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THE FRAMING OF CHARLES W. CHESNUTT: PRACTICAL DECONSTRUCTION IN THE AFRO-AMERICAN TRADITION

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First, three quotations.

"Under exegetical pressure, self-reference demonstrates the impossibility of self-possession. When poems denounce poetry as lies, self-referentiality is the source of undecidability, which is not ambiguity but a structure of logical irresolvability: if a poem speaks true in describing poetry as lies, then it lies; but if its claim that poems lie is a lie, then it must speak true."—Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (202).

"They ain't no different from nobody else....They mouth cut cross ways, ain't it? Well, long as you don't see no man wid they mouth cut up and down, you know they'll all lie jus' like de rest of us."—Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* (22).

"The text is a beautiful, slender stream, meandering gracefully through a wide meadow of margin."—Charles Waddell Chesnutt, "Baxter's *Procrustes*" (419).

As the Signifying Monkey and Brer Rabbit have always known, as Charles Chesnutt knew in 1890, as Euro-American literary theorists working in the wake of Jacques Derrida have discovered, truth lies in a lie. By focusing on the writing of Chesnutt, one of the most enigmatic figures of the post-reconstruction era, I hope to prefigure a politically significant discourse between Euro-American literary theory and the Afro-American expressive tradition it has excluded from its premises.

But before I begin, two remarks on the premises. First, an anecdote explaining the hostility toward the theoretical enterprise, until recently my central position, which may emerge throughout this essay. As a graduate student, I participated briefly in a critical theory reading group. At one meeting, a prominent theoretician responded to Missy Dehn Kubitschek's question concerning the relevance of theory to a non-specialist audience with the contemptuous statement, "I don't much care what the guys at the corner garage think about my work." Juxtaposed with the frequently recondite and exclusive vocabulary of theoretical writing, this highlighted what I perceived, and to some extent continue to perceive, as an elitist stance which contributes to the effective power of the institutions deconstruction ostensibly calls into question. As an aesthetic populist who takes James Joyce, James

Brown and George Clinton with equal comico-seriousness, I consigned the whole enterprise to the nether regions and went about my business. Only recently, inspired by the gentle chiding of autodidacts Geoff King and Charles Weir and academics Kathy Cummings of the University of Washington and Robert Stepto of the Afro-American Studies Department of Yale—a ritual ground given over to unspeakable forces in my neo-populist demonology—have I begun to realize that, professional argot and elitist individuals aside, the guys at the corner garage may have been telling lies about their true knowledge of deconstruction all along.

Second, and perhaps the paranoia inheres in the populism, I've felt for some time that I was standing alone in my reading of Chesnutt as an exceptionally complex modernist/post-modernist ironist situated on the margins of a literary marketplace conditioned first by the plantation tradition stereotypes of Thomas Nelson Page and later by the virulent racist diatribes of Thomas Dixon. Standard literary histories evince almost no awareness of Chesnutt's complexity; *The Cambridge History of American Literature* (edited by Carl Van Doren, et. al., 1917) omits all mention of Chesnutt while the fourth edition of *The Literary History of the United States* (edited by Robert Spiller, et. al., 1974) dismisses him as a minor Plantation Tradition figure overshadowed by Joel Chandler Harris. Even William Andrews' sensitive study *The Literary Career of Charles W. Chesnutt* credits Chesnutt with relatively little awareness of structural irony or metafictional subtlety. Aesthetic isolation mocks my populist soul; on the other hand, originality intrigues my academic mind. Whatever the case, Afro-American novelist John Wideman's piece "Surfiction" in the Summer 1985 issue of *The Southern Review*—my copy of which was lost in the mail and arrived only this week, on All Souls Day—seems to be a response to my unsounded call or a call for my unsounded response. I say "seems" because, upon recognizing the Chesnutt figure created by Wideman, who recently identified Brer Rabbit as his favorite literary character when questioned by the *New York Times Book Review*, I decided not to read the rest of his piece until I had figured out my own position. Incidentally, were I permitted (to quote one of Chesnutt's more famous black contemporaries), I might suggest some duplicity in the identification of Wideman's words as "fiction" in the table of contents of *The Southern Review*. (Space for future retrospective commentary: after reading both Wideman's essay and version of this paper at a conference, I'm surer than ever that it's nothing but a lie.) With these positions in mind, we can begin.

Henry-Louis Gates suggests the implicit connection between the Afro-American folk tradition from which Chesnutt drew many of his figures and the deconstructionist sensibility when he presents "the Signifying Monkey, he who dwells at the margins of discourse" as a figure embodying the "Afro-American rhetorical strategy of signifying [as] a rhetorical act which is not engaged in the game of information-giving. Signifying turns on the play and chain of signifiers, and not on some supposedly transcendent signified" (129-31). Locating his own position in the space between Euro-American theory and Afro-American signifying, Gates applies his insights concerning "folk deconstruction" to Afro-American literary history in a diagram centering on Hurston and including Jean Toomer, Sterling Brown, Ralph Ellison, Richard Wright, and Ishmael Reed. In response to this diagram—clearly intended by Gates as provisional rather than definitive—I would suggest that, especially in *The Conjure Woman* (1899) and the self-referential story "Baxter's *Procrustes*" (1905), Chesnutt prefigures both the Afro- and Euro-American understandings of literary signification in a way that we have only recently begun to comprehend. In advancing this argument, I am suggesting not simply that deconstructionist methodologies can be profitably applied to Chesnutt's work or that a general parallel exists between the Afro-American tradition and Euro-American theory. Rather, I am suggesting that Chesnutt consciously orients his discourse toward crucial elements of the deconstructionist project and that he anticipates constructive approaches to several issues which remain extremely problematic in contemporary theoretical discourse. From a deconstructionist perspective, it should come as no surprise that focusing on the excluded margin, the Afro-American literary tradition which has never enjoyed the social privilege allowing it to dismiss the masters from its awareness, should help cast light on the blind spots of Euro-American theory.

By focusing on the general (and to the extent possible, shared) understanding of deconstruction in contemporary academic discourse, I hope to lay some groundwork for future cross-cultural discussions oriented toward the articulation and refinement of specific implications of Derrida's positions. Terry Eagleton's chapter on "Post-Structuralism" in *Literary Theory: An Introduction* and Culler's chapter on "Critical Consequences" in *On Deconstruction*, two works which diverge sharply in their views of the larger significance of the movement, share a number of premises I shall treat as consensual positions. Both understand deconstruction as a philosophically grounded approach to thought which: 1) emphasizes the problematic relationship between the linguistic signifier and the "transcendent

signified" (Eagleton, 131; Culler, 188); 2) challenges, and ultimately decenters, hierarchies of thought or expression based on binary oppositions which privilege one term over its ostensible opposite (Culler, 213; Eagleton, 132); 3) focuses on the "marginal" terms excluded from the discourse in order to recognize the way in which the text subverts its own meaning (Culler, 215; Eagleton, 132-33); 4) recognizes that all signifiers derive their meaning from "traces" of other signifiers and concentrates on the "play of signifiers," creating a theoretically endless chain which frustrates attempts at closure (Eagleton, 134; Culler, 188). Eagleton summarizes the deconstructive project as follows: "Deconstruction tries to show how such oppositions, in order to hold themselves in place, are sometimes betrayed into inverting or collapsing themselves, or need to banish to the text's margins certain niggling details which can be made to return and plague them...The tactic of deconstructive criticism, that is to say, is to show how texts come to embarrass their own ruling systems of logic" (133). Culler echoes and extends this understanding when he writes of the deconstructionist interest in "previous readings which, in separating a text into the essential and marginal elements, have created for the text an identity that the text itself, through the power of its marginal elements, can subvert." Generalizing this approach in a manner consistent with Eagleton's insistence on the contextual determinants of textual meaning, Culler asserts "One could, therefore, identify deconstruction with the twin principles of the contextual determination of meaning and the infinite extendability of context."

Chesnutt, whose active publishing career had ended by the time Ferdinand de Saussure delivered the lectures which would become the *Course in General Linguistics* between 1907 and 1911, derived his awareness of the problematical nature of binary oppositions, hierarchies in discourse, and the signifier-signified relationship from two basic sources: the folk tradition on which he drew, and the literary context in which he wrote. As Hurston, Ellison and Gates have noted in quite different contexts, the Afro-American folk tradition encodes a profound suspicion of and resistance to Euro-American expression. Placed in a marginal position enforced by institutional structures and physical violence, Afro-Americans, especially those *without* access to the mainstream educational system, have always been acutely aware of the radical inadequacy of white figures of black experience. Experiencing what W.E.B. DuBois called *double consciousness*—"this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (17)— Afro-Americans, individually and communally, learned

quickly to manipulate the gap between signifier and signified. Constructing elaborate verbal "masks" in everyday discourse as well as in the spirituals and animal tales, "slaves" (to use the Euro-American signifier) continually (and because of their political oppression, implicitly) subverted the oppositional racist association of *white* with such privileged terms as "good," "God," "mature," and "civilized," and *black* with such excluded terms as "evil," "devil," "child-like" and "savage." Focusing on the "marginal" elements of the dominant discourse (i.e. themselves), they learned to effectively decenter social and political hierarchies in order to survive, psychologically and physically. Ultimately, as Ellison notes in his wonderfully titled essay "Change the Joke and Slip the Yoke" in his proto-deconstructionist book *Shadow and Act*, this shaped an expressive tradition based precisely on the closure-resisting play of signifiers articulating "a land of masking jokers" in which "the motives hidden behind the mask are as numerous as the ambiguities the mask conceals" (70). Chesnutt, probably the first Afro-American writer to assume the truth lying behind Ellison's signifying, incorporates this deconstructive folk sensibility into his literary productions in a highly self-conscious manner.

The specific manifestations of this self-consciousness, however, derive directly from the tradition of racial signification in the Euro-American writing of the 1880s and 1890s. When Chesnutt began to publish in mainstream magazines such as *Family Fiction* and the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1886 and 1887, he encountered editors and readers deeply influenced by Joel Chandler Harris's tales of Uncle Remus and Brer Rabbit. Harris remains one of the least understood, and perhaps least understandable, figures in one of the least understood/standable currents of the Southern literary tradition: that of minstrelsy. On the surface, Harris appears to articulate a straightforward version of the Plantation Tradition in his tales of an essentially child-like black man gently harassed into telling charming animal stories by a young white boy who brings him sweets and affection from the big house. Occupying the center of the American consciousness of Harris—the Disney minstrel show *Song of the South* is only the most obvious of many examples—,this image would seem to dictate dismissal of the Uncle Remus tales as the type of "blackface minstrelsy" Berndt Ostendorf describes as "a symbolic slave code, a set of self-humiliating rules designed by white racists for the disenfranchisement of the black self" (66).

Beneath both the benevolent and maleficent surface(s) of the minstrel tradition, however, lie unsuspected depths where Harris joins

William Faulkner and Derrida to comprise a significant genealogy in which Chesnutt is the crucial and crucially unrecognized missing relation. The most powerful recent Faulkner criticism, that written by John Irwin and Eric Sundquist, recognizes a troubling link between the irresolvability of the Faulknerian text—Irwin calls Quentin's narration of *Absalom! Absalom!* as "an answer that doesn't answer—an answer that puts the answerer in question" (8)—and the presence of unresolved psychological tensions originating in miscegenation, the denied actuality which unrelentingly subjects racial oppositions to the type of subversive interrogation Luce Irigaray directs against Freud's gender oppositions in "The Blind Spot of an Old Dream of Symmetry." Orienting his discussion specifically toward Faulkner's rejection of the binary oppositions inherent in "Manichaeanism," Sundquist writes: "The gothicism of *Absalom! Absalom!* is not by any means the sentimentality of a minstrel show—not the benign dream in which 'all coons look alike'—but the nightmare in which black *and* white begin all too hauntingly to look alike" (99). Harris and Chesnutt in fact prefigure this Faulknerian dilemma, a dilemma inherent in the minstrel show from the beginning. As Ostendorf writes, "Minstrelsy anticipated on stage what many Americans deeply feared: the blackening of America. Minstrelsy did in fact create a symbolic language and a comic iconography for 'intermingling' culturally with the African Caliban while at the same time 'isolating' him socially. In blackening his face the white minstrel acculturated voluntarily to his 'comic' vision of blackness, thus anticipating in jest what he feared in earnest....Minstrelsy is proof that negrophilia and negrophobia are not at all contradictory. Minstrelsy is negrophobia staged as negrophilia, or vice versa, depending on the respective weight of the fear or attraction" (67, 81). To state this in specifically deconstructive terms, the minstrel show—whether manifested in the Uncle Remus tales, Faulkner's novels, or, as Charles Sanders brilliantly suggests, T.S. Eliot's "Waste Land"—subverts its own meaning by deconstructing the binary opposition on which its hierarchical structures depend, creating a form of expression which demands confrontation with an infinitley extensive/regressive chain of signifiers. Which is to say: white minstrelsy deconstructs itself.

Nowhere is this clearer than in *Uncle Remus, His Songs and Sayings*, the text through which Harris engendered a long line of Euro-American negrophiles. As Harris seems to have sensed—he attributed the writing of the Brer Rabbit tales to an internal "other fellow" who "is simply a spectator of my folly until I seize a pen, and then he comes forward and takes charge" (Martin, 92)—and as Bernard Wolf first

articulated in his 1949 essay "Uncle Remus and the Malevolent Rabbit," the volume in fact presents a sequence of "answers that don't answer, that put the answerer in question." Just beneath the negrophiliac surface of the "charming" tales (most of them faithfully reproduced from the Afro-American oral tradition) Harris expropriates from/to the benevolently asexual Uncle Remus lies a world of violence, sexual energy, and barely subdued racial drama in which the physically weak Brer Rabbit attains at least momentary mastery over the stronger but less aware Brers Bear, Wolf and Fox through his manipulation of the gap between verbal signifier and concrete action. Encoded within the ordered hierarchy of the Plantation Tradition, the trickster figure delights in the disruption of hierarchies, textual or contextual, almost without reference to their apparent significance. At times, as in "The Wonderful Tar-Baby Story," this radically subversive delight works to Brer Rabbit's detriment. When Brer Rabbit takes on the role of the "master" demanding respect from the tar baby—a profoundly charged figure for the "black" pole of oppositional racist thought (stupid, lazy, very black, a thing)—his discourse subverts his own claims of privilege as surely as his ability to turn Brer Fox into a riding horse elsewhere decenters the Plantation Tradition hierarchy. This aspect of the Brer Rabbit tales is particularly important in relation to the development of Afro-American deconstruction because it protects against substituting one set of privileged terms for another. Although Wolf's reading of the animal fables as slightly veiled allegories of racial hatred and sexual competition seems accurate, the random and frequently self-destructive manifestations of Brer Rabbit's deconstructive energies makes it clear that the tales privilege *neither* the black or white position.

An understanding of Chesnutt, however, requires some attention to the unconsciously self-deconstructing aspects of Harris' adaptation of this already deconstructive material in *Uncle Remus, His Songs and Sayings*, which subverts its own intended meanings by encoding several thoroughly contradictory versions of its Afro-American subjects. The tension emerges clearly in a comparison of the three major sections of the book. The irascible minstrel show darky signified by the name "Uncle Remus" in "His Sayings" and the loyal slave presented in the Plantation Tradition short story "A Story of the War" evince nothing of the creative energy of the story teller of "Legends of the Old Plantation." Within the "Legends," on which Harris's reputation depends almost entirely, a similar tension exists between the frame tales, written in standard English, and the animal tales, written in a linguistically accurate dialect which Harris contrasts in his introduction specifically with "the intolerable misrepresentations of the minstrel

stage" (39). As Harris' comment concerning the "other fellow" intimates, an anxious but not quite articulated awareness that the linguistic and thematic tensions of the book cast his own identity as a unified subject into doubt, permeates *Uncle Remus*. The opening "Legend," "Uncle Remus Initiates the Little Boy," establishes not one but two narrative frames, suggesting the unbridgeable distance between Euro-American signification and Afro-American experience. The most obvious frame tale concerning Uncle Remus and the seven-year-old boy establishes a symbolic equality between the ostensibly child-like black man and the actual white child, Harris's pastoral version of an earlier self similar to that constructed by Mark Twain in *Tom Sawyer*, a construction which reveals a deep longing for the Old South (Martin 92-96). Alongside this frame, however, another frame, almost entirely unrecognized, presents a "mature" perspective which "explains" how the collaboration between the two "child-like" figures happens to have been written down on paper. Presented only at the beginning of the first legend, this frame is in some ways as subversive of oppositional hierarchies as the Brer Rabbit tales themselves. The little boy is introduced as a figure of absence; his mother "Miss Sally," a curiously asexual figure who will be refigured in the "Miz Meadows" of the Brer Rabbit tales, "misses" her child. Arriving at Uncle Remus's cabin, she sees her "boys" together and steps back. Harris concludes the initial frame with the sentence: "This is what 'Miss Sally' heard." Although there is no evidence that he was doing so as part of a conscious rhetorical strategy, Harris has in effect decentered his presence into at least four components: Uncle Remus who as story-teller plays the role of "the other fellow" in charge of Harris' pen; the little boy who bears the most obvious biographical relationship to Harris; the passive "feminine" figure who resembles the Harris who collected the tales attributed to Uncle Remus from a number of Afro-American "informants;" and the silent scribe, Harris the *Atlanta Constitution* columnist who attributes his tales not directly to the black tellers but to a white female intermediary. In this complex configuration, neither whiteness nor masculinity possesses the significance—as signifiers invoking a range of transcendent creative attributes—attributed them by the explicitly patriarchal and paternalistic Plantation Tradition writers.

Given the multitude of "presences" mediating between "Harris" and his "subjects," it should come as no surprise to discover traces of mutually deconstructing forms of awareness throughout the "Legends." "The End of Mr. Bear," for example, betrays its own ruling system of logic in several ways. Most obviously, the text subverts the Plantation Tradition opposition between benevolent white master and

happy black slave through the contrast between the superficially stereotypical frame and the vicious tale. Culminating in the death of Brer Bear (on the level of racial allegory, the symbolic white man) who Brer Rabbit tricks into sticking his head into a tree where it is stung by a swarm of bees, the text closes with an expression of barely veiled joy (attributed to Uncle Remus but consistent with the folk materials) derived from contemplation of this inverted lynching: "dar ole Brer B'ar hung, en ef his head ain't swunk, I speck he hangin' dar yit" (136). It seems almost unbelievable that no critic prior to Wolfe seems to have understood this even in part as a warning against the racial pride—ironically projected as a savage black desire for a "shrunken head"—which enforced the social privilege encoded in the black-white opposition.

Even without reference to the animal tale, "The End of Mr. Bear" provides clear evidence of the self-deconstructing tendency of Harris' text to "embarrass its own ruling systems of logic." When the little boy comes to the cabin, he finds Uncle Remus "unusually cheerful and goodhumored" (133). Signifying this good humor in the way most dear to slaveholders and Plantation Tradition writers who cited the slaves' oral performances as proof of their contentment, Uncle Remus sings a song, "a senseless affair so far as the words were concerned." Immediately after quoting a verse of this "non-signifying" song, however, Harris contradicts himself in a peculiar manner. Unconsciously underlining Harris's evershifting Brer Rabbit-like relation to his text, the following passages reads: "The quick ear of Uncle Remus, however, had detected the presence of the little boy, and he allowed his song to run into a recitation of nonsense, of which the following, if it be rapidly spoken, will give a faint idea: 'Ole M'er Jackson, fines' confraction, fell down sta'rs fer to git satisfaction; big Bill Fray, he rule de day, eve'ything he call fer come one, two by three. Gwine 'long one day, met Johnny Huby, ax him grine nine yards er steel fer me, tole me w'ich he couldn't; den I hist 'im over Hickerson Dickerson's barn-doors; knock 'im ninety-nine miles under water, w'en he rise, he rise in Pike straddle un a hanspike, en I lef' 'im dar smokin' er de hornpipe, Juba reda seda breda. Aunt Kate at de gate; I want to eat, she fry de meat en gimme skin, w'ich I fling it back agin. Juba!" This curious passage begins with an intimation of a level of awareness in Uncle Remus, associated with his leporine "quick ear," which allows him to shift from the "senseless affair" into "a recitation of nonsense." The reasons for the shift or the difference between the two levels of non-signifying discourse are never stated. Emphasizing the insufficiency of his written text which can provide

only a "faint idea" of the oral expression of "Uncle Remus," who exists only within the written text, Harris plunges into what, if recognized, would certainly have seemed a nightmarish minstrel show skit on the relationship between signifier and signified. Trapped within the hierarchical system which denies transcendence to the Afro-American subject, Harris can only dismiss Uncle Remus's words, albeit with a great uneasiness grounded on his sense that the black voice signifies something unavailable to any white "presence" in the text.

Clearly a version of the signifying rhetoric described by Gates, Uncle Remus's speech is best understood as a quintessentially Afro-American manipulation of the "play of signifiers," which includes numerous politically resonant images of conflict and/or Africanisms which subvert Plantation Tradition images without concern for specific referential meaning. Accepting the divergence between signifier and signified, the black voice encoded in the text subverts the previous interpretation of the words as nonsense. Immediately after the performance, which creates "bewilderment" in the young boy and, presumably, in the white readership guided by Harris' remarks, Uncle Remus proceeds "with the air of one who had just given an important piece of information" (134). The black voice, aware that the destruction of an oppositional hierarchy resting on a simplistic sense of linguistic significance does not entail the destruction of all meaning, very nearly effects a successful revolution when Uncle Remus says: "Hit's all des dat away, honey....En w'en you bin cas'n shadders long ez de ole nigger, den you'll fine out who's w'ich, en w'ich's who." Acutely uncomfortable with the confusion of identity established through the verbal play of the "black" voice in the "white" text, Harris seems unable to distinguish between his own voice and the voice of an "other" subverting the hierarchical system which privileges the written expression as a mark of civilization and humanity. Returning to the standard English of the frame tale, Harris attempts to reassert the Plantation Tradition stereotype which ascribes superior "capacity" to whites and only childlike significance to black expression: "The little boy made no response. He was in thorough sympathy with all the whims and humors of the old man, and his capacity for enjoying them was large enough to include even those he could not understand." Even the reassertion reveals subversive traces, however; the boy is silenced, uncomprehending. Shortly, the angry black voice of the Brer Rabbit tales will assume the central position in the world of the text. The deconstructive black voice renders the white personae silent, thereby creating a space for articulation of the subversive animal tale ending with the lynching of Brer Bear, condemned by his inability to see

through Brer Rabbit's masks. As ironic prelude, however, and apparently without any awareness on the part of Harris, Uncle Remus effects a role reversal which places the white child in the symbolic position of the subordinate attending to the marginal details of the master's work: "Uncle Remus was finishing an axe-handle, and upon these occasions it was his custom *to allow* the child to hold one end while he applied sand-paper to the other" (emphasis added). The final sentence of the frame-story echoes, almost word for word, the standard Plantation Tradition description of slavery as a system benefiting both black and white: "These relations were pretty soon established, to the satisfaction of the parties most interested..." Operating in the newly created textual space, the final clause of the final framing sentence specifically contrasts the nonsense of the previous sections with the significance of the animal tale to come: "the old man continued his remarks, but this time not at random." Even the frame tale, the section of *Uncle Remus* in which Harris attempts to impose the oppositional order of the Plantation Tradition on the Afro-American folk materials is subject to the deconstructive energies of the black voice. As the frame story metamorphoses into Brer Rabbit tale, the white writer's voice surrenders itself to the black speaker's as written by the white writer. In effect, the text acknowledges a significance in the nonsignifying nonsense. This infiltration of what Gates would call a signifying black voice into not only the tale but the frame itself recalls Ostendorf's comments on the minstrel show and prefigures the racial and aesthetic tensions of Faulkner's greatest work.

Appropriating the voice of the Euro-American figure who established the ground on which he worked, Chesnutt recognized and consciously manipulated the self-deconstructive form of *Uncle Remus*. Particularly in *The Conjure Woman*, Chesnutt employs a complex rhetorical strategy, based on a deep understanding of the deconstructionist principles of the contextual determination of meaning and the infinite extendibility of context, anticipated in the Southern literary tradition only (if indeed at all) by the best work of Poe and Twain. Superficially, Chesnutt's conjure stories mimic Harris' structure; a white narrator, writing in standard English, reports the charming but absurd tales of an old black man, presented in black dialect. Like Uncle Remus, Chesnutt's Uncle Julius seems motivated by childlike selfish concerns. Uncle Remus cajoles the little boy into bringing him sweets; Uncle Julius manipulates his white listeners, the relocated northern businessman John and his wife Annie, into a variety of personal indulgences. Most critics who have discussed the relationship between frame tale and conjure story in *The Conjure*

Woman concentrate on the economic dimension of the relationship between Julius and John, or on Julius' attempt to educate Annie concerning the realities of slavery (Ferguson; Andrews). While these observations shed light on the mimetic dimension of the text, they typically exclude those aspects which relate primarily to the communications process itself, the aspects which intimate Chesnutt's awareness of numerous deconstructive concerns.

The model of the rhetorical relationship between John and Julius in *The Conjure Woman* comments directly on Chesnutt's own position as an Afro-American writer working in a context dominated by Euro-American oppositional hierarchies, particularly the Plantation Tradition stereotypes shaped by Harris, Thomas Nelson Page, and countless others publishing in the same magazines where "The Goophered Grapevine" and "The Conjurer's Revenge" first appeared. Recognition of this parallel hinges on an understanding of the significance of the "mask" in the signifying tradition. In *Mules and Men*, Hurston described masking as follows: "the Negro, in spite of his open-faced laughter, his seeming acquiescence, is particularly evasive. You see we are a polite people and we do not say to our questioner, 'Get out of here!' We smile and tell him or her something that satisfies the white person because, knowing so little about us, he doesn't know what he is missing....The theory behind our tactics: 'The white man is always trying to know somebody else's business. All right, I'll set something outside the door of my mind for him to play with and handle. He can read my writing but he sho' can't read my mind. I'll put this play toy in his hand, and he will seize it and go away. Then I'll say my say and sing my song" (4-5). Most immediately, this rhetorical strategy creates a space, simultaneously physical, verbal and psychological within which the Afro-American individual and community can survive within a hostile racist culture. At times, it can serve as a more active political tool allowing Afro-Americans access to information or situations from which they would be excluded if their true motives were recognized. Set against this background, the figure Chesnutt creates in *The Conjure Woman* comes into focus as an elaborate mask, or set of masks designed to infiltrate Euro-American discourse and, in the long run, subvert the binary oppositions on which racial privilege depends. It should be noted in approaching this strategy that, as soon as an audience recognizes the mask as a mask, the mask loses all possible effectiveness. The nature of the masking strategy, therefore, depends on the trickster's ability to convince the audience that it sees his/her actual face. One of the conceptually simple but practically inexhaustible methods for attaining this goal is to construct "false"

masks, masks over masks, which the audience is allowed to see through in order to convince it that it has seen the trickster's face when in fact it is encountering only another mask. In effect, Chesnutt uses such a strategy to construct a complex model of practical deconstruction in which the masking Julius, prefiguring the doubly conscious Afro-American modernist writer, manipulates his audience through his awareness of the structure and limitations of Euro-American oppositional thought and his understanding of the potential uses of a marginal position.

Reflecting his situation as a light-skinned "black" writer born in North Carolina but living in Ohio, Chesnutt creates two personae, textual masks: John, with whom he shares geographical residence and a Euro-American literacy based on writing and knowledge of white institutional structures (Stepto 167); and Julius, with whom he shares racial and geographical origins and "tribal literacy," based on oral expression and specifically black cultural patterns (Stepto, 167). Dividing "himself" into two figures who, in the binary oppositions of the Plantation Tradition, are mutually exclusive and irresolvable, Chesnutt anticipates Saussure in deconstructing the linguistic convention, crucial to mimetic fiction, which asserts the identity of signifier and signified. Nonetheless, Chesnutt's audience, excluding from its discourse any cultural traditions positing alternatives to oppositional thinking and assuming the identity of signifier and signified, was almost totally unprepared to understand his critique. Chesnutt's "solution" to the problem brought the implicitly deconstructive elements of the masking/signifying tradition of Afro--American culture very near the surface of *The Conjure Woman.*

What I am suggesting is that Julius in *The Conjure Woman*, like Chesnutt in the literary culture of his era, constructs a sequence of increasingly opaque masks, predicated on his knowledge of the structure of his audience's belief systems and implying a recognition of the underlying perceptions asserted in Culler's identification of deconstruction with "the twin principles of the contextual determination of meaning and the infinite extendability of context." On the surface the Julius of "The Goophered Grapevine" appears to be motivated by economic self-interest, telling the story of the haunted vineyard in an attempt to scare John off and keep the grapes for himself. But this mask is absurdly transparent. Julius, of course, has no hope of frightening John, the "hard-headed" businessman, with romantic fancy. If John grants Julius any economic concessions it is because he is an essentially well meaning "master." In fact, Julius seems aware of the actual economic dynamic when he stresses the past bounty of the

vineyard and the crucial role played by blacks in maintaining its productivity. In addition to suggesting a less direct economic motive, this double voicing intimates Julius's awareness that his white audience is in fact less unified than it appears. Employing many of the standard images associated with the 19th century sentimental fiction addressed primarily to a female audience—particularly those focusing on the division of families (Fiedler)—Julius addresses not only John but also Annie, whom he gradually educates concerning the inhumanity of the slave system of the old South. Given the composition of Chesnutt's magazine audience, it seems likely that he perceived the parallel between Julius's rhetorical strategy and his own. Allowing male readers seeking escapist fantasy to perceive him, like Julius, as a simple storyteller who "seemed to lose sight of his auditors, and to be living over again in monologue his life on the old plantation" (12-13), Chesnutt simultaneously educated his "female" audience, which itself occupied a marginal position in patriarchal/paternalistic culture, concerning the actual brutalities of racial relations.

Adopting an essentially deconstructive narrative technique, Julius places his subversive criticism of the romantic image of the "Old South" in the margins of his tale. Frequently, his most pointed criticism occurs in the background descriptions of what life was like "befo' de wah," a common formula in the nostalgic stories of Page and others. In "The Goophered Grapevine," for example, Julius says: "I reckon it ain' so much so nowadays, but befo' de wah, in slab'ry times, a nigger did n' mine goin fi' er ten mile in a night, w'en dey wuz sump'n good ter eat at de yuther een'" (14). Contrasted with the illicit treats the boy gives Uncle Remus or with the slave banquet in Paul Laurence Dunbar's poem "The Party," the political point of Julius' marginal "literary criticism" seems unmistakeable. Especially in the early tales, Julius makes political points obliquely since more direct approaches might alienate John and result in his exclusion from the situation in which he can address Annie. As Julius establishes himself within the structure of John and Annie's lives, however, he alters his strategy. By "Mars Jeems's Nightmare," the third story in the collection, he focuses on a harsh master whose attitudes change substantially after he is transformed into a slave for a period of time; clearly, Julius feels free to include much more explicit social commentary than he had previously. Although John retains his condescending belief in the childlike simplicity of blacks in his ironic comment—"I am glad, too, that you told us the moral of the story; it might have escaped us otherwise"—, there is no danger that he will use his social privilege to exclude Julius from the discourse into which they

have entered. The strategy of "Mars Jeems' Nightmare" depends, therefore, on that of "The Goophered Grapevine" which disarmed John by playing on his belief that he "understands" Julius when he has actually only seen through a transparent economic mask. The long-term success of the strategy, however, requires periodic reenforcement of John's assumption, evidence Julius provides in "The Conjurer's Revenge" when he tricks John into buying a blind horse. The real significance of Julius's interaction with John, then, lies not in the success or failure of a particular trick but in the control he attains over the context in which he can direct his "marginal" address to Annie to communal rather than individual benefits.

When he allows this mask to become transparent in the didactic "Mars Jeems' Nightmare," Julius extends the basic principle to another level of contextual complexity. By convincing relatively liberal whites such as Annie, who are willing to face the somewhat distanced reality of the brutality of the Old South (itself part of a binary opposition of north-civilized/ south-primitive) that they have seen the true face of the black "petitioner", Chesnutt creates a context in which his more radically subversive deconstructive message can infiltrate the literary forum. Having entered this discourse, Chesnutt may in fact discredit both conservative Old South and liberal New South through the structural analogy between the whites in the fables Julius tells and those in the frame story Chesnutt writes. From this perspective, John and Annie can be seen as new incarnations of the old masters subjecting Afro-Americans to a system of discourse and institutional organization that denies their humanity. Allowing his readers to penetrate a sequence of transparent masks, Chesnutt articulated an extremely intricate parody which expands to deconstruct the ostensible opposition of "liberal North" and "reactionary South," both of which manifest a similar set of racist attitudes. Condescension, active oppression and pity are equally compatable with the binary oppositions of the Plantation Tradition. Perhaps Chesnutt's final target, in his immediate context, is the predominantly Northern readership who, like John and Annie, are willing to indulge the transparent "entertainments" of a charming black storyteller, perhaps even accepting a limited political critique, as long as it leaves the social framework undisturbed.

Each level of this process moves toward the actual context in which Chesnutt wrote, raising questions regarding the interaction of text and world and implicitly repudiating the traditional view of fiction as a privileged form of discourse. Extending this approach temporally, it would be possible to see Chesnutt as attempting to educate a future audience, or perhaps future Afro-American writers, in the methods of

deconstructionist/masking reading and writing. Of course such reading writers, whites or "literate" blacks, themselves would be subject to interpretation as new incarnations of John and Annie determined to master Afro-American experience through ever more subtle techniques. At some point in this infinitely extendible context, Chesnutt's deconstructions flip over into a kind of structuralist (thought not ahistorical) awareness of the persistence of the deeply ingrained oppositional structures characterizing Euro-American discourse and supporting oppressive institutions. In speculating on the long-term implications of the rhetorical structure of *The Conjure Woman*, I realize I have ventured forth onto shifting ground. The final stages of the process outlined above are unsupported and, by nature, unsupportable. The last mask must always remain opaque, at least to its immediate audience. Any evidence of its construction renders it partially transparent and subjects it to possible exclusion from the public forum, destroying any hope of political effectiveness. The play of signifiers must resist closure in order to resist the power of the dominant discourse. Nevertheless, Chesnutt provides enough textual evidence to suggest this approach is not simply a postmodernist imposition, an academic re-voicing of the plantation tradition distortion of the Afro-American voice. Both the contrast between John's and Julius's linguistic practices and the specific choices of material for the tales Julius tells intimate Chesnutt's conscious awareness of basic deconstructive approaches to discourse.

Possessing only a minimal sense of irony, John assumes the identity of signifier and signified. Because his attitude toward southern life has been shaped by literature, John perceives Julius in terms of the signifiers of the plantation tradition. Rather than leading to a relaxation of his belief in the adequacy of the signifiers, perceived discrepencies between signifier and signified are resolved by adjusting his conception of the signified. John's belief in the plantation tradition stereotype attributing mental capacity solely to the white term of the white/black binary opposition leads him to create a mixed ancestry for Julius: "There was a shrewdness in his eyes, too, which was not altogether African, and which, as we afterwards learned from experience, was indicative of a corresponding shrewdness in his character" (9-10). Similarly, the frame story of "Mars Jeems's Nightmare" emphasizes the underlying structure of the binary opposition which defines blacks as subhuman. Extending the black-physical/white-mental dichotomy, John describes Julius's relationship with the "natural" world: "Toward my tract of land and the things that were on it—the creeks, the swamps, the hills, the meadows, the stones, the trees—he maintained a peculiar

personal attitude, that might be called predial rather than proprietary. He had been accustomed, until long after middle life, to look upon himself as the property of another. When this relation was no longer possible, owing to the war, and to his master's death and the dispersion of the family, he had been unable to break off entirely the mental habits of a lifetime, but had attached himself to the old plantation, of which he seemed to consider himself an appurtenance" (64-65). In addition to supporting politically destructive institutions, such reduction of the black subject reveals John's simplistic linguistic and philosophical premises. Foregrounding the deconstructionist tendencies implicit in *Uncle Remus, The Conjure Woman* suggests ways of subverting the power of the discourse resulting from such simplistic premises.

Recognizing John's tendency to confuse white metaphorical signification with the actuality of the "black thing" signified, Julius bases his strategy on the manipulation of the unrecognized distance between signifier and signified. Where John assumes presence, Julius implies absence. Frequently, Julius' speech implies the inadequacy of the signifier=signified paradigm, drawing attention to the ways in which the linguistic position serves institutional structures whose actual operations the language veils. For example, Julius describes Mars Jeems's relations with his slaves as follows: "His niggers wuz bleedzd ter slabe fum daylight ter da'k, w'iles yuther folks's did n' hafter wuk 'cep'n' fum sun ter sun" (71). Rhetorically accepting the distinction between "daylight ter da'k" and "sun ter sun," this sentence parodies the way in which white folks, especially when they want to evade their own position in an unjust system, employ different signifiers to obscure what from the Afro-American perspective appear to be identical signifieds. Although the sun rises after light and sets before dark, the distinction, which might be emphasized by a good master as evidence of his kindness, does nothing to alter the fact that in either case, the enforced labor is of murderous duration. Frequently Julius bases his rhetoric on the apparent acceptance of a white signifier, as in "The Goophered Grapevine" which identifies the slave Henry with the vineyard in much the same way John identifies Julius with the "things" of the plantation. By adapting John's preconceptions, Julius finds it much easier to construct an effective mask. As Gates notes in his discussion of the "Signifying Monkey," who along with Brer Rabbit provides the closest analog for Uncle Julius in the folk tradition, "the Signifying Monkey [Julius, Chesnutt] is able to signify upon the Lion [John, the white readership} only because the Lion does not understand the nature of the Monkey's discourse....The Monkey speaks

figuratively, in a symbolic code, whereas the Lion interprets or 'reads' *literally*" (133-134).

A similar dynamic is at work in relation to the "folk" tales which charmed and fascinated both Julius' auditors in the text and Chesnutt's readership. Because the tales are presented in dialect within a frame readily familiar to readers of Harris, most contemporary reviewers assumed that Chesnutt was presenting "authentic" Afro-American folk tales; several hostile reviews criticized *The Conjure Woman* for simply repeating folk materials without adequate imaginative transformation. As Melvin Dixon demonstrates, however, only one of the tales ("The Goophered Grapevine") is an authentic folk tale. While the remainder incorporate folk elements, Chesnutt transforms them in a way which deconstructs the hierarchy on which the negative judgments rest. The recurring images of transformation in the tales—Sandy turns into a tree, Mars Jeems into a slave, Henry into a kind of human grapevine, etc.—implicitly repudiate the identification of signifier with transcendent signified. Identity is multiple, shifting, a play of forces rather than a transcendent essence. Chesnutt charmingly plunges his readers into the Faulknerian minstrel show/nightmare in which the answers place the answerers in question, names surrender their significance, becoming a source of ironic play in which the devil turns from black to white: "Mars Jeems's oberseah wuz a po' w'ite man name' Nick Johnson,—de niggers called 'im Mars Johnson ter his face, but behin' his back dey useter call 'im Ole Nick, en de name suited 'im ter a T" (75). Deprived of their linguistic base, dichotomies collapse, including that of white-classical-written-civilized/black-vernacular-oral-savage. For, although Chesnutt used Afro-American folk materials, the clearest source of the charming stories in *The Conjure Woman* is Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. The illiterate former slave and the classical poet play one another's roles in the minstrel show in which black and white begin to look very much alike. In a rhetorical gambit worthy of "The Purloined Letter" or the Signifying Monkey, Chesnutt draws attention to the similarity between Julius' concerns and those of the Euro-American philosophical tradition at the beginning of "The Gray Wolf's Ha'nt" when John sits down with Annie and reads: "The difficulty of dealing with transformations so many-sided as those which all existences have undergone, or are undergoing, is such as to make a complete and deductive interpretation almost hopeless. So to grasp the total process of redistribution of matter and motion as to see simultaneously its several necessary results in their actual interdependence is scarcely possible. There is, however, a mode of rendering the process as a whole tolerably comprehensible. Though the genesis of the rearrangement of every evolving aggregate is

in itself one, it presents to our intelligence" (163-164). When Annie repudiates the passage as "nonsense," John claims that this is philosophy "in the simplest and most lucid form." His failure to understand either the deconstructive implications of the emphasis on transformation and interdependence or the similarity between the philosophical passage and Julius' tales would seem clumsily ironic were it not for the fact that Chesnutt's ostensibly "literate" Euro-American readership shared the blindness. In addition, Annie's impatience with the philosophical discourse, contrasted with her eager but simplistic acceptance of Julius's oral versions, suggests intriguing approaches to the problem of audience which effects both Afro-American writers and Euro-American theorists.

"Baxter's *Procrustes*," the last story Chesnutt published prior to the literary silence of his last twenty seven years, reflects his growing despair over the absence of an audience sensitive to his concerns. Not coincidentally, the story provides clear evidence that, even as he wrote the "conventional" novels (*The House Behind the Cedars, The Marrow of Tradition, The Colonel's Dream*) which have veiled the complexity of the works which frame them, Chesnutt continued to develop his awareness of concerns which have entered the mainstream of Euro-American literary discourse only with the emergence of the deconstructionist movement. To a large extent, the issues raised in "Baxter's *Procrustes*" are those described in Culler's chapter on the "Critical Consequences" of deconstruction. Culler catalogs four levels on which deconstruction has effected literary criticism, the "first and most important [of which] is deconstruction's impact upon a series of critical concepts, including the concept of literature itself" (180). Among the specific results of deconstruction he lists the following propositions. Deconstruction focuses attention on 1) the importance and problematic nature of figures, encouraging readings of "literary works as implicit rhetorical treatises, which conduct in figurative terms an argument about the literal and the figural" (185); 2) "intertextuality," the "relations between one representation and another rather than between a textual imitation and a nontextual original" (187); 3) the gap between signifier and signified, leading to the conclusion that there "are no final meanings that arrest the movement of signification" (188); 4) the *parergon*, the "problem of the frame—of the distinction between inside and outside and of the structure of the border" (193); and 5) the problematic nature of self-reflexivity, which implies "the inability of any discourse to account for itself and the failure of performative and constative or doing and being to coincide" (201).

"Baxter's *Procrustes*," a parody of a literary club tricked into publishing and giving glowing reviews to a book which contains no words whatsoever, reads from a contemporary perspective as a treatise on the deconstructive issues Culler identifies. The "figural" descriptions of the reviewers, including the narrator, entirely supercede the book's "literal" contents, underlining the problematic relationship between signifiers and signified. The text's emphasis on the value of "uncut copies" of the book, ostensibly a printing of a poem parts of which Baxter has presented orally, draws attention to the problem of intertextuality. In Chesnutt's configuration, written copy and verbal "original" assume significance only intertextually, as they relate to one another; the probability that no "original" of Baxter's *Procrustes* exists renders the concept of "final meanings that arrest the movement of signification" absurd. Even the critical attempts to construct a final meaning are presented in terms of intertextuality. Responding to the comments of a fellow critic, the narrator observes: "I had a vague recollection of having read something like this somewhere, but so much has been written that one can scarcely discuss any subject of importance without unconsciously borrowing, now and then, the thoughts or the language of others" (419). Especially in regard to a "text" consisting entirely of absence, the most promising field of play for original critical thought, no definitive interpretation is possible. At his most insightful, the narrator half-recognizes the distance between his figuration and the actual text, writing that he "could see the cover through the wrapper of my sealed copy" (420). Chesnutt seems explicitly aware that this deconstruction of critical/philosophical certainties implies a parallel deconstruction of the idea of the unified transcendent subject. The interrelationship between psychological and linguistic realities assumes a foreground position when the narrator claims that Baxter "has written himself into the poem. By knowing Baxter we are able to appreciate the book, and after having read the book we feel that we are so much the more intimately acquainted with Baxter—the real Baxter" (418). Like all "subjects" of deconstructive thought, Baxter's significance can be perceived only through recognition of his absence.

The most interesting aspects of "Baxter's *Procrustes*," however, involve framing and self-reflexivity. Tracing the concept of the *parergon*—the "supplement" or "frame" of the aesthetic work—to its ill/logical extreme, Chesnutt again anticipates the deconstructive perception summarized by Culler as follows: "The supplement is essential. Anything that is properly framed...becomes an art object; but if framing is what creates the aesthetic object, this does not make the

frame a determinable entity whose qualities could be isolated" (197). "Baxter's *Procrustes*" foregrounds this issue; frame and object simultaneously give one another significance—a significance derived purely from the traces each leaves in the other's field of absence—and deconstruct the hierarchical relationship between "ground" and "figure." The binding, which is the sole concern of the narrator's "review" is decorated with the fool's cap and bells, in effect becoming the "work" which derives its meaning from the *parergonal* absence of the empty pages. The narrator's description of the form of the words on the page in Baxter's *Procrustes*, based entirely on intertextual hearsay, articulates both his blindness and his insight: "The text is a beautiful, slender stream, meandering gracefully through a wide meadow of margin" (419). This recognition in turn suggests an awareness of context as frame. Extending the concern with the audience introduced in *The Conjure Woman*, "Baxter's *Procrustes*" presents a model of a literary discourse in which cultural frame and literary text cannot be clearly distinguished.

Published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, this openly self-reflexive text comments on itself and its audience, anticipating the deconstructive concern with the way "Texts thematize, with varying degrees of explicitness, interpretive operations and their consequences and thus represent in advance the dramas that will give life to the tradition of their interpretation" (Culler 214-215). Sharing a title with an empty book reviewed by fools who drive the author out of their community while they continue to profit from his production—a "sealed copy" of Baxter's *Procrustes* is sold for a record price at a club auction after Baxter's expulsion—Chesnutt's "Baxter's *Procrustes*" anticipates its own "misreadings." Interestingly, it also anticipates future "positive" readings in the club president's suggestion that Baxter "was wiser than we knew, or than he perhaps appreciated" (421). The retrospective appreciation of Baxter's "masterpiece" (420), however, relates solely to its economic value. Suspended in a context in which Uncle Julius' original auditors, Chesnutt's contemporary readers, and, perhaps, even his future (deconstructionist) critics share an inability to perceive the true values of an Afro-American text, (")Baxter's *Procrustes*(") seems acutely aware that its self-reflexivity does not transcend the gap between signifier and signified, attain closure or imply self-possession. In this recognition, as in so much else, Chesnutt seems much more proto-deconstructionist than the marginal Plantation Tradition figure he has traditionally been seen to be.

To remark Chesnutt's engagement with deconstructive concerns does not imply his ability to resolve their more disturbing

implications. Confronting his marginalization and the failure of his audience to respond to anything other than the surface of his texts, Chesnutt fell into a literary silence like that of another pre-modernist American deconstructionist Herman Melville, or those of the women writers Tillie Olsen discusses in her profoundly moving essay on "Silences." Olsen catalogs a number of professional circumstances which drive marginal writers into giving up their public voices. Among the most powerful forces are "devaluation" ("books of great worth suffer the death of being unknown, or at best a peculiar eclipsing," 40); "critical attitudes" ("the injurious reacting to a book, not for its quality or content, but on the basis of its having been written by a woman [or black]," 40); and, perhaps most important, the "climate in literary circles for those who move in them" ("Writers know the importance of being taken seriously, with respect for one's vision and integrity; of comradeship with other writers; of being dealt with as a writer on the basis of one's work and not for other reasons," 41). Chesnutt clearly confronted each of these problems without finding an adequate solution.

This breakdown (or absence) of contact between artist and audience parallels a similar situation, also leading to withdrawal from engagement with the context, which some observer/participants, myself among them, see as a major problem of contemporary theoretical discourse. Critics whose insights would seem to possess profound social significance find themselves in the situation of John reading to Annie; the form of their discourse and lack of contextual awareness alienate their audience and, all too frequently, the critics respond by retreating into a contemptuous solipsism which guarantees that the subversive implications of their work will not have substantial effect on the context. One particularly unfortunate manifestation of this pattern has been the almost unchallenged alienation of Euro- and Afro-American discourse, an alienation addressed but not yet contextualized, by a small group of Afro-American (Stepto, Gates) and feminist theorists (Johnson, Rich). Still, further work towards a context which allows, to use Culler's phrase, "these discourses to communicate with one another," offers intriguing possibilities for avoiding the nihilistic impasse and tapping the political potential of deconstructive thought. To begin, deconstruction possesses the potential for substantially alleviating the conditions which forced Chesnutt—and a long line of successors including Hurston, Wright, Baldwin, and William Melvin Kelley—into exile. By focusing attention on the margin and articulating the recurring concerns of the folk-based Afro-American tradition in a vocabulary which can be recognized by the educated Euro-

American readership which continues to comprise the majority of the literary audience, deconstruction at least theoretically could help create an audience sensitive to the actual complexities of Afro-American expression. At present, this potential remains unrealized, in large part because the literary community in which deconstruction has developed continues to exercise its social privilege in a manner which suggests a continued belief, clearly inconsistent with its articulated perceptions, that its own cultural tradition serves as the center of serious literary discourse.

Precisely because Afro-American culture continues to be excluded from, or marginalized in, Euro-American discourse, writers working in the wake of Chesnutt offer a great deal of potential insight into the blindness of the Euro-American theoretical discourse (which most certainly offers an analogous set of insights in return). A passage from Derrida's *De la grammatologie* quoted in Culler's chapter on "Writing and Logocentrism" provides suggestive evidence of both the actuality and the implications of the Euro-American exclusion of Afro-American expression. Referring to the privileging of speech found in numerous European discussions of the nature of writing, Derrida writes: "The system of 'hearing/understanding-oneself-speak' through the phonic substance—which *presents itself* as a non-exterior, non-worldly and therefore non-empirical or non-contingent signifier—has necessarily dominated the history of the world during an entire epoch, and has even produced the idea of the world, the idea of world-origin, arising from the difference between the worldly and the non-worldly, the outside and the inside, ideality and non-ideality, universal and non-universal, transcendental and empirical" (107). Asserting that a particular European philosophical discourse "necessarily" dominates the "history of the world," Derrida excludes a wide range of cultural traditions based on relational conceptions of identity which treat significance as derived from process. Contrasting with the beliefs in individual subjectivity and transcendental signification characteristic of the system Derrida deconstructs, many African-based discourses (while no doubt subject to analogous deconstructions) suggest approaches to impasses in thought and action which, at the very least, should be of interest to those members of the deconstructionist movement concerned with the practical impact of their perceptions. Specifically, the conception of performance embedded in Afro-American aesthetics (Jones, Sidran, Scheub), particularly as articulated in music and verbal signifying, suggests that the feeling of alienation characteristic of many deconstructionist texts is not a necessary product of the recognition that speech does not create a "non-exterior, non-worldly and therefore non-

empirical or non-contingent signifier." From the perspective of the excluded tradition which uses "call-and-response," the performative dynamic in which the meaning of any signification derives from the interaction of individual and community in relation to a specific set of social circumstances, the inadequacy of the Euro-American system which Derrida deconstructs seems obvious. More important than the parallel perception as such is the fact that Afro-American writers, experiencing the "double consciousness" which makes it impossible for them to exclude the Euro-American tradition from their expression even if they so desire, have been exploring the practical implications of the intersection of modes of thought for nearly a century. Opening theoretical discourse to consideration of complex Afro-modernist texts such as Melvin Tolson's *Harlem Gallery*, Langston Hughes' "Montage of a Dream Deferred," and Hurston's *Moses Man of the Mountain* might substantially alter the "feel" if not the conceptual underpinnings of contemporary theoretical discourse.

Perhaps the most important result of such consideration, derived from the origins of the Afro-American concern with deconstruction in both the relational conception of signification characteristic of the African continuum and the political circumstances of slavery and continuing oppression (based on the continuing dominance of the binary oppositions of American racial thought), would be to caution against 1)a relapse into the solipsistic withdrawal available primarily to those capable of exercising social privilege and 2) the separation of deconstructionist discourse from engagement with the institutional contexts in which it exists. Despite the prevalence of such separation in American academic discourse, it is not in fact inherent in deconstruction, a point made by both Eagleton and Culler. Attributing such separation to Anglo-American academicians (a.k.a. the demons of Yale), Eagleton stresses that "Derrida is clearly out to do more than develop new techniques of reading: deconstruction is for him an ultimately *political* practice, an attempt to dismantle the logic by which a particular system of thought, and behind that a whole system of political structures and social institutions, maintains its force" (148). Similarly, Culler emphasizes that "inversions of hierarchical oppositions expose to debate the institutional arrangements that rely on the hierarchies and thus open possibilities of change" (179). Acutely aware of the ways in which even his sympathetic readers, and I suspect that would include many of the critics (I would not except myself) working toward an opening of discourses, continued to reenact the hierarchical minstrel show of the plantation tradition, Charles Chesnutt sensed this significance nearly a century ago. Like the guys at the

garage—and, I suspect, the "girls" at the grocery—, he knew that the man's mouth is cut cross ways and that the cross cuts a figure flattering to the man. Now we can begin to figure out where the meanings lie.

OF TIME AND THE RIVER: CRITICS AND REVIEWERS

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Thomas Wolfe kept his readers waiting more than five years after *Look Homeward, Angel* for his second novel, and even at that *Of Time and the River* was published in 1935 only after a great deal of editorial and authorial anxiety. Because of the attention given to the first book, and its popularity, *Of Time and the River* was heavily publicized by Scribner's and was widely reviewed. Carol Johnston has skilfully analyzed the publicity from Scribner's, which marketed the author, as great American novelist, as much as it did the book; and she has studied the text and subtext of Bernard DeVoto's incisive critique of Wolfe's novel in a 1936 article reviewing *The Story of a Novel.*[1] The consensus on the book's reception has been that while generally positive it was dominated by reviews—favorable and unfavorable—critical of Wolfe's undisciplined romantic overwriting and faulty sense of form.[2] Significantly, however, the known reviews come almost entirely from New York newspapers, national journals generally centered in New York, or Wolfe's home state of North Carolina. I have tried to unearth as many unlisted reviews of the novel as possible, particularly in daily papers around the country, and to learn whether the overall critical reaction to *Of Time and the River* is indeed accurately reflected in the set of reviews heretofore studied. I have located thirty-three such "new" reviews, increasing by seventy-five per cent the data base for the project. The evidence indicates that reviewers outside New York (and perhaps North Carolina) were less ready to criticize Wolfe's shortcomings, less restrained in praising his virtues, and more inclined to claim him as "a" or "the" great American novelist.

In the checklist below each review is marked, to account for tone as well as specific criticisms, on a scale from favorable to unfavorable (F, F-, M, U+, U). There was roughly a 3:1 ratio of favorable to mixed or negative reviews in the South, Midwest, and West combined. Among reviewers in the Northeast and in national magazines and journals combined, there was a ratio of about 3:2 on the favorable side. Generally the reviews in national journals were more sophisticated and incisive, and they do tend to be "mixed" —praising characterizations and lyrical passages but, like DeVoto's article, highlighting the need for cutting, for restraint, and for moderation of purple prose, and citing problems in the author's handling of his young protagonist. At the same time Wolfe's fiction did strike the emotional chords of middle

America's book reviewers, who in the Depression years were seeking a romantic affirmation of the American Experience, and often connected Wolfe with Whitman.

Perhaps that is why there were so few outright negative articles. Of course, book reviews tend to be positive; that is, if a book is terribly bad, or negligible, it may well be left off the review page. A few standard review sections did ignore *Of Time and the River*, probably from its intimidating length as much as from negative perceptions. I have found only eight clearly negative reviews. Two—by Sean O'Faolain and Peter Quennell—came from Britain; two came from Wolfe's home state, where beginning with *Look Homeward, Angel* he inspired both pride and outrage; two—by Clifton Fadiman and Florence Codman—were in national magazines and did speak well of Wolfe's talent and potential; and two were anonymous. The "mixed" reviews included four anonymous items; a New York review by Franklin P. Adams; and reviews in the following journals: *Saturday Review of Literature* (Henry Seidel Canby), *New Outlook* (Robert Cantwell), *New Republic* (Malcolm Cowley), *Atlantic Monthly* (Paul Hoffman), *North American Review* (John Slocum), *American Review* (Robert Penn Warren), *Virginia Quarterly Review* (Howard Mumford Jones), *Yale Review* (Helen MacAfee), and *Newsweek*. In many ways their consensus reflects judgments of the novel today. Warren and Jones emphasized the book's faulty structure, Cowley and Canby the cases of overwriting and purple prose, Slocum and Hoffman the author's failure to handle his main character well; but all also praised supporting characterizations, the lyrical quality of many sections, and the remarkable descriptive passages. These negative and mixed reviews total twenty-two. Next to them can be placed some fifty-seven positive reviews, about thirty-five of them strongly favorable. These do include, by the way, eleven from newspapers in the New York City area, as well as articles from Chicago, Milwaukee, Omaha, Detroit, Washington, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, and other towns around the country. Below is an annotated list of known reviews. Future studies of the broad response to Wolfe's posthumous books may indicate whether the romantic attraction to this bardic novelist of the Depression years continued, for the "artist tragically dead while still in his youth," in the time of anxiety marked by the start of World War II.[3]

NOTES

[1]Carol Johnston, "The Critical Reception of *Of Time and the River*," *Thomas Wolfe Newsletter*, 11 (1987): 45-54.

[2]For example, see David Herbert Donald, *Look Homeward: A Life of Thomas Wolfe* (Boston, 1987), pp. 314-317; Richard S. Kennedy, *The Window of Memory: The Literary Career of Thomas Wolfe* (Chapel Hill, 1962), pp. 273-274; and Elizabeth Nowell , *Thomas Wolfe: A Biography* (Garden City, 1960), pp. 256-262. Kennedy says that it "was the literary event of 1935." Wolfe "was swept into an important position in American literature." The fullest source for reviews is Paschal Reeves, *Thomas Wolfe: The Critical Reception* (New York, 1974). Also to be consulted are John S. Phillipson, *Thomas Wolfe: A Reference Guide* (Boston, 1977); and Elmer D. Johnson, *Thomas Wolfe: A Checklist* (Kent, Ohio, 1970).

[3]In the list below an asterisk (*) designates a review I have not found listed previously. The item designated with (PR) is listed by Reeves, but not yet read by me.

Reviews of *Of Time and the River*

A., R. "Confused Traveler." *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 6 April 1935, p. 11. M He "writes beautiful English....He satirizes superbly." The best sections are those with "Abe Jones and the Pierce family and Robert Weaver." No one "will ever forget "Uncle Bascom or the Countess." The Gant family parts are "overwritten " and the "utterly unnecessary title" is not clarified by "page after page of harping on those two nouns."*

Adams, Franklin P. "The Conning Tower." *New York Herald Tribune*, 9 March 1935, p. 11. M He "could do better if he would discipline himself to write less repetitiously and not be so carried away, as he seemeth to be, by the sound of his voice....But Lord! what a colossal book."

Ames, Richard Sheridan. "Wolfe, Wolfe!" *American Spectator*, 3 (January 1935), 5-6. A pre-publication praise of Wolfe as a writer not packaged by the usual critical schools, perhaps "the real thing, at last."

Anon. "Wolfe's New Book." *Asheville Times*, 12 March 1935, p. 4. A favorable editorial that says in "the judgment of competent reviewers...Thomas Wolfe in this book now takes his sure place among the great writers."

Anon. Review. *Booklist*, 31 (April 1935), 268. U "The introspection, the lack of plot, and the chaotic profusion of words make it difficult reading and limit its appeal."

Anon. "Thomas Wolfe's New Novel Proclaims His Ambitious Scheme to Interpret Every American Experience of Life." *Dallas Morning News*, 17 March 1935, Sec. 3, p. 10. F He "has the soul of a poet," and although at times "the lyric impulse of the novelist-poet is kept in a sort of subordination to the narrative purpose," then "the poet defies restraint and becomes the master of the page." (The review carries no by-line, but the page is edited by John H. McGinnis and Alice Kizer Bennett.)*

Anon. "Author of the Month." *Digest and Review*, July 1935. (PR)

Anon. "Wolfe's Vast Novel Puzzles." *Kansas City Star*, 9 March 1935, p.14. M "Some of the writing is superb. Some of it is so silly as to out-Stein the capricious Gertrude." Against a certain amount of "trivia one must cite the strange quality of universality the book has...How can one pigeonhole such a book?" (Associated Press review, dateline New York)

Anon. Review. *Literary Digest*, 16 March 1930, p. 30. F "If there is a certain lack of restraint, of decorum, of selectivity in his furious prose, there still is an aliveness which is peculiarly American." This is as "contemporaneously alive and unblushing as Walt Whitman in its proclamation of the poetry of America."

Anon. "Thomas Wolfe's 'Of Time and the River' a Large Novel Full to Brim With Life." *Milwaukee Journal*, 10 March 1935, Sec. 5, p. 3. F Although wordy and repetitious in places, "Wolfe is a writing fool. He writes with magnificent unrest, with a driving power few writers possess." To "read it is an experience which must be akin to that of hurtling through space." (Possibly by Floyd Van Vuren, editor of the page who commented briefly on the novel 24 March 1935, Sec. 5, p. 3.)*

Anon. "Books and Authors: A Masterpiece." *Newark Evening News*, 26 March 1935, p. 12. F It is "an undoubted masterpiece, sometimes rugged, sometimes repellent, sometimes wearisome, but so rich in noble qualities and in its burning quest for the truth of life, so plentiful in character and profound in reflection that it seems destined to take its place among the best that our literature has produced."*

Anon. "Pilgrimage: Gant Continues His Quest for Life's Answer." *Newsweek*, 16 March 1935, p. 40. M More "blue-penciling would have helped. Mr. Wolfe is prone to over-write in his descriptive rhapsodies. The last part is far less solid than the

first.... Most of the prose is as full of details as a patriotic poem by Walt Whitman and as sonorous as orchestral music."

Anon. "'Of Time and the River' Carries on Epic of America." *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 16 March 1935, p. 8A. F- "Parts of it are exquisitely and rhapsodically beautiful but...there are passages of tedious boredom and unintelligibility." There "are moments of such burning intensity that the reader is fairly carried away with the mastery of his pen...Much of the overpowering effectiveness of his style is predicated upon this tendency to overwrite and exaggerate the simple things in life...There is a bursting vitality about the book." (Probably by Adalyn Faris McKee, editor of the page.)*

Anon. Review. *Saturday Review* (London), 160 (17 August 1935), 56. F He "manages never to allow his readers' interest to flag."

Anon. "Unselective Bulk." *Springfield Republican*, 31 March 1935, p. 7e. U+ It does not fuse its huge "amount of heterogeneous material. It does not discriminate and select." It makes the "error of attempting to employ 'true experience' directly as the immediate basis of fiction, instead of indirectly and mediately, as the source rather of greater creative understanding."

Anon. "U. S. Voice." *Time*, 11 March 1935, p. 77. F- It "occasionally falters in execution, but...is written with a surer hand than the first."

Anon. Review. *Wisconsin Library* Bulletin, 31 (June 1935), 78. M The style runs "from utter lack of taste to heights of sheer beauty. A work of genius of sorts but not a novel to be recommended for unrestricted circulation."

Beck, Clyde. "Thomas Wolfe: Novelist Who Sees All, Tells All." *Detroit News*, 17 March 1935, Arts Sec., p. 17. F "It is so far out of the ordinary that it almost defies description...a Wagnerian music-drama without sound." It is "a vast and sprawling prose epic." He tells all. He "will lecture you about hats" and he "will also lecture you on literature." Is it "a great novel? Well, much as I have been taught about the canons of art; about economy of utterance and the deadly sin of repetition—I am afraid it is."*

Bellamann, Henry. "The Literary Highway." *Charlotte Observer*, 10 March 1935, Sec. 3, p. 8. U He is "the most undisciplined, the wildest and most unfocused talent." The "book is a huge welter of impressions, rages, disgusts..., and the effect of the whole is irritating and confusing. The writing itself is a strange jumble of good and bad." He reports conversations with "a miracle of accuracy," but follows with "over-written, lurid, purple-patchy" rhapsodies. His "mannerisms are disconcerting and disagreeable"

(using the same word twenty times on a page, an outpouring of adjectives). He "understands amazingly little of what he has seen." A follow-up article appeared on 17 March 1935, Sec. 3, p. 10: "One admires the sincerity," but "one laments the inadequate result." (Although Bellamann regularly wrote reviews for the *Observer*, these items carried a dateline of New York.)*

Bourne, William. "An Epic of Passion and Hunger." *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 14 April 1935, Magazine, pp. 10-11. F His goal "is to be known as America's greatest novelist, and with each book he publishes he appears to take gigantic strides toward its realization....His book is at times disjointed and he wanders off on tangents, but he has done a great job of reporting his own life." Few "of his vividly described scenes have not passed before his eyes. But he has made them epic." (An adjacent column by Frank S. Hopkins comments on Bourne, who knew Wolfe as a boy in Asheville.)*

Bowerman, Sarah. "Thomas Wolfe's Big Novel." *Washington Sunday Star*, 17 March 1935, Part 4, p. 4. F This "shows a great advance in maturity over his earlier novel." His "work is strong meat. His attack on life is fierce, bitter, denunciatory. He finds in it so much that is obscene, but also much of magic." His "eating scenes rival those of Dickens."*

Brickell , Herschel. "Books on Our Table." *New York Post*, 8 March 1935, p. 7. F It is "a rare and memorable experience. Maybe it's genius; anyway, it's something strange and powerful we stand in the presence of in this book." It is "the saga of a lusty youth burning with a love of life."

Bridgers, Emily. "The Fulfillment of Thomas Wolfe." *Raleigh News and Observer*, 17 March 1935, p. 5. F It is "an amazing and a beautiful book,...so abundant in life, so varied in incident and mood....With his amazing, voracious, and magnificent use of words," he "has put down on paper more of the capacity for living than most men experience in a lifetime."*

Butcher, Fanny. "Thomas Wolfe Receives More Lavish Praise." *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 3 April 1935, p. 14. F Wolfe is "an undeniable American genius....There is something epically American" about this book, even though it is also akin to the great "lusty novel of English literature."*

Calverton, V. F. "Thomas Wolfe and the Great American Novel." *Modern Monthly*, 9 (June 1935), 249-50. F- At his best he is "of the highest order that American literature has produced, and, like Hemingway, it is only in terms of Melville, Whitman, and Poe

that he can be compared." As "a descriptive genius" he surpasses Melville and is close to Conrad. The work does fail "to get outside of itself, outside of the personal into the plane of the impersonal , where the personal lives more as an objective than as a subjective force." Wolfe must work "toward that end" to "make his American saga...into the greatest fiction America has produced." There is some "over-writing" but he can write powerfully.

Canby, Henry Seidel . "The River of Youth." *Saturday Review of Literature,* 11 (9 March 1935), 529-30. M Wolfe's concern is the "curse of impotence" in America, "an impotence of expression." This is "one of the most American books of our time." This is "better organized, more poetical" and "sharply realistic" than his first book. It is "a picaresque novel" of the poet "seeking a spiritual home." But Wolfe "cannot control the theme," and his method gets lost between fiction and fact. It is "an artistic failure" yet an "important book."

Cantwell, Robert. Review. *New Outlook,* April 1935, p. 10. M It is "a fine book" and "suggests the emergence of a great talent; it has power, life, beauty...but it is also repetitious, overwritten, confused, chaotic, and downright bad." Parts of the book "are rich and lyric," and the "accuracy of his observation" in parts is impressive. In a follow-up article (May 1935, p. 10), Cantwell said that in spite of "its weakness and occasional tiresome bombast," it is "the most original" of the new Southern novels.

Catton, Bruce. "It's Very Long—But It's Very Good, Too." *Durham Sun,* 25 March 1935, p. 4A. F- "All things considered, it is a magnificent book—one of the best American novels of our generation, perhaps—but it seems to me that it would be much better if Mr. Wolfe had continued to cut it in half." It has "a great quantity of splendid prose, it voices a robust Americanism...and it presents some scenes and characters that are quite unforgettable."*

Chamberlain, John. "Books of the Times." *New York Times,* 8 March 1935, p. 19; and 12 March 1935, p. 19. F- It is "the most satisfying reading that has come this way in a long time," but mostly because of its secondary characters and scenes. "The character of Eugene...is constantly letting the reader down," for Wolfe lacks "the clarity of vision" and distance he needs for his main character. If he can mature as Proust and Joyce did, "he will be America's greatest novelist." (Chamberlain also reviewed the novel for *Current History,* April 1935, p. iii.)

Clarke, Eleanor. Review. *Common Sense,* May 1935, p. 27. F- It lifts "out of the bog of formula...the pride and love and nostalgia

of millions of Americans." The hero is "valuable for his gigantic energy and humor" but "often maudlin." There are "many overeloquent passages," but "the sprawling of this book is that of America, and Eugene's hunger includes the longing of Americans."

Codman, Florence. "The Name is Sound and Smoke." *Nation,* 140 (27 March 1935), 365-66. U+ "He is lost in a murky film, in a tangled gossamer of his own emotions. His feelings have got the better of him" and "destroy the truth of his vision." He needs more balance between intellect and feelings, yet grounded "in this confusion is an admirable and sympathetic talent....No more vitalizing talent has appeared in America this century."

Colum, Mary M. Review. *Forum,* 93 (April 1935), 218-19. F It is "one of the best books ever produced in America...and the most successful attempt since Joyce and Proust to instill new blood and life into that withered literary form, the novel." There is "nothing of that empty realism and that craze for recording stereotyped physical facts which...did so much to demote the novel."

Cowley, Malcolm. "The Forty Days of Thomas Wolfe." *New Republic*, 82 (20 March 1935), 163-64. M The best passages are those about Bascom Pentland, the Harvard drama class, Oswald Ten Eyck, the death of Gant, the disintegration of Starwick. At his best Wolfe "is the only contemporary American writer who can be mentioned in the same breath with Dickens and Dostoevsky." But "the bad passages are about as numerous and as extensive as the good ones." When Wolfe writes about Eugene, "he almost always overwrites." Although Eugene has "warmly human traits, they scarcely add up into a character." The book would be better "if the author had spoken in the first person from beginning to end." He needs "some other theme" and hero to write a truly great novel. A response to this review came as a letter by William Howard, "Praise for Thomas Wolfe," 82 (1 May 1935), 343.

Cronin, A. J. "The Book of the Day: A Book in Which a Man Reveals His Soul and Writes With His Soul." *New York Sun,* 11 March 1935, p. 22. F This is "a great long novel, but the novel might have been greater still had it been less long." There is much "waste tissue." He has an "effective and individual sense of place." This is "a true spiritual experience . surging with the aspiration of a man who lives...with courage and fears."

Currie, George. "Passed in Review." *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 11 March 1935, p. 18. F He is the "prose minstrel among novelists." It is "a gorgeous literary experience."*

Daniel, Frank "Of Time and the River." *Atlanta Journal* , 31 March 1935, Magazine, p. 12. F- It is "an unrestrained, bewildering, overpowering book, but it is the unedited version of a book which would almost certainly be a greater, more forceful and much more readable one." His "method is exhausting, but it certainly is not boring." His eloquence "is sweeping and, eventually, fascinating."*

Dewey, Edward Hooker. "The Storm and Stress Period." *Survey Graphic,* 24 (May 1935), 255. F- "The book has exuberance, grandeur, and excess," but would benefit from "judicious pruning." He writes "with heart and mind and sinew, and nothing can destroy his power."*

F., H. C. "Power and Beauty in Wolfe's Book." *Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel,* 24 March 1935, p. 7B. F "With eloquence, persistence, intensity of tone and unique power of repetition," he "pounds into the reader's mind the thoughts of loneliness, of wandering, of the relentless moving of the hands of time. With the deft phrase and the exact, though oft repeated word, he makes men and women spring" to life.*

Fadiman, Clifton. "Thomas Wolfe." *New Yorker,* 9 March 1935, pp. 68-70. U+ "The actual material is familiar to the point of banality; it is what the author does to it that is important." At times the reader is "bludgeoned into sharing" a conviction that the experiences are novel. Even if not a master of language he is eloquent, his style "wondrous, Elizabethan. At its worst it is hypertheroid and afflicted with elephantiasis." The book needs "a blue pencil" especially on characterizations. His people "are either giants or piddlers, the confusing thing being that he works with the same enthusiasm on both." With admiration for Wolfe, "I still cannot swallow gluttons of eternity" or believe in Eugene. Its ideas "are confused and sparse." He has brilliant gifts but "too much cosmos" in his ego.

Gannett, Lewis. "Books and Things." *New York Herald Tribune,* 8 March 1935, p. 17. F He is "almost the wildest and most copious of contemporary writers...a mighty, furious Paul Bunyan, with the passionate love of America of a Walt Whitman and the enraged adolescent idealism of a Shelley."

Glicksberg, Charles I. "Thomas Wolfe." *Canadian Forum,* (January 1936), 24-25. F It is "imbued with an extraordinary vitality and it is instinct with lyricism and splendor." His "faculty of vision, this Faustian metaphysical longing," makes the book "a vast and fearful allegory of the modern soul." He does need to learn restraint.

Govan, Gilbert E. "Thomas Wolfe Fulfills the Promise of 'Look Homeward, Angel,' in an Even Greater Novel, 'Of Time and the River.'" *Chattanooga Times,* 17 March 1935, Magazine, p. 15. F "It is a grand book....It is rich in imagination and faithful in its realism. The reader" participates "in an emotional experience far beyond the ordinary." It has "every quality that the first book had, combined with a sureness of touch that it lacked."*

Grimes, George. "Thomas Wolfe Reveals Anew His Great Welter of Power as a Writer." *Omaha Sunday World-Herald,* 10 March 1935, p. 7E. F It is "a continuously moving tale" with "unforgettable scenes....It is a baffling book, but one powerfully gripping."*

H., H. H. "Books on Review." *Durham Sunday Herald-Sun* 17 March 1935, Part 1, p. 5. F "His prose is rich, ripe, distilled, full of meaning and poignancy....This is a book of profound enchantment, power that rings with beauty, an epic of man's intense study in the manswarm."*

Hall, Theodore. "No End of Books." *Washington Post,* 8 March 1935, p. 9; and "Spring Fiction Proves of Varied Hue," 24 March 1935, p. 8B. F There is "an immense wealth of characters" and "hugely live and vigorous dramatic scenes" and a "heart-deep nostalgia for 'the grand and casual landscape of America.'" It is better than his first book. "Not one writer now exceeds Mr. Wolfe in his tremendous grasp and power."*

Hansen, Harry. "The First Reader." *New York World Telegram,* 8 March 1935, p.27. F It "marks the flowering of a writer who may help to bring the terse, telegraphic style to an end." It has "some of the finest prose of our time." Judged "as a soliloquy on life," it is "one of the most eloquent, most thoughtfully and verbally satisfying novels of our time." He "casts a spell over the reader."

Harkins, Herschel S. "Tom Wolfe's Book." *Asheville Citizen-Times,* 2 June 1935, p. 3B. F "It is the greatest thing I have ever read." He "writes powerfully," and the plot is "the plot of existence and eternity." (This is an unreservedly favorable review by a student, from Asheville, at Davidson College.)

Hart, Philomena. "The Angel of the Homeward Look: Of Time and the River." *Providence Sunday Journal,* 10 March 1935, Sec. 6, p. 4. F It is "so vital an experience to the reader that its publication is surely one of the great literary moments of our time." It is "irresistible, overwhelming and galvanic."*

Hoffman, Paul. "The Man of the Month: Thomas Wolfe." *Atlantic Monthly,* August 1935, p. 6. M In the lyrical sections much "is beautiful,...full-throated, sonorous, and vital; and much...is

inferior, hyperbolic and adolescent. And so it is an uneven book, and in its excessive length badly proportioned." His device "of telling his story in the third person" does not work well. Something is "lacking in that confused and heightened figure." The distortions were less bothersome in the first novel.

Hollis, E. E. "The Fury of Living." *Salt Lake Tribune*, 14 April 1935, Magazine, p. 5. F- It is "a gigantic, formless, torrential book, a rushing spate of words that overflows the confines of a novel. It expresses an enormous power, enormous vitality, and is a force so uncontrolled that the novel loses all sense of direction or harmony or continuity. "It is "often repetitious,...but one feels through it all a dynamic energy."*

Hosking, James. "Larger than Life." *Detroit Free Press*, 10 March 1935, Part 3, p. 14. F His "unique style...raises his characters above the common denominator. With this prose that never talks but always shouts or stammers, there results not realism but contemporary life cast in a larger mold....There is a depth, a sweep and an overpowering richness in this book that catches up...the million aspects of contemporary America."*

Jack, Peter Monro. "Mr. Wolfe's Pilgrim Progresses." *New York Times Book Review*, 10 March 1935, pp. 1, 14. F- Its "tremendous capacity for living and writing lifts" it "into the class of great books." He has "the stamina to produce a magnificent epic." The North Carolina parts and the train parts are best. Characters at Harvard or in New York are more often caricatures.

Jones, Howard Mumford. "Social Notes on the South." *Virginia Quarterly Review*, 31 (July 1935), 455-56. M Wolfe, for all "his virtues of strength, vividness, and sympathy, is utterly lacking in a sense of structure." This "might be described as a Gargantuan rhapsody interrupted from time to time by scenes from a novel." These scenes "are for the most part of remarkable power and insight." He "surpasses most living writers in the sheer power to see." He "has not yet learned repose, as Tolstoy, whom he resembles, learned repose."

Jones, Webster A. "Thomas Wolfe and John Knittel Wrote Brilliant Long Novels." *Portland Sunday Oregonian*, 31 March 1935, Magazine, p. 14. F "Much of the writing is superb. Some of the pages are drivel. Altogether it is a powerful story."

Jordan-Smith, Paul. "Thomas Wolfe's New Novel Part of a Great Series." *Los Angeles Times*, 17 March 1935, Part 2, p. 6. F He uses "realism and romance," but "everything is subjected to his purpose: the making of America's spiritual Odyssey....No man has

ever told the story of youth's tragi-comedy in such golden words; no man has understood it more profoundly....He has both thought and felt his way into the network of tender and terrible relationships. He is alive to both irony and pity." It is "a magnificent book."*

Kantor, Seymour. Review. *Washington Square Critic*, May 1935, pp. 15-16. F Here is "the most prodigious talent that America has yet produced." Yet his handling of Eugene is faulty, and at times there is too much trivia or excessive rhetoric.

L., S. "Man's Hunger." *Review of Reviews*, 91 (May 1935), 4. F "He writes of America with enthusiasm, with richness and breadth." This is a *"must"* book "for the coming summer," although "sometimes the reader yearns for a blue pencil."

Loveman, Amy. "Books of the Spring." *Saturday Review of Literature*, 11 (6 April 1935), 602, 612. F It has "magnificent stretches of writing, arresting passages of description, and the revelation of a gargantuan zest for life." In the same issue is Ann Preston Bridgers, "Thomas Wolfe: Legends of a Man's Hunger in His Youth," pp. 599, 609, a biographical and anecdotal essay on Wolfe.

MacAfee, Helen. Review. *Yale Review*, 24 (Summer 1935), vi, viii. M He "has plenty of force" but it is "still undirected." He has "a faulty conception of the best means to emphasis.... Expansion...becomes wearisome" with so little subtlety.

Maslin, Marsh. "Reading with the Bookworm." *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*, 23 March 1935, p. 6. F- "You will be dizzied, angered, bored, shocked, but you will not put it down." He "will remind you of Whitman...in his wild but more discriminating love of America."*

Milner, Rosamond. "'Knowest Thou the Land...?'" *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 21 April 1935, Sec. 3, p. 4. F- The "book will be more apt to live as great writing than as a great novel." It has "abundance of creative vitality" but "would be a better book for...less wearying repetitions of certain words and phrases." It needs pruning and there are "many very shallow stretches."*

Morgan, Marshall. "A Legend of Man's Hunger in His Youth." *Nashville Banner*, 17 March 1935, Magazine, p. 8. F "In this powerful and half-savage novel...Thomas Wolfe has attained full stature....Here is the power and sincerity of Dreiser, the male tenderness of Galsworthy, the merciless fury of Lewis, the sly humor of Cabell , the earth-love of Whitman....This intense lyrical quality is the outstanding characteristic."*

O'Faolain, Sean. "Fiction." *Spectator,* 155 (23 August 1935), 300. U It "is an extraordinary farrago of realistic descriptions, subjective musings, and implorations of the universe in a wild Whitmanesque bellowing." There is "little room to admire it except as an awful curiosity."

P., M. K. "The Genius of Thomas Wolfe." *Jacksonville Sunday Times-Union,* 24 March 1935, p. 10. F He "is worthy and capable of this gigantic undertaking." This work "magnificently points the way to splendor in American literature." *

Paterson, Isabel M. "Turns with a Bookworm." *New York Herald Tribune Books,* 24 February 1935, p. 18. F- He is "a lavish writer" who manages "to keep up the excitement" but with too many "superlatives" and characters "roaring, whining, stuttering and gasping." This is preferable "to the nullities of 'behavioristic' fiction."

Patterson, Alicia. "The Book of the Week." *New York Sunday News,* 10 March 1935, p. 68. F It is "a proud successor to 'Look Homeward, Angel,' which some consider the greatest novel of our time." There is "an appreciation of the power of the ties of blood....Parts of the book will amuse you. Parts you may find pretty grim." If "you have any feeling for American literature you must read it—carefully."*

Perry, Jennings. "A Colossal Book, Brevet of Genius." *Nashville Tennessean,* 17 March 1935, Magazine, p. 7. F "We know of no author who has been able to capture so much of the eternal parade of sensation." To Wolfe "the need to feel is a passion, to interpret a 'must.'" The impact of his prose "is solid, jarring." This "is meaty, purposeful and dynamic narration. It is writing imbued with vitality."*

Pinckard, H. R. "Thomas Wolfe Shows Genius and Prolixity." *Huntington Herald-Advertiser,* 31 March 1935, Sunday sup., p. 1. F- "With all its power, its fire, its human drama, its superb and virtually endless panorama of characters, it is still a heavy and sometimes labored document" that "is capable of boring you." It is "a novel you must read" and "one of the most important books of the year." There are "mental pyrotechnics the brilliance of which is not altogether visual."

Quennell, Peter. "New Novels." *New Statesman and Nation,* 10 (24 August 1935), 253. U+ It is a "vast, emphatic, violent yet curiously vacuous book."

Rascoe, Burton. "The Ecstasy, Fury, Pain and Beauty of Life: Thomas Wolfe Sings and Shouts in His Gargantuan New Novel." *New*

York Herald Tribune Books, 10 March 1935, pp. 1-2. F He has "a magnificent malady: it may be called gigantism of the soul." He is "lush and exuberant, word-drunk like an Elizabethan." Today "it is thrilling to contemplate and to read the teeming novels of Thomas Wolfe," so unlike other books being published. He writes at times "like an intoxicated Gargantua," at other times like a "virile and elephantine Proust."

Robinson, Joseph. "Of Time and the River: The Progress of Youth." *Savannah Morning News,* 31 March 1935, Sec. 2, p. 10. F His "linked rhapsodies" if at times "too long drawn out," do show the author "at his poetic best. Here he is Whitman Redevivus." His "passion for detail is not unlike that of Proust." He "seems an almost uninhibited writer" and "pays no heed to what were once the laws of decorum." There is a "more mature imagination and craftsmanship" than in the first novel. "There are characters that are Dickensian in their life-like qualities."*

Robinson, Ted. "In 'Of Time and the River' Thomas Wolfe Tries to Pen the Great American Novel." *Cleveland Plain Dealer,* 17 March 1935, Women's Sec., p. 15. F "I enjoyed this novel—all of it. The author's lyrical style, his passionate earnestness....There are strongly drawn characters" such as Bascom. The "only thing that may keep Thomas Wolfe out of the very first rank" is that his aims and techniques "are all too obvious."*

Russell, Phillips. "The Literary Lantern." *Durham Sunday Herald-Sun,* 17 March 1935, Part 1, p. 5. He "has constructed an American comedie humaine. It is not only Balzacian, but Hugoesque, in its inclusiveness and lack of selection." As before there "is the lumpy formlessness" and "a sackful of short stories...not always well mortared together." But he "writes largely and symphonically" on "the loneliness of the individual."

Scott, Evelyn. "Colossal Fragment." *Scribner's,* June 1935, pp. adv. 2, 4. F- He "is representative of our national individualistic bent at its faulty but often splendid best." His "real mission is to transcribe our national intoxication with vast dimensions in the language of his own spirit." The "sum of this turbulent writing...is an impression of young inexhaustible vitality." But reflective "without the mental discipline for illumining his own moments of blindness, he mingles platitude with poetry."

Selby, John. "'Of Time and the River' Contains Exactly 912 Pages." *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), 17 March 1935, Society Sec., p. 4. F- "Some of the writing is...superb. Some of it is so silly as to out-Stein the capricious Gertrude....Against such trivia one

must cite the strange quality of universality the book has." (A nationally syndicated review.)*

Slocum, John. Review. *North American Review*, 240 (June 1935), 175-77. M American criticism puts too much pressure "on the young artist to shout America," and Wolfe's prose suffers from this problem. He "shows a great mastery of conversation and an ability to delineate unforgettable characters in a few vivid strokes," but main characters "tend to become caricatures." Yet with his ability he may "go farther toward expressing romantic America than any novelist living today."

Starkey, Marion L. "Along the Course of Time and the River." *Boston Evening Transcript*, 9 March 1935, Book Sec., p. 1. F- It "is chiefly distinguished for its outpourings of poetic vision." He "is still too immature" in some ways. But he has a "truly marvelous poetic gift," an "unquenchable wonder at the miracle of living," and "honesty." He needs "restraint" and "discipline" and "wisdom." He remains "one of the most remarkable and promising phenomena in American literature...the unbroken colt of American letters."

Stone, Geoffrey. "In Praise of Fury." *Commonweal*, 22 (10 May 1935), 36-37. F- In "the end, it is magic that Mr. Wolfe offers; he would get in touch with some force at once limitless and personal." It is "a desperate pantheism and magic whose end is unbounded power....By the very confusion which his failure to select engenders, Mr. Wolfe reflects the often-noted confusion of our times," though the value of the result is more documentary than artistic.

Sugarman, Joe. "Thomas Wolfe Hungers On." *Carolina Magazine*, April 1935, pp. 22-24. F- The "fusion of the grotesque and the daring in incident and language is one of Wolfe's most skillful accomplishments." Its organization is striking, "despite its apparent formlessness," for it is based on patterns of "forward motion" and "bellows- like motion." Individual characters are not equal to those in the first book, but there are "groups which are genuinely artistic creations." Stylistically it is bold but at times excessive.

Terry, John S. "Calls Wolfe's Novel 'Book of America' and Work of Great Genius." *Charlotte Observer*, 17 March 1935, Sec. 3, p. 10. F "The grandeur, beauty, terror, and unuttered loneliness of America are portrayed with the master's touch." The reader "will realize what America is, as he can realize it from no other book....Like Dickens and Tolstoi, Wolfe has the power to reveal as

an individual every character he mentions. Wolfe's "method is more profound" than that of Faulkner, Cabell , and Hemingway.

Wade, John Donald. "Prodigal." *Southern Review*, 1 (July 1935), 192-98. F Despite his faults "he has the virtues of stupendous gusto and energy" and he is "proof of a man's ability, in our time in America, to write in the grand manner with sustained strength." There is some "downright bad rhetoric and there is a considerable amount of trite phraseology." Generally "the story is conveyed with subtlety as well as vigor...There is a sweeping command of language and vocabulary, and a majesty of style. There is a large and beautiful mysticism."

Warren, Robert Penn. "A Note on the Hamlet of Thomas Wolfe." *American Review*, 5 (May 1935), 191-208. M "The root of Mr. Wolfe's talent is his ability at portraiture." Eliza, old Gant, Ben, and Helen "are triumphs of poetic conception," though Bascom Pentland is "more static and anecdotal." The method "collapses...when applied to Starwick." Thus far he has produced "fine fragments" and "many sharp observations" but shows the limitations "of an attempt to exploit directly and naively the personal experience and the self-defined personality in art."

Williams, Sidney. "Thomas Wolfe and the Odyssey of Eugene Gant." *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 9 March 1935, p. 9. F- He "must disappoint those who expected of the book before us the refinement of minted gold. He still sees life in superlatives." It is "a loosely ordered and amazingly vivid tale.... When bogged in composition," he is like Cesar Franck, who would simply "play 'The Pilgrims' Chorus' with thunderous effect."*

Wilson, Elizabeth. Review. *Bluets* (Asheville), May 1935, pp. 31-32. F His "descriptive powers are little short of uncanny....His portrayal of character is vigorous and forceful." Plot "is subordinated to a long and brilliant series of studies taking up the various angles...of character." His "pen point of sharpest steel" is "dipped in the most vitriolic of acids."

THE EXISTENTIALIST ASPECTS OF PHILIP LARKIN'S POETRY

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Philip Larkin presents in his poetry incidents, moods and moments of everyday life and reveals the hopes, fears and disappointments of the contemporary English man in the suburbs. The ordinariness of subject matter and the traditional verse form in Larkin's poetry often leave the reader believing that his poems are very simple and easy to read. To some extent, this impression is true since most of his poems are short lyrics dealing with familiar experiences and his diction concrete and exact, free from the complicated allusions (frequently found in modernist poetry) to classic and mythological works. In most cases, however, Larkin's poems are deceptively simple, for, like an iceberg, Larkin's poems tend to hide their profound ideas under the surface. Beneath the ordinariness of the subject matter, one may find that Larkin is examining the various modes of existence of contemporary man and developing a philosophy of life. I find that the philosophy of life the poet examines and develops is that of existentialism. In the following pages I intend to explore the existentialist aspects of Larkin's poetry.

As a poet Larkin followed a consistent guiding principle for his literary creativity. Though few in number and small in range, Larkin's comments on his purpose of writing poetry and his conception of the nature of poetry shed much light on his guiding principle. In a brief statement of his views on poetry, Larkin said in 1955:

> I write poems to preserve things I have seen/thought/ felt...both for myself and for others, though I feel that my prime responsibility is to the experience itself, which I am trying to keep from oblivion for its own sake.[1]

Even though Larkin claimed that he had dashed off the statement "as raw material" for D. J. Enright to use in his introduction to the book *Poets of the 1950s* (RW 79), the poet's view on poetry in his later life seems to have changed little from what was there in the statement. In his interview with the *Observer* in 1979, Larkin stated that as a poet, "you want it [your poem] to be seen and read, you're trying to preserve something. Not for yourself, but for the people who haven't seen it or heard it or experienced it" (RW 52). The only change we may detect here is that Larkin now seems to center more on other people as his audience. His sense of responsibility "for the people who haven't seen

it or heard it or experienced" the "something" seems to have heightened over the quarter of a century. Such a change is also reflected in his poems. In his first collection of poems *The North Ship*,[2] the poet seems to be struggling sensitively to express some private and solitary experiences; the poems appear to have no specific audience and the poet seems more interested in himself and the particular incident, mood or moment of his life. In other words, he was trying to preserve the experience "for its own sake." Larkin's later volumes, however, have a much wider range of subject matter and greater technical accomplishments. More often than before Larkin blends his personal experiences with the larger social context. With care, sensitivity, and thoroughness in his observation of life, he is much more in touch with the concrete reality. His poems seem to address more to an audience rather than just himself, and the experience depicted in a poem appears no longer just "for its own sake." A mature poet, Larkin has a new ability to convince and to move the audience with his poetic substance and particular insights. The reader no longer sees the brooding persona and the general remarks as in *The North Ship*, but is frequently presented with concrete images that convey some general truth of life. Let's take "Ambulances" in *The Whitsun Weddings*[3] for an example. The incident described in the poem is the sight of an ambulance taking away an injured person, presumably a construction worker, from a street side, which is an ordinary scene on the "loud noons of cities" (WW 33). This is a commonplace experience for children, women and men in the urbanizing suburbs. What the poet sets out to preserve, however, is not the incident itself but the sudden realization of some truth of life. For the children and women here, the experience could mean a change of their views on life as they suddenly

> ... sense the solving emptiness
> That lies just under all we do,
> And for a second get it whole,
> So permanent and blank and true. (WW 33)

So when they sigh "poor soul," the people on the scene in fact "whisper at their own distress" (WW 33). By recording through his imagination the sense of emptiness underlying life, which the children and women perceive, the poet has preserved the "something" "for the people who haven't seen it or heard it or experienced it." As a poet, Larkin has preserved in his poetry many such experiences as emptiness, disappointment, boredom, fear, and death. Interestingly enough, what he

takes upon himself to do is exactly what the existentialists want to do. As Ernst Breisach points out:

> The existentialists have been demanding that the full immediacy of such experiences as anxiety, risk, boredom, despair, death and nothingness be preserved. Only then can they provide the jolt necessary to project man out of his unauthentic existence.[4]

As we know many of Larkin's poems are meant to give their readers an abrupt, unexpected shock that would enlighten them on the human condition in the modern world. So the correlation between Larkin's principle of artistic creativity and what the existentialists want to achieve through literature seems to be more than just coincidental.

Larkin's guiding principle of poetic creation bears another affinity to existentialist philosophy. In his elaboration of the pleasure principle in poetry, Larkin commented: "Poetry is emotional in nature and theatrical in operation, a skilled recreation of emotion in other people" (RW 80). With this conception of the nature of poetry, Larkin in many of his poems deals with the emotional life of man, that is, the changing feelings, moods, or affects that appear in the human mind. In "Nothing to Be Said" (WW 11), for example, he suggests that saying "Life is slow dying" and "Hours giving evidence/Or birth, advance/On death equally" to some people would provoke such intense emotions that it would leave "Nothing to be said." But he also notes that some people are not as sensitive as others and that saying the above to them "Means nothing." Most of Larkin's personae, however, are sensitive and emotional people, whose feelings of joy, regret, frustration, anguish, disappointment, loneliness and hopelessness may be touched right off by a photo album, old song books, a radio program, a visit to an old place, a building, or simply drinking alone by a fireplace. Such colloquial expressions as "Stuff your pension!" ("Toads," LD 32) and "Sod all" ("Send No Money," WW 43) may well indicate the emotional intensity in the mind of the persona. Larkin preserves the moments of intense feelings so that he may recreate in other people the same emotion which would bring about the awareness of a certain aspect of life. By emphasizing the emotional nature of poetry and dealing extensively with the emotional life of man, Larkin again stands on the ground of existentialist philosophy. For, as John Macquarrie observes, "one of the most brilliant and lasting contributions of existentialist philosophy is to be found in its treatment of...the emotional life of man".[5] As a poet Larkin understands very well the existentialist's claim

that it is through the emotional experiences "that we are involved in our world and can learn some things about it that are inaccessible to a merely objective beholding" (Macquarrie, pp. 17-18).

With what may be called an existentialist guiding principle of artistic creation, Larkin produced a poetry that treats many of the recurrent themes in existentialist literature. According to Macquarrie, "such topics as finitude, guilt, alienation, despair, death" are recurring existentialist themes (p. 17). To the existentialists, human existence in the world is a matter of contingency. Man's life is a finitude ending in death. During his life man constantly experiences such feelings as anguish, care, alienation, fear, frustration, and despair. If we examine Larkin's poems carefully, we may be astounded to find how many of the above themes are treated in them. First, many of these poems highlight contingency and finitude of human existence. Larkin seems to view our existence as a contingency: man comes into the world for no apparent reason or by mere accident and is doomed in his transient existence. Such ideas may be found in "This be the Verse."[6] The poem has three quatrains. In the first, the poet depicts how men are "fucked up" by their parents for no particular reason. The line "They may not mean to, but they do" strongly suggests the contingent nature of man's existence. Two important details must be noted to understand the full significance of the poem. One is that the poet describes no specific individual but a general human being, "you," whose parents are referred simply as "they." Such a choice of general pronouns may tell us that the poet is concerned with the common nature of human existence rather than that of one individual. The other significant detail is the genealogical line of three generations, which may indicate the poet's view that man's contingency is perennial. With the two crucial details in mind, we may better understand the concluding stanza:

> Man hands on misery to man.
> It deepens like a coastal shelf.
> Get out as early as you can,
> And don't have any kids youself. (HW 30)

Clearly the poet is commenting on the common condition of human life. In his view man's existence is a "misery" that grows by chances ("like a coastal shelf"). But how can man "get out" of the misery? The poet seems to suggest that we need to make a deliberate choice not to fall into the common misery of man. Since I discuss below this idea of making a deliberate choice, we will now leave it to look at the title of the poem. The imperative mood and the choice of a definite article in

the title "This Be the Verse" indicate the poet's confident or even arrogant tone. It appears as if he were making the final statement of human condition in the world and everybody must accept his point of view and take his advice. Larkin's view of man's contingent existence matches well with that of the existentialist philosophers. The passage below defines the existentialist concept of contingency:

> Contingency includes what Heidegger calls the awareness of "being-thrown-into-this-world." Man finds himself here in the world although no one has asked him whether he wanted to be here or not. Around him is a puzzling, often terrifying world. Similarly life ends with an event beyond man's control, death. (Breisach, p. 193)

Apparently, man's finitude is an important part of his contingent nature. Just as he has no control over his birth, man faces his end in death throughout his temporal existence in the world. A sentitive man, Larkin knows this circumstance well and deals with the theme of death in many of his poems. Since poems on death can be found in all of Larkin's four volumes of poetry, I will only discuss the few which I think are the most typical of Larkin. In "Next, Please,"[7] Larkin points out that "Always too eager for future, we/Pick up bad habits of expectancy," hoping something wonderful will eventually approach us. But "we are wrong," he says; such hopes are only illusions. There is only one certainty in man's life—that of death! The death image of the black-sailed ship in the last stanza of the poem symbolizes for Larkin the finitude of man:

> Only one ship is seeking us, a black-
> Sailed unfamiliar, towing at her back
> A huge and birdless silence. In her wake
> No waters breed or break. (LD 20)

In Larkin's view of human condition in the world, death is not only sure, but it is present everywhere and at any moment. This idea of "Life is slow dying" is best expressed in his poem "Nothing to Be Said." We have already discussed the poem earlier. What I would like to add is that the poet's deliberately general reference to "nations" and "hours" makes what is described in the poem a universal and perennial phenomenon. Confronted with the certainty of death, man's efforts to save himself prove to be futile. In "The Building" (HW 24-26), the poet describes a modern hospital as a symbol of man's efforts to save himself with the help of medical science and technology. Larkin understands well that

man has always tried to save himself. Previously man has relied much on the church for salvation. After the church is gone, which is suggested in "Church Going" (LD 28), man in the secular age has come to the modern hospital for salvation—in fact the religious images such as "confess," "congregation," "cathedrals" are clearly meant to suggest the resemblances in function between the hospital and the church:

> Humans, caught
> On ground curiously neutral, homes and names
> Suddenly in abeyance; some are young,
> Some old, but most at that vague age that claims
> The end of choice, the last of hope; and all
> Here to confess that something has gone wrong. (HW 24)

But the hope for salvation in humans is only illusive. These people in the hospital as well as all other people in the world can by no means escape the seeking of the death-ship mentioned earlier. As Larkin regretfully says, man's end is "beyond the stretch/Of any hand from here [the hospital]" and the hope to be saved is an "unreal, a touching dream" (HW 25). Even though they come to the hospital for salvation, the patients, as well as the strong and healthy, "All know they are going to die" (HW 25). After all, human existence is an "error of a serious sort" (HW 24).

In addition to such themes as contingency and finitude of human existence, Larkin also deals with such themes as anguish, fear, alienation, disappointment, frustration, and despair, which are characteristically existentialist. These themes recur in Larkin's four volumes. Early in his poetic career he recognized the "patient hopelessness," "the silences of death," "each dull day and each despairing act" that man has to face ("XX," NS 33). In Larkin's poetic world, man often confronts nothingness; a feeling of aching void haunts him from time to time. To Larkin's typical persona, "Nothing, like something, happens anywhere" ("I Remember, I Remember," LD 39). Reflecting on the mundane life, he can not shake off "the dread/That how we live measures our own nature" ("Mr. Bleany," WW 10); even "the deep blue air" beyond "the sun-comprehending glass" of high windows shows only "Nothing and is nowhere, and is endless" ("High Windows," HW 17). The Larkinesque persona is acutely aware that

> Life is first boredom, then fear.
> Whether or not we use it, it goes,
> And leaves what something hidden from us chose,

> And age, and then the only end of age.
> ("Dockery and Son," WW 38)

With such a world outlook, Larkin's persona feels anguish and fear over the cold reality of human condition and often finds that he is isolated and lonely. He is "the less deceived," seeing through everything. Even love seems evasive in nature and unfulfilling in practice. Friendship is overgrown by grass and becomes sour ("No Road," LD 26), and lovers become strangers in bed, wondering why

> At this unique distance from isolation
>
> It becomes still more difficult to find
> Words at once true and kind,
> Or not untrue and not unkind. ("Talking in Bed," WW 29)

Desiring to understand man's dilemma in a world void of meaning, Larkin's persona spends his youth trying to learn "the way things go" but only ends in frustration to find truth to be as illusory as "the trite untransferrable truss-advertisement" ("Send No Money," WW 43). The feelings of the Larkinesque persona are natural experiences of modern man. According to the existentialist philosophers, "Anxiety results whenever nothingness through contingency has been understood by man in its immediate importance for each person." Larkin's persona experiences anxiety because he has understood the nothingness beneath human existence and wants to become himself through his existential quest rather than conform to the external world. He understands that man is always "alone in those matters which count most" and that "no other man and no human institution can lift the responsibility and decision from his shoulders" even when "a man's life is at stake;" in other words he is experiencing the "existential despair" (Breisach, p. 196).

As an existential being, Larkin's persona also knows well man's relationship with time. As he says it himself, "Time is the echo of an axe/Within a wood" is the first thing he has understood ("xxvi," NS 39). Commenting on time in Larkin's poetry, Peter R. King makes the following remarks:

> At the heart of Larkin's poetry lies a constant awareness of the passing of time and a belief that man is always in thrall of time. Time strips us of illusions and is the bearer of realities which we would prefer to avoid.[8]

Indeed, it is "the white hours" of June that remind the Larkinesque persona of the frailty and brevity of human life ("Cut Grass," HW 41) and that make him obsessed with the idea of aging and death. To him, time is the mirror against which man sees himself and the world. In the fading summer afternoons, the persona notices the young mothers' "beauty has thickened./Something is pushing them/ To the side of their own lives" ("Afternoons," WW 44). Confronted with the end of life, "the old fools" are baffled and kept quiet by "the echo of an axe" within them ("The Old Fools," HW 19). Yet the typical Larkin speaker does not surrender to time; he tries to figure out what time means to him, seeking truth "under the fobbed/Impendent belly of Time" ("Send No Money," WW 43). Most important, however, Larkin's persona, like the existential hero, understands that past, present and future are intrincically related to each other. In "Triple Time" (LD 35), the poet-speaker expresses succinctly how what constitutes the present also makes up the future of the past and the past of the future. By viewing time in such a triple perspective, he transcends the soured instants of the present and forms a meaningful relationship with time in its continuous passage. What Macquarrie says in the following passage about man's special relationship with time seems to be the exact description of the Larkinesque persona's relationship with time:

> ...in the case of the existent past and future are intrinsically related to the present. We never catch the existent in a knife-edge present, so to speak. By memory the existent has brought his past with him into the present; and by anticipation and imagination he has already laid hold on his future and projects himself into it. (p. 200)

What we have traced so far are some of the existentialist themes in Larkin's poetry. The poet's observations and analyses of human condition in a world void of meaning are illuminating, but they may also give the reader an impression that he is pessimistic. This impression, however, is not true. Just as "Existentialism is not necessarily a pessimistic philosophy", Larkin's poetry does not profess pessimism either. Like the existentialist the poet has simply been "realistic in acknowledging the disorder of human existence." More significantly, Larkin, like the adherents of existentialism, does not stop at his realistic picture of the contemporary man and his world. As Macquarrie points out, "Existentialism in most of its forms is not just a cold analysis of the human condition but itself a passionate quest for authentic existence" (pp. 202, 205). The greatest value of

existentialism, I personally feel, is in its "passionate quest for authentic existence." It is this quest, the desire of being, that helps the existent to create meaning in his life and face the contingent and void world around him with courage and determination. A great poet of the contemporary world, Larkin fully understood this active aspect of existentialism and presented his persona in his "passionate quest" in at least three very significant ways.

First, the Larkinesque persona seeks the true knowledge of the human condition and the real nature of the world around him. In many of his poems, Larkin's persona describes the various modes of human existence in the world. Although he occasionally reveals how ritualistic practice and social conventions can make man's life meaningful—as in "To the sea," "Vers de Société," " Show Saturday" (HW), and "The Whitsun Weddings" (WW)—the Larkinesque persona in most cases would depict the mundane existence of human beings. It is to such scenes as the card-players in a stormy night, the lonely guest in the deserted hotel on Friday night, and the opportunist speaker hurrying off to sell his stale ideas that Larkin's persona devotes most of his time. He does this, of course, for an important reason, that is, to make people aware of such inauthentic existence and help them to be "less deceived" about the reality. In "Essential Beauty," for example, the persona urges us to stare beyond the "sharply-pictured groves/Of how life should be" and see "the boy puking his heart out in the Gents," the aging pensioner and the dying smokers (WW 42). In fact the contrast between the artificial, illusory world of romantic notions and the mundane world of reality is one of the major themes in Larkin's poetry. The desire to know the truth of human condition in the real world clearly indicates the Larkinesque persona's attempt to capture a hard and honest look at the inauthenticity of human existence.

Second, Larkin's persona pursues his quest for authentic existence by acting responsibly with deliberate choice. In many poems the poet-speaker chooses to live a particular mode of life and to find in it his own meaning of existence. In "Reasons for Attendance," for instance, the speaker chooses to "stay outside" instead of joining the dancers in the lighted glass room because he finds satisfaction and happiness in pursuing his "individual bell" (LD 18). If the speaker at the end of the poem is still not quite sure of the value of his pursuit, he later turns out much more affirmative of such deliberate choices. In "Toads Revisited," for example, the persona has a clear sense of accomplishment in long-time friendship with toad—a symbol figure for work—as he says:

What else can I answer,

When the lights come on at four
At the end of another year?
Give me your arm, old toad;
Help me down Cemetery Road. (WW 19)

If deliberately chosen, even life in isolation can be authentic. The light-house keeper in Section II of "Livings" certainly find his solitary life satisfying and meaningful as he sits at the table "guarded by brilliance," enjoying the meal, "the divining cards" and watching "Lit-shelved liners/Grope like mad worlds westward" (HW 15). The speakers in the above mentioned poems are satisfied because they are able to choose freely what they want to do. As Sartre says, "freedom is nothing other than a choice which creates for itself its own possibilities" and "the desire of being is always realized as the desire of a mode of being."[9] The Larkinesque persona acts freely and responsibly not only for himself but also for others (as in the light-house keeper's case). Thus he lives an authentic life. To Larkin's persona, the greatest tragedy of human existence seems to be the loss of the power to choose deliberately. In "The Old Fools" and "The Building," he suggests that the loss of power to choose is one of the basic signs for the loss of life. As Andrew Motion rightly points out, in Larkin's poems

> The power to choose is repeatedly highlighted as the most fulfilling of all human capabilities. As his poems explore the gulf between deception and clearsightedness, illusion and reality, solitude and sociability, they constantly discuss the need to decide on one or other of them: that is, not simply to notice the difference but to make an active choice about which to adapt.[10]

So in his treatment of his persona's quest for an authentic living, Larkin has worked on such major themes of existentialism as "freedom, decision, and responsibility" with the full understanding that "It is through free and responsible decisions that man becomes authentically himself" (Macquarrie, p. 16).

Third, Larkin's persona constantly explores the process of aging and the end of life, death. He seems to understand well the existentialist views that "death is the great symbol of human finitude" and that it is "natural to fear death or to be anxious in the face of death" (Macquarrie, p. 198). Larkin's attitude toward death can be best seen in his poem

"Aubade," published in the *Times Literary Supplement* on 23 December 1977. Here is the opening stanza:

> I work all day, and get half drunk at night.
> Waking at four to soundless dark, I stare.
> In time the curtain-edges will grow light.
> Till then I see what's really always there:
> Unresting death, a whole day nearer now,
> Making all thought impossible but how
> And where and when I shall myself die.
> Arid interrogation: yet the dread
> Of dying, and being dead
> Flashes afresh to hold and horrify.

The persona apparently is an aging man who still works every day and has a habit of waking at four every morning. While waiting for the dawn to break, the persona here contemplates death, which is getting nearer with every passing day and brings him dread and horror. In the second stanza the speaker finds himself anticipating "the sure extinction." "Nothing more terrible, nothing more true" than death, but this is how he honestly accepts it:

> Not in remorse
> —The good not done, the love not given, time
> Torn off unused—not wretched because
> An only life can take so long to climb
> Clear of its wrong beginnings, and may never;
> But at the total emptiness for ever.

Thus he describes in the next stanza the dread of death as "a special way of being afraid/No trick dispels." In the face of death's certainty, religion in the past or rational thinking in the modern world of science can by no means drive away the furnace-fear. Even "courage is no good," for "Being brave/Lets no one off the grave." So the speaker finally comes to his philosophical conclusion: "Death is no different whined at than withstood." As the dawn finally breaks, the persona is ready to start his work for another day and to withstand the slowly-approaching certainty of death. Such an attitude toward death is clearly existentialist. For Heidegger claims, "death, honestly accepted and anticipated can become an integrating factor in an authentic existence" (Macquarrie, p. 198).

As shown above, Larkin's persona is quite successful in his "passionate quest" for authentic existence. By keeping a clearsightedness in viewing man's existence in the real world, by choosing deliberately

and acting responsibly and by accepting and anticipating death with honesty, he creates meaning in his own life in spite of the ultimate futility of the creation and achieves authenticity of existence. This is probably the most significant aspect of existentialism in Larkin's poetry, indicating Larkin's recognition of human potentials as well as his admission of human limitations. It is also in this feature that we may see Larkin's central concern with human "survival in a world without value, a world with all coherence gone." As Lavine rightly points out, Larkin's "strength as a poet has been his ability to confront this world and describe it without lament."[11]

Having traced the several existentialist aspects of Larkin's poetry, I conclude that Larkin's affinity with existentialist philosophy is more than just resemblance. In her introduction to contemporary English poetry, Ellen F. Shields speaks thus of Larkin: "[He] captures in his poetry the spirit of postwar England, the spirit of an age of diminished expectations."[12] The spirit Larkin captures, I find, is that of a desire to know man's condition in a war-shattered world and to find a new meaning of life to make up for the lost values of the past. To accomplish his noble but difficult task, Larkin turns, at least in some aspects, to the philosophy of existentialism which was fast spreading in the intellectual world right after the Second World War. A graduate student at Oxford and later a librarian at the University of Hull, Larkin certainly had the advantage of acquainting himself with the most significant philosophy of the time. Although Larkin in his published works made no reference to his acquaintance or view of existentialism, the internal evidence in his poetry points to his remarkable understanding of the essential themes of existentialism and their implications in human life. I believe that an understanding of the philosophical elements in his poetry will enable us to look beyond the technical brilliance and resonant beauty as well as the ordinariness of subject matter and to grasp in his poetry the most profound and even disturbing ideas about human life in the contemporary world.

NOTES

[1] Philip Larkin, *Required Writing: Miscellaneous Pieces 1955-1982* (New York, 1984), p. 79. Further references in my text to this collection will be abbreviated parethetically as RW. I am grateful for assistance from Dr. Michael P. Dean, University of Mississippi, in my preparation of this study.

[2] *The North Ship* was first published in 1945. References will be based on the paperback edition published in London by

Faber and Faber in 1973 and will be abbreviated parenthetically as NS.

[3]Larkin, *The Whitsun Weddings* (London, 1971). Further references will be abbreviated parenthetically as WW.

[4]Ernst Breisach, *Introduction of Modern Existentialism* (New York, 1962), p. 193.

[5]John Macquarrie, *Existentialism* (Harmondsworth, 1973), p. 17.

[6]Larkin, *High Windows* (New York, 1974), p. 30. Further references will be abbreviated parenthetically as HW.

[7]Larkin, *The Less Deceived* (London, 1955), p. 20. Further references will be abbreviated parenthetically as LD.

[8]Peter R. King, *Nine Contemporary Poets: A Critical Introduction* (London, 1979), p. 6.

[9]Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Human Emotions* (New York, 1957), p. 63-64.

[10]Andrew Motion, *Philip Larkin* (London, 1982), p. 70.

[11]Steven David Lavine, "Larkin's Supreme Versions," *MQR* 15-16 (1976-77), 481-486, at 482.

[12]Ellen F. Shields, "Introduction," *Contemporary English Poetry: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism to 1980* (New York, 1984), p. xiv.

BYRON AND ARISTOTLE: IS *MANFRED* A TRAGEDY?

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Is *Manfred* in fact a tragedy? Some do not believe so. David Perkins states that *Manfred* stands to "more earnest poetry as melodrama does to tragedy."[1] And M.S. Kushwaha says of *Manfred* that it "may be called a tragedy only because it ends in death."[2] Goethe, however, in his review of *Manfred*, refers to it as "Byron's tragedy."[3] And Samuel Chew speaks of it as reaching "the heart of the tragic idea."[4] Perhaps the two sets of readers are operating from two different conceptions of the genre. Yet each reader, no doubt, upon examining the poem, felt that he recognized how it should be classified. One of them calls it, in effect, a melodrama; one, a tragedy. Which is it?

One way to answer the question is to compare the poem to a definition of tragedy. Before doing so, one must settle on a definition. There are several. The most famous, of course, is that of Aristotle, which concerns classical tragedy. Is it likely that a drama composed by Byron, who is considered the epitome of Romanticism, should meet the standard laid down by Aristotle, who is considered the epitome of Classicism?

In 1815, Byron was appointed to the subcommittee managing Drury Lane theater. Here, he had a chance to review scripts submitted for presentation and to see the dramas performed on stage. Much of what he saw disgusted him, for it was melodrama indeed. Byron, in reaction, determined to reform the English stage by writing plays of his own (Chew, pp. 31-36). In fact, by the time he departed England for Italy, Byron had made up his mind to write plays that could stand as models for future English dramatists to imitate.[5]

In Italy, Byron read the tragedies of Alfieri, who had written in imitation of the Greeks. If a reader would understand my conception of tragedy, Byron says, "Take up a translation of Alfieri."[6] Like Alfieri, Byron also looked to the Greeks for inspiration. In January 1821, writing to his publisher, Murray, Byron states that he hopes to revive the English tragedy:

> I am, however, persuaded, that this is not to be done by following the old dramatists, who are full of gross faults, pardoned only for the beauty of their language; but by writing naturally and *regularly*, and producing *regular* tragedies, like the Greeks; but not in *imitation*,—merely

> the outline of their conduct, adapted to our own times and circumstances, and of course *no* chorus. (Steiner, p. 203)

Thus, it should come as no surprise if *Manfred* does in fact adhere, more or less, to rules laid down by Aristotle. But does it do so? Let us consider.

In *The Poetics*, Aristotle states that tragedy consists of six elements: plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, and song.[7] *Manfred* does contain song (I i, II iii, II iv). About song, however, Aristotle says almost nothing. He simply observes that song, or music by itself, sometimes occurs in tragedy and that it is pleasurable (p. 41).

About spectacle, the philosopher also says little. What he does say is disparaging. Of all the elements of tragedy, spectacle has the least to do with the art of poetry. In fact, he states, "the power of tragedy is independent both of performance and of actors" (p. 41). In *The Poetics*, Aristotle makes this point again and again, emphasizing that a tragedy can elicit pity and fear whether the play is seen, heard, or read. For this reason, although *Manfred*, a chamber-drama, is without spectacle, it cannot be ruled out as a tragedy on this point.

Upon turning to diction and thought, Aristotle gives these elements short shrift. For Aristotle, thought is the content of language; diction, the decoration thereof. Although thought is important, because it is through this element that pity and fear are awakened, Aristotle refers the reader to his treatise on rhetoric; for, an analysis of the thought in language more properly belongs to the study of rhetoric (pp. 57-58). Whether Byron uses the element of thought in a way that Aristotle would call tragic, depends on whether the play awakens pity and fear. This point will be considered later, under the heading of plot.

As for diction, Aristotle dismisses it, stating, "the poet's art is not seriously criticized according to his knowledge or ignorance of these things" (p. 58). And since diction is of no account to tragedy in general, it is of no account to this argument.

Of the six elements of tragedy, Aristotle considers character second in importance only to plot (p. 40). Of character, Aristotle states this. A man of wealth and reputation, the tragic hero must be conspicuous for neither virtue nor vice, but must fall because of some error (p. 48). Does Manfred fit this description? He does belong to the nobility. Like his father before him, Manfred is a count. The family has been titled for centuries.

But is Manfred good? Or rather, neither too good nor too bad but falling by error? This is not entirely clear. For what has he done? The

crime is only hinted at. This much can be pieced together. Long ago, outside the action of the play, Manfred fell in love with a female relation, the Lady Astarte. She resembled him very closely, therefore suggesting a very close relation. For loving Manfred, the Lady Astarte was slain by someone, whom Manfred in turn slew.

Therefore, it is hinted that Manfred has committed incest. Probably the incest was discovered by a father, brother, husband, or lover, who killed Astarte; Manfred killing him.[8] Yet it is never made clear that this scenario is the case. And if it is indeed the case, the circumstances surrounding it, by which one could judge the actions as good or bad, are missing entirely.

This vagueness would seem to prevent a judgment about character, but it does not prevent the reader from coming to a conclusion about Manfred—by means of feeling. That Byron does not allow the reader to witness the crime, that he does not allow the reader to hear, after all these years, so much as a full account of it, places the reader at a distance from the crime. One cannot witness the suffering of a victim; one can only witness the suffering of the killer, Manfred, for whom one can and does feel sympathy. For the suffering Manfred undergoes is tremendous. As a result, the reader views Manfred, not as a criminal, so much as a fellow human-being in pain. Thus, because of the way Byron presents the facts of the case, the reader can feel that, yes, a crime may have been committed, but the man who has committed it, is not therefore irredeemably evil.

As the reader continues to follow the action of the play, the feeling that Manfred is neither too good nor too bad is continually reinforced. The words of Manfred himself show him to be both good and bad. At one time he states, "I have done men good" (I i 17); and at another, he states, "I have ceased / To justify my deeds unto myself— / The last infirmity of evil" (I ii 27-29).

On the one hand, Manfred believes he cannot enter heaven; for when he attempts suicide, he states, "Farewell, ye opening heavens! / Look not upon me thus reproachfully— / Ye were not meant for me..." (I ii 107-09). On the other hand, Manfred believes he cannot be taken to hell. When he is dying, the demons come to take him away, but Manfred spurns them, saying, "Thou hast no power upon me, *that* I feel; / Thou never shalt possess me, *that* I know" (III iv 125-26).

In fact, although Manfred descends to the very underworld itself, presenting himself before Arimanes, prince of demons, Manfred refuses to bow to him and even invites Arimanes to kneel, with Manfred, before the "overruling Infinite" (II iv 48). Thus does Manfred show respect for God, even in the presence of evil incarnate.

Later, when Manfred knows he will soon die, he addresses an encomium to the sun. In doing so, he shows respect for its Creator:

> Most glorious orb! that wert a worship, ere
> The mystery of thy making was revealed!
> Thou earliest minister of the Almighty,
> Which gladdened, on their mountain tops, the hearts
> Of the Chaldean shepherds, till they poured
> Themselves in orisons! Thou material God!
> And representative of the unknown—
> Who chose thee for his shadow! (III ii 9-16)

Manfred also shows respect for the church. The Abbot of St. Maurice, he receives cordially, saying, "welcome to these walls; / Thy presence honors them, and blesseth those / Who dwell within them" (III i 21-3). But Manfred rejects the Abbott's offer of absolution, saying finally, but again cordially:

> Old man! I do respect
> Thine order, and revere thine years; I deem
> Thy purpose pious, but it is in vain:
> Think me not churlish; I would spare thyself,
> Far more than me, in shunning at this time
> All further colloquy; and so—farewell. (III i 154-159)

Immediately thereafter, the Abbot shows that he too thinks Manfred a mixture of good and evil, as he comments on the state of his soul: "It is an awful chaos—light and darkness, / And mind and dust, and passions and pure thoughts / Mixed..." (III iii 104-106). Thus, Byron gives the reader a hero neither too good nor too bad.

Even Manfred's almost pathological aversion to mankind is balanced by his treatment of the Abbot and the Chamois Hunter, a treatment sometimes rough but also kindly and respectful; by his undying love for Lady Astarte, though forbidden; and by his respect for the Creator, although he does not believe the Creator can take away the sins Manfred has committed.[9] At first glance, the play may give a reader the feeling that, where the character of Manfred is concerned, the scales are tipped on the side of evil. A closer reading will show that the balance between good and evil is very nearly even.

Manfred is conspicuous for neither virtue nor vice; but does he fall through error? Aristotle equates calamity with suffering, especially by wounding or death (pp. 46-47). Manfred does die, but is this a calamity? Throughout the play, he has sought to die: at first to find

oblivion; then, as Astarte promises, to put an end to "earthly ills." Finally, his wish is granted. For him to die, then, cannot be called a calamity. It does not necessarily bring suffering. It may in fact be a movement away from suffering.

The calamity that befalls Manfred is the death of Astarte. This brings forth Manfred's suffering. And why? Not only is the one he loves taken from him, and possibly made to suffer for sins she may have committed with him, but also Manfred holds himself responsible for her death. He states, "If I had never lived, that which I love / Had still been living..." (II ii 193-194). Knowing this, Manfred also suffers from guilt. Therefore, the reversal occurs at Astarte's death, and the calamity, in the form of suffering, goes on throughout the action of the play.

Manfred does fall, then, but by what error? That he loved Astarte at all, apparently a very near relation, is the result of his holding the taboos of mankind so lightly. And this is the end-result of pride: "I disdained to mingle with / A herd, though to be leader—and of wolves. / The lion is alone, and so am I" (III i 121-123). Through pride Manfred is alienated from mankind, loving only the one whom mankind has forbidden to him. This is the error by which he falls.

But it is also pride that gives Manfred power and magnificence; power, from seeking knowledge beyond that considered proper for mankind; magnificence, from insisting he must stand alone, without help of any kind, even that of God. Pride, then, raises Manfred high, but it also brings him low.

Finally: of all the elements of tragedy, Aristotle states, "the most important is the plot, the ordering of incidents; for tragedy is a representation, not of men, but of action and life..." (p. 39). Under the heading of plot, Aristotle gives many suggestions as to how a play should be constructed in order to realize excellence in tragedy. Although it might be possible to demonstrate that *Manfred* meets many of the requirements for excellence, it is the purpose of this argument to demonstrate that the play is or is not a tragedy. If the incidents of a play are so arranged as to produce fear and pity, then the play is tragic in effect. Setting aside any other consideration, let us consider whether *Manfred* does produce fear and pity.

Through pride, and defiance of taboo, Manfred has apparently fallen in love with a kinswoman, whom he therefore has caused to be killed. Possibly a kinsman has killed Astarte; possibly Manfred has killed him. Is this the stuff of tragedy? Aristotle, in considering what kind of incidents best bring forth fear and pity, notes that "when the sufferings involve those who are near and dear to one another, when for example

brother kills brother, son father, mother son, or son mother...then we have a situation of the kind to be aimed at" (p. 50). This play, then, contains the very stuff of tragedy.

But the crimes are presented sketchily and are committed long ago, as background to the action of the play. In the action of the play itself, are there any incidents that bring forth fear and pity? There are some scholars, it is well to remember, who would deny this.

Yet there can be no question that Manfred suffers. For much of the play, he is in torment. The action of the play consists of Manfred, in one way or another, seeking an end to the torment. To watch him suffer—a man with whom the reader can sympathize—is to feel pity.

Byron introduces the word "pity" into the play five times. At II i 90, the Chamois Hunter sympathizes with Manfred, saying, "My prayers shall be for thee." But Manfred counters, saying, "I need them not— / But can endure thy pity." At II iv 69, the First Destiny states that Manfred is "a thing which I, who pity not, / Yet pardon those who pity." At III i 50, the Abbot argues that "there still is time / For penitence and pity," that is, penitence by Manfred and pity from God. At III i 93, Manfred compares himself to Nero, and the Abbot to the soldier who tried to save the emperor from suicide: "a certain soldier, / With show of loyal pity, would have stanched / The gushing throat...."

Thus, Manfred receives pity from the Chamois Hunter (a layman) and from the Abbot (a churchman). There is a suggestion of pity even from a fiend. And it is stated that the Deity would pity him, too, if only Manfred would repent. To witness others pitying Manfred, confirms and reinforces the pity a reader may already be feeling. Pity, therefore, certainly can be produced by the incidents of the play.

What of fear? Is it also produced? Aristotle states that fear is awakened by witnessing the suffering "of someone just like ourselves..." (p. 48). Is anyone just like Manfred? Hardly. Yet it can be argued that Manfred is a symbol of mankind, falling through pride and struggling toward atonement—or else, through pride, refusing it. And, at least according to Christianity, this is the situation of every man, woman, and child on the planet. In this, perhaps, can be seen an opportunity for everyone of us to identify with the hero and thus to fear, both for the hero and for ourselves.

But does Manfred himself ever show fear? When threatened by the fiends in hell, Manfred is in control. When he is dying and the demons come to take him, he is in control. Early on, when he attempts to kill himself by leaping off the cliff, he comes close to giving up control and thus to awakening fear in the audience; but he is snatched back from the act. Manfred has so much control over the forces around him that

he simply cannot feel fear. And neither can the reader, for long. As soon as it becomes obvious that Manfred is in control of the matter, fear fades away. Thus, if *Manfred* fails to meet the standard of tragedy laid down by Aristotle, it may be on this point. The pity is strong; but the fear, questionable.

However, there is the matter of the star. Does it merely influence the hero? Or actually control him? For if it does control him, then fate is inevitable. Suffering is inevitable. And this is a situation that could befall anyone. With this the reader can identify, and for this, feel fear.

At I i 110, the Seventh Spirit states, "The star which rules thy destiny / Was ruled, ere earth began, by me...." Here, the star is said to rule Manfred's destiny, that is, to control it. But then "The hour arrived" and the star became "a curse." Was it Manfred's crime that changed the star? No. The star is said to rule the hero's destiny and not *vice versa*. According to the spirit of the star, then, Manfred is controlled by fate.

Later, when the hero calls up the Witch of the Alps, she addresses him, saying,

> Son of Earth!
> I know thee, and the powers which give thee power;
> I know thee for a man of many thoughts,
> And deeds of good and ill, extreme in both,
> Fatal and fated in thy sufferings. (II ii 33-37)

She who says she knows him, states he is "fated" to suffer. Again there is the suggestion of control. And if control, then inevitability.

In this case, Manfred seems to be controlled by a force outside of himself. He can control particulars, enough to make a decision, enough to make an error, but in general the suffering he undergoes seems to be uncontrollable. He must simply endure it. This is a situation any one of us can identify with. For this, one can feel pity—even fear.

Thus, in almost every way, the play seems to meet the standard of tragedy: not romantic tragedy, but classical tragedy, as defined by Aristotle himself. This finding is remarkable, since Byron, quoted earlier, states that he does not intend to imitate the Greek dramatists point by point, and yet in many ways he does just that. This finding is also remarkable because it demonstrates yet again what many a scholar specializing in Romanticism has come to realize: that Romanticism can best be understood, not as a polar opposite to Classicism, but as a phenomenon which has grown out of it. Classicism is the fertile soil in which Romanticism has taken root; and often—more often than one

might ordinarily suspect—it is possible to trace resemblances between the two as between the parent and the child.

However, if *Manfred* should in some ways deviate from the standards of *The Poetics*, let Byron speak for himself: "...as I have a high sense / Of Aristotle and the Rules, 'tis fit / To beg his pardon when I err a bit" (*Don Juan* I CXX). He was no doubt jesting when he wrote this; but, as often in Byron, there is truth in the jest.

NOTES

[1]Perkins, ed. *English Romantic Writers* (San Diego, 1967), p. 784.

[2]*Byron and the Dramatic Form* (Salzburg, Austria, 1980), p. 95.

[3]Cited by Perkins, p. 810.

[4]*The Dramas of Lord Byron: A Critical Study* (1915; rpt. New York, 1964), p. 149.

[5]William Calvert, *Byron: Romantic Paradox* (Chapel Hill, 1935), pp. 157-158.

[6]George Steiner, *The Death of Tragedy* (London, 1961), p. 212.

[7]Aristotle, "On the Art of Poetry," in *Classical Literary Criticism*, trans. and ed. T. S. Dorsch (New York, 1977), p. 39. Subsequent page references will be given parenthetically in the text.

[8]See II i 84-85: "My injuries came down on those who loved me— / On those whom I best loved...." Is the plural "those" suggesting, besides Astarte, a kinsman was killed? It is ambiguous.

[9]For proof, see the passage beginning at III i 66: "Old man! there is no power in holy men, / Nor charm in prayer, nor purifying form/Of penitence...."

THE IRVING INFLUENCE IN THE SNOPES TRILOGY

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At the crest of the tremendous flood of popular, critical, and scholarly tribute that poured forth to celebrate *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in its centennial year, John Gerber strove to estimate the worth of that book as a quintessential archetype of American fiction. He initiated the effort with this comparison: "The trip down the Mississippi River on a raft has become legendary, and like Rip Van Winkle the main characters have become firmly fixed in the public consciousness."[1] It is appropriate that Gerber should strive to determine the importance of Huck's story according to that of Rip, for one can scarcely say which character or narrative has the firmer hold upon the American imagination. Nor can one say which work has had the greater influence upon subsequent American literature.

Although Hemingway's famous assertion that American literature "comes from" *Huckleberry Finn* has provided Twain's masterpiece with the more vivid publicity,[2] the ubiquitous influence of "Rip Van Winkle" makes Hemingway's sweeping generalization less than convincing. Rip's marital wars, mock odyssey, and epic sleep have so captivated the imagination of generations of American writers that the history of past American literature will remain incomplete so long as the influence of "Rip Van Winkle" remains unstudied. If anything, that influence has become even more important in recent decades. For example, T. S. Eliot, Hart Crane, William Faulkner, Saul Bellow, and Robert Coover, among modern and contemporary writers, have found Irving's story essential to some of their endeavors. Probably no imaginative use of Irving's masterpiece excels William Faulkner's incorporation of it into the Snopes trilogy.

The influence of Irving upon the trilogy has been apparent since the publication of *The Hamlet* in 1940, but what has been obvious is the influence of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," not "Rip Van Winkle."[3] That Faulkner had the adventures of Ichabod in mind in this first Snopes novel becomes clear when Eula rejects the advances of the school teacher Labove: "'Stop pawing, me,' she said. 'You old headless horseman Ichabod Crane'" (*The Hamlet*, p. 122).[4] There are many undeclared parallels between the adventures of Ichabod and events taking place in Frenchman's Bend, some of which have been developed well before Eula's outburst. Little notice has been taken of them because Faulkner, as Virginia Hlavsa points out, derived "pleasure" and "real

humor" from "creating hidden parallels," from "privately out-Joyceing Joyce...."[5] And so it is on this occasion.

Eula's scornful remark illuminates and fuses a number of apparently disparate passages. For instance, fifty-three pages before Eula's outburst, Tull remarks, "The teacher we had left all of a sudden just after Christmas" (*The Hamlet*, p. 69). Later (p. 102), the reader discovers that Tull refers to Labove who, in the progress of the narrative, reveals more kinships with Ichabod than teaching and an abrupt flight after losing the girl. For instance, Labove adheres to Ichabod's method of schoolkeeping via physical persuasion: "within that week he [Labove] had subdued with his fists the state of mutiny which his predecessor had bequeathed him" (109-110). In addition, Labove's ambitions compare with those of Ichabod. After fleeing Sleepy Hollow, Ichabod goes into politics and becomes a judge; Labove studies law (112) and wants to become governor (105).

More obvious parallels between Eula and Katrina combine with these kinships to extend the allusive presence of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." Both Eula and Katrina are daughters and ostensible heirs of rich farmers; both are beautiful and sexually irresistible. As food arouses Ichabod's voracious appetite, so the physical presence of Katrina, who is humorously depicted in terms of food, arouses other of his desires. Faulkner's Eula emerges spectacularly as a heroic embodiment of feminine sexuality. Both girls reject their teachers for those reckless daredevils, Brom Bones and Hoake McCarron. In all of these things, Faulkner's method is such that the elaborate allusive pattern is virtually complete before his transformation of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" in *The Hamlet* stands fully revealed.

The method is not without challenge to Faulkner's readers, for they may miss the allusions entirely. To some extent this has happened with the interwoven "Rip Van Winkle" allusions and motifs. After all, there are historic reasons to expect "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," not "Rip Van Winkle," as an influence in Faulkner's trilogy. The importance of the former to Southwestern humor, which Faulkner read, admired, and made use of, has been well documented. As Henig Cohen and William Dillingham have pointed out, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" has, except for the regional vernacular, "most of the ingredients of a typical sketch of Southwestern humor."[6] Writers who incorporated into their fiction the basic features of Irving's plot and charaterization, such as Joseph B. Cobb, William Tappan Thompson, and Francis James Robinson, were quick to supply the vernacular.

The muscular rowdiness of Brom Bones was particularly appealing on the frontier. But to a keen, insightful reader like Faulkner with an abiding interest in humor, how valid is a popular assessment of Rip as a timid, hen-pecked husband and how definitive is Brom Bones as a frontier prototype? Walter Blair and Hamlin Hill refer to Rip as "a ne'er-do-well whose greatest talents lie in avoiding work, raising hell, and completely relaxed hunting...."[7] This perception of Rip as hell raiser and hunter fits as satisfactorily as Brom Bones into the rugged early sketches and stories of southern literature. It is well to remember Irving's talent for sketching his characters broadly, even as he developed them through a wealth of concrete particulars. One of the jests in "Rip Van Winkle," for the alert reader, is that Rip obeys none of his termagant wife's commands. More important to Faulkner, the theme of "Rip Van Winkle" is, as will be seen, much more important to the trilogy than the Flem Snopes unsuitability of Ichabod as a husband for Katrina.

In addition to theme, there are narrative elements of greater importance to Faulkner. From the source of "Rip Van Winkle," the folktale of the goatherd Peter Klaus, Irving took the simple shepherd, his faithful dog, the cave in the mountain, the ghostly complement of medieval knights, the twenty-year sleep, and the return to the village where at last Peter is recognized. Irving transformed this substance of a brief, naive folktale into a fully developed short story with an American setting. The knights become the ghosts of Henry Hudson's crew. Peter Klaus, scarcely more than a name and occupation, becomes Rip Van Winkle, the perpetual celebrant of holiday and husband of Dame Van Winkle, for whom three epithets serve in lieu of character development: virago, shrew, and termagant.

Neither Dame Van Winkle nor the husband-wife conflict derives from the source; they are Irving's additions. That conflict and Rip's penchant for fun and games provide Rip with his identity as it is most popularly conceived—that of a comic, lovable ne'er-do-well, a farmer who can make a kite but cannot make a crop and who has, in Philip Young's words, all the status "of a kid with a dog."[8] Most remarkable of all is what Irving did with the long sleep simply by treating it ambiguously. It can be regarded as an actual sleep, as a prolonged state of amnesia, or as a tall tale that Rip yarns off to gloss over his abandonment of Dame Van Winkle and all other family responsibility. Regardless of how Rip's sleep is interpreted, it results in life that consists of early manhood and old age with a void in between, two

decades of biological existence only that lack any discernable psychological and spiritual content.

Once the story "Rip Van Winkle" is discovered as a source, certain episodes and briefer passages of the Snopes trilogy resonate with richer significances. One such episode is Mink's first encounter with his future wife (*The Hamlet*: Book Three, "The Long Summer"). In this episode Yettie begins to emerge as a southern version of Dame Van Winkle. The traits shared by the women illuminate Dame Van Winkle's role as much as they do Yettie's. Both dominate men. It is not only gentle Rip who is no match for his sharp-tongued wife, it is the entire village. Future heroes of the Revolutionary War, one who dies bravely in battle, and another, of great intelligence as well as courage, who becomes a congressman in the new republic, are thoroughly routed by her. According to Philip Young, she fulfills the dual role of wife and mother to Rip and therefore governs him on many levels.[9] Whatever the role, she is, in the words of the psychiatrist Marcel Heiman, "a searing picture of a phallic woman"; her interests therefore are power, not domestic tranquility.[10] In the best book on Irving to date, William Hedges calls her "the spirit of industry, a *Poor Richard's Almanac* made flesh."[11] In sum, Dame Van Winkle embodies and expresses pervasive and enduring forces.

Yettie also embodies pervasive and enduring forces that become apparent through her domination of men. But Yettie prevails after the manner of Venus, not of Mars. She, too, is a big woman and towers over Mink, man-like, with a "splendid heavy mane" of black hair that is "cut almost man-short with razors" (*The Hamlet*, p. 236). Working as an axeman in a lumber camp, Mink turns to find Yettie

> sitting a big, rangy, well-kept horse behind and above him, in overalls, looking at him...boldly, as a bold and successful man would. That was what he saw: the habit of success—that perfect marriage of will and ability with a single undiffused object—which set her not as a feminine garment but as one as masculine as the overalls and her height and size and the short hair; he saw not a nympholet but the confident lord of a harem. (237)

When Mink is summoned to serve this woman who is ruler of her harem, he finds that he has entered "the fierce simple cave of a lioness—a tumescence which surrendered nothing and asked no quarter, and which made a monogamist of him forever, as opium and suicide do of those whom they once accept" (238).

For all of the similarities, the word *monogamist* indicates a difference between Yettie and Mink and their Van Winkle ancestors. Although their relationship is as turbulent as that of the fiery Dame and Rip, there is always love between them, even when their disagreements surpass the verbal abuse of the Van Winkles and culminate in physical violence. That physical violence underscores a principal difference between the two men. If Rip is a hell-raiser, he is a cheerful, good-natured one. By contrast, there is nothing cheerful about Mink's hell-raising. Although Ratliff never grasps the depth of Mink's character, his perception of Mink as dangerous is accurate. "This here seems to be a different kind of Snopes," he drawls, "like a cotton-mouth is a different kind of snake'" (*The Hamlet*, p. 91).

Such differences in character, situation, and event signal that just as Irving had earlier transformed the tale of Peter Klaus, so Faulkner is telling his own story and transforming "Rip Van Winkle" for his own purposes. The transformation adds interest to the principal icons of Irving's story as they appear. The ghosts, for example, are neither knights nor sailors but shadowy images in Mink's mind of Yettie's many lovers. Rip's constant companion, the dog Wolf, emerges as Jack Houston's blue-tick hound, constant to Houston in death as in life and snarling and showing its teeth as Wolf does in his final appearance in "Rip Van Winkle." Rip's rusty pre-Revolutionary flintlock appears in two altered guises, first in *The Hamlet* as an ancient ten-gauge shotgun, the only gun of its kind remaining in Yoknapatawpha County (219), and then in *The Mansion* (291) as an ancient pistol, which looks more like a "cooter," a turtle, than a handgun. Even the cave is invoked in *The Mansion* as the "old cellar—the cave, the den" (432) beneath the ruins of Mink's home.

The most obvious parallel between Rip and Mink, of course, is their stolen or lost middle years, the sleep and the thirty-eight-year prison sentence. Before Mink goes to Parchman, however, Faulkner establishes more similarities between him and Rip. Both are failed farmers. Rip, happy with gun in hand but not with plow, watches his farm go to ruin and dwindle acre by acre "until there was little more left than a mere patch of Indian corn and potatoes...."[12] He experiences a sense of helpless futility like that of Mink who looks with despair at *his* "yellow and stunted" corn and then moves "among the bitten and fruitless stalks, carrying the gun which looked too big for him to carry or aim..." (*The Hamlet*, p. 220). Both of these failed farmers are child-like men: Rip with his commitment only to holiday, never to work or to responsibility; Mink with his child-like faith in "give a lief"—that

is, a universal principle of fairness that operates among Yoknapatawpha men in lieu of formal justice.

The peasants of Frenchman's Bend know of this faith. They understand Mink's singular concern with Flem's absence from the trial. "'Shucks,' Bookwright said, 'even Flem Snopes aint going to let his own blood cousin be hung just to save money'" (*The Hamlet*, p. 265). After Mink has satisfied his honor by shooting Flem, Ratliff testifies to the community's faith in "give a lief": "'Flem had had his lief fair and square like the rule said, so there wasn't nothing for him to do but just set there [and let Mink shoot him with the ancient pistol].... '"[13] The difference between Mink and other members of his social order is that, like Rip with his commitment to the joys of life, he has carried too unreservedly a simple faith over into manhood. That faith, the foundation in this instance of justice and honor, complicates and jeopardizes his chances of adequately controlling his mature life.

But Faulkner's principal means of keeping his reader conscious of Mink as a man-child comparable with Rip is a constant emphasis upon Mink's lack of physical size. Probably Mink's role was not fully realized by Faulkner when he introduced him. Mink, he writes, is "slightly less than medium height also but thin, with a single line of heavy eyebrow" (*The Hamlet*, p. 73). As the narrative of the trilogy progresses, however, Mink is reduced in size. He is referred to as being no bigger than a boy of 15, then of 14, 13, and finally 12. It is as a man the size of a 12-year old that Mink acts out Faulkner's version of a Rip Van Winkle awakening.

Outside the prison gate, Mink, like Rip after his long sleep, becomes afraid and disoriented (*The Mansion*, p. 103). The dirt road which brought him to Parchmen thirty-eight years earlier, then gouged with mule tracks and the iron tires of wagons, is paved as smooth as a floor. Soon he will walk upon concrete for the first time (267). He will also discover that kitchens have gas and electric stoves, neither of which he has seen before (270). In a store he will have to ask, "What is lunch meat (260)?" Finding a Negro apparently operating his own store in Memphis, the astonished Mink will wonder if new laws have been passed (290). Prices inspire repeated attacks of anxiety. The traditional five-cent can of sardines costs twenty-six cents. Receiving a dime less for a purchase, he assumes frantically that the price of bread jumped ten cents "right while I was looking at it" (263). Rip's departure as a colonial and return as a citizen of a new country is not more bewildering.

Most terrifying for Mink is the realization that he has forgotten distances (259). He is as disoriented as is Rip, who does not awaken in

the cave where he fell asleep but on the grassy knoll where he first heard the ghostly sailor call his name and from which, because the natural surroundings are not as he remembered them, he cannot retrace his steps to the cave. Shaken though he is, Mink catches a ride north. "'Where have you been the last five years, dad?'" the truck driver asks (106). "'Asleep?'"

The association with Rip Van Winkle is thus openly established, not only through the sleep motif but also through Mink's emergence like Rip as the central figure of an on-going, obvious comedy. When, for example, a kind-hearted Memphis policeman gives him fifty cents to get a room for the night, Mink assumes that there is a new law requiring policemen to give the needy fifty cents, an assumption that arouses the ire of a plainclothes guard at the railroad depot. Mink concludes: "the railroad policeman who just wore clothes like everybody else didn't belong to the W P & A free-relief laws" (289). Henceforth he determines to collect money only from uniformed policemen.

The importance of "Rip Van Winkle" as a source partly resides in its enrichment of the least humorous plot of the Snopes trilogy and partly in its contribution to the meaning of Snopesism. Irving's story, of course, is unforgettably humorous, with its warm, amused narrator and its lovable good old boy who is the mock-heroic champion of an epic adventure in doing nothing so as to achieve a comically subversive end which is to assure that a young nation's pursuit after wealth does not triumph at the expense of joyous living. Faulkner creates for the reader no such "comic climate."[14] The pleasant voice relating Irving's story passes lightly over the poverty and ragged children of the Van Winkle home, but Faulkner details with gritty realism the embittering, spiritually devastating poverty of the Mink Snopes family. And Mink is anything but a good old boy. A murderous man of fierce, unremitting passions, he is referred to in terms of a number of poisonous snakes: moccasin, krait, asp, and fer-de-lance. Possessing a "fierce intractable face" and a "single eyebrow," Mink brings to mind the small carnivorous animal with whom he shares a name (*The Mansion*, p. 85).

All of the malevolence notwithstanding, Mink *is* a comic character—in large measure because he is paranoid. He accounts for everything from a perspective that allows for little except conspiracy and persecution. His world view is therefore a logical construct, serious and perfect. He has been wronged by Houston and Flem; honorable revenge is required. However, the basis of this selective view, as of all paranoid views, is false. To wit, Mink has deliberately allowed his cow to mingle with Houston's herd in defiance of law and compelling social

custom. Every afternoon he goes up the muddy road to watch his animal among Houston's pedigreed stock (*The Mansion*, p. 11). He is, in effect, cheating Houston and stealing from him regardless of the rationalizations he employs to justify himself. Moreover, the fact that he cannot wait for Flem to return from Texas before killing Houston reveals that the murder would have been carried out regardless of Flem's presence or help. Mink expects Flem (who is patently incapable of any commitment except to wealth and who is shrewd enough to realize that Mink will not be sentenced to hang) to use his wealth either to get Mink off or mitigate the legal punishment. The perfect logic of Mink's view is therefore perfectly absurd—and comic, even in the face of violence and bloodshed and horror, as his reaction to his successful bushwhacking of Houston reveals:

> here again, for the third time since he had pulled the trigger, was that conspiracy to frustrate and outrage his rights as a man and his feelings as a sentient creature... who realised now that he had known already, before he heard the horse and raised the gun, that that would happen which had happened: that he had pulled trigger on an enemy but had only slain a corpse to be hidden.
>
> (*The Hamlet*, pp. 218-219)

"They" (the fates and perhaps "Old Moster") have wronged him again, taking away from him the essence of the man he has hated and leaving, unjustly, the back-wrenching labor of a meaningless corpse to dispose of. What has the world degenerated to when a man cannot enjoy a good bushwhacking?

Thus Faulkner exhibits a gift for finding humor in the least promising material. If part of his success lies in the comic potential of perspectives like Mink's that express human absurdities, part of it also lies in an approach to humor which supports Elder Olson's contention that comedy minimizes the claim of something to be taken seriously.[15] For example, the murder of Houston is, properly, a serious event. Yet it is depleted of its seriousness by the rapacious actions of Lump Snopes who, oblivious to any notions of honorable murder, wishes to rob the body and refuses to leave until Mink takes him to the corpse. In hopes of stalling until Lump grows discouraged and leaves, Mink proposes a game of checkers. At first Lump cheats to win the amount of Houston's money that he has mentally allotted to Mink for the killing. But growing afraid that Mink will not share Houston's money with him if he wins too much, Lump desperately cheats to lose (*The*

Hamlet, pp. 245-248). Finally Mink has to club Lump over the head on two successive occasions to be rid of him.

A consequence of the episode is that the death of Houston has become a source of low comedy. Whatever promise of seriousness, or even tragedy, the event holds has now been reduced in worth. The solemn occasion of Mink's trial is also depleted of significance. The court goes about its serious business seriously, but Mink is hardly mindful of it. The exasperated judge shouts (*The Mansion*, p. 41): "'You, Snopes! Look at me. Did you or didn't you kill Jack Houston?' and he answered: 'Don't bother me now. Can't you see I'm busy?'"

Mink's one attempt to escape from Parchman is similarly robbed of high drama when Montgomery Ward Snopes persuades him that he must dress in drag. Five guards are required to stop Mink who fights with such ferocity that even his betrayer (and kinsman) is proud to witness the struggle, but again the heroism of the act is diminished—not by the foolhardiness of it but the absurdity: "the damn little thing," Montgomery Ward recalls, "looking like a little girl playing mama in the calico dress and sunbonnet..." (*The Mansion*, p. 85). Mink's honorable duty to kill Flem upon release from prison is not without its elements of heroism. Nevertheless, the heroism is mitigated by Mink's character as man-child and the pettiness of the grubby folk he meets along the way. The child in him, for example, delights in soft drinks and animal crackers. It also makes him prey to every con artist he meets. Discovering that Mink does not know the price of soft drinks, the proprietor of a country store cheats him of fifty cents, then gives a Negro a free drink to "run [Mink]...up to the crossroads" (261) before Mink can discover that he has been cheated. All that effort for half a dollar!

The operators of the pawn shop in Memphis have fun at Mink's expense as they, too, cheat him. While Mink examines the old forty-one caliber pistol that resembles "the fossil relic of some antediluvian terrapin" (291), the ten-dollar bill he has placed upon the counter disappears, and he is told that it will cost him an extra dollar if the shop has to "reclaim" the gun. By the time they are through Mink has surrendered up $12.10 for the old gun and three cartridges. All the while he is treated as if he is a retarded child—or he who gets slapped, the clown.

One of the subtlest and sublimest comic patterns in the Snopes trilogy is completed amid the splendid, poetic scene of Mink's death which concludes the novel. It consists of Mink's careful handling of money. The pattern begins when Mink, having determined to kill Houston, takes his last five dollars and heads for Jefferson to buy fresh

shotgun shells. Mink folds "the bill carefully into the fob pocket of his overalls" (*The Mansion*, p. 30) and catches the mail carrier for Jefferson. When Jefferson is in sight, he discovers the money is missing. Although he knows he cannot win, he challenges the mail carrier and loses the fight. Picking himself up, he thinks matter of factly: *"I not only could a saved a trip, I might still had them five dollars"* (31).

Thirty-eight years later Mink leaves prison on a similar mission of revenge with $13.85, ten-dollars of it in a bill secured inside the bib pocket with a safety pin. While he sleeps, he is robbed again (273). The cautious handling of money is thus established as part of a predictable pattern of events. So is the loss of the money each time Mink repeats the careful ritual of securing it. Thus when Ratliff and Gavin Stevens find him at night in the cellar or cave beneath the ruined house that was once home and give him $250, it is to be expected that Mink will fold the money carefully and secure it with the safety pin. And so he does. All that remains to repeat the established pattern is the loss of the money. But a quiet comic reversal occurs. Mink dies with the money still secure. He does not lose it; it is lost to him. He is as free of worldly things as all who have died before him:

> so that it was just the ground and the dirt that had to bother and worry and anguish with the passions and hopes and skeers, the justice and the injustice and the griefs, leaving the folks themselves easy now... himself among them, equal to any, good as any, brave as any, being inextricable from, anonymous with all of them.... (435)

Of a sudden the little comic reversal becomes a huge one. The Snopes trilogy, in which the most constant Snopes passion has been an unappeasable greed for money, comes to a humorously ironic conclusion with the ultimate reality of death in which neither hunger after money nor money itself has relevance. Made explicit only at the end of *The Mansion* via the evocations of sleep, cave, and negated materialism, Faulkner's transformation of "Rip Van Winkle" reveals the relevance of Irving's seminal story to his own vital concerns as well as the importance of humor to his expression of those concerns.

Faulkner has made double use of Irving in his treatment of rampant materialism. In his use of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," love offers greater potential value; but Faulkner's Ichabod, Labove, proves to be no more worthy of Eula than Ichabod proves worthy of Katrina. Moreover, Ichabod's hunger to devour the Van Tassel estate compares

with Flem's desire to devour the estate of Will Varner. But it is Faulkner's Rip Van Winkle, poverty stricken Mink, whose experiences with love and honor convey the final, eloquent repudiation of single-minded materialism which closes the trilogy. It is a closing which gives reality to Mink's un-Snopes-like faith in values more important than money. Throughout Mink is constant in his faith. Though he lacks funds by which to escape after killing Houston, he refuses to rob Houston's body and thereby profane the act of honorable murder. Nor does he accept the money Yettie offers him out of love because she had sold herself to acquire it. In Memphis, old and timorously out of touch with the world about him, he nevertheless spends virtually all of the money he has to purchase a weapon and ammunition so as to undertake a final quest after honorable revenge. Paranoid, vengeful, passionately obsessed, and murderous though he is, Mink exhibits, albeit in radically different ways, Rip Van Winkle's devotion to matters of greater importance than the worship of money.

Clearly Faulkner has created an avatar of Rip to address concerns akin to those of Washington Irving, as all of the similarities between Rip and Mink confirm. Consequently, the differences between the two narratives have less to say about Faulkner's concerns than about his humor. "Rip Van Winkle" subverts the early to bed, early to rise materialistic work ethic of Irving's day and all that an obsessive devotion to it entails. Dame Van Winkle, who embodies that work ethic, self destructs, and Rip emerges victorious, having done some rough toil for the sociable fun of helping a few neighbors but little else except to sleep, play, and outlive his wife. Albeit limited, Rip's is a victory of joy over joylessness, of art (Rip is the author of ghost stories, including his own) over practical achievements, of work for psychic enrichment over work for profit only, of play (Schiller: "'man is only whole when he plays'")[16] over grave responsibility. To Irving, who believed that life is also to be enjoyed, this victory is important, but he handles it and everything else in the story with charming amiability. Such geniality comes from a writer who, though subversive, accepted the belief of his literary masters that the way to inform society of its errors and correct them is through an amiable humor which provokes thoughtful laughter.[17] Whatever doubts he may have had about correcting mankind, Irving exercised that amiability to freshen and increase the mainstream of American letters and humor.

Much more than Irving and probably more than Twain, Faulkner views man as irremediably flawed and thus scarcely susceptible of amiable correction.[18] He evokes the cognitive resources of humor to

illuminate the human condition as he sees it.[19] At the same time he extends the range of American humor into areas that in Irving's day would have been considered the provinces of tragedy. Faulkner's humor therefore emerges from contexts that are more pessimistic and more turbulent, painful, and ugly. Those contexts account for a remarkable pattern of likeness and difference between archetype and avatar. For instance, neither Rip nor Mink can turn a profit. In Rip the flaw is "an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labor" (30). The consequence is that Rip is a misfit in a capitalist society, a comic ne'r do well who happily converts work into profitless play and who in his old age is saved from want because, while asleep, he acquires a son-in-law who gladly profits from his labor and gladly supports Rip, too. In Mink the flaw is no aversion to monetary gain but a similar inability to convert work into profit, no matter how herculean his efforts. No son-in-law comes to his rescue like a god out of a machine. The consequences are a cruel poverty and a murderous, baffled rage that are comic only after Mink reveals his paranoia. To express the different consequences of their common failing requires a different comic climate and that, in turn, creates a different effect—even after it becomes clear that Faulkner's avatar of Rip Van Winkle is also committed to values of greater worth to him than money.

Faulkner's act of transforming and incorporating "Rip Van Winkle" into the Mink Snopes portions of the trilogy creates something new without distorting the essence of Irving's great story. This achievement, when recognized, is worthy of the most thoughtful appreciation. Faulkner could accomplish this feat only by working knowingly and confidently from the original center of American humor, where Irving resides, even as he added to that humor, expanding both its center and its boundaries like no other writer before him.[20] The presence of "Rip Van Winkle" in the trilogy suggests that the definitive study of Faulkner's humor, if there is to be one, may virtually be a definitive study of American humor up until Faulkner wrote his last humorous passage. As for the first and most famous American short story, its value as a resource, like that of *Huckleberry Finn*, grows as modern/contemporary literature grows. It is informative to note that "Rip Van Winkle" figures as importantly in the urban environment of Saul Bellow's Chicago (*Humboldt's Gift* 1975) as it does in Faulkner's rural world of farm and small-town Yoknapatawpha.

NOTES

[1]"Introduction: The Continuing Adventures of *Huckleberry Finn*." *One Hundred Years of Huckleberry Finn: The Boy, His Book, and American Culture*, ed. Robert Sattelmeyer and J. Donald Crowley (Columbia, Mo.,1985), p. 1.

[2]Ernest Hemingway, *The Green Hills of Africa*. Permabooks ed. (Garden City, 1954); first ed. (New York, 1935). "'All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*... All American writing comes from that. There was nothing before. There has been nothing as good since,'" p. 19.

[3]On this influence, see Cecil D. Eby, Jr., "Ichabod Crane in Yoknapatawpha," *GaR*, 16 (1967), 465-69.

[4]*The Hamlet*. Vintage Books Edition; rpt. of 1940 ed. (New York, 1958), p. 122. Subsequent references are included in the text.

[5]"The Levity of *Light in August*" (1984), in *Faulkner and Humor*., ed. Doreen Fowler and Ann J. Abadie (Jackson, Miss., 1986), pp. 47-48.

[6]"Introduction," *Humor of the old Southwest* (Boston, 1964), p. xii.

[7]*America's Humor from Poor Richard to Doonesbury* (New York, 1978), p. 168.

[8]Philip Young, "Fallen From Time: Rip Van Winkle," *Three Bags Full* (New York, 1967), p. 227.

[9]Young, pp. 227, 228.

[10]Marcel Heiman, "Rip Van Winkle: A Psychoanalytic Note on the Story and Its Author," *AI*, 16 (1959), 42.

[11]William L. Hedges, *Washington Irving: An American Study 1802-1832* (Baltimore, 1965), p. 137.

[12]"Rip Van Winkle," *The Sketch Book. Complete Works*, (Boston, 1978), 8:31.

[13]*The Mansion* (New York, 1955), 430-431. Subsequent references are included in the text.

[14]Gerald Mast develops the concept of "comic climate" in *The Comic Mind: Comedy and the Movies*, 2nd ed. (Chicago,1979).

[15]*The Theory of Comedy* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1968), p. 23.

[16]Quoted by Eugene Fink, "The Oasis of Happiness: Toward an Ontology of Play," *Game, Play, Literature*. Ed. Jacques Ehrmann (Boston, 1968), p. 20.

[17]On the belief embraced by Irving's mentors (Goldsmith, et al.) that humor should be amiable, see Stuart M. Tave, *The Amiable Humorist* (Chicago, 1960).

[18]The French called attention to Faulkner's perception of man as irreparably flawed. "'As Lawrence is wrapped up in sexuality,' wrote Andre Malraux in 1933, 'Faulkner buries himself in the irremediable.'" Quoted in Maurice Coindreau, "William Faulkner in France," *The Time of William Faulkner* (Columbia, S. C., 1971), p. 80.

[19]See William F. Lynch, *Christ and Apollo* (New York, 1960), p. 104: "In terms...of its peculiar images, it [comedy] is the most cognitive and least magical of the arts."

[20]On Irving's place in the history of American humor, see John Seelye, "Root and Branch, Irving and American Humor," *NCF*, 38 (1984), 415-425.

RECURRENCE AND REDEMPTION: THE FALLEN VISION IN BLAKE'S POETRY AND DESIGN

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> Then was the serpent temple form'd, image of infinite
> Shut up in finite revolutions, and man became an Angel,
> Heaven a mighty circle turning, God a tyrant crown'd.
>
> W. Blake, *Europe: A Prophecy*, 10: 21-23

In Blake the bound circle represents the recurrent world of time. The vision of eternity is achieved by the opening of the centre. Redemption, an apocalyptic vision transcending the circle, is attained through the heightened individual imagination.

Since Blake regards the world of nature as the passageway to a visionary world, there is a unity of vision between his striving towards the world of art and imagination and his concomitant acceptance of the world of experience which he regards as temporary, limited in vision and partially corrupt and thus imperatively in need of deliverance. In examining Blake's concept of creation in his poetry and design we see that his advocacy of striving towards the world of art to achieve apocalypse and redemption provides as well a coherent view of life in the material and mutable world of time and space. In Blake's transformation of biblical tradition into a personalized myth of redemption through the imaginative vision of the individual, the "centre" of the envisaged circle of the harmony of the four Zoas fails to hold, since the power of the Zoas is not equally divided. When one Zoa tries to gain dominance over another, the circle disintegrates. The circle is transcended in the moment of unity. Thus "man, entrapped in his labyrinthine existence, will ultimately be redeemed through love, imagination and forgiveness of sins by the divine immanence within him. The four Zoas, the Spectres and Emanations will ultimately be perfectly united through the redemptive role of Los. Blake does not attempt to explain the cause of the Fall nor the precipitating cause of apocalypse and redemption."[1]

In the vision of the fallen world we observe Blake's circular images of expansion and contraction, the vortex, the centre and circumference, the globe and the coiled serpent. In Blake's design, which supplies an ironic comment on his poetry, the contrast between the fallen and unfallen creations is suggested by the sharply distinguished outlines of objects presented with the minutest detail that appear as images that are

barren and circular, contrasting with the dynamic forms representing unfallen spirits. Again, the immensity of infinity in the design is contrasted to the minute detail in the mortal figures and emphasized through it.

The style of Blake's illustrations plays a significant role in the movement toward abstraction in Romantic art. W. J. T. Mitchell, in his study of Blake's style as epistemology, traces some of Blake's stylistic borrowings of space and colour from the medieval illuminations and sixteenth-century Italian water-colour paintings. Human figures are seen to have been influenced by Michelangelo, the affected distinctiveness of the Mannerists and the classicized Gothic of English funerary sculpture. As we also find in his poetry, there are symbolic motifs from the hermetic influences of the alchemists and cabbalists and the emblem tradition. The influence of Fuseli is seen in Blake's portrayals of the fantastic and grotesque, of the academic tradition in his characterization of the heroic and classical, and of Flaxman and Cumberland in his ideal and linear forms. With regard to contemporaries, there is no evidence of Blake and Goya knowing of each other's exploration of giant forms and supernatural dream states, while Turner's experiments with whirlwinds do not give any evidence of an awareness of Blake's spiral forms and vortices.[2]

Both Flaxman and Blake represent abstraction, the absence of a concrete reality. While Flaxman's technique is to withdraw from the world of sensory qualities, Blake's method is to withdraw from visual sensation, a prominent characteristic of pictorial and epistemological realism since the Renaissance, a purely rational, mathematical perspective which Blake termed "Single vision & Newton's sleep."[3] This style of abstraction in Blake, the withdrawing from visual perspective, did not detract from his portrayal of sensory quality, but conversely emphasized other sensory effects, such as heat, light and the vitality of the human flesh. Thus in Blake's abstraction the visual norm of concreteness is replaced with "a more comprehensive, multi-sensory, or synaesthetic norm."[4] The use of this technique of synaesthesia places Blake in the mainstream of Romanticism. In Janet Warner's comprehensive study of Blake's use of the human form she affirms that Blake's stylistic borrowings equipped him for the expression of his own genius for "breathing living flame into driest bones."[5] With a rich sensory vitality the unfallen world is perceived through the fallen as the divine is perceived through the human:

> The poet who wrote of "the human form divine" and who said "All deities reside in the human breast" made his visual

> divine image reflect traditional icons of the human body as an ideal measure and gave it also the quality of motion. For the dancelike movement of Albion in both *Albion rose* and *Jerusalem* 76 is the subtle but central quality which distinguishes Albion, the living human, from the passive crucified Jesus. It expresses visually the idea of the way the divine must live in the human—that eternal life for man is a dance "of Eternal Death," continuous self-sacrifice for one's fellows. The outstretched arms of the standing form are the connecting link between Christ and Albion which contributes to the visible expression of Albion as the "spiritual body of mankind." (p. 179)

With his technique of portraying the subject beyond the visual Blake can depict the parodic or demonic as well as the sublime. Warner gives as an example Blake's use of the gesture of outstretched arms which can represent both spiritual life and spiritual death, in accordance with the mental state of the subject represented. On the one hand, outstretched arms signifying the cross have associations of divinity, self-sacrifice and spiritual regeneration while, on the other hand, in the aspect of fallen vision, they signify human error which turns divine creativity into spiritual death (p. 177).

W. B. Yeats remarks that Blake's technique of achieving the Sublime in his art lay in effecting a distinct outline and a concentration of the minutest details, all of which combine into a total structure of inspired vitality and permanence. To emphasize imperishable lineaments of beauty he withdrew shadow and reflected light:

> The limitation of his view was from the very intensity of his vision; he was a too literal realist of imagination, as others are of nature, and because he believed that the figures seen by the mind's eye, when exalted by inspiration, were "eternal existences," symbols of divine essences, he hated every grace of style that might obscure their lineaments....Inspiration was to see the permanent and characteristic in all forms...Leave out this line and you leave out life itself.[6]

Yeats points to the characteristics of abundance, exuberance, determinate outline, the avoidance of generalization and emphasizing particulars as the key rules in Blake's method of expressing the eternal beyond the visible. He noted Blake's use of circular images in his depiction of both the fallen and unfallen creations as they occur bridged together in *Jerusalem*, Plate 91. Such Blakean passages may to some

degree have influenced the apocalyptic vision of Yeats's earliest poetry based on the merging of the symbolic circles of time and eternity:

> There is a beautiful passage in "Jerusalem," in which the merely mortal part of the mind, "the spectre," creates "pyramids of pride," and "pillars in the deepest hell to reach the heavenly arches," and seeks to discover wisdom in "the spaces between the stars," not "in the stars," where it is, but the immortal part makes all his labours vain, and turns his pyramids to "grains of sand," his "pillars" to "dust on the fly's wing," and makes of "his starry heavens a moth of gold and silver mocking his anxious grasp." So when man's desire to rest from spiritual labour, and his thirst to fill his art with mere sensation, and memory, seem upon the point of triumph, some miracle transforms them to a new inspiration; and here and there among the pictures born of sensation and memory is the murmuring of a new ritual, the glimmering of new talismans and symbols.
>
> (p. 50)

Yeats, in his exposition of The Song of Los in the critical edition of Blake's works, explains Blake's concept of the fallen world as the division of time from eternity, and conversely the vision of eternity as the mental unification of all divided things such as the four elements and the four corners of the earth. The divine imagination is envisaged by mortals through the symbolic creations of poetry, song or music:

> In this book Blake says that he will sing that song, that creative-imaginative impulse - for such is a song - of Los, the prophetic spirit who, in the person of Time, brings division to ultimate unity by redividing it; until, by the final law of contraries, it calls up its own opposite.
>
> This creation was achieved by the four forms of idea called elements. In the region of the heart, when created, life began there, for it began everywhere. The instruments of music used for mental productivity are harps. Each of the four points has its own inner four, and in heart-formed Africa, were four of these creative instruments.
>
> Creation is the union of divided things by the power of mind.
>
> In the spiritual world it began when Urizen, the once bright constructive power, made his temple the heart of

man. He then faded, though once the "Prince of Light," - for his power was spent.[7]

Blake's fallen world is the world governed by Reason, which, by its limitation, gives full credence to the world of the senses:

> These were the Churches: Hospitals: Castles: Palaces:
> Like nets & gins & traps to catch the joys of Eternity
> And all the rest a desart:
> Till like a dream Eternity was obliterated & erased...
>
> Thus the terrible race of Los and Enitharmon gave
> Laws and Religions to the sons of Har binding them more
> And more to Earth: closing and restraining:
> Till a Philosophy of Five Senses was complete
> Urizen wept & gave it into the Hands of Newton & Locke.
> (*The Song of Los* in Erd pp. 67-68)

Blake's illustration of the frontispiece to *Europe: A Prophecy*, known as "The Ancient of Days Striking the First Circle of the Earth,"[8] shows an aged man with white beard and hair bending downwards while kneeling on one knee and stretching his left hand downwards and pressing a huge pair of compasses onto the top of a sphere, this act being symbolic of Creation. The Creator is a Urizenic figure encircling the compasses he manipulates.[9] In *Newton*[10] which is reminiscent of the illustration to the frontispiece in *Europe: A Prophecy*, Newton, representing the institution of reason and mathematical vision, replaces the Urizenic figure constructing the world with a pair of compasses. The concept of the compasses denotes limitation and restriction.[11] Here again the figure bends downwards to design a geometric diagram of a material centre bound by a material circumference while it demonstratively turns its back on the heavenly creation. Newton's physical posture and his eyes bent downwards and turning outwards suggest the single vision of rationality and death governed by a material universe and the human body and mind.[12] As in "The Ancient of Days," it is the left hand which performs the act of creation as opposed to the right, symbolizing the designing of a world which is material, transitory and malevolent.[13] The left forefinger leads the movement of the compass. The designing takes place on a scroll, a symbol of reason and dogma, suggesting the institutions of "Churches: Hospitals: Castles: Palaces" of a material universe. The sensory world is emphasized by the affected, strong, muscular lineaments and sturdy proportions of Newton's naked body. Newton's head forming an apex of

a triangle continuing from the points of the compasses, similarly to the head of the Urizenic figure forming the centre of a circle in "The Ancient of Days," symbolizes Reason as the ruling power. The background of the picture seems to be in complete darkness while light is focused on the compasses that are controlled by the left hand. Newton is crouched at the bottom of a downward sloping rock, symbolic perhaps of the limit of the Fall.[14] Strongly delineated as he concentrates on his creation, he is posed between the light and the dark. Robert N. Essick who demonstrates connections between *Newton* and "The Ancient of Days" remarks that the greyish blues and greens of *Newton* possibly representing the sea of time and space and suggesting the design as an underwater scene establishes a link between Newton and Urizen who rolled thundrously through "an ocean of voidness unfathomable" (Erd p. 73).[15] Anne Mellor aptly comments that the lichen-covered rock suggests the bottom of a cave, thereby linking Newton's world to Plato's world of deluded humanity that perceives only the reflected shadows of truth.[16] We may thus see Blake's strong sense of irony, deriding the inadequacy of a rationally governed world. Significantly, the figure of Newton occupies the centre of the design, since the personality of Urizen is central to the fallen creation. With Reason at the centre controlling the circle, it is mathematically bounded, symbolizing the constriction and oppression of law and dogma. However W. J. T. Mitchell, noting that the vortex may symbolize expanding vision, draws attention to the vortical curling of the end of Newton's scroll as a sign that Newton will dispense with his obsession with single vision. He will persist in his error long enough for the scroll to coil itself gradually into a complete spiral and become a prophetic scroll. Then Newton will lift his head and eyes upwards towards the vision of Imagination.[17] Newton redeemed from his abstract ideas represents a prototype of humanity's redemption from purely rational thought as symbolized by the bounded circle or globe.[18] Los announces the fallen creation which will be redeemed by him at the end of the cycles of time:

> I saw the finger of God go forth
> Upon my Furnaces, from within the Wheels of Albions Sons:
> Fixing their Systems, permanent: by mathematic power
> Giving a body to Falshood that it may be cast off for ever.
> (J, 1: 12: Erd p. 155).

Northrop Frye notes that the compass outlines the shape of the human skull as well as the circumference of the fallen world (p. 433).

One of Blake's fundamental images of creation is that of the centre and the circumference of a circle. In fallen creation the centre and circumference become material and of malevolent connotation. At the fall of Albion, who in his fallen state is materialized into the human body, the four Zoas which have dispersed into the four directions of the compass communicate with the external world by means of the four senses. Luvah or the heart in the East turns inwards, becoming the unattainable centre, "unapproachable for ever."[19] In his physical human form Albion's vision is limited and constricted to the world of the senses:

> All his Affections now appear withoutside...
> Albions Circumference was clos'd: his Centre began darkning
> Into the Night of Beulah... (J, 1: 19: 17-37 Erd p. 164.)

In the fallen vision the divine creator who is the centre of the eternal creation is parodied as Satan who represents Selfhood and gyrates his constricted and corrupt vision in a bound circle. We note Blake's ironic treatment of the fallen condition. Satan, at the centre of man's affections, motivates a rationally oriented universe where man strives for power. Dominated by the Urizenic tyrant, man in his spectral form is motivated by self-love:

> I am your Rational Power O Albion & that Human Form
> You call Divine, is but a Worm seventy inches long...
>
> So spoke the Spectre to Albion. he is the Great Selfhood
> Satan: Worshipd as God by the Mighty Ones of the Earth
> Having a white Dot calld a Center from which branches out
> A Circle in continual gyrations. this became a Heart
> From which sprang numerous branches varying their motions.
> (J, 2: 33: 5-21 Erd p. 173.)

At the Fall of Man the sublime centre and circumference materialize into the limits of time and space. The harmony of the Zoas is disrupted. The disintegrated centre is the centre of the fallen creation:

> All fell towards the Center, sinking downwards in dire ruin...
> ...but in the midst...
> Is Built eternally the sublime Universe of Los and Enitharmon.
> (J, 3: 59: 17-21 Erd p. 209)[20]

In contrast to Blake's vortical images of dynamic forms, whirlwinds, maelstroms, prophetic scrolls and the spiralling serpents,

denoting perpetual self-renewal, associated with fallen vision, he also has static curvilinear patterns of "closed" forms, indicating barrenness or constriction, dead tree trunks, gravestones, caves, chains, legal tablets, rocks and crouching human figures. The limitation of purely sensual existence is symbolized not only by the circle or globe but also by vortical forms. In contrast to the lively dynamic movements of the whirlwinds denoting the powerful struggle for sublime vision, the vortical images of sensual limitation are rigid with ironic suggestions of narrowness, lowliness or malevolence.

The dynamic "vortex" vision of Eternity is parodied in the fallen world by globular sensual images, the globe of blood or the globe of water such as raindrops denoting the material world and tears, indicative of human passion. In addition the organs of sense portrayed with rigid circular lineaments denote constriction. The organs of sense are also the portals of communication between the earthly globe of the Mundane Shell and the dome-shaped human skull. In fallen vision the revolutions of man's organs of sense are turned downwards and outwards, indicating movement away from internal vision. The eyes of internal vision, when beholding the "Abyss", are transformed "Rolling round into two little Orbs & closed in two little Caves".[21] Upward spiralling movement becomes "barr'd and petrify'd against the infinite".[22] Ironically Blake describes the ear as "a whirlpool fierce to draw creations in".[23] The process of the Fall, when man takes on physical form, is related to *The Four Zoas* and *Jerusalem.* The human form is described as resembling the encircled serpent, with its connotations of finiteness, passivity, obliviousness and death. The cycle of Nature is decreed:

> I will turn the volutions of your Ears outward; & bend your Nostrils
> Downward; & your Fluxile Eyes englob'd, roll round in fear
> Your withring Lips & Tongue shrink up into a narrow circle
> Till into narrow forms you creep.
>
> (FZ, 3: Erd p. 328.)

The paralysed vortical images of the organs of sense of fallen man are a parody of vortical vision, which denotes the psychological breakthrough of imaginative vision. In Blake, the dome-shaped inside of the Mundane Shell, representing the starry Heavens, opens out and the world of time and space becomes manifested in Eternity and Infinity. The macrocosm of the heavens is the objective external reflection of the landscape of the soul. Man within the Mundane Shell, caught inextricably in innumerable cycles within himself as well as in the

cycles imposed on him from without, exists, as conceived by Blake, in a Vortex of Wheels. Before the Fall there was no circumference beyond man. The sun, moon, stars, the centre of the earth and the sea were all contained in the mind and body of man.[24] To conceive the divine vision the centre expands and opens and the vortex turns inside out:

> What is above is Within, for every-thing in Eternity is translucent:
> The circumference is Within: Without is formed the Selfish Center
> And the Circumference still expands going forward to Eternity.
> And the Center has Eternal States! these States we now explore...
>
> For all are Men in Eternity. Rivers Mountains Cities Villages,
> All are Human & when you enter into their Bosoms you walk
> In Heavens & Earths; as in your own Bosom you bear your Heaven
> And Earth, & all you behold, tho it appears Without it is Within
> In your Imagination of which this World of Mortality is but a Shadow.
>
> (J, 3: 71: 6-19 Erd p. 225).

The vortex is related to the serpentine form, symbolizing the ever-revolving passions in the Circle of Destiny. This idea is already found in Milton, where the serpentine labyrinth is symbolical of the fallen world ensnared in the labyrinth of the serpentine vortex, the form taken by Satan at the Fall. In Blake's symbolic view of the world of the redeemed man, the circumference of the vortex within the Mundane Shell expands and the centre opens as his vision becomes infinite and eternal. Ironically, however, it is through the cyclical process of human experience in the world of generation, the serpentine labyrinth, that salvation must come. Thus Enitharmon says to Los:

> When in the Deeps beneath I gatherd of this ruddy fruit
> It was by that I knew that I had Sinnd & then I knew
> That without a ransom I could not be savd from Eternal death.
>
> (FZ, VII: Erd p. 369.)

This ransom was:

> ...not to be Effected without Cares & Sorrows & Troubles
> Of six thousand Years of self denial and of bitter Contrition.
> (FZ, VII: Erd p. 369.)

The conception, originating in Plato, of the world as suspended from Heaven by a golden chain, conveys the idea of the divine power manifesting itself throughout the universe:

> Far off th' Empyreal Heav'n, extended wide
> In circuit, undetermin'd square or round,
> With Opal Tow'rs and Battlements adorn'd
> Of living Sapphire...
> And fast by hanging in a golden Chain
> This pendant world, in bigness as a Star
> Of smallest magnitude close by the Moon.
> (PL II, 1047-1053).

Satan journeys along the causeway from Hell through God's creation:

> Paved after him a broad and beat'n way
> Over the dark Abyss, whose boiling Gulf
> Timely endur'd a Bridge of wondrous length
> From Hell continu'd reaching th' utmost Orb
> Of this frail World.
> (PL II, 1026-1030).

The symbolism of the stairway from Earth to Heaven, permeated with a sense of mystery and sanctity by its comparison to Jacob's ladder, may be identified with the imagery referred to above of the golden chain suspended from Heaven to Earth, which also conveys the idea of the earthly linked to the divine:

> The Stairs were such as whereon *Jacob* saw
> Angels ascending and descending, bands
> Of Guardians bright...
> ...*This is the Gate of Heav'n.*
> (PL III, 510-515).

Whereas in Milton the Platonic picture of the created world is linked to the eternal world by a golden chain suspended from Heaven, in Blake the stars are created in the pattern of a golden chain to form the outer barrier of the Mundane Shell:

> Thus were the stars of heaven created like a golden chain

To bind the Body of Man to heaven from falling into the Abyss
Each took his station, & his course began with sorrow & care.

(FZ, II: Erd p. 322).

For Blake the starry universe is a beautiful but dead world when viewed as a material manifestation. The voids between the stars are the Satanic wheels of the mill which grinds Albion to dust, and Blake links them with the name of Newton, representing the scientific view that all vision comes only from the external material world. The stars are designed in the form of a golden chain in order to protect Albion from the abyss, but the chain descends with him into complete darkness. In its descent the chain loses its golden and benign character and becomes iron and oppressive. It is the chain with which Orc is bound upon Mt. Sinai and is symbolical of the restrictiveness of the moral law. Yet Blake also ascribes to the chain a redeeming function. Albion's ultimate release is anticipated, for the Creator sets a limit to the Fall as Albion's path is described as circular. As the chain originated in the unfallen world and will return to it at the end of the cycle, the restrictive doctrinaire moral law will ultimately be annulled. Thus the transitory nature of the moral law is indicated by the chain's descent into the world of Time and its return at the end of the cycle to Eternity in its perfect form.

Milton's depiction of the "sovran Architect"[25] designing the divine creation with "golden Compasses"[26] is parodied in Blake by the Urizenic figure or the figure of Newton designing the fallen creation. Milton's description of the building of Pandemonium, Mammon's city of gold towering towards the glittering "golden Hinges" of the Gates of Heaven, which parodies the city of celestial light created by the divine architect who, with "golden Compasses," designs the mystic circles of perfection and the spheres of the universe, is imitated in Blake's vivid description of "Urizens strong power", fallen man's construction of the Mundane Shell, "a Golden World," "porches round the heavens," "pillard halls" and "eternal wandering stars."[27] This scene is climaxed by the appearance of the "Divine Vision" which is clothed in "Luvah's robes of blood,"[28] the blood of sacrifice, since man must undergo the fallen state in order to become liberated.[29]

Although Yeats admired Blake's vision of the unfallen world, "the shapes of beauty haunting our moments of inspiration (Yeats, p. 42)," in Blake's poetry and design, even in the idealism of his formative

years, he was not in agreement with Blake's uncompromising, ironic view of the world of man in nature:

> The errors in the handiwork of exalted spirits are as the more fantastical errors in their lives; as Coleridge's opium cloud; as Villiers de l'Isle Adam's candidature for the throne of Greece; as Blake's anger against causes and purposes he but half understood; as the flickering madness an Eastern scripture would allow in august dreamers; for he who half lives in eternity endures a rending of the structures of the mind, a crucifixion of the intellectual body. (p. 57)

However, Blake sees the imaginative goal of man beyond the fallen world where:

> The dark Religions are departed & sweet Science reigns.
> (FZ, IX: Erd p. 407)

In the poetry and design depicting the fallen vision of Blake we have in particular the image of the circle as "closed form." Corresponding to the phases of the dark and full moon in Yeats we have in Blake demonic and apocalyptic wheels. Blake's illustrations are replete with these symbolic wheels, in particular in his Illuminated Books, Young's *Night Thoughts* and the *Divine Comedy*. In the plate to *Purgatorio* Canto XXXII, Beatrice is reunited with Dante, appearing to him on a symbolic chariot which, while descending, undergoes transformations signifying the historical changes of the church.[30] The great wheel formed by the serpent's body is foreshadowed in the illustrations to his own prophetic works, in particular in *Jerusalem Plate 41*. We see the chariot which is drawn by serpent bodies with interwoven necks and spiralling tails that form wheels ablaze with the flames of the Furnaces of Los and on which ride two eagle-like men with wings held high. Here, as Erdman explains, "serpent power and eagle spirit...tempt Los and Urizen to come under one yoke."[31] Thus the spiralling serpents would symbolize wheels progressing from fallen Nature to Redemption. In Blake's illustration to *Paradiso* Canto XXXI-XXXIII, in which Beatrice leaves Dante to return to Heaven and Saint Bernard describes the realm of the Eternal home of the blessed as being in the shape of a great Rose, the artist depicts the rose as a wheel forming the foundation of paradise.[32]

Demonic and apocalyptic wheels are often contrasted with one another in the poetry of Blake. The age of science, logical thought and materialism represented by the looms of Bacon, Newton and Locke are

pictured as turning outwards since they denote an emphasis on outward form. Inner vision, on the other hand, is symbolized by eyes turning inwards or by "wheel within wheel." These contrasting wheels moving in opposite directions also symbolize war and peace:

> I turn my eyes to the Schools & Universities of Europe
> And there behold the Loom of Locke whose Woof rages dire
> Washd by the Water-wheels of Newton. black the cloth
> In heavy wreathes folds over every Nation; cruel Works
> Of many Wheels I view, wheel without wheel, with cogs tyrannic
> Moving by compulsion each other: not as those in Eden: which
> Wheel within Wheel in freedom revolve in harmony & peace.
>
> (J, 1: 15: Erd p. 159).

Similarly, the eyed wheels within wheels in the vision of Ezekiel symbolizing the height of spiritual vision, as described, for example, in *The Four Zoas*, are challenged by the oppressive forces of reason, dogma and materialism on their entry into the fallen creation, the world of external forms symbolized by single vision, sleep or death:

> Terrific ragd the Eternal Wheels of intellect terrific ragd
> The living creatures of the wheels in the Wars of Eternal life
> But perverse rolld the wheels of Urizen & Luvah back reversd
> Downwards & outwards consuming in the wars of Eternal Death.
>
> (FZ, I: Erd p. 313).

In Blake's water colour version of *The Last Judgment* in the Petworth Collection,[33] the over-arching eyed figures turn inwards towards the divine presence. Grant[34] notes the more convincing vision of *The Last Judgment* in the Rosenwald Collection,[35] where the company turns its wheels outwards from the divine vision just as Ezekiel had prophesied of the multitude progressing towards the apocalypse.

The cycles of fallen nature superseded by the cycles of redemption are shown in *Blake's Illustrations to the Poems of Thomas Gray*. In his design to Gray's "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College"[36] Blake interprets the poet's feelings of misery and alienation as consonant with

his view of the brutally restrictive, punitive and rationalistic environment of the traditional educational system as a facet of the world of Experience antipathetic to the imagination. As Gray states, the schoolboys will not only be the future victims of Experience but they will also be those "the fury Passions tear," and Blake interprets this to mean that the schoolboys will become the products of their own Urizenic environment. Gray's description of the passions, "the vultures of the mind" breeding "Anger," "Fear," "Jealousy," "Despair" and "Sorrow," is an apt representation of Blake's fallen cycle of humanity. In the illustration Blake depicts Gray's personifications of human passions, his "vultures of the mind", and on top of them a circling serpent which bears the epigraph to the illustration, while above birds are flying into the distant sky. Keynes identifies the green arched serpent's head as the symbol of Flattery.[37] However, as Irene Tayler notes, Blake shows an opposing view in his illustration to Gray's "Progress of Poesy."[38] The "birds of boding" which represent the passions in the illustration to "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" are cited here in the epigraph from Gray's "Progress of Poesy," while the illustration itself shows the sun god Hyperion, associated with the sky, redeeming fallen humanity through the power of poetic genius. The sphere of the flaming sun in Blake is symbolic of poetic inspiration. As Keynes notes, in Hyperion's aerial chariot carrying shafts of war these are at the same time rays of sunlight dispelling the spectres of Night below the chariot. The contrast of their anguished grey heads offsets the radiant light above. The light of inspiration is shown to be victorious over the night spectres who represent the evil spirits of materialism.[39] The lack of ultimate meaning in the repetitive fallen cycle of Experience, Blake's Circle of Destiny, such as represented by the life in Eton College with its emphasis on immediate and material goals, is redeemed by the spirit of poetic inspiration symbolized by the flaming sphere of the Sun.

Blake's attack on limited vision caused by law and restriction applies on the religious, moral and political as well as intellectual planes. Limitation of vision, Urizenic reason and the imposed oppression of the Female Will in the fallen cycle are therefore denoted in his illustrations and poetic works by images of oppression such as chains, nets, webs, briars and serpentine loops around dead tree trunks, images of passivity such as roots, embryos, corpses and tombs, images denoting limited form such as the skeleton, images of destruction of purpose such as the thwarted or cruelly bound body, animals associated in mythology with human oppression such as the serpent, dragon,

vulture and worm, water images denoting materialism such as the ocean, flood or rain, since it is believed to be in the waters of chaos that creation originated, images of barrenness such as dead trees, stone and rock, darkness and abysses and images of enclosure such as caves and, most prominently, circles. Tyranny and oppression through reason and law are represented by the book, scroll and decalogue, while the compass denotes a world governed by mathematical and scientific law. In the opening plate of the [*First*] *Book of Urizen* Urizen is pictured as an aged man sitting with bended knees and enrooted on top of an open book. Erdman notes that the closed book on which he is transcribing may be seen as a coffin lid which thus spells death, and that the decalogue placed behind Urizen is made of stone, denoting sterility, while a barren trunk and branch from the Tree of Mystery form a cave-like arch above the tyrannical old man.[40]

Fallen cycles designated by the symbolic circle are replete in Blake's illustration entitled *Milton and the Spirit of Plato, Il Penseroso*.[41] As Anne Mellor notes,[42] Plato drawn as an old Urizenic figure imposes his fallen vision of reason on Milton. Venus, Mars and Jupiter, the three classical gods, dominate the learning of Plato. In the left circle above Plato's head Venus reigns, denoting the domination of the Female Will. Mars, the god of war, is shown as a tyrant with a spear and with the decalogue in front of him in the upper central circle. In the third circle, Jupiter, representing mathematical and abstract reason, presides, holding compass and spear. His slave is seen to roll the mill wheel symbolizing mathematical computation. Controlling these three spheres, the three Fates are seen at the top of Plato's heavens, spinning and cutting the thread of mortal life. In the three spheres attached to the Urizenic figure of Plato, Plato imposes his fallen vision of reason on Milton and the three spheres in turn illustrate episodes of fallen nature in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In Venus's sphere, the dominion of the Female Will, one can see the expulsion from Eden; in the sphere of Mars the god of war can be seen as representing the rebellion of Satan, while the tyrant Jupiter holding spear and compass can be seen as the Creator constructing the fallen creation with the mathematical computation of the golden compasses:

> Then stay'd the fervid Wheels, and in his hand
> He took the golden Compasses, prepar'd
> In God's Eternal store, to circumscribe
> This Universe, and all created things.
>
> (PL VII, 224-227)[43]

In Blake's notebook the poet throws out a challenge to the Urizenic oppressor, the god who rules by restrictive, moral and religious law and whom he names Nobodaddy:

> To God
> If you have formd a Circle to go into
> Go into it yourself & see how you would do.[44]

Here in this epigram we have the seed of Blake's revolutionary thought expressed in terms of the symbolic circle.

He explains this in "There is No Natural Religion" [second series]:

> Man's perceptions are not bounded by organs of perception; he perceives more than sense (tho' ever so acute) can discover.
>
> Reason, or the ratio of all we have already known, is not the same that it shall be when we know more....
>
> The bounded is loathed by its possessor. The same dull round even of a universe, would soon become a mill with complicated wheels.
>
> (K p. 97)

He expresses his revolt against the deistic god of reason denoting man's limited perception in the fallen world, against the Jewish god of law enforcing constriction and oppression and against the tradition of biblical revelation since it does not allow for the freedom of the individual imagination. He asserts man's dominance over God by his symbolic breaking through the bounded circle and his claim to the power of unbounded vision:

> He who sees the Infinite in all things, sees God.
> He who sees the Ratio only, sees himself only.
>
> (K p. 98)

Blake ironically describes the fallen, constricted, corporeal existence:

> ...the Inhabitants...
> ...shrunk up from existence...
> ...forgot their eternal life...
> No more could they rise at will
> In the infinite void, but bound down
> To earth by their narrowing perceptions...
> And form'd laws of prudence, and call'd them

The eternal laws of God.
(*The Book of Urizen, Chap. IX*, Pl. 28, Erd pp. 82-83)

The most recurrent theme throughout the poetry of Blake is the world of Eternity, represented by Imagination, opposed to the world of Time, the world of the senses. These fallen and unfallen cycles are also prominent in his illustrations, of which we consider only a few important ones. The pinnacle of poetic imagination is centrally represented as fourfold vision in four-faced creatures and this is contrasted with the world limited by human reason in the cycle of time which is symbolized by serpents entwining the human body:

I see the four-fold Man. The Humanity in deadly sleep
And its fallen Emanation. The Spectre & its cruel Shadow.
I see the Past, Present & Future, existing all at once
Before me; O Divine Spirit sustain me on thy wings!
That I may awake Albion from his long & cold repose.
For Bacon and Newton sheathd in dismal steel, their terrors hang
Like iron scourges over Albion, Reasonings like vast Serpents
Infold around my limbs, bruising my minute articulations.
(J, 1: 15: Erd p. 159).

The vision of Eternity showing fourfold vision with apocalyptic eyed wheels is illustrated in the design, *The Whirlwind: Ezekiel's Vision of the Eyed Wheels.*[45] The figure standing in the centre of the design represents the embodiment of the four-fold Man. It stands in the centre of a whirling eyed wheel. The Eyes of God in the wheel are symbolic of the Seven Spirits of God,[46] which are ideals to live by in the wheels of time throughout history till the progression reaches the apocalypse.[47] Instead of the serpents of the life of instinct which are so prevalent in Blake's design we have here the dominant wings of Imagination.

The world of Time, encompassing the vast stretch of history from the Fall to Redemption, is symbolized by the encircled coiled world serpent or dragon, each coil a progressive historical state or "Church" of human history. The illustration of *The Spiritual Form of Nelson Guiding Leviathan*[48] is an allegory on the theme of war. It can be seen as an apocalyptic vision anticipating the Last Judgment, in accordance with the explanation given in the full title of Blake's *Descriptive Catalogue: The spiritual form of Nelson guiding Leviathan, in whose wreathings are infolded the Nations of the Earth.*[49]

The symbol of Leviathan comes from Hobbes, who presents a mechanistic view of the world completely devoid of the Imagination implicit in Blake's concept of poetic inspiration but based on memory and sensory perception. To Blake this represents a demonic view, a parody of the sublime vision of the mental wars of Eternity. Thus Blake depicts the wreaths of Leviathan's serpentine coils as constricting and crushing anguished human forms. Political power possessed of demonic vision destroys the nations of the world. We see in this illustration the contrary visions of humanity represented by the oppressors and the oppressed. In the foreground a negro slave lies cowering on the ground. As Hobbes's view of the world is based essentially on sensory perception, Blunt identifies Nelson who guides Leviathan with Tharmas who is symbolic of the senses in Blake (p. 102). Nelson, famed as a sea captain in the war in which the French under Napoleon were defeated, and Leviathan associated both with the sea and the political machinations of power in a mechanistic world, are both identifiable with the Blakean Tharmas, the parent power of instinct, who enters Creation through his fall into the sea of chaos. Blake's attitude to war, however, is not that it is completely evil. Even as the deepest triumph of human error it is part of the divine plan which necessarily precipitates prophetic revelation and the Last Judgment. Tharmas prophesies:

> My Waters like a flood around thee fear not trust in me
> And I will give thee all the ends of heaven for thy possession
> In war shalt thou bear rule in blood shalt thou triumph for me
> Because in time of Everlasting I was rent in sunder
> And what I loved best was divided among my Enemies.
> (FZ, VIIb in Erd pp. 361-362).

At the end of time, Leviathan, representing all "Giant Warriors," will be destroyed and annihilated and the oppressed nations of the earth will triumph:

> And all Nations were threshed out & the stars threshd from their husks
>
> Then Tharmas took the Winnowing fan the winnowing wind furious
> Above veerd round by the violent whirlwind driven west & south

Tossed the Nations like Chaff into the seas of Tharmas...

Go down ye Kings & Councellors & Giant Warriors
Go down into the depths go down & hide yourselves beneath
Go down with horse and Chariots & Trumpets of hoarse war...

Then all the Slaves from every Earth in the wide Universe
Sing a New Song drowning confusion in its happy notes.
(FZ, IX: Erd pp. 402-403).

The Leviathan-dragon, symbolizing the temporal world of warring humanity, carries the waters of materialism on his back and imprisons the nations of the earth in his coils. He is also the Ouroboros, the world serpent, which in swallowing its own tail represents the self-devouring futility of time.[50] The self-devouring serpent recurrently begetting its own image, or alternately the coiled dragon, is a prominent circular symbol of the fallen history of mankind throughout Blake's Lambeth and Prophetic Books. The act of devouring represents political revolution and the disintegration of civilizations which are in time regenerated, in a recurrently repeating cyclical, historical progress of political, social and religious institutions within the Circle of Destiny. However, Erdman points out that while the biblical Leviathan is both whale and sea serpent, Blake always depicts him as sea serpent, "War by Sea," which is distinct from the serpent symbolism of Orc,[51] representing the gyrating history of civilizations with their patterns of successive flourishing and disintegrating.

As Erdman points out, unless the Poetic Genius is on the side of the oppressed, the war of nations will continue to be a perpetual cyclic progression. Nelson's spiritual antagonist in the jaws of Leviathan who is being devoured by war is identified as Christ crowned with lilies. He reaches to a sword to combat the false gods of war. The enfolded nation at the top of the illustration is conjectured to be France. Nelson triumphantly holds up her hair, the ragged ends of which signify her naval defeat. Lines emanating from the heroic figure of Nelson suggest the appearance of thunderbolts about to converge on him. A flash of lightning from Christ's sword is also directed towards the figure of Nelson, piercing his right shoulder.[52]

The thunder bolts converging upon the heroic figure of Nelson who occupies the centre of the illustration possibly correspond both in design and in significance to the six circles converging from above towards Pitt. Pitt, in the companion illustration *Pitt guiding*

Behemoth,[53] also occupies the central position of the illustration as he guides the monster Behemoth, who is inhabited by kings and tyrants of the earth. In the rough sketch in Keynes' edition of the pencil study we may gain some insight into Blake's main motif of the illustration, *The spiritual form of Nelson guiding Leviathan*.[54] Circles of cyclical recurrence against the circular thunderbolts convey a message of apocalypse initiated by lightning. Possibly the six circles converging above and behind Pitt, unseen and probably unknown to him, are six cycles leading to the seventh Eye, delivering warring humanity to apocalypse and redemption. Pitt and Nelson, standing in the centre of whirling tyrannized humanity, as aptly pointed out by Paley, represent the opposite to Blake's conception of the awakening of Albion, who breaks through the symbolic centre occupied by Pitt and Nelson, the prison of the Selfhood, and rises to become part of regenerate humanity.[55] Schorer remarks on another significant aspect, that the most prominent feature in the illustration to *Nelson*, apart from the fact that the hero's figure occupies the centre from which point he directs his tyrannical will to circumscribe the nations of the earth, is that the hero stands on a pediment consisting of a coil of the dragon and the collapsed body of a negro.[56] The heroic figure of Nelson, whose head is encircled by a halo as he directs political destruction, is a demonic parody of the divine imagination, one identified example of the progressive series of tyrants in the fallen vision of man.

In spite of the very broad prophetic vision of Blake the reader finds in his works a significant amount of repetition in the organic integration of theme and symbol. His ideas are principally based on the central myth that the world of Eternity is represented by the Poetic Genius of man and that the Fall from Eternity is into "single vision" or the material world. The repetitions became more profuse as he borrowed passages and illustrations from his former works, believing that in a variant context they might offer a stronger appeal. The illustration designed for Young's *Night Thoughts*, *Night III* NT 353,[57] the ouroboros serpent, whose folds symbolize cyclical recurrence or the twenty-seven Churches throughout history, is re-employed as the illustration to *Vala* or *The Four Zoas*, *Night VI*,[58] with only the verse on the illustration changed. *The Four Zoas*, modelled on Young's *Night Thoughts*, is an internalized epic of the cyclical history of man in a dream of nine nights, in which Blake reiterates many of the circular symbols of time from earlier works—orbs, circumferences, compasses, the spinning looms of time and the resolution of the contrast between

cyclical time and Eternity by the apocalyptic wheels of the vision of Ezekiel.[59]

In Illustration 75 of *Jerusalem*,[60] Blake designs a row of angels with haloes around each of their bodies, thus creating intersecting circles which represent the "wheels within wheels" of Ezekiel's vision. At the bottom of the design these circles are parodied in the rolling coils of dragons. On this plate Blake inscribes:

> ...the Abomination of Desolation
> Religion hid in War: a Dragon red, & hidden Harlot
> But Jesus breaking thro' the Central Zones of Death & Hell
> Opens Eternity in Time & Space; triumphant in Mercy.
> (J, 3: 75: Erd p. 231).

The symbolic circle of human experience is pictured in the *Arlington Court Picture*, also named *The Circle of the Life of Man*.[61] Within this Platonic circle of life on earth, the creator Urizen is conceived in a circle of light emanating from the sun chariot in which he has fallen asleep after the act of creation. The soul descends into the fallen creation. The waters of the material world come from a cave. Wreaths of cloud are seen spiralling from above the head of the sea nymph and reaching behind the fiery chariot of the sun,thus joining the seas of time and space to the sky. Vala, the veiled giant female figure, raises her left hand, thereby indicating her sinister role in fallen nature where she appears prominently as the Female Will.

On the right the women water carriers represent the weaving of the material body in the perpetuating of generations. The fallen soul tries to ascend the stairway but is impeded by two women, Motherhood and Marriage. The stairway is further blocked by three women walking down the stairway as they weave on the looms of generation. The vision of entrapment in the ascent of the soul indicates the labyrinthine nature of Experience and spells the futility of the singularly sensual existence from which the gateway to Eternity cannot be reached without the redeeming power of inspiration. However, the man in red, who appears to be preparing to leap away from the world of generation with its closed forms, has often been identified with Blake or Los in his quest for the imagination within the life of the body. In this illustration we can thus see the depiction of the quest for a vision beyond material existence. The spiralling image of the cloud joining the rolling sea to the realm of the fiery sun gives a telescopic view of the fallen and unfallen creation, where corporeal existence is joined to the vision of Eternity.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

FZ	Blake, *The Four Zoas*
M	Blake, *Milton*
J	Blake, *Jerusalem*
Erd	*The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman. Commentary by Harold Bloom. New York, Newly revised edition, 1982 (1965).
IB	*The Illuminated Blake*. Annotated by David V. Erdman. New York, 1974.
K	*Blake: Complete Writings*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes. London, 1974 (1966).
PL	Milton, *Paradise Lost*

NOTES

[1]See Rachel V. Billigheimer, *Wheels of Eternity: A Comparative Study of William Blake and William Butler Yeats* (Dublin, New York, 1990), p. 194.

[2]cf. W. J. T. Mitchell, "Style as Epistemology: Blake and the Movement toward Abstraction in Romantic Art," *SIA*, 16 (1977), 147.

However, as Collins Baker observes, "he [Blake] cannot be fitted into an orderly chronological progression of influences and performance," [C. H. Collins Baker, "William Blake, Painter," *HLB*, 10 (1936), 135-148]. For some notable pictorial and emblem borrowings of Blake see C. H. Collins Baker, "The Sources of Blake's Pictorial Expression," *HLQ*, 4 (1941), 359-367, Anthony Blunt, "Blake's Pictorial Imagination," *JWCI*, 6 (1943), 190-212, Piloo Nanavutty, "Blake and Emblem Literature," *JWCI*, 15 (1952), 258-261 and Jean H. Hagstrum, *William Blake: Poet and Painter* (Chicago and London, 1964).

[3]Letter to Thomas Butts, 22nd November 1802 in K p. 818.

[4]W. J. T. Mitchell, p. 153.

[5]*Blake's Visionary Forms Dramatic*, ed. David V. Erdman and John E. Grant (Princeton, 1970), p. 174 n.

[6]W. B. Yeats, "William Blake and His Illustrations to the Divine Comedy," *The Savoy*, 2 (1896), 45-46.

[7]Edwin John Ellis and William Butler Yeats, eds., *The Works of William Blake: Poetic, Symbolic, and Critical* (London: 1893), 2: 145.

[8]Geoffrey Keynes, *A Study of the Illuminated Books of William Blake: Poet Painter Prophet* (New York, 1964), p. 59 and Martin Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake* (New Haven and London, 1981), 2: Plates 341, 367. For a list of reproductions of this design and discussion on it, see 1: 147-151.

[9]Paley sees the figure as Newton, "both creator and victim of the same limits, and so his magnificent torso bends over his compasses in a posture approaching that of Nebuchadnezzar." [Morton D. Paley, "Blake's *Night Thoughts*: An Exploration of the Fallen World," *William Blake: Essays for S. Foster Damon*, ed. Alvin H. Rosenfeld (Providence, 1969), p. 151.] Anne T. Kostelanetz likewise notes that in Blake the closed form is associated with a closed mind: "Like Newton's mind, the composition itself is severely limited." ("Blake's 1795 Color Prints: An Interpretation," in Rosenfeld, pp. 121, 126).

[10]Butlin, *Paintings and Drawings*, 1: 166-167 and 2: Plate 394. See also *Nebuchadnezzar* in 1: 164-166 and 2: Plates 393, 407.

[11]For the motif of the compasses common to both these illustrations see Robert N. Essick, "Blake's Newton", *Blake Studies*, 3 (1971), 156-157. Anthony Blunt in "Blake's 'Ancient of Days': The Symbolism of the Compasses", *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, 2 (1938-39), 53-63, gives a historical account of the symbolic use of the compasses.

The idea of the compasses precedes Blake in many works amongst which are Dante's *Par.* XIX, 40-42 to him "who rolled the compass round the limit of the universe", PL as quoted on p. 15 above. The source, however, is the account of creation in *Proverbs* VIII: 27, "When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth." Hughes notes biblical commentary on this verse "as meaning that a literal compass was used in creation, with one foot on the earth and the other describing the surrounding heavens" [*John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York, 1957), p. 351]. Blake, however, inverts the meaning of the compass as given in the account of creation in *Proverbs*, which is the imposing of order on chaos. His irony is again evidenced early in the *Book of Urizen*:

> Times on times he divided, & measur'd
> Space by space in his ninefold darkness. (Erd p. 70).

Martin K. Nurmi suggests that Blake's ironical inversion could possibly have been influenced by Motte ["Blake's 'Ancient of Days' and Motte's Frontispiece to Newton's *Principia*", in *The Divine Vision: Studies in the Poetry and Art of William Blake*, ed. (London, 1957), pp. 207-216.]

[12]Thomas H. Helmstadter points to the analogy to the "Newtonian" of the *Night Thoughts* design, Plate 1: "Blake and the

Age of Reason: Spectres in the *Night Thoughts*," *Blake Studies*, 5 (1972), 108.

[13]For left and right symbolism see Joseph H. Wicksteed, *Blake's Vision of the Book of Job* (New York, 1971), p. 134. Wicksteed concludes that the left side symbolizes the sinister and the right side, the benevolent.

[14]Northrop Frye refers to Blake's physical world as the "universal rock" which in the Atlantis myth, imprisons human and vegetable life [*Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (1947; rpt. Boston, 1967), p. 225.]

[15]"Blake's Newton", pp. 149-150.

[16]*Blake's Human Form Divine* (London, 1974), pp. 156-157.

[17]p. 162. Essick points to the scroll as often being associated with apocalyptic events. ("Blake's Newton", p. 162.) Blunt makes an interesting observation of the scroll and compasses in *Jacob's Ladder*: "The composition seems to show the various ways which lead man to heaven. Near the bottom of the spiral staircase are two figures. One goes up carrying a scroll, and perhaps symbolises poetry; the other goes down, holding a huge pair of compasses, and probably stands for science. In this case the directions in which they walk would be significant, poetry leading up to heaven, science leading down from it" ["Blake's 'Ancient of Days': The Symbolism of the Compasses," p. 62]. See Billigheimer, *Wheels of Eternity*, "the book and scroll preserve the prophecy of revelation", p. 95.

[18]Butlin observes that Newton, giving a tangible form to error, was also seen by Blake as being partly instrumental to mankind's redemption. [*Paintings and Drawings*, 1: 167].

[19]J, 1: 12: 56 Erd p. 156.

[20]See also M, I: 19 [21]: 21-26 Erd pp. 112-113.

[21]M, I: 3: 14 Erd p. 97.

[22]*Europe, A Prophecy*: 10: 15 Erd p. 63.

[23]*The Book of Thel*: 6: 16 Erd p. 6.

[24]cf. Frye, p. 350.

[25]PL V, 256.

[26]PL VII, 225.

[27]FZ, II: Erd p. 321.

[28]FZ, II: Erd p. 321.

[29]In both Milton and Blake, Paradise is lost only to be regained. All of Blake's prophetic poems end in a vision of apocalypse [cf. Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr., *Angel of Apocalypse: Blake's Idea of Milton* (Wisconsin, 1975), p. 194]. These two poet-prophets did not seek to revolt against order but rather to impose a stronger order; not to invert the social system but to cultivate the prophetic character by exercising the imaginative powers. Both looked upon their art as a divine mission to awaken the social, moral and political consciences of their audiences redeeming humanity to the mental wars of eternity.

[30]*The Harlot and the Giant* in Albert S. Roe, *Blake's Illustrations to the "Divine Comedy"* (Princeton, 1953), Plate 89 and in Milton Klonsky, *Blake's Dante: The Complete Illustrations to the "Divine Comedy"* (New York, 1980), p. 116, Plate 92 [Plate 89].

[31]IB p. 321.

[32]*The Queen of Heaven in Glory* in Roe, Plate 99 and in Klonsky, p. 126, Plate 102 [Plate 99].

[33]Kathleen Raine, *William Blake* (New York, 1971), p. 131, Plate 96 and Butlin, *Paintings and Drawings*, 2: Plate 870.

[34]John E. Grant, "The Visionary Perspective of Ezekiel", *Blake Studies*, 4 (1972), 156.

[35]*A Vision of the Last Judgment*, in Geoffrey Keynes, ed., *Drawings of William Blake* (New York, 1970), No. 51. See also S. Foster Damon, *A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake* (New York, 1971), Plate 1 and Butlin, 2: Plate 871.

[36]Irene Tayler, *Blake's Illustrations to the Poems of Gray* (Princeton, 1971), Plate 19.

[37]*William Blake's Water-Colour Designs for the Poems of Thomas Gray*. Introduction and Commentary by Geoffrey Keynes. (London, 1971), p. 47. Illustration on Design No. 18.

In a later illustration "Ode for Music" on Design No. 95 Servitude, an evil figure trailing an iron chain is depicted with legs coalescing to form a devil's tail. Keynes parallels this figure with that of the 'half woman, half spectre' in FZ, I, Page 7: "Flattery has painted cheeks and a hand turned into a serpent's head." p. 66.

In FZ, I: 7 a woman's figure is drawn with legs coalescing to a coiled serpent. On the page is written,

Half Woman & half Spectre, all his lovely changing colours mix
With her fair crystal clearness; in her lips & cheeks his poisons rose
In blushes like the morning, and his scaly armour softening
A monster lovely in the heavens or wandering on the earth.

[*William Blake: Vala or The Four Zoas*, ed. G. E. Bentley, Jr. A Facsimile of the Manuscript: A Transcript of the Poem and a Study of its Growth and Significance (Oxford, 1963)].

[38]Irene Tayler, "Two Eighteenth-Century Illustrators of Gray" in James Downey and Ben Jones, eds., *Fearful Joy* (Montreal, London, 1974), p. 123. Irene Tayler, *Blake's Illustrations to the Poems of Gray*, 47th Plate. See also Butlin, *Paintings and Drawings*, 2: Plate 343. A facs. drawing of this water-colour, the sixth design in "The Progress of Poesy" is in *Poems by Mr. Gray, Drawings by William Blake*. A New Edition (London, 1790), III, No. 6. Jean H. Hagstrum discusses the tradition of pictorialism in this poem [*The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray* (Chicago and London, 1958), pp. 301-306].

[39]*William Blake's Water-Colour Designs for the Poems of Thomas Gray*. Introduction and Commentary by Geoffrey Keynes. Illustration on Design No. 46.

[40]IB p. 183.

[41]Geoffrey Keynes, *Blake Studies: Essays on his Life and Work* (Oxford, 1971), Plate 53. See also Mellor, *Blake's Human Form Divine*, Plate 74 and Damon, *A Blake Dictionary*, Plate IX.

[42]Mellor, *Blake's Human Form Divine*, pp. 280-282.

[43]Hughes comments on "fervid Wheels" as conveying the similarity to the wheels of the chariot of deity in Ezekiel 1: 16 being "like unto the color of a beryl". These "Wheels" thus gleaming with the immortal fire are contrasted with the "golden Compasses" of computation [*John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Hughes, p. 351].

[44]*The Notebook of William Blake* (Rossetti Manuscript) ed. David V. Erdman (Oxford, 1973), [N73] transcript. See also K 557.

[45]*William Blake: Illustrations to the Bible*. A catalogue compiled by Geoffrey Keynes (London,1957), Plate 80. See also Kathleen Raine, *William Blake*, p. 119, Plate 86 and Clyde R. Taylor, "Iconographical Themes in William Blake", *Blake Studies*, 1, (1969), Figure 5.

[46]Revelation 4: 5, 5: 6 and Zechariah 3: 9.

[47]For a description of Blake's Eyes of God see Rachel V. Billigheimer, "Blake's 'Eyes of God': Cycles to Apocalypse and Redemption", *PQ*, 66 (1987), 231-257.

[48]Anthony Blunt, *The Art of William Blake* (New York, 1959), Plate 46d. See also Morton D. Paley, *Energy and the Imagination: A Study of the Development of Blake's Thought* (Oxford, 1970), Plate 3, Kathleen Raine, *William Blake*, p. 172, Plate 125 and Clyde R. Taylor, Figure 9.

[49]*Descriptive Catalogue*, K p. 564 and Erd p. 530.

[50]Taylor points to the significant analogy with Kronos, god of time, who eats his own children. ["Iconographical Themes in William Blake", p. 77].

[51]David V. Erdman, *Blake: Prophet Against Empire*. Revised Edition [New York, 1969 (1954)], p. 26.

[52]Ibid., p. 450. Blunt disagrees with Erdman's interpretation of *The spiritual form of Nelson guiding Leviathan*: "I cannot believe that the lines of radiance round the central figure are really thunderbolts directed at him [Nelson]; nor that what he holds in his right hand is the hair that he has torn from the figure floating above him, which on this interpretation would symbolise France shorn of her sea power at Trafalgar. Above all, the figure in the jaws of Leviathan cannot be Christ, as Mr. Erdman proposes. It is inconceivable that Blake should represent Christ in this degrading pose and with so evil a face" [*The Art of William Blake*, pp. 102-103 n].

Erdman clarifies his interpretation: "Anthony Blunt sees the thunderbolts, but patriotism compels him to see them as Jovian attributes in the hand of Nelson (where they are not) and to refuse to 'believe that the lines of radiance round the central figure are really thunderbolts at him' (though no other thunderbolts are in the picture). Blunt chooses not to consult the pencil drawing. He also finds it 'inconceivable that Blake should represent Christ in this degrading pose,' forgetting what Blake says about the way 'the Modern Church crucifies Christ' ['with the head downwards' V.L.J.)." (*Blake: Prophet Against Empire*, p. 451 n].

Bo Lindberg sees Leviathan as a symbol of Satan. He draws attention to Job 41: 14 (*Vulgate*) when God shall send thunderbolts against him to destroy him since man does not have the power to destroy him. This prophesies the destruction of Satan and his hordes at the Last Judgment ["William Blake's Illustrations to the Book of Job", *Acta Academiae Aboensis, Ser. A Humaniora*, 46 (1973), 93, 93 n].

[53]Blunt, Plate 46c.

[54]*Drawings of William Blake*. 92 Pencil Studies: Selection, Introduction and Commentary by Sir Geoffrey Keynes (New York, 1970), Plate 46.

[55]"The opposite of Albion 'giving himself for the Nations' is Nelson guiding the monster 'in whose wreathings are infolded the Nations of the Earth'" [Morton D. Paley, *Energy and the Imagination*, p. 196].

[56]Mark Schorer, *William Blake: The Politics of Vision* [New York, 1959 (1946)], p. 153.

[57]*William Blake*, ed. Rosenfeld, Plate IX.

[58]*William Blake: Vala or the Four Zoas*, ed. G. E. Bentley, Jr. Illustration Page 73 Night VI. Blake's *Night Thoughts* engravings used in *Vala* are listed on p. 209.

[59]The illustration to the *Vision of Ezekiel* in *Night Thoughts* Design No. 474 (9: 56). An earlier version than *The Whirlwind: Ezekiel's Vision of the Eyed Wheels*—Boston Museum of Fine Arts—is reproduced in *Illustrations to Young's Night Thoughts*, ed. Keynes (Cambridge Mass., 1927), Plate 28. Here the emphasis is on the endless circles of Infinity rather than the whirling motion of the eyed wheels in *The Whirlwind* version.

[60]IB p. 354.

[61]Keynes, *Blake Studies*, Plate 51. See also Mellor, *Blake's Human Form Divine*, p. 257, Plate 68 and Damon, *A Blake Dictionary*, Plate IV. A reproduction is also in the front cover of *The Visionary Hand: Essays for the Study of William Blake's Art and Aesthetics*, ed. Robert N. Essick (Los Angeles, 1973) and a reproduction of the pencil sketch in the back cover. A colored reproduction is in Butlin, *Paintings and Drawings*, 2: Plate 969.

A basic interpretation of *The Circle of Life* is generally accepted although many variations have been put forward:

Robert Simmons and Janet Warner, "Blake's Arlington Court Picture: The Moment of Truth" (1971) in *The Visionary Hand*, pp. 453-482. "We think that the picture describes the philosophical and psychological fall of man; that it gives a clear, intellectual explanation of the Greek origin of Western man's neurotic existence as Blake saw it, as well as the tentative indication of a way out - risky and laborious as that may be - and that it is a grand and coherent summary of Blake's thoughts at a period relatively late in his career" (p. 478).

John E. Grant, "Redemptive Action in Blake's *Arlington Court Picture*" (1971) in *The Visionary Hand*, pp. 483-491. "If the

Spirit within the Whirlwind is bringing about the Eternal Salvation of most of those immersed in the River of Death, it can do so because it refuses to be encumbered by the central institution of the Greek temple which is subverting the efforts at redemption that are taking place all around it in ACP" (p. 488).

George W. Digby, *Symbol and Image in William Blake* (Oxford, 1957) "this picture shows man placed between the light and dark aspects of life. The opposite poles of his nature are opened up in him: It is the perennial moment of crisis and the moment of its possible solution" (p. 59).

Geoffrey Keynes, *Blake Studies*, pp. 195-204. "The conception of a single 'Circle of the Life of Man,' as the picture was at first named, was an oversimplification. Human souls are passing upwards through 'the southern gate' to the realms of light, while the water from the cave, symbolizing the material world of generation, pours downwards through 'the northern gate' to join the Sea of Time and Space" (p. 203).

Mellor, *Blake's Human Form Divine*, "Like the mental traveller, this visionary, with whom the spectator identifies, condemns the physical and psychological oppression of Vala's world for a more satisfying realm beyond the cold earth" (pp. 269-270).

Damon, *A Blake Dictionary*, "...it is a study of Neo-Platonic philosophy, as indicated by the classical temple in the mid-background, also by the absence of Los, or true inspiration. The painting depicts the descent of a soul into the material world" (p. 86).

Kathleen Raine, *Blake and Tradition*, I Bollingen Series XXX.11 (Princeton, 1968): "The living spirits of light and water, reborn in their everlasting youth from Blake's imagination, are age-old. They enact the perpetual cycle of the descent and return of souls between an eternal and a temporal world, and the journey through life, under the symbol of a crossing of the sea" (p. 75).

Butlin, *Paintings and Drawings*, observes that the man in red, who represents man, is involved in a choice of worlds and rejects the world of the senses symbolized by Vala, the fallen female principle (1: 549).

[1]See Rachel V. Billigheimer, *Wheels of Eternity: A Comparative Study of William Blake and William Butler Yeats* (Dublin, New York, 1990), p. 194.

[2]cf. W. J. T. Mitchell, "Style as Epistemology: Blake and the Movement toward Abstraction in Romantic Art", *SIA*, 16 (1977), 147.

Although as Collins Baker observes, "he [Blake] cannot be fitted into an orderly chronological progression of influences and performance", [C. H. Collins Baker, "William Blake, Painter", *HLB*, 10 (1936), 135-148], for some notable pictorial and emblem borrowings of Blake see C. H. Collins Baker, "The Sources of Blake's Pictorial Expression", *HLQ*, 4 (1941), 359-367, Anthony Blunt, "Blake's Pictorial Imagination", *JWCI*, 6 (1943), 190-212. Piloo Nanavutty, "Blake and Emblem Literature", *JWCI*, 15 (1952), 258-261 and Jean H. Hagstrum, *William Blake: Poet and Painter* (Chicago and London: 1964).

[3]Letter to Thomas Butts, 22nd November 1802 in K p. 818.

[4]W. J. T. Mitchell, p. 153.

[5]Janet A. Warner, "Blake's Use of Gesture", in *Blake's Visionary Forms Dramatic*, eds. David V. Erdman and John E. Grant (Princeton, 1970), p. 174 n.

[6]W. B. Yeats, "William Blake and His Illustrations to the Divine Comedy", ed. Arthur Symons, *The Savoy*, II. (London, 1896), 45-46.

DRYDEN'S "ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL"

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Once, when commenting on his brilliant political satire "Absalom and Achitophel," John Dryden mentioned that he thought his verse caricature of Zimri (George Villiers, the second Duke of Buckingham) "worth the whole poem."[1] Now probably no one since Dryden has assessed the Zimri excerpt so highly, but even if this literary master of the age was guilty of exaggeration, his comment does give one pause, because, for one thing, the passage is such an extraordinary one. That the poet recognized this strikes me as significant, at least for those who study this lengthy political put-down. The poem's length itself generally causes any detailed study to be of the parts rather than of the whole, and Dryden's laudatory equation of his favorite part of the poem with its entirety can perhaps be taken as a directive from the poet to see the witty portrait of Zimri as a microcosm of the full one thousand odd line poem. Be that as it may, the short, twenty-five line Zimri section (ll. 543-68) does admirably showcase Dryden's skill with the heroic couplet.

Because of his high social position, Zimri stands "In the first Rank" (l. 544) of "the Malecontents" (l. 492) that Dryden surveys and his portrait fittingly precedes those of the lesser born villains Shimei (Slingsby Bethel) and Corah (Titus Oates). Dryden's memorable picture of Zimri is prefaced by an overview (ll. 491-542) of all the "differing Parties" (l. 493) that seek "For several Ends...the same [rebellious] Design" (l. 494). Zimri, of course, is only one of this divergent "Hydra.../...of sprouting heads" (ll. 541-42), but because of his characteristic changeability he represents all of the misguided rebels. In fact, he seems to be the "Hydra" himself.

> Some of their Chiefs were Princes of the Land
> In the first Rank of these did Zimri stand:
> A man so various, that he seem'd to be,
> Not one, but all Mankinds Epitome.
>
> (ll. 543-46)

Punning on "Rank," Dryden has his readers smell this "Hydra" before he shows him. The poet adds irony to the line by having his unstable subject "stand," as if that were possible given the extremely malleable condition of the man—one that is "so various" that he virtually melts into a woefully inconsistent Everyman. The humorous

tone of the lines is made even more so by the screeching long "e" assonance and the double syllable rhyme which conclude this initial summation of Zimri's multifaceted character: "he seemed to be/...Mankinds Epitome."

Another feature that Dryden begins here and continues throughout much of the Zimri portrait is the use and overuse of caesura as a metrical mimickry of Zimri's chameleon-like nature.

> Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong;
> Was everything by starts, and nothing long:
> But, in the course of one revolving Moon,
> Was Chymist, Fidler, States-Man, and Buffoon:
> Then all for Woman, Painting, Rhiming, Drinking;
> Besides ten thousand freaks that dy'd in thinking.
> (ll. 547-52)

Simply count the commas. With the stop-and-go reading that all these caesuras dictate, Dryden has actually placed the reader in Zimri's place for a moment. We all pause repeatedly for the flurry of commas as inconstant Zimri changes from one role to another. Dryden is showing Zimri's (or Villier's) dilettante attempts at being a Renaissance all-round man, and this is fittingly paralleled by the staccato sound of these telling lines.

Another effect of Dryden's catalogue of Zimri's dalliances is the satiric undercutting of the entire line of items by the last words of the line. "Buffoon" and "Drinking" are both emotionally loaded terms that cast ridicule on everything that precedes them.

In satire the old guilt-by-association principle works in full force, and Dryden takes advantage of this by charging the rest of his Zimri rhetoric with negative values. Consider the devastating effects of the following phrases that Dryden uses to describe his aristocratic target: "ten thousand freaks" (l. 552), "Blest madman" (l. 553), "Rayling" (l. 555), "Extreams" (l. 559), "Desert" (l. 560), "Begger'd by fools" (l. 561), and "wicked but in will" (l. 567). The "freaks," of course, refer to the multiple masks that Zimri has donned "in the course of one revolving Moon" (l. 549). For Dryden's readers, the "moon" would automatically be linked with lunacy, and, sure enough, Zimri's manifold poses have all "dy'd in thinking" (l. 552). Naturally, cerebration is a fatal activity for any fool.

Since Zimri is such a "Buffoon" and since he is indeed blessed with money, Dryden's oxymoron, "Blest Madman," is not as puzzling an epithet as it first appears, but is appropriate after all. This important fool is not to be feared, but, if anything, he is to be pitied—especially

after his erstwhile companions "Desert" him once they have "had his Estate" (l. 562).

Dryden indulges in another rhetorical technique in finishing up his puncturing portrait of Zimri, and that is his use of the poetic equivalent of the balanced sentence. Zimri is established as a changeable creature of either-or extremities, and the syntax as well as the semantics of Dryden's lines reflect this paralleled structure: "So over Violent, or over Civil,/That every man, with him, was God or Devil" (ll. 567-68). The result of this juxtaposition of oppositions is, for the reader, like viewing a verbal tennis match. Dryden continues this volleying with "Nothing went unrewarded, but Desert" (l. 560), and, following this aphoristic irony, he delivers another series of counterpointed phrases:

> He had his Jest, and they had his Estate.
> He laught himself from Court, then sought Relief
> By forming Parties, but could ne're be Chief.
>
> (ll. 562-64)

Dryden concludes his sullying summation of this pathetic, stereotyped aristocrat with the best of his balanced phrases: "He left not Faction, but of that was left" (l. 568). The sentence mirrors itself in its inversion as it carefully counterpoises "left" with "left" and, at the same time, emphatically recalls the rhyming word "bereft" (l. 569) of the preceding line. Finally, Dryden's punning with "Faction" (meaning "dissension" in the first instance and "the political party of dissenters" in the second instance [when referred to by "that"]) is simply representative of his stunning word play throughout this short section. And it is interesting to remember that the poet claimed to value this short section as much as the entire poem.

NOTES

[1]Dennis Davison, *Dryden* (London: Evans, 1968), p. 123.

MY SIZE FELT SMALL

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Emily Dickinson once complained to Higginson about people who speak too directly and "embarrass my dog."[1] It was not her habit to embarrass her dog—or herself. The same poet who said, "The truth is such a *rare* thing that it is delightful to tell it" (*Letters*, p. 474) usually does so only within the frame of some game. Indeed Poem #1129, which begins, "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant—" is actually one of her most direct. She promises to "tell all the Truth"—but does not say when; that the unveiling will be done "gradually." Thus she gains time for all the games she may want to play first.

Emerson J. Todd discusses the "Little Girl" persona,[2] which is probably Dickinson's favorite game, citing various poems as examples, some more convincing than others. A clearer example of the "Little Girl" game is found in the letters to Higginson, which themselves read like the poetry and seem to be an extension of it. Her first letter begins, "Are you too deeply occupied to say if my Verse is alive?" Right after this child-like line a sophisticated woman says, "The Mind is so near itself—it cannot see, distinctly—and I have none to ask—." A few lines down she is again calling him "Sir" and asking him to tell her "what is true." She adds, "You will not betray me—" (*Letters*, p. 403), and even her customary dash here sounds like a child's breathless pause. A few months after beginning her correspondence with him she is signing herself "Your scholar" (*Letters*, p. 412). After becoming his scholar she says, "I had no Monarch in my life, and cannot rule myself..." (*Letters*, p. 414). Clearly she is asking him to do so. One senses, though, that Emily Dickinson means to retain the upper hand even while asking Higginson to rule her. She is simply too elusive to be dominated. In a letter more lyrical than factual she concludes, "Is this—Sir—what you asked me to tell you" (*Letters*, p. 405)? A woman who does not even answer direct questions directly is in no real danger of being dominated. Instead, she is playing at being a child and asking him to play at ruling her.

If the letters sound like poetry, some of the poems sound like notes. So effective is Dickinson when she plays at writing a brisk little note that the reader may almost forget—momentarily—that a game is being played. But not because Dickinson means that the reader should forget. The issue of her attitude toward the games and the reader will be considered. For the moment, though, let us look at the "note writing" device. Largely it is a matter of tone. One senses that

Dickinson is the bashful-eager lady who has been sending notes to the reader for years.

Although tone contributes most to the note quality, form and content should not be overlooked. The short lines with frequent dashes resemble a note that one might write to a friend. Anyone comparing Dickinson's poems with the letters will be struck by the similarity in form and content. The dashes are present in the letters, and it is not hard to draw line by line comparisons to the poems. In one letter she says, "Your letter gave no Drunkenness because I tasted Rum before—Domingo comes but once..." (*Letters*, p. 408). The line seems reminiscent of another: "I taste a liquor never brewed" (#214).

Anyone asking why Dickinson uses this approach should postpone such questions and look at how the notes are put together. Usually, as Archibald MacLeish points out, there are no adjectives.[3] Often the note seems cryptic, even detached at a glance. Typically what seems to be a mundane statement precedes the real statement of the poem. The impact is quiet and startling as the little wild flower that springs up beneath dry leaves and goes unnoticed by most people.

No matter how interesting the technique, one must come back to the question of what Dickinson is up to when she plays games. What she is not doing is trying to trick the reader. To play a game and not tell the reader that one is in progress is to refuse to play "fair." Dickinson, however, always invites the reader to play. In the letters to Higginson, as has been noted, she is inviting him to be playful and pretend to rule her. In her note-poems, the mischief is felt and the reader is invited to pretend with her that only a mundane note is being sent, while knowing full well what is going on. Furthermore, the form of a note implies mutual participation since a correspondence is a dialogue.

Even after we acknowledge that Dickinson plays "fair" with the reader, we might be tempted to assume that the games are mainly for self protection. This idea is especially pertinent to the little-girl game—if one notes how selective Dickinson is about whom she plays with. Always she chooses some strong male figure who would not harm her, such as a teacher or a minister. (Evidence in the poetry suggests, for example, that she was in love with a Presbyterian minister.) Closely intertwined with the idea of being a little girl is that of being a pupil—a bright child in a fairly safe situation. As has been noted, she signs a letter to Higginson, "Your scholar." In her second letter to him she recalls, "When a little girl, I had a friend, who taught me Immortality—but venturing too near, himself—he never returned—Soon after, my Tutor died—and for several years, my Lexicon—was my

only companion—Then I found one more—but he was not contented I be his scholar—so he left the Land" (*Letters*, p. 404). At times the one she treats in this manner is God—the nineteenth century New England God being a strong male figure. She calls him "Papa" and says, "I am poor once more" (#49)—obviously expecting to be replenished. Her idea of being a student, it should be noted, is evident even in connection with God—especially if we consider #193, in which "Christ will explain each separate anguish/ In the fair schoolroom of the sky—" There is no little irony and some anger in this poem, since she is being scalded now and the explanation will come when "I have ceased to wonder why—"

Despite this pattern of offering child-like trust only selectively, Dickinson is doing more than protecting herself. Ultimately the little-girl game serves psychological and thematic functions in the poetry. These functions become apparent when one realizes that Dickinson's writing resembles a snapshot. In a certain slant of light it reveals a scattering of brilliant colored fragment—bits of raw emotion. In another light, though, one sees a figure at the center of the snapshot. This figure is basic to the poetry. Since everybody is, in some sense, a child in need, this figure is basic to the ability of the text to speak for both writer and reader. In this person—this metaphor—the experience of both reader and writer is expressed.

Although the little-girl game is effective, the note-writing game turns out to be essential to the poetry. The necessity of the restrained, conversational tone becomes obvious as soon as one notes the central emotional content of the poetry. Allen Tate suggests that Dickinson "thinks sensation."[4] Without the pretense of writing a stiff little note, Dickinson would overwhelm the reader; she would become the mad woman sending anguished letters. Not able to bear so much unrelieved passion, the reader would either pity or despise her. Or she would be pitied and despised and laughed at simultaneously—and the poetry would fail. This response would result from the reader's own embarrassment, but the poetry would fail just the same. Dickinson is too shrewd to evoke that response. Instead she uses a dignified little note to convey passion that might otherwise "embarrass her dog"—and her reader.

NOTES

[1] *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), 2: 415

[2]*Emily Dickinson's Use of the Persona* (Hawthorne, N.Y., 1973).

[3]"The Private World," *Emily Dickinson: Three Views by Archibald MacLeish, Louise Bogan, and Richard Wilbur* (Amherst, 1960), p. 15.

[4]"New England Culture and Emily Dickinson," *The Recognition of Emily Dickinson: Selected Criticism since Eighteen-Ninety*, ed. Caesar Robert Blake and Carlton F. Wells. (Ann Arbor, 1964), p. 159.

FROM THE WASTELAND TO EAST EGG: HOUSES IN *THE GREAT GATSBY*

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Near the end of *The Great Gatsby* Nick Carraway states that his home in the Middle West is in "a city where dwellings are still called through decades by a family's name" (177). This stability directly contrasts with the drifting of people in the East, where the Buchanan's home had until recently belonged to "Demaine, the oil man" (8) and Jay Gatsby's huge mansion was built by a brewer whose children sold it "with the black wreath still on the door" (89); nonetheless, houses in *The Great Gatsby* are more than symbols of stability or the lack of it.

Whether the novel is a story of the failure of the American dream or simply a conflict between socio-economic classes, the dominant symbol of success is the person's residence. That is why Gatsby insists that the tea party which is to reunite him with his long-lost love must be held at Nick's home: "He wants her to see his house....And your house is right next door" (80), Jordan Baker explains to Nick. To Gatsby the house, its contents, the activities that take place there, and the people found there ("I keep it always full of interesting people, night and day" [91]) signify Gatsby's having attained both the economic and social status to win Daisy back; and he wants to show her that he is now worthy of her love, that he has now arrived in the Buchanan's world. However, Fitzgerald blatantly points out that Gatsby's West Egg is not the equivalent of the East Egg of the Buchanans. The "courtesy bay" (5) that separates the two Eggs is not just a physical barrier, but a social one as well. East Egg stands for manners, privileges and a social awareness not yet attained by the residents of the other Egg. An examination of the various domiciles and the activities that take place in them reveals that Fitzgerald was rather obvious in his use of these settings to distinguish the socio-economic levels of the various characters, and yet at the same time he was subtle in the manner that he used residences to keep the characters from knowing too much about each other, and by presenting the more subtle differences through conflicts which usually take place not in anyone's home, but on neutral ground.

Early in the novel, as Nick sets himself up as a credible narrator, attempting to show, as he later states, that he is "one of the few honest people that I have ever known" (60), he calls attention to his unpretentious dwelling. Although he lives in the "proximity of

millionaires" (5), he actually resides in an eighty-dollar-a-month "weather-beaten cardboard bungalow" (3), a "small eyesore" (5) located at the very tip of the less fashionable of the two Eggs.

Next door, Gatsby's marble-stepped mansion projects a "feudal silhouette against the sky" (92). It is a "colossal affair by any standard—it is a factual imitation of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a marble swimming pool, and more than forty acres of lawn and garden" (5). Downstairs there are "Marie Antoinette music rooms and Restoration salons" (92). There is also a "high Gothic library, panelled with carved English oak, and probably transported complete from some ruin overseas" (45); its real books with uncut pages cause the owl-eyed man to refer to Gatsby as a "regular Belasco" (46). Upstairs there are "period bedrooms swathed in rose and lavender silk" and "dressing rooms and poolrooms, and bathrooms, with sunken baths" (92). Gatsby's personal apartment consists of "a bedroom and a bath and an Adam study" (92). Daisy claims to love Gatsby's mansion (91), but Nick considers it an "elaborate road House" (64), ultimately referring to it as a "huge incoherent failure of a house" (181), thus emphasizing the failure of Gatsby's mansion to contribute to the success of his grand design.

Across the bay from Nick's and Gatsby's homes are the "white palaces of fashionable East Egg" which "glitter" along the water (5); these include the estate of Tom and Daisy Buchanan with its garage converted into stables (11), in a gesture of outlandish snobbery. Nick reveals that when he first saw the Buchanan place it was "even more elaborate than I had expected, a cheerful red-and-white Georgian colonial mansion, overlooking the bay" (6). The difference in architecture is an obvious contrast; Gatsby lives in a huge imitation, unbalanced, semi-barbaric pseudo-castle, while the Buchanans reside in a more civilized, conservative, symmetrical, neo-classic mansion. The Buchanan lawn, which stretches from the beach to the house is a quarter of a mile long and includes such features as brick walks, burning gardens, sun dials, a sunken Italian garden, and "a half acre of deep pungent roses" (6-8). Almost forbidden to the lower classes, very little of the interior of the Buchanan home is described, only a "high hallway" and a "bright rosy-colored" room with "French windows at either end," a "frosted-cake of a ceiling," and a "wine-colored rug" (8).

Contrasting with the palatial mansions of the two Eggs is the valley-of-ashes home of the Wilsons. No glimpse is allowed into the apartment upstairs, but the garage itself, situated in a "small yellow

block of yellow brick sitting on the edge of the waste land." (24) is "unprosperous," "bare," and covered with gray dust (25).

The trysting apartment of Tom and Myrtle on 158th Street, "one slice in a long white cake of apartment houses," (28) reveals the insurmountable differences between the social classes of the two:

> The apartment was on the top floor—a small living room, a small bedroom, and a bath. The living-room was crowded to the doors with a set of tapestried furniture entirely too large for it, so that to move about was to stumble continually over scenes of ladies swinging in the gardens of Versailles. The only picture was an over-enlarged photograph, apparently a hen sitting on a blurred rock. Looked at from a distance, however, the hen resolved itself into a bonnet, and the countenance of a stout old lady beamed down into the room. Several old copies of *Town Tattle* lay on the table together with a copy of *Simon Called Peter,* and some of the small scandal magazines of Broadway. (29)

Just as this apartment probably epitomized the pedestrian dreams of Myrtle Wilson, Jay Gatsby's romanticized dream is symbolized in the Louisville home of Daisy Fay, with the largest of Columbus Day banners and the largest of lawns (75). Nick does not describe the house, but Gatsby's reaction to it and what it represented to him:

> It amazed him—he had never been in such a beautiful house before. But what gave it an air of breathless intensity was that Daisy lived there—it was as casual a thing to her as his tent at camp was to him. There was a ripe mystery about it, a hint of bedrooms more beautiful and cool than other bedrooms, of gay and radiant activities taking place through its corridors, and of romances that were not musty and laid away already in lavender, but fresh and breathing and redolent of this year's shining motor cars and of dances whose flowers were scarcely withered. It excited him, too, that many men had already loved Daisy—it increased her value in his eyes. He felt their presence all about the house, pervading the air with the shades and echoes of still vibrant emotions. (148)

While the homes of the various characters may serve as places where members of various social classes sometimes come together for luncheons, dinners, teas, and parties, there is never any conflict between

the important characters at any of these functions. The two important clashes take place outside the homes. The first and somewhat less significant, Tom's and Myrtle's argument which ends in her nose being broken, takes place in the New York apartment, which is not really the home of either. The climatic scene of the novel, the direct confrontation between Tom and Gatsby, takes place, again, on neutral ground, the Plaza Hotel. Nick prepares us for this scene when Gatsby calls to invite him to the luncheon at the Buchanans' by stating that he couldn't believe that Daisy and Gatsby had chosen the luncheon for the "rather harrowing scene that Gatsby had outlined in the garden" (114). Apparently Daisy and Gatsby had planned that the confrontation should take place elsewhere for it is Daisy who brings up the subject of what they should do after lunch, (118) and, as they prepare to go to New York, Gatsby explains to Nick: "I can't say anything in his house, old sport" (120). And so the five head for the arena, which turns out to be a parlor in the same hotel in which Nick first learned from Jordan of the romance between Daisy and Gatsby (75). It is also here that, after the talk of the Buchanan wedding and Tom's inquisition of Gatsby, Nick also realizes that the romance between Daisy and Gatsby is over.

After the confrontation all return to their respective homes which also represent their rightful places in the social world. Tom, Daisy, and Jordan return to the Buchanan mansion in East Egg; and although all three leave the next day, they will go to other places where people play golf and polo and are rich together. Nick returns to his unpretentious bungalow and ultimately back to the stability of the midwest, and Gatsby to his "huge incoherent failure of a house" where the next day he will be killed as he swims in his marble pool while waiting for a phone call that never comes.

Houses and their descriptions in *The Great Gatsby* serve as symbols of the various socio-economic classes; but they also characterize individuals and reveal their values, ideals and dreams. Fitzgerald uses the homes of Tom and Daisy Buchanan, Jay Gatsby, Nick Carraway, and George and Myrtle Wilson to portray their status, character, and tastes: the Buchanan house revealing social acceptance, confidence, and proper taste; Gatsby's, the gaudiness of the nouveau riche; Nick's, simple honesty and unpretentiousness; and the Wilson's, that which is beneath contempt. Houses are especially important to Jay Gatsby for whom they are the most important symbols of accomplishment. That is why he bought a house for his parents and sent them a picture of his home. That is also why he revered Daisy's

home in Louisville and why immediately after their reunion he insisted that Daisy see his house.

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KATE CHOPIN'S FICTION: ORDER AND DISORDER IN A STRATIFIED SOCIETY

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Much has been written on the negative reaction of readers to Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* when it was first published in 1899, and on her reputation as a local color writer of short stories before she wrote the novel. Scholarship on the reception of the novel has focussed primarily on the heroine and on themes unacceptable to nineteenth-century readers: Edna Pontellier's awakened sexuality, her rebellion against the prescribed duties of a wife and mother, and her decision to live for herself, to achieve some individual autonomy. Parallels between the stories that brought recognition to Chopin and the novel that brought her condemnation have also been noted and commented on.

Especially, attention has been drawn to the ways the stories published before *The Awakening* anticipated the novel. Helen Taylor, for example, concludes that "A No-Account Creole" "prefigures the novel in its focus on the polymorphous, uncontrollable nature of sexual desire" and that "Athénaïse" "anticipates the novel even more directly, since it confronts the problems of the institution of marriage itself."[1] Joyce Duer comments that, in both the stories and *The Awakening*, characters, under the influence of nature, awake to the revelation that "freedom and sensuous experience is a basic component of the human personality."[2] Gina Burchard traces the conflict between self-assertion and duty in the novel and several of the stories.[3] What has not been convincingly explained is why *Bayou Folk* and *A Night in Acadie*, the two collections of stories published before the novel, escaped adverse criticism if representative stories also explore similarly daring themes.

Though some of the individual stories did face difficulties with editors, the two collections were warmly received by an increasingly admiring audience of readers. By the time *The Awakening* appeared, Chopin was a well-known and generally admired story teller. Yet, when reviewers turned to the novel, it was to call it "sex fiction," "a morbid book," and "bald realism."[4] If the treatment of a woman's sexual awakening and rebellion had escaped condemnation earlier in the collections of stories, and in some instances in a narrative context more provocative than that of the novel, why did such themes inspire a different reaction now?

Some answers have been suggested. Perhaps the fact that the stories were classified as local color enhanced their acceptability. Lewis Leary theorizes that in the stories Chopin uses "strange and exotic" backgounds to disguise theme.[5] Helen Taylor too comments on Chopin's use of "unfamiliar and exotic locations...to explore taboos around female sexuality and desire" (p. 165). Other explanations have focussed not on Chopin's use of the conventions of American local color but more on the narrative of rebellion itself. In general, readers have felt that, in these early stories, the rebellion against conventions is tentative or ambivalent or incomplete.[6]

However, another explanation suggests itself. The stories very likely evaded open criticism because in them Chopin not only submerges the narrative of rebellion beneath the myth of the Creole and the Acadian but also confines a rebellious heroine within the same class and caste. Typically, a heroine's defiance occurs within a clearly defined ethnic group or an otherwise clearly demarcated and insulated social class. Hence, a heroine's rebellion does not evoke *inter-class* tensions and conflicts within the text and in the reader as does the defiance of Edna Pontellier. In contrast to the heroines in the short stories, Edna, a Southern American woman in an alien culture, experiences a transformation which compels her to defy the conventions not only of her own social class and culture and of the dominant class and culture of her adopted region, upper-class Louisiana Creole, but also those conventions that link various subclasses and cultures, Acadians, Spanish Creoles, and blacks, into the intricately stratified social order of New Orleans and its surroundings. In so doing, Edna introduces a disturbing element into the context of a highly ordered world that, paradoxically, is itself suggestive of disorder. It is surely this undercurrent of disruption that explains the hostile reaction to the novel and not solely its themes of sexual freedom and social rebellion.

To begin with the parallels between heroines in the collected stories and Edna Pontellier, several stories depict unawakened women like Edna, sheltered, inhibited women who are also transformed by appeals to their sleeping passions. Among the stories in the *Bayou Folk* and *A Night in Acadie*, such women as Madame Delisle in "A Lady of Bayou St. John," Euphrasie in "A No-Account Creole," and Athénaïse in the story by the same name are inhibited far more completely by their Creole and Acadian cultures than Edna has been repressed by her own Southern Presbyterian culture. However, in her delineation of the heroines in the short stories, Chopin embeds their arrested development so completely in cultural norms that, ironically, readers hardly seem to notice the infantilization.

Especially in the three stories mentioned above, the heroines emerge as "doll-like and childlike" as Priscilla Leder observes of the Creole women in the novel.[7] Of the upper-class Creole wife, Madame Delisle, the narrator says she was so young that "she roamed with the dogs, teased the parrots, and could not fall asleep at night unless old black Manna-Loulou sat beside her bed and told her stories....In short she was a child."[8] Though Euphrasie is old enough to have accepted her childhood friend Placide's proposal of marriage, her father still calls her "my li'le chile."[9] The parent's reflections on his absent daughter lead his visitor, Wallace Offdean, a stranger to the rural community, to conclude that the little girl must be an unusually precocious child indeed (p. 8). Similarly, of the Acadian wife, Athénaïse, the narrator says, "About her features and expression lurked a softness, a prettiness, a dewiness, that were perhaps too childlike, that savored of immaturity."[10] And her husband, Cazeau, reminds his wife's brother that she is "nothing but a chile in character" (p. 116) and in constant need of the guidance of authority.

In contrast, Edna's development never appears to be as arrested as that of these heroines in the stories. Only once in the novel is the image of the child used in connection with her. When Adèle Ratignolle goes to visit Edna at her new house, the quintessential Creole woman reflects on her American friend's behavior: "In some way you seem to me like a child, Edna. You seem to act without a certain amount of reflection which is necessary in this life. That is the reason I want to say you mustn't mind if I advise you to be a little careful while you are living here alone."[11] However, Adèle's comment emphasizes the proper behavior of a Creole wife rather than psychological maturity. And, in any case, Adèle does not speak with the authority of a narrator's voice or that of a father or a husband as is the case in the stories.

In several of the stories in the two collections, at a climactic moment in the narrative, a heroine awakens not only sensually but also psychologically and begins to imagine a freer and fuller existence than the one she have known thus far. Madame Delisle's intimate walks and talks with her neighbor Sépincourt with the sensuous sounds and smells of the marais all around them, Euphrasie's rides with Offdean into the plantation woods, and Madame Baroda's encounter with Gouvernail under the cover of a dark summer night all foreshadow Edna's awakening in the company of Robert Lebrun that summer on the Gulf.

Not only are the circumstances and settings in some of the stories and in the novel similar, but so are the patterns of self-discovery and the

subsequent desire for change and individual autonomy. Though the passion Madame Delisle sees in Sépincourt's glance and recognizes in herself at first frightens her, the awakening of this sleeping beauty results in her putting an end to her extended childhood, symbolized by her forgoing Manna-Loulou's storytelling and blowing out the night candle by her bed. Becoming an adult woman, sexually alive for the first time in her life, Madame momentarily and spontaneously is "capable of love or sacrifice" (p. 307), reminiscent of Edna's self-assertive, "I give myself where I choose" (p. 107). Edna too puts aside the trappings of her unawakened self—forgoing the customary Tuesdays at home, turning the kitchen over to her cook and the house to the servants, and, finally, moving out altogether. However, in the development of a character like Madame Delisle, Chopin is far more critical of the culturally accepted role that imprisons a woman and against which some of her heroines begin to rebel than she is of Edna's married life in the novel. Edna has been enough the adult woman that she has at least played at being the proper Creole wife. Madame Delisle has just played, child-like, in her world of fantasies.

The directness with which Madame's story moves toward the climactic moment of defiance of social and moral conventions and the radical change between her infantile state before her awakening and her adulterous longings after should have evoked some unease in nineteenth-century readers. Unlike Robert who runs away to Mexico and then leaves Edna a second time, Sépincourt urges on Madame real choices: to live in Paris with him outside of marriage or return to her infantilized state in a Creole marriage. In imagery that parallels the use of music in the novel, the love language of Sépincourt's letter is to Madame like "a voice from the unknown, like music, awakening in her a delicious tumult that seized and held possession of her whole being" (p. 308).

The ironic, almost comic, narration of events leading to and away from the climax of the story—Madame's first agreeing to go to Paris with her lover, then, immediately after receiving the news of her husband's death, sublimating her sexual passion to a religious ecstasy—provides one of Chopin's most telling critiques of marriage. Like Mrs. Mallard in "A Story of an Hour," Madame is freed from marriage by death. But, unlike Mrs. Mallard, Madame lives on as a votary dedicated to the memory of her dead husband. With consummate irony the narrator at the conclusion implies that such a life allows Madame both to escape a second marriage and to enshrine the feminine virtues her culture idealizes in the mythic Creole woman. To the admiring community she is "a very pretty old lady, against whose long

years of widowhood, there has never been a breath of reproach" (pp. 312-313). And Sépincourt, says the narrator, has been taught a lesson in the "psychological enigma of a woman's heart" (p. 312).

Of course, key differences exist between Madame Delisle and Edna. One retreats into what might be called delusional madness, displacing her passion onto the picture of her dead husband, her altar and icon, living a life-in-death; the other chooses death over continuing the oppressive marriage she is in. Unlike Edna, Madame cuts herself off from self-awareness while Edna is never so alive as when she makes the decision to take her life, never so fully aware of the limitations conventional society will continue to impose on her. Edna, at the point of death, is an existentialist actively choosing her fate. Madame, in her response to her husband's death, becomes the sentimental heroine in a Gothic romance. Her life becomes the kind of sadly poignant story Manna-Loulou might tell to lull her child-mistress to sleep. With gentle but pointed irony Chopin delineates this child-woman's brief period of self-awareness and assertion, a moment of psychological growth between fantasy and withdrawal into madness.

Yet, as Seyersted observes, a story such as "A Lady of Bayou St. John" did not face difficulties getting published (p. 55). And, apparently, neither Madame Delisle's extended childhood nor her sudden sexual awakening, neither her decision to leave her husband and live in an illicit union with Sépincourt nor her subsequent escape into madness gave offense to nineteenth-century readers. One has to conclude that the irony in the submerged narrative, the story of an upper-class Creole child-wife going from infantilization to madness, with a moment of self-awareness allowed her, went undetected. Instead readers responded to the surface narrative—the Gothic romance—the romanticizing of love and death and of the mystery of a beautiful Creole woman's transcendent devotion to her dead husband.

Indeed, even twentieth-century readers read over the ambiguities and ironies in the narrative texts of such stories. They see tentative or incomplete expressions of rebellion against social and moral norms but not the extent of Chopin's critique of cultural attitudes toward women. Some recent scholarship has been devoted, however, to Chopin's use of narrative strategies to suggest the imprisonment of Edna in the Creole culture and her subsequent inability to tell her story. Patricia Yaeger argues that Edna's "temptations to think are repressed by the moody discourse of romance" and that" her inability to deal fluently in the language her husband and lovers speak remains a sign of her disempowerment"[12], that they, in fact, narrate her story. Joseph Urgo makes a similar point in relation to Edna's difficulty telling her

story.[13] In such stories as "A Lady of St. John," Chopin in fact uses narrative strategies to suggest disempowerment and imprisonment. Manna Loulou's storytelling prolongs Madame's imprisonment in childhood, and the Gothic romance her story becomes further imprisons her in the text of her story.

In addition, in a story like "The Lady of Bayou St. John," Chopin uses the mythic Creole woman both to mask her subversive narrative and, at the same time, expose the realities behind such romanticized exotic cultures. Because the stereotyped Creole woman embodied feminine virtues very similar to those of the idealized nineteenth-century woman, Chopin could use Madame Delisle to comment on both the cult of true womanhood and Creole attitudes toward women. The feminine qualities Wilbur Fish Tillet celebrated in his essay on Southern womanhood were also admired in the Creole woman, especially her decorousness—her beauty, refinement, social graces and gentility—and her devotion to family and home.[14] Indeed, a white, upper-class Creole woman of leisure like Madame Delisle embodied exactly those social and moral values important to the stratified world of a very conservative male hegemony.

However, Chopin also suggests the alien and deviant in the Creole myth, the disorder to which the general population responded with ambivalence. Both social historians and scholars of American literary regionalism make much of the sensuality, eroticism, and openness of the Louisiana French. Edward Tinker describes the city of New Orleans as one of the most open ports in the country, where cock-fighting, bull-baiting, gambling, dueling, and quadroon balls compete with opera and theatre for the attention of the wealthy Creoles.[15] Nancy Walker, in her article on the social context of the novel, illustrates from several sources the differences between the Anglo-American culture and the Creole culture as perceived in the popular imagination.[16] In Creole Louisiana in general, the codification by class and race into the various levels of racial gradations itself suggested both a highly intricate, legalized social hierarchy and at the same time the potential for disorder, immorality and impurity. Thus, the Creole culture represented both order and disorder for Americans, a highly formalized world of social behavior and conservative values coupled with a liberal enjoyment of sensual pleasures.

In a story like "The Lady of Bayou St. John," the tension between order and disorder suggested by this exotic culture is contained within the world of the upper-class Creole. The disorder of the war has disrupted the ordered existence on the Creole plantation as well as the

ritualized life of the Delisles in their separate spheres. And the code of behavior which condoned an unattached man's lavishing attention on a married Creole woman is broken when Sépincourt, apparently the lone man in the community not committed to defending the sacredness of Southern and Creole plantation values, makes his passionate appeal to Madame to enter into a serious, though adulterous, relationship. And Madame herself symbolizes the contrasting images suggested by the mythologized culture. She is refined and gracious yet sensuous and unfathomable, the mistress of a plantation yet developmentally a child. In the end, she becomes the lovely Southern grand lady who is also mad.

Similarly, in "A Respectable Woman," collected in *A Night in Acadie,* the ambivalence the general culture felt about the Creole is dramatized in the encounter between Mrs. Baroda and Gouvernail, her husband's college friend. Though not infantilized like Madame Delisle, Mrs. Baroda is another inhibited, unformed woman, the decorous wife in the highly ritualized Creole plantation society. Hers is the world of the social seasons, of fashions, and of "mild dissipations." With a comic detachment suggestive of the English novel of manner, the narrator of the story describes the superficial social world Mrs. Baroda inhabits as her only sphere of influence. Mrs. Baroda's dilemma, what to make of a man, a guest, who is definitely not "a society man or 'a man about town,'"[17] reflects not only the purely social role she plays in her marriage and her culture but also her unawakened state. She had expected that Gouvernail would make social demands on her and that he in turn would provide her with "intellectual," that is, entertaining dinner conversation and with the attention a married Creole woman can expect from an unattached Creole man. But he does not fit into her world of social stereotypes. He is neither a man about town, nor the dinner conversationist, nor the Creole gigolo. Rather, Gouvernail is reserved, introspective and philosophical, a man whose hidden passionate nature unfolds in her presence and to which she responds, at first in confusion but finally with self-awareness. Though Mrs. Baroda at first does not understand what is being appealed to in her own hidden self, she, too, like the other heroines, does acknowledge and act on those first stirrings of feelings as she listens to Gouvernail talk about his disappointments in the past and his present compromises. She at first chooses to run away, but the conclusion suggests that, unlike Madame and Edna, Mrs. Baroda will have the best of both worlds, the respectable, though purely social life, of a Creole wife and the more personally satisfying and sensually pleasing relationship with her husband's friend when he returns for another visit. Such a reconciliation between the married life

of duty and the illicit relationship of passion and intimacy is suggested in other stories, in "The Storm" and "The Kiss," for example, but not with the possibility that it may well be on-going, recurring with each summer visit of the beloved.

Again, the parallels between Mrs. Baroda and Edna are striking, and the story's conclusion would seem to be at least as threatening to social and moral order as Edna's leaving Léonce's house. As in other stories in the two collections and in the novel, the disorder symbolized by the Creole culture itself is suggested—the "mild dissipations," the sensuous setting, and the unattached male companion for the Creole wife who is free, within the accepted social ritual, to enjoy his company. More explicitly, of course, disorder is revealed in the adulterous longings of a respectable married woman who wishes to break out of the conventions of her culture. But in this story, as in "A Lady of Bayou St. John," the threat that sexual freedom and individual autonomy for the woman pose to the dominant order is again confined within the same class and ethno-social group; and the heroine's rebellion is submerged beneath and masked by cultural stereotypes and by the comic tone of the narrative strategy Chopin has adopted to delineate the social world of plantation Creoles. In the novel, on the other hand, Edna enters the culture not only as herself the outsider but also as the representative of a "pure" culture ready to be corrupted by a socially diversified world; and neither the myth of the Creole in characters like Adèle nor the narrative strategy of regional realism provides an adequate cover to mask her radical departure from the tradition of feminine heroines nor the author's departure from the genteel tradition of feminine writing.

At Grand Isle Edna befriends Adèle, the personification of the polarity in the Creole culture. Sensuously indulgent, openly seductive, Adèle revels in the minutiae of her pregnancies, charmingly flirts with adoring young men like Robert Lebrun, and indulges her pleasure in risqué stories making the round. Yet no-one in the novel understands the rules of the Creole society better than she does or observes them more assiduously. She knows that Edna does not understand the various codes of behavior, such as those that apply to summer flirtations between married women and unattached young men. She warns Robert not to play the gigolo with Mrs. Pontellier who is likely to take him seriously. When Edna and Robert do not return from Chêniére Caminada, Adèle cares for the boys to lessen Edna's transgression as wife and mother. Later, in New Orleans, Adèle stays away from Edna's farewell party, as does Mrs. Lebrun. At other events deemed inappropriate for a Creole woman, such as excursions to the race track,

Edna is surrounded by Creole men and American women. What is seductive about Adèle is her sensuous feminine beauty and ritualized encroachment on sexual and social taboos confined within this very ordered, though deviant, culture.

But Edna, the innocent American in this milieu, is an embodiment of the nineteenth-century Anglo-American reader's own values. The standards she is measured by are very different from those applied to the Creoles in the novel. Indeed, contemporary reviewers reveal their preoccupation with the fact that both the author and her heroine are outsiders to the Creole society. In reviews of the novel, readers are reminded that Chopin is a St. Louisan and her heroine a Kentuckian, that the former wrote "delightful sketches" of local color before she wrote this unacceptable novel, and that the latter is isolated in a "Creole watering place."[18] Thus, what Nancy Walker has called "the clash of two cultures," dramatized in Edna's "denying what she was raised to believe...by succumbing to the sensuality of the Creoles,"[19] seemingly was on the minds of Chopin's critics when they reacted to the novel, though they apparently could not articulate their anxiety clearly. Indeed, even more threatening, Edna is rebelling against both cultures.

In nineteenth-century Louisiana, the stratification by race and class was further complicated by various subcultures and by the ethnic diversity, the Spanish Creole, the Acadian French, the Creoles of color, and the descendants of slaves. As many misconceptions existed about these various subgroups as existed about Creoles. In particular, Acadians, or Cajuns as they are still popularly called, like Creoles, have inspired contrary stereotypes. Marcia Gaudet comments that "the images of Cajuns range from the quiet, pastoral view found in Longfellow's *Evangeline,* to the lazy, stupid, naive, happy Cajun of later writers."[20] In fact, Cajuns in nineteenth-century literature were frequently presented as either simple and gentle or rough and crude, given to drinking, fighting, and avenging wrongs. Glenn Conrad comments that the Cajun has been depicted as either a savage, "an ignorant, therefore superstitious swamp dweller living in squalor in a moss-draped, reptile-infested wilderness or as a creature of simple but solid virtue...inhabiting a timeless, changeless land of great natural beauty."[21] There is then in the stereotypes of this subculture the suggestion both of an harmonious, bucolic life and of disorder, defiance of the law or, at the very least, non-conformity.

In *The Awakening* what was even more threatening to both the Louisiana Creole and Anglo-American cultures was that Edna's rebellion is acted out in inappropriate behavior outside the dominant

social order of the upper-class French, in the Spanish and French Acadian subcultures perceived to be socially inferior to the dominant culture of the region. When she and Robert disappear to the island of Chêniére Caminada, Edna responds to the Spanish Creole girl Mariequita's bold overtures to Robert with a sharp jealousy she has never felt before. And after Robert leaves her a second time and she begins to assess the unfulfilling life in store for her, she returns to Grand Isle and re-encounters Mariequita, this time openly flirting with Victor Lebrun. Edna then realizes even more fully than before that in the Creole culture she will quickly lose the support offered her by class and caste if she continues her socially unacceptable struggle for sexual freedom and autonomy. At her party celebrating her move out of Léonce's's house, Victor, always competing with his more respected older brother, has already begun to see Edna as a sexual object to steal from Robert.

As with her depiction of the Creoles in her stories and in the novel, Chopin suggests the conflicting images of Cajuns and uses that subculture to frame her heroine's rebellion. When Edna is overwhelmed at the church service, Robert takes Edna to an Acadian home to rest. In the simple, unpretentious cottage of the Antoines, Edna begins her day-long slumber, isolated and withdrawn from her husband and children, separated from the Creole community of Grand Isle, unable even to communicate with her hostess. An outsider to the social codes of Creoles and their definition of social proprieties, Madame Antoine leaves Edna asleep in the care of Robert as she goes to make her rounds of family and friends. When she returns to her guests, it is to entertain them with stories celebrating disorder, the immoral and asocial in the adventures of Lafitte the pirate. As openly flirtatious and seductive as she is, Adèle certainly would not have allowed herself to be in such a situation. Later, at a more decisive stage of her rebellion, after her farewell party, Edna moves out of her husband's house with the Acadian, old Celestine, as her only companion.

In several of the stories in the two collections, the unawakened heroine is an Acadian, but, like the rebellion of Creole heroines, her rebellion is confined within a stereotypically defined ethno-social group. For example, in the story "Athénaïse," collected in *A Night in Acadie,* Chopin uses prevailing assumptions about Acadians against which to present a heroine undergoing an awakening paralleling the experience of Edna. In this story, Chopin uses the heroine's husband and her own family to suggest the bipolar images of order and disorder represented by the subculture. Athénaïse's husband, Cazeau, is, on the surface, a highly disciplined man who lives a very ordered, purposeful life, yet

there is the sense of barely suppressed rage whenever he is thwarted—particularly in his vengeful attitude toward his wife's brother, whom he clearly hates. Athénaïse's family, on the other hand, reflects the opposing image of the Cajun. They live an easy, carefree existence characterized by the joie de vivre frequently associated with Cajuns and suggestive of the hedonistic and immoral.

In this story too the heroine's rebellion, her efforts to leave her marriage, is associated with especially provocative themes, in fact more daring ones than Chopin was willing to chance in the novel. As Edna did in her younger years, the unawakened Athénaïse indulges in unfocussed romantic fantasies; however, in Athénaïse's case, her romantic fantasies are displaced onto her brother who finds that "eloping with his sister was only a little less engaging than eloping with some one else's sister" (p. 118). Like Edna and other heroines, Athénaïse too experiences a sexual awakening; but, significantly, it is not inspired by the urban Creole Gouvernail whom the young wife thinks of as merely a friend of her brother and someone who can be helpful. It happens rather as a result of her growing awareness of her own body at the onset of pregnancy. The emotional and physical awakening of this immature woman is suggested provocatively through the association of the bodily changes of pregnancy with sexual arousal, certainly a potentially bolder treatment of female sexuality than Edna's arousal. Marriage is criticized far more openly too. At one point, a husband's relationship to his wife is compared to a master's relationship to a slave, and Athénaïse's plight is compared to that of a runaway slave. The parallel Chopin draws between a traditional marriage and slavery certainly provides a harsher critique of marriage than the novel suggests in its description of the Pontellier marriage. Athénaïse's rebellion against marriage has been characterized as "problematical,"[22] but, given the male-dominated culture that has encouraged her immaturity and the several men who are only too willing to tell her what to think and do, Athénaïse's actions are remarkably courageous. She is certainly "self-willed, impulsive, innocent, ignorant, unsatisfied, dissatisfied" (p. 123), as Gouvernail's observes. However, the social context of her story certainly supports some of her observations about the fate of women in her culture. At one point she reflects that marriage is "a trap set for the feet of unwary and unsuspecting girls" (p. 111); and, though she is too independent-minded to simply accept her fate, she does instinctively realize very early "the futility of rebellion against a social and sacred institution" (p. 109) like marriage. The Acadian culture, community, and family freely enjoy the pleasures of life but do not sanction a woman's rebellion

against certain duties and obligations any more than Creole society condoned Edna's rebellion.

But what is characteristic of Chopin's stories about Creoles is equally true of her stories about Acadians. The rebellion and the sexually explicit are confined within the same subculture, and the disorder is delineated in the language of cultural stereotypes. Chopin uses the sensuous, the socially uncultured and, at times, obstreperous nature of the Cajun to frame the rebellion of the spirited Athénaïse. She acts out her rebellion in a community and family that embrace an easy, fun-loving, non-conforming lifestyle; but, ultimately, they too, like Athénaïse's husband, Cazeau, support fidelity to the institution of marriage and the social and moral order it represents. Especially for the Acadian woman, such loyalty and submission are expected.

Another story concerned with an Acadian community, "At the 'Cadian Ball," collected in *Bayou Folks*, comes closer to suggesting the inter-class and caste tensions reflected in the novel. In that story Calixta is of mixed Acadian and Spanish Creole heritage and, like Athénaïse, spirited and fiery, even more rebellious by nature. The man she wants is the upper-class Creole, Alcée Laballière, who clearly responds to her passionate nature but at the end rejects Calixta for his very respectable, socially appropriate Creole cousin. Her passion thwarted, Calixta accepts a Cajun suitor, Bobinôt, as her husband. Thus, the conclusion avoids any disalignment within the class hierarchy, and Calixta's mixed blood, in any case, further excuses her reckless behavior and inappropriate attempts to cross cultural and class lines. In a sequel story, "The Storm," never accepted for publication in Chopin's lifetime, Calixta and her Creole lover, Alcée, both married to other people, act on their illicit passion and consummate their love. Thus, the sequel acts out the rebellion forestalled in the earlier story.

In the stories and in the novel Chopin also recreates the racial strata of Southern Louisiana and uses the racial and interracial to reinforce the repression of the dominant white culture and to underscore the threat of rebellion against it. In the Pontellier household, acceptance of one's place in the social order is a given; and, on the surface, the servants seem to be stereotypically obedient and loyal, knowing their place in the patriarchal hierarchy. Edna's personal maid retrieves her mistress's wedding ring when Edna, in a rage, throws it to the floor and stamps on it. A servant boy faithfully produces the cards visitors have left behind while Edna has deliberately chosen to absent herself from her ritualized role as hostess. The children's quadroon nurse allows herself to be tyrannized by the Pontellier boys, and the cook is the recipient of Léonce's's anger when Edna doesn't please him. Yet, as with the

Acadians and Spanish Creoles Edna has come in contact with, the black servants become involved in their mistress's rebellion. As she liberates herself, she empowers her inferiors, whom she should oversee. The servant boy has taken over receiving guests and accepting their cards and good wishes. The cook is placed in charge of the kitchen, and her cooking improves noticeably when she is given some freedom. Presumably, when Edna leaves, the servants are left in charge of the house. Edna's identification with the servant class, non-whites at that, in the course of her liberation certainly disturbed accepted conventions in such a stratified society.

In at least one story collected in *Bayou Folks,* a black heroine rebels against the racial codification of the Creole culture, but that defiance is also contained within the same racial group, though the codification itself is threatened. "La Belle Zoraïde," a companion piece to "A Lady on Bayou St. John," is a story presumably told to the child-woman Madame Delisle by her personal maid and nanny, Manna-Loulou. In its treatment of the black heroine's awakening, rebellion, and subsequent withdrawal into madness, it provides an ironic commentary on Madame's own awakening, rebellion, and withdrawal into madness. La Belle Zoraïde, the light-skinned favorite of her Creole mistress, caught between the codes of caste and race on the one hand and her own desires on the other, rebels against the codification of her race by the dominant white Creole culture. Her mistress wants for her belle Zoraïde a caste-appropriate husband, a neighbor's light-skinned house slave, and social acceptance within the caste system. But Zoraïde defies her mistress and gives her love to the slave Mézor, whose African origin is symbolized by his music and dance. When the child of this illicit union is taken away from her, mad Zoraïde displaces her love for her child onto a doll fetish. The story thus is doubly ironic in that Madame Delisle presumably heard this black woman's tragic story of rebellion and madness before withdrawing into her own mad world of the idealized Creole woman. The story follows a pattern similar to the others already analyzed. An unformed woman's being is awakened; she rebels and threatens the dominant order, but in this case the threat is confined to the same race, though not the same class or caste within the complicated racial stratification.

Clearly then it was not Chopin's use of explicit sexual material that most deeply shocked the readers of *The Awakening*, though that affront to their sexual mores is what they were able to respond to superficially. Nor was it Edna's transformation from an unawakened woman to a sexually aroused one. It was not even Edna's defying social conventions, even taking her own life to circumvent those conventions.

Far more disturbing to contemporary readers of the novel was the heroine's defiance of the very conventions that connected various subcultures and subclasses and held them in place in the social hierarchy. It was her defying not only the Creole codes of behavior symbolized by Adèle Ratignolle but also the stratification that stipulated the degree of acceptance a person of a certain class, caste, and race could expect to receive from the dominant culture. And that she was a Southern American woman defying this highly stratified society heightened the typical nineteenth-century reader's anxiety about social and moral order. The stories are frequently more daring in the treatment of theme and more critical of cultural attitudes about women, but the cultural insularity of the characters and the uses Chopin makes of stereotypes and of narrative strategies forestalled for the two story collections the outraged reaction the novel endured.

NOTES

[1]Helen Taylor, *Gender, Race, and Region in the Writings of Grace King, Ruth McEnery Stuart, and Kate Chopin* (Baton Rouge, 1989), pp. 179-180.

[2]Joyce Dyer, "Epiphanies Through Nature in the Stories of Kate Chopin," *UDR*, 16:3 (1983-84), 80.

[3]Gina Burchard, "Kate Chopin's Problematical Womanliness: The Frontier of American Feminism," *JASAT*, 15 (1984), 39.

[4]These negative comments appear in "Notes from Bookland," *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* 13 May 1899; "Books of the Day," *Chicago Times-Herald* 1 June 1899; and "Books of the Week," *Providence Sunday Journal* 4 June 1899, collected in the Norton Critical Edition of *The Awakening*, ed. Margaret Culley (New York, 1976), pp. 146-149.

[5]Lewis Leary, Introduction, *The Awakening and Other Stories* (New York, 1970), p. ix.

[6]For example, Helen Taylor comments that "A No-Account Creole" and "Athénaïse" are "significantly more timid and ambivalent precursors of *The Awakening*" (p. 179). Winfried Fluck sees in the heroines of several stories tentative formulations of "culturally disruptive impulses," in "Tentative Transgressions: Kate Chopin's Fiction as a Mode of Symbolic Action," *SAF* 10 (1982), 155. Per Seyersted observes that a heroine like Madame Delisle in "A Lady of Bayou St. John" does not complete her rebellion against conventions, in *Kate Chopin* (Baton Rouge, 1969), p. 55.

[7]Priscilla Leder, "An American Dilemma: Cultural Conflict in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*," *SoSt*, 22:1 (1983), 102.

[8]"A Lady of Bayou St. John," *Bayou Folks* in *Americans in Fiction Series* (Ridgewood, N. J., 1967), p. 304. Subsequent references will appear in parentheses following the passage.

[9]"A No-Account Creole," *Bayou Folks*, p. 109.

[10]"Athénaïse," *Portraits*, ed. Helen Taylor (London 1979), p. 109. Subsequent references will appear in parentheses following the passage.

[11]*The Awakening*, ed. Margaret Culley (New York, 1976), p. 95. Subsequent references will appear in parentheses following the passage.

[12]Patricia Yaeger, "'A Language Which Nobody Understand': Emancipatory Strategies in *The Awakening*," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, 20:3 (1987), 202, 210.

[13]"A Prologue to Rebellion: *The Awakening* and the Habit of Self-Expression," *SLJ*, 20:1 (1987), 22-32.

[14]"Southern Womanhood," in the Norton Critical Edition of *The Awakening*, ed. Margaret Culley (New York, 1976), p. 122.

[15]*Creole City: Its Past and Its People* (New York, 1953), pp. 208-209.

[16]"Feminist or Naturalist: The Social Context of Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*," *SoQ*, 17 (1979), 97-99.

[17]"A Respectable Woman," *Portraits*, ed. Helen Taylor (London, 1979) p. 78. Subsequent references will appear in parentheses following the passage.

[18]See references to Chopin's origin of birth in Frances Porcher's "Kate Chopin's Novel," *The Mirror* IX 4 May 1899 and in "Notes from Bookland," *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* 13 May 1899. See also references to Edna Pontellier's place of birth in "Book Reviews," *Public Opinion* 22 June 1899; in "Fresh Literature," *Los Angeles Sunday Times* 25 June 1899; and in "Books and Magazines," *The Pittsburg Leader* 8 July 1899, collected in the Norton Critical Edition of *The Awakening*, ed. Margaret Culley (New York, 1976), pp. 145-146 and 151-153.

[19]P. 99.

[20]"The Image of the Cajun in Literature," *JPC*, 23:1 (1989), 77.

[21]"The Acadians: Myth and Reality," *The Cajuns: Essays on Their History and Culture* (Lafayette, La., 1978), p. 1.

[22]Burchard, p 41.

DISFIGURED FIGURES: VIRGINIA WOOLF'S DISABLED LIST

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Virginia Woolf's miniatures—those briefly described figures that do so much to anchor the world in her novels—are both myriad and vivid. Like Joyce's peripatetic minor characters out on a Dublin afternoon, they seem to represent adamant pieces of reality in an otherwise malleable fictional structure. As moving images, they may persist in the reader's mind long after the major figures have faded. Given her range, from prime ministers to beggarwomen, one particular type stands out curiously: the figure of the cripple, the amputee, or the disabled. Often dispensed with in the space between parentheses, they nonetheless represent salient portraits of disfigured lives, part of Woolf's historical realism that points to the ravages of the Great War. In a larger sense, they also function as metaphors of disability in gender and society, and together form the contour of Woolf's ontological landscape.

One of the more prominent examples of the type is Captain Barfoot from *Jacob's Room*, the novel into which Woolf has crammed so much of *species mundi*. As Barfoot prepares to visit Ellen Flanders, the narrator notes: "He dressed himself very neatly in blue serge, took his rubber-shod stick—for he was lame and wanted two fingers on the left hand, having served his country—and set out from the house with the flagstaff precisely at four o'clock in the afternoon."[1] In a characteristic aposiopesis, Woolf has set down a few particulars that mark the captain as a war victim. Here is no Septimus Smith, incapacitated by his memories of death and destruction. Rather, the reader encounters an incidental note, much like an incident of war, damaging to those involved but somewhat incomprehensible to those on the outside, hence glossed over.

There are, of course, parallels. In *The Years*, when Colonel Pargiter embraces Mira, "He drew her to him; he kissed her on the nape of the neck; and then the hand that had lost two fingers began to fumble rather lower down where the neck joins the shoulders" (p. 9). As in the description of Captain Barfoot, the detail is noted in passing, as if it didn't matter—and yet, ghoulishly, it does. Captain Barfoot is merely sprucing himself up to see a woman, whereas the Colonel is using his mutilated hand for a sexual probe. Woolf has constructed a deliberately awkward metaphor for the conjunction of love and war, devoid of romance. In neither case has there been a cessation of life; instead, something has been irreparably damaged, irretrievably lost. The part

comes across as distanced from the owner—"the left hand" and "the hand that had lost two fingers"—suggesting a subtle disenfranchisement. The phantom synecdoche—a missing part representing a once-whole man—is reflected on the larger scale of one man for many, or a whole generation lost in wartime.

As Aileen Pippett pointed out over thirty years ago, *Jacob's Room* is a war novel.[2] It might be clearer to characterize it as an anti-war novel, and *The Years* also participates in this implicit attack. As it happens, the description of Colonel Pargiter is in the section labeled 1880, and Barfoot's visit occurs around 1900. Given the dating, Barfoot was probably involved in the Boer War, the Colonel in the Crimean conflict. The two men, then, embody a criticism of militarism in general, though in Woolf such references always reflect the losses incurred from 1914 to 1918, as well as the grievous aftermath. Woolf's attack is not waged on the battlefields, but rather within individuals, and with a sharp sense of irony instead of outright mourning. In his 1917 poem "Does it Matter?," Siegfried Sassoon employs exactly this tone and scope with killing accuracy:

> Does it matter?—losing your legs?...
> For people will always be kind,
> And you need not show that you mind
> When the others come in after hunting
> To gobble their muffins and eggs.[3]

Sassoon goes on to remark, "There's such splendid work for the blind," and the poem ends on a note of equally false comfort. This is an irony that borders on scorn. Similarly, in her description of Mr. Pepper's incapacitating rheumatism in *The Voyage Out*, Woolf sums up: "One does not die of it, at any rate" (p. 8). In fact, the number of characters in Woolf with withered arms, limps, and swollen veins is legion, enough to constitute a grand metaphor of disability.

Woolf's scorn for the crippling circumstances of war tends to belittle the victims, as well, provided they are members of the patriarchy. Barfoot, for instance, is not crippled but "lame," with a left hand that "wanted two fingers." The sense is of an injury somehow softened or lessened, like his stick shod in rubber. The demeaning comparison is with Topaz the cat, described a few pages previously, who has been gelded as a means of housebreaking him (pp. 22-23). In the same way, Mira calls her lover Uncle Bogy and puts the Colonel's glasses on her eczemous dog Lulu (*Years* p. 7). This is low burlesque, the men parallel to suffering animals. Mitchell Leaska, equating Abel

Pargiter with Leslie Stephen, suggests that Woolf is getting back at her father, but the expansion inherent in representational characters applies to a group of men as well as an individual.[4]

Castration symbolism is equally evident. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Hugh Whitbred thinks of how "that great shaggy dog of Clarissa's got caught in a trap and had its paw half torn off," an image linked to the next paragraph, where her husband "got on his hind legs" (p. 113). In *To the Lighthouse*, a far crueler scene is enacted in brackets: "[Macalister's boy took one of the fish and cut a square out of his side to bait his hook with. The mutilated body (it was alive still) was thrown back into the sea]" (p. 268). The scene with the fish is all the more brutal for its piecemeal sacrifice. Leaska (p. 144) suggests that it represents the conflict between James and his father, and while the Oedipal struggle is certainly a theme, this scene seems more indicative of man's general inhumanity to man, with a Woolfian emphasis on men. The judgment on all this comes in *The Waves*: "They pick at a worm—that is a hooded cobra—and leave it with a festering brown scar to be mauled by lions. This is our world..." (p. 23).

The Oedipal struggle *per se* or sublimated in war is hardly the only incapacitating force in society, however. It is well to remember that Captain Barfoot's wife, Ellen, is confined to a bath-chair. Unable to participate in any of the festivities at Scarborough, she is wheeled about by an attendant named Mr. Dickens. Her injury remains undiagnosed, but she is described as "civilization's prisoner" (p. 25). Woolf emphasizes through the thoughts of Mr. Dickens that she is a victim of male society: "He, a man, was in charge of Mrs. Barfoot, a woman" (p. 26). And though Mrs. Barfoot knows quite well where her husband is headed in the afternoons, she is powerless to act.

The woman-in-the-bath-chair image occurs elsewhere, with the same general import. In *Between the Acts*, part of the audience for the pageant is "the great lady in the bath-chair," who years ago married a local peer. Unable to move, she has become indigenous to the region, her "ungloved, twisted hands" resembling the brambles and briars of the underbrush (pp. 93-94). Perhaps the most prominent woman invalid, however, is the figure of Elizabeth Barrett in *Flush*. As Flush grows up in the Barrett household, he observes that his mistress "sometimes kept the house for weeks at a time, and when she left it, it was only for an hour or two, to drive to a shop in a carriage, or to be wheeled to Regent's Park in a bath-chair" (p. 44). It is damning, if humorous, that the dog Flush enjoys a freedom greater than his owner. Flush, of course, is no mere animal image but an actual dog; still, as a feat of

anthropomorphism, he shares some of the brutish, wounded traits of Woolf's males.[5]

Evelyn Whitbred in *Mrs. Dalloway* is another in the range of Woolf's invalid women. As Avrom Fleishman has pointed out, the novel is infected by a whole host of illnesses, including Ellie Henderson's chills and Clarissa's prematurely white hair from influenza.[6] The vaguely neurasthenic symptoms may not sound that serious, but, as Mrs. Hilbery in *Night and Day* remarks about her sister-in-law, who may lose the sight in one eye: "I always feel that our physical ailments are so apt to turn into mental ailments" (p. 488). Given this connection, one may extend the range of disability in women from the frustrated feminist Julia Hedge in *Jacob's Room* to the embittered Miss Killman in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Unlike masculine brutality, however, being female causes disability that is more unfortunate than reproachable. The only male character allowed such unmediated sympathy is Septimus Smith, a major character treated as if her were minor. Unsurprisingly, his thoughts often resemble Woolf's mental configuration.

One could stop here: the disfigured and the lame in Woolf's fiction are, in part, comments on social injustice. But Woolf was never quite content to remain within the confines of merely human systems. As she remarks in *A Room of One's Own* (pp. 114-115), reality "would seem to be something very erratic, very undependable—now to be found in a dusty road, now in a scrap of newspaper in the street, now in a daffodil in the sun." In other words, Woolf is more than a social observer; she is really a phenomenologist, observing the caprices of life, in general. The point is that in Woolf these occurrences so often happen on a minute scale, though nonetheless poignant, as in the "failure and awkwardness" in "The Death of the Moth" (*CE* 1: 360). Woolf's world is not pretty but real, in which a cat "bit a man's hand to pieces" (*Voyage* p. 132), "in which poor Mr. Curnow had lost an eye" in a gunpowder explosion (*Jacob's Room* 10), where the man putting up a circus poster has had his left arm "cut off in a reaping machine two years ago" (*Lighthouse* p. 21). As Betty Flanders thinks in *Jacob's Room*, "Accidents are awful things" (p. 7), and this general anxiety over the flux of the world is a common condition in Woolf's work. Or, as Woolf has Septimus Smith worry in *Mrs. Dalloway*: "The world has raised its whip; where will it descend?" (p. 22)

This sense of unease tends to link manmade and natural catastrophe. Noting the gales and the roaring sea, Woolf notes: "The nights now are full of wind and destruction" (*Lighthouse* p. 193). In the same section, of course, Woolf records the deaths of Prue Ramsay in childbirth, and

Andrew Ramsay in a shell-explosion in France (pp. 199, 201). These are the unaccountable injuries, the unwarranted deaths. They are as close as Woolf comes to acknowledging something akin to fate. Later in the novel, James Ramsay ponders the way these events happen:

> Suppose then that as a child sitting helpless in a perambulator, or on some one's knee, he had seen a waggon crush ignorantly and innocently, some one's foot? Suppose he had seen the foot first, in the grass, smooth and whole; then the wheel; and the same foot, purple, crushed? But the wheel was innocent. So now, when his father came striding down the passage knocking them up early in the morning to go to the Lighthouse down it came over his foot, over Cam's foot, over anybody's foot. One sat and watched it. (p. 275)

It is this premonition of sudden tragedy that Woolf describes as "a blade, a scimitar, smiting through the leaves and flowers even of that happy world and making it shrivel and fall" (p. 276).[7] For Woolf, the postlapsarian tragedy is just as much an aesthetic loss as a moral one: disaster ruins the pattern of art.

If, as Jane Novak and others have noted, the pull in Woolf's novels is the struggle to shape the tumult of the world through art,[8] there must nonetheless remain aspects outside one's ken. As Jinny reflects in *The Waves*:

> And that man is a judge; and that man is a millionaire; and that man, with the eyeglass, shot his governess through the heart with an arrow when he was ten years old. Afterwards he rode through deserts with dispatches, took part in revolutions and now collects material for a history of his mother's family, long settled in Norfolk. That little man with a blue chin has a right hand that is withered. But why? We do not know. (p. 175)

One can at least distinguish between two different situations here: the man with the eyeglass has followed the path of war, from the shooting of his governess to his dispatch-riding. His retirement into history fits the mold of so many eminent men that Woolf has observed. There is some implied censure in his getting off scot-free, and this may be the fault of society. As for the little man with the withered hand, however, there is no perceptible reason, nowhere to affix blame. In an art that attempts to recreate life, epistemology has its limits.

The gamut of figures in Woolf runs from insects to adult *homo sapiens*, with the comparisons among them not always in favor of man, or even of humans. At times, the outlook seems pessimistic. Maria DiBattista goes further, noting "a pure negativity" at the center of Woolf's mature fiction.[9] Overriding the despondent tone, however, is Woolf's perpetual curiosity in seeking out as much and as varied life as possible. As she writes near the end of "An Unwritten Novel": "Wherever I go, mysterious figures, I see you, turning the corner...you, you, you. I listen, I follow" (*Complete Shorter Fiction* p. 121). In an unfair society within a random universe, Woolf remains faithful to her art by virtue of her mimesis, by reproducing as many different types of life as she can, and by not trying to explain away the inexplicable.

NOTES

[1]*Jacob's Room* (New York, 1978), pp. 24-25. All subsequent references to Woolf's novels and essays are from the HBJ editions, unless otherwise noted, with *CE* as the abbreviation for the four-volume *Collected Essays*.

[2]See *The Moth and the Star: A Biography of Virginia Woolf* (Boston, 1955), p. 158.

[3]*The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*, ed. Rupert Hart-Davis (London, 1983), p. 91. For a larger perspective on the situation, see Paul Fussell, *The Great War in Modern Memory* (New York, 1975).

[4]See *The Novels of Virginia Woolf from Beginning to End* (New York, 1977), p. 228.

[5]For a discussion of animal imagery in Woolf, see Jean O. Love, *Worlds in Consciousness: Mythopoetic Thought in the Novels of Virginia Woolf* (Berkeley, 1970), pp. 52ff.

[6]See *Virginia Woolf: A Critical Reading* (Baltimore, 1975), p. 75.

[7]Cf. Rachel's fevered vision in *The Voyage Out*: "But she only saw an old woman slicing a man's head off with a knife. 'There it falls!' she murmured" (413-14). Here, however, castration symbolism provides an added etiology to the fall.

[8]See Novak, *The Razor Edge of Balance: A Study of Virginia Woolf* (Coral Gables, 1975), p. 1.

[9]*Virginia Woolf's Major Novels: The Fables of Anon* (New Haven, 1980), p. 10.

CRUSOE, CROCODILES, AND COOKERY BOOKS: *DAVID COPPERFIELD* AND THE AFFECTIVE POWER OF READING FICTION

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I

In *The Uncommercial Traveler*, Charles Dickens describes how, as a child, he became intimately acquainted with a number of imaginary places. He affectionately remembers minute details of the settings of *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gil Blas*, and *Don Quixote*:

> I was never in Robinson Crusoe's Island, yet I frequently return there....
>
> I was never in the robbers' cave, where Gil Blas lived, but I often go back there and find the trap-door just as heavy to raise as it used to be....
>
> I was never in Don Quixote's study, where he read his books of chivalry until he rose and hacked at imaginary giants...yet you couldn't move a book in it without my knowledge or consent.[1]

A similar description of Dickens's childhood reading appears in the autobiographical fragment which he eventually incorporated into *David Copperfield*. In it, he describes the comfort he received from reading and acting out books like *Robinson Crusoe*, *Tom Jones*, *Don Quixote*, and *The Arabian Nights*.[2]

Dickens's enthusiasm for fiction is also evident in his novels. In *A Christmas Carol*, Scrooge is taken back by the Ghost of Christmas Past to a holiday he spent alone at school. While there, characters from the books he read as a child come to life. "Why it's Ali Baba!" he exclaims at the appearance of a man in foreign clothing. "It's dear old honest Ali Baba! Yes, yes, I know! One Christmas Time, when yonder solitary child was left here all alone, he *did* come, for the first time, just like that."[3] Ali Baba is soon followed by other characters from *The Arabian Nights*, as well as Robinson Crusoe with his parrot. Like Dickens's discussions of his own reading, this one emphasizes the reality of fiction to the reader and the comfort it can provide.

Scenes with characters enjoying books also occur in *Martin Chuzzlewit, Bleak House, Hard Times,* and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood.* Tom Pinch of *Martin Chuzzlewit* escapes from his dreary life with Mr. Pecksniff by frequenting book stores where the phantoms of Robinson Crusoe and characters from *The Arabian Nights* entertain him. He also becomes so caught up in reading books to Young Martin that he forgets about worldly concerns such as putting more wood on the fire. In *Bleak House*, Esther Summerson charms the otherwise uncontrollable Jellyby children by reading them stories such as "Little Red Riding Hood." Sissy Jupe of *Hard Times* believes her happiest hours have been spent reading about fairies and genies, while Rosa Bud of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* keeps her spirits up after Edwin's disappearance by accidentally "lighting on some books of voyages and sea adventure" (p. 263).[4]

Given Dickens's interest in the effects of reading fiction, it should not be surprising that many of his novels are about characters who are apparently changed by the books they read. Such characters are especially important in *David Copperfield.*[5] Unfortunately, most discussions of these characters are used only to analyze Dickens's reading and its influence on his writing. Harry Stone, Christopher Mulvey, William J. Palmer, and Janet Larson have noted Dickens's allusions to fairy tales, *The Arabian Nights,* eighteenth-century novels, and the Bible, while missing their effect on his characters.[6] While both Stanley Friedman and Max Byrd write more specifically about Dickens's use of reading as a motif, neither directly studies its affective power. Instead, they both define reading generally as any act of interpretation.

Certainly, the thematic importance of the reading in *David Copperfield* has never been fully realized. John Forster's early biography suggests that David's books are merely a gratuitous grafting of autobiographical material onto the novel. James Kincaid mistakenly sees David's reading as contaminating "his perception...." Rather than "building an expansive and healthy imaginative life," David's novels become "a narcotic, sustaining but dangerous."[7] On the other hand, although James Marlow believes Dickens sees literature as a "spiritual reservoir," he only briefly touches on Dickens's attitudes towards fiction without exploring how it affects David.[8]

David Copperfield, however, is fundamentally concerned with the effects of reading fiction; it can be seen as a response to the charge that readers of fiction are wasting their time and that their books are dangerous. A close analysis of the readers presented in *David*

Copperfield reveals that they are not didactic demonstrations of the ill-effects of reading literature. While fiction is shown sometimes to foster false perceptions, it clearly contributes to its reader's "expansive and healthy imaginative life," something Kincaid and others fail to see. For most of the novel's characters, books are a saving force, a spark for kindling imagination and creativity, a way to order and interpret the world. At the same time, they are part of a complex *Ars Poetica* detailing Dickens's ideas about the novel as a genre and the proper relationship between his readers and his work.

II

The first sentence of *David Copperfield*, in which David ponders whether or not he will become the hero of his own life, suggests that he sees his life as a work of literature. It is not until Chapter Four, however, that he describes how, he began to devour books and imitate their heroes. Just when he thinks he can no longer bear the Murdstone's injustices, he discovers a treasure-trove of books in a room everyone else ignores. Soon he becomes so involved with their characters that he thinks of them as real people. Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, Humphry Clinker, Tom Jones, the Vicar of Wakefield, Don Quixote, Gil Blas, and Robinson Crusoe become "a glorious host to keep [him] company." David is captivated by them because, along with characters from *The Arabian Nights* and *Tales of the Genii*, they keep alive his "fancy" and "the hope of something beyond that time and place...."[9] He would have been perfectly miserable after his mother's death, "but for the old books. They were my only comfort; and I was as true to them as they were to me, and read them over and over I don't know how many times more" (p. 205). David's books provide such comfort because they temporarily allow him to escape from his miserable existence, permitting him return to the edenic paradise where Clara and Peggotty protected him. It is appropriate, then, that David's initial description of his reading appears between two scenes of ill-abuse from Mr. Murdstone.

As if in response to those who might criticize his love of these books, David argues that "whatever harm was in them was not for me." He impersonates his favorite characters, putting "Mr. and Miss Murdstone into all the bad ones..." (p. 106). He is not unlike another "healthy" character, Tommy Traddles, who vents what Trevor Blount calls "inner sadness" by drawing skeletons (p. 27). At times, David takes the part of a "child's Tom Jones" and sustains his "own idea of

Roderick Random for a month at a stretch." Soon he begins to associate every barn and each stone in the church with his books:

> I have seen Tom Pipes go up the church-steeple; I have watched Strap, with the knapsack on his back stopping to rest himself upon the wicket gate; and I *know* that Commodore Trunnion held that club with Mr. Pickle, in the parlour of our little village alehouse. (p. 106)

David's desire to act out the books he reads is further encouraged when he is sent away to school. When Steerforth hears him compare another student to a character from *Peregrine Pickle*, he becomes interested in David's reading, casting him in the role of the Sultana from *The Arabian Nights*, making him act out various novels in nightly installments for the amusement of the other boys. According to David, "the institution never flagged for want of a story" (p. 146).

As David grows up, he continues to see himself and others as characters from literature. When he eats dinner with Mr. Micawber, he feels like Roderick Random. He sees Mrs. Waterbrook as "a near relation of Hamlet's—say his aunt," Jack Maldon as Sinbad the Sailor, Mr. Spenlow as Punch, and both Em'ly and Aunt Betsey as fairies (p. 431). When he gets his own set of rooms, he feels like Robinson Crusoe barricading himself against the world; after Aunt Betsey loses her fortune, she also becomes "a female Robinson Crusoe, drinking tea" (p. 557). These last examples are especially significant because David's frequent allusions to Crusoe express his sense of isolation.[10]

Despite David's claim that books have not harmed him, he acknowledges that his role-playing may not have been healthy, that relying heavily on novels is potentially confusing and dangerous. Discussing the books he shared with with his schoolmates, he writes, "Whatever I had within me that was romantic and dreamy, was encouraged by so much story-telling in the dark; and in that respect the pursuit may not have been profitable to me" (p. 146). If David is correct, his fascination with Steerforth, Miss Larkins, Dora, and Little Em'ly comes from the books he has read. While David compares some of these people to literary characters, he is also attracted to their seemingly romantic exteriors.

When David meets Steerforth for the first time after leaving Salem House, he has just been to see a production of *Julius Caesar*. The play sweeps him away in a romantic whirl, "like a shining transparency," a picture which becomes visible when illuminated from behind, through which he sees his "earlier life moving along..." (p. 345). He soon

connects Steerforth to the play's "poetry," "lights," and "music"—to its "smooth stupendous changes of glittering scenery" which open up "illimitable regions of delight..." (p. 344). That night he falls "asleep in a blissful condition," dreaming of "ancient Rome, Steerforth, and friendship" (p. 347). Unfortunately, he does not look closely at the play, which parallels Steerforth's betrayal and false friendship, but instead comes to admire him in "a thousand respects" (p. 358).

David is also attracted to women who seem to resemble the goddesses and fairies of myths and folktales. It only takes two waltzes with Miss Larkins for him to "go home in a state of unspeakable bliss," dancing "in imagination all night long" with his "dear divinity" (p. 329). When she ultimately rejects him, he repeats the process with Dora Spenlow. As with Steerforth and Miss Larkins, David does not look beyond Dora's appearance, but he seems determined to put her into an exotic fairy tale. When he first visits Mr. Spenlow's house, he makes it into an enchanted garden before he even sees Dora. When they do meet, he thinks of Dora as a fairy or a sylph who casts a spell on him. Of a walk he takes with Dora and Jip, he writes that "if we were not all three in Fairyland, certainly *I* was" (p. 456).

Later, Dickens shows that books are no substitute for reality. At the end of Chapter 35, David praises Dora to Agnes, who unwittingly sheds "some glimpses of her own pure light " onto "the little fairy figure" in a way that makes it "yet more precious and more innocent..." (p. 581). Nevertheless, the scene ends with David looking from the window and spotting a beggar who mutters, "Blind! Blind! Blind!" (p. 582) Obviously, David is blind to the fact that he really loves Agnes, and that he has himself imbued Dora with the very "fairy" quality that attracts him.

Likewise deceptive is the fantasy David creates by putting Em'ly and himself into a pastoral version of the ballad, "The Children in the Woods." It implies that they would marry, be happy, and

> live among the trees and in the fields, never growing wiser, children ever, rambling hand in hand through the sunshine and among flowery meadows, laying down our heads on moss at night, in a sweet sleep of purity and peace, and buried by the birds when we were dead! Some such picture with no real world in it, bright with the light of innocence, and vague as the stars afar off, was in my mind all the way. (p. 202)

As the older David states, there is no "real world" in this picture. The young man has also conveniently forgotten that, in the ballad, the

children are abandoned, dying from isolation and neglect.[11] David unfortunately locks Em'ly into this story and has difficulty understanding the dangers she later faces. Ironically, Em'ly herself is seduced by a story Steerforth tells. "Steerforth told a story of a dismal shipwreck...as if he saw it all before him—and little Em'ly's eyes were fastened on him all the time, as if she saw it too" (p. 375). Subconsciously, she is also attracted by a Cinderella tale in which Steerforth transforms her into a lady.

Each of these examples might be used to argue that the novel is primarily concerned with demonstrating the dangerous potential of fictional narratives. This would, however, seem to contradict David's early contention that such works sustained him, providing him with life. Certainly, David's reading never physically endangers him as it does the heroines mentioned at the beginning of Chapter Two. It should be clear, instead, that these examples are more an indictment of the way David sometimes reads than a criticism of specific literary works. There are dangers associated with reading fiction, but they arise from reading superficially. Ultimately, David discovers something universal in his books. He is no longer an isolated Robinson Crusoe, but is linked to other people with similar hopes and problems. Like the supplies Crusoe rescues from his boat, David's reading is the one possession he has to help him when he is shipwrecked in the outside world, and the novel clearly argues that it helps save him.

Literature, then, helps David bring order to a very chaotic world. It is not merely a means of escape and self-introspection, but a way to transcend life and understand its possibilities.[12] In the first edition of *Household Words*, Dickens writes that his books are meant to "teach the hardest workers at this whirling wheel of toil, that their lot is not necessarily a moody, brutal fact, excluded from the sympathies and graces of imagination...."[13] The books David reads have such an impact on him that they allow him to triumph, at least mentally, over his enemies.

Fiction lets David see the possibility, as far-fetched as it may seem, for a "happy ending." Perhaps the best illustration of this is the "crocodile book" which Peggotty saves from his childhood days. Significantly, it is first mentioned about the time Mr. Murdstone starts courting his mother. While reading it to Peggotty, David interrupts with a question about his mother's possible remarriage. Peggotty is evasive, however, so they continue reading. The description of the story (into which David projects himself and Peggotty) is very suggestive:

> However, we returned to those monsters, with fresh wakefulness on my part, and we left their eggs in the sand for the sun to hatch; and we ran away from them, and baffled them by constantly turning, which they were unable to do quickly, on account of their unwieldy make; and we went into the water after them, as natives, and put pieces of timber down their throats; and in short we ran the whole crocodile gauntlet. (p. 67)

In writing about this scene, Bert Hornback argues that in "this storybook version of experience the conflict is falsified for the sake of sentimental innocence, and the natives all live happily ever after" (p. 70). Yet he misses the fact that it also shows David that he can potentially escape life's crocodiles, providing him with the chance to practice the game of survival he will soon be forced to play.

The value of David's role-playing and his belief in happy endings is nicely illustrated by his journey to Dover. Earlier in the novel, he has already acted out the part of a "child's Tom Jones." When he finally runs away from Murdstone and Grimby's, he once again assumes the role of Fielding's penniless foundling, forced to travel the countryside.[14] David knows that Tom's story ends with love, marriage, and forgiveness. *Tom Jones* and books like it, however, only initiate David's resolve to run away; it is the supernatural, fairy godmother picture he creates of Aunt Betsey which sustains him through his journey. The determination and belief it engenders help David move forward and escape the "Murdstonian monsters." After all, he knows that even lonely Robinson Crusoe is eventually rescued.

Through his reading, David develops imaginative faculties which prompt him to become a story-teller, an effect he recognizes:

> I fitted my old books to my altered life, and made stories for myself, out of the streets, and out of men and women....some main points in the character I shall unconsciously develop, I suppose, in writing my life, were gradually forming all this while." (p. 244)

In this way, reading inspires him to create "new" stories. He has gained the ability to understand and order his life to the point where he can write it down. For him, writing an "autobiography" is another attempt to find meaning and structure in his life.

The fact that, in this novel, practical, factual reading can create more problems than fiction also supports the value of David's books. The various "How to..." books he encounters demonstrate this nicely.

Murdstone's speller, Dora's cookery book, and David's stenography handbook all present a practical system of knowledge which causes problems for its users. David abhors the "dead weight" of "that horrible old spelling book, with oval woodcuts, shaped to my useful fancy, like the glasses out of spectacles" because it embodies a Murdstonian firmness quite the opposite of the literature he reads (p. 617).

The stenography alphabet, which David has difficulty mastering, is even worse:

> When I had groped my way, blindly...and had mastered the alphabet, which was an Egyptian Temple in itself, there then appeared a procession of new horrors called arbitrary characters; the most despotic characters I have ever known; who insisted, for instance, that a thing like the beginning of a cobweb, meant expectation, and that a pen-and-ink skyrocket stood for disadvantageous. When I had fixed these wretches in my mind, I found that they had driven everything else out of it; then, beginning again, I forgot them: while I was picking them up, I dropped the other fragments of systems; in short, it was almost heart-breaking. (p. 609)

All three of these books, though meant for self-improvement, are as unreal as any fairy tale because they do not include any representation of human feelings and are therefore extremely artificial. In each case, they nearly master the user.

By juxtaposing David's stories against practical writing, *David Copperfield* criticizes the placing of too much reliance on either fiction or facts. Either of these can help save its Robinson Crusoes, although they contain their own crocodiles. Most important, the opposition between practical writing and fiction provides a means for judging and interpreting many of the novel's characters. Generally, those who are most practical and rigid tend to be the aggressive villains, while those who are too absorbed in fanciful worlds become their victims. The novel very carefully sets up Heep, Maldon, and Steerforth as self-centered pragmatists who could benefit from the qualities novels have nourished in David. Heep, who spends his time reading law books, never understands that his unhappy situation is not unique. He has never been instilled with the possibility of a "happy ending," or the notion that he can transcend his situation in life. Maldon and Steerforth have never gained the ability to understand other people or empathize with them. David discusses Maldon's "indifference to all actions and passions of mankind" by stressing that he ignores newspapers.

"There's an account about the people being hungry and discontented down in the North, but they are always being hungry and discontented somewhere," Maldon remarks. "There's a long statement in the papers...about a murder....But somebody is always being murdered, and I didn't read it" (p. 587).

Of course, Steerforth's egotistic practicality is even more insidious. After all, he ruins more lives. Of Barkis's death he tells David, "It's a bad job...but the sun sets every day, and people die every minute, and we mustn't be scared by the common lot" (p. 487). Like David, Steerforth tells stories and goes to plays, but his interaction with these works is generally superficial. Even Steerforth, however, has a moment of introspection prompted by reading. He tells David that at "odd dull times, nursery tales come up into the memory, unrecognized for what they are." He has been confounding himself "with the bad boy who 'didn't care' and became food for lions" (p. 381) He subsequently equates himself with Macbeth, who breaks up the feast when he sees Banquo's ghost (pp. 274-275). Sadly, this is the one time that Steerforth even comes close to understanding the potential effects of his affair and the only time he benefits from literature. As David explains, he "could not help observing how much Steerforth knew, on an infinite variety of subjects, and of how little account he seemed to make of his knowledge" (p. 349). Despite his knowledge, Steerforth remains heartless, self-centered, and unfeeling.

Conversely, many other characters are decidedly romantic and thus easily manipulated. As I have mentioned, Em'ly is ensnared by Steerforth's stories. Like David, Annie Strong seems to see Jack Maldon as a romantic Sinbad. Interestingly, the only character, other than David, who has great difficulties with both the real and practical world is Dora. She is inept at keeping a house and cannot sustain an intelligent conversation with anyone except Jip.[15] Perhaps it is because she encourages David's uncontrolled fancy and yet cannot stimulate his creative impulses that Harry Stone calls her "profoundly destructive for David" (p. 246).

By the end of the novel, David has learned how to bridge the gap between the worlds of romance and reality, to read critically both fictional and factual works. He eventually tames his imaginative faculties and thereby becomes successful:

> ...I never could have done what I have done, without the habits of punctuality, order, and diligence, without the determination to concentrate myself on one object at a

> time, no matter how quickly its successor should come upon its heels, which I have formed. (p. 671)

David further contends that he has gained these qualities through Agnes and that they have made him happy.[16]

David Copperfield, then, presents two very divergent attitudes towards its protagonist's reading. Although books are consoling, encouraging and stimulating, they are also confusing and dangerous if not subjected to a careful reading. Apparently, in this novel's world appearances are easily equated with reality. While subduing crocodiles is difficult, it is next to impossible to recognize the true nature of those who, like Steerforth, seem to resemble the heroes of literature. This does not mean that David loses the imagination developed from his early reading and storytelling. The book he writes is a means of bringing reality and imagination into perspective, his literary technique "the blending of experience and imagination" (p. 734). Seemingly, he attempts to instill in his readers the comfort, pleasure, and hope that his reading gave him, and yet keep his writing grounded in experience and reality. Certainly, the act of doing this helps merge the distinct worlds he has encountered. Not surprisingly, this is what Dickens attempts to do in novels like *David Copperfield*. As he explains in the often quoted preface to *Bleak House*, "I have purposely dwelt upon the romantic side of familiar things" (p. 4).[17] David's reading is at the center of the novel, providing a metaphor for the complexity of life, as well as his and Dickens's artistic theory, at the same time representing the novel's reader.

The reader might ask why, given the tragedy of Em'ly and Steerforth and the pain of David's early childhood, the novel should end with happy endings for almost everyone from Mr. Micawber to Mr. Mell. The tables seem cleared, like those at the dinner presided over by Mr. Micawber, "as if by the art-magic for dancing" (p. 945). By the end, however, Dickens's readers ought to understand they are being asked to respond to the story as David does his own books: they are invited to see the possibilities of a happy ending. Ultimately, David triumphs over his own crocodiles, just as he does the ones in Peggotty's book. Like Robinson Crusoe, he is rescued and returned to humanity. David's triumphs are, of course, tempered by the novel's insistence that the crocodiles he meets are dangerous. The deaths of Steerforth, Little Em'ly, and Ham help balance David's Cinderella-like happy ending. At the same time, David's readers are educated to look beyond the surfaces of romantic appearances, to desire the balance of fiction and fact which David develops in his own life.

Certainly, as Stone suggests, the way Dickens artfully includes in "the commonplace those dimensions, those secret consonances and existence" demonstrates this novel's richness (p. 197). *David Copperfield* is deeply entertaining, yet resonates with great power, even in such small details as crocodiles, cookery books, and allusions to *Robinson Crusoe*.

NOTES

[1]"Nurse's Stories," in *Selected Short Fiction* (Harmondsworth, 1976), pp. 220-221.

[2]John Forster quotes the description of David Copperfield's reading as autobiographical fact. According to Forster, every word of it "had been written down...some years before it found its way into *David Copperfield*; the only change in the fiction being its omission of the name of a cheap series of novels then in the course of publication...." See John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens* (1874; rpt. London, 1927), 1: 8.

[3]*A Christmas Carol: The Original Manuscript* (New York, 1967), pp. 48-50.

[4]*Pickwick Papers* is also filled with characters who enjoy hearing stories. Mr. Pickwick spends Christmas Eve listening to "The Story of the Goblin Who Stole a Sexton," though he later is less enthusiastic about "The True Legend of Prince Bladud" which produces a yawn and "a countenance expressive of the utmost weariness." Toots, in *Dombey and Son*, is less fortunate with books. His mind has "left off having brains" as a result of too much reading and studying under Dr. Blimber. The works he reads, however, are lesson books and works by classical writers, not novels and fairy tales. See *Pickwick Papers*, ed. Stephen Marcus (New York, 1964) p. 559; and *Dombey and Son*, ed. Peter Fairclough (Harmondsworth, 1970), p. 206.

[5]Dickens's last completed novel, *Our Mutual Friend*, is also about the effects of reading. For much of the novel, Mr. Boffin appears to imitate the misers of the books read to him. Bradley Headstone and Miss Podsnap are also shaped by the books they have read. For a rather general study of reading in this novel, see Stanley Friedman, "The Motif of Reading in *Our Mutual Friend*," *NCF* 28 (1973), 38-61.

[6]See Harry Stone, *Dickens and the Invisible World: Fairy Tales, Fantasy, and Novel Making* (Bloomington, 1979); Christopher Mulvey, "David Copperfield: The Folk Story Structure," *DSA 5*

(1976), 74-94; William J. Palmer, "Dickens and the Eighteenth Century," *DSA* 7 (1977), 15-39; and Janet Larson, *Dickens and the Broken Scripture* (Athens, Ga., 1985).

[7]James R. Kincaid, *Dickens and the Rhetoric of Laughter* (Oxford, 1971), p. 259.

[8]James E. Marlow, "Dickens' Romance: The Novel as Other," *DSA* 5 (1976), 35.

[9]*David Copperfield*, ed. Trevor Blount. (Harmondsworth, 1966), p. 105. All further references to this work appear in the text.

[10]Dickens's other works contain similar allusions to *Robinson Crusoe*. As already mentioned, Tom Pinch and Ebenezer Scrooge have read it. Defoe's novel is also used to describe Mr. Bob Sawyer, who "eschews gloves like a dissipated Robinson Crusoe," Mr. Quilp, who feels like Robinson Crusoe when he is sequestered in his summer house, and Captain Cuttles who "feels as lonely as Robinson Crusoe." See *Pickwick Papers*, p. 450; *The Old Curiosity Shop* (Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 465; and *Dombey and Son*, p. 636.

[11]This ballad has become a nursery classic and is sometimes published as "The Babes in the Woods." A version of it may be found in Joseph Jacobs, *More English Fairy Tales* (New York, 1968).

[12]Bert Hornback believes that this novel is primarily concerned with the "finally unmanageable problem, both real and mythic, of ordering a disordered world." See Bert G. Hornback, *"Noah's Arkitecture": A Study of Dickens' Mythology* (Athens, Ohio, 1972), p. 63.

[13]As quoted in Robert Newsom, *Dickens on the Romantic Side of Familiar Things: Bleak House and the Novel Tradition* (New York, 1977), p. 3.

[14]Two of the characters in *David Copperfield*, Tommy Traddles and his wife Sophia, bear the same first names as Fielding's hero and heroine.

[15]In order to form her mind, David tries to read Shakespeare to Dora, "fatiguing her mind to the last degree" (p. 762).

[16]Perhaps David's marriage to Agnes could be viewed as the union of imagination and practicality. She seems to represent the "order and diligence" Dora lacks. In any case, Agnes is, unlike

Dora, a reader; when they are married, she shares many books with David and tells stories to their children.

[17]*Bleak House*, ed. George Ford and Sylvère Monod (New York, 1967).

MORE ANALOGUES AND RESOURCES FOR POE'S FICTION AND POEMS

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Perhaps no major American writer was more engrossed in the profession of journalism than Edgar Allan Poe. Some of his best tales and poems first appeared in minor journals or newspapers. His criticisms and reviews, however, were often printed in periodicals that enjoyed wide circulation in particular regions along the Atlantic seaboard. As journalist and critic, Poe spent many hours perusing contemporary periodicals and newspapers, some of which were ephemeral; others were major publications that included quarterly reviews, monthly magazines and big-city newspapers. Most notably, Margaret Alterton, Killis Campbell, Ruth Lee Hudson, and, more recently, Thomas O. Mabbott, Burton R. Pollin, and Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV have established Poe's dependence upon a variety of journalistic publications.[1] Poe's comment in a letter to Thomas W. White, Poe's soon-to-be boss[2] and publisher of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, dated 30 April 1835, strongly suggests Poe's wide reading of the fiction published in the magazines of the 1820s and 1830s:

> The history of all Magazines shows plainly that those which have attained celebrity were indebted for it to articles *similar in nature—to Berenice*—although, I grant you, far superior in style and execution. I say similar in *nature*. You ask me in what does this nature consist? In the ludicrous heightened into the grotesque: the fearful coloured into the horrible: the witty exaggerated into the burlesque: the singular wrought out into the strange and mystical. (pp. 57-58)

In an effort to continue the search for additional hints and evidences of Poe's use of nineteenth-century journals, reviews, and newspapers in composing his fiction and poems, I have concentrated my examination on American magazines, newspapers, annuals, and gift-books.[3] Among others comprising this search are the *Democratic Review*, the *Knickerbocker*, the *American Monthly Magazine* [New York], the

New-York Mirror, the *American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge*, the *North American Review, Alexander's Weekly Messenger*, the *Atlantic Souvenir*, and *Godey's Lady's Book*. British publications receiving special attention are the *New Monthly Magazine, Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, the *Westminster Review*, and the *Metropolitan Magazine*.

The annotated entries below are presented as an initial step in locating possible new sources for Poe, thereby adding to the vast resources available to him in current journalistic literature. I intend to provide possible evidence of additional borrowings and to specify additional background material that help to place Poe in his cultural milieu. How Poe made use of current popular themes in his own tales and poems bespeaks, to a degree, his methods and traits as a literary artist. Or, what he drew from news items concerned with travel or with science, not to mention from a host of other journalistic miscellanies, could be a start in understanding how Poe wrought "the singular...into the strange and mystical."

Poe's world of journalism was an intermix of major and minor contemporary figures: editors, feature writers, occasional contributors, poets, scientists, and others. Along with Irving, Cooper, Bryant, Hawthorne, and Longfellow, Poe was well acquainted with the compositions of lesser-known writer-journalists like Nathaniel Parker Willis (*New-York Mirror*), Gulian Verplanck and James K. Paulding (*American Monthly Magazine* [New York]), and Lewis Gaylord Clark (*Knickerbocker*). As Robert Jacobs has written, Poe "must have learned about the literary cliques and cabals which controlled magazine publication and, to a certain extent, journalistic reputations in America."[4]

To my knowledge, none of the possible parallels or echoes has been previously cited. The immensity of Poe's scholarship, however, is obviously an acknowledged hurdle for any researcher; then my repeating a likely analogue or Poe borrowing already noted is a lurking possibility. Also, one must remember that early and mid-nineteenth century periodicals frequently borrowed from each other, often representing an item verbatim. For example, Irving's essay "An Unwritten Drama by Lord Byron," Poe's acknowledged source of his tale "William Wilson," was printed in three contemporary publications, including the *Gift* where Poe reports reading it.[5]

NOTES

[1]Alterton, *Origins of Poe's Critical Theory.* (1925; rpt. New York, 1965); Campbell, ed., *The Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (1917; rpt. New York, 1962) and Campbell's *The Mind of Poe and Other Studies* (1933; rpt. New York, 1962); Hudson, "Edgar Allan Poe's Craftsmanship in the Short Story," diss., U. of Virginia, 1935; Mabbott, *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1969-1978); Pollin, *Discoveries in Poe* (Notre Dame, 1970); Fisher, "To 'The Assignation' from 'The Visionary' and Poe's Decade of Revising," *Library Chronicle*, 39 (1973), 89-105; 40 (1976), 221-251; and "More Pieces in the Puzzle of Poe's 'The Assignation,'" *Myths and Reality: The Mysterious Mr. Poe* (Baltimore, 1987), pp. 59-88.

[2]*The Letters of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. John Ward Ostrom. rev. ed. (New York, 1966), 1:57-59.

[3]I am indebted to Mrs. Elizabeth Sayle Ruleman for her aid in my search of nineteenth-century journals and annuals.

[4]Jacobs, *Poe: Journalist and Critic* (Baton Rouge, 1969), p. 95. Identifying contributors to the early and mid-nineteeth century American magazines and serials is a very time-consuming challenge at this point. Without doubt, something comparable to the five volumes of the *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals 1824- 1900*, ed. Walter Houghton et al. (Toronto, 1966-1989) is sorely needed. The following studies, however, were helpful in compiling this checklist: John E. Farrior, "A Study of the *North American Review*: The First Twenty Years," diss., U. of North Carolina, 1954; London E. Fuller, "*The United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, 1837-1859: A Study of Its History, Contents, and Significance," diss., U. of North Carolina, 1948; David K. Jackson, *The Contributors and Contributions to the Southern Literary Messenger* (Charlottesville, 1936); and Herman E. Spivey, "*The Knickerbocker Magazine* 1833-1865. A Study of Its History, Contents, and Significance," diss., U. of North Carolina, 1936.

[5]John Ward Ostrom, "Supplement to *The Letters of Poe*," *AL*, 24 (1952), 360-361.

"The Balloon-Hoax" (1844)

"Balloon Voyage." *American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge*, 3 (Feb. 1837), 173.

Brief notice of successful balloon trip from Vauxhall gardens (England) to a location near Coblenz (Germany).

"Sir John Herschel and the Moon Hoax." *Alexander's Weekly Messenger*, 5 July 1837, p. [3].

Reported discoveries of Sir John Hershel's using a high-powered telescope in examining the surface of the moon are a hoax.

"The Bells" (1849)

"The Lay of the Bell." *American Monthly Magazine* [Boston], 1 (July 1829), 281-285.

Quotes translated passages from Schiller's poem which treat "the most beautiful episodic pictures of the various scenes of life, with which the sounds of the bell are connected."

Merivale, J.H. "'The Song of the Bell' by Schiller." *New Monthly Magazine*, 58 (Jan. 1840), 129-139.

A translation of Friedrich von Schiller's lyric "Das Lied Von der Glocke."

Merry, Felix, Gent [Evert Augustus Duyckinck]. "Essay from the Fire-Side. Number III. The Chime of Bells." *American Monthly Magazine* [New York], 5 ns (May 1838), 566-569.

Focuses upon the effects of ringing bells upon the human consciousness.

[Smith, Horace]. "The Village Bells." *New Monthly Magazine*, 8 (July 1823), 40-43.

Prose description of bells signifying important events in the life of a small village.

"Song of the Bell." *American Monthly Magazine* [New York], 3 ns (Jan. 1837), 33-40.

A translation of Schiller's poem.

"The Black Cat" (1843)

Olddruck, Jonathan. "A Paper on the Theory of Cats." *New-York Mirror*, 21 (21 April 1838), 342.

Essay on the omnipresence and possible omniscience of cats, especially in inaccessible places.

W. "A Chapter on Cats." *Knickerbocker*, 3 (May 1834), 348-356.

A gentleman lawyer kills his mistress' favorite cat.

"The Cask of Amontillado" (1846)

"The Bridal Morn." *New-York Mirror*, 5 (13 Oct. 1827), 106-107.

A tale with Lord "Montressor" as a primary character. (The protagonist in Poe's tale is spelled "Montresor.")

"The Coliseum" (1833)

"Atlantis." *Atlantic Souvenir*, (1827), 1-2.

City of Atlantis compared to ancient Rome.

"The Coliseum." *New-York Mirror*, 10 (28 July 1832), 25.

Focuses upon the grandeur of ancient Rome as evidenced by the awesome ruins of the Roman Coliseum.

Mellen, Grenville. "Balbec." *Atlantic Souvenir*, (1827), 148-151.

Reflections upon ancient city now in ruins.

"The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion" (1839)

B. "Strange Predictions." *American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge*, 1 (June 1835), 414.

An "odd character of learning" associates approaching comets as "heralds of war or pestilence" and predicts several catastrophic effects from an approaching comet.

"A Descent into the Maelström" (1841)

A. "Dreams." *American Monthly Magazine* [Boston], 2 (July 1830), 299-305.

Narrator dreams that his ship is devoured by a whirlpool or "Maelström." See p. 304.

"A Prodigious Whirlpool." *American Magazine of Wonders and Marvellous Chronicle*, 2 (1809), 307.

Briefly cites the Maelstrom near Drontheim (Sweden?) which, supposedly, empties "its water into the bay of Bothnia, by a subterraneous passage."

"Eleonora" (1941)

"The Spirit." *American Monthly Magazine* [New York], 3 (April 1834), 113-120.

A guardian spirit—a nameless woman having intellect, "pallied cheeks," and "most liquid orbs"—effects a faithful relationship with a soldier fighting in the French and Indian War.

"The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (1845)

"Life in Death." *New Monthly Magazine*, 37 (March 1833), 302-307.

Head of a dead man becomes lifelike after coming into contact with a mysterious liquid.

"The Fall of the House of Usher" (1939)

W. E. [Eliza Waler]. "Hypochondriacs." *New Monthly Magazine*, 5 (Dec. 1822), 470-475.

Narrator visits a former college friend who has become an invalid.

"The Imp of the Perverse" (1845)

"The Jurisprudence of Insanity." *North American Review*, 60 (Jan. 1845), 1-23.

Uncontrollable impulses resulting in heinous acts of violence are categorized as a form of moral insanity.

"The Lake" (1927)

Mellen, Frederic. "Boyhood's Days." *The Atlantic Souvenir* (1830), 230-232.

Speaker in the lyric longs for the "fairy land" of his youthful days.

"Ligeia" (1838)

L. "Reid's Essay on Hypochondriacal and Other Nervous Affections." *American Monthly Magazine and Critical Review* [New York], 1 (Aug. 1817), 262-268.

Cites examples of the power of the will over "the vital and animal functions"—even death.

"Lionizing" (1835)

Placid, Pertinax [Edward Sparhawk]. "A Tale of the Nose." *Southern Literary Messenger*, 1 (April 1835), 445-448.

"The Man of the Crowd" (1840)

"A Day in London." *New Monthly Magazine*, 8 (July 1823), 44-50.

A visitor from the country takes in London life and describes the city's squalid areas. See Mabbott, 2: 509-510.

"The Streets of London." *New-York Mirror*, 10 (June 22, 1833), 404-405.

A vivid description of impecunious sections of London. See Mabbott, 2: 509-510.

"The Masque of the Red Death" (1842)

"A Chapter on Goblins." *Blackwood's Magazine*, 14 (Dec. 1823), 639-646.

Accounts of spectral apparitions, one of which involves a skeleton who appears at a ball in Italy (p. 642).

F.F. "The City of the Pestilence." *Godey's Lady's Book*, 5 (Sept. 1832), 113-115.

A city suffers a plague personified as a man with a "noiseless step." (A narrative poem).

"Mellonta Tauta" (1849)

"Nineteen Hundred." *Democratic Review*, 20 (May 1847), 449-453, 545-550.

Upon partaking of a primeval fern, six friends meet in 1900 and discuss changes in technology, tastes, and urban development.

"Mesmeric Revelation" (1844)

"Animal Magnetism." *Democratic Review*, 9 (Dec. 1841), 515-527.

Declares that Mesmerism could answer some of the great mysteries of life as well as to reveal how the body perceives reality.

Swift, Mrs. Jane. "Ernest Steiner, A Tale of the Ideal and the Real." *Democratic Review*, 8 (July 1843), 38-44.

Hypnotism (Mesmerism) is utilized to enter "regions of the lost." See especially note on p. 44 (signed J.L.S.) for an account of Animal Magnetism involving a physician in New York who "willed" that a female patient visit heaven. Awakening, she reported "she had dreamed of Paradise" and described in detail what she felt and saw.

"The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841)

"From the 'Book of Nature' for January. Orang Outang." *Saturday Evening Post*, 21 February 1835, p. [1].

Describes the behavior and amazing feats of a captured orangutan "on his arrival in Jarva, from Batavia."

J.J.J. "Sketches of Paris." *American Monthly Magazine* [New York], 4 ns (Aug. 1837), 114.

Comments upon Charles Dupin, "Procureur general du roi [French]...and president of the Chamber of Deputies." (Poe's C. Auguste Dupin has identical last name.)

"Orang Outang." *Alexander's Weekly Messenger*, 20 (June 1838), p. [4].

A female orangutan from Borneo performs an amazing feat.

[Southern, Henry (?)]. "Memoirs of Vidocq." *Westminster Review*, 2 (July 1829), 162-180.

Focuses on Vidocq's method of solving a crime involving the wounding of a butcher "going to a fair."

The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym (1837-1838)

"Account of New Discoveries." *The Casket (Graham's American Monthly Magazine* [New York]), 2 ns (July 1836), 367-368.

Discoveries of Captain J. Haddington in the north polar sea, including a "quadruped like the fox" having a fur of the "fineness and whiteness of the purest ermine." See Pollin's edition of *Pym*, p. 167, in *Collected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe. The Imaginary Voyages.* Boston: Twayne (1981).

"Black and Gilded Teeth." *American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge*, 3 (Feb. 1837), 206.

Javanese paint their teeth black. See Pollin's edition of *Pym*, p. 205.

"Biche De Mer; or Sea-Slug." *American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge*, 3 (Dec. 1836), 104.

Describes the properties of biche de mer and cites its various locations. See Pollin's edition of *Pym*, pp. 177 ff.

[Clark, Lewis Gaylord]. "Literary Notices." *Knickerbocker*, 8 (Dec. 1836), 742-745.

A review of *Address on the Subject of a Surveying and Exploring Expedition to the Pacific Ocean and South Seas* by J.N. Reynolds. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1836. Reynold's *Address* is one likely source for *Pym*.

[Clark, Lewis Gaylord (?)]. "Literary Notices." *Knickerbocker*, 4 (July 1834), 67-72.

A young son becomes a stowaway on his father's ship the *Grampus*. A review of *Miriam Coffin*, or *The Whale Fisherman: A Tale* (1834) by Joseph C. Hart. See pp. 69-70.

"Interesting Natural Phenomenon." *American Magazine of Useful Knowledge*, 3 (Oct. 1836), 28-29.

Describes unusual mirages at sea, one of which the author conjectures is the origin of the Flying Dutchman. See pp. 123-126 of Pollin's edition of *Pym*, pp. 53-363. See also "Ms. Found in a Bottle" (1833) in Mabbott, 2: 135-146, for Poe's likely use of the Flying Dutchman before *Pym* (1837-1838) was published. Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV, in *The Gothic's Gothic*, New York, London: Garland, 1988, pp. 387-388, lists items dealing with the origin and treatment of the Flying Dutchman.

"Navigation of the South Seas." *North American Review*, 45 (Oct. 1837), 361-390.

Commentary upon J.N. Reynolds's *Address on the Subject of a Surveying and Exploring Expedition to the Pacific Ocean and South Seas* to Congress on 3 April 1836, and extensive discussion of south-sea exploration.

R. B. "The Flying Dutchman. A Sketch." *Knickerbocker*, 13 (Nov. 1836), 545-547.

A ship off the Cape of Good Hope encounters the Flying Dutchman. See pp. 123-126 of Pollin's edition of *Pym*, in *Collected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe. The Imaginary Voyages*, pp. 53-363. See also "Ms. Found in a Bottle" (1833) in Mabbott, 2: 135-146, for Poe's likely use of the Flying Dutchman before Pym (1837-1838) was published. Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV, in *The Gothic's Gothic*, pp. 387-388, lists items dealing with the origin and treatment of the Flying Dutchman.

Stone, William Leete. "The Dead of the Wreck." *Atlantic Souvenir*, (1831), 164-193.

Narrative of a young soldier experiencing a shipwreck, witnessing the horrid death of a shipmate, and an act of cannibalism.

"A Voyage to the Internal World." *North American Review*, 6 ns (July 1821), 134-143.

A review of *Symzonia, a Voyage of Discovery*, by Captain Adam Seaborn, New York, 1820. *Symzonia* is considered a source for *Pym*.

"The Premature Burial" (1844)

"Narrative of a Person Who Was Buried Alive." *Alexander's Weekly Messenger*, 12 April 1837, p. [2].

Describes the sensations of being buried alive and of being revived later by a medical doctor and his students.

"The Purloined Letter" (1844)

"The Late Mr. Abernethy." *Metropolitan Magazine*, 1 (June 1831), 182-186.

A characterization of the late Dr. Abernethy, a Scottish physician known for his eccentric behavior and rapier wit. See Mabbott, 3: 982.

Philo-Abernethy. "Anecdotes of Mr. Abernethy." *Metropolitan Magazine*, 1 (Aug. 1831), 354-361.

Incidents illustrating the eccentricity of a famous physician alluded to in Poe's "The Purloined Letter." See Mabbott, 3: 982.

"The Raven" (1845)

F.H. "The Messenger Bird." *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* [Boston], 7 (Jan. 1824), 538.

A lyric poem accompanied by a headnote that Brazilians venerate "a certain bird" who "brings them news from the other world."

G. "The Dying Raven." *New Monthly Magazine*, 23 (Oct. 1828), 335.

A talking raven who reflects upon his life and is seeking his obscure grave.

"The Sleeper" (1831)

Jones, J.A. "Ellen's Grave." *The Atlantic Souvenir*, (1832), 293-294.

Reflections over the nameless grave of a young woman.

"Some Words With a Mummy" (1845)

"The Speech of the Mummy." *Democratic Review*, 3 (Dec. 1838), 374-380.

A mummy awakens and comes "to speak of future time." (A narrative poem).

"The Tell-Tale Heart" (1943)

[Clark, Lewis Gaylord]. "Editor's Table. Murder's Miraculous Organ." *Knickerbocker*, 17 (Feb. 1841), 169-170.

Relates two instances of a murderer's conscience revealing acts of crime: in one instance a body is buried beneath the floor, in the second a body is burned except for the "headless trunk."

H.E.H. "The Crazy Eye." *American Monthly Magazine* [New York], 1 ns (April 1836), 334-341.

Cites two anecdotes demonstrating the remarkable power of a locksmith's eye which subdues a maniac and silences a politician. Reprinted in *New-York Mirror*, 15 (March 3, 1838), 280.

A Nervous Gentleman. "'The Evil Eye on the Oxford Road'" by a Nervous Gentleman." *New Monthly Magazine*, 51 (Oct. 1837), 231-237.

A traveller is mesmerized by a companion with an "evil eye."

S.O. "Art 3—The Evil Eye." *Western Messenger*, 3 (1837), 663-665.

An evil eye reveals an outlook "clouded in darkness and despair."

"To Helen" (1831)

E. "Sonnet—Rome in Ruins." *American Monthly Magazine* [New York], 2 (Dec. 1833), 224.

Contains the phrase, "O Rome! Thy grandeur and thy beauty...." See Poe's revised text of "To Helen" in *Graham's Magazine*, 19 (Sept. 1841), 123.

"Ulalume—A Ballad" (1847)

"Fine Arts in America. National Academy of Design. Tenth Annual Exhibition." *American Monthly Magazine* [New York], 5 (July 1835), 391.

A reference and comment upon R.W. Weir's painting "Rebecca, from Ivanhoe." See Poe's references to Weir in his poem "Ulalume," Mabbott, 1: 415-418.

"Miscellaneous Notices." *American Monthly Magazine* [New York], 6 (Dec. 1835), 319.

In a brief reference to an earlier review of the poems of Joseph Rodman Drake, the editor refers to a pencilled vignette by Weir included in the edition of Drake's poetry. See Poe's references to Weir in his poem "Ulalume," Mabbott, 1: 415-418.

"William Wilson" (1839)

Irving, Washington. "An Unwritten Drama of Lord Byron," *New-York Mirror*, 17 Oct. 1835, p. 122.

Protagonist is haunted by a personification of his own conscience. Article possibly reprinted from the August, 1835, issue of *Knickerbocker*. Poe acknowledges in a letter to Washington Irving (12 October 1839) that he used a version of this brief essay first published in the *Gift* for 1836. See John Ward Ostrom, "Supplement to *The Letters of Poe*." *AL*, 24 (1952), 360.

"My Familiar. A Mystery—Founded on Fact." *American Monthly Magazine* [New York], 6 (Dec. 1835), 290-294.

Narrator is accompanied by a sleepless spectator who becomes "privy to each act that volition may prompt."

JAMES KIRKE PAULDING AND THE PICTURESQUE TOUR: "BANQUETING ON THE PICTURESQUE" IN THE 1820S AND '30S

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At first glance the Paper War and the picturesque tour would seem to have little in common, but for James Kirke Paulding the war of words between American and British writers in the half-century after the Revolutionary War would prompt him to defend his country with his pen. What better way to demonstrate America's glory and to show its past greatness than through the medium of the picturesque tour? The focus on landscape beauty in this genre provided a conventional means of celebrating the landscapes of his native country, while at the same time the stops at historic points of interest during a tour enabled him to interpret America's heroic past as a token of its future greatness. In addition, the popularity of picturesque travel in the 1820s and '30s led Paulding to satirize some of the absurdities and excesses of fashionables who flocked to eastern watering places and, occasionally, to offer more positive models of probity and patriotism in fictional characters. Paulding contributed in an important way to the development of the picturesque tour in America by transforming it into a vehicle for nationalism.

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, American writers and critics began increasingly to call for an American literature based on native materials and featuring national themes. As British critics responded to their efforts with increasingly disparaging reviews, the ensuing Paper War between American and British writers threatened to distract patriotic Americans from their stated purpose. But for Paulding and other nationalistic authors, the Paper War not only gave them an impetus to respond to British critics, but also provided an opportunity for them to demonstrate by their imaginative use of Old World literary conventions that the new nation's literary culture was alive and well. In defending American interests, such writers attacked European values and conventions as immoral or outmoded; more important, they reassured their American audiences that the patriotic values of the previous generation retained validity.

Since much of the criticism and misinformation propagated by British writers was found in travel books from American tours, the travel narrative—this time written by Americans—became a logical outlet for corrective views. Paulding, in particular, favored the travel

narrative as a loosely structured genre that enabled him to include whatever information he wished and to adopt the tone he needed in different books. In the first twenty years of his publishing career the Knickerbocker writer often turned to the travel narrative to respond to British critics and to present his own nationalistic view of the United States, contributing in this way to both the transatlantic debate about the New World's cultural vitality and to the internal debate concerning the identity of the new nation. Indeed, five of the seventeen major works published during this period take the form of travel narratives, including *The Backwoodsman,* a lengthy poem featuring, in part, the protagonist's travels from the Hudson River Valley through New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and west to Ohio; *A Sketch of Old England, by a New-England Man* (1822), a satiric travelogue; and *John Bull in America, or, The New Munchausen* (1825), a burlesque on British travel writers.

Among Paulding's American travel narratives, two books and a tale present interesting studies in the use and modification of the picturesque tour, a specialized form of travel narrative. This kind of travel book was modeled on the published tours of William Gilpin (1724-1804), an English clergyman, traveler, and writer. The tour centered on the search for picturesque beauty, or that kind of landscape beauty which would be suitable in a picture. Travel books such as Gilpin's also included historical anecdotes, local legends, and accounts of colorful personalities encountered on the tour, which contributed to the associations necessary for true picturesque beauty in a landscape.[1] Beginning with *Letters from the South* (1817), the picturesque tour takes on added importance for Paulding as a means of presenting his increasingly critical view both of British travelers and of American tourists who aped Continental fashions and mores on the picturesque tour. Later works such as *The New Mirror for Travellers; and Guide to the Springs* (1828) and the tale "Childe Roeliff's Pilgrimage" (1832) also use the picturesque tour in these two ways. At the same time, Paulding's picturesque tours served to present the beauty of American landscapes to the world—a positive attribute of the United States about which even the most acerbic critics did not argue—and to offer more positive models of American integrity and values. In this respect both his fictional and nonfictional travel writings actively helped shape the national identity: America's greatness became further identified with its scenic marvels, and the American reader was advised to take his or her role models not from Continental fops but from patriotic natives, with Paulding offering fictional characters as examples and historical figures as role models.

Letters from the South offers an early example of Paulding's conventional use of the picturesque tour as a structural device in a travel narrative and as a means of celebrating American landscape. This early work shows the author already experimenting with the genre as a means of correcting distorted foreign views of the United States and of presenting his own ideas about the new nation. *The New Mirror for Travellers* (1828), however, written over a decade later, presents a more interesting study in his use of this British convention. By the time *The New Mirror* appeared, picturesque travel had become popular in the Northeast among the middle and upper classes, and guidebooks to favorite watering places and tourist attractions proliferated to such an extent that both tourists and guidebooks became ripe targets for satire. Some years later, when a collected edition of Paulding's works was brought out, he described the book as "a quiz on watering places and the Mania for Traveling."[2] Because many readers initially mistook the work for a guidebook, wags christened it *The New Pilgrim's Progress*,[3] which suggested the possibility of reading the book not only as a light-hearted satire on contemporary fashionables but also as a more serious commentary on the superficial values of this group.[4] The book evolves from a wickedly funny takeoff on the picturesque tour and tourists of the day to a satire on contemporary social trends.

The New Mirror opens with Paulding calling the reader's attention to new modes of transportation—steamboats, Liverpool packets, and railroads—that have speeded up travel.[5] While decrying the "march of human improvement," he dedicates himself to providing the traveler with instructions on what to take, where to go, and how to behave. But most important of all, he offers "critical and minute instructions, concerning those exquisite delights of the palate, which constitute the principal objects of all travellers of taste" (p. 6). What initially appears to be a straightforward travel guide is revealed in the preface to be aimed, rather, at satirizing the tour guides and tourists themselves. The phrase "gentleman of taste" had become a cliche by this date, referring to a gentleman's exquisite taste in aesthetic matters—here, scenery. Paulding's work reveals his awareness of the spate of books in the last forty years that had considered the proper education of a man of taste, debated about the various levels of taste, and argued the fine points of defining terms such as "picturesque" and "sublime."[6] But when he promises to instruct readers in "those exquisite delights of the palate," which "constitute the principle objects of all travellers of taste," the reader can expect hilarious results: not content with satirizing the picturesque tour in general terms, Paulding has set out to turn the

"gentleman of taste" into a literal gentleman of *taste*. Instead of a scenic tour, then, he produces a gastronomical tour whose noteworthy features will be the foods worth eating and the inns worth patronizing on the "Grand Northern Tour" (p. 8), not the expected scenes of picturesque and sublime scenery of the conventional picturesque tour.

But for what is ostensibly a satire and occasionally a burlesque, a surprising amount of the book involves conventional elements of the picturesque tour, including straightforward description. The contrasting scenes that follow, for example, could be part of any typical tour. Paulding's tourists travel by steamboat up the Hudson River, and after a brief series of anecdotes from the voyages of Hendrick Hudson, ostensibly from the works of "Alderman Janson" (a fictional source much like Irving's Diedrich Knickerbocker), they glimpse the following scenes. The narrator invites the traveler to contemplate "the beautiful world expanding every moment before him, appearing and vanishing in the rapidity of his motion, like the creations of the imagination. Every object is beautiful, and its beauties heightened by the eye having no time to be palled with contemplating them too long." Looking back, the traveler sees the "waters gradually converging to a point at the Narrows," while up ahead, he sees "on one side the picturesque shore of Jersey...[and] on the other, York Island with its thousand little palaces." Although there is no evidence that Paulding read Gilpin's works, passages such as this one suggest his familiarity with the English writer's ideas about river travel, as expressed in the *Wye Tour*. Just as Gilpin extolled the "succession of...picturesque scenes" presented by the Wye, the traveler in *The New Mirror* admires the scenery along the Hudson River.[7] The various views "by turns allure his attention, and make him wish either that the river had but one side, or that he had more eyes to admire its beauties" (p. 98). Some of this language is fairly hackneyed by the 1820s, but otherwise the writing is accurately descriptive. Certainly the author is attuned to the picturesque point of view that Gilpin had popularized decades earlier.

For example, in a passage following a description of the "sublime bluffs" bordering the Hudson River, Paulding's traveler views the landscape with a well-trained picturesque eye, unconsciously echoing Gilpin's description of the contrasting banks of the Wye[8]: "Contrasting beautifully with this long mural precipice on the west, the eastern bank exhibits a charming variety of waving outline." He admires the "long graceful curving hills," "wood crowned heights," "mingled woods, and meadows, and fertile fields," and "the living emblems of industry; cattle, sheep, waving fields of grain, and

whistling ploughmen" (pp. 99-100). In these two scenes the use of contrast, an essential element of the picturesque, and the inclusion of pastoral elements confirm the picturesque quality of Paulding's description. The author notes the success of American farmers in taming the land and making it productive, while reassuring readers that it is still picturesque. Like other American writers of the time, Paulding finds nothing incongruous about the juxtaposition of farms and scenic beauty. American "industry" recalls the yeoman farmers of Crevecoeur's and Jefferson's agrarian ideal rather than factories belching smoke. The "march of improvement" Paulding fears and decries is scarcely evident here, except, ironically, in the steamboat on which his narrator travels. To complete the conventional nature of this section of *The New Mirror,* scenes are framed by anecdotes of Hudson's life and comments on the region's geology, history, and inhabitants, making this a good example of the kind of material included in a typical picturesque tour of the period.

Elsewhere in *The New Mirror* Paulding satirizes the elements of the picturesque tour that he seems to take seriously in other places, though he generally handles the transition from straightforward narrative to satire deftly enough for the reader to follow his lead comfortably. Skewering guidebooks whose excessive descriptions overwhelm the traveler, rendering actual viewing of the scenes almost unnecessary, he recommends that fashionable travelers dispense altogether with scenery and read the guidebook instead, the descriptions of which will be "infinitely superior" to nature's "clumsy productions" (p. 90). Similarly, in "A Tale of Mystery; or The Youth that Died without a Disease," published two years earlier, Paulding satirizes a young gentleman of fashion who consults a guidebook for advice on "reading" the landscape before him.[9] Later in *The New Mirror,* following a lengthy—and generally straightforward—description of points of interest along the Hudson, Paulding reiterates his advice to the jaded picturesque tourist: "We now approach the Highlands, and advise the reader to shut himself up in the cabin and peruse the following pages attentively, as it is our intention to give a sketch of this fine scenery, that Nature will not be able to recognise herself in our picture" (pp. 114-115). Guidebooks and picturesque tours occasionally exaggerated or rearranged scenery whose composition did not perfectly fit the standards of picturesque beauty. True, William Gilpin had stated that the hand of art could often improve upon nature.[10] But he had never advocated completely ignoring nature in favor of the imaginative verbal or pictorial sketch and would have resisted, as Paulding did, the notion

that the picturesque verbal sketch did not need to resemble its original model at all.

In some places Paulding's burlesque of picturesque tourbooks must have struck many a sophisticated traveler—and a few ordinary ones—as very funny, though modern readers may tire quickly of the mock-archaic diction he affects. In the scene that follows, he begins by invoking the inspiring spirit of the picturesque after the manner of eighteenth-century poets: "Genius of the picturesque sublime, or the sublime picturesque, inspire us! Thou that didst animate the soul of John Bull, insomuch that if report says true, he did once get up from dinner, before it was half discussed, to admire the sublime projection of Antony's Nose [a rock formation in the Hudson Highlands]. Thou that erewhile didst allure a first rate belle and beauty from adjusting her curls at the looking glass, to gaze for more than half a minute, at beauties almost equal to her own....Thou genius of travellers, and tutelary goddess of bookmaking, grant us a pen of fire, ink of lightning, and words of thunder, to do justice to the mighty theme" (p. 115)! By employing inflated language and choosing one of the more absurdly named objects of the traveler on the Northern Tour, Paulding satirizes the jaded picturesque tourist (here, an Englishman), whose appetite for food was stronger than his taste for landscape beauty, and he mocks society women, whose egotism leads them to think that their own beauty eclipses that of the passing scenery. He had made the same criticism earlier in "A Tale of Mystery," in which a group of "gay butterflies of fashion" traveling up the Hudson to the springs reveals the same sort of egotism.[11]

Elsewhere Paulding satirizes conventions of the picturesque tour by pointing out that it is not always the scenery that draws tourists but the presence of the fashionables who frequent some of the popular stops on the Northern Tour. Of Ballston, a popular spa on the American tour, he writes: "It is very extraordinary, but the first impression derived from the opening scene...is that it is the ugliest, most uninviting spot in the universe" (p. 218). Arguing that it is really "beautiful damsels" that attract the eye, Paulding undercuts the reader's expectation of picturesque scenery with the following satirical comment on Ballston's less than scenic views: "If the marshes were only green meadows, dotted with stately elms; the sand hills richly cultivated with fields of golden wheat, and stately corn, waving its green ribbons to the breeze; the muddy brook a pastoral, purling river; the pine trees stately forests of oak and hickory, and their stumps were a little more picturesque, neither Ballston or Saratoga, need be ashamed to show themselves any

day in the week, not excepting Sunday" (p. 219). Since travelers are apparently not touring for the sake of the scenery, the author provides a ten-chapter "system of rules and regulations" (p. 220) on proper behavior for everyone from young ladies to aging bachelors at the popular watering places on the Northern Tour.

The most obvious and certainly the most humorous way in which Paulding satirizes the conventional picturesque tour is his insistence on picturing "gentlemen of taste" not as tourists whose knowledge of the picturesque is faultless, but as travelers whose pursuit of great culinary experiences is second to none. Opening the travel book, then, with a few comments on sights to see in New York City, the start of the Northern Tour, Paulding gets down to business and boasts of the city's "consummate institutions for cultivating the noble science of gastronomy." What follows is a mouth-watering catalog of American specialties that rivals some of Washington Irving's feasts: "There too will be found canvass backs from the Susquehanna; venison from Jersey, Long Island and Catskill; grouse from Hempstead Plains; snipe from the Newark meadows; and partridges from Bull Hill; which, if the gourmand hath never eaten, let him despair. Then as for fish! O for a mouth to eat, or to utter the names of the fish that flutter in the markets of New York, silently awaiting their customers like so many pupils of Pythagoras" (pp. 11-12). With rhetorical flourishes worthy of Geoffrey Crayon salivating over the joys of a bountiful banquet, Paulding catalogs the many delicious varieties of fish. As his muse inspires him to greater and greater poetic heights, he exclaims, "O most puissant and imperial oyster," concluding that the visitor who leaves New York without sampling these delights "has traveled in vain" (pp. 12-13). Later, playing on the accepted theory that one responded to beautiful scenery with pleasure, to the picturesque with delight or astonishment, and to the sublime with awe or terror, the author satirizes the picturesque tourist by describing the effect of a sublime prospect upon his appetite: "The stomach expands with the sublimity and expansion of the prospect, to a capacity equally sublime," he writes. As further evidence of this phenomenon, the narrator cites the case of a "sickly young lady" who learned to "discuss venison for breakfast like an alderman" (p. 145) on her travels. Lest readers take him too seriously, the writer introduces a traveler whose dyspepsia acquired on a recent Grand Tour (of the Continent) proves him worthy of emulation as the quintessential "gentleman of taste." The letter that follows, full of references to the most superficial European culture (opera dancers!) and, of course, digestive difficulties resulting from overindulgence,

reveals this gentleman traveler as one of the empty-headed, morally deficient sophisticates Paulding abhors (pp. 15-21). Even in the most apparently digressive sections of *The New Mirror*, such as this one, Paulding seldom fails to bring his narrative around to a pointed satire of the fashionables, whose aimless, vaguely immoral lives he deplores.

Paulding also satirizes the fashionables who took up picturesque touring in the 1820s and '30s by focusing on their tendency to praise Europe at America's expense. Just as Colonel Culpeper represents the voice of common sense and conservatism in *The New Mirror*, Stephen Griffen, another member of his traveling party, is the young man whose travels abroad have qualified him as a voice of pseudo-sophistication and modern manners. Called "Signior Maccaroni" by the Colonel (p. 59), Griffen brags that he "got rid of all my home bred prejudices" on the European tour (p. 20). "I brought home a great number of clever improvements," he writes, "to wit, a head enlightened with a hundred conflicting notions of religion, government, morals, music, painting, and what not; and a heart divested of all those vulgarisms concerning love of country, with which young Americans are apt to be impestered at home" (pp. 19-20). Lucia Culpeper, the Colonel's niece, criticizes Griffen for his imagined superiority: "He wont [sic] let me admire any thing in peace," she complains. "The moment I do so, he comes upon me with a comparison with something in Paris, Rome, or London, which goes near to accuse me of a total want of taste. If you believe him, there is nothing worth seeing here, but what comes from abroad" (p. 57).

Unwarranted criticism of America offends Paulding's pride in the young nation. In the numerous sections of *The New Mirror* in which the narrator's and the author's voices are essentially one, he encourages nationalism by highlighting the stops on the northern tour that would appeal to the patriotic tourist. Since the United States had fought and won two wars against Great Britain in the previous half-century, there were plenty of examples of its people's courage, daring, and fortitude available to the writer. Taking advantage of the tour's emphasis on the associations connected with picturesque beauty in a particular location, Paulding finds in the nexus of landscape and history the means to celebrate America's past military triumphs over a tyrannical foe and offers heroes of earlier wars as models for young Americans growing up in less heroic times. Stops at Tarrytown and Saratoga provide the author with precisely the right materials for achieving these goals. At Tarrytown, where Paulding grew up, "three honest lads of Westchester" (one of whom was Paulding's first cousin) captured the British spy

Major Andre, winning admiration for their courage during wartime. The narrator recounts the story of Andre's capture in detail, emphasizing the Americans' valiancy in withstanding the British spy's protestations of innocence and attempts at bribery until he was tried and hanged. In the introductory comments to the story the narrator emphasizes the "romantic interest" attached to the place where Major Andre was captured, recommending Tarrytown as a worthwhile stop on the tour. In spite of the complex nature of the case—and partly in defense of the integrity of his relative—Paulding recommends the subject for future poetic and dramatic treatment, lamenting that previous attempts at converting history into literature distorted the heroic nature of the three militiamen involved. With the author's patriotic convictions coloring his own presentation of the story, *The New Mirror* demonstrates how future writers might use the material for shaping the national consciousness by celebrating the heroes of recent conflicts. The length of the story of Major Andre's capture (about six pages) argues for its importance to the author. Moreover, given the superficial qualities of some of the main characters in *The New Mirror*, Paulding may have intended the "three young volunteers" to serve as role models for young Americans who were growing to maturity after similar opportunities for heroism were past (pp. 103-109).[12]

Paulding also emphasizes the patriotic value of Saratoga, a fashionable spa, suggesting numerous excursions in the area for the tourist, particularly "the famous field of Saratoga, on which the key stone of the arch of our independence was raised." Arguing for the historic value of the place, where a major battle with the "English invaders" was fought and won, he recommends that a monument "be erected to commemorate the triumph of free soldiers" (p. 289). Such a monument would attract even more tourists, further establishing Saratoga as a stop worth visiting on the tour of New York and New England described in *The New Mirror*. John Sears has shown that places like Niagara Falls came to represent shrines for travelers on a pilgrimage in search of picturesque beauty, with their aesthetic value transmuted into a quasi-religious experience.[13] So too historical sites from previous wars—the French and Indian War, the Revolution, and the War of 1812—attracted travelers interested in more than just scenic beauty. Places such as Saratoga or, for example, Stony Point, where a British fort was captured by General "Mad Anthony" Wayne, became part of the American tour because of their historical and patriotic associations. Paulding makes this point clear in his comments on the second site. Since the ruins of the fort remain visible, the narrator

suggests that readers who wish to appreciate Wayne's feat must see the site for themselves. And though the historic field at Saratoga lacks a monument to past heroism, Stony Point has already acquired one: an "ornamental lighthouse" designed "to accommodate the lovers of the picturesque," as the narrator puts it. This "beautiful superfluity" is treated ironically by the narrator, who may consider, however, that half a monument is better than none (pp. 113-114).

The New Mirror's inclusion of numerous historic sites on the northern tour and the narrator's comments on their significance together argue that Paulding found the picturesque tour a genre well suited for the expression of implicitly political ideas. More important, he clearly considered the tour an appropriate, certainly useful vehicle for the propagation of his patriotic ideals. He could not have found more fertile soil for such seeds, for in spite of the satirical nature of the book, *The New Mirror* would likely encourage tourism, and enlightened travelers, guidebooks in hand, would see more than an empty field at Saratoga or a ruined fortress at Stony Point. Their imaginations fired by Paulding's patriotic prose, they would see thousands of British soldiers surrendering their flag or a heroic Revolutionary general capturing an enemy fort. Equally important, if these tales of past valor worked their magic, travelers young and old might be inspired to emulate the heroes of an earlier day and maintain the ideals of that first generation of American citizens.

Paulding demonstrated in *The New Mirror* that a travel narrative modeled on the picturesque tour could serve several purposes at once. In spite of the occasionally uneven tone of this multi-purpose genre, it successfully described and celebrated the native landscape, urging Americans to visit places important in the nation's history. At the same time, the picturesque tour and guidebook satirized tourists, fashions, and popular spas, and critized citizens who traveled abroad and then returned to deride others for their outmoded ideas. Even more important to the nationalistic author, these themes were, implicitly or explicitly, patriotic. Tourists visiting places connected with important American victories felt a renewed sense of pride in America's past and faith in her future as a strong, independent nation. Even readers who never left their comfortable firesides could imagine the historic sites Paulding described, often in great detail, and could take pride in the heroic men and women whose stories he told in the book. Yet in spite of the modest popular success of *The New Mirror*, its odd mixture of fiction (the letters of the fictitious Colonel Culpeper and family) and nonfiction, and its references to long-forgotten figures and fashions

limit interest in it today. A tale published four years later, however, offers a more successful treatment of similar issues, retaining the modern reader's interest. Indeed, "Childe Roeliff's Pilgrimage" and *The New Mirror* share enough similar characters, scenery, and themes that the earlier work reads almost like a rough draft for the latter.

Written for *Tales of Glauber-Spa*, edited by William Cullen Bryant, the tale is much shorter and more focused than *The New Mirror*. As a result, it is more successful as a work of literature and better at satirizing its subjects. In "Childe Roeliff's Pilgrimage" Paulding grafted sentimental fiction onto the picturesque tour and produced an occasionally awkward but frequently humorous social satire that only loosely parodies Byron's "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage." The title character is Roeliff Orendorf, who is similar in temperament and conservatism to *The New Mirror*'s Colonel Culpeper. Orendorf is a New Yorker who, "having got rich by a blunder," finds he doesn't know how to spend all his money.[14] He tries spending it on literature, art, and music, but when his wife is seized with a "mania for travelling" the problem of how to spend their money is solved. Although his wife hints that she would really prefer a trip to Paris, she compromises on a tour to Canada after being assured that America's northern neighbor is really a foreign country (pp. 115-116). Childe Roeliff's "pilgrimage," then, is not a self-imposed exile from his native land, like the pilgrimage of Byron's poem, but a typical tourist's pilgrimage to the popular sites on the American Grand Tour. Accompanying the Orendorfs on their trip are Minerva, their spoiled, pretty daughter (a character like Lucia Culpeper), and their nephew, Julius Dibdill (like Stephen Griffen), a fop whom Roeliff considers a suitable beau for his daughter and heiress. The group leaves for Albany by steamboat in the early summer, in the course of their trip frequently encountering Reuben Rossmore, a worthy young man whom Minerva favors.

Traveling by carriage to Saratoga Springs, the family plans to admire picturesque beauty along the way, but as Paulding points out several times, the speed of modern travel prevents them from appreciating the scenery (p. 121). Most of the tale's satire, when not aimed at the foppish Dibdill, who has been corrupted by his European travels, is directed at a group of "picturesque hunters" who travel on board the steamboat with the Orendorfs. These fashionables complain constantly about the slow pace of the boat, wishing they could be at their next destination. In such haste to reach the next stop, they miss its beauties once they do arrive and begin complaining about reaching the next place. Paulding comments: "The day was of a charming

temperature; the sweet south wind gently curled the surface of the lake, which gradually expanded to a noble breadth, and all nature invited them to share in her banquet. But they turned from it with indifference, and were continually yawning and complaining of being 'tired to death'" (pp. 162-163).

As he implies by his criticism of "picturesque hunters," in "Childe Roeliff's Pilgrimage" Paulding uses the picturesque tour for a unique purpose, one not seen before in British or American fiction: The responses of his characters to picturesque scenery reveal character and, more important, serve as a measure of their integrity and patriotism. A classic example of this occurs on the way to Lake George, where the party encountered "a fine fruitful and picturesque country" along an untraveled route. The different responses of the main characters serve to characterize each of them: innocent, forthright Minerva and Reuben respond to the scenery "with sympathetic delight"; the pseudo-sophisticated Julius Dibdill "lug[s] in a comparison with some scenery on the Rhine" and pities "those unlucky wights who...could admire the homely charms of an American landscape"; the self-centered Mrs. Orendorf chats with other society women; and Childe Roeliff, tired and bored, falls asleep (p. 133). Later, confronted with the magnificent scenery of Lake Champlain, the author is moved to speak of God's hand in creating the world, an appropriate response to natural sublimity. Minerva and Reuben respond deeply to the view: They are "abstracted" from the present and "their spirits communed together in the luxury of silence" (p. 165). In contrast, the unimpressed "picturesque-hunters" are "tired to death" of the sublime and long for the next stop on their tour, revealing the shallowness of their character.

Sometimes a mutual response to picturesque beauty reveals an unspoken sympathy between two characters, developing, in this case, the love relationship between them. The author reveals Minerva and Reuben's growing love, for example, largely by showing their sympathetic response to the same scenery. On the way to Lake George one picturesque view elicits the following comment: "At sight of this charming scene Reuben and Minerva exchanged looks of mutual pleasure, indicating that sympathy of taste and feeling which forms one of those imperceptible ties which finally bind two hearts together, and constitute the basis of the purest species of youthful love" (p. 134). Few writers use responsiveness to picturesque scenery as a measure of character. In examples such as this, it becomes clear how far American writers have taken what began as a relatively simple love of landscape

in the picturesque tour and developed it into a complex vehicle for developing character and promoting nationalism.

In "Childe Roeliff's Pilgrimage" Paulding uses the format of the picturesque tour to reveal his pride in America and to argue that Americans ought to feel a similar patriotism, a theme he returns to throughout his career. In his own voice and through the characters Reuben Rossmere and Dibdill, Paulding makes a clear connection between the picturesque tour and nationalism in this tale in two important ways, by enabling him to celebrate the American landscape and to emphasize its historical associations. First, the tour offers an opportunity for the author to celebrate American scenery through patriotic characters such as Minerva and Reuben, who admire "the homely charms of an American landscape," while criticizing fops such as Dibdill, who disparage it in favor of European scenery (p. 133). During a stop for dinner while traveling in the Hudson River Valley, for example, Minerva suggests that the party walk to a nearby falls. Dibdill disdains viewing an American falls when he has already seen superior ones in Europe, preferring to check into the quality of the dinner fare instead. But Minerva and Reuben are rewarded for their hike with "one of the finest scenes to be found in a state abounding in the beautiful and sublime of nature" (p. 135). With a deft compliment to his native state, Paulding turns an ordinary trip to a local landmark, a conventional element of a picturesque tour, into praise for those who admire America's scenic beauty and criticism of those who disparage it. Later in "Childe Roeliff's Pilgrimage" the group steams across Lake George, one of the most picturesque lakes in the country as well as one of its most famous in history and legend. The steamboat's slow pace allows the travelers "an opportunity of almost studying the beautiful scenery of the lake," reinforcing their role as picturesque tourists and giving the author the chance to describe that scenery.

More important, though, is Paulding's interpretation of the scene: "It was a rare and beautiful scene, such as seldom presents itself to travellers in any region of the peopled earth, and such as always awakens in hearts disposed to love thoughts, feelings, and associations which cannot fail to attract and bind them to each other in the ties of mutual sympathy and admiration" (p. 159). Reiterating his notion that a sympathetic response to scenery brings people together, the author mentions the scene's unique beauty. As in a classic picturesque tour, he emphasizes not the scenery itself, but the observers' response to it. Among other things, Lake George's picturesqueness engenders "associations" in their hearts, though Paulding does not enumerate

those associations. The well-read or much traveled reader, however, would be expected to fill in the blank here, recalling various historic events associated with the lake. Travelers could turn to their guidebooks for help. When G. M. Davison's popular *Traveller's Guide* recommends an excursion to Lake George, for example, the author suggests that "the interest which is excited from an association of many important historic events" will add to the traveler's enjoyment of the lake's picturesqueness. The *Traveller's Guide* notes some of the events associated with the area. Tourists might visit nearby "Bloody Pond," the site of three different battles between French and British forces on one horrendous day in 1755, or the ruins of Fort William Henry near the lake's southern shore, the site of the Indian massacre of the British commemorated in Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* a half-dozen years before Paulding's tale appeared. Other historic attractions recommended by Davison's guide include Ticonderoga, whose importance during the French and Indian War and Revolutionary War is underscored; Diamond Island, once the site of a "military fortification"; and the "mouldering ruins" of Fort George.[15] Although Paulding himself does not detail the historic sites located on Lake George, he clearly expects his more sensible and patriotic tourists—Reuben and Minerva—to know them and appreciate their significance, just as he expects his readers to be responsive to the lake's historical associations. The importance of such sites in stimulating patriotism in the tourist is explored later in the tale when the travelers visit Lake Champlain.

In "Childe Roeliff's Pilgrimage" the picturesque tour also proves useful as a narrative vehicle for the author's nationalism through Paulding's criticism of Dibdill, who is a foil for the patriotic Reuben Rossmere. Because Dibdill arrogantly believes that his travels on the Continent have fitted him to comment on America's inferiority to all things European, he receives the brunt of the author's satire throughout the tale, just as Stephen Griffen in *The New Mirror* is satirized for similar reasons. In a letter to "Count Rumpel Stiltskin," an imaginery correspondent, Dibdill describes the unhappy results of travel abroad: "One of the great disadvantages of foreign travel is, that it unfits one for the enjoyment of any thing in one's own country, particularly when that country is so every way inferior to the old world." Dibdill disparages "this vulgar republic," which, he argues, "seems in a fair way of debauching the whole world with her pernicious example of liberty and equality" (p. 128). That Dibdill cannot be "bamboozled" into admiring anything American and, more important, that he disparages its ideals reveal not only his superficiality, but also the

dangers of his shallow-mindedness. Through the examples of Griffen and Dibdill Paulding warns readers that when America's native sons travel abroad their clear-eyed vision may become clouded in the shadowy world of European culture and morality, or they may become corrupted outright by Old World immorality. This notion anticipates the fascination of later writers such as Hawthorne and James with the moral struggles of young Americans abroad, though Paulding's characters lack the emotional intensity and intellectual complexity of a Miriam or an Isabel Archer.

Furthermore, during the critical decades after the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, an American's speaking out against liberty and equality, the keystones of New World freedom, is tantamount to siding with European restrictions on individual liberties and advocating monarchy over democracy. Thus even the most offhanded of Dibdill's snide remarks about his native land were meaningful for patriotic Americans of Paulding's day and require careful reading today to recognize their significance. In a fictional work such as "Childe Roeliff's Pilgrimage," however, the author maintains his light tone by never allowing Dibdill's remarks to be taken too seriously by the group. When the ladies of the group look forward to "banqueting on the picturesque" at Lake George, for example, Dibdill cries: "I who have seen the Lago Maggiore, and the Isola Bella—...and I who have luxuriated at the Cafe Hardy on *turbot a la creme et au gratin*—I to be bamboozled into admiration or ecstasy by Lake George and its black bass!...forbid it, heaven!" (p. 131). But no one except Reuben Rossmere, who is a bit of a prig, it must be admitted, takes offense at Dibdill's posturing.

In addition to using characters' love of national landmarks as a measure of patriotism, Paulding brings nationalism into the fictional picturesque tour in a second, more important way by showing that American scenery is full of associations with past moments of national glory, contrary to the laments of those writers who claimed that America lacked the "storied and poetical associations" necessary for literary endeavors.[16] To highlight some of the nation's historic sites, he takes his tale to Lake George and Lake Champlain. Reuben, for example, finds the stagecoach ride between the lakes interesting because they provided an important supply route during the French and Indian War, in which his grandfather had fought. Later, at Lake Champlain, the ruins of Fort Ticonderoga enable the author to explore the connection between scenery and history, with important implications for the nation's future. "There are few more grand and interesting

scenes in the wide regions of the western world than old Ticonderoga," Paulding states. "Ennobled by nature, it receives new claims and a new interest from history and tradition; it is connected with the early events of the brief but glorious career of this new country..." This connection, as the author describes it, provides the associations that make a picturesque scene more than just a pretty picture for the tourist. Ticonderoga's "extensive, massy, picturesque ruins" remind the traveler of the nation's glorious past and suggest its equally glorious future (p. 161).

A stop at Ticonderoga offered Paulding the sort of iconography any well-read tourist of the early nineteenth century would recognize. As Dennis Berthold has demonstrated, Ticonderoga was "an icon of the American past unrivalled for historic significance and scenic beauty." Descriptions of well-known views of Ticonderoga, whether of Mount Independence or of the fort's ruins, would be familiar to readers from paintings and engravings by Henry Reinagle, William Guy Wall, and Thomas Cole, and in guidebooks such as Theodore Dwight's *The Northern Traveller* (1830). These works appeared before Paulding's tale, one in *The Analectic*, a popular journal for which the author himself had written.[17] Paulding could rely upon his readers' familiarity with these pictorial images, which gave him a kind of shorthand with which to convey his nationalistic message to the reader. A brief sketch of Ticonderoga alone might have conveyed this meaning successfully, but the author's interpretation of the scene ensures that the reader will follow his reading of it completely.

Paulding makes the most important connection between history and scenery towards the end of the tale, when he takes his characters through Lake Champlain to the Bay of Saranac, just before the group enters Canadian waters. With a full moon in the early evening, the setting is romantic, though the author scarcely bothers to describe it in any detail. The Bay of Saranac, he states, is "scarcely less distinguished for its beauty, and far more renowned in history" than the city of Burlington, which they had visited earlier. Hence the author focuses on the bay's historical connections rather than its visual beauty, supporting Dennis Berthold's argument that visual interest is sometimes subordinated to historical associations in a picturesque scene, particularly in American writing.[18] Since Paulding develops the Bay of Saranac's historical associations in some detail, it is worthwhile to look closely at what he hoped to accomplish in "Childe Roeliff's Pilgrimage" with what becomes, in the tale, a lengthy digression. At first the author simply states: "It was here that the gallant McDonough

[sic], now, with his famous contemporaries Decatur and Perry, gone to immortality, won laurels that will never fade while the grass is green on the bank that overlooks the bay, or the water runs in the Saranac River" (p. 172). In highly poetic language Paulding states MacDonough's connection to the scene on which his characters gaze. The reader is left to fill in the details that complete the allusion: In 1814, American naval forces under the command of Captain Thomas MacDonough, then a lieutenant, decisively defeated the British at the Bay of Saranac and seized control of Lake Champlain.[19]

What is the intended effect of this reference on Paulding's characters, Reuben and Minerva, and on the reader? Two additional comments in the tale clarify the author's intentions. First, he notes that "these distinguished men" (MacDonough, Stephen Decatur, and Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, victor at the Battle of Lake Erie in 1813) were known by both characters; Reuben, morever, knew them "intimately." Second, Paulding develops the brief mention of Decatur, whose military exploits had virtually nothing to do with the Bay of Saranac, into a paragraph-long digression that includes a reference to yet another military hero, David Porter. In the first case, Reuben and Minerva's close acquaintance with these heroes is used to bring in comments on their physique and character, some of which might be known only to intimates of a great man in the days before photography and television. The romantic Minerva cries, "'What a striking figure was McDonough!'" To which Reuben replies, "'And what a sweet, mild, yet manly expression was in the blue eye of Perry!'" These two young men were "united in glory" and "united in death, in the flower of their age," according to the author (p. 172). What, then, does Paulding emphasize in his characters' description of MacDonough and Perry? They were known for the "simplicity" of their character and their mildness, yet both were "manly" too. These were heroes for a new age, for a new nation. Paulding makes this point clear in his biography of MacDonough in *The Analectic*. Speaking of many of the naval offers who distinguished themselves during the War of 1812, he writes: "They seem, like this country and every thing in it, bearing the stamp of vigorous youth, and promising yet more than they have ever yet performed."[20] Since many of the naval heroes of the War of 1812 were indeed young men, the author's hope of future greatness from MacDonough and others was not unfounded; he was not to know then, as his characters state in "Childe Roeliff's Pilgrimage," that MacDonough, Decatur, and Perry all died young, their future promise unfulfilled.

In short, these three naval heroes could provide excellent role models for a generation of men and women coming of age in the more peaceful 1830s. Paulding's relatively lengthy dissertation on the merits of Stephen Decatur, whose military exploits had little directly to do with the Bay of Saranac, underscores the importance of these naval men as heroes and role models for Reuben and Minerva and, more important, for readers of the tale. After the high praise accorded MacDonough and Perry, the reader is almost surprised to hear that "'Both were of a high class of men, but they neither of them equalled Decatur.'" Reuben, who "'knew him well,'" had found Decatur's character worthy of study; unspoken until the end is the assumption that the reader may benefit from the character analysis that follows. Decatur, Reuben declares, "'was one of the few—the very, very few great men I ever met with,'" for "'a truly great man is a rare production'" (pp. 172-173).

The gist of Reuben's comments on Decatur appears in one long, perfectly balanced sentence that reflects the balance Paulding admired in the naval hero's life. He writes: "'Such was Decatur: he was not merely a brave man—I might almost say the bravest of men—but he was a man of most extraordinary intellect, a statesman as well as a warrior; one who, like David Porter, could negotiate a treaty as well as gain a victory; one who could influence the most capacious minds by his eloquence and reasoning, as easily as he quelled the more weak and ignorant by his authority and example.'" Reuben notes that had Decatur lived longer he would have distinguished himself in a civil career, too (p. 173). The salient feats of Decatur's distinguished military career are all here, but concealed behind generalizations that to a modern audience are completely obscure. Contemporary articles such as Paulding's "Biography of Commodore Decatur," which appeared in *The Analectic Magazine* in 1813, highlighted the events of Decatur's career that had made him a hero: during the Barbary Wars he had burned the captured American ship *Philadelphia* as it lay in the harbor at Tripoli, an achievement described as "gallant and romantic"; during an attack on Tripoli he had avenged the death of his brother in single combat with a Turkish commander; he had successfully negotiated a treaty with Algiers; and he had captured a British ship during the War of 1812. Paulding's conclusion to the brief biography underscores the significance of Decatur's character and achievements for Americans in the formative early years of the nineteenth century. Describing his deportment as "manly and unassuming," Paulding praised Decatur's "spirit, enterprise and urbanity." In this one man, he said, "the polish

of the gentleman" was combined "with the frank simplicity of the sailor."[21]

What is admired, then, is not just the courage of the hero in combat, but the modesty and courteous behavior of the true gentleman. As he states explicitly in "Childe Roeliffe's Pilgrimage," these are the qualities in Decatur that the author wants young Americans to emulate (p. 173). While the tale is less specific about the connection between hero and nation, Paulding's biography of Decatur notes that "the gallant achievements" of the naval officers are "the universal topics of national pride and exultation." He concludes the article with the following comment on the importance of these national heroes: "With the aspiring ardour of truly brave spirits, they pay but little regard to the past; their whole souls seem stretched towards the future. Into such hands we confide...our national interests and honour; to this handful of gallant worthies is allotted the proud destiny of founding the naval fame of the nation, and of thus having their names inseparably connected with the glory of their country."[22] Trusting in the honor and courage of these young men, Paulding sees hope for the nation's future in them. America's "Rising Glory" will continue.

How do these comments on the historical associations with the Bay of Saranac and on naval heroes of the War of 1812 connect with "Childe Roeliff's Pilgrimage"? If Dibdill is a negative example of a young American aping the Old World dandies, foppish, imitative, and immoral, then Reuben is the moral exemplum whose character is admired. Even without a war in which to prove himself, Reuben Rossmere exhibits the integrity and honor that Paulding admires in Decatur and other naval heroes. Just before the digressive section on naval heroes, in fact, Dibdill has tried to convince Reuben to elope with Minerva. Reuben shows his integrity by his refusal to marry the young woman without her father's permission, and just before the two-page commentary on the Bay of Saranac and American naval heroes he promises Dibdill ("upon my honour") not to act further before they arrive at Montreal. The concept of honor is expanded and clarified through the author's commentary on the integrity of the military men. Reuben lives up to these ideals later in the tale and becomes Roeliff's favorite—and future son-in-law—by this display of integrity.

What Paulding achieves, then, in "Childe Roeliff's Pilgrimage" is a tale that successfully integrates the literary form of the picturesque tour into fiction as a vehicle for the writer's patriotic ideals. Certainly this work seems to support Dennis Berthold's contention that "patriotism might have produced the picturesque tour, instead of the

other way around," here in a literary rather than literal sense.[23] For the tour offered exactly what Paulding needed in his patriotic campaign to show the world—England in particular—what America had to offer, and to remind Americans of their recent heroic past. The convention of tourists traveling from one scenic vista to another gave him the opportunity to present the usual picturesque and sublime landscapes. But Paulding took Gilpin's occasional references to English history a step further by emphasizing visits to sites where he could recall America's recent heroic past and suggest its future glory. In addition, with references to heroes associated with particular sites he could present positive role models of native courage and integrity to readers. Rather than indulge in "servile imitation" of English writers, a habit he deplored in his essay "National Literature,"[24] Paulding took an English form and used it to address contemporary American issues of pride and patriotism. In doing so he showed writers that followed him the potential uses of picturesque travel for both fiction and nonfiction, ranging from the humorous social satire of *The New Mirror for Travelers* to the successful tale "Childe Roeliff's Pilgrimage."

NOTES

[1]William Gilpin, "On Picturesque Travel," *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape* (London, 1792), pp. 41-58.

[2]Letter to T. W. White, 7 December 1835 (?), in *The Letters of James Kirke Paulding*, ed. Ralph M. Aderman (Madison, 1962), p. 171.

[3]Evert A. Duyckinck and George L. Duyckinck, *Cyclopaedia of American Literature* (New York, 1855), 2: 3.

[4]Since Paulding himself reports this nickname in an autobiographical essay for the Duyckincks' *Cyclopaedia of American Literature*, one may assume that he approved of or, at the least, felt flattered by the comparison. Paulding reports that he substantially rewrote the biographical entry on himself for the *Cyclopaedia* in a letter to Evert A. Duyckinck, one of its editors, dated 15 October 1854 (*Letters*, pp. 547-548).

[5]*The New Mirror for Travellers; and Guide to the Springs* (New York, 1828), [p. 3]. All subsequent references to this edition will be cited in the text.

[6]Paulding might have read or read about any or all of the following works: Archibald Alison, *Essays on the Nature and*

Principles of Taste, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1811); Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres,* 2nd Amer. ed., 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1793); William Gilpin, "On Picturesque Beauty," *Three Essays;* Uvedale Price, *An Essay on the Picturesque* (London, 1794).

[7]Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye* (London, 1782), pp. 7-8.

[8]*Observations,* pp. 8-9.

[9]"A Tale of Mystery; or The Youth that Died without a Disease," *The Atlantic Souvenir* (1826), p. 79. (Subsequent references to this short story will appear in the text.) The guidebook referred to here is Horatio Gates Spafford's *A Gazetteer of the State of New-York...* (Albany, Troy, New York, 1824).

[10]"On the Art of Sketching Landscape," *Three Essays,* pp. 67-68.

[11]"A Tale of Mystery; or, The Youth that Died without a Disease" (1826), in Melvin Rosser Mason, "The Uncollected Stories of James Kirke Paulding: An Annotated Edition," diss., University of Texas, 1958, pp. 75, 79, 81.

[12]See Reynolds, pp. 2-3, for a brief account of the capture of Major Andre and its influence on Paulding's writing.

[13]*Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1989), pp. 5-6; see also ch. 1 (pp. 12-30).

[14]"Childe Roeliffe's Pilgrimage," *Tales of Glauber-Spa,* ed. William Cullen Bryant (New York, 1832), 1: 111. All subsequent references to this edition appear in the text.

[15]*The Traveller's Guide: through the Middle and Northern States, and the Provinces of Canada,* 5th ed. (Saratoga Springs, New-York, 1833), pp. 183-192.

[16]Washington Irving, *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon,* ed. Haskell Springer, in *The Complete Works of Washington Irving,* ed. Richard Dilworth Rust (Boston, 1978), 8: 9.

[17]Dennis Berthold, "A Literary and Pictorial Iconography of Hawthorne's Tour," in *Hawthorne's American Travel Sketches,* Alfred Weber, Beth L. Lueck, and Dennis Berthold (Hanover, New Hampshire, 1989), pp. 124-125. See illustrations #23, #24, #25 (pp. 95-97).

[18]"History and Nationalism," *Hawthorne's American Travel Sketches*, p. 132.

[19]See Paulding's comments on MacDonough and this famous naval battle in "Biographical Sketch of Captain Thomas Macdonough," *Analectic Magazine, and Naval Chronicle* 7 (1816): 201-215.

[20]"Biographical Sketch of Captain Thomas Macdonough," p. 215.

[21]"Biography of Commodore Decatur," *Analectic Magazine* 1 (1813): 503-510.

[22]p. 510.

[23]"History and Nationalism," p. 134.

[24]"National Literature," *Salmagundi*, second series (New York, 1835), 2: 270.

BALDWIN'S "SONNY'S BLUES": THE SCAPEGOAT METAPHOR

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In James Baldwin's only book of short stories, *Going to Meet the Man*, "Sonny's Blues" stands out as the best, most memorable. This story is both realistic and symbolic, part autobiography and part fiction. So memorable is "Sonny's Blues" that a student once put it at the top of a list of thirty stories read for a course in fiction. She commented, "The story haunts you; its beauty continues in your mind long after the original reading and discussion." The story's haunting beauty comes from our participation in the scapegoat metaphor that creates the intricate tracery which holds the story together, forming a graceful spiral, a pattern of correspondences which informs and entices as it helps us to be free.[1]

The scapegoat metaphor is developed through several images, the most important of which is music,[2] with its links to suffering and brotherhood. But we are only dimly aware of this scapegoat pattern until we see the final, startling biblical image of the scotch and milk drink, "the very cup of trembling,"[3] which follows Sonny's playing of the blues and which clarifies the story's meaning. This "cup of trembling", then, is at once the Old Testament cup of justice and the New Testament cup of Gethsemane, or mercy.[4] The Old Testament allusion to the "cup of trembling" leads directly to the scapegoat metaphor and the idea of pain and suffering of a people.[5] The New Testament story of hope is carried in Sonny's name which suggests Christ symbolism and leads to the New Testament message of the 'cup of trembling' as the cup of Gethsemane which Christ drank, symbolizing the removal of sins for all who believe and hope for eternal life through belief in him.[6] Sonny's name echoes this special relationship. Sonny, the scapegoat, is the hope of his particular world.

The power of guilt and suffering is revealed in Sonny's tenuous relationship with his own brother and in his immediate empathy with the revivalists; it has been foreshadowed in the anguish of the young friend who still feels a connection with Sonny. Through these people's responses we come to understand that brothers—literal or metaphorical—rescue, redeem, bring righteous anger, and act as scapegoats to open up the world of suffering; the friend begins this for Sonny's brother, the revivalists for Sonny, and Sonny for his brother and for us.

Further, the scapegoat metaphor is strengthened and enriched by the metaphor of shared suffering carried through music—either by a young boy's whistle, by the revivalist's hymns, or finally and most significantly by Sonny's hot piano on which he plays the blues. The blues metaphor also involves suffering and the sharing of suffering that supercedes race and time and cements us all together within our shared humanity. Sonny's music—the blues—has power to transform both his and our pain; through his sharing, Sonny becomes the ultimate scapegoat.

The term 'scapegoat' means 'sharing of pain'; it implies a true understanding of another's suffering. According to *Webster's New World Dictionary,* the scapegoat, the *caper emissarius,* or azazel, was originally "a goat over the heads of which the high priest of the ancient Jews confessed the sins of the people on the Day of Atonement, after which it was allowed to escape." More secularly and popularly, the scapegoat is "a person, group, or thing upon whom the blame for the mistakes or crimes of others is thrust."

Baldwin, himself, defines for us the scapegoat metaphor when he asserts "That all mankind is united by virtue of their humanity."[7] He writes elsewhere, "'It is a terrible, an inexorable, law that one cannot deny the humanity of another without diminishing one's own: in the face of one's victim, one sees oneself.'"[8] In another context, Jack Matthews, in *Archetypal Themes in the Modern Story,* asks "When is a person not himself?" He answers, "When he reminds you of someone else and you can't see the living presence because of the remembered image. Or when, through accident or muddled design, he begins to embody our own secret fears. In psychology, this is termed projection; in a story or folktale, it is a celebration of the Scapegoat theme."[9] Thus the literary scapegoat, through his own personal suffering or by his metaphorical sharing of his own sorrow, may allow us to see into life and into ourselves and thus vicariously transfer our guilt and pain through him and his suffering.

In this story music is the thread that accompanies and develops the brotherhood/scapegoat metaphor. For in his music Sonny reveals both his suffering and his understanding of others' pain. His music becomes a mystical, spiritual medium, an open-ended metaphor simultaneously comforting the player and the listener and releasing their guilt and pain. No words *could* have expressed so well what Sonny's music conveyed effortlessly. For, according to Cirlot, "Music represents an intermediate zone between the differentiated or material world and the undifferentiated realm of the 'pure will' of Schopenhauer."[10] The power of this

emotional transfer is seen in the brother's response. For through Sonny's music his brother comes to understand his own life, his parents' experience, his daughter's death, and his wife's grief. The brother recapitulates his own, Sonny's, and the family's suffering here at the end of the story. But as Kirkegaard says, in *Repetition*, "repetition" replaces "the more traditional Platonic term anamnesis or recollection." This is "not the simple repeating of an experience, but the recreating of it which redeems or awakens it to life, the end of the process...being the apocalyptic promise: 'Behold, I make all things new.'"[11] Sonny's awakening is done through his blues, and its effect is revealed through the brother's sudden understanding, conveyed in the final image of the Scotch and milk drink, "the very cup of trembling" ("SB," 141). This central biblical image reverberates with life and reinforces the scapegoat metaphor. This recreation of life is also what the blues are all about. We come full circle.

The scapegoat metaphor is first presented very quietly when Sonny's childhood friend offers to become a scapegoat, insisting upon his symbolic action when he tells Sonny's brother, "Funny thing,...when I saw the papers this morning, the first thing I asked myself was if I had anything to do with [Sonny's arrest for using and selling heroin]. I felt sort of responsible" ("SB," 106-7). The young man offers to take the blame for Sonny's fall, but his hesitant plea is offensive to the brother who, like us, does not understand the symbolic significance of the act. For, instead of accepting and sharing the man's guilt, the brother becomes angry at the friend's panhandling. He feels superior to him and rejects his offer and his sympathy.

Just prior to this meeting with the old friend a boy's whistle echoes through the school yard. The whistle is "at once very complicated and very simple; it seemed to be pouring out of him as though he were a bird, and it sounded very cool and moving through all that harsh, bright air, only just holding its own through all those other sounds" ("SB," 104). But this music creates a central abstract image, a tone poem carrying the sadness and guilt of the brother, a simple yet complicated sounding of pain.

This first subtle pairing of music with guilt and pain sets the tone for the story. This young man, this emotional 'brother,' cannot comfort Sonny's brother, but paradoxically his sincere concern increases the brother's understanding of Sonny's problems. Further, this sad young man illustrates the community's desperate need for a savior as well as setting up the scapegoat metaphor. For the brother sees in the friend as in a mirror the great sadness and courage of Sonny. He says

"All at once something inside gave and threatened to come pouring out of me. I didn't hate him [the friend] any more. I felt that in another moment I'd start crying like a child" ("SB," 108). This emotional release is the first step toward understanding and the first presentation of the Old Testament scapegoat motif so delicately interwoven in this story.

The scapegoat metaphor is next presented and perfectly symbolized by the street revival. The street people are a paradigm of life, a kind of representative cross-section of humanity. All sorts of people watch and listen to the street revivalists—working people, children, older folks, street women, Sonny, and Sonny's brother who watches from above at the window. At this "old fashioned revival meeting" there are "three sisters in black, and a brother. All they [have are] their voices and their Bibles and a tambourine." These people sing "'Tis the old ship of Zion'....it has rescued many a thousand!" ("SB," 128-9).

The listeners hear nothing new, only the old pain and suffering and the offer of relief from three sisters and a brother, mortals like themselves; yet these four make suffering real. Their music acts as a mirror for the watchers whose response illustrates the scapegoat metaphor in action: "As the singing filled the air the watching, listening faces underwent a change, the eyes focusing on something within; the music seemed to soothe a poison out of them; and time seemed, nearly, to fall away from the sullen, belligerent, battered faces, as though they were fleeing back to their first condition, while dreaming of their last" ("SB," 129). These spirituals are an amalgam of joy and the blues, touching everyone who listens and helping them share the guilt and pain of the human condition.

The revival, central to the brother's awareness since it incorporates music, religion, and suffering, helps Sonny to articulate the relationship between suffering and human understanding. Also, for Sonny, the woman revivalist serves as a scapegoat; she helps him to understand his own suffering just as she had helped those who listened and contributed to her cause. For Sonny, this insight into the woman's suffering makes his own pain bearable, makes it possible to reach out to his brother. For Sonny understands this scene. Touched by their pain, he alone articulates its universal meaning—suffering. New Testament echoes of brother and savior are palpable in his response: "It's *repulsive* to think you have to suffer that much" ("SB," 132). But ironically, the biblical scapegoat metaphor suggests group suffering as well as individual suffering.

Sonny's own pain has been personal and private. He had tried to tell his brother about his suffering in the letter from prison, but he was almost inarticulate. His suffering went beyond words. Now, after the brothers have experienced the revival, Sonny tries again to communicate with his brother by explaining his relationship with music: "you finally try to get with it and play it, [and] you realize *nobody's* listening. So *you've* got to listen. You got to find a way to listen," ("SB," 133) to distance the pain, to look at despair and deal with guilt in order to live. To play this way requires brutal honesty and empathy with the suffering of others. Sonny says, I "can't forget—where I've been. I don't mean just the physical place I've been, I mean where I've *been.* And *what* I've been....I've been something I didn't recognize, didn't know I could be. Didn't know anybody could be" ("SB," 133-34). But the painful rendition of the revivalists shows him musically that others have been there too.

Significantly, Sonny invites his brother to hear him play right after the street revival when they talk for almost the first time. Sonny understands his own need and his brother's suffering because someone else's suffering mirrors his own, effectively causing his confession and his sharing of his own pain through his music, mirror of man's soul. Music is able to heal wounds, for when Sonny is in perfect harmony with himself and with his environment, when he understands, he plays the piano effortlessly. Now Sonny's confession of failure also prepares for the final scene where Sonny plays the blues, an appropriate musical form based on folk music and characterized by minor harmonies, slow tempo, and melancholy words. The blues, like the tuneless whistle and the melancholy spirituals sung by the revivalists, reinforce the idea of human suffering carried by the scapegoat metaphor. For the blues, sad and melancholy jazz, are a mood, a feeling, a means of escape and entertainment; the blues, especially, are a way of sharing suffering, a way of strengthening the idea of community. The blues, the tune without the words in this instance, help the inarticulate young pianist to communicate with his brother and with the world. Thus he enriches the central metaphor for the story. For according to C. W. Sylvander, "Art can be a means for release from the 'previous condition' when it is heard, listened to, understood."[12]

The linkage between the scapegoat motif and the music is clearly revealed when Creole has the group play the blues and signifies that this particular rendition is 'Sonny's blues.' L. H. Pratt notes that "Once the narrator draws near to listen, the blues becomes the means by which Sonny is able to lead his brother, through a confrontation with

the meaning of life, into a discovery of self."[13] Through the blues the brothers can communicate. The blues become the last and greatest reinforcer of the scapegoat metaphor. For through the music something magical happens.

The narrator comes to understand that "not many people ever hear [music]. [But]...When something opens within, and the music enters, what we mainly hear, or hear corroborated, are personal, private, vanishing evocations" (SB," 137). The same thing is true of our suffering and our alienation from others. Until we understand another's pain, we cannot understand our own. We must be transformed as the musician is. The musician, a kind of scapegoat, removes the pain of existence and helps us understand our suffering.

Sonny—the name echoes his strong New Testament scapegoat position—takes the pain away for all those who listen when he plays the blues. But as Baldwin says, Sonny cannot be free unless we listen and we will not be free either until he removes our pain—or until we believe on his ability to remove that suffering; Sonny thus serves to free those who listen as the cup of Gethsemane serves to free those who believe. Sonny's name echoes this special relationship and speaks of him as the ultimate scapegoat.

The brother, then, represents us also as he vividly illustrates our human response to the scapegoat offer. We accept, as understanding and insight come through the music; we change, for the function of the scapegoat is vicarious death. The ancient scapegoat was presented *alive* and allowed to escape; but metaphorically he represented the death of sin and pain for those covered by his action. Metaphysically what happens when we hear, as Sonny knows, is a death of our old understanding or the old ways and a recreation of a new way of being. So finally, at the end, in the image of the Scotch and milk drink, an image so unprepared for as to be startling, we see Sonny's symbolic value as the scapegoat. The transformation occurs as the music plays, because for the musician "What is evoked...is of another order, more terrible because it has no words, and triumphant, too, for that same reason. And his triumph, when he triumphs, is ours" ("SB," 137).

Only in music can Sonny truly tell all and fulfill his function as a scapegoat. Only in music can he reach our hearts and minds. Thus the last and clearest presentation of the scapegoat metaphor comes at the end of the story. Here "Sonny's fingers filled the air with life, his life. But that life contained so many others....It was no longer a lament" ("SB," 140). This is a clear expression of the scapegoat metaphor. For Sonny's sharing through music transforms the pain. As the narrator

says, "Freedom lurked around us and I understood at last that he could help us be free if we would listen, that he would never be free until we did" ("SB," 140). This freedom is the Black's escape, the reader's escape, Sonny's escape. It is the scapegoat metaphor in action, a release for Sonny's brother and for us too. For Sonny "was giving it back, as everything must be given back, so that, passing through death, it can live forever" ("SB," 140).

The reversal of the situation at the end is important. The blues which Creole guides Sonny to play are central. For to play the blues one must first have suffered; then one creates the form to hold the pain, a fluid changing style where, according to John Reilly, "One uses the skill one has achieved by practice and experience in order to reach toward others."[14] The narrator expresses it best: "For, while the tale of how we suffer, and how we are delighted, and how we may triumph is never new, it always must be heard. There isn't any other tale to tell, it's the only light we've got in all this darkness" ("SB," 139).

Sonny's brother indicates that he both understands and symbolically shares Sonny's pain and guilt by sending the Scotch and milk drink. He affirms the religious connection with his comment, "For me, then, as they began to play again [the cup of Scotch and milk] glowed and shook above my brother's head like the very cup of trembling" ("SB," 141). The drink of Scotch and milk develops the image of Sonny as sinner and savior, the God/man, the scapegoat, the unlikely mixture which saves. This image conveys Sonny's complex purpose and suggests, on an earthly level, that Sonny's pain will continue, but his pain is shared and understood by his brother. On the second level it suggests that as God took away the pain for Israel, and as Christ takes away the pain and sin of the world for the believer, so does Sonny, the scapegoat, take away pain and guilt for his brother, for the listeners, and for us. As Keith Byerman said, "The drink itself, Scotch and milk, is an emblem of simultaneous destruction and nurture to the system; it cannot be reduced to one or the other. Sonny's acceptance of it indicates that his life will continue on the edge between the poison of his addiction and the nourishment of his music."[15] But Sonny *has* drunk the cup of pain before; now the brother joins in, empathizes, understands. Sonny drinks the Scotch and milk and continues to suffer, but part of his suffering is removed by his brother's understanding. For the brother, the action itself suggests increased understanding and a sharing of Sonny's pain.

The brother's final comment about the 'cup of trembling' emphasizes the narrator's understanding and reinterprets the image,

making Sonny a true scapegoat for the reader and enlarging our vision as well. Only with the last image do we reflect on the biblical imagery, seeing Sonny's linkage to Aaron and to Christ. Then we concentrate on Sonny's name; he is transformed before our very eyes and we see in his ceremonial acceptance of the drink his function as a scapegoat, a substitute for all.

NOTES

[1]This analysis intends only to peel the layers of meaning from the story and to integrate the recurrent scapegoat metaphor with the final startling, unprepared for biblical image. Thus this interpretation of Baldwin's most famous story does not compete with interpretations by others that involve social criticism, philosophical changes, prophetic voice, or Baldwin's place in Black literary history. Each of those has more than amply been done by other critics. See especially: *James Baldwin: A Critical Evaluation,* ed. Therman O'Daniel (Washington, D.C, 1977); John Reilly, "'Sonny's Blues': James Baldwin's Image of Black Community," *NALF* 4 (1970), 56-60; Elaine Ognibene, "Black Literature Revisited: 'Sonny's Blues,'" *EJ* 60 (Jan. 1971), 36-37; Donald C. Murray, "James Baldwin's 'Sonny's Blues': Complicated and Simple," *SSF* 14 (1977), 353-357; Sigmund Ro, "The Black Musician as Literary Hero: Baldwin's 'Sonny's Blues' and Kelley's 'Cry for Me,'" *ASS* 7 (1975), 17-48; Bernhard Ostendorf, "James Baldwin, 'Sonny's Blues,'" in *Die amerikanische Short Story der Gegenwart: Interpretation,* ed. Peter Freese (Berlin, 1976), pp. 194-104; M. Thomas Inge, "James Baldwin's Blues," *NCL* 2 (Sept. 1972), 8-11; and Shirley A. Williams, "The Black Musician: The Black Hero as Light Bearer," *Give Birth to Brightness* (New York, 1973), pp. 145-166. This paper draws specifically where mentioned from these critics but owes them also a debt of inspiration.

[2]See also Inge, "James Baldwin's Blues," who declares that the musical metaphor controls the story and Sonny's salvation, and Shirley Williams, "The Black Musician," who attests that the musician is an archetypal representative for Blacks and music is his medium of achievement.

[3]James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues," in *Going to Meet the Man* (New York, 1965), p. 141. All further references are given in text as "SB" and page number.

[4]*"Cup,"* the rendering mostly in the Old Testament of the Heb. *kos;* in the New Testament of the Greek *proterion....*5. Figurative. 'Cup' is employed in both Testaments in some curious metaphorical phrases: ...The 'cup of trembling,' literally, 'cup of reeling, intoxication' (Isa. 51:17, 22; Zech. 12:2), 'cup of

astonishment and desolation' (Ezek. 23:33), 'cup of fury' (Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15), 'cup of indignation' (Rev. 14:10) are figures representing the effects of Jehovah's wrath upon the wicked. God is represented as the master of a banquet, dealing madness and stupor of vengeance to guilty guests. There is in the prophets no more frequent or terrific image, and it is repeated with pathetic force in the language of our Lord's agony (Matt. 26:39; 42; John 18:11). Merrill Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago, 1966), p. 230. See also Psalms 75:8: "For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them."

[5]See Leviticus 16:15-16; 20-22: "Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness....And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness." See also Zechariah 12:2: "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling (or slumber, or poison) unto all the people round about when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem." And see also Isaiah 51:17; 22: "Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out....Thus saith thy Lord the Lord, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again."

[6]See Matthew 27:34: "They gave him vinegar to drink mixed with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink." However, in his death he symbolically drank the cup of trembling, the cup of God's wrath. See Matthew 26:39: "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, 'O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.'" See also Matthew 20:22-23: "'Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the

baptism that I am baptized with?' 'Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.'" See also Mark 14:36: "'Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me; nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.'" Also consider Isaiah 53:6: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every man to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

[7]Louis H. Pratt, *James Baldwin* (Boston, 1978), p. 21.

[8]James Baldwin, "Fifth Avenue, Uptown: A Letter from Harlem," *Nobody Knows My Name* (New York, 1961), p. 71.

[9]Jack Matthews, ed., *Archetypal Themes in the Modern Story* (New York, 1973), p. 79.

[10]J. E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols,* 2nd ed., Jack Sage, tr. (London, 1962), p. 225.

[11]In Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton, 1973), p. 345.

[12]Carolyn Wedin Sylvander, *James Baldwin* (New York, 1980), p. 117.

[13]Pratt, p. 34.

[14]John Reilly, "'Sonny's Blues': James Baldwin's Image of Black Community," *BALF,* 4 (1970), 169.

[15]Keith E. Byerman, "Words and Music: Narrative Ambiguity in 'Sonny's Blues,'" *SSF,* 19 (1982), 371.

A BIRDER'S RE-READING OF POE'S "ROMANCE"

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Edgar Allan Poe's poem "Romance" (intermediate version 1831; final,1845) turns on a comparison of two bird symbols—the paroquet and the condor—which reflect a division in the narrator's life. Because the meaning of these two avian symbols has become canonized in the United States, students often find in the poem a paean to exotic Romance. However, if we restore these birds to their nineteenth-century American context, "the wild wood" (l. 9), we can come closer to the interpretation Poe probably intended, and re-read his poem to find Romance rooted in the quotidian.

To do so, we must look beyond Mabbott's commonly accepted explanation of the two bird symbols. In a note to *Poems, No 6,* he explains that Poe connects the paroquet "with the carved and painted figure of a bird, in Scotland locally called a papingo, hung from a pole outside a church tower to be shot at by archers." He adds:

> the custom was kept up from the fifteenth century until 1686 at Kilwinning Abbey at Irvine, Ayrshire, where Poe stayed for a time as a boy. It is clearly referred to in his story, "The Bargain Lost," published in 1832, where it is said of a character wearing brightly colored garments: 'The paroquet, upon a certain cathedral, resembled nothing so much as Pedro.' The passage is not included in the several later versions of the story called "Bon-Bon."[1]

Mabbott also identifies Poe's contrasting avian symbol, the condor, as an ornithological reality, but ignores its presence in North America. He says simply, "Condors, the largest bird of prey, are noted for voracity; Poe refers to them also in 'The Conqueror Worm'" (1: 127). Other explanations that complement Mabbott's also see the paroquet as foreign, and emphasize it as a conceptualization of distant romance.

But was this Ayrshire paroquet the sole source for Poe's symbol? Certainly it was not the most immediate. We must consider that Poe's choice of symbols was also influenced by the time and place in which he lived and the books he reviewed. In doing so, we continue to agree with Mabbott that the poem "is a declaration of the poet's dedication to Romance, in the voice of Nature" (1: 127), but we find that Romance is to be found closer at hand, in a more accessible Nature.

Poe lived during a time of intense interest in the work of the renowned ornithologists Alexander Wilson (1766-1813) and John James Audubon (1785-1851), whose publications and debates were part of a broader reckoning and cataloging of nature's unexplored frontiers that stirred contemporaneous intellectual and literary life.[2]

Perhaps Poe was open to the stimulation of these new American discoveries and explorations because Emerson and others repeatedly exhorted the American artist to be concerned with American subjects. For example, in 1825, prominent classicist Richard Ray directed the American Academy of Fine Arts in New York: "the Genius of your country points you to its stupendous cataracts, its highlands...place on the canvas the lovely landscape and adorn our houses with American prospects and American skies" (Merritt, 11).[3]

Furthermore, Poe was fascinated with science and with the physical world around him, as is evident in books he owned, discussed, and reviewed for publication. These books, which include *Animal and Vegetable Physiology, The Rambler in North America, and Discourse on the Objects, Pleasures. and Advantages of Science,*[4] point to Poe as an amateur naturalist with a scientific bent.

Most important for this birder's re-reading of "Romance" are the facts that the California condor (plate 2) was a known American bird and that the Carolina paroquet (plate 1)[5] was commonly viewed during Poe's lifetime.

Though the Carolina paroquet has been extinct since 1913, dense flocks of these small, raucous, fast-flying birds inhabited the Atlantic coastal plains of the United States in the nineteenth century, from Florida through Virginia, giving Poe ample opportunity to sight them. Their range and frequency indicate that Poe could well mean what he clearly says, the "painted paroquet hath been—a most familiar bird—" (ll. 5-6). With its large, white beak, the Carolina paroquet was a highly "painted" bird whose orange and blue colors bled off into shades of green and yellow. Audubon first painted and described this *psittacid* in his 1827 (U.S., 1839) landmark work, *The Birds of America* (plate 1).

The California Condor has a nine- to ten-foot wing span; it is an immense vulture that supports Poe's metaphor of the ominous "Condor years" (l. 11). Audubon's watercolor shows this *cathartid* as an ugly, eagle-like bird with a small naked head suitable for entering carrion (plate 2). During Poe's lifetime the condor's eating habits were looked upon with disgust. As late as 1894, *The Encyclopedia Britannica* called the condor's characteristic feeding on carcasses an "obscene habit." In

"Romance" the negative figure of the carrion-eating condor marks a tumultuous period in the narrator's life, the dark and thunderous years.[6] The narrator says (ll. 11-15) that the tumultuous, ugly, eternal activities of these recent condor years have kept him so occupied that he has no time for the romance of younger days symbolized by the paroquet, the gentler bird of his innocence. He bemoans his present loss of time for what are now "forbidden things" (l. 10): romance and poetry.

This bird symbolism penetrates Poe's poem too deeply for our sole concern to be solely with the wooden archer's mark. Poe describes Romance as a living bird. It "nods and sings" (l. 1); the reader can almost see "the drowsy head" tucked under the "folded wing" (l. 2). Its distanced reflection in the "shadowy lake" (l. 4) is not that of a still statue of a bird atop a steeple, but that of a living bird that has come to light or fluttered on a branch "among the green leaves," (l. 3) causing those leaves to "shake" (l. 3) a bit. Alluding to the belief that all members of the parrot family can be taught to talk, Poe uses the paroquet to represent Romance as the teacher. Romance has taught the youthful narrator his alphabet[7], the positive and simple basics of life, or, to expand the conflict for the author, the basics also of writing, or self-expression which have been displaced by the concerns of his mature, condor years.

Thus, if we enter the text of "Romance" through its nineteenth-century ornithological context, we can see Poe's experiments with an American iconography and hear his American voice where "things near are not less beautiful and wondrous than things remote."[8] More, by recognizing the condor and the paroquet as real American birds, instead of one actual bird and one Scotch wooden target, we grant a deeper parallelism to the multiple contrasts Poe establishes in "Romance": small vs. large, delicate vs. powerful, beautiful vs. ugly, colorful vs. black, gentle vs. fierce, good vs. evil, teacher vs. competitor, and east vs. west. This structuring of opposition in nature that metaphorically reflects contrasts in the narrator can be seen also as Poe's tacit riposte to contemporaneous landscape painters and transcendentalists who saw Nature as the repository of only the sublime.

Recognition that Poe's use of avian symbols could be based in the physical world suggests that beautiful and delicate Romance is not merely an exotic state of being or a foreign mark at which to aim, but can also be taught to us by "familiar" (l. 6) objects in our natural environment; Romance is within reach.

NOTES

[1]Thomas O. Mabbott, ed. *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*. (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), 1: 127. A variation of this explanation appears in Mabbott, ed. *Selected Poetry and Prose of Edgar Allan Poe*. (New York, 1951), p. 407.

However, in "The Bargain Lost," Philadelphia *Saturday Courier*, 1 Dec. 1832, p. 1, the paroquet metaphor refers to clothing style and coloration. Neither Pedro nor his fanciful clothes can be construed as a target at which to aim—quite the contrary. In the later version of "Bon-Bon," "Pedro" becomes "Pierre" and the paroquet becomes a bird of paradise. Poe's description of the still too gaudily dressed protagonist then reads, "It was difficult to say whether Pierre Bon Bon was indeed a bird of Paradise or the rather, a very Paradise of perfection" (Mabbott, 2:100).

[2]For example, from 1814 to 1831 a continuous and raucously public debate took place concerning the relationship between Wilson and Audubon. Evidence discussed centered in part on Wilson's 23 March 1819, diary entry regarding a paroquet. Robert Henry Welker, *Birds and Men*. (Cambridge, 1955), pp. 48-53.

[3]This selection is part of a longer passage quoted by Howard S. Merritt, ed. *Thomas Cole 1801-1848*. (Rochester, 1969).

[4]Burton R. Pollin, *Dictionary of Names and Dates in Poe's Collected Works*. (New York, 1968). In addition, Pollin lists the following (103-181):

America and the American People. Raumer. (Reviewed by Poe)

American Almanac and Repository of Useful Knowledge for the year 1837. (R)

Baltimore Museum (for *American Museum of Science, Literature, and the Arts*). (Discussed by Poe)

Christian Florist: Containing the English and Botanical Names of Different Plants. (R)

Life on the Lakes: Being Talks and Sketches Collected During a Trip to the Pictured Rocks of Lake Superior. Gilman. (R)

New and Comprehensive Gazeteer of Virginia, and the District of Columbia. J. Martin. (R)

Pleasant Peregrination through the Prettiest Parts of Pennsylvania A. Nichelin. (R)

The Rambler in North America, Latrobe. (R)

[5]Slides from the Collection of Audubon Watercolors, courtesy The New York Historical Society, New York, N.Y.

[6]In Greek mythology the vulture or condor is sacred to Aries, the God of War, which reinforces the negative image of the

'eternal condor years' (11). That the California condor is now on the endangered species list makes it a more rarified symbol in 1990 than perhaps it was in 1831.

[7]Poe was not the only writer of the American Renaissance who saw Nature as a teacher of life's alphabet. Seven years after the final version of "Romance" was published, Melville wrote (1852), "Say what some poets will, Nature is not so much her own ever-sweet interpreter, as the mere supplier of that cunning alphabet, whereby selecting and combining as he pleases, each man reads his own peculiar lesson according to his own peculiar mind and mood." *Pierre or The Ambiguities*, ed. Harrison Hayford et. al. (Chicago, 1971) p. 342.

[8]Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar." *The Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Brooks Atkinson (New York, 1950), p. 61.

Plate 1.

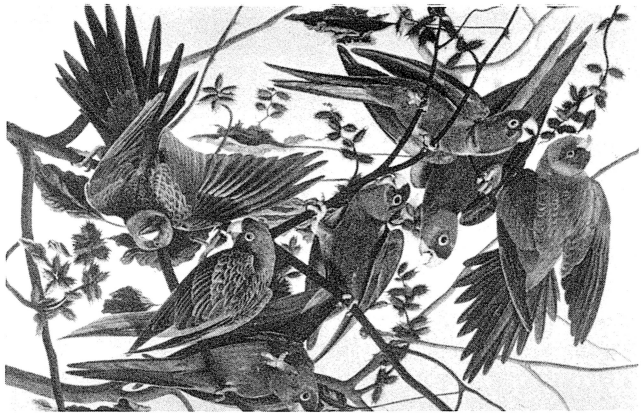
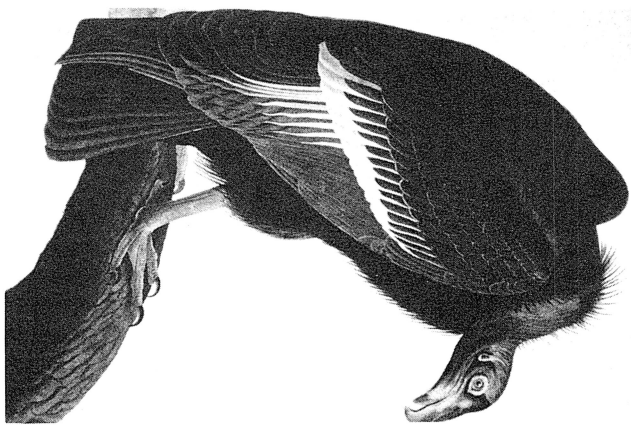


Plate 2.



VIRGINIA FRAZER BOYLE: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Virginia Frazer Boyle, best remembered as a Memphis poet, novelist, and short-story writer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was born on 14 February 1863 near Chattanooga, Tennessee to prominent parents. Since she was born during the height of the Civil War to a Confederate officer who, though imprisoned on Johnson's Island for almost two years, became known as the "Unreconstructed Rebel," it is not surprising that Boyle's poetry and fiction would have as a primary theme the glorification of the South and its inhabitants. Boyle was among the many turn-of-the-century writers whose eyes and efforts were turned sentimentally toward the pre-war South and one of the host who produced local color literature which so dominated the popular magazines from 1860 through the first couple decades of the twentieth century. The Memphis author died on 13 December 1938. Her collection of voodoo stories, *Devil Tales* (1900), chronicles the passion, humor, and, above all, the active superstitions of Tennessee and Mississippi blacks.

Even as a child Boyle was heralded as a writer—a poet. Father Abrams Ryan, the Poet Priest of the South, gave the girl her first pseudonym, "Thyra," and during a visit with Jefferson Davis, when she was ten years old, he playfully proclaimed her the poet laureate of the South and entrusted her with the responsibility of recording the heart and history of the imperiled Southland (Kilmer, p. 14, #196 below). Indeed, Boyle became the poet laureate of the *Confederate Veteran,* a journal dedicated to the purpose of glorifying the exploits of confederate soldiers in the Civil War and to recognizing the heroism of veterans and other southerners. Her poetry was celebrated in Memphis and often graced the pages of the local newspapers. In 1906 she published a collection of poems entitled *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* This volume and the numerous poems from the *Confederate Veteran* reveal the author's religious faith, patriotism, and diverse interests. Several of the poems included within *Love Songs* are "Wanola of the Cotton," an epic love poem about the Natchez Indians; "Demetria: A Musical Extravaganza" adapted from her story "The Devil's Little Fly"; "The Old Canteen," an extremely sentimental poem about a battle-scarred canteen unearthed by a sharecropper's plow; and lullabies crooned by black mammies to their young charges. Boyle wished to be

remembered for this poetry (Kilmer, p. 14); however, time has left her wish unfulfilled.

Boyle's fiction has proved longer lasting than her verse. Similar to the poetry, her fiction contains themes of southern heroism, slave superstition and loyalty tied together with sentimentality and humor. She attempts to romanticize and glorify the south, but her best work in this form records southern superstitions and folklore garnered from her nurse, Ellen, and it also reveals social customs of southern life. This part of her canon includes two novels and thirty short stories. The novels *Brokenburne: A Southern Auntie's War Tale* (1897), and *Serena* (1905) are conventional treatments of the southern plantation tradition so prevalent at the close of the nineteenth century. In fact, *Brokenburne* is very similar in plot, theme, and characterization to "Marse Chan," the Thomas Nelson Page classic which set the standard for later plantation literature. *Serena* is noteworthy for glimpses of slave voodoo rites and social customs of the planter class it offers readers. Voodoo dances, chivalric tournaments, Ladies Aid Societies, the Civil War, a cowardly brother, a strong, independent, classically educated heroine, and two handsome suitors are the novel's principle features.

Any saccharine-sweetness and pretentiousness in Boyle's poems and novels are offset by the genuine spirit and colorful elements in the short stories. These stories, especially those about the devil and voodoo that first appeared in *Century* magazine from 1890 to 1899 and were collected in *Devil Tales* in 1900, are Boyle's most valuable contribution to American literature; within these tales of slave superstitions and voodoo rites Boyle best employs her skill as a storyteller with a penchant for humor, a flair for creating an atmosphere fraught with Gothic possibilities, a sensitive ear for dialect and speech patterns, and a thorough knowledge and understanding of slave superstitions and other folkways of southern life.

In essence, Boyle was a southern writer exploring southern themes and using her skill on material with which she was intimately familiar. The characters in her fiction are often stock; Ole Marses, Ole Misses, Hoodoos, 'Zorters, loyal Mammys and flirty "yaller gals" abound. Boyle's Ole Marse is the stereotypical southern gentleman—proud of his heritage, firm and affectionate to his slaves, loyal to friend and country. He loves his family fiercly and has a prediliction for drinking and hunting. His few weaknesses include excesses in gambling, pride, and idealism. In many cases Ole Marse is a doctor or a lawyer in addition to being a planter. He is either a very strong individual who runs his plantation with a firm hand or a highly impractical

dreamer,with "not an ounce of evil in his heart," who allows his wife to run the business.

The aristocratic women of Boyle's fiction include wives and belles who are almost always as strong, stubborn, and busy as they are good. At times, Boyle's Ole Miss is quite delicate. She bears her burdens silently and means to be brave but needs protecting. She loves her family wholeheartedly and is gracious and kind to friend and foe. She never refuses care to those in need. In some cases, however, Ole Miss is iron-willed and arrogant. Too much pride is her downfall. With family honor as her primary concern, she runs the home and the business and allows her husband to dream and peruse his books. In "Ole Marse and Aunt Nancy" and in "The Old Hair Trunk" Ole Miss, now dead, had been the ruling force of the plantation from the time Ole Marse married her. The daughters, the belles, are lovely and coquettish as well as strong and intelligent. Serena, the loveliest girl in Hollyford, Mississippi, is more interested in studying than her brother. When he deserts from the war, Serena disguises herself in order to fight in his place and preserve the family honor. Dainty Dorothy Lane in "According to the Code" expresses views similar to twentieth-century suffragists when she refuses to marry unless she can be a partner to her husband and not just a lovely, silly plaything.

Boyle's black characters are also to a great extent stereotypical. For the most part they fit easily into the stock types described by Sterling Brown in 1930.[1] The tales contain a hearty share of contented slaves preoccupied with superstition, religion and sweet "taters" for dinner; wretched freemen attempting to reattain their happy captivity; exotic primitives who understand the ways of nature; and comic types who entertain readers and amuse as well as exasperate their owners. Boyle's blacks are ever-loyal and proud of their white folks up at the "Big House." Though stock, Boyle's black characters often possess a certain vitality which marks them as real human beings driven by passion, greed, love, loyalty, jealousy, supertition, and fear.

Predominant among the black characters in Boyle's fiction are the strong women: the mammys, cooks, and maids. These women are loyal and very proud and sometimes stern and stubborn. Although they are not always loveable, all are bent on protecting their charges be they infant or adult. The mammys spin scary tales to quiet and amuse the older children; they sing lullabies and bounce babies to sleep in hard, canebacked chairs. The mammys in "Old Hair Trunk" and "The Breaking Away of Mammy" illustrate Boyle's loyal, self-sacrificing servants whose white families are dependant on them. The cooks rule the kitchen and take what they want from its provisions. They will

stand no nonsense from their subordinates in the house. "The Lane to the Pasture" offers in Aunt Jarvis a nice portrait of a haughty cook. With Aunt Nancy of "Ole Marse and Aunt Nancy" one may see the proud, sometimes arrogant, maid who tends to imitate Ole Miss' manners and wear her cast-off finery.

Another type of black female recurs in Boyle's tales. She is the sensuous, frivolous girl, often of mixed blood, who flirts shamelessly and incites strong, shy field hands to jealously and even murderous violence. In "When the Stars Fell" covetous Dicey, "the belle of the Quarters," flirts with Lish just long enough to wrest his family treasures away from him (#031, p. 18). She even takes the beautiful, handsewn "kivers" left to him and his old father to keep them warm in the winter. Flighty Kizzy of "Lemuel" steals Ole Marse's prize turkeys and blames Lemuel because she is envious of his good relationship with Ole Marse. The pouty, yellow "gal" of "Black Silas" flirts with another man and incites her lover to murder. As in an Elizabethan drama, though, all works out in the end. The guy gets his girl when she is made to realize that she loved him all along, usually after some heroic and self-sacrificing feat on his part.

The black males in Boyle's works are frequently comic figures. The type which occurs most often is the ineffectual trickster, usually an ancient field hand who is too old to do heavy work but who expends much energy arranging plans to suit him. He might wish to sample freedom and demand it of his amused and indulgent Ole Marse, as did Micajah in "A Kingdom for Micajah." Hilarity ensues as the reader witnesses Micajah's attempts to imitate the actions of "white folks." He asks Ole Marse for a book, which he cannot read, to carry under his arm and a "little nigger" to order around who must fan his feet. Finally, unhappy with his "freedom" and unable to wait out the month-long term, Micajah runs away in order to regain his slave status.

Another of these comic blacks is the manservant. Like Boyle's maidservants, he often imitates his Ole Marse. He is loyal, stubborn, and often impractical. He takes pride in his relationship with the master of the plantation and appears quite pompous to the other slaves. Such qualities sometimes get him into trouble. Whitington from "Old Hair Trunk" is proud and boastful. Old Uncle Aaron from *Brokenburne* attempts to imitate Ole Marse's style of speech and dress as he attends the unexpected visitors to the old Balfour place: "Will de gemmens go arter breakfast er rise ter de huntin' horn?" (p. 10). Jezrul from "The Taming of Jezrul" is "as pompous, if not so rotund, as the Colonel himself" (*Devil Tales,* p. 93). Each of these characters offers a typical example of Boyle's manservants.

Boyle's young black men are usually strong, hardworking field hands. They pick cotton or shoe horses with almost superhuman speed and strength. Her young men are usually shy, gentle giants. The character Silas from "Black Silas" is described as a "black Colossus." Boyle is always careful to make these exceptionally strong men amazingly loyal and devoted to their white owners. In fact, these young men frequently are willing to sacrifice their lives in order to save Ole Marse or a member of his family from death by fire or murder. Cotton, too, is saved from consumption by fire with regularity by the loyal slaves. "Black Silas" and "Lemuel" offer the best look at Boyle's young black male characters.

Finally, some of Boyle's most interesting characters, male or female, are her conjurers, hoodoos and parsons. Hoodoos and conjurers have great status among the people in the quarters, and their services are never cheap. One might have to pay a conjure woman with a cherished pair of gold-hoop earrings or a prized fine-china teacup as Bithie did in "'Liza." Often the hoodoos are seventh daughters or sons. Uncle 'Jah from "Black Silas" and "Dark of de Moon," 'Liza from the story of that name, and Mammy from "The Breaking Away of Mammy" are a few of these naturally born, powerful hoodoos.

Parsons, too, appear frequently in Boyle's stories and are often as superstitious as they are religious. Daddy Mose from "The Black Cat" was the "counsellor, soothsayer, and leading exhorter to the whole of the dusky population of Piney since the close of the war" and "in emergencies, even whites depended on him" (p. 169). Old Parson 'Bias from "Old Hair Trunk" was loved and respected and over one hundred years old. Most often Boyle's preachers are respected, but at times they are not deserving of it. With her Jo from "Penny Wise" one may note that Boyle did not exclude lazy, self-serving preachers.

Boyle added her dialect fiction to the many tales by those who were recording scenes or moments from the idiosyncratic people of their various locales. She chose as her major theme the glorification of the antebellum south, its inhabitants, and their chivalric feudal ways. Her novels and stories are very sentimental portraits of benevolent plantation lords and ladies who live in Arcadie with their childlike, contented slaves. Most of her other themes arise from this major one. Boyle's slaves are loyal, trusting and amusing. The caste distinction between the field hands and the house servants is mentioned frequently but is always treated humorously. Miscegenation seems commonplace and nonthreatening in Boyle's fiction.

Superstition and the supernatural are also prominent themes. Boyle's tales are liberally flavored with humor and dark voodoo magic:

Much of the action in the quarters takes place during the "dark er de moon" deep in the forest alongside swampy creek banks where the devil and his minions roam freely through the quarters and its environs. Good hoodoos and parsons match wits with the devil and evil hoodoos who are in his power.

After the manner of her literary predecessors, the Southwest humorists such as George Washington Harris and local colorists such as Charles W. Chesnutt, Boyle's tone is apt to be arch or condescending. Her tales are frequently told with an authorial smile at the "quaintness" of the black characters. She employs the conventional frame to preserve her dignity, while at the same time she skillfully presents the unschooled, naturally poetic voices of her black narrators and characters. Again, similar to the Southwest humorists, Boyle creates mirth by means of comic situations, malapropism, and egregious mispronunciations.

Boyle's valuable records of authentic slave superstitions and folkways and her ability to infuse life into even her most tepid novels with the same superstitions raise her above the rank and file of the numerous look-back-to-glory writers of the 1880s and 1890s and award her a place among the inner circle of folklorists and local colorists such as Joel Chandler Harris, Charles W. Chesnutt, Kate Chopin, or Mary N. Murfree. Boyle, however, is no mere imitator of Page's plantation tradition formula and Harris's "Uncle Remus" tales. Her treatment of superstition, voodoo rites, and their psychological effects upon her black characters serve to prove that Boyle was creating original and valuable material.

What follows is an annotated bibliography of Virginia Frazer Boyle's works and the scanty body of criticism. Most of the criticism consists of reviews of Boyle's two novels and her collection of tales. She received favorable notice from reviewers exploring chroniclers of Afro-American folklore. Biographical information on Boyle is usually passing mention in reference and critical works. Her two volumes of collected poems are treated somewhat differently from the other material in the bibliography as many of the poems made their first appearances in these collections. Each poem from both volumes will be listed along with the symbol [1st] to indicate that its first publication was in the book. The bibliography follows this format: 1) books, 2) short stories, 3) nonfiction articles, 4) poems, 5) reviews, 6) biographical works, and 7) critical works pertaining to Boyle and her work.

Primary Sources

Books

001 *The Other Side: An Historic Poem.* Cambridge, Mass: Riverside Press, 1893.

Narrative poem in three parts, "Divergent Lines," "The Prisoner of State," and "Reconstruction," which chronicles the Civil War from a southern perspective. Author notes in preface that "success tells its own story" but "there is another side too often forgotten."

002 *Brokenburne: A Southern Auntie's War Tale.* New York: E. R. Herrick and Company, 1897; rpt. Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries, 1972.

Novelette in tradition of Southern Plantation with Slave narrator. Contains typical themes and elements: heightened sentimentalism, family pride—a gracious, decaying, house—old and loyal servants.

003 *Devil Tales.* New York: Harper and Brothers, 1900; rpt. Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries , 1972.

Ten tales of life in the quarters, voodoo and superstition. Boyle's most important work. Illustrated by A. B. Frost.

004 *Serena.* New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1905.

Civil War romance in the Southern Plantation tradition. When heroine's brother deserts from the war, she preserves honor of her family name by taking his place in battle. Significant for scenes of slave voodoo dances and glimpses of social customs of aristocratic southerners.

005 *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1906.

Collected poems seperated into four categories: "Love Songs," "Bugle Calls," "Miscellaneous," and "Dialect." The collection reveals Boyle's strong religious faith, patriotism, and diverse interests. Included within the collection are "Wanola of the Cotton," an epic love poem about the Natchez Indians and "Demetria (A Musical Extravaganza)" adapted from "The Devil's Little Fly." The volume is dedicated to the memory of Boyle's father.

006 *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939.

Posthumous collection of some of Boyle's published and uncollected poems all of which contain themes of southern heroism in an attempt to glorify the South and its inhabitants.

212 VIRGINIA FRAZER BOYLE: BIBLIOGRAPHY

Short Stories

007 "How Jerry Bought Malviny." *Century* 40 (October 1890): 892-895.

Jerry remembers how Ole Marse helped him buy his wife when the plantation had to be auctioned. Illustrated by E. W. Kemble.

008 "De Hant er Buzzard's Nes'." *Century* 43 (February 1892): 581-586.

Old Uncle Abner tells a bedtime story of superstition, hard times, and death during the Civil War. Illustrated by E. W. Kemble.

009 "Old 'Bias's Vision." *Century* 48 (August 1894): 515-520.

Old Parson 'Bias's vision of Judgment Day brings repentance to his congregation, especially to "pious" Brer' Peter. Illustrated by E. W. Kemble.

010 "Dark er de Moon." *Harper's Monthly* 100 (December 1899): 58-68.

Tale of superstition, hoodoo, and the devil. Unc' 'Jah, a powerful hoodoo chases away the devil during the "dark er de moon." Collected in *Devil Tales* .

011 "Asmodeus in the Quarters." *Harper's Monthly* 100 (January 1900): 217-222.

Deaf and curious, Old Shadrach makes a deal with the devil to exchange his soul for good hearing and sight. Collected in *Devil Tales.*

012 "Stolen Fire." *Devil Tales.* New York: Harper and Brothers, 1900. 157-166; rpt. *Witches, Wraiths, and Warlocks: Supernatural Tales of the American Renaissance* . Ed. Ronald Curran. Greenwich, Conn: Fawcett Publications, 1971: 23-26 [gives incorrect page numbers for *Devil Tales* publication].

Darwinism inverted. While the Devil is away, the fires of Hell go out. He must steal some fire but is not fast enough because of his cloven foot. He asks the bear, the rabbit, the turtle, the fox, the blue-jay, and the crow to steal it for him, but it is a "worthless town nigger" who finally agrees. For his trouble the Devil turns him into an "Afika monkey."

013 "The Black Cat." *Devil Tales.* New York: Harper and Brothers, 1900. 167-191.

Tale based upon superstition that killing a black cat is bad luck. Great misfortune ensues when 'Lish Stone is enlisted to kill a black cat stealing cream from the dairy. Hoodoo Unc' Ceaesar must remove the devil's curse from 'Lish. See poem "I Kilt er Cat" for similar theme.

014 "'Liza." *Devil Tales.* New York: Harper and Brothers, 1900. 193-211.

Dark tale of greed, lust, and magic. Hoary-haired hoodoo Unc' Casper curses 'Liza, the seventh daughter born with a veil, when she offended him as an infant. Through his trickery, greedy 'Liza marries the devil and is never seen again.

015 "The Taming of Jezrul." *Harper's Monthly* 100 (February 1900): 389-393.

Story of jealousy and hoodoo rites. Crecy puts Jezrul under a curse until he returns her love. Collected in *Devil Tales.*

016 "A Kingdom for Micajah." *Harper's Monthly* 100 (March 1900): 527-535.

Story of Micajah's dissatisfaction with freedom and of his devotion to his Ole Marse. See "Her Freedom" for similar theme. Collected in *Devil Tales.*

017 "Penny Wise." *Atlantic Monthly* 85 (April 1900): 518-530.

Story of free, industrious Penny's sale and subsequent search for her lazy husband, Jo.

018 "Old Cinder Cat." *Harper's Monthly* 101 (August 1900): 416-422.

Tale of voodoo rituals. Juno breaks the "hoodoo" on her husband, Solon. Collected in *Devil Tales.*

019 "Black Silas." *Century* 59 (September 1900): 376-377.

Story of proud Black Silas's punishment for murder and of his loyalty and devotion to Ole Marse. Illustrated by Edward Potthast. Engraved by G. Putnam.

020 "Devil's Little Fly." *Harper's Monthly* 101 (September 1900): 597-602.

Tale of slave superstition that devil's spy is the little black fly. Collected in *Devil Tales.*

021 "The Other Maumer." *Harper's Monthly* 101 (October 1900): 749-756.

Gothic tale of an old black woman's pride and jealousy and of her subsequent madness. Collected in *Devil Tales.*

022 "The Child Perpetual." *Century* 60 (October 1900): 868-873.

Sentimental story of a slave woman's love for her dwarfed, retarded child. Illustrated by Edward Pothast. Half-tone plate engraved by Charles State.

023 "For Cousin Polly Broadus." *Delineator* 57 (February 1901): 273.
Tale satirically told about the courting and marriage of an impoverished, well-born youth, Great-grandfather, and a determined and independent belle, Great-grandmother, refuting the claim that Great-grandfather "never earned a dollar in his life."

024 "According to the Code—A Romance." *Delienator* 53 (July 1901): 84-91.
Nineteenth-century "Romeo and Juliet." Two young lovers cannot marry until their feuding fathers form a friendship after fighting a duel from which they both sustain injuries; however, the lady will not marry to become a "mere toy or a butterfly" to amuse her husband. She refuses to wed until she can become his partner.

025 "The Triumph of Shed." *Century* 62 (October 1901): 902-906; rpt. *American Local Color Stories.* Eds. Harry R. Warfel and G. Harrison Orians. New York: American Book Company, 1941; rpt. New York: Cooper Square, 1970. 767-775.
Story of an old black man's confrontation with and dismissal of the New South. [Similar in theme to the poem "The Automobile Dray" entered below] Illustrated by Edward Potthast.

026 "Her Freedom." *Century* 65 (February 1903): 617-621.
Story of old Aunt Nancy's unhappiness with her new freedom and of her scheme to sell herself back to Old Marse in order to feel free. Similar in theme and plot to "A Kingdom for Micajah."

027 "A Florida Cracker." *Delineator* 62 (September 1903): 306-310; (October 1903): 482-488.
Tale of how crotchety, secretive Dr. Tolliver arrived mysteriously in Opal, Florida and, despite his efforts to remain aloof, made friends with romantic and idealistic Miss Elpinice Crandall and loyal Hiram Dale. Years later as the doctor lay dying, Miss Elpinice reunited him with his estranged wife.

028 "Breaking Away of Mammy." *Delineator* 73 (February 1909): 217-220, 302.
The Battle family discovers just how dependent on Mammy they are when she decides to take a seven day holiday in the swamps. Gothic. Illustrated by W. Sherman Potts.

029 "Ole Marse and Aunt Nancy." *Harper's Weekly* 53 (19 June 1909): 22-23.
Tale of slave-master relationship. Since Marse cannot "whup" Aunt Nancy, she does it for him in order to prevent his loss of face to the other slaves. Illustrated by John Wolcott Adams.

030 "Lemuel." *Delineator* 75 (March 1910): 203, 257-258.
Story about the stormy romance of good Lemuel and jealous Kizzy and how they saved Ole Marse's life one dark night. Illustrated by Frederic Dorr Steele.

031 "When the Stars Fell." *Harper's Weekly* 54 (16 July1910): 18-19.
Story based upon Negro superstition and the meteoric showers of 13 November 1899. Illustrated by M. Leone Bracker.

032 "Dream Doll and Mr. Twinkle Eyes." *Harper's Bazaar* 45 (March 1911): 120-121.
Sentimental story of an orphan girl and her adoption by a kind old gentleman and his sister. Significant because the main characters are caucasian and dwell in the city.

033 "The Christmas Child." *Harper's Weekly* 101 (16 December 1911): 22-23.
Sentimental story about the Christmas spirit of giving. The Doctor and his wife are distressed because their children and grandchildren will not be home for Christmas. However, an abandoned child renews their joy and reunites them with their estranged son. Illustrated by Walter Biggs.

034 "Christmas Gif': A Memory of the Old South." *Century* 83 (December 1911): 305-309.
Sentimental story describing the plantation custom of slaves catching Ole Marse, Ole Miss, Young Marse, and Little Miss and demanding a Christmas gift. See also "Old Hair Trunk" for further mention of the custom.

035 "Lane to the Pasture." *Delineator* 80 (September 1912): 146-147.
Story of the unlikely courtship and marriage of Aunt Jarvis, the Big House cook, and Unc' Caswell, an old field hand. Illustrated by Frederic Dorr Steele.

036 "Old Hair Trunk." *Good Housekeeping* 60 (January 1915): 26-34.
Sentimental story of Mammy's loyalty and generosity to Ole Marse in his hour of need. Illustrated by Walter Biggs.

Nonfiction

037 *Song of Memphis: A Canticle.* [Music by Creighton Allen. Orchestration by Earnest F. Hawke]. Memphis, Tenn: S. C. Toof, 1919.
Musical tribute to Memphis.

038 "Jefferson Davis in Canada." *Confederate Veteran* 37 (March 1929): 89-91.
Article describing Davis' bible and religious devotion during his captivity at Fortress Monroe and of his life after parole.

Poems

039 "By de Mississippi Sho'." *Century* 39 (February 1890): 640; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 227-229.
Dialect poem depicting the scene of an old black man waiting in his cabin for Gabriel to collect him and take him to heaven.

040 "Negro in the Overflow." *Century* 40 (August 1890): 639-640; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 218-220.
Poem in dialect dealing with a man's love for his old plantation home. Jasper clings to his perch on the roof of the plantation house even though the levees have broken and the river is rising rapidly.

041 "Sunset on the Mississippi." *Arena* 2 (November 1890): 732; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 145-146; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 18.
Depicts scene of spiritual-singing slaves walking homeward from the fields while the sun sinks into the Mississippi River.

042 "Two Little Shoes." *Harper's Weekly* 34 (6 December 1890): 954; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 120-122.
Religious poem.

043 "Jaybird's Friday." *Century* 41 (January 1891): 479; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 215-217.
Dialect poem based upon superstition that jaybirds carry firewood to Hell every Friday morning.

044 "I Kilt er Cat." *Century* 41 (March 1891): 799; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 222-223.
Poem in dialect dealing with a man's fear of being "hoodooed" by the spirit of a cat he had killed. See "The Black Cat" in *Devil Tales* for similar theme.

045 "Survival of the Fittest." *Century* 42 (May 1891): 160; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 229-230.

Lighthearted dialect poem dealing with the philosophical question of superiority among the creatures created by God.

046 "Ill-Omened Crow." *Century* 42 (September 1891): 799; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 224-227.

Dialect poem telling how the crow's feathers became blackened when flying through Hell in a race with the devil.

047 "Beached." *Century* 44 (August 1892): 539; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 140-142.

Poem about superstitious custom of beaching recovered boats of drowned fishermen.

048 "My South, My South." *Confederate Veteran* 2 (April 1894): 114; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 87-881; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 31.

Somewhat autobiographical poem expressing Boyle's devotion to the South.

049 "Cottonade." *Bookman* [New York] 7 (July 1898): 430-431; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 24-27.

Poem describing the planting, laying-by, and picking of cotton and of the love of a "dusky" youth and maiden.

050 "Apotheosis of War." *Harper's Monthly* 97 (November 1898): 902; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 74-75.

Poem expressing the author's grief about the Civil War.

051 "Pickaninny Lullaby." *Bookman* [New York] 9 (March 1899): 43; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 220-221.

Lyric in dialect featuring Mammy and pickaninny.

052 "Where 'er Thou Art." *Bookman* [New York] 9 (April 1899): 161; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 8-9.

Song of love eternal.

053 "Howdy." *Century* 58 (August 1899): 644; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 232-234.
Lighthearted dialect poem.

054 "The Automobile Dray." *Century* 59 (December 1899): 324; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 231-232.
Dialect poem lamenting displacement of mules and blacks by automobile. See "The Triumph of Shed" for similar theme.

055 "Old Letters." *Bookman* 10 (January 1900): 465; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 9-10.
Sentimental poem describing bittersweet memories evoked when reading old letters.

056 "When Love Is Dead." *Harper's Monthly* 100 (February 1900): 455; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 5; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 30.
Describes Nature's reaction to the end of love.

057 "Optim." *Current Literature* 27 (March 1900): 224; rpt. *Harper's Monthly* 102 (April 1901): 767; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 6-7.
Expresses religious optimism in spite of sorrow.

058 "They Said That Love Was Blind." *Harper's Monthly* 102 (May 1901): 966; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 6.
Love poem. Although blind, Love could hear and blossoms of spring are the embodiment of what he heard.

059 "The Wizard of the Saddle." *Confederate Veteran* 9 (June 1901): 251; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes. 1906. 54-56; rpt. *Songs from the South,* 1939. 46-47.
Tribute to Nathan Bedford Forrest. Read 30 May 1901 during the laying of the cornerstone of the Forrest monument at Forrest Park, Memphis, Tennessee. Contains portrait of author as a young woman.

060 "Badge for the CSMA." *Confederate Veteran* 11 (November 1903): 485; rpt. "Women of the Confederacy." *Confederate Veteran* 34 (November 1926): 423.
Read at the dedication of Tennessee's monument to southern women. Honors southern women who supported the Confederacy. Boyle designed a badge for the Confederated Southern Memorial Association, which was adopted at a New Orleans convention of that organization. Contains illustration of the badge.

061 "Psalm for Nineteen-four." *Harper's Weekly* 47 (12 December 1903): 2041; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 124-126.
Religious poem.

062 "June." *Century* 68 (June 1904): 237; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 37-38.
Nature poem in praise of spring.

063 "To Mark Twain on His Seventieth Birthday." *Harper's Weekly* 49 (December 1905): 1889; rpt. *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 142-144; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 17.
Tribute to her friend, Mark Twain. Contains photograph of Boyle.

064 "Forrest Before Murfreesboro." *Confederate Veteran* 14 (December 1906): 549-550; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 52-54.
Poem describing General Nathan B. Forrest's bravery during the rescue of Confederate soldiers imprisoned at Murfreesboro, Tennessee 13 July 1862.

065 "The Apron Flag." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 62; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis, Tenn: S. C. Toof, 1939. 35-37.
Sentimental tribute to Confederate cause during Civil War. Common apron is used as a flag to inspire Confederate soldiers during battle.

066 "The Ballad of Tulipa." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 40-44.
Epic ballad about a little mollusk's "life," her longing for excitement, and her imprisonment by a crab. Floridian influence.

067 "The Ballade of the Tapestrie: 1799." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 15-19; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis, Tenn: S. C. Toof, 1939. 23-24.
Reminiscent of Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott." A shy maiden sits on her veranda and sews as she watches lovers pass.

068 "Before the Afterglow." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 146-147.
Poem describing beauty of sun setting on the harbor. Creates peaceful image. Floridian influence.

069 "The Bells of the Soul." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 126-128.
Poem expressing religious faith.

070 "The Brotherhood of Man." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 129-130.
Calls for man to be more compassionate to man. Touts the Golden Rule.

071 "Christ Is Born." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 123-124.
Prayer urging for blessings for the poor and illiterate as well as for the priviledged classes.

072 "A Confederate Button." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 65-68.
Sentimental poem about a tarnished button from an unknown soldier's uniform "upheaved" by a squirrel years after the Civil War.

073 "A Confederate Trumpet." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 82-84.
Sentimental tribute to soldiers in a poem about a Confederate bugler's trumpet upturned by a sharecropper's plow twenty-four years after the war.

074 "Day unto Day." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 133.
Prayer. Asks God for peace, rest and love.

075 "Death of Cleburne." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 79-81.
Tribute to Civil War hero.

076 "Demetria: A Musical Extravaganza." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 151-212.
Musical drama adapted from short story "The Devil's Little Fly."

077 "Dewdrops." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 144-145.
Dewdrops are Nature's gems.

078 "Dey's All Got Sumpin'." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 234.
Dialect poem expressing philisophical belief that everyone wishes to hide some secret sin.

079 "Dying Butterfly." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 44-46.
Dirge for dying butterfly.

080 "First Love." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 22.
Lover turns from love of the flesh to her first love, "Poesy."

081 "Florida Love Song." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 3-4; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis, Tenn: S. C. Toof, 1939. 12.
Birdsong and romantic scenery call people to idyllic state of Florida.

082 "Gethsemane." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 128-129; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis, Tenn: S. C. Toof, 1939. 77.
Religious poem urging people to seek comfort in prayer as Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane.

083 "The Hearts of the World Are All Akin." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 34-35.
Philosophical poem expressing belief that all inhabitants of the earth, are essentially the same.

084 "To Helen." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 23.
Love lyric.

085 "Hereafter." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 130-131.
Religious poem expressing belief in God and heaven.

086 "I Know What Love Is." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 39-40.
Song of a lover "in tune" with Nature.

087 "The Keepers of the Soul." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 136-137.
Song in praise of those who labor honestly and "live a principle" rather than preach it.

088 "A Knitting Caleb's Sock." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 11-13.
Old woman knits her husband's sock and reflects on the life of contentment and love they have shared.

089 "Lullaby." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 38-39.
Lullaby in dialect, sung by Mammy.

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090 "Marina: Sea Madness." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 27-33.
Floridian influence. Lyric about a sailor driven mad by the monotonous rhythms of the sea and of the woman who waits for him on shore.

091 "Nathan Hale." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 56-58; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 25-27.
Tribute to hero of American Revolutionary War.

092 "A Nation's Dead." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 89-91.
Poem lamenting the death of President Garfield.

093 "The Old Canteen." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 59-61; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 38-40.
Ode to a battle-scarred canteen unearthed by a sharecropper's plow.

094 "An Old Maid." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 148-149.
Poem in praise of kind, secretly sad old maids who give comfort to the young and old.

095 "On the Field of Honor." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 68-70.
Poem lamenting death in war.

096 "The Passing." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 148; rpt. *Commercial Appeal* [Memphis] 24 December 1939; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 29.
Poem expressing fragility of life on earth and permanence of that in heaven.

097 "Pestilence." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 137-139.
Pestilence is malaria personified as woman

098 "Picking." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 26-27.
Poem celebrating cotton and the love that blossoms between two "dusky" pickers amid the bolls.

099 "Progression." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 13-15.
An abandoned cradle is used to express the mutability and natural progression of life.

100 "Providence." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 132.
Religious poem expressing belief that, during troubling times, comfort can be found in Christ.

101 "Song of the Patriot." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 91-94.
Read at 1896 Reunion of the Philadelphia Brigade and Army Northern Virginia in Washington, D. C. Laments Civil War and looks optimistically toward a united America where the Blue and Gray meet only at a rusty cannon.

102 "The Tattoo." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 77-78; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 55-56.
Sentimental poem about inspirational drum tattoo heard throughout battle.

103 "Tennessee: Prize Centennial Ode." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 71.
Celebrates admittance of Tennessee into Union.

104 "Tie-Vines and Morning-Glories." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 46-47.
Celebrates loveliness of wild flowers.

105 "Vashti." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 134.
Praises Old Testament queen who possessed pride and self-respect and, thus, lost her country.

106 "The Voice of the Pearl." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 19-22.
Poem tracing the "life" of a pearl. Floridian influence.

107 "Wanola of the Cotton." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 110-119.
Chronicles the love of a Natchez brave for his wife and of her rescue from captivity in a neighboring tribe.

108 "Washington's Birthday." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 84-87.
Tribute to George Washington.

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109 "What Would You Do, O Poet?" *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 35-36.
Counsels would-be poets to observe and experience life before writing.

110 "When Comes the Reveille." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 75-76.
Laments death of Union and Confederate soldiers.

111 "White Violets." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 7-8.
Poem of regret over lost love. Symbolic of love, the white violets are at first dewy and then withered.

112 "Women of the Confederacy." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 94-95; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 69-70.
Praises bravery and industry of the southern women who offered support to the men who fought the battles.

113 "The Wreck of the Bird's Nest." *Love Songs and Bugle Calls.* [1st]. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1906. 47-49.
Poem about the birds which "kept the summer in tune" and their autumnal migration.

114 "Confederate Requiem." *Songs from the South.* [1st]. Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 66.
Laments death of Confederate soldiers.

115 "Gypsy Call." *Songs from the South.* [1st]. Memphis, Tenn: S. C. Toof, 1939. 11.
Decorous old woman's irreverent longing to dance in a fairy ring. Age does not dampen the spirit.

116 "Robert Edward Lee: The South's Gift to Fame." *Songs from the South.* [1st]. Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 44.
Tribute to Confederate general.

117 "Silver Strand." *Songs from the South.* [1st]. Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 10.
Poem about cherished memories.

118 "Song." *Songs from the South.* [1st]. Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 72.
Lyric urging patriotism.

119 "A Song in Job." *Songs from the South.* [1st]. Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 78.
Lyric expressing religious faith based upon Job 19:25.

120 "To a Mockingbird." *Songs from the South.* [1st]. Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 14.
Tribute to the State bird of Tennessee.

121 "Treasure Trove." *Songs from the South.* [1st]. Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 9.
Wealth of beauty from Nature surpasses that of gold and silver.

122 "Wings and Things." *Songs from the South.* [1st]. Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 15.
Poem urging aid for crippled children. Dedicated to Crippled Children's Hosptial School.

123 "Little Yaller Rose." *Century* 76 (October 1908): 962.
Lighthearted love poem in dialect.

124 "Love Time and Dream Time." *Harper's Weekly* 53 (17 April 1909): 13.
Poem of love and nature.

125 "Love." *Harper's Bazaar* 43 (May 1909): 503.
Lighthearted love poem.

126 "The Dream of the Alabama." *Confederate Veteran* 17 (September 1909): 446; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 50-51.
Poem honoring Admiral Raphael Semmes of the Confederate States Navy. Semmes' centennial was celeberated 27 September 1909.

127 "The Immortal Six Hundred." *Confederate Veteran* 17 (November 1909): 551.
Tribute to the valor of the Confederates held prisoner in Charleston Harbor. Read at the Memphis Convention of the Confederate Southern Memorial Association.

128 "Dead Confederates on Johnson's Island." *Confederate Veteran* 18 (August 1910): 363.
Poem read 8 June 1910 unveiling of a monument to the Confederate soldiers who died prisoners of war on Johnson's Island.

129 "Dirge for General William L. Cabell." *Confederate Veteran* 19 (1911): 280; also in the Minutes of the Twenty-first Annual Meeting and Reunion of the United Confederate Veterans. Little Rock, Arkansas: 16-18 May 1911.
Read during memorial service for General Cabell.

130 "Appomattox." *Confederate Veteran* 19 (March 1911): 111; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 57-58.
Tribute to Lee and other Confederate soldiers defeated at Appomattox. Read 19 January 1911 at the Goodwyn Institute in Memphis.

131 "Greeting to Our Heroes at Little Rock Reunion." *Confederate Veteran* 19 (June 1911): 265.
Poem praising the soldiers of the Confederacy. Written for the 1911 Reunion of the United Confederate Veterans in Little Rock, Arkansas.

132 "Eagle to the Aviator." *Harper's Weekly* 55 (November 1911): 22-23.
Philosophical poem. Eagle declares his superiority to aviators in the sky.

133 "The Little Shepherd." *Commercial Appeal* [Memphis] 24 December 1911: 1.
Describes the vision of a shepherd left tending sheep while others journey to Bethlehem to see the Christ-child.

134 "Tribute to Lee, Evans, and Gordon." *Confederate Veteran* 20 (July 1912): 314.
Tribute to Confederate "chieftans."

135 "Chickamauga." *Confederate Veteran* 21 (September 1913): 417; rpt. Minutes of the Thirty-second Annual Meeting and Reunion of the United Confederate Veterans, 1921.
Tribute to Confederate soldiers of Chickamauga, Tennessee.

136 "Washington." *Commercial Appeal* [Memphis] May 1914; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 21.
Tribute to George Washington written for the one hundred twenty-fifth anniversary of his inauguration.

137 "Miser." *Century* 88 (June 1914): 200.
Describes the emptiness of a miser's life and calls for prayers from those the miser denied while he lived.

138 "The Unknown Dead." *Confederate Veteran* 22 (June 1914): 275; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 67-68.
Poem lamenting the death of unknown soldiers during the Civil War. Read during Memorial Hour of Reunion of the United Confederate Veterans Association in Jacksonville, Florida.

139 "Robert Edward Lee: The South's Gift to Fame." *Commercial Appeal* [Memphis] 1 June 1915; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 44.
Tribute to General Robert E. Lee.

140 "Pay Day for the Veterans." *Commercial Appeal* [Memphis] 4 June 1915.
Celebrates the issuance of a month's pay or one Confederate bill to all Confederate veterans attending the Richmond Confederate Veterans Association convention.

141 "Union." *Literary Digest* 55 (21 July 1917): 35; rpt. *Current Opinion* 63 (December 1917): 418; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 64-65.
Patriotic poem in praise of the unified efforts of soldiers from the north and south during World War I.

142 "The Tribute of the South." *Confederate Veteran* 25 (August 1917): 356.
Poem praising the loyalty and bravery of southern soldiers in World War I.

143 "Henry Mills Alden." *Harper's Monthly* 140 (December 1919): 136.
Tribute to Boyle's friend, the editor of *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, 1869-1919.

144 "The Service Flag of the Confederacy." *Confederate Veteran* 27 (December 1919): 445; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 73-74.
Poem honoring wounded World War I soldiers comforted with tales of southern chivalry.

145 "The Gold Star." *Press-Scimitar* [Memphis] 5 March 1921; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 75.
Poem honoring men killed in World War I. Celebrates the mingling of the blood of those who fought with Grant and those who fought with Lee.

146 "Ellen Morrison Dorion—An Appreciation." *Confederate Veteran* 29 (June 1921): 236.
Tribute to Ellen Morrison Dorion, the first vice president for life of the Ladies' Confederate Memorial Association of Memphis, Tennessee.

147 "White Blossoms in April." *Confederate Veteran* 31 (May 1923): 165.

Poem lamenting the death of Confederate veterans. Read during the Memorial Hour of the 12 April 1923 New Orleans convention of the United Confederate Veterans' Association.

148 "Miss Mary A. Hall: In Memoriam." *Confederate Veteran* 31 (June 1923): 235. Tribute to Mary A. Hall.

Read during Memorial Hour of New Orleans Reunion of United Confederate Veterans, 1913.

149 "Jefferson Davis." *Confederate Veteran* 32 (July 1924): 281; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 59-60.

Tribute to the President of the Confederacy.

150 "In Memoriam, General William Birch Haldeman." *Confederate Veteran* 33 (July 1925): 275.

Tribute to General Haldeman. Read during Memorial Hour of the 21 May 1925 Reunion of the United Confederate Veterans, held in Dallas.

151 "San Jacinto." *Confederate Veteran* 33 (July 1925): 245.

Poem in honor of Texas soldiers from the Alamo to World War I. Read at the 25 May 1925 Reunion of the United Confederate Veterans, held in Dallas.

152 "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth." *Confederate Veteran* 35 (May 1927): 192.

Religious poem. Read during the Memorial Hour of the April 1927 Reunion of the Confederated Southern Memorial Association, held in Tampa, Florida.

153 "John Brooke of Tampa." *Confederate Veteran* 35 (July 1927): 258; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 48-49.

Tribute to John Brooke who devised and tested the armor and ordinance of the *Merrimac*, first ironclad ship of the Civil War. Read at the April 1927 Reunion of the Confederated Southern Memorial Association in Tampa, Florida.

154 "The Stone Mountain Emblem." *Confederate Veteran* 35 (September 1927): 355; rpt. *Confederate Veteran* 36 (March 1928): 117.

Poem written to support the Confederate Southern Memorial Association drive to present each living veteran of the Confederacy with the emblem of Stone Mountain—the Gold Star of Memory.

155 "Ode to Carolina." *Confederate Veteran* 37 (July 1929): 251.
Tribute to the states of the Confederacy. Written for the Thirty-ninth Annual Reunion of the United Confederate Veterans, held 4-7 June 1929, in Charlotte, North Carolina.

156 "Glory March." *Confederate Veteran* 38 (July 1930): 274.
Poem honoring Confederate soldiers. Read during Memorial Hour at the Biloxi, Mississippi Reunion of the CSMA, 1930.

157 "Memorial Hour." *Confederate Veteran* 38 (December 1930): 474.
Religious song. Sung during the Memorial Hour of the Annual Convention of the Tennessee Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy in Memphis, 7-11 October 1930.

158 "Sam Davis." *Confederate Veteran* 39 (January 1931): 7; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 28.
Tribute to Sam Davis who was executed as a Confederate spy 27 November 1863. Boyle claims "America gave another—Nathan Hale."

159 "Who Plants a Tree." *Confederate Veteran* 39 (October 1931): 364; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 19.
Tribute to author's mother. Read at a meeting of Tennesseans in Florida.

160 "Thomas Alva Edison." *Commercial Appeal* [Memphis] 1 November 1931. Rotogravure Picture section: 3.
Tribute to Edison.

161 "Cotton." *Commercial Appeal* [Memphis] 12 May 1932: 6.
Tribute to cotton at time of Memphis Annual Cotton Carnival.

162 "In Memoriam." *Press-Scimitar* [Memphis] 4 June 1936; rpt. *Songs from the South.* Memphis: S. C. Toof, 1939. 71.
Poem honoring southern women, especially those of the Civil War.

Secondary Sources

Reviews

***Brokenburne: A Southern Auntie's War Tale*, 1897.**

163 "The Independent." 50 (February 1898): 224.
An amateurish but sincere novel which gives "a good, strong impression of what the War of the Rebellion brought to a rebel heroine and her loyal lover."

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164 MacArthur, James. "Review of Brokenburne: An Old Auntie's War Story." *Bookman* 6 (December 1897): 348-349.
Glowing review calls the work "one of the best stories that have gathered around the Old South since the war.

***Devil Tales*, 1900.**

165 Abercromby, John. *"Devil Tales." Folklore* 58 (1901): 252.
Favorable review. Maintains Boyle weaves the "woof and web" of folklore into her tales.

166 Armstrong, Regina. Untitled. *Bookman* 12 (February 1901): 623-624.
Places collection in southern literary tradition with Negro as hero; notes that the use of "voudoo" [sic] as *"piece de resistance"* adds new heights to the genre.

167 *Nation* 72 (May 1901): 362.
Favorable review. Valuable look at plantation life, African rites, Negro dialect, and supernatural in a "dark age of epic possibilities."

168 *[New] Outlook* 66 (November 1900): 710.
Pronounces tales "weird and uncanny" with "a fine and unbroken humor that run[s] throughout them."

169 Russell, Frank. *"Devil Tales." Journal of American Folklore* 14 (January 1901): 65.
Favorable review. Finds the work to be literary folklore of the Old South of interest to psychologists and anthropologists for showing how superstition shaped Negro life. Notes similarities in theme to Faust, AEsop's Fables, and Darwin.

***Serena*, 1905.**

170 "A Civil War Heroine." *New York Times Book Review* 10 (20 May 1905): 324.
Favorable review. Primarily plot summary.

171 *Critic* 47 (September 1905): 284.
Unfavorable review of *Serena*. Calls the story "overdrawn and sentimental." Also terms the subject "overworked."

172 *Independent* 59 (July 1905): 210.
Unfavorable review. Calls the characters unbelievable.

173 "Mystery and Humor." *Public Opinion* 38 (June 1905): 868-869.
Unfavorable review. Proclaims love affair ordinary and the story commonplace and predictable. Notes the one atoning feature is Boyle's "easy wording." Claims the "novel reads smoothly and without effort."

174 *New York Times Book Review* 10 (17 June 1905): 390.
Favorable review. Notes the treatment of southern code of honor.

175 *[New] Outlook* 80 (May 1905): 247.
Unfavorable. Pronounces the novel "a thoroughly provincial" tale, and holds that author portrayed both civilians and soldiers north of the Mason-Dixon line were "knaves and coarse mercenaries."

176 "Portrait." *Reader* 5 (May 1905): 767.
Untitled notice with portrait announcing the April 1905 publication of *Serena.*

177 *Public Opinion* 38 (June 1905): 869.
Unfavorable review. Primarily plot summary. Notes Boyle's dislike of soldiers "north of Mason and Dixon's line."

178 *Reader* 6 (October 1905): 596.
Unfavorable review; however, notes Boyle's "sense of humor, her knowledge of southern social life and of the relation borne by the Negro to the social structure...provide occasional agreeable diversions from the imperfections of the production considered as a whole."

Biographical Works

179 "Colonel Charles W. Frazer." *Confederate Veteran* 5 (October 1897): 505.
Lauditory account of Boyle's father. Primarily concerns his involvement in the Civil War.

180 Howes, Durward, ed. *American Women: The Official Who's Who Among the Nation.* Los Angeles: Richard Blank, 1935. 4 vols. 1935-1939.
Brief biographical account: notes Boyle's major literary works, clubs of which she was member, hobbies she enjoyed, etc.

181 "Junior Confederate Memorial Association Organized in Memphis, Tennessee, June 10, 1904." *Confederate Veteran* 14 (August 1906): 354-355.
Describes the founding of the club by Boyle, who held the presidency.

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182 "Letitia Austin Frazer, Tennessee State President C. S. M. A." *Confederate Veteran* 32 (February 1924): 75.
Biographical account of Boyle's mother written upon Letitia Frazer's death 8 November 1923.

183 Manly, Louise. *Southern Literature from 1579-1895: A Comprehensive Review.* Richmond, Va: B. F. Johnson Publishing, 1895. 462.
Boyle noted among list of southern writers. She is credited for "Old Canteen" and "On Both Sides."

184 "Mrs. Boyle and Her Tribute to Forrest." *Confederate Veteran* 9 (June 1901): 251.
Lauditory article about Boyle and her literary accomplishments. Precedes her tribute to Nathan Bedford Forrest, "The Wizard of the Saddle." Contains a portrait of Boyle as a young woman.

185 *National Cyclopedia of American Biography.* New York: James T. White, 1906. 61 vols. 1893-1882.
Brief biographical account.

186 *New York Times* 14 December 1938: 26 L+. Obituary.

187 Porteous, Clark. "Busy Pen of Mrs. Virginia Frazer Boyle, 'Poet Laureate of Confederacy,' Is Stilled by Death." *Press-Scimitar* [Memphis] 1December 1938. sec. 2: 13.
Primarily biographical sketch honoring Boyle. Notes her major works, her family heritage, and funeral information.

188 Rutherford, Mildred Lewis. *The South in History and Literature: A Handbook of Southern Authors from 1607-1906.* Atlanta: Franklin Turner, 1907. 669-671.
Primarily biographical sketch. Boyle, a "Writer of the New Republic," is found more notable for her poems than her novels or stories.

189 Swiggett, G. L. "Virginia Frazer Boyle." *Library of Southern Literature.* Ed. Edwin A. Alderman and Joel Chandler Harris. Atlanta: Martin Hoyt, 1907.
Brief biographical account.

190 "Virginia Frazer Boyle." *Who Was Who in America* Ed. Marquis, Albert Nelson. Chicago: A. N. Marquis, 1942. 1607-1960.
Brief biographical account.

191 "Virginia Frazer Boyle." *Who's Who in America.* Ed. Marquis, Albert Nelson. Chicago: A. N. Marquis, 1938.
Brief biographical account.

Critical Works

192 Alden, Henry Mills. *The House of Harper: A Century of Publishing In Franklin Square.* New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1912. 226.

Included Boyle among the "brilliant group of Southern writers that so suddenly emerged after the war" who were frequent contributors to *Harper's* and who had "...a vivid appreciation of local color and character..." and drew from the "wealth of Negro folklore at hand."

193 Capers, Gerald M. *The Biography of a River Town, Memphis: Its Heroic Age.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939: 229.

History of Memphis. Describes Boyle as "perhaps" the best of the "local literati."

194 Gaines, Francis Pendleton. *The Southern Plantation: A Study in the Development and the Accuracy of a Tradition.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1925. Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith,1962. 83-84.

Places Boyle in the Southern literary tradition, but finds *Devil Tales* "not unlikely" to "remain the best exposition" of the humor, loyalty, and superstition of the Southern Negro.

195 Gallman, Mary N. "A Critical Study of Virginia Frazer Boyle." Thesis. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942.

Most comprehensive study of Boyle's work, primarily biographical. Finds tales of Negro folklore to be Boyle's most original contribution to American literature.

196 Kilmer, Joyce. "Will Great American Novel Come from South?" *New York Times* (26 September 1915): 14.

Tells of Boyle's belief that the South would produce the Great American Novel. Describes how she came to publish her stories. Reveals the names under which she wrote as a young girl. Contains portrait.

197 Nelson, John Herbert. "The Negro Character in American Literature." *University of Kansas Humanistic Studies* Lawrence, Kansas: Department of Journalism Press, 1926. 4: 122.

Proclaims Boyle the most important of the many collectors of Negro folktales so popular as a result of Uncle Remus stories. Pronounces her work original and states that she was "no mere imitator" and that her work was "far superior to that of most who took suggestions from the tales of Uncle Remus."

198 Puckett, Newbell Niles. *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1926. 36-37,187, 205, 243-244, 285-289, 298, 353, 356, 417, 444, 471, 473, 475, 483, 549, 550-551, 553, 555, 565. [Boyle's contributor number is 42].

Study of Negro folklore and its origins. Describes *Devil Tales* as interesting.

199 Render, Sylvia Lyons, ed. *The Short Fiction of Charles W. Chesnutt.* Washington, D. C: Howard University Press, 1974: 23.

Mentions Boyle in list of authors using "stereotypic comic Afro-American" as subject matter during the 1890s and early twentieth century.

200 Skaggs, Merrill Maguire. *The Folk of Southern Fiction.* Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 1972: 6.

Mentions Boyle among several southern female writers while claiming that southern women were even more "extreme in their affirmation of all things southern" than male writers of the day.

201 Warfel, Harry R. and G. Harrison Orians, eds. *American Local Color Stories.* New York: American Book Company, 1941; rpt. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1970: 767-775.

Pronounces Boyle's devil tales and pre-war stories her best and most imaginative works.

NOTE

[1]*The Negro in American Fiction* (Washington, D.C., 1937; rpt. New York, 1969), pp. 1-30.

FREDERIC FAVERTY: HIS TIME AND SPIRIT

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The exterior of Northwestern's University Hall exhibits its gothic aspirations readily enough: spires, ornamentation, rugged stonework from top to bottom. But the interior, home to the English department for many years, disappoints the eye and depresses the spirit: drab hallways, windowless office doors, lecture rooms with immoveable desks. But for forty-one years those mundane hallways and dim lecture rooms were illuminated and even bathed in the special glow of a remarkable teacher and scholar. For thirteen of those years—1945 through 1958—Frederic Faverty could be found in the chairman's office quietly creating a department as notable for its teaching (Bergen Evans) as for its scholarship (Richard Ellmann). For the remainder of his years at Northwestern, Frederic Faverty might be found in the huge office he shared with his long-time colleague Zera Silver Fink—sometimes still preparing his lectures for the undergraduate Victorian period course, sometimes asking doctoral candidates for additional bibliographical references in the texts of the forty-two dissertations he directed in his Northwestern years. Whether his students were undergraduates just beginning their readings in the great Victorians or doctoral candidates nearly completing their research, the mind and manner they encountered in lecture hall, seminar, or office was always the same: Frederic Faverty was both formidable and accessible, demanding and kind. His special glow of learning and wit must influence his students to this very moment.

The Frederic Faverty students of the late 1960s will remember was a slightly stooped, even frail figure who nevertheless exuded energy and good humor. He usually opened his Victorian survey class by mounting the elevated platform in Room 101, picking up a lectern someone had thoughtlessly placed on the floor, and flinging the lectern onto the table. The crash of the lectern was followed soon enough by a lecture delivered in a voice so raspy and varying in pitch as to be inimitable but memorable to all who heard it—or who tried, and failed, to parody. The parodists—usually graduate students who had taken the course for the kind of background Faverty was constantly demanding of all his students—were paying tribute to a man whose lectures nearly always managed to make the Victorians seem so contemporary as to be living authors. The lectures themselves were cued by notes, in ink, penned on 5 x 8 Northwestern inter-office memoranda and literally jabbed, every few minutes or so, by eyeglasses which he would remove,

clasp in his fist, wave a bit in the air, and then use to stab his book. As far as we know, he never lost his place, his glasses, or his students.

When recalling the man as teacher and scholar, former students always mention Frederic Faverty's humor. The humor was physically discernible in the sly twinkle of his eyes—a twinkle that suggested skepticism, irony, and bemusement all at once—and usually as well timed as those cut and thrust gestures with his glasses were well placed. His pronunciation even of single words would reveal their latent irony. Faverty could use a favorite Arnoldian pejorative—"interesting," for example—with devastating and amusing effect; his reading of Arnold's description of Carlyle as a "moral desperado" is memorable to this day for its accurate imitation of Arnold's deft, succinct wit. Sometimes even an entire lecture might end with a single sentence that would summarize and, in a twinkle, dismiss. One student recalls Faverty's lecture on Newman's "What is a University?" from his *Rise and Progress of Universities.* Newman had closed his lecture on the proposed Catholic University of Ireland with reverent hope. Here is Newman: "Shall [such a university as I envision] ever be again? We are going forward in the strength of the Cross, under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin, in the name of St. Patrick, to attempt it." And here is Faverty: "In spite of their help, the university failed."

Clerics, it seems, could be counted on to produce a bemused and amusing comment from Frederic Faverty. On at least one occasion, an entire lecture seemed designed to amuse as well as enlighten—always, of course, enlightening through irony and wit. Here, for example, is one student's recollection of Faverty on a writer usually not associated with his interests and research, Gerard Manley Hopkins:

> The news would go out that Fred was to discuss the poetry of G. M. Hopkins on a specific day, and the lecture room would be crowded by people not ordinarily in his class. Fred would approach the reading of selections from Hopkins by the prefatory warning that he (Fred) did not himself espouse Jesuit austerity—indeed, his practice when about to read Hopkins in preparation for lecturing on him was to pour a glass of sherry, sit in a comfortable chair, and banish the world while he read as a sybarite. Then, at the lecture itself, he would select as the first item "The Leaden Echo and The Golden Echo," which he would read with his distinctive gravelly voice in such a way as to denude the poem of any superficial beauty. The contrast between the Keatsian mellifluity of the verse and Fred's astringent reading of it was at once richly amusing and also

> productive of the close attention the poem demands, and of course we learned much in the course of stifling our amusement and making a case within our minds for the goodness of the poem (and of course the poem). I think our legs were being pulled all along.

If Frederic Faverty's physical appearance sometimes suggested a wise and ironic view of life, it also suggested, to some, austerity. There is even some evidence that he could be, on occasion, severe. One former student remembers an "un-Faverty-like explosion" witnessed in an Arnold seminar in the early 1970s. A doctoral student had, that day, read a report on Arnold's poetry and had been admonished with unusual sharpness by Faverty. The professor concluded his comments by observing that "this report is exactly why a talk should never, never be read." The student, thus judged, appeared ready to faint. Behind Faverty's reprimand—unusual for its tone but not for its candor—was his abiding interest in good teaching. Good teachers do not simply read their notes—certainly Frederic Faverty never did—and even papers destined for conference presentation should be delivered by scholars who have learned to teach. The reprimand in the seminar was more a plea on behalf of passionate and rigorous teaching than a summary judgment on one student.

Although examples of professorial severity can be found in the reminiscences of students taught in a career that spanned more than four decades, examples of personal kindnesses and generosity clearly predominate. One former student, now one of our most distinguished Victorianists, believes that Frederic Faverty was "the most unfailingly gracious person I have ever met," and continues:

> In a modern university, where the levels of stress and competition are high, this is an increasingly unusual trait. I remember sitting in a student lounge in University Hall one day and overhearing a conversation between two undergraduates. A girl told her friend that she was "going upstairs to see Professor Faverty about a paper that is overdue," and she left the lounge. When she returned about fifteen minutes later, she was crying. "Was he that hard on you?" asked her friend. "No, no," said the girl. "He was so nice to me that I burst into tears."

In a more personal example of generosity, Frederic Faverty's former student recalls that "in the spring of 1967, he gave me some of his own travel money from Northwestern to enable me to do some

research for my doctoral dissertation in England. When I dedicated one of my books to him in 1976, I was conscious that this was a sadly inadequate means of publicly acknowledging my debt to a man who had so largely shaped my life."

The man who inspired so moving an example of indebtedness as the preceding, was born 29 September 1902 in Sparta, Illinois—deep in southern Illinois and less than twenty miles from the Mississippi River. He graduated from East St. Louis (Illinois) High School in 1920 already showing signs of future accomplishments: he was president of the class of 1920 and a staff member of both the school newspaper and the literary magazine. Moving across the river, he attended Washington University and graduated with a B.A. in 1924. He began teaching English almost immediately upon his graduation and was an Instructor of English at Adelbert College, Western Reserve University for three years, 1925-28. His advanced degrees—the M.A. in 1929, the Ph.D. in 1930—were taken at Harvard where he wrote a dissertation, under the direction of Kittredge, on "Legends of Joseph, the Hebrew Patriarch, in European Literature of the Middle Ages."

Faverty joined the Department of English at Northwestern in 1930 and remained there until his retirement in 1971. He married Margaret Ellen Beckett on 20 June 1934 and, in time, was father to two children, Kathleen Margaret and Richard Beckett. At Northwestern, he was promoted rapidly—to Assistant in 1933, Associate in 1939, and Professor in 1945—and, as noted earlier, was department chair for thirteen years during which the Northwestern faculty achieved attention as well as prominence for its teaching and research. Returning to full-time teaching in 1958, he was named Morrison Professor of English and remained in that endowed professorship until 1971. Although no one acquainted with the academy in twentieth-century America will underestimate the demands placed on department colleagues and chairs, the Faverty administration of the 1940s and 1950s must have been conspicuous for its collegiality. A personal letter sent Faverty on his resignation from the chair in 1958, is generous in its praise and sincere in its affection: "I remember your saying once at a staff meeting that when you stepped out of the chairmanship you would like your colleagues to be able to say of you, 'His rule was easy, and his yoke was light.' I would say those things with all my heart."

The years of Frederic Faverty's administration at Northwestern were also the years of his major contributions to research. Although his publications are extensive, beginning as early as 1926 and appearing in such important periodicals as *Modern Language Notes, PMLA, Studies in Philology,* and *Philological Quarterly,* the publication of *Matthew*

Arnold, The Ethnologist in 1951 and *The Victorian Poets: A Guide to Research* in 1956 represent his most significant contributions to scholarship and research. *Matthew Arnold, The Ethnologist* was an original work of research and scholarship and was, in some quarters at least, controversial and provocative. The book discusses Arnold's racial theories within the context of influential nineteenth-century classifications of Celts, Teutons, Semites, and Indo-Europeans. While its focus is on Arnold, it manages to see its subject steadily and wholly. "Its theme," remarked Faverty himself in *Victorian Poets,* "is the whole confused but significant doctrine of cultural and racial traits which colored much nineteenth-century thinking." That its author was not entirely happy with discoveries unearthed by his research is apparent from the book's opening sentence, a sentence typical in its balance and cadence of Frederic Faverty's mind: "This book deals with some of the maddest of theories and one of the sanest of men—nineteenth-century racial doctrines and Matthew Arnold."

Early reviews of *Matthew Arnold, The Ethnologist* were, on the whole, favorable. *TLS,* for example, commented on the "pleasant and easy" style of the book and judged its scholarship to be "concealed rather than paraded," a comment that could as easily have been applied to Faverty's classroom and seminar manner. John A. Irving in *Queen's Quarterly* felt that the Faverty book "suggests, in a quite remarkable manner, that the future of the humanities is bound up with the future of the social sciences." Whether Faverty himself was open to such a suggestion must remain a matter of conjecture, but he would certainly have been sympathetic with the appropriately Arnoldian range or synthesis of knowledge that Irving saw in *Matthew Arnold, The Ethnologist.*

A less sanguine view was taken by Kenneth Allott in the *Review of English Studies.* Allott's criticism of the book centered on what he took to be its "topicality," or, what the next generation would call by another term, its "relevance." "Surely Mr. Faverty is ill advised," Allott wrote, "to inject topicality into what is essentially a painstaking account of the references to racial and national characteristics in Arnold's prose works." Ironically, Allott chose to fault Faverty for one of his most conspicuous and positive traits—his ability to make the Victorians, and Arnold in particular, vitally important and wonderfully alive for students born half a century after the deaths of Arnold, Browning, Tennyson, and Victoria herself. One former student remembers that "Fred taught us what to make of, say, Matthew Arnold, a writer with concerns that appealed to students of the fifties and sixties, and he brought out for us Arnold's exquisite wit and irony so that we

could pass on to our students those attractive qualities and draw the sting, as it was then, of Arnold's being a 'Victorian.'"

As a pioneering and illuminating example of scholarship, *Matthew Arnold, The Ethnologist* has never needed defenders, and may well be said to have stood the test of time. In its 1988 issue on the centenary of Arnold's death, *The Arnoldian* solicited from prominent Victorianists reviews of influential twentieth-century studies of Arnold. In the midst of reviews of the work of Trilling, E. K. Brown, and E. K. Chambers, came this assessment, by Ruth apRoberts, of *Matthew Arnold, The Ethnologist:* "It is by no means dated; it adds greatly to our knowledge of Arnold and the general issues of cultural conditioning. It can still be heartily recommended as a prime example of urbane scholarship, as essential to an understanding of Arnold, and broadly as a piece of the history of a 'science' which still touches us in devious ways."

Frederic Faverty's second contribution to Victorian studies in the 1950s—and a contribution which affects us to this day—was his editorial supervision of *The Victorian Poets: A Guide to Research.* Sponsored by the Victorian Group of the MLA, the Faverty collection followed the lead of the earlier (1950) *Romantic Poets: A Guide to Research* and surely encouraged publication of related works such as Lionel Stevenson's *Victorian Fiction: A Guide to Research* (1964, second edition edited by George Ford in 1978) and David J. DeLaura's *Victorian Prose: A Guide to Research* (1973). Contributors to the first Faverty collection (there would be a second edition in 1968) represented critics and scholars largely responsible for the revival of Victorian studies we now associate with the 1940s and 1950s, two of whom have been commemorated in this journal: Buckley on the Victorians, Baum on Tennyson; DeVane on Browning; Terhune on Barrett Browning, FitzGerald, and Clough; Hyder on Swinburne; Mumford Jones on the Pre-Raphaelites; Pick on Hopkins; Stevenson on the "later" Victorian poets; and Faverty himself on, of course, Arnold. No graduate student in the 1950s could begin work without consulting the Faverty *Guide,* no graduate student in the late 1960s could begin work without consulting the second edition, and the book's usefulness, combined with its annual supplement in *Victorian Poetry,* is evident to this day.

Another Faverty publication less evident to his fellow Victorianists as his scholarship and editions but well known to readers of the *Chicago Tribune,* is *Your Literary Heritage,* a collection of eighty essays written with a readership in mind that was far broader and more various than any found in the academy. Over the course of several years Frederic Faverty introduced readers of the *Tribune* to works and writers as different as Fielding and Dostoevsky or Twain and Trollope.

Characteristically self-deprecating in his assessment of his own works—which he usually labelled "effusions"—he once told a doctoral candidate that he had never taught novels because he found little required of the mind when ideas were spread so thinly by 800 pages of print. He may not have taught those novels, but the evidence from *Your Literary Heritage* is clear on one point: he knew them so well that he could write about them with economy and grace and, in so doing, help introduce to a very large audience some of the most significant works of world literature. Some of his assessments, though intended for a non-academic readership, recall the wit so evident in his university lectures. On Montaigne, for example: "He was the father of six daughters and the essay." On Goethe: "He spent his life in an heroic and successful attempt to be Faust." Although he himself did not give a direct definition of his critical objectives in writing on so many writers, much can be inferred on that subject by noting the epigraph he placed as frontispiece to *Your Literary Heritage:* "The critic who rightly appreciates a great man or a great work, and can tell us faithfully—life being short, and art long, and false information very plentiful—what we may expect from their study and what they can do for us: he is the critic we want." It should surprise no one acquainted with Frederic Faverty that the author of that epigraph is Arnold.

In Faverty's final years at Northwestern he remained active as the professor of choice for the Victorian period course as well as seminar leader in courses in biography and autobiography, in Browning, and, of course, in Arnold. He continued to sit on the advisory board of *Victorian Poetry* and *Victorian Studies,* and continued to serve, as he had for many years, as chair of the Harris Foundation Lecture Series. That committee, under his leadership, had brought to the Evanston campus over the years writers and scholars as different as Dylan Thomas and Edith Sitwell and R. H. Super. The Harris Lectures of R. H. Super, later published as *The Time-Spirit of Matthew Arnold,* remain especially memorable for their unfortunate topicality. Scheduled for the same week in 1968 in which Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis and riots broke out in Chicago, they were presented in abbreviated fashion to an Evanston audience only too aware of society's fragile social fabric. I well remember Frederic Faverty's typically gracious but atypically solemn introduction of R. H. Super on the evening of 8 April 1968 with its reminder that the very title of Arnold's most famous work of social and political criticism offers each of us a choice: culture *or* anarchy.

Frederic Faverty retired in 1971, and in a dinner of commemoration and celebration for Faverty and two colleagues also retiring that year—

Thomas Pyles and Ernest Samuels—he delivered a speech full of self-deprecating humor and witty reminiscence. Even its opening sentence was richly characteristic of its author. Said Frederic Faverty, as he surveyed a large audience of colleagues, family, and friends, "even Christ didn't have to sing for his supper." He was engaged in a study of Hardy's poetry when he died on Sunday, 9 August 1981.

It may not be possible to sum up a life lived so well and so richly as Frederic Faverty's, but one is tempted to try. In the remembrances and anecdotes of his former students and in the twenty boxes of his papers now housed in the Northwestern Archives, one word seems suggested again and again: spirit. Frederic Faverty's spirit as a teacher seems evident in his students who taught, and continue to teach, with passion and energy. His spirit of kindness and generosity seems remembered by students who were welcomed to the Judson Avenue home of Professor and Mrs. Faverty with its Burne-Jones canvas and its Arnold autograph in the front room and with its many, many books on the shelves, on the tables, and on the piano. His spirit of good humor—sometimes sharply honed humor—seems to this day very much alive in the memories of his students. That that humor could be used as a reminder that we should not be always so highly serious might be illustrated through a story told by one of Faverty's last doctoral students. Teaching a course in biblical literature for the first time, that student shared his syllabus with his former mentor and received, shortly thereafter, the following response: "I should appreciate later on a report on the progress of your Biblical studies—what you do with the patriarchs and the prophets, whether you omit the four gospels, what you think of St. Paul's epistles, and how you stand on the Apocalypse. And what relationship you find for all the foregoing with English and American literature." No one who knew Frederic Faverty would doubt that all those questions, each one of them tending to lessen one's denominator, were delivered by a wise man with a twinkle in his eye, for one of Frederic Faverty's most winning traits was his inability to take even himself with high seriousness.

In the nearly ten years since his death, the academy of which he was for so long a member has undergone changes too familiar to all of us to require description here. It may be fascinating to wonder what Faverty would take to be the function of criticism as the century nears its close, but such speculation would be, of course, idle. What remains indisputable is Frederic Faverty's lasting example as teacher, writer, and humanist. He expressed his belief in various ways that teachers should take all knowledge as their province and should do everything they can to spread ideas and knowledge—not only for the sake of the ideas or for

the teachers themselves but for the future and for the sake of our children. Richly aware of our literary heritage, he saw each of his students as men and women who should—indeed, must—pass on that heritage to the next generation. Such sentiments are, of course, Arnoldian, and as I look over my notes and recall my memories of Frederic Faverty, I find my eyes drawn to a starred passage in my worn copy of Harrold and Templeman. Starred passages mean that Frederic Faverty had called special attention to that part of the text. Here is such a passage from a paragraph near the end of "Sweetness and Light":

> The great men of culture are those who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time; who have laboured to divest knowledge of all that was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive; to humanise it, to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned, yet still remaining the *best* knowledge and thought of the time, and a true source, therefore, of sweetness and light.

Arnold goes on to name Abelard, Lessing, and Herder as examples of men of culture who were able to "humanise knowledge." Because Frederic Faverty would never presume to claim such a title for himself, his former students, finding themselves deeply in his debt and influenced by his example to this day, must make that claim for him.

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