5-1993

1993 Literary Review (no. 7)

Sigma Tau Delta

LITERARY REVIEW

• ΣΤΔ •
published by the
Upsilon Sigma
chapter of
Sigma Tau Delta

Number 7
May 1993

Introduction

The Literary Review was resuscitated by Whittier College's Upsilon Sigma chapter of the international English Honorary society, Sigma Tau Delta, in 1986. Its purpose is to publish the best student writing submitted, whether fiction, non-fiction, or poetry. All of the contributors are students at Whittier College, as are the editors.

The Review is a manifestation of the belief that academic and creative excellence should be rewarded, and that rewarding that excellence positively impacts the intellectual life at the College. The educational process is, at its core, a sharing process: a time when ideas, attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge may be exchanged in an environment which is specifically designed for this interaction, and which rewards effort and encourages intellectual growth.

This publication is a forum for student expression, but the expressions of the contributors do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editors, the faculty advisor, the members of the Publications Board, the council of Representatives of Whittier college, or any other College entity, department , or organization.

A special thanks to Anne Kiley, Sigma Tau Delta's advisor and mentor, the creator of this and other fine literary exercises. Without her support and especially, her living room, this Literary Review would never have been possible.

1993 LITERARY REVIEW STAFF

EDITOR: Bridget Brady
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Adam Webster

Associates: Jennifer Buddemayer, Jason Fish, Iris Fujikawa, Jenny Kelly,Ryan Nielsen, Avtar Singh, and Justin Wallin

Cover Art by Lara B. Wahlberg

Table of Contents

Stephen Sondheim: Master of the Musical Palette

An Exploration of Form and Content in *Sunday in the Park with George*

by Jennifer Sanchez-Salazar

The name "Stephen Sondheim" may not yet be a household world, but among those who follow the trends and developments of America's musical theatre the name means much. Often criticized for not following Broadway's traditional formula for success, Sondheim has nonetheless achieved a level of accomplishment that is unmatched by others in his field. And while the critics may not always agree in their opinions of his work, virtually all recognize Sondheim's hand in reshaping the American musical theatre.

Born in New York City in 1930, Stephen Sondheim was musically and mathematically talented from an early age. By the age of fifteen, he had already written an original musical. Sondheim's neighbor and "surrogate father," Oscar Hammerstein II, answered the novice's request for honest criticism by saying, "It's the worst thing I have ever read—but I didn't say it was untalented."[1] Sondheim then began a long period of informal education and training from Hammerstein II.

Logic-loving Stephen Sondheim later entered Williams College as a math major, but one music theory class changed his mind:

> The professor, Robert Barrow, was cold and dogmatic. I thought he was the best thing I had ever encountered, because he took all the romance away from art. Instead of the muse coming at midnight and humming *Some Enchanted Evening* into your ear, music was *constructed* .[2]

This approach appealed to the young composer, who has often likened lyric writing to "an elegant form of puzzle."[3] After

graduating with honors, Sondheim studied under experimental composer Milton Babbitt, paying for his instruction with the money from a fellowship in musical composition which he had received upon graduating. Sondheim also tackled other different endeavors, including writing crossword puzzles for newspapers and writing scripts for a television series, before he finally made his mark in the field that would make him famous.

Sondheim's first real break came in 1957, when he was introduced to Leonard Bernstein. The legendary composer listened interestedly to Sondheim's audition and subsequently hired him to compose the lyrics for *West Side Story*. That famed show began a string of musicals on which Sondheim collaborated with various artists. He next wrote the lyrics for *Gypsy* in 1959, and this show distinguished him as a talented new lyricist on Broadway. *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962) marked Sondheim's Broadway debut as both composer and lyricist. This was followed by *Anyone Can Whistle* in 1964, for which Sondheim wrote the music and lyrics; *Do I hear a Waltz?* (1965) was the last time Sondheim would write words for another composer's music. After a five-year hiatus, he wrote *Company* , 1970; *Follies* , 1971; and *A Little Night Music* , 1973. *Sweeney Todd* (1979) was Sondheim's first attempt at an operatic musical. *Merrily We Roll Along* appeared in 1981, *Sunday in the Park with George* in 1984. Most recently, Sondheim created *Into the Woods* (1987) and *Assassins* (1991). The division between those shows on this list that were financially and critically successful and those that were flops on Broadway is almost equal. Stephen Sondheim, however, seems not to mind the fact that not all of his shows have been financially successful; speaking of *Anyone Can Whistle* , which closed on Broadway after only nine performances, the composer/ lyricist said, "I don't mind putting my name on a flop as long as we've done something that hasn't been tried before."[4]

Clearly, Sondheim has made a career out of trying things that haven't been done before. Many critics[5] see his efforts as revolutionary, commenting that his early works further the changes

made by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein in their heyday. Without question, however, Sondheim's musicals have come a measurable distance from the early tradition of simple and optimistic, if well-integrated, shows that made Rodgers and Hammerstein so popular:

> Sondheim's music is more sophisticated and complex, more advanced in harmony, form, and melody than the work of previous theater composers. Sondheim modifies-and often spurns-the conventional structure of the theater song, with its AABA form. . . . Sondheim's music is not simple. The texture is denser and more complex. It is consequently more difficult to grasp in the fleeting immediacy of the theatrical moment. With each musical and lyrical nuance perfectly matched to the particular character in the particular situation, music, lyric, character, and plot are interwoven into a seamless whole, closer to Wagnerian opera than traditional musical comedy.[6]

Thus Sondheim has made a dramatic alteration to the structure of the musical as it existed in the time of Rodgers and Hammerstein. In that era, the idea of the musical as a work in which the music and lyrics, characters, and dance sequences are integrated into the plot was just beginning to take root, as pioneered by Rodgers and Hammerstein. Sondheim took that idea a step further and developed it into the formula that would underlie all of his work: a musical is built around a single thought or concept, and all aspects of the work "are integrated to suggest a central theatrical image or idea."[7] In contrast to the integrated style, which was just beginning to use songs and dance numbers to further plot or develop character, the concept style uses music, lyrics, characters, dialogue, dance, and the "plot" itself to support a focal thought, which actually shapes the entire production.[8]

This conceptual approach is particularly apparent in

Sondheim's more recent work. In *Sunday in the Park with George*, Sondheim and director/ co-writer James Lapine collaborated to write a musical which presented the concept of the problems associated with creating art itself. The plot of the first act follows the progression of a phenomenal work of art that was innovative in its own era: George Seurat's pointillistic masterpiece, "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte." The audience is introduced to the central character, George, an artist whose vision and innovative talent parallel Sondheim's own. As the play opens, George has begun the rough sketches for what will become his most famous and important work; as George begins to transform the blank canvas of the stage into the pattern that will become a masterpiece, Sondheim follows suit with the score. The painting is a definitive work in the pointillistic style, using myriad, minute dots of basic color in carefully-determined patterns to create a shimmering, total effect. Millions of disparate dots of the primary colors merge, when seen from a distance, into a complete picture. Similarly, in the musical that describes the creation of this masterpiece, Lapine and Sondheim "deploy music and language in nonlinear patterns that, like Seurat's tiny brushstrokes, become meaningful only when refracted through a contemplative observer's mind."[9] Seeking to accentuate the minimalist visual technique with a minimalist score, Sondheim uses diatonic harmonies rather than chromatic (that is, he uses the musical scale with bigger differences between pitches rather than the scale with narrower spaces between the notes as the foundation for his score). He also uses simple triadic forms, one of the simplest of musical figures, in order to "keep the music open, the way the painting is, and to give it a shimmer. I was also fiddling with chord clusters, because that seemed to me some kind of analogue to Seurat's close juxtaposition of different colored dots."[10] Just as Seurat chose each dot of red, blue, or yellow with care, Sondheim chooses each word and musical nuance carefully. In the same way that Seurat used only a few basic colors, "so Sondheim uses a core group of musical phrases and words recurrently in different contexts."[11] Phrases like "color and light," "make a

connection," and "move on" recur throughout the show. Similarly, musical themes and motifs recur:

> The romantic section of the opening song ("Sunday in the Park with George"), for instance, is further developed in a subsequent number ("Color and Light"), which then becomes the basis for a later song ("We Do Not Belong Together"), which, in turn, informs the show's penultimate number ("Move On"). As a result, what may initially sound like a sequence of separate numbers actually connects, like the painter's dots, to form a highly patterned score that grows in resonance with the progress of the show.12

Characters in this musical are also used in nontraditional ways. Seurat uses human models to paint only shimmering forms, not individuals; mirroring Seurat, Sondheim "has himself adopted this style. The characters that inhabit both the canvas and the stage are not defined as they would be in a realist work of art. Although their essential qualities are suggested, their passions are ephemeral."13 It is almost as if each character (aside from George) is one of his dots of color. The audience sees these characters through the eyes of George, who only allows himself to see what can be translated into a painting. Their individual stories are never fully developed, and, while their songs offer little in the way of revealing the characters' feelings, they are used mainly to complement each other, to create the total effect. The result is that the songs play off one another as the colors do on Seurat's canvas. As the separate specks of color mix, fuse, and intensify optically on the viewer's retina, so repeated musical phrases in various songs merge in the theatergoer's ear to produce a cumulative, shimmering composition.14 Thus, Sondheim's concept musical was born.

Besides being an exercise in integration of the concept, this project was also a chance for Sondheim to address something of real import to him: aesthetic truth. Explorations of the ideas of

commercialism versus artistic integrity and sentiment versus passion not only occur through the story of the musical, but are also evident in the way in which the work itself has been brought to light.

What "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte" was to painting, *Sunday in the Park with George* could very well be to the musical theatre. The painting was a testament, as is the musical, to the passion that can be found under the surface of seemingly "cold" and "tedious" art. The plot shows George being criticized, in echoes of Sondheim's own critics, for producing lifeless and unromantic art. Just as Sondheim's talent goes beyond the level of familiar musical motifs and hummable tunes, Seurat's painting goes beyond the romantic view of life to depict something still, breathless, shimmering, and definitely *new* . Throughout the musical, Sondheim seems to answer his critics through George. In fact, according to Frank Rich, "the show's entire fabric argues, by example, that just as much heart can go into the making of cerebral modern art as into romantic art."[15]

When, in the second act of the musical, the focus shifts to Seurat's great-grandson (also named George), Sondheim has still more to say about the subject of art, and particularly about the commercial side of it. George the younger, living in contemporary America, shows us that "art isn't easy" in a time when commercial concerns sometimes overpower artistic integrity. Through him, Sondheim seems to be pointing out his own unconventional path to success. By not caring too much for reviews or box office returns, as long as his work was something new, Sondheim avoided some of the pitfalls that can trap artists. In developing *Sunday in the Park* in a nonprofit theater off-Broadway , Sondheim took another unconventional tack which would work to his advantage.

Clearly, then, Sondheim ascribes to the same aesthetic philosophy ascribed to by Seurat: form should mirror content. Just as Seurat's pointillism mirrored the shimmery, glimmering essence of a Sunday afternoon spent watching the rippled water of a sunny lake, Sondheim's technique of diatonic and triadic building of melodic themes mirrors the idea of precise pointillism and the

engaging process behind the creation of art. However, perhaps the most stunning possibility to be found in studying *Sunday in the Park with George* is that it may be personally as well as philosophically autobiographical for Sondheim:

> [Sondheim] acknowledges that many of his own frustrations and beliefs are expressed as George tries to justify his compulsion to create something unique. Sondheim's dominating compulsion has always been to discover his own voice and find for each musical its own individual form. This fundamental drive is shared by theprotagonists in acts 1 and 2 and functions as a thematic link.16

Beyond this marriage of the minds between Sondheim and George, it seems very likely that there is something common to their souls. Like George, Sondheim is almost a prisoner to his art, and this leads one to fear that what is said about the character George could just as easily be said about the man who brought him to life: "torn apart by two worlds, he accepts that his attraction to the world of human emotion will always be subordinate to the absolute imperatives of his art."17 It is sad enough to watch the character come to this realization; one can only hope that the character's path does not also become the path of his flesh and blood creator.

All autobiographical and philosophical implications aside, there is no doubt that this musical, in the tradition of all of Sondheim's work, has vast significance for the American musical theatre of today. He continues to break the rules of Broadway, and the results are seldom less than breathtaking. By writing a show that is a comment on art, that not only dramatizes its subject but is an example of the concept itself, Sondheim has left an important door open for those who find themselves on the outskirts of Broadway's theatre. By giving each musical a unique shape of its own, by using innovative techniques to tell his stories, Sondheim is redefining the Broadway musical as an art form. He is building up a legacy for

musical theatre, and for all of American theatre; it is a legacy that will, in all likelihood, leave the genre of musicals, and theatre in general, profoundly and irrevocably changed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bordman, Gerald Martin. Oxford Companion to the American Theatre. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.

Flatow, Sheryl. "Making Connections." Opera News (November 1985) : 18-22.

Gale Research Company. Contemporary Theatre, Film, and Television. Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1984.

Gordon, Joanne. Art Isn't Easy: The Achievement of Stephen Sondheim. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990.

Henry III, William A. "Master of the Musical." Time (7 December 1987): 80-82.

Henry, William A. III. "More Than Song and Dance." Time (16 June 1986): 90.

Horn, Miriam. "Broadway's Age of Wit and Glitter." U.S. News and World Report (1 February 1988) : 53-55.

"How Two Artists Shaped an Innovative Musical." New York Times, 10 June 1984,2:1.

Rich, Frank. "Stage: Sunday in the Park with George." *New York Times Magazine* (21 October 1984): 53-66, 71.

"Sondheim Isn't Quite Out of the 'Woods'." Los Angeles Times Calendar, 8 January 1989, 4-5, 75.

Mixed Metaphors

Lover
The very word feels warm
In an instant it heats me more
Than the sun can in an hour
Every kiss like the strike of the hammer on the forge
Sprays sparks all around
Sensation sweeter than the sweetest hot fudge
And one hundred times as hot
Burns within my body
Soft fingers caress
Soft lips tease
Soft tongue tickles
I close my lids on burning eyes
Another kiss
I burst into flame
Water, please, though it feels so good to burn
Fireworks exploding and falling back to earth...
Dawn
Tangled limbs and a gentle peace.

—Ricki Garvin

Strange Moment

His blue green eyes met mine.
His orangey-striped body stretched in ecstasy across my lap.
This adolescent marmalade cat was my lover in another life.
His furry skinny body was not the body I loved,
But his eyes, young, eager, and trusting,
Were my lover's.
After I petted him for a long while, I thought
He would fall asleep, but he is awake now,
Ruining my fantasy by gazing with all his concentration
At the fish tank.

—Ricki Garvin

Revolution

In this world we are all cowards.
We point a criticizing finger at the brave man
Because we envy his bravery.
We are lovers of mediocrity,
Jealous of excellence,
Clinging desperately to routine,
Wanting to break away,
But knowing that if we do,
We will face what we fear most—
The misunderstanding we
So willingly awarded the brave man
In the first place.

—Ricki Garvin

KILLED BY LIES

by Jeremy Cosand

They tell me religion is facing hard times these days. Like an elderly grandmother amidst a swarm of racing youths, she finds that it is not as easy as it once was to keep up with this frenetic, high energy world. Technologies and sciences scamper ahead of her, and her old tired bones, they say, just aren't what they used to be. She toddles behind, absorbed in the difficulty and pain of walking, breathing hard and loud. At last, exhausted, she crumples down on a bench some ways behind, alone and, they tell me, hungry for rest. She watches the happy children play and run and dance and sing ahead of her, and she remembers a time when she too was young and enjoyed the blessings of this wide, wonderful world.

Her memory drifts fondly back to those times in her youth and her prime, when she had countless suitors and lovers and friends; when the world was hers and the irrepressible hope of a boundless future lay, it seemed then, just a little distance ahead of her. She longs to join them in their fun — to feel again the free-spirited joy of youth — but she is too old now, they tell her, and her time has come and gone. She has heard it enough that it must be true, and so she dare not leave her bench. Instead, she will watch and perhaps give a shout from time to time if the play gets too rough or if the big kids start harassing the smaller ones. But mostly she will just sit, and watch, and acknowledge that the world really is for the young, and not for old grandmothers whose youth has passed.

She is forgotten, too, by the children intent in their play. Only when she rouses herself from her wistful memories to scold one of them do they take notice of her. And every time they pause at the voice and stand silent and still in mock respect, their silent anger, concealed behind their down-turned eyes, flashes hotter and brighter in their minds at the mean spoilsport she is. For a while they humor her, and say "Yes, ma'am" and "We're sorry, ma'am" and try to be quiet when she is near, but soon, even her stern sharp warnings and old-fashioned words are ignored. "What does she know anyway about the games of today?" "She just doesn't understand us." "The world's a different place now than it was in her day."

Eventually, when they are a little older and she is more convinced of the truth of what they say, she will follow their well-meaning advice, move out of their way, and into the home for old-folks. After all, they say, that's all she is: just one of the old folks, who can't understand the world today and has no place in it. The best she can hope for, they tell her, is to retire to a nice little community all walled in with gates and fences and bars; be safe; be quiet; and try to recreate those glorious days she once knew. They

assure her she'll be fine, and they leave her. And she watches through the window as their smiling carefree faces skip merrily away.

Rejoicing in the freedom they already feel, with the papers signed and grandmother settled in, the children, now adults themselves, find more children to play with and play on and on and on. Occasionally, one is reminded of the grandmother they left in the home some time back, and her words and her warnings ring again in his ears. Sometimes he wonders if she is still there; and at times, like Christmas or Thanksgiving or Easter, whether for guilt or for curiosity — to see if she's still the same old grandmother he remembers — he will write or visit, but never stay long. She is still the same grandmother with all the same words and such an old-fashioned understanding of the world today. Though now it seems her mumblings have grown even more incoherent. "Better to keep her walled in and away, for she could never handle seeing the world today. And when she asks if we're still playing fair, we will nod and smile, keep her happy, and tell her we are. For times are not what they used to be, and now, more than ever, the real world's no place for old grannies."

And as the world rolls along and the children keep playing, new games are invented and new rules for the old ones. And grandmother remains in the home far away, although now she is so terribly old, and the world is really too much for her weary old bones. The children can't understand how she's lasted so long, seeing as how the games keep on getting rougher and rougher, and the world keeps on getting younger and younger. But the walls of the home just grow thicker and higher, and the memory of her fades in the children's minds. The visits become less seldom, and the games more fun and free. Eventually, the children realize how grandmothers are obsolete these days, and it is such a pity she must spend her life wasting away in misery, believing a lie that the games are still fair and the children still kind. "Such a life must surely be worse than death!"

Fortunately a new game, called euthanasia, is invented, that even old miserable grannies can play. "She really will be so much better off," agree the smiling children, "since this world has no place for old grandmothers anyway." Believing that this probably is very true, old grandmother listens as the children explain. "It has been quite boring behind these walls all alone, and there's really no place for you outside of the home." "Oh yes, it really is better this way. You'll see. Besides, it is one of the best games to play." "All the other grandmothers are doing it too. Just like in the old days; we all get to play." And grandmother smiles and nods her head, and agrees that the world is just like they said. They've told her so much, it just has to be true. There really is nothing left for her to do. "Things truly are not what they used to be; there's no place in this world for old grannies like me. . ."

Dirty Dancing

We danced the exotic impulse
while banners streamed inside
my mind echoing our passion

You orbited my body like sputnik
on crack and then you flattered into
debris: metal scraps, food refuse, etc.

I had to fight off torrents of trash
as I danced with you. You were
used parts, garden tools; especially
the old rusty hoe I threw away.

The simple passion of one dance
perverted you into a useless
form of worthless junk.

Ours lips met and you melted.
Our lips met and I became
so nauseous I could even taste
the after-dinner mints.

I said a quick prayer during
our cheap swapping of spit,
but you felt sanctity behind the
frothy looks and the sleazy smile.

As I condemn myself to improper
behavior, I realize that the music
has stopped long ago and I'm
still dancing.

I dance and I dance and I
dance with the haunting
memories of that impure night
and rotten refuse for a dance partner.

Memories not even a scalding hot
shower could wash away from
my polluted conscience.

—David A. Stelmach

April 29, 1992

Regurgitated from smoke and fire,
The devil rose today
and confronted the angels

more than just 52 blows
more than just a swollen jaw

BURN - not guilty?

Hues of yellow, orange,
red,
Black,
White -
All aflame.

"They're just rebel youth."
SHUT UP NEWSMAN

Who are the "theys"

The battle raged of over the fallen king
(there seemed to be so many)

Where is a leader?
Who is in charge?
Is this the end?
... or merely the beginning?

BURN - justice?
Where are we heading?
AGAIN!?!?!?!?
Charcoal Alley? 1965?
The x-factor.

Where are you Leroi Jones?

Is this hell?
Is this heaven?
All the while,
within this city of angels
She feels the weight of the scales
yet She cannot see

Why can't ~~you~~ She see?

—Josh Machamer

Going

by Phil Hickey

It's cold outside on Christmas Eve. It's cold in the garage too, but there's no point in starting this Porsche and turning on the heater. It doesn't work, and if it did I'd probably die of carbon monoxide asphyxiation without even noticing it. And everyone would probably think it was suicide. And another death so soon would only be awkward, like a bid for attention coming from a pesky younger brother. So I shiver, and listen to my teeth hitting each other.

If my father could see me now, clenched tight as my fist, holding my self within myself, he would at least try to force a laugh. He might even be able to calmly discuss the fresh dent in the door, the cause of my immediate pain. Of course it would be killing him inside; he loved this car, but he'd work, struggle to understand. Always working. All of his doctors said the same things: relax, lower your blood pressure, get a hobby.

His idea of a hobby was to drag me along to what seemed like every single junkyard in the city to watch him haggle with every single oil stained junkyard owner, until the last dealer he talked to gave him the beaten Porsche chassis for a song, even offered to have it towed to our driveway. The whole drive home, my father cackled about how badly he had ground the guy, how much he had saved by shopping around, and by being a tough guy. But then came the manuals, buying all the right tools, and on and on into the nights after he got off work, him cursing and throwing his tools, until the time he broke the spark gapper. Then he just cursed. And me holding the light, always striving to give him enough light.

No, he never loved this car. But he felt an obligation, a bond. To people and to things. I tried to feel it, to overcome my complete disinterest in the restorative process, but I never did progress much beyond the go fer stage. So he nurtured it, coddled it, pouring time, money and parts into it,

cursing and finally just laughing a tired laugh, as fuel pump followed ignition system followed something else into the scrap heap. And after he

replaced, over the course of seven years, damn near every part in the whole car, he'd had to begin again, re-replacing. An immaculate circle of restoration for his beautiful car that he never even drove.

No; it's my car now. My reward for years of faithful illumination

The door to the house opens, and someone enters, followed closely by the noise of subdued conversations spread thinly over crackers, served dryly with wine. The car door creaks, a plea for oil and attention, and a bulk squeezes into the passenger seat. It's not my mother; I know her presence, her way of walking and breathing. I want to talk to whoever even less than I want to hear her ramblings. I avoid a response by opening my fist and kissing my battered knuckles. A flake of green paint lies embedded in the center of the rawness like an emerald set in a vermilion band, and the taste is of tangy salt.

"Do you want to talk?" A male voice, raw and warm. It belongs to my uncle Jerry.

"No. Go away." Blood wells up and swallows the emerald.

"Are you sure? You know, you're only hurting your mother, and yourself too." He places a hand on my shoulder.

"Go away."

He tightens his grip. God, it's weak. It should be stronger. I remember that when I was young I always pestered him to throw me up into the air and to catch me at the moment of fear. He always indulged me in this game. Of course I was much smaller then.

"I'll talk then." Silence hangs in the car, suspended by wine fumes and dust. I feel tension building, rising up from my center, and then a sneeze explodes like echoing thunder in a cave.

"God bless you." Automatically, as if he were some superstitious peasant afraid that demons might crawl inside my gaping mouth between

sneezes.

"God bless us all. Go away, will you." I can feel two trickles, one from my right hand, one from my right eye, racing each other to fall first. But I'm not crying, because I don't cry. It's pure liquid anger. "Jesus, I hate her!"

"Don't say that, you don't mean that." He knows exactly what I mean, but it would take words to explain it, and words are the enemy right now, traitors that can only expose and never protect. But he tries, skirting the subject, treading a softer, well worn path, one that avoids what we both know. "She can't help herself, and you know it." Everyone knows it but her. He seems to think it's an excuse.

His grip is starting to bother me. I try to shrug it off, but he clings hard. He's still strong, for all his years. He and my father used to work together on this car, when Jerry flew in for the holidays. Jerry did the heavy work, and my father did the fine adjustments.

"Okay I don't mean it." Sitting here, I know that I meant it. I want to throw something else at her, recock my arm and throw again, something heavier than a stack of insurance papers, something to shock her free of the freezing rust settling over her, into her. I ran instead, while she stopped, transfixed by the image of papers falling as gently as snow, out among the people busily preparing mortuary manners. Wine sloshed in little glasses, as people leached away their emotions. I needed refuge from cowed acceptance.

But alone, sitting in the car, sneezing and shivering... Shit. I felt like a stupid kid, crying, throwing things, punching things. God, my knuckles are stiff, might even be broken. Hitting things is childish, but all this family, cloying and close, is making me feel like a boy again, hoping that they will be strong so that I won't have to understand things and can just relax. I don't want to shoulder my burden.

"Good." Jerry is positive, and gives every appearance of health. People never believe he's slipping up on sixty, that he could ever be old

and weak. But I know. When I was sixteen, his knee gave out, and he had to have it operated on. He stayed with us while he was recovering. Three months. I was appointed his nurse and valet for the duration. Every single morning, I helped him out of bed, watched him struggle through his exercises, cursing and sweating. After I helped him in the bathroom, I made his breakfast. It was the only time in my life I looked forward to the arrival of the school bus. It was tacitly assumed that I would do this for family; it was not even a topic of conversation. When he hobbled back on the plane for Denver, he hugged me. I was embarrassed, being hugged like a little kid, in front of God and everyone. When I washed my jacket, I found the fifty he'd slipped into my pocket, only slightly faded by the bleach. It was my first real job, I suppose. I've got a job now, one that pays for my life in another city: my apartment, my girlfriend's little things, my car payments.

Jerry managed to fix all his defective parts. It's obvious when a knee breaks down, I guess. It stands out when you can't stand up. That's easier to notice than a defective gasket, one that just gives out one fine day, with no warning, no fanfare.

Jerry notices my hand. He pokes blunt fingertips into the swollen flesh. "That hurt?" It does, but in a pointless throbbing way.

"No."

"Well, then it's probably not broken. Why don't you put some ice on it anyway. That's a good way to break your knuckles, punching walls." I can feel what he thinks, like a tall freight train crashing down. Immaturity. But he won't say anything to me about it, because that's just wasteful conversation. He's not going to waste words. He opens his door, and kind of pops out. He's not graceful. I open my door, and crawl out, hardly a vision of grace myself. I can't feel my legs. They won't support me, and I have to hold onto the car door, swaying and stomping my dull feet into recirculation. I've never had very good circulation since college. My pants are getting tight when I sit down for hours at my desk, and when I come home at night, I have red angry welts across my waist. But they go away.

"It's fucking cold out here." Jerry looks at me blankly and nods. I suppose he doesn't care too much what I say. We're all going off in our own ways, breaking whatever internal rhythm normally sustains us.

Alone, I don't feel like exposing more weakness to his probing. With the current mood in the house, anything that looks suspicious is going under a doctor's eyes. Not that it helped my father. When he raced to the emergency clinic 4 nights ago, shadowed as always by my mother, the doctor sent him home.

"Possibly a migraine, brought on by recent job stress. Relax. Take up a hobby." The next morning, he was in a hospital bed, unconscious from a stroke, barely active enough to deteriorate before all our gathered eyes. And then he died.

The house is warm and well lit, illuminated by holiday cheer. I can see my mother, in the center of a group of well wishers. But they can't corner her. She moves, constantly, from person to person, smoothly engaging and disengaging. She was always like well oiled machinery, a perpetual motion machine. She can't break down. But when she does, I have to pick up the pieces, even as I am picking up pieces right now, sweeping them under whatever rug will hide them.

She says something to a man in a suit, a distant relative, I think. I walk past, listening to her voice floating and fluttering like butterflies on a string. She's calling him Edward, my father's name. She's holding his stiffened, suited arm, and looking at the Christmas tree. "Isn't it pretty!" she says. I look down at her, and she shows me her false teeth. I look into her wrinkles. She is old, but looks even older, despite make up and smiles. The people around her know what is happening, and they just relax, smile, go along with her. It is the easiest thing to do, perhaps.

I enter the kitchen, passing simmering pots and the wreckage of delicious good intentions. The number for the lady from the organ bank is tacked on the crowded cork board, hidden by a dog eared picture of myself in long black robes and a funny square hat. She had come to the

hospital, summoned perhaps by the doctors, from the number on the back of my father's driver's license.

She was sympathetic, even kind. I could see it in her eyes, and the eyes never lie, because they are the windshield for the soul. But she is Business too, and the cut of her suit reveals that. She has a function, and needs to fulfill it. She wants to finalize this trade, and I want to trade with her. My father has been disconnected from the machines. They are, after all, needed by others. Surgeons are standing by, and their time is money. And so others benefit, and it is easy to accept that. These things are important. The world keeps spinning along, stuck in the rut that becomes path, and is eventually granted the sanctity and reverence of the name "road".

We receive peace, reassurance that he is fulfilling the civic duty that rides shotgun with the privileges of driving. He gets pieced out, stripped forever from our world, our memories. This is right and good. We won't have a funeral. Funerals are like used car lots; every one goes to them to get something they need, not for the company of the dealers waiting to tear their fair and shiny share from you. No, even funeral directors serve their function in the economy; they keep us shuffling along, keep us from taking up too much valuable space. But I still think of vultures.

I'm on the phone for less than a moment when my mother comes in, bearing an empty tray. She asks me who I'm talking to, if it's Jerry. I tell the organ bank lady (her name is Sandra) to hold, leaving her to glean what she can from the cold comfort of an empty phone line. I hold the phone with my right hand, so that my mother won't see the blood and wonder.

I could just explain to my mother that I'm taking care of some end of the year business. I could tell her it's my girlfriend. I don't need to tell her that I'm going to identify the body of my father, her husband, and then give it away. That would be cruel. She's doing well enough moving in her orbit, taking care of her holiday guests. She's always worked well with people, always been the immaculate hostess. Maybe just lately, in the last year or

two she's been getting testy for small reasons. And sometimes she is forgetful, but she's still good with people, mostly.

"I'm talking with the people at the hospital about Ed. They need his organs." She starts. I look in her eyes. There is something there, something hard, sharp, and mean. Furrows form around her eyes. She slams down her tray, and it echoes hollowly.

"Don't you dare disrespect your father! He's your father. Not Edward, and certainly not Ed!" She advances on me, with one arm out to slap me, like she used to when I was too young to understand words like right and wrong. "No Christmas for you, young man!" And then she hits me, and it is like the cold soft slap of reason, slipping from her and into me. I fall back.

I could try to make her understand this, make her see what is happening to herself, see that she is rusting away inside, that she is becoming unsafe to herself and others. But I can't make myself do this. I tried with the insurance papers, but she threw a screaming, petulant fit, a childish fit, but infectious all the same. She is aware of anger, and still responds to it. This is reassuring to me. She is loosing her grip on reality, slowly falling apart in front of me. She can't do this, no matter how slowly. I refuse to accept this planned obsolescence. I will fight it, but not tonight. Tonight I am pacifying her, because she is winding down, and all I do is watch.

"Okay, Mother. I'm sorry. I'll go apologize to Father." She seems reassured by this. I look at her. There is nothing in her eyes but color, a deep abiding blue. She is an old woman.

"Susan. Come out to the porch. The carolers are here." It's Jerry. He looks at me, and smiles like a skeleton. Behind him, all of us are seeping out into the cold, into the darkness of the Christmas night. I can hear the sound of clear rising voices, muffled by the delicate glass of the kitchen window.

"Just a minute." She turns to her tray, and begins loading it, taking

the time to select only the best hors d'oeuvres for her guests. Jerry leads her to the door, and the singing starts.

I go back to Sandra from the organ bank. I tell her that I will be down soon. My signature is good; I am an adult. You have to put the best face forward, and I am the best face. She tells me that she looks forward to seeing me soon, and I remember that she is a professional.

I put down the phone, and take my keys from my pocket. Apartment, work, my girlfriend's house, my car, locks I don't even know. My car is a Toyota, and I can see it through the window, strong and ready to fly away.

Our family and friends are filing back in, laughing and bearing guilty smiles. Their faces are red, beaten into health by the cold. I say the little things that make up a goodbye, and offer hugs all around. I kiss my mother, and Jerry too. Then I walk out the door. It must be the coldest night of the year. The breath of the carolers carries from two houses down, where they are singing Silent Night. I hurry to my car, fumbling at the door with my left hand. My right hand is no longer clenched, and is starting to hurt. Maybe I need X-rays.

The car isn't going to start. I shove the key into the ignition again, harder, and twist it around, much harder. I kick the gas, harder. It isn't going to start. Shit, it's cold out. The engine is cold and still. The lights are on inside the house, but they are on inside the car, dancing and blinking futilely on the dash. My breath is escaping, obscuring the car's windows so that all the lights seem dimmer somehow.

Dante's Circles in *Paradiso*

by Joshua J. Pak

The Book of the Twenty-four Philosophers is a pseudo-hermetic manuscript of the Twelfth Century, which defines God as *"Deus est sphaera cuhus centrum ubique*: God is a sphere of which the center is everywhere and the circumference is nowhere."[1] This definition has played an important role not only in the thoughts of theologians and philosophers, but also in the imaginations of poets. The double quality of this sphere has been studied and expanded by many great minds throughout history.

First, Boethius borrows this platonic idea of the immense sphere in his attempt to defend the nature of God. One can see the infinite sphere as a figuration of the divine immensity. But one also can see it as a figuration of the other divine attribute: eternity. Boethius states that "God is eternal"[2] and he glorifies the immense sphere with the idea that "Eternity is the whole, perfect, and simultaneous possession of endless life."[3] He further states:

> For the infinite motion of temporal things imitates the immediate present of His changeless life and, since it cannot reproduce or equal life, it sinks from immobility to motion and declines from the simplicity of the present into the infinite duration of future and past.[4]

Invariably, the definition of eternity contains double qualities which are contradictory to each other; however, this contradiction is justified easily by the fact that it can be reconciled only by the divine

life. Boethius explains that the divine life is the only life which can conjoin these contradictory dual qualities and unite them in a circle, which represents eternity.

In Dante's *Paradiso*, the idea of unification of opposite qualities is found throughout. As an infinite circumference, eternity is the largest possible circle of duration; and, as the center of this circumference, it is the fixed point and unique moment which is simultaneously in conjunction with all the circumferential elements of the duration. This is the image that is represented in Dante's *Paradiso*:

> The water in a round vessel moves about
> from center to rim if it is struck from within,
> from rim to center if it is struck from without.[5]

As the water in a receptacle flows indifferently either toward the periphery or toward the center, the soul of the poet moves toward the God who encompasses everything, as well as moves toward the God who is at the center of all things. This double quality of centrality and circularity embodies itself in a series of passages that finally reaches its climax in the vision of God in the form of both a circle and a point. Dante says that God is a focus "where all time is time-present"[6] and "where time and space are focused in one ray."[7] These two passages link nicely with a passage in the *Vita Nuova* where the god of love appears to Dante and says to him, "*Ego tanquam centrum circuli, cui simili modo se habent circumferentie partes; tu autem non sis*: " or, "I am like the center of a circle, equidistant from all points on the circumference; you, however, are not."[8] Love here

suggests that Dante, whose thought is limited to the present moment, is separate from the divine thought, which is the center of all.

According to all of these texts, for Dante, the place occupied by the central point of the circle represents not only the unity and stability of the divine duration, but also the multiplicity of simultaneous rapport that it represents with the peripheral and changeable duration of creatures. Eternity is not simply perpetuity: the string of events along which time travels; it is rather that a point where, like the rays of the circle, the events of the past and the future converge and unite in the will of God.

However if all things, including the dual qualities, coexist in God, it is not just because they are created by God and merged in God. He is not only the creator but also the center of force: the force that maintains and recalls his creations. Dante says, "I saw a Point that radiated light"[9] and adds,

> To all, the Primal Light sends down Its ray.
> And every splendor into which it enters
> receives that radiance in its own way.[10]

These phrases specifically explain the entire existence of things in God. Whole creation can exist only because everywhere and always the action from a creative center causes them to exist. This creative action of God essentially occupies every corner of the universe, wherever creation receives its radiance.

But the radiance is also temporal, since every new moment is also the result of this continuous and contiguous creation. God's radiating action immediately and simultaneously attains to all the

points of duration as it does to all creation in the universe. Dante describes God as a point that infinitely and universally enlarges itself:

> That lamp forms an enormous circle, such
> that its circumference, fitted to the Sun
> as a bright belt, would be too large by much.[11]

Therefore, it is entirely up to the individual creature to receive the radiance and fully to reflect it.

Among all the significant attributions to the divine point that Dante made, perhaps his assimilation of the Trinity is the most profound of all. He starts out with the familiar idea that God is a unique center of activity, but this activity is the same activity which brings about the creation of knowledge and the procession of the Holy Ghost. In the final cantos of the *Paradiso*, Dante creates a self-metamorphosis allusion to the mystery of the Trinity: at first the form of a triple arrow shot from a bow of three cords, it becomes enlarged and create three circles. Then, in the center and divine circumference, Dante first sees the representation of the internal action of the Trinity. Dante also sees a prefiguration of the external movement, which is no smaller nor less circular, which spreads itself outward to surround itself, and which is ultimately a new creation of circles. The creation is the most precious work of the three circles. Because of these everlasting creations, every point in the universe of space and of time becomes the eternal place and moment where God begins to engender the Son, and where the Son lovingly begins to reflect the Father in himself. This reciprocity of love is nothing more

nor less than the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost.

At the end of the *Paradiso*, the final object of the poem is no longer an object which a human can comprehend or which human language can describe. It is an object that one can only desire and with which one can hope, unlike the Dante of the *Vita Nuova*, to coincide. If one is able to coincide with this divine object, it is because it is no now longer exterior and remote. The divine point is the very center of the human soul, though which God is immanent in human history.

If I may attempt to comment anything about Dante's absolutely incredible and beautiful work, I must use exactly the same expression that Dante himself used to express his emotion as he left Paradise: I yearned to know just how our image merges into that circle, and how it there finds place,[12] or should I say that I yearn to know just how my brain comprehended even a bit of Dante's knowledge in the *Comedia*. And, at the end of this paper, I feel these two contradictory emotions, pleasure and sorrow, in my mind. I feel delighted that I understood even a bit of the mystery, yet sad that language fails me in expressing what I know, just as it failed even Dante.

ENDNOTES

[1]*Philosophorum* edited by Clemens Baeumker p.207
[2]*The Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius p.115
[3]*The Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius p.115
[4]*The Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius p.116
[5]*The Paradiso* by Dante translated by John Ciardi p.162
[6]*The Paradiso* by Dante translated by John Ciardi p.195
[7]*The Paradiso* by Dante translated by John Ciardi p.317
[8]*Vita Nuova* by Dante translated by Mark Musa p.18
[9]*The Paradiso* by Dante translated by John Ciardi p.308
[10]*The Paradiso* by Dante translated by John Ciardi p.322
[11]*The Paradiso* by Dante translated by John Ciardi p.331
[12]*The Paradiso* by Dante translated by John Ciardi p.365

Don't misunderstand...

Don't misunderstand
It isn't what you've done, but what
you haven't
I heard you and
it wasn't what you said, but what
I listen to.
I know— you weren't yourself, you were acting.
But I can only
see so far
or listen so close
and be so near
before I tell you— are you listening?
Is isn't your fault but maybe your consequences.

—Eryn Osterhaus

To hurt...

To hurt me requires
the stength of a feather
for I wear no armor, I
hide no weakness, I love
and in turn— you
use your fear to
destroy
detach
deflower and
dismiss.
It is not power you feel,
it is me.

—Eryn Osterhaus

Warfare and the Pursuit of Military Security

by Genevieve Haines

A microbiologist and infantryman, John Shook delivers his combat saga One Soldier in a unexpectedly lyrical voice - war and the military virtually set to music. Shook's song explores the macro concepts of ambition, military preparedness, and the psychological effects of war on the soldier's psyche through the depiction of micro phenomenon within his experiences in Vietnam. Insofar as the concepts emerge as macro only when translated into such, the memoir is not intended as a representative experience of a soldier. Nevertheless, One Soldier is an engrossing portrayal of the life of one military draftee.

John Shook was drafted out of college, despite assurances of an F-4 because of blindness in one eye. He was sent to Basic Training in Fort Lewis, Washington. From there he attended Advanced Infantry Training at Fort Ord, and then enrolled in Officer Candidate School. By some stroke of luck (in his perspective), he was allowed to withdraw from the horror and humiliation of OCS at Fort Benning and relegated to Causal Company. From there he received his assignment in Vietnam: 1st Division Delta Company. After serving months in the field as an M-60 machine gunner, his bad eye got him transferred to the rear in pursuit of a more appropriate career. He was assigned to Echo Company briefly, assuming non-combat maintenance tasks, until a transfer to the Popular Forces. Finally, upon removal from support of the Popular Forces, he was assigned a clerical job in the rear for the remainder of his tour.

The jumble of experiences described in the novel metamorphosizes into discreet commentary on the military from the perspective of the infantryman, particularly concerning ambition and leadership. This "political" (Bergerson, 1993) protrusion of the officers' ambitions, and even those of the advanced enlisted men, often means the lives of foot soldiers like himself. Shook recognizes this inhumanity within a transmission between a company commander in the field and a major in the rear. "Our position exposed. No chance of surviving engagement. Immediate air support imperative," transmitted the captain, to which the major responded, "I don't want to hear that shit, Captain. You have a company of infantry at your disposal - use them. Engage enemy at once," (Shook, p. 173). The major would sacrifice the lives of his soldiers for the promotions guaranteed by hefty body count totals. The war could be over, maintains Shook, less the "people in the rear clamoring for dead bodies," (Shook, p. 152) to feed their ambitions. This phenomenon is not unique to Shook's experiences in Vietnam. General Patton suffered from the same blinding ambition, and would sacrifice his troops to make headlines for himself (Schaffner, 1970). Shook does credit some leaders with humanity. The captain in the previous transmission risked his military career for the sake of his men. Rather than follow the suicide orders of the major, and under threat of court-martial, the captain instructs his radio telephone operator, "You just keep on stalling him and maybe we'll get out of this yet," (Shook, p. 176). This was also recognized during WWII, where it was acknowledged among the infantrymen that the wiser officers "don't tolerate bootlicking or petty politicking," (Mauldin, p. 60) in the interest of esprit de corps and overall morale. Shook

himself passed over officer candidacy and numerous leadership opportunities in the interest of avoiding "associat[ion] with the egomaniacal authority," (Shook, p. 121) prevailing within his own experiences. The author rejects the almost universal attitude among his officers that "no duty is too perilous for his men, no duty too safe for himself," (Shook, p. 294) and no promotion at too high a price.

The disregard of the military brass for rational courses of action and the exploitation of minor and irrelevant issues in the face of death and destruction is another emergent theme in the memoir, and a point meriting the infantryman's contempt. Following a successful VC penetration of the base camp's primary defenses, Shook predicts the soldiers will, "suffer an increase in boot polishing," (Shook, p. 248) to fend off future lapses in security. Further, the focus of the energies of the leadership in the military too often lies within concern for rank, rather than plain and simple logic. Shook's Basic Training drill corporal serves as a microcosm of the inefficiency of this prevalent approach. "His training technique consists of a single theme that is carried out with fantastic vigor. He is not so much interested in how we march, how we handle our rifles, or how accomplished we are at hand-to-hand combat as he is in our absolute acceptance of his authority," (Shook, p. 17). Another incident is apparent in the leadership of the Popular Forces by a Sergeant Bolinski. Consumed with his position, he refuses the expertise of the infantrymen, nearly leading to his and his company's collective deaths (Shook, p. 299-302). This, for the infantryman, evolves into a distrust for the leadership and overall inefficiency in the execution of their duties. Upon repeated surprise inspection of the guard towers, the focus of the guards shifts from watching for the

VC to watching for the brass. "Your job is to protect yourself from your enemies. For now, at least, your greatest enemy is the U.S. Army," (Shook, p. 252) the author explains to a new guard. Shook is heavily influenced by this corruption of the seemingly most rational course of action in life and death situations for the sake of irrelevant displays of respect.

Most disturbing to the author, however, is the change in his person over his tour of duty. Drafted into the Army as an idealistic bright-eye young man, he leaves disturbed; in him "tender emotions...have been disallowed, invalidated by violent death," (Shook, p. 287). This hardening is apparent particularly within his perspective on those lacking combat experience. Young female visitors are sent by the Red Cross to entertain at the base; "four girls fresh out of high school trying to engage a dozen killers in a child's game while silently praying that they make it out of here without getting raped." These girls, he muses, "could have been classmates a year ago, but the gap that separates [us] is so vast it may never be bridged," (Shook, p. 124). On a more personal level, he abandons his plans to marry when he returns from his tour. "No, there will be no wedding, for I cannot take care of another's emotions or offer them mine," (Shook, p. 287). This hardening is not unique to this soldier or this war. The physical symptoms of combat on the soldiers of WWII are known to be manifested in their eyes and in their actions. "Perhaps he will change back again when he returns, but never completely. If he is lucky, his memories of those sharp, bitter days will fade over the years into a hazy recollection of a period which was filled with homesickness and horror and dread and monotony," (Mauldin, p. 34). This change in his manner and

disposition concerns the author, and transforms his life course.

One Soldier is an excellent piece of literature. The novel is candid, entertaining, and easy to read, all the while maintaining realism in the portrayal of combat. Even an individual entirely unfamiliar with the military and its workings is afforded a clear glimpse of combat and military life. The book made me appreciate the plight of all soldiers and renewed in me a sense of the endurance of the human spirit in the face of adversity. These soldiers returned from Vietnam with their souls intact. The strength of the soldiers is admirable and deserving of respect; these men emerged whole from a combat situation where the only appropriate description seems to be 'Hell.' The soldiers in the field also recognized the delicate balance of life and death, and resorted to depending on the important, intangible things in life; friendship, camaraderie, and sacrifice for others emerge as paramount. For each of us, it is imperative to thank God that we have life, and even two arms and two legs, rather than focusing on the menial occurrences along life's journey. Shook's song is just too good to be missed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bergerson, F. (1993, January). Lectures presented in Warfare and the Pursuit of Military Security, Whittier College, Whittier.

Mauldin, B. (1968). Up Front. New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc.

Schaffner, F., director. (1970). Patton: A Salute to a Rebel. 20th Century Fox.

Shook, J. (1986). One Soldier. New York: Bantam Books.

We, Large or Small, in Chicago

This is where we have
come, to our strategically placed
collection of cardboard refrigerator
and freezer boxes,
some for washers and dryers
with dark blue writing
(WCI Manufacturing) .

This,
my woman, is a house,
a home for your luggage carrier of
many beige plastic bags,
a change of shoes,
your herring-bone comb,
an old key you found
in the train station
that never fit the orange locker,
an occasional wandering
homeless cat -
your carefully chosen

rainbow of trash.
But I let you wear my felt hat
when the days are damp.
And all there is
is simple.
Your bags of important things,
the boxes we pack
each other in at night,
my hat that fits us both.

—S. Plantenburg

A Day on the Grass

The grass rose and kissed the sky,
my hair, pure locks of woven gold
my eyes, as into my own soul,
The trees sung louder than the birds,
The clouds kissed my weather beaten color,
The sun danced away with my ambition.

This day, this sunny heaven
God came down
held his children with invisible beauty,
My soul swam with the wind,
faded into the soil and planted its roots there,
And became the ocean
tickling the fish and teasing the mermaids.

I rose up with volcanic strength.
My wings spread and my breath fire,
My talons blinding
Flying higher than Icarus,
Then I floated to the earth
like a feather,
light and limp,
And kissed myself goodnight.

—Stephanie Ferrario

TWO MUSES

Anne Sexton and Adrienne Rich: Perspectives of the Female Artist Shaping Feminist Attitudes in Poetry

by Bridget Brady

In Adrienne Rich's 1971 essay "When We Dead Awaken," she briefly discusses Henrik Ibsen's idea (from a play of the same title) that the male artist and creator has used the women of his life as both a caretaker and a muse for his work, consistently degrading and dehumanizing the female's perspective as a creator beyond birthing children and the culinary arts. Since then, the tables have turned. Although neither poet was attempting to dehumanize the male, and Anne Sexton had trouble considering herself a feminist at all, while Rich tended to focus her feminist fight on the academic exploration of women as writers, especially lesbians (see class text, p.150), — at the height of both Rich and Sexton's careers, several of their poems contain detailed examinations of men in their lives as lovers, fathers, and mythic figures.

"Growing up" in a male dominated career field was a struggle that still exists for many women writers today. In the 60's, Sexton said the best compliment a female poet could receive was that "she writes like a man." She later admitted that as long as the women poet takes this as a compliment "we are in trouble." (Middlebrook, 173) Rich felt even more strongly about the male domination in the literary world. She said in 1983 that,"Competing in the literary establishment felt to me defeminizing." (Middlebrook,p.111) By

reading first Sexton and then Rich, we can see a growth from one to the another of a feminist vision. Sexton's work is highly personal, "confessional," and when she writes of the influential male figures in her life, almost all of her poems have specific addressees. Rich, however, is more comprehensive. When writing of men, she prefers to explore how they as a whole have affected the female population and the definitions of what it is to be male versus female, in a larger social context. By exploring several poems from both women, we can outline the feminist development that occurs, and shapes, their work.

Sexton, as it is well known, had many different affairs over the course of her married life, often with her male contemporaries, and at least one with her therapist. Sexton was shackled by her need to have a lover. A "fine narcotic" she called it:

> The aura of this thing is more strong than alcohol. Not just sleeping with them: it's a ritual. If I want to push it I just say" I need you"....I've been thinking, well, I'm going to die of this, it's a disease; it will destroy the kids, axe my husband and anyone else's opinion of me. Ever since George [Starbuck, another young poet], ever since my mother died, I want to have the feeling someone's in love with me. (Middlebrook, 148)

Sexton had debilitating memories of sexual abuse as a child, both with her father and her great-aunt Nana. Though her chief therapist, Dr. Orne, was "virtually certain" that these memories were only inventions, for Sexton they were "real" and were treated as such.

Sexton "sexualized" everything and sexual metaphors were very evident in all her work. (Middlebrook, 58) Throughout her life, she needed constant reaffirmation of affection from her lovers, and even from her female friends and her daughters, most often taking a sexual form. Sexton was obviously concerned and confused throughout her life with her self-identity in all her relationships. Her childhood abuse, her confused erotic feelings towards her daughter, Linda, and her desperate need for attention from any lover, gave her plenty of material to work off of in her poetry.

In "The Moss of His Skin" Sexton remembers these moments of abuse as being buried in her father's presence. She feels guilt at what takes place and hopes that God will not see that she holds her father "like an old stone tree." (line 24) The voice of the poem begins as an adult, and reverts to a child by the end. This unhappiness and anger towards her father grow, and her struggle on how to deal with these events from childhood, and with him are the subject of the elegy "All My Pretty Ones." Here Sexton examines the contradictions between her memories of her deceased father versus his pictorial record of his life in snapshots and scrapbooks. His alcoholic tendency is not recorded in the pictures, but Sexton, the persona, remembers, and also reads in her mother's diary (also recently deceased) of the pain she suffered with his addiction. All this is juxtaposed by the scrapbook clippings about Hoover "wiggling his dry finger at me/and Prohibition," (line 24-5) and her father's social activities, robust and healthy "standing like a duke among groups of men." (line 38) He lived a dichotomy. The tragedy of the poem is that her father was just about to embark on a "second chance" (line 29) at life with a new marriage, but death got there first: "a second

shock boiling its stone to your heart." (line 3) In the poem, Sexton recalls the last year of his life "solvent but sick," and questions what to do with her memories of him. (line 27) She decides that she must "forgive" this man, whether his life was "pretty or not." (line 49-50) She has outlived him; she must honor his memory with the communion imagery of drinking wine each Christmas day, the alcohol-saturated blood of his "hurly-burly years." (line 46) He was a "drunkard," but he was also her father her "navigator," her "first lost keeper," someone to cherish and look at and love by turns. (lines 39-40) The poem expresses both her anger and her love for this man, this father/Christ figure who seemed to be her salvation as a child, but has been subsequently exposed by death and the boxes of pictures and diaries he left behind. But really it is her memories that betray him, and in the poem the persona/Sexton must come to terms with all the different facets of her father as a man and imperfect human. It is when she is able to look at all the different images and call them all her "Pretty Ones" that she has learned to accept him and his influence in her life.

In "The Fury of Cocks" Sexton uses humor and personification images to acknowledge the power of the male and female sexual relationship. Her childhood anger has been transferred. She can now accept the partnership of the man and woman, or the "cock" and its "home." (line 14) But though she shows the cock can be "angel-like,/folding in their sad wing,/animal sad," (lines 3-5) the cock can also be violent, "battering" its way home. (line 16) It has many different facets and personalities, but the strength it empowers to the consummate act is almost a religious experience. "When they fuck they are God." (line 24) And the experience stays with them

through the night until the next morning.

In Sexton's "Water," the female persona manages to assert herself in the sexual relationship. In the opening stanzas, the lovers are the fisherman watching the creatures of the water - the fish and the loons - go about their daily lives, and the female persona watches a loon fall into the lake. This reminds her of the compatible power between women and the water. Mythic figures of female power, like sirens and the stuff of fairytales, bewitch men with the aid of water. Water is mysterious; it is "worse than woman." It calls to him and "empties" him as a woman does. (lines 21-2) The persona is gratified that she too, has this power over men. "I have known water," what it is to be like the water, "exhausting" her lovers. (lines 25-6) And the men drown in her, while she sings to them "all night," these "mouths that float back later," dead, their bodies still grasping on to anything they can of her. (lines 29-30) This is an interesting image for Sexton, and demonstrates the growth she has had in accepting her power as a woman.

Moving on from the transitional feminist work of Anne Sexton, we move on to the solid frustrations of Adrienne Rich. As one of the first female poets and mothers, even before Sexton, Rich was much more concerned with political issues and questions of the female in a social context, not only as mothers and homemakers, but as catalysts for a new definition of femininity in the workplace and the world. In "Like This Together" Rich explores how the perpetuation of two lovers in the form of a child causes them to grow together in desperation of the unknown and powerful nature they have created, and that faces a destructive world. The child itself grows out of destruction. Nature is breaking down, "tearing

down, tearing up" the houses of the lovers childhood's. (line 14) The couple must create new life, and by the action of this creation, speak against the destruction. But their's has already proven a difficult relationship. The woman remembers they sat together like "drugged birds/in a glass case" (lines 10-11) with "silence between our teeth." (line 3) They must come together as a couple; they must come to an understanding of their relationship with each other as well as the significance of the new life. Before the consummation, the persona identifies with her partner as both her mother and the event of her birth. Like Sexton's father to her, this man is both her salvation, her "cave" and her "nightmare" that drowns. (lines 46-9) This love between them is like the birth she experienced in which she had to rely on the insecurity of the world, sucking air and still twitching in her dreams. The consummation that follows is desperate. Their "Miscarried knowledge" of each other is not love. (line 50) Rich compares their love-making to a "carrion" that has been picked clean. (line 53) Life grows out of death because of their "fierce attention" to the hyacinth buds and the stem — symbolic of the phallus and ovaries. (line 60) The new life is cut off, like a "severed hand," and the persona feels it tingling. (line 65) She and her lover are a tree on fire with the child, and the child/fire -seen both as a destructive and a creative force- is sucking the "blind power" of their roots. (line 75) They have created the child because of the calamity of nature, but they do not know what to do with their own creation except endure it. It is bigger than them; it is unknown, and yet a part of them. The only action they can take is to grip on the earth, hope for salvation and burn in their consummate sacrifice. The partnership between the man and the woman has developed, but out

of fear and not love. This is frightening. Rich seems to be saying that nature pushes the world like an assembly line. We must create and recreate before we are ready, and the action drives us together as a race, but it is almost Darwinian. Our existence is bigger than we are, and the survival is frightening. From the women's point of view, she has never had the chance to realize herself as an individual before the partnership. She is pushed into the coupling by society, and she will continue to push out the children she cannot understand.

In "The Demon Lover," Rich can be said to be continuing the scenario of "Like This Together." It opens quietly. The couple is parking while the snow falls, and desire ebbs under the surface. The woman's persona, looking in retrospect, gives way to the "half-grown bones/of innocence" of her youthful self. (lines 17-18) Here, like in Sexton's "Water," there are many images of water. The snow drowns the houses as the moon swims through the sky. Appropriately, the young girl feels her own power and turns down the boy's request for sex. The persona knows that she will not enjoy being ridden. She is angry at his use of language to try and persuade her. "He doesn't know;" (line 40) that her life is going beyond that, the world has moved beyond these "weary" thoughts of love and youth. (line 45) The world is trembling under more frightening issues, and we go on "making heirs and heirlooms" without resolving war, or social injustice. "Posterity trembles" because of the materialism, this urge for creation of bodies and buildings and national power that "we have to make." (lines 70-72) The persona cries out for it to stop- she says, "how much longer, dear child,/do you think sex will matter?" (lines 79-80) She wants to use the same language the boy did to seduce the world into happiness and

acceptance of both sexes as people. Otherwise, "death's in the air," and without survival of the now, the future will die anyway. She speaks of the "harp of my hair," a traditional symbolism of female power and sexuality. (lines 92-3) She will use all these ideas to sing to the world that is "black and bruised" and dying because "we are our words," and right now they are cruel and false. (line 97) The persona grasps for the "sweet hands" of the world, urging them to move with her, sing with her, use the language to change the future, but like the boy in the car, she fails to persuade and the grasp is "Broken!" (lines 100-101) The persona falls into the own sea of her power, still resisting that she will find out the subtle secret that resists her triumph. The persona is searching within herself for the muse. It is a struggle against a world of men that, like in Ibsen's play, have expected the women to create the children while they create the society, and in this poem Rich's persona screams in protest that the woman is drowning in her own frustration to grow and write and change the world.

As poets both Sexton and Rich were extremely complicated women who explored fascinating but very different topics in their poetry - which - nevertheless, enabled their work to grow into compatible essences of personal and social realizations as women. Sexton, as a transitional feminist artist, saw the layered development and conflicted love of a girl for her father, and for men in general, as a source of insight into the psychological and social complexity of living as a woman. Sexton learns to be feminist merely by acknowledging her power. She can cry, forgive, rejoice, and triumph as a woman. The poems I have chosen show Sexton's growth as a sexual being. On the other hand, Rich has developed a feminist

poetics that doubles back into the issues of how tormenting it is to be a female, sexual, and create a social identity at the same time. Her struggles are personal conflicts against a world oppression of the feminist writer and the sex as a whole. But for both Sexton and Rich, as a part of the generation of privileged female poets who were beginning to produce imagery that expressed their reluctance to relinquish what they felt was their social entitlement as women, the beauty and path-breaking courage of their work continues to elicit wide admiration.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Middlebrook, Diane Wood. Anne Sexton: A Biography. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991

Rich, Adrienne. "When We Dead Awaken: Writing As Re-Vision." Twentieth Century Poetry. Nesset, Kirk, ed. 20th Century Poetry Class text, pp.156-164.

———— "The Demon Lover." I Hear My Sisters Saying: Poems by Twentieth-Century Women. Konele, Carol, and Dorothy Walters, eds. New York:Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1976, pp.239-242.

———— "Like This Together" A Controversy of Poets: An Anthology of Contemporary American Poetry. Leary, Paris, and Robert Kelly, eds.New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc. 1965, pp.375-378.

Sexton, Anne. "All My Pretty Ones," "Water." A Controversy of Poets: An Anthology of Contemporary American Poetry. Leary, Paris, and Robert Kelly, eds. New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc. 1965, pp.400-403.

———— "The Moss of His Skin" I Hear My Sisters Saying: Poems by Twentieth-Century Women. Konele, Carol, and Dorothy Walters, eds. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1976, pp.30-31.

———— "The Fury Of Cocks" Twentieth Century Poetry. Nesset, Kirk, ed. Class text, pp.126-127.

HIS EARLY MORNING WALK

by Raymond Nolan

He awoke and noticed the burn on his palm. Through his half open eyes he peeked at his hand and wondered how it had happened. There had been a lot of drinking; this he knew. He closed his eyes briefly and smiled. There would be a hang over. He was pretty sure of that. So there was really no need to smile — yet.

He swung his left leg over the edge of the bed and his right followed naturally. A clump of hair on the lower shin of his right leg had curled up to almost nothing. He remembered. Virgil and he had spent hours sipping dry martinis and burning each others arm and leg hairs. He had won — had forced Virgil to quit first — but was scarred none the less. He thought of Polly. She had been beautiful to only him for twenty four years and three hundred and sixty four days. Was she beautiful last night? A dumb question, he thought. He wished he could remember the details. It was too early. He wanted to see his wife. She was twenty five years his now, just as Virgil and Marion were to each other after last night. Too early, he thought. He needed his walk. He knew he was nothing until he ventured downstairs. Once he did this, he would be fine.

He was in his mid-fifties and, yes, he was hungover. He had risen from his bed and was now standing upright. His head pounded and his breath was pungent. He remembered his discussion with his wife about perfume-mixing. Polly said there was no need for women to mix perfumes. He had argued otherwise only because he liked it when her lips moved. They moved well last night. He gave up the argument shortly after it began and hugged Polly. He wanted to see her and feel her arms, the small of her back, the skin just below her cheekbone. First he had to walk and clear his mind; then he could wear a name.

One step in front of the other he made his way slowly to the door of

his room. Outside, clouds blew by against sky. Only certain things were able to register. He looked down below and saw that the pile of leaves he had raked had found somewhere else to lay. Steam from the washing machine crawled out of the window two floors below. He cleared his eyes and watched a seagull slip through the wet air. His feet were cold and his head still hurt. He felt a bottle within his stomach and wished it was tomorrow. Or at least ten minutes later, downstairs, where it would all be different.

He reached the door and opened it. What was Polly doing? He wished he could have awakened beside her warm body and opened up with her, and molded with her, and had her to mold him. He passed their bathroom and slowly looked in, hoping to sniff the splendid compilation of Polly's fragrances which she kept on a table in the corner. He noticed another problem. His nose was clogged. His right nostril could harbor only a fraction of air and scents; his left nostril was entirely full of last night's runoff. He pouted and thought of approaching Polly's corner in the bathroom so that he could get a better smell of her. He shrugged off the idea as he had every morning at their seaside home.

His cold feet landed softly on the carpeted stairs, and he stopped and stared at the many more below him that he shared with Polly. There was Allison and her husband Pierce. A painter and a lawyer. It worked. Somehow, against their wishes, Allison had managed a dual life and was happy. Justin was a son — he liked him — but was really much of nothing in his eye. He had taken a friend in and was living with him. Apparently, Justin felt comfortable telling his father about his affinities. It wasn't strange, he said, it was divine. Thanks dad for understanding. It's not easy, I know. Those were his two that he shared with Polly. He could see them at the end of the stairs.

He descended three steps and counted the rest. There were eighteen more. He was glad it was Saturday. He would have a full day off to admire Polly. He couldn't wait. He made his way down two more steps and stopped. He reached down and picked up a scarf. It was Virgil's; he

knew this because he had given it to him for his birthday. They were such good friends. Virgil was awake every morning by five-thirty. After a jog, shower, and a bowl of Corn Flakes, it was off to work, where he spent ten hours stripping salmon from the sea. He could have been a doctor or a lawyer or a man of business, but he loved the ocean and the labor it brought him. He was a gentle man and tolerant. An atheist but attended church for Marion. It didn't bother him that souls believed in something higher and more holy. He went to church and sat quietly at the end of the pew, where he watched Marion dive into religious waters and find grace. Virgil loved her so. Marion's elegance Virgil had uncovered and refined, and he was to her a jewel of vast proportions, of sapphire and ruby enclosed in the finest platinum and gold casing.

The man walked slowly down the stairs, noticing the change in color of the red carpet as its threads were moved by his feet. The plants on the window sill were green and their soil moist. Polly must have just watered them. As he closed in on the final steps, he wiped away the film from his eyes that had collected overnight and kept him from many things he would liked to have seen this morning. He would have time later to retrace his steps and discover what he had missed. It was part of his early morning walk. Missing things.

He landed softly on the wooden floor and could now hear the three voices in the kitchen.

"Should I wake up Harper?" asked Virgil.

"Is he still asleep?" It was Marion.

"I think he's up," said Polly. "It always takes Harper a little longer. He'll be down soon."

It was good to hear his name and he smiled. He looked down the corridor and into the kitchen, where Polly stood above a steaming dish of bacon and eggs. He watched her talk and liked the way her lips moved. Yes, he remembered now. Her lips had moved well last night.

The Preservation of Human Integrity in the Great Chain of Being: An Explication of Alexander Pope's "An Essay on Man"

by Jason S. Fish

As beings with reasoning ability, we often find ourselves pontificating on the origin of, and the fundamental reason for, our existence. Although most of the time we are circumlocutory in our discussions, conclusions are sometimes reached. Alexander Pope, in his "An Essay on Man," examines the nature of our existence and of our origin. His goal in the essay is to "vindicate the Ways of *God* to Man" (page 636: line 16), or to present his own version of a *theodicy*. He examines the problem of *theodicy*, focusing on similar points that John Milton does in *Paradise Lost*; however, rather than approach the vindication from a theological perspective, Pope adopts Boethius' philosophical approach as displayed in *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Hence, Pope presents his speculations in a sociological and philosophical manner, which was seen by some theologically based critics of his time as blasphemous; however, if we examine his text closely, we will find that Pope emphasizes the preservation of Man's place in the Great Chain of Being, and that most of Pope's described tensions arise from this placement: a hardly blasphemous point.

In "The Design," the preamble to "An Essay on Man," Pope states his purpose for writing the essay. First of all, he wanted "to write some pieces on Human Life and Manners" (635); thus, he felt the best subject for him to discuss was Man in the abstract, his *Nature* and his *State*; since, to prove any moral Duty, to enforce any

moral precept, or to examine the perfection or imperfection of any creature whatsoever, it is necessary first to know what *condition* and *relation* it is placed in, and what is the proper *end* and *purpose* of its *being*. (635) It is from this goal that Pope decides to study "the science of Human Nature" (635). Pope also adds that by studying human beings in the abstract, he will avoid focusing on "finer nerves and vessels" (636), a preoccupation with detail which only can "[diminish] the practice, more than [advance] the theory, of Morality" (636).

However exact Pope may be in his depiction of his *theodicy*, he stresses that it is important we realize his goal is in steering betwixt the extremes of doctrines seemingly opposite, in passing over terms utterly unintelligible, and in forming a *temperate* yet not *inconsistent*, and a *short* yet not *imperfect*, system of Ethics. (636) Basically, then, Pope's philosophical approach is a focus on the "*general Map* of Man, marking out no more than the *greater parts*, their *extent*, their *limits*, and their *connection*, but leaving the particular to be more fully delineated in the charts which are to follow" (636).

In "Epistle I," Pope begins by stating that he and St. John will "Expatiate free, o'er all this *Scene of Man*" (636:5). Furthermore, "since Life can little more supply / Than just to look about us, and to die" (636:3-4), we need to look earnestly and live. Pope suggests that in order to "live" in our temporal world, we must be free from restriction so that we may examine freely the earthly world. But, implicit in this type of examination is our ability to understand our world in some objective manner, which is exemplified by the idea that the Garden of Eden is the Garden of the here and now:

Or Wild, where weeds and flow'rs promiscuous shoot;
Or Garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.
Together let us beat this ample *Field*.
Try what the open, what the covert, yield;
The latent tracts, the giddy heights explore,
Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar. (636:7-12)

In addition, Pope describes this Garden of the here and now as "A mighty Maze! but not without a plan" (636:6).

It may seem Pope is suggesting that we are able to decipher God's great plan; however, as implicitly stated in line twelve, we are not capable of such insight and should not "sightless soar"; we are limited to our world and should deal only with the *"Scene of Man"* (636:5). But, we must keep in mind that however elusive this Plan is, the Plan exists, even though the order to the "Maze" is unintelligible. Therefore, Pope's task is to "vindicate the Ways of *God* to Man" (636:16) through a merely human perspective and focus. Thus, he "Expatiat[es] free, o'er all this *Scene of Man*" (636:5), in an attempt to comprehend our reason for being (or create a human justification for our existence).

Right from the beginning of "An Essay on Man," Pope sets up the tension between human reason and God's reason. Our "Maze" has a plan, yet the question is, how much of this plan can we comprehend? Even by focusing on the human world, are we not limited in our ability to understand the *"greater parts"*? Pope addresses this by stating "Say first, of *God* above, or *Man* below, / What can we *reason*, but from what we know?" (636:17-18). In our vindication of the Creator, no matter what we do, we will define

God's reason from our perspective, "'Tis ours to trace him, only in our own" (636:22). But, are not all justifications human fabrications? Pope states that our knowledge, however we conclude, may not be accurate since "a part [may or may not] contain the Whole?" (636:32). And to throw us even farther away from trusting our human justifications, Pope adds, "Is the great Chain that draws all to agree, / And drawn supports, upheld by God, or thee?" (636:33-34).

Pope now has presented the crux of the paradox of knowing: we reason from our abilities, but when we reason on things outside of our experiences, then we "blindly creep" (636:12); however, is not the idea of "blindly creep[ing]," our idea in the first place? The problem of knowing becomes problematic in the strictest sense that we do not know if we are in control of our ideas, or if God is in control, or if we have some pervading element of God within us that causes us to conjecture, whether adequately or inadequately, about God's realm. Pope proposes the idea that only the paradox truly exists: everything we do is of human origin; but, there is an external plan, independent of us, which encompasses us in its plan.

Pope proffers a somewhat practical conclusion to this paradox in lines thirty-four and thirty-five by exclaiming "Presumptuous Man! the reason wouldst thou find, / Why form'd so weak, so little, and so blind?" (637). Pope is alluding to the story of Job and is utilizing its essence as an answer to his presented paradox. If we could understand this paradox, then we would be God; since we do not understand it, we must be humble in our humanity. To endeavor our intellectual grasping in realms unintelligible to us is presumptuous and leads only to prideful confusion. However, it is from this confusion that Pope is able to justify our existence in the

Chain of Being:

> Of Systems possible, if 'tis confest
> That Wisdom infinite must form the *Best*,
> Where all must *full* or not *coherent* be,
> And all that rises rise in due degree;
> Then, in the Scale of reas'ning Life, 'tis plain
> There must be, *some where*, such a Rank as *Man*..
> (637:43-48)

Thus, the question of truth changes from whether or not the Chain exists in fabrication, to whether or not "God has *plac'd him wrong*?" (637:50). But, if God is infinite, as Pope has defined Him, then "Respecting *Man* whatever wrong we call, / May, must be right, as relative to *All*" (637:51-52). Again, Pope expresses the tension of knowing. It seems that as we try to understand our place in the Chain of Being, we feel cheated and dumbfounded; however, we so easily forget that "'Tis but a Part we see, and not a Whole" (537:60). Our responsibility is to the part, not the Whole.

From the idea that we see only the human perspective of the Great Chain of Being and that God sees the Whole and has created this "maze" in which we live, Pope advances by stating that we must, therefore, confine our comprehension to what matters in our sphere:

> They say not Măn's imperfect, Heav'n in fault;
> Say rather, Mans as perfect as he ought;
> His knowledge measur'd to his State, and Place,

His time a Moment, and a Point his space,
If to be perfect in a certain Sphere,
What matter, soon or late, or here or there? (637:69-74)

The idea of perfection matters only in relation to our sphere and what we define; for in the Whole, who knows?

Pope reasons that since we are limited in all of our intellectual endeavors to human comprehension, we should not try to compare our conceptions of reality to a presumptuous understanding of a sphere more encompassing than just a human perspective, i.e. God's realm. Therefore, as he has stated several times, our focus should be on the "*Scene of Man*" (636:5). Hence, the knowledge we can be sure of is the knowledge of our being, i.e. how we operate from day-to-day.

However, rather than dismiss our entire notion of God as being a fabrication, which seems plausible since all we know is <u>us</u>, Pope points out that, on the contrary, since we cannot explain the origins of our sphere, God must exist. If we see human beings in the Chain as a part of the Whole, which is unintelligible to us, then there must be some external being that understands and is responsible for the Chain. But, if we look at <u>us</u> in the abstract, then all conclusions about God stem from our arrogance, not our humility. Yet, how much of God is in each part? Pope adds, thus, that all we have regarding God is hope:

Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;
Wait the great teacher, Death, and God adore!
What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,
But gives that *Hope* to be thy blessing now.

Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
Man never *is* but always *to be* blest;
The soul uneasy, and confin'd from home,
Rests, and expatiates, in a life to come. (637:91-98)

Since we have the ability from our humility to sense God's presence, we only can hope for disclosure some day. Pope emphasizes the universality of this hope when he writes that all of us have the "natural desire" (637:109), "To *be*" (637:109), which brings about the belief in God and the Chain.

With the idea, then, that we are rulers of our sphere, Pope begins his analysis of how we should rule our sphere. First of all, he states, "Go, wiser Thou! and in thy scale of sence / Weigh thy *Opinion* against *Providence*: / Call Imperfection what thou fancy'st such, / Say here he gives too little, there too much" (638:113-16). But, in doing this, we must remember that when we err, we err because of our ruling over our world:

If Man alone ingross not Heav'n's high care,
Alone made perfect here, immortal there:
Snatch from his hand the Balance and the Rod;
Re-judge his Justice, Be the God of God!
In *Pride* in reas'ning *Pride*, our error lies...(638:119-23)

Although Pope is very clear on this idea, when he states "And who but wishes to invert the Laws / Of Order, sins against th' Eternal Cause" (638:129-30), he confuses us. If we have no other choice but to rule over our world with hope that God someday will bring

salvation to us, then why are we sinning against the "Eternal Cause"? Pope is depicting again an inevitable tension that arises out of the inevitability of our judgment. Since we have no choice but to rule over our judgments of our world and exert our pride in our every move, we are felled. In a sense, Pope is suggesting that our natural state is of a fallen nature—not because of Adam and Eve's action—but because of the very nature of our inherent limitation in understanding God's plan and of our place in the Chain. From this notion, Pope argues that the only "reason right is to submit" (638:164).

Pope concludes "Epistle I" with the idea that as "The bliss of Man (could Pride that blessing find) / Is, not to act, or think, *beyond* Mankind" (638:189-90); we should "Cease then, nor Order *Imperfection* name: / Our proper bliss depends on what we blame. / Know thy own *Point*. This kind, this due degree / Of blindness, weakness, Heav'n bestows on thee. / Submit" (639:281-85). And furthermore, by knowing our limitations and focusing humbly only on our selves, we will come to realize that in relation to God, "'Whatever Is, is Right" (639:294).

From here, Pope begins examining the nature of human beings in the human realm. First of all, he states "KNOW then Thyself, presume not God to scan" (640:1). Our focus is on <u>us</u>, abstracted from the Chain of Being: "Plac'd on this Isthmus of a Middle State" (640:3). Hence, we need to do the following:

> Trace Science then, with Modesty thy Guide;
> First strip off all her Equipage of Pride;
> Deduct what is but Vanity or Dress.
> Or Learning's Luxury, or Idleness;

Or Tricks to shew the stretch of human Brain,
Mere curious Pleasure, or ingenious Pain;
Expunge the whole, or lop th' excrescent Parts
Of all our Vices have created Arts;
Then see how little the remaining sum,
Which serv'd the past, and must the times to come!
(640:43-52)

If we do this, our focus on our "Isthmus" becomes a search to discover our fundamental nature, which Pope concludes lies in a dynamic tension between Self-love and Reason: "Two Principles in Human Nature reign; / *Self-Love*, to urge; and *Reason*, to restrain" (640:53-54). Furthermore, it is the somewhat queasy balance of these two that "maintain[s], the Balance of the Mind" (671:120). Without this balance, however, we can destroy ourselves.

Remembering that we now are "The *God* within the *Mind*" (642:204), Pope discusses the notion that even our vice is similar to virtue in that when used in balance, it can provide us with true happiness. However, we always must remember that all of "The Lights and shades, whose well-accorded Strife / Gives all the *Strength* and *Colour* of our life" (641:121-22) are created by our human reasoning; but, instead of despairing over this fact, Pope now adds that if our desires prompt happiness, then the nature of these desires does not matter: "*That* Virtue's Ends from *Vanity* can raise, / Which seeks no Int'rest, no Reward but Praise. / And build on *Wants*, and on *Defects* of Mind, / The *Joy*, the *Peace*, the *Glory* of Mankind" (642:245-48). But, on the other hand, Pope also states that although happiness may be achieved, in our temporal world, our happiness is

just one of the positions on Fortune's Wheel:

> Each want of Happiness by Hope supply'd,
> And each Vacuity of Sense of Pride.
> These build as fast as Knowledge can destroy;
> In Folly's Cup still laughs the Bubble, *Joy*...(643:285-88)

And, it is this ephemerality to which we must submit. For this temporal world is our placement, for <u>now</u>, in the Chain of Being.

At the heart of "Epistle III" lies the foundation to all elements of the Chain and in the Chain. Pope states that love is the universal connector to all of these elements: "Behold the Chain of Love / Combining all below, all above" (643:7-8). Basically, everything is connected in some way, and love is at the center of every connection:

> ...Parts relate to Whole:
> One All-extending, All-preserving Soul
> Connects each Being, greatest with the least;
> Made Beast in Aid of Man, and Man of Beast:
> All serv'd, all serving; nothing stands alone;
> The Chain holds on, and *where* it ends, unknown!
> (643:21-26)

And, although human beings think the world is "*All* made for *One*" (644:48), Pope points out that in the entirety of the Chain of Being, the world is "*One* for *All*" (644:48). For human beings have reason to lead our lives, but in relation to the Chain, "all enjoy that Pow'r which *suits them best*" (644:80); therefore, we must realize that

although our studies are directed towards our own kind, which sometimes may cause us to feel abstracted from the Chain, we are connected universally and eternally to the Chain; it is our pride that makes us think we are not.

At the conclusion of the epistle, Pope begins discoursing on the idea of love connecting not only each link in the Chain, but also the particulars of particular links. In particular, Pope examines our link. He states that although we may differ in *"Modes* of *Faith"* (646:305), our only concern is "Charity" (646:308). Pope derives this from the idea of the Chain of Love:

> Such is the World's *great Harmony*, that springs
> From *Order*, *Union*, full *Consent* of Things!
> Where Small and Great, where Weak and Mighty,made
> To serve, not suffer, strengthen, not invade...
> ...Draw to one Point, and to one Centre bring
> Beast, Man, or Angel, Servant, Lord, or King.
> (646:295-302)

Thus, Self-love and love for others becomes "the same" (646:318).

In "Epistle IV," after examining the nature of our existence in relation to God and the Chain, and after analyzing the nature of our being in the temporal world, Pope examines the nature of happiness and how we attain it. First of all, happiness is the goal of every element of the Chain:

> O Happiness! Our Being's End and Aim!
> Good, Pleasure, Ease, Content! whate'er thy name:

That Something still, which prompts th' eternal sigh
For which we bear to live, or dare to die;
Which still so near us, yet beyond us lies. (646-47:1-5)

However, it seems that happiness eludes us from time to time; thus, it only seems natural to ask where does happiness dwell. Pope answers that happiness is "Fix'd to no spot" (647:15). It has many forms; hence, the only true definition of happiness is tautological: "Happiness is Happiness" (647:28). But, we can lose touch with happiness if we forget what our goal is and where we fit into the Chain:

Remember Man! 'the Universal Cause
Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral Laws';
And makes what Happiness we justly call,
Subsist not in the Good of one, but all. (647:35-38)

And, finally, it is most important to note that happiness is unique and equal to all: "One common Blessing, as one common Soul" (647:62); but, by Fortune's Wheel do we find ourselves unequal: "But Fortune's gifts if each alike possest, / And each were equal, must not all contest" (647:63-64).

It may seem confusing that at this point in the essay Pope begins moralizing on what is true, virtuous happiness, especially when we supposedly were given the right to make our own perfection; however, Pope is attempting to depict Edenic happiness, not earthly happiness. In his analysis of the human condition, he has stripped away all frivolity and found only self-love and reason. From there, he has reasoned that what connects all of us is God's

love, and our response to that love, which only can be charity. From here, Pope discourses on virtuous happiness, trying to withstand the inequalities of temporal, Fortune-provided happiness, which is why we find Pope stating in "Epistle IV" "Know then this Truth (enough for man to know) / Virtue alone is Happiness below" (650:310). And, with the idea of the union of the Whole, Pope adds that:

> the Good...
> ...Sees, that no Being any Bliss can know
> But touches some above, and some below;
> Learns, from this Union of the rising *Whole*,
> The first, last Purpose of the human Soul;
> And knows, where Faith, Law, Morals all Began,
> And end, in Love of God, and Love of Man.
> (650:330-340)

It is our love for the part that allows us to move up the Chain, seeing more and more of the Great Plan: "God loves from Whole to Part: but human soul / Must rise from Individual to the Whole" (651:361-62), cf. Plato, Plotinus, Boethius, Dante, and Milton.

What Pope does in "An Essay on Man" is explicate our role in the Chain of Being, preserving many of the philosophical tensions that exist for us in our place in the Chain. If, indeed, our goal is happiness, then Pope discourses on how we are to attain that state of happiness—with all of the tensions still intact. And overall, he poses some of the great perennial questions dealing with the nature of knowing. The fundamental questions remain: How do we know when we are creating rather than receiving Grace?; Is *theodicy* just our

own creative conjecturing about what we would like the world to be?; Or is there some unintelligible element pervading our consciousness, linking us to a higher link in the Chain?

Although Pope concludes that God does exist and that the Love of God and of Human Beings is what holds the Chain together, he still emphasizes the point that our focus should be on ourselves—for it is only through self-love that we can aspire to feeling our connection to the Chain, rather than abstracting ourselves from the Chain in our arrogant inquiry. Thus, when Pope makes the statement "Whatever is, is right," he is making a two-fold statement. First of all, in the scheme of all things, in God's mind, whatever is, is right. Secondly, in our particular link of the Chain, whatever we create—not being compared to any elements outside of our link since that would be "sightless soar[ing]"—is right only as we justify it. In other words, without an absolute, perfect creation to which to compare anything, everything becomes humanly right.

Finally, Pope's discourse on *theodicy* is filled with many paradoxes; yet, he maintains the preservation of our human integrity in the Great Chain of Being, however elusive the meaning of the Chain is. He examines our human nature, stripping us of all of our vanities, reaching a core which is the key to our connection to the Chain. But, while this seems appropriately virtuous, Pope also points out that there is the tension between our fabricating reality and reality creating us; hence, the hope for divine revelation becomes the only eternal truth in regards to any knowledge we maintain as real.

WORKS CITED

Pope, Alexander. "An Essay on Man." *Eighteenth Century English Literature*. Ed. Geoffrey Tillotson. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers 1969.

The Rain Splashes

The rain splashes
into soft puddles
as my world slowly dies.

The seagulls are screaming
all around me
but I can hardly
hear them
over the screaming
in my mind.

Why did you leave me
to walk the beach alone?

—Lisa Dewey

A Tear Falls

A tear falls into a puddle
A bird, tired from the storm,
    falls into the ocean.
A heart shatters on the cold,
    hard concrete.
A starving woman
    falls into the street.
A flag from a conquered nation
    falls into the mud.
A beaten child falls
    to the ground.
A star falls from the sky,
And another tear falls
    into a puddle.

—Lisa Dewey

The Mexican Revolution: A Multidisciplinary Survey

by Steve Tredennick

Throughout Latin American political and economic history the recurrent theme has been the domination of the political and economic superstructure by a patriarchal elite resistant to change. The primary goals of these individuals have been to maintain and reinforce their power through the manipulation of social structures. In their efforts, Latin American elite codified the colonial system of corruption and suppression-disabling even the pequeña bourguesia from fully participating in government and politics. While non-fictional historical texts are an important way of gaining an understanding of the particular events of this period in Latin American history, a full understanding of the complex network of historical implications on day-to-day reality is better achieved through the combination of non-fictional historical text and the fictional representations of the lives of the individuals of this period.

The historical novels of the revolutionary period provide striking insight into the behavior of the Mexican people in a difficult period in their history. The revolution against the nepotistic and despotic tendencies of Mexican elitist government was an ideological product of a broad spectrum of people all acting separately to achieve their desired ends. Historical novels which attempt to define motivations and philosophies of the revolutionary period in Mexico are faced with the task of intertwining characters from various backgrounds-African, Indian, Spanish, and those of mixed bloods-in the effort to create order where there is none.

In Mexico, a breakdown of the many ideological justifications for revolution is sometimes difficult because of the immense degree of factionalism based on regional geographic locations. Reasons for revolt in the north were based on the expansion of the central government, which posed a direct threat to the power of the landed elite. As a result, the north banned together under the rallying cries for a federalist system based on capitalism and anti-clericalism. On the other hand, the revolutionary ideology of the southerners was based on the need for a strong, egalitarian central government system which could reform the plantation system created by the upper-class political elites.

This dichotomy of values finds its way into the novels of the revolution in many interesting ways. In Mariano Azuela's *The Underdogs,* the main character, Demetrio Macías, represents the ideology of the small farming community of the north. As Azuela describes him, Macías is a simple man who has been forced to the revolution as a result of personal conflicts with the corrupt federales:

> [Macías] was born in Limón, close by Moyahua, right in the heart of Juchipila canyon. I had my house and my cows and a patch of land, see: I had everything I wanted....But soon they start bothering you and the policeman walks up and down and stops occasionally, with his ear to the door....Now if they leave understand you, everything's all right; they leave you alone and that's all there is to it; but sometimes they try to talk you down and hit you and — well you know how it is.... (Azuela, 55)

But at the same time, contrary to Azuela, Augustín Yañez in *The Edge of the Storm* provides the impression that the farming community of the revolution, in this case those in southern Mexico, are dissatisfied with their impoverished lives as well as afraid of the seemingly anarchic ideology of the northern revolutionaries.

To this apprehension of the sweeping revolt in the north, Yañez adds the discontent in the lives of the tenant farmers on the plantations. Yañez's most colorful example of the discontented farming community of the south is Don Timoteo Limón, a small farmer, similar economically to Demetrio Macías, who is faced with "The failure of the harvest for four successive years...The death of Rosalía...The paralysis of his wife, a helpless invalid now, for ten years...Damían's absence, which has been a daily torture"(Yañez, 17). And, Yañez adds to this, "and all God's will"(17) in an effort to adequately emphasize the reliance of the southerner's on the church, again further exhibiting the paradoxical ideologies of the revolution.

Despite the differences between the north and south on many different ideological tenets, the one class which found itself in a position to significantly better itself was the middle class, or pequeña bourguesia. Carlos Fuentes in *Where the Air is Clear* sets out to portray post-revolutionary Mexican middle class in its full array of luxury, tyranny, and wretched inequality. Ironically, the novel depicts the survival, beneath Mexico's recent overlay of internationalism, of its secret pagan Gods with their insatiable demands for bloodshed and betrayal. In the end it is the historical past that manipulates Mexico's present and future-not revolution, bourgeoisie, or even Fuentes the author.

The protagonist of the novel is Mexico City itself; the title

refers, sardonically, to the capital's overbearing smog. Fuentes, in the person of Ixca Cienfuegos, a stranger who is both character and mythological reincarnation of the Aztec god of war, takes the reader through many layers of Mexican society by eliciting confessions from bankers, cabdrivers, cooks, prostitutes, beggars, revolutionary heroes, and dispossessed aristocrats. Rodrigo Pola describes the difficulties of describing Mexican society:

> He felt small and ridiculous: small and ridiculous was how any man had to feel when he tried to explain anything about Mexico. Explain? No, he said to himself. One does not explain Mexico. One believes in Mexico, with fury, with passion, and in alienation. (Fuentes, 49)

Of the characters, the most compelling is the life story of Federico Robles—a ruthless and sentimental tycoon whose rise and fall are symbolic of the tale of modern Mexico. Robles, the son of an Indian peasant who wife was raped by a local landowner, becomes successively, a protégé of the local priest; a cavalry officer under Carranza; a provincial lawyer with significant ties to the new government; and finally one of the most powerful men in Mexico. Yet Fuentes allows the historical nature of Mexico to rear its head and Robles' financial empire collapses and he winds up a humble cotton farmer in the north.

In the novel, *The Death of Artemio Cruz*, Fuentes paints a portrait of a man born into Mexican society an agrarian peasant, who was able to rise up to the status of landed gentry by betraying the

ideals of the Mexican revolution. Artemio Cruz was born on April 9, 1889, into the heart of the Porfiriato. During his childhood years, Artemio would live day-to-day as a member of the impoverished classes eking out an existence. Only twenty years later, however, Artemio Cruz found his way into the upper echelons of society: La Revolucíon. Fuentes' commentary on Artemio: "Artemio Cruz. So that was the name of the new world that had risen from the ashes of civil war. So that was the name of the newcomers who had appeared to dispossess the old order....unfortunate land where each generation must destroy its masters and replace them with new masters equally ambitious and rapacious."(Fuentes, 45)

Cruz is a man who was made by the revolution and whose cynical co-optation of its ideals makes him in turn symbolic of the failures of modern Mexico. According to Fuentes, the failure of Mexico to translate the Revolution's original idealism into an honest, just, and equitable polity is to be blamed on a new class of military men turned tycoons and politicians.

> You will bequeath this country: your newspaper, the hints and adulation, the conscience drugged by lying articles written by men of no ability;...You will bequeath them their crooked labor leaders and captive unions, their new landlords, their American investments, their jailed workers, their monopolies and their great press, their wet-backs, hoods, secret agents, their foreign deposits, their bullied agitators, servile deputies, fawning ministers, elegant tract homes,...their fleas and wormy tortillas, their illiterate Indians,

> unemployed laborers, rapacious pawnshops, fat men armed with aqualungs and stock portfolios, thin men armed with their fingernails: they have their Mexico, they have their inheritance....(269)

Fuentes' Cruz embodies this historical legacy as he shields himself behind glory to justify raping in the name of the revolution, self-aggrandizement in the name of working for the good of the revolution, and the perpetuation of the ancient cycles of exploitation and inequalities of wealth, be it by selling out to North American imperialism or exploitation of the Mexican peones.

Where the Air is Clear is a novel written precisely to deconstruct this rising middle class. While *The Death of Artemio Cruz* attacks them on a symbolic scale, Fuentes' earlier novel is an attack on all facets of these elites. The novel is filled with character who, at best, are able to achieve only material happiness. This elite cast of characters have no traditions and are characterized by a lack of conviction and civic responsibility.

However, Fuentes is not the only author to note the cyclical nature of Mexican history and the revolution. Azuela characterizes the revolution through the actions of Demetrio Macías:

> Demetrio frowned deeply. Picking up a stone absent-mindedly, he threw it to the bottom of the canyon. Then he stared pensively into the abyss, watching the arch of its flight. Look at that stone; how it keeps on going....(Azuela, 147)

Azuela's novel, however, gives the impression that the evil in the revolution is tied up less in the idea that the ideals have been abandoned, which is the assertion of Fuentes. In *The Underdogs* the overarching theme is the senseless violence mandated by the revolution. Demetrio sums up the theme in the following monologue:

> You're right, there's no gettin' around it, we're in a bad way. The soldiers grumble about the officers, the officers grumble about us, see? And we're damn well ready now to send both Villa and Carranza to hell to have a good time all by themselves....I guess we're in the same fix as that peon from Tepatitlán who complained about his boss all day long but worked on just the same. That's us. We kick and kick, but we keep on killing and killing.(142)

Even though Azuela and Fuentes express anguish at the seemingly pointless progression of the revolution, there were political reasons behind the chaotic progression of events. Madero was not taken seriously because the Díaz regime was busy with the Reyistas in the south. As Madero was forced to flee to exile, the revolution in the north took on a different shape and new leaders emerged; most importantly, Pancho Villa.

With the emergence of Pancho Villa, the novelists of the revolution found a leader in which they could base the romantic ideas of revolution. Almost immediately, Villa became a symbol for the Mexican of the end of an oppressive regime and foreign

domination. In talking about the legend of Villa, Azuela writes:

> The bare facts, the mere citing of observation and experience meant nothing....Villa, indomitable lord of the sierra, the eternal victim of all governments...Villa as Providence, the bandit, that passes through the world with the torch of an ideal: to rob the rich and give to the poor. (77)

This passage demonstrates not only the significance of Villa and his army as fighters of the despotic forces of the government in the North, it also illustrates how the legend of Villa attains a status which becomes greater than the man himself. Yañez furthers the notion of revolutionary as symbol as he states, "If, instead of 'General Reyes!' the cry had been raised for any other strong man, capable of leading the suffering people under his banner against the proud tyrant, the name would have been acclaimed. Reyism is essentially impersonal. It expresses a reaction, a longing, a necessity of society..."(Yañez, 154)

Aside from the functional necessity of the leaders of the revolution as ideological symbols, these leaders also played a significant role in the formulation of political goals. The leaders of the revolution became tools of the intelligentsia for the wide dispersal of propaganda. Many of the characters of the novels of the period exemplify this conception. Azuela uses Luis Cervantes in particular to characterize this phenomenon. Here Cervantes articulates the ideological importance of men like Macías:

> You do not yet realize your lofty noble function. You are a modest man without ambitions, you do not wish to realize the exceedingly important role you are destined to play in the revolution....You are under arms to protest against the evils of all the *caciques* who are overrunning the whole nation. We are the elements of a social movement which will not rest until it has enlarged the destinies of our motherland. (Azuela, 55)

For Yañez, the description of this phenomenon is portrayed through two separate characters who demonstrate two different way in which ideology is shaped. On the one hand, Damián Limón represents the intellectual philosopher who attempts to codify the societal wrongs. On the other hand, Anacleto Morones provides the historical context for the changes that are so rapidly occurring in the present(a year before the call to arms). By using both of these characters, Yañez is able to synthesize the historical-sociological context of the need for change in Mexican society.

One of the important problems of Mexican society not yet addressed is the significant influence of foreign enterprise. The United States, in particular, had managed to achieve a significant degree of influence in the Mexican economy through corruption of government officials. Needless to say, the pequeña bourguesia, the members of society who were most affected by American financial influence, felt the need to eradicate foreign influence altogether.

Mexico entered an economic slump from 1907-1911. By 1907 the percentage of foreign control in Mexico had reached record heights. Furthermore, the United States was quite evidently reaping

the benefits of their investments. "By 1910, the United States was receiving 77 per cent of Mexico's mineral exports, as compared to only 42 per cent at the start of the Porfiriato." (Cockroft, 22) Of the novelists of the revolution, it is Juan Rulfo who most dramatically portrays the way the Americans were able to influence the social and familial aspects of Mexican life.

Railroad-building and industrialization were the two most important aspects of economic change during the Porfiriato. And, on the surface, the dramatic improvements in transportation and the increased efficiency of production were great improvements in the Mexican society. However, the 15,000 miles of railroad lines constructed during the 1890's were funded primarily by significant foreign investments in conjunction with the assistance of the local political elites. "President Diaz' rail policy after 1890 was strictly one of foreign concessions. U.S. business elements came to control the entire rail grid...."(17) In fact, almost 85% of U.S. foreign investment in Mexico during the Diaz regime was in mining and resultantly railroads.(17) And, not surprisingly, these industries were the two principal components of the economic infrastructure of industrializing cities throughout the Porfiriato.

In Rulfo's short story "Paso del Norte", Rulfo describes how a young Mexican is forced to look north to the railroads in order to provide for his family. The revolution has essentially destroyed the economy, and the young man is no longer able to find employment. The young man explains:

> And at first I sold eggs and then chickens and later pigs, and even that didn't go badly, if I may say so. But

> money runs out; the children come and they drink it down like water and then there's none left for the business and nobody wants to give you credit. I already told you, last week we ate weeds, and this week, well not even that. (Rulfo, 124)

In answer to the man's problems, he chooses to leave his family with his father and go north; a resolution which eventually fails as well:

> Soon, Father. As soon as I get the money together I'll come back. I'll pay you double for what you do for them. Just feed them, that's all I ask you. (125)

On the road, the young man finds that the American owned railroads are the only source for money, despite their tendency to exploit the proletariat for relatively cheap wages:

> 'Listen, they say that at Nonoalco they need people for unloading the trains.'
>
> 'And they pay?'
>
> 'Of course, two pesos for twenty-five pounds.... The railroads are serious. They're not the same thing. Let's see if you are brave enough.' (125)

In theory, the Mexican Constitution of 1917 marked the synthesis of the revolution and the beginning of the reform period in Mexico. The Constitution grew out of an attempt of Venustiano Carranza and his supporters to consolidate their military victories

over Victoriano Huerta, Pancho Villa, and Emiliano Zapata and, more importantly to legitimize Carranza's claim to the leadership of the revolutionary state.

Carranza attempted to control the contents of the new constitution by barring any of the followers of the other revolutionary factions from the convention and submitted a draft which essentially echoed the Constitution of 1857.(In fact, this new draft even furthered the powers of the central executive.) However, despite Carranza's attempts to control the proceedings, young, educated radicals led by Francisco Mugica managed to gain a majority. Most of the Carranza document was rejected, and in its place they drafted a document which called for far reaching and rapid social reform. Thus the document established on February 5, 1917 became a consolidation of the ideals of the Mexican revolution and a blueprint for social change.

Almost immediately, the paradox of the Constitution of 1917 became evident in Mexican society. The Carranza government found little or no reason to abide by the constitution and instead assumed a style of leadership comparable to the days of the Porfiriato. It would not be until the days of Cardenas that any
inroads towards social reform would be made for the Mexican proletariat.

Evidence of the paradoxical nature of the Constitution of 1917 is abundant in the novels of the revolution; most of it dealing with the false promises of land reform. Article 27 of the constitution, generally, provides:

(1) Lands seized illegally during the Porfiriato should

be returned to their rightful owners.
(2)The state retains the right to take control of any private lands or resources in order to assure a more equitable distribution of public wealth.
(3)Only Mexicans by birth have the right to acquire lands or to obtain concessions for exploitation of mines or waters.
(4)The government may divide large landed estates, to develop small land holdings and to establish new centers of rural population with such lands and waters which may be indispensable to them.

However, as Juan Rulfo is quick to point out in his short story "They gave us the land", this article was essentially a wish list. "They gave us the land" is a testimony to the lives of the native Indian population who was theoretically supposed to benefit from this article of the constitution. In the guise of a conversation between a native Indian and a government official responsible for delegation of the reclaimed land, Rulfo spells out what the reforms meant to the Mexican peasantry:

'But, sir, the earth is all washed away and hard. We don't think the plow will cut into the earth of the Plain that's like a rock quarry. You'd have to make holes with a pick-axe to plant the seed, and even then you can't be sure that anything will come up; no corn or anything else will come up.'

'You can state that in writing. And now you can

> go. You should be attacking the large-estate owners and not the government that is giving you the land.'
>
> 'Wait, sir. We haven't said anything against the center....' (12)

A government acting to enforce the ideals of the Constitution of 1917 would find difficulty with assigning land that is worthless to the Mexican agrarian workers, yet in this case the government finds that placement of the Indian peasantry on unsustainable land is much more profitable politically and economically for the Mexican elite.

The same paradoxical notions about the constitution are more eloquently stated by Fuentes, as the conscience of the main character, Artemio Cruz, speaks to him on his death bed:

> You cannot stop events. Let's go on and give up those fields to the peasants. After all, its land that can only be dry-farmed. You will lose very little. We give it up, so the Indians will go on raising only patch-crops. And you will see that when they are obligated to us, they'll leave their patches to be hoed by their women, and return to working our irrigated fields for wages. Look: you pass for a hero of the agrarian reform, and it costs you nothing. (Fuentes, 49)

And, as Artemio Cruz makes the attempt to come to terms with his actions in the past, we the reader are confronted with the chingón nature of the Mexican government, the chingáda nature of the Mexican Indian and the circular nature of the Mexican revolution.

The roles change and the ideals change, but the constant is the oppression of an elitist regime which does not answer to the needs of the people.

The actual results for the Mexican pequeña bourguesia are dramatically different than for the agrarian peasantry. The 1917 Constitution represented the Revolution's only clear cut and lasting victory; i.e. the ideological victory. "Articles 27 and 123, agrarian reform and labor's "Bill of Rights,"(Cockroft, 234-235) did not go as far as some of the more radical intellectuals would have liked, but the 1917 Constitution did, to the distress of moderates, go a long way toward laying the ideological basis for radical socioeconomic change in Mexico.

As a result, the period of 1916-1924 can be characterized as a synthesis of the pequeña bourguesia, revolutionaries, and elites. And although this process did not come easily, as the post-revolutionary fighting exemplifies, it marked the establishment of a stable political infrastructure allowing new paths of economic and social growth. The remaining challenge for the new rulers was to establish a broad based regime that could adjust to new economic and social realities, while accommodating the needs of all important groups in the political process: elites, bourgeoisie, and labor.

In a sentence, Jason Hart sums up the revolution:

> Stabilization required the meshing of liberalism and nationalism in order to reconcile and balance the differences between the dynamic, powerful, and upwardly mobile forces of the pequeña burguesía and those...of Mexico's largest, most prestigious and

wealthy families. (Hart, 327)

The bourgeoisie had fought to rid themselves of the caste ridden hierarchical nature of Porfirian society and "to facilitate the rise to power of representatives of their class."(328) Interestingly, however, this leaves out the lower class revolutionary factors and their influences on the revolution.

Certainly, the peasants were a key component of revolutionary change in the Mexican society. Madero, without their support, would probably have remained in exile in Texas. Their cries of "Effective suffrage — No Reelection" did not go without an ear. However, what they found in the wake of revolution was distinctly similar to the lot that was their during the Porfiriato. The higher level of consciousness concerning the need for social legislation was not quite enough to make any significant differences for the peasant.

By 1940, the Mexican population was still 80% rural in nature and aside from a trend towards increasing availability of education, the peasant was still rooted to the land. The small businessman, the pequeña bourguesía, came out the winner. The small businessman found greater upward mobility both economically and socially; and the reform laws were not enforced in any way as to make a difference.

The novelists of the revolution have somewhat different notions of what the revolution meant to Mexico. For Fuentes, the revolutionary ideals of 1910 provided a necessary embodiment of paths to reform. However, the reality of the revolution did not manifest itself in these terms. Men like Artemio Cruz simply replaced the Diaz regime with an equally corrupt method of

operation, providing for Fuentes the cyclical nature of history. As Fuentes explains in *Where the Air is Clear*:

> Ours is a land which has had redeemers, its anointed, its higher-being men. But perhaps they disappeared because of the abundance of chimps they had to face. They succumbed. Mexico has never had a successful hero. To be heroes, they had to fall. Cuauhtémoc, Hidalgo, Madero, Zapata. The hero who triumphed, Cortés, is not accepted as such. This may be extended to the nation itself: has Mexico ever accepted itself as triumphant? No, we taste and take seriously only our defeats. Victories are converted into empty holidays; Cinco de Mayo. But the Conquest, the war with the United States....(Fuentes, 47)

Rulfo, different yet the same as Fuentes, feels betrayed by the final results of the revolution. His short stories portray the revolution as a whirlwind of change where things remain the same. And, although this sounds antithetical to the essence of revolution, it seems to have some basis in this period of Mexican history.

Azuela, writing at a different point in time and therefore from a different perspective, notes the need for change in Mexican society. However, like the other authors of the period, Azuela does not agree with the method nor the results. Yañez provides the overall backdrop for the revolution and what it meant to live in a time of impending change.

These various opinions on this period of Mexican history pose

an interesting question in the assessment of the revolution: Did a revolution really occur? I offer three possible answers. If you interpret the revolution as the effort to erect large scale social reforms for the agrarian Mexican society, then yes a revolution did occur; and it failed. However, if you interpret the revolution as an effort of the middle class to create a system in which they were able to assume a significant role in Mexican society, the revolution did occur; and it was a success. Finally, if you interpret this period of time as marked by the need for dramatic social change to accommodate dramatic economic change, as I do, then there was no revolution other than an "Industrial Revolution"; and Mexico is still in the process of industrial revolution today.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Azuela, Mariano. The Underdogs. New York: Penguin Books, U.S.A., 1963.

Cockroft, James D.. Intellectual Precursors of the Mexican Revolution. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1968.

Fuentes, Carlos. The Campaign. New York: Harper Perrenial Publishers, 1990.

———————. The Death of Artemio Cruz. New York: The Noonday Press, 1964.

———————. Where the Air is Clear. New York: The Noonday Press, 1960.

Hart, John Mason. Revolutionary Mexico. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1987.

Rulfo, Juan. The Burning Plain and Other Stories. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967.

Yañez, Augustín. The Edge of the Storm. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1963.

The following two essays are from a Twentieth Century Novel class in which students were asked to construct parodies of one author's style while discussing the content of a novel by a different author. The student's chose from novels by Joseph Conrad, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf among others. See if you can guess whose style is being parodied and what novel is being discussed. —Editor's Note

EXCESSIVE! EXCESSIVE!

by Justin Wallin

Ashley, of course, returning home (home not simply a dwelling or wife or the offspring of manhood, but the land that harbors the many noble hearts of his lineage - and perhaps often lecherous or disdainful, no one will know, no one cares, for it was never his family's character, that is, it was never the actuality of their humanness that mattered, their lives and passions and weaknesses, but instead their names, the names that resulted in that of Lord Ashley, ninth Baronet, who was to attach his name; like some sort of appendage, by which to transform this Brett, this woman who had married and loved him before the war, into a Lady, and so it is that this woman is thought of as Lady Ashley, and it is only the name that remains of this Ashley fellow, not his actual existence, nor that of his forbearers, and not even his love for Brett, or her love for him, but simply a name, manifested in that which is not even his blood, so that his blood will never continue; his forbearers' blood thins and washes away as the manhood of others is layered, now in the name of Mike, before in the name of Cohn, over his that originally transformed this

Brett into a Lady, so that it is only the name that remains, and it is as thinned as the Lord's mental facilities were upon his return, as watery and weakened, in fact, non-existent, as he was in his shell-shocked state) when confronted with sleeping with his Lady in a bed refused to do so, instead forcing her to sleep with him on the floor, so it could not have been a fear or hatred of Brett at first, for he still slept with her (though one can only speculate as to whether passion still remained a part of their relationship, if indeed it can be called that, this burnt-out hulk of a man, this specter of a noble family, ministered to buy what eventually ceased to be love on the part of Lady Ashley, but more likely the remembrance of that love, so it is doubtful whether ever he was the Ashley he was before the war - at least some sort of glimmer of hope for his Lady to grasp onto - but probably was instead a petrified and violent being, like a badger when cornered and not knowing any other recourse but to attack, to rip and tear - though this was to come later, now he simply slept on the floor - and becoming so panicked that he could not tell friend from foe, much less carry on anything that could be with any accuracy called a relationship, or the close physical nature that is indigenous to the companionship between two lovers) but instead some dire need to be freed from a bed, whatever horrors it held, or he perceived it to hold for him that occupied his addled brain - a dense thicket of explosions, mud, barbed wire and the piercing screams emitted from dying soldiers; entreaties made by those who had no hope and knew this and yet still would not, could not, stop crying for some sort of comfort, some sort of escape - and eventually would manifest themselves in his physical rantings more dire than refusing the comforts of mattress and pillow, sheets and blankets: threatening this

Lady, this Brett, that he would kill her, and she knew he slept with a loaded service revolver, so her nights of sleeping with the Lord's body, which only resembled humanity by still holding the name of Lord Ashley, became a sort of deadly nursing as Brett would perform her nightly ritual (after the abuse and threats and quieted and the rapidly darting eyes had closed, if for only a few hours) of unloading the shells of the gun; of saving her life one more day, though she could not have known why, she could not have been able to see past this looming hulk of post-mortem flesh which had adorned her with the title of lady and which still shared her bed like some sort of morbid penance which she had to perform for sins to come; it is this past which comprises the name of Ashley, our lady Ashley, or Brett or however she will be called, but in the end it is still Ashley, the ghost of the rantings of a Lord that once loved and was loved, that came home from he war and finally only left her with a name whose only connotations are memory interwoven with memories - of love buried beneath anguish.

Stephen Discourses

by Bridget Brady

-And what do you think of *The Rainbow*? asked Lynch. It is obviously art, I mean, the book itself, but I'd like to hear your ideas on Lawrence's marriage theme using the definitions you just gave me for beauty and truth and art. I'm working on a paper about Lawrence and your ideas might give me ideas.

Stephen, following his own thought, was silent for a moment and then spoke.

-Lawrence, he said slowly, is discussing marriage as an artistic endeavor, as an attempt by and through pairings of human artists to create a synthesis of their individual qualities of *integritas, consonantia, claritas*. Translated: the wholeness, harmony, and radiance of the one human being is combined with another to give birth to a new and different sum of beauty. This, together with the presence of truth, that is, the truth that the human love exists and is whole within marriage, creates art.

-So marriage itself is the creation of art? Humanity as art? Art of humanity? asked Lynch.

-It is the attempt, said Stephen. The ceremony itself is the celebration of the human being as individual, and as the example of the human being as a creation on earth, and of the rich possibilities these human elements could create together. But the art as an end result is not necessarily attainable. Lawrence is describing the struggle of the couple as artist. Remember when Tom Brangwen speaks at the marriage of Anna and Will? His treatise is on the

essence of each angel consisting of the souls of one married couple together. In his own bumbling way he is defining the married couple as art - as truth and beauty combined - and Brangwen knows art only as a mystical experience, thus the angels. -So if Will were giving a similar speech at Ursula's wedding it would probably be related to churches, said Lynch.

-Possibly, said Stephen. It is the art-form he is most familiar with. He might say the married couple symbolizes the union of the God and His people through the building as a vehicle for worship, something like that.

-Something like it, Lynch agreed.

-Do you have the book with you? Stephen asked.

Lynch nodded and pressed a dog-eared copy into Stephen's outstretched hands saying simply:

-Proceed!

Stephen flipped through the pages and in the ensuing silence Lynch queried:

-So Anna and Will, for example, must find and combine each others wholeness, harmony, and radiance in order to create a marriage of beauty?

-Yes, Stephen replied, and the marriage as art must satisfy the intellect, which is truth, and the imagination, which is beauty. Remember when I said beauty ought to awaken an esthetic stasis prolonged and dissolved by the rhythm of beauty?

-Yes, said Lynch, excited. The sheaves...

-Exactly, the sheaves. Listen, Lawrence says, "They worked together, coming and going, in a rhythm, which carried their feet and bodies in tune. She stooped, she lifted the burden of sheaves, she

turned her face to the dimness where he was, and went with her burden over the stubble. She hesitated, set down her sheaves, there was a swish and hiss of mingling oats, he was drawing near, and she must turn again. And there was the flaring moon laying bare her bosom again, making her drift and ebb like a wave. He worked steadily, engrossed, threading backwards and forwards like a shuttle across the strip of cleared stubble, weaving the long line of riding shocks, nearer and nearer to the shadowy trees, threading his sheaves with hers...Into the rhythm of the work there came a pulse and a steadied purpose. There was only the moving to and fro in the moonlight, engrossed, the swinging in the silence, that was marked only by the splash of sheaves, and silence, and a splash of sheaves." There Will and Anna are in harmony. They have discovered the rhythm of their togetherness. They have apprehended each other as complex, multiple, divisible, the result of their parts and their sum, *consonantia.*

-And they have already discovered each other as integral and whole as individuals? Lynch asked.

-No, said Stephen, the qualities of *integritas, consonantia,* and *claritas,* don't necessarily have to be achieved in a defined chronological order, though it is probably best if they are. Anna and Will's marriage never achieves the true status of art because they never do recognize each other as individuals. They have a kinetic understanding, but not a spiritual one. Spiritually they are alien. Anna will dance in her nakedness before the moon and Will will feel that his presence to her is a violation of her consummation with the moon. Will will transcend the earth in his
love for the symbolism of the church and Anna will continue to

ridicule him for his affection towards a silly lamb. They will recognize themselves and never attempt to recognize their partner, all the while expecting to be understood. It is a fight between them, forever. They recognize their individual physical rhythms and the rhythm they can achieve together, but because they lack knowledge of *integritas,* their marriage can never be defined as beautiful.

-And what do Tom and Lydia lack? Lynch said. Not *integritas,* because they are very aware of themselves and each other as whole individuals.

-Yes, they are aware of the integral structure of each other, said Stephen, but they must learn to appreciate it. At first, Tom can not comprehend what Lydia means as a whole person. She has a past he can not begin to fathom or understand. Lawrence writes, "He suffered very much from the thought of actual marriage. He knew her so little. They were so foreign to each other, they were such strangers. And they could not talk to each other. When she talked, of Poland or what had been, it was all so foreign, she scarcely communicated anything to him...And there she sat, telling the tales to the open space, not to him, arrogating a curious superiority to him, a distance between them, something strange and foreign and outside his life, talking, rattling, without rhyme or reason, laughing when he was shocked or astounded, condemning nothing, confounding his mind and making the whole world a chaos, without order or stability of any kind. Then, when they went to bed, he knew that he had nothing to do with her." You see, Tom has to learn the quality of Lydia's wholeness. It takes him two years to do so, to know her meaning, without understanding her. Then, when she touches him - to paraphrase - he knows her instantly, that she is the gateway and

the way out, that she is beyond, and that he is traveling in her through the beyond.

Lynch looked over Stephen's shoulder at the quote, saying:

-If I remember correctly, Lawrence then brings out the rainbow as symbolism.

-The rainbow, said Stephen, is a visual, symbolic representation of the art the marriage is attempting to express. It is the *integritas* of the elements of light and water, the *consonantia* of the intertwining elements, the *claritas* of the rainbow being that thing which it is and no other thing. It is the clear radiance of the esthetic image come to life, and we are arrested by its wholeness and fascinated by its harmony.

-Is Ursula capable of creating the rainbow? asked Lynch. I mean, I know she is, but how does she alone create the art of the rainbow, through truth and beauty?

-Easily, said Stephen, Ursula intellectually chooses to realize the truth of herself, to become human art without the trappings of marriage to weigh her down. She realizes her wholeness, her harmony, and her radiance as the novel progresses on her own.

-Quite right, you are quite right, chuckled Lynch. I ought to be able to see all this on my own.

-You do, said Stephen, but I am conversing a little differently on the subject than we are used to doing. And I am also taking visual, physical definitions, and applying them to the undefinable human experience, which transcends the mere physicality of earth.

-Naturally, said Lynch.

-I mean to say, said Stephen, that it is difficult to understand

the application of terms generally used to define representational art to literature, because you are then dealing with abstracts as art, with ideas as art.

-Yes, I understand, Lynch said.

-Good, said Stephen, handing him back his book. Then you see that though marriage is the artistic endeavor of the human experience, it can also be created by the individual as through Ursula.

-Yes, I do, Lynch said. I think you will do some of that creating too, Dedalus.

-I know I will, said Stephen, and he fell into step silently with his friend.

Swallowed...

Swallowed by temptation
And the reality of dreams
I'm drowning here in silence
Nothing is what it seemed.
Once, things came so easy
But, oh, how beauty can be defaced.
The simple days have long been gone-
The pain in love remains.
Yes, blue skies are still a mystery,
But the answer means nothing to me.
The answers I need are to questions unseen
By the world of ignorance around me.
Responsible for a life so young,
I need to get away.
But I could run for years, neverending tears
And the pain won't go away.
Surrounded by a hate for life, This disregard for feelings,
There's no respect, no comforting,
Just painful thoughts and stealing.
Stolen hearts and twisted minds
I need some time to see
That the world needs help and I can't pass that by
But help me, where should I be?
Confusion has taken over
And I need more time to live.
I'd give this small life to free myself
But it's not my life to give.

—Tiffany Hilberth

ALICE STUCK IN WONDERLAND

(Delirium overtakes the Mad Hatter.)
It might have been the mushrooms.

"Vengeance is mine," says the Knave of Hearts
as he personally dismembers the Queen of Hearts
"Off with her head
out with her spleen!"
He extracts her epiglottis
and displays it proudly for the forum
of underachieving croquet players.

Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum destroy the terrain
on their matching quadrunners. They swerve
to hit the White Rabbit, who narrowly avoids
becoming Wonderland Roadkill.

The Cheshire Cat just grins.

Meanwhile, Alice suffering from grief
and anxiety grows larger than life.
She scolds herself
"I should have had my Slim-Fast before eating
that delicious Mock Turtle soup."
She vomits; call it compulsive behavior.
Call it confusion.

The Cheshire Cat just grins.

"Order in the court!" shouts the King of Diamonds.
(The Queen recently remarried before her brutal death.)
The Mad Hatter eyes the March Hare
as he grows ravenous with hunger.
The March Hare notices and decides

that he will attend no more tea parties.

The King collects on life insurance.
Alice wonders if there was a conspiracy
to have the Queen murdered.
The Duchess sits by his side, her eyes
growing ravenous with uterine adrenaline.
The Knave sits on her lap.
There is corruption in the Land of Wonder.

The Cheshire Cat, half-materialized, laughs hysterically.

"Who is being tried for the Queen's death?"
Asks Alice.
"You are!" Insists the disreputable Duchess.
Alice, armed with a semi-automatic,
unloads its rounds upon
the unsuspecting forum of
underachieving Wonder-stuff.
No one is killed or even hurt.
Remember, Alice, they are nothing
but a pack of playing cards.
You are stuck in Wonderland.

--David A. Stelmach

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM:
Flouting the First Amendment

by Jeremy Cosand

Two hundred years ago, when the United States of America was founded, this world looked vastly different. Technology, science and industry were mere babes in comparison to the behemoths that they are today, and democratic government was a "great experiment" rather than the design of the majority of world politics. Religion played a stronger and more influential role in society than it does now. In fact, it was in the name of religion and religious liberty that many of our founding fathers and mothers embarked on the long, treacherous journey from continent to continent. As a reflection of this honor for religious duty, the authors of our nation's Constitution included provisions for its protection and freedom, giving it a place of respectful exemption from the control of government. In the words of James Madison, one of our most influential founders:

> Before any man can be considered as a member of Civil Society, he must be considered a subject of the Governor of the Universe: And if a member of Civil Society, who[ever] enters into any subordinate Association, must always do it with a reservation of his duty to the general authority; much more must every man who becomes a member of any particular society do it with a saving of his allegiance to the Universal Sovereign."[1]

The protection of this allegiance was written into the text of the Constitution as the First Amendment. It states, "Congress [and, by extension of the Fourteenth Amendment, the individual states] shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . ." The founders of our nation

wanted to insure the lasting security of this freedom and therefore established it as a right unalterable by the government or the people.

Today, however, things look very different, and the "hands off" protection afforded religious liberty by the First Amendment is being experimentally flouted. The most recent, and possibly the most far-reaching, case was decided by the Supreme Court in 1990. Called *Employment Division v. Smith*, the case involved two Native Americans fired from their jobs and denied unemployment benefits by the state of Oregon for possessing the illegal drug peyote. This drug is commonly used in the religious practices of the Native American Church, and, thus, the two men claimed that their First Amendment rights were being violated. The decision handed down by the Supreme Court was that the state was not violating their rights to religious freedom, and the reason was given in a majority opinion that drastically departs from the traditional interpretations and precedents of the Court regarding the First Amendment.

In the two hundred year history of our nation, much has been added to the Constitution, but many measures have also been taken to remain as close to its original intent as possible. Over time, certain exceptions to the right of "free exercise" of religion have been made, yet only where the government was able to demonstrate that it had a "clear and compelling interest" to do so. Most of these exceptions stood unchallenged precisely because the reason for them was obviously "clear and compelling." In the past, the Court has found that national defense and tax collection are compelling interests of the government, worthy of restricting an individual's right to free exercise of religion, while "requiring Amish children to attend high school and saving money in the unemployment compensation fund [are] not."[2]

Regardless of whether one thinks the government has a "clear and compelling interest" in restricting the use of peyote by Native American churchgoers, the decision given by the Supreme Court in *Employment Division v. Smith* is tragic because it significantly alters the rules by which future cases of religious liberty will be decided. Instead of relying on the "clear and compelling interest" argument,

the Court's opinion is that the law convicting the peyote-users is constitutional because it is not directed at their religion in particular; in other words, it is "facially neutral," and it is a law of "general applicability," applying equally to all. The justification of the law's necessity and value is utterly ignored. Furthermore, this decision violates the very purpose of the First and Fourteenth Amendments by placing the freedom of religion in the hands of individual state legislatures rather than affirming it as a right unassailable by the might of the majority.

A closer look at the language of the decision, penned by Justice Antonin Scalia, reveals what Harry Blackmun called, "a wholesale overturning of settled law concerning the Religion Clauses of our Constitution."[3] The first problem with the decision is its definition of "religion." During the time of the founding of our nation, "religion" generally referred to a variety of Protestant Christian sects. As the religious plurality of our nation grew, the definition grew correspondingly to include a variety of non-Christian, non-Western faiths. The Court's decision in Smith reveals an even more dramatic shift in the definition of "religion," effectually confining it to belief and profession of faith alone. Traditionally, however, the Court has recognized that free exercise must necessarily include conduct as well.[4] The Smith decision ushers in a new and ominously insufficient understanding of the nature of religious freedom, and other cases in U.S. courts reveal the spreading acceptance of this non-traditional definition of religion. In a highly publicized Florida case, a law banning animal sacrifices for religious purposes was upheld in both a U.S. district court and a federal appeals court as "constitutional because it was directed at conduct rather than belief."[5]

Furthermore, the Smith decision essentially undermines the intent of the First Amendment protection. As Justice Robert Jackson explains so clearly:

> The very purpose of a Bill of Rights was to withdraw certain subjects from the vicissitudes of political

> controversy, to place them beyond the reach of majorities and officials and to establish them as legal principles to be applied by the courts. One's right to life, liberty, and property, to free speech, a free press, freedom of worship and assembly, and other fundamental rights may not be submitted to vote; they depend on the outcome of no elections."[6]

The Court's decision, however, "says that America 'cannot afford the luxury' of making exceptions to general laws that may incidentally restrict religious freedom."[7] The reasoning follows that, because the law banning peyote is not directed specifically at the Native American Church, since it is "facially neutral," the government "cannot afford the luxury" of excusing certain persons from its reach because of their religious convictions. This logic is antithetical to the intent of the Framers in including a Bill of Rights and the First Amendment protection of religious liberty in the Constitution. If religious freedom is merely a "luxury" that our nation cannot afford, then no protection of minority rights remains at all, and the First Amendment is virtually bereft of its power. The decisions of religious exemption are relegated to the individual state legislatures, where even the decision's author Scalia concedes, "those religious practices that are not widely engaged in [will be] at a relative disadvantage." Yet he continues to say that that is "an unavoidable consequence of democratic government."[8] This is a complete denial of the purpose and intent of the First Amendment.

On the surface, this decision appears to contain some positive features. It enforces a greater equality of legal restraint; no one is going to "get away" with anything just because of their religious beliefs. There is a certain level of expediency reached by this decision, since no more time-consuming court battles need be fought over what constitutes a "compelling governmental interest." These decisions will instead be made in the legislatures of our states, where they will be subject to the sacred processes of democracy our nation holds so dear. All of this, in a way, seems to be very good and

democratic.

The problem, however, is that it contradicts the purpose and intent of the First Amendment. By placing the establishment and free exercise clauses of religious liberty in the First Amendment, the founders of our nation were saying that religious liberty is a right that is not decided by majority votes or even granted by the government. It is a truth that is "self-evident." It is a "certain inalienable right" and must be protected as such. It is not to be left in the hands of the people to decide. Furthermore, the Court's decision removes the test of a "clear and compelling governmental interest" as the standard of judging a law that restricts religious freedoms. The test of the law's necessity and value is abolished. Instead, any law that is "facially neutral" and "of general applicability" is allowed to stand no matter how grievously it prohibits the free exercise or, logically, the establishment of religion. In addition, "neutrality" is defined only in terms of cause and not effect. To a non-peyote-ingesting person, the law banning its use is relatively insignificant; to the Native American worshiper, it prohibits a central tenet of their faith. Ultimately, this decision subordinates religion to the government in a way our founders never intended, and virtually removes the protection of a right our nation was founded upon.

All hope is not lost, however, for the Supreme Court decision can be overturned by an act of Congress. The Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1990, drafted in response to the Court's decision in *Employment Division v. Smith*, would, if passed, return the legal restraint of "clear and compelling governmental interest" to the conflict over religious liberties. This is not a perfect solution, but, in my opinion, it is necessary to remove the power now granted the state legislatures to decide restrictions on religious freedom and re-open the channels of petition to the Supreme Court. The definition of "clear and compelling governmental interest" is vague, yet it is precisely that vagueness that allows for a defense of religious freedom. In the past, for the most part the Court has sided with religious freedom in disputes over law and religion because upholding and protecting the ideals of liberty and freedom on which

our nation is founded proved to be of greater and more compelling interest to the government than restricting those freedoms. The Religious Freedom Restoration Act would also free religious minorities from the necessity of legislative battles to protect their rights, and would give back the Supreme Court as an indispensable advocate in the federal government. Without it, our freedoms are removed from their place of honor in the Constitution and entrusted to the rough handling of state legislatures, government officials and majority rules.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Animal Sacrifice Case." The Christian Century 15 April 1992: 393

Cord, Robert L. "Church, State, and the Rehnquist Court." National Review 17 Aug. 1992: 35-37

Hentoff, Nat. "A Blow To Freedom of Religion." The Progressive Dec. 1990: 16-17

Hunter, James Davison, and Os Guiness, eds. Articles of Faith, Articles of Peace. Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1990

Laycock, Douglas. "Watering Down the Free-Exercise Clause." The Christian Century 16-23 May 1990: 518-519

Morgan, Richard E. The Supreme Court and Religion. New York: The Free Press, 1972

Neuhaus, Richard John. "Church, State, and Peyote." National Review 11 June 1990: 40-44

"The Religious Freedom and Restoration Act." Friends Committee On National Legislation: Washington Newsletter 559 Nov. 1992: 5

Sanders, Alain L. "Convicted of Relying on Prayer." Time 16 July 1990: 52

Teach Me

What if I came onto the porch
with you,
and then outside in the rain,
strung my hair, wet and light,
to my face?

Splashing through weather, you open your mouth
to the sky and drink
and are satisfied,

color dancing through trees.
Weighted deep-green
leaves are waiting for you,
wet amber body
one trunk to another,

you drip branch to branch,
in a
full man's body,
slide to the ground and
begin to gather stones.

—S. Plantenburg

Sexism and the Paradoxes of Feminism: The Young, Naive, Insane Philosophers Discourse Again

by Karla J. Kaphengst & Jason S. Fish

Setting: A man and a woman meeting for lunch in an outdoor, Italian cafe. The two have not seen each other for several months and are meeting to share new experiences.

(The man is seated at a table in the corner of the outdoor part of the cafe. The woman walks in, sees her friend, and walks to the table.)

Pylaxius: Good afternoon, Theophilus.

Theophilus: Pylaxius, I'm glad to see you. Please join me. Do you want anything to drink?

Pylaxius: Yes. I think I'll have a hot chocolate with whipped cream.

Theophilus: Server, we're ready to order.

(The waitperson comes over to the table and they order.)

Theophilus: Did you notice the way she insisted on taking your order first? Her kind of attitude has been bothering me for quite a while. I recently read some books on Feminism. Specifically, I read the book *Backlash*. Have you read the book? It's by Susan Faludi.

Pylaxius: Yes, I read the book, and I'm outraged! I knew that discrimination, particularly against women, still existed, but I had no idea as to the extent with which it persists.

Theophilus: What do you think about Feminism?

Pylaxius: That all depends on how you define feminism: it's quite a

loaded term these days.

Theophilus: True. Well, I particularly am alarmed at what I read about the conservative, right-winged, so-called feminists. I am speaking specifically of Phyllis Schlafly. Do you remember in the book where Faludi discusses the ideology that women are supposed to stay at home and raise the children? She claims that Schlafly insists the problems of our society are directly linked to the lack of the mother figure in the home.

Pylaxius: Yes. I believe Faludi goes on to state this is an example of a woman who has risen to some sort of position of power, and then the woman states paradoxically that she is a champion of women's rights while she simultaneously serves to keep women oppressed. Unfortunately, there are many other examples of this, ranging from a token woman in the higher management of a company which actively sexually discriminates to such political figures as Barbara Bush and Marilyn Quayle to the female pop psychologists Connell Cowan, Marynia Farnham, Susan Price, Toni Grant, and Robin Norwood. Such statements as "Take control and submit" really make me angry.

Theophilus: They make me angry too. And, not only do these women perpetuate the problem, but men in positions of power contribute as well. This reminds me of Michael Levin: the famous story about how "boys don't cook and girls don't do long division." He asserts three statements: "women with successful careers sacrifice marriage and motherhood; sex roles are innate: women naturally prefer to cook and keep house, and men naturally don't; men are better at math." At first these assertions seemed comical in their absurdity, but then I got angry because I have observed that a large number of people in our society actually believe these statements. It doesn't help when you have people such as Levin who present these ludicrous reports in a scientific manner so that more people will believe their findings.

Pylaxius: What really upset me was the role the media had in this. I

have a hard time believing anything I read now. The fact is, many of these "scientific" reports are nothing of the kind; they are willful mis-manipulations of the scientific process. What is even more startling is that when someone actually did the research to check the facts of these stories and found them to be unreliable, the media refused to publish anything to inform their readers that some data in their stories might have (or definitely did!) contain wrong information. It not only shows a lack of integrity on the part of the publishers, but their bias in favor of such sexist rhetoric. I can't believe researchers at Harvard and Yale would actually print an article claiming there was a shortage of eligible men for marriage, and that women should marry first and have their own lives later.

Theophilus: There was one particular anecdote that Faludi cites which really bothered me. She talks about Leslie Wolfe, who was a "ten-year civil service veteran who had pioneered government programs to promote women's education and who was one of the few women to have ascended to G.S. 15 status." Wolfe was removed from her position because she supported an act which provided education to handicapped girls. She was labeled as a "nazi feminist" and demoted eventually to clerk-typist. I'm glad she resigned, but I feel sorry for her that she had to get through this and eventually lose her job. I'm curious about how the whole book affected you. After I read the book, I became weary of everything I read too. I have a hard time watching television, looking at billboards, or reading the newspaper. How has this affected you?

Pylaxius: It has just reinforced my belief that our society has a long way to go before "equality" exists. I was angered over the lack of support the government gave to the economic equality of women in the Republican years. The government, however, is not the only example of an institution which perpetuates the oppression of women; others include the media, religion, language, and popular culture.

Theophilus: One would think, legally speaking, that equality would have been realized when women received the right to vote over sixty

years ago.

Pylaxius: One would think....but it is far from the truth. The Equal Rights Amendment, though granted a thirty-six month extension, failed to become an amendment to the Constitution of the United States. J. S. Mill discusses two kinds of freedom: explicit and implicit. Not only does the government continue to oppress women explicitly by failing to pass legislation of equality or failing to enforce it, but other institutions continue to oppress women implicitly and explicitly in a myriad of avenues.

Theophilus: What is interesting to note about the legal side of oppression is that in order for an oppressed group to overcome its oppression it must embrace its groupness, which is an alienation of sorts, and demand special laws be made to remove the oppression. For those people that are empowered, this separation only reinforces their established sense of superiority, and they usually oppose any "special" treatment laws. What's ironic is that these law-makers are supposedly educated. This makes me question the role of education in our society. What is it accomplishing?

Pylaxius: Education must be viewed within the social context in which it operates. The culture inundates children with stereotypes of sexual roles, and these are reinforced in many cases by the educational materials and the manner of instruction. An excellent presentation is made in a book entitled *Myths of Coeducation*. In it, the author gives examples of how our educational system serves to legitimize stereotypic roles. In one case, she tracked a group of kindergardeners for a number of years. By the time the children reached the third or forth grades, they had already acquired attitudes such as "I can't do math—I'm a girl." The author examined textbooks and found that in reading books, the stories usually centered around a boy doing the action and a girl watching, or a boy helping a girl out of trouble. In mathematic books, story problems usually had boys doing aggressive activities, such as sports, and girls doing passive activities, such as sewing. In addition, the author cites

examples of how the teacher's attitude can have a major impact. In one case, a kindergarten teacher assigned a project in which the children were to bring in pictures representing what their parents did. When a girl brought in a picture of a man cuddling a baby, she was told that this was "wrong." Education, then, becomes just another avenue of oppression.

Theophilus: That's very frightening to hear. All of this makes me wonder about the origin of sexism. We've discussed its groundings in politics, the media, education, and popular culture. Obviously, sexism is not a result of just one source; however, I do think there are certain institutions which perpetuate the oppression of women more so than others. Let's look at language, for example. Although language may be arbitrary in itself, when coupled with a culture, it becomes an entity filled with potential for oppression. A word may be arbitrary in itself, but when coupled with other words, the word receives a meaning. For instance, the word "go" has no meaning without such words as "stop, forward, backward, and halt." When we speak of gender, we discern between male and female. When we ascribe definitions to each of these words, we determine differences. Through these differences, we define one as being and the other as not being. At this point, sexism may or may not exist; but, when we bring in the nature of culture, the dominating characteristics become the being, and the subordinate characteristics become the not. However, I don't believe we can discern between a culture and a language once they have become interwoven. The language is created by a culture, and a culture is facilitated by a language. What do you think?

Pylaxius: This is absolutely true. In our language, the universal representation of a human being is the male, and then we have two categories: plus male and minus male. Men are empowered in such words as "men", "mankind", "he", and "him" which are used to supposedly represent men and women. In addition, there are many words which have positive connotations for men, but relatively few for women. In fact, there are many negative words for women, in particular, words having negative sexual connotations. It is

significant that it is expected in our society that a woman gives up her name to take her husband's name when she marries, and is then referred to as "Mrs. John Doe." When a woman simply chooses to keep her name, eyebrows are raised and she is labeled a "radical." *The Handbook of Nonsexist Writing* does an excellent job of pointing out many inconsistencies and sexisms in the language, and also provides many alternatives to sexist language. Changing the language alone, however, will not alleviate the problem. Since the language and culture are in a dynamic relationship, both must evolve in order for us to reach a state of true equality.

Theophilus: You are so right. One thing I also have noticed is how in sports we identify male sports simply as the sport and in women's sports we identify them as women's sports.

Pylaxius: This is just one example of how women's activities need extra justification. The reasoning is as follows: since "real" sports teams are composed of men, when a team is composed of women, it needs to be stated as a "women's team" as it is a deviation from the norm. Similarly, when referring to professionals, many will say "lawyer" if he is male, but "woman lawyer" if she is female. These kinds of language structures only serve to reinforce that it is not "natural" for women to be involved in these types of activities.

Theophilus: Natural—there is an overused term these days.

Pylaxius: That reminds me of a conversation I had with a fundamentalist. He was arguing that women were naturally inclined to stay home with the children, while men were naturally inclined to work. He was defining "natural" as those practices endorsed by God; he believes The Bible clearly defines the roles of men and women, and it is these definitions which many believe to be true. The most blatant form of sexism in religion takes the form of a male God. Mary Daly explains how God functions to oppress women: first, it is God's will that women are subordinate to men; second, power relationships are established between men and women that

result out of calling God "he" or "father;" third, it condones non-action against oppression. In addition, a woman's inferior role becomes "doubly justified:" not only is she derived from man, but she causes his downfall. The myth of Adam and Eve is very powerful, continues Daly, because "the male's viewpoint is metamorphosed into God's viewpoint." Ironically, the story of Adam and Eve is a twisted version of an earlier Summerian creation myth. Because the Judeo-Christian traditions (not to mention many other religions) are patriarchal, and given the fact that many people are raised with a religion, it is no surprise that these sexists attitudes survived into the present.

Theophilus: I find this very interesting. In all my literary exposure, I have found there are many interpretations to The Bible. First and foremost, what I find fascinating is the fact that so many people forget that The Bible has been translated from Greek and Hebrew to Latin to 16th Century English, and on and on. Within these all translations. What I find contradictory to this statement is the fact that there are many different versions of The Bible that are not the same from the 17th Century and on. For example, there is Calvinism and Lutherism: two fundamentalist who have two entirely different translations of The Bible. Another problem with this is that fundamentalists fail to acknowledge how politics and economics play a part in the shaping of translations of The Bible. My biggest gripe, though, surrounds the sexism of The Bible. How can God be male, or any other thing? In Exodus, God is called Yahweh, which roughly translates as "I am..." I do not find any male characteristics in this. What many people do is fill in the "..." and believe that is what God is, without ever realizing the implication of the "..."

Waitperson: Your food will be here in a few moments. I'll bring you more water and another hot chocolate.

Theophilus: Enough about God. I recently have been reading Virginia Woolf and Charlotte Perkins Gilman. I think it is great that Woolf pointed out that in order for a woman to be considered truly

equal she must have a "room of one's own." In other words, a woman must be economically able to take care of herself, without the dependency of another person. Gilman points out a great deal of problems with the economy and how it affects women negatively. She focuses primarily on the bifurcation of home and office, in which the man's definition is based on his career and the woman's definition is determined by the home. In Gilman's "The Man-Made World," she states what I feel to be most vital: "Our humanness is seen to lie not so much in what we are individually, as in our relations to one another; and even that individuality is but the result our relations to one another. It is in what we do and how we do it, rather than in what we are." She goes on to talk about how there are "three distinct fields of life—masculine, feminine and human." The one we should be focussing on is the human sphere, which is where the commonality exists.

Pylaxius: I agree. I do think we should concentrate on the human sphere. Although I think Woolf makes some good points, I disagree with her concepts of the "womanly-man" and the "manly-woman." Even though she makes strides towards an androgynous mind, and in fact states that it "is resonant and porous; that it transmits emotion without impediment; that it is naturally creative, incandescent and undivided," she then attempts to divide it into the female and male parts, without defining either. In the current men's movement, I think Robert Bly makes a similar error when he states that "men have awakened their feminine principle only to be consumed by it. They [have] gone 'soft.'" He then introduced workshops in order to help men find "the deep masculine." Ironically, both seem to be striving towards the ultimate goal of freeing themselves from social constraints by transcending their genders, yet they persist in maintaining the "masculine" and the "feminine" as distinct parts of the whole rather than just defining the whole without any internal divisions.

Theophilus: This is so true and very frustrating. Many of the feminist literary critics I have read do the exact same thing. For example, Helene Cixous examines the nature of sexism and states

that the essential question centers on activity versus passivity. However, she then states men and women are prone to gender-specific behaviors: for example, "Man cannot live without resigning himself to loss...women do not mourn." She continues to perpetuate the use of masculine and feminine definitions, which she believes are based on fundamental, biological differences between men and women. Elaine Showalter, another feminist critic, numerates several differences between male writing and female writing. She believes women do not seek closure, and it is masculine to have a beginning and an end. While some feminists will define masculine and feminine writing, there are some who only will state that our society is patriarchal because of empowerment, and that feminine writing cannot be defined. However, I have not found anyone who states that there is no such thing as feminine writing or masculine writing.

Pylaxius: This is the paradox of feminism. While feminists strive for equality, the very name "feminism" serves to separate women from men, leaving room for these continued attempts to define the "masculine" and the "feminine." Personally, I suggest the term "individualism" instead of "feminism." The paradox continues when men and women attempt to decide on a mode of behavior; particularly for women, either they conform to societal stereotypes, thereby perpetuating the stereotypes, or they rebel and give the stereotypes a certain amount of power by acknowledging them by their rebellion. Is striving for equality the same as striving for androgyny? I think many are scared of androgyny. Can we have equality while defining masculine and feminine roles?

Theophilus: Is striving for equality the same as androgyny? Implicit in the statement of striving for equality is the assumption that man and woman can be equal. In what way are they equal? I think where these two differ is that men and women are not biologically equal; however, as far as abilities, they are. I think you are right in stating that people are scared of androgyny. Androgyny by definition is lacking masculinity and femininity, or containing both. Furthermore, for men, the concept of androgyny means emasculation

while, for women, the concept means empowerment. For a man, the idea of giving up power is threatening. How do we overcome this fear? That's tough. The male-female poles are too well established in our culture. What I do think is an excellent term and possible transcending avenue is individualism. This way, as Gilman states, everyone would have the opportunity to be what he or she wants to regardless of gender roles. This line of thinking would remove traditional gender roles, and prevent any future roles based on gender. I don't think we will be able to avoid factions, but at least individual roles will be revered. The only definitions allowed for masculine and feminine should be strictly biologically based. I am interested in your presented paradox. Do women only have two choices? Rebel or perpetuate? Or, does this paradox stem only from the male-female poles?

Pylaxius: If women were raised on Mars without being inundated about what it means to be a woman, then they would be able to choose their actions based solely upon what they want. The fact is, however, that women grow up in a culture which sends a myriad of messages about what women are supposed to be. Because of this, I don't see how other choices besides support or rebellion exist since women are told who they are before they have a chance to decide for themselves without interference from the sexist culture.

Theophilus: I understand what you are saying. What I am wondering is how can anyone personally overcome the paradox within herself or himself. Also, I don't think anyone, male or female, has a chance to figure out who she or he is prior to enculturation. Since we are within the structure, we cannot objectively analyze it. Given that we are within the structure, how do we overcome the paradox?

Pylaxius: The only way to overcome the paradox is to transcend the definitions and stereotypes of women and men. For people already raised in a society where such a division between men and women exist, our only hope it to ask these questions and continue to strive for a culture which does not heap upon individuals expectations

based upon their sex. Such a culture would be a truly free, and equal, society which would allow individuals to develop unfettered by erroneous sexual preconceptions.

Theophilus: I think in the case of gender roles, I agree that one can overcome theses definitional limitations when the culture changes its focus from defining gender differences to maintaining the individuality of all human beings. However, I do not think we can ever be unfettered by some thing in one's culture. The concept of total individuality, I think, is an illusion. Any given individual cannot mature without being dependent on the environment in which he or she resides. On the other hand, I do realize that in order for a society to exist, it must embrace some set of assumptions. I think we need to be extremely careful about what those assumptions are. However, can we ever know all assumptions?

Pylaxius: Obviously not.

Theophilus: Then I think as we deconstruct gender roles, we are subject to some other assumptions that are limiting. The only way I think we can reach our goal of individualism is through an anarchic society.

Pylaxius: But how can a person develop her or his individuality in a vacuum? Doesn't a person need the interaction with others? Is individuality defined as Gilman stated as the relationship one has with others instead of some internal quality one possesses? It would seem, then, that we do need some kind of society in which individuals can interact in order to establish their individuality.

Theophilus: Then what we are saying is that we need society; but, we need a dynamic society in which we can change our assumptions based on the individuals who are within it.

Pylaxius: But having the ability to change the assumptions requires that the original assumptions are known. We have already come to

the conclusion, however, that we can never know all the assumptions upon which a society operates.

Theophilus: I understand that; but all we can do is try to make our lives happy by focusing on those assumptions that we're aware of and that we want to change, then we act upon that, as Gilman states.

Waitperson: (She comes to the table loaded with plates of food in her hand and on her forearm. She serves Theophilus first with the apologetic remark...) I normally would have served you first, Miss, but his plate was on top. Forgive me, please.

Pylaxius: Oh, I don't mind at all; we're equal.

WORKS CITED

Cixous, Helene. "Castration or Decapitation?" *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. New York: Longman, 1989.

Daly, Mary. *Beyond God the Father*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1973.

—. "Qualitative Leap Beyond Patriarchical Religion." *Philosophy for a New Generation*. Editors: A.K. Bierman and James A. Gould. New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1981.

Faludi, Susan. *Backlash*. New York: Crown, 1991.

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *Women in Economics*. New York: Harper and Row, 1966.

The Handbook of Nonsexist Writing.

Howe, Florence. *Myths of Coeducation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.

Mill, J.S. "The Tyranny of the Majority." *Philosophy for a New Generation*. Editors: A.K. Bierman and James A. Gould. New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1981.

Showalter, Elaine. "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness." *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. New York: Longman, 1989.

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

A Time?

Has there ever been a time:

When no one hurt little kids?
When plates weren't for throwing?
When how your evening was matters more than
what time you came home?
When a baby's cry
was answered with a hug
not a slap?
When I was more important
than your image?
When a daughter mattered
just as much
as your precious son?
and
When anyone you loved
didn't just walk away
without saying goodbye?

—Lisa Dewey

The Last Corpsicle Stand

by Phil Hickey

I'll bet Fat Boy was dying to ask why a perfectly healthy guy should shell out all that pretty, pretty, green to have himself cryogenically frozen. A terminal sickie— maybe, banking on a future utopia where miracle doctors are standing by to fix him up— just because they're nice guys. I don't buy that; I don't believe in nice guys doing good deeds for nothing. But if you're out of luck, you take the breaks you can get, and this small and stuffy shithole was a definite break. Even with the obnoxious reek of hunger and the lingering tang of cannabis cigarettes, it was a break, or maybe a crack.

It's like the deer and the wolves at the end of winter, when the wolves get so hungry they don't even finish the kill properly before they start eating. Ask the deer, standing on the edge of the icy chasm as the wolves come closer, if a quick trip then *snap* is better than seeing little bits of himself disappear into so many mouths.

He won't answer, because he just jumped.

I know; because I've seen it, or at least heard it. I was born when there were still barren places, when you could still hear the death gurgle of the wild, and not just the bleating that was so carefully reconstructed for the digitally animated docudramas. Yeah, I was young once, a babe in the winter snow of Minnesota, before I came pushing south. But now I'm old, ready to lie down and play dead.

Most people who wander into these quick freeze joints never see their wolves. Victims of a lot of diseases with long names and no cures, they just feel themselves getting weaker, shrinking every day; feel the pain smiling and getting stronger. And when they're standing on the edge they make the cold jump.

But I've got a good reason. Twenty six million reasons, trapped in the ice of a foreign account. Plus accumulated interest. I haven't figured out how much that comes to over 50 years. Maybe I will when I wake up.

Or maybe I'll figure the interest while I sleep.

"A real gambler, eh?" Just what I was waiting for: a bit of small talk to fill my last moments. I didn't bother to tell him that in Las Vegas, everyone is a gambler. But I was a pro, an accountant for a large casino—a gamble in itself. That's what made me into a gambler. How long can you swim in all that money, before you think of it like water? I controlled it, and therefore I owned it. The growth of that particular strand of logic was a slow and succulent process. The actual transfer was just a risk. Just coddle some numbers on the computer, pack my clothes into a suitcase and get on that plane to Bogota. It seemed so easy; packing everything I valued took only twenty minutes. But this is an old town; not wise, but cunning. I forgot to account for other controlling factors, and my bosses won't let me repair my mistake. They aren't nice, utopian types, but I understand them more for all that.

He passed over the form, a real paper relic for me to sign. I grunted, and signed the sheet, using my real signature. Why not? I've made all the mistakes I can. A drop of sweat fell to the sheet, onto my signature, diluting the ink, spreading my name across the diameter of the drop. A hundred meat-lockers, and not one damn air conditioning duct. It stank here, just like it did everywhere in this city. But if you had money, the smell was much duller.

The patch on Fat Boy's white jumpsuit read Cryogenics Plus. I had scouted this one out as carefully as I could in the 10 minutes I had before my logic curled up and died. Everything about Cryogenics Plus was too small to attract any real attention; even the meat-lockers stood cramped. This place operated on the sketchy fringes, but that cut down on the attention it attracted; it was just another corpsicle stand, and not one of the better ones. Definitely a gamble, but then I've already told you about myself.

"50 years, three months, and a day." I repeated; set for the first day of spring, 2050. And that's all I said. (Hey, Fat Boy, how do you keep an asshole in suspense? I'll tell you when I wake up.) He tossed the sheet in a

immense antique filing cabinet that squatted behind his videophone. Out of sight, out of mind. And then I knew I'd make it; I could feel the ice settling over me already. There's tempting fate, and then there's fooling fate. A gambler knows the difference, even if he sometimes ignores it. All suicides have a good reason— the hope of beating the house odds keeps you going.

I can't see my wolves, but I don't need to hear howls to know they're close and that they won't be quick. They won't swallow my pieces; they'll leave them spread all over for everyone to see. So now I was making the deer's choice. Only I was opting for the slow death over the quick one. The slow one would take 50 years, the quick one... maybe two, possibly three days— if the wolves were good.

Still, 50 years is long enough for anyone to forget. After all, if the offended parties are still alive, thoughts of revenge should be mixed up with disintegrating childhood memories and the loosened bowels of a senile haze. I don't think 50 years is going to see any miracle life extenders coming on to the market. Hell, with all the pollution and ambient radiation, life is getting shorter all the time. So I'm not worried. The money is stashed in a safe place; hell, when I wake up, I can walk across the sunny street to the bank and get it. Hell, then I can go, maybe start gambling. Say warm and magnanimous nothings to all the people who won't know me, but will hang near me like carrion creatures. Why should the future be any different than now? And no wolves. You never catch the wolves making the big leap. The wolves may pace the edge of the chasm for a while, but they always skulk off, gnashing pure and unbloodied teeth.

But for me, it's just 50 years, years that'll melt away like ice in boiling water. It's not like I'm leaving anything behind— a furnished hotel room and a suitcase. And a plane ticket. And a few pissed off people. Nothing important. No strings, no roots, nothing that binds. And who knows? The future may just be a utopia.

I followed the fat asshole out of the slightly cheerful waiting room into a smaller, grayer room and stripped. Figuring that he had me in the

bag, he shook out a hemp smoke, offered me one that I stared at until he shoved it back in the pack, white and pure. I didn't want any dreams. I handed my clothes and wallet to him, chanting the number of the account inaudibly as he locked my effects into the vault. He handed me the plastic electronic key, which I slipped on, along with the dog tags they give you. Then I walked into the diamond box and stood, waiting for the door to close.

You stand in them, you see, because that way they can pack more meat-lockers into a given space. And because they remind people less of coffins. It didn't help me at all; I thought of tombstones. Sweat was running freely down my sides, between my legs. I felt a twinge. The attendant smiled at me, a perfect gleaming smile with pure white smoke curling up at the edges. I waited for the ice to creep over me. And creep it did, slinking over my body like crystalline euphoria. It felt like a frozen forever, sealed with a low icy hum.

Maybe I slept. Maybe I dreamed.

Then I felt it, more than I ever could have heard it; a snap. With it, the hum ended. A hand scraped aside the ice on the front of my meat-locker. A face looked in. Bad teeth, beady eyes and only a few days worth of beard to hold back a snarl. It wasn't Fat Boy's face, but it wasn't a kind and smiling face either. I looked for a clock on the wall, a calendar, something, but of course there was nothing but my intuition, and I've gotten far enough on that. My intuition had a hunch that it had not quite been fifty years.

There was time before they opened the lid. I stumbled out, fell to the floor, naked and shivering. This was it, and it was all wrong; there should have been doctors, and instead there was this ugly mug, this shark with rotten teeth ready to tear me apart. I was too stiff to run, too weak to fight. I was found, and soon I would be found again, in smaller, warmer, wetter pieces.

Fat Boy stood to the side, leaning against the barren wall chewing on his nails. Furniture had vanished from the waiting room, and the smells

were stronger. He wasn't quite living up to his name any more. He had shed a lot of himself, so that his skin hung over his bones like a large and loose winter coat. And he looked older, haggard. But it wasn't real age hanging on his skin, under his eyes. It was the weight that sweat adds to your soul, the worries and wrinkles etched not by years, but by cares. He was making the weak protestations of a rabbit with a broken back, waving his arms and screeching things. Two guys were busily ignoring him, one working out figures on a portable keyboard, and the other just standing around cracking his knuckles and practicing his tough look. His was the face from the front of the meat-locker.

Fat Boy looked at me and smiled. His smile was weak, limp and twitching like a beaten thing. "Please," he was saying, "these people are sick. They can't be turned out onto the streets." His sincerity was obviously chilling in one of the meat-lockers. He stank of fear.

The other man looked up from his calculations. He had the disinterested face of a blackjack dealer congratulating a winner. Even his hair was slick and severe. "They'll all be transferred to adequate facilities, and will receive quality health care. Your records showed him as healthy. So he walks." He pointed to me. I felt anything but healthy. "You can get out of here." He was talking to me. I looked up.

"What's happening?" I meant it to be a demand, but it came out as a cross between a shiver and a whine. Slick looked back down at the keyboard. His partner looked up, fixed me with eyes that seemed to focus somewhere beyond my head. I was walking on dice, and I knew it; I should just shut up and walk across the street, get my money and run. But I had to sit there and listen, because I could feel the ice melting in my veins.

"Failure to pay debts. Foreclosure." He pointed to Fat Boy's trembling flaps of skin. His fingernails were long and shaped, and I wondered if they interfered at all with his calculations.

Bad Teeth sauntered over to the videophone and shook out a hemp stick from the depleted pack lying by it before punching up a number. "Hello," he said, before turning aside to light his joint. "St. Vitus Charity

Hospital?"

Slick called my name. "Lucas Veneur? Here's your possessions." A large faded manila envelope landed crisply on the floor beside me. Inside were my clothes. I began addressing the task of opening it. This was bad, but it could be worse. Hell, it could even be that enough time had passed, that everyone had forgotten me...

"Veneur. Veneur." Bad Teeth was looking away from the video screen, looking at me, his forgotten cigarette consuming itself. "Wait a minute— wasn't that the guy who ripped off the casino two years ago? Yeah! It was!" His eyes narrowed on me, and he grinned, exposing his namesakes. A string of shrewish whine erupted from the videophone and his eyes flicked back to the screen. "Screw you, bitch!" he said to the nurse on the screen, as he bleeped her out of existence.

All three of the men were looking at me like I was salvation. Fat Boy was caught between shitting and drooling, his eyes and mouth all opened wide. "Half a million dollar reward..." I wasn't sure which one of them said it. It could have been all three. I could feel all those cold moments of not-living rising up in me, coming on like a heat wave of fear and anger. Those cheap bastards— only a half million! But a half million or twenty five cents, these assholes weren't going to take me. I dropped my clothes and darted for the door, even as Bad Teeth was punching another number. Slick jumped up and clumsily grabbed for me, but I skittered between his legs, crawling and scrambling for the door. If I could just make it out the door...

Fat Boy's hand came down hard on my shoulder, with a grip like hunger and desperation. I turned my head and bit down hard, tasting my first meal since winter. He screamed, and I was out the door, onto the heat of the pavement, in the middle of the crowds, and the traffic. I could smell it all, like the corruption of combustion. I could hear their honking and the squeal of nervously idling engines.

I dove into their midst, towards the anonymity of the nucleus. Fat, perfumed bodies parted as I clawed my way through. Behind me, I could hear Fat Boy yelling his head off. I risked a look back and saw Fat Boy

pointing to me.

Bad Teeth and Slick were closer, coming for me like the frozen cock of death. I ran, scattering people behind me like pigeons. I could feel my pursuers with some previously unknown sense, and they were near. Up ahead a barren traffic light sprouted green, and all the cars growled with anticipation. I was too weak. I hadn't a hope of escape, and could only look forward to a certain loss of my self, a slow departure into the frozen lands. The sun was bright on my head, strong and warm. It was a good day, and the sky was as blue as unknowable liquid depths. A hand fell on my shoulder, again, and with a last burst of life I wrenched myself free, flying off of the curb and into the street. I landed on my side and grinned at my wolves with unbloodied teeth, waiting for the snap.

The Archetypal Organ Grinder:
Northrop Frye and his Signifyin' Monkey
a look at archetypal criticism and the art of signifyin' within Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

by Josh Machamer

> Suspended between the nastiness of life and the meanness of the dead,she couldn't get interested in leaving life or living it...Her past had been like her present - intolerable - and since she knew death was anything but forgetfulness, she used the little energy left her for pondering color. [1]

Toward the turn of the century, the question of man's position within the universe was a popular topic amongst scholars. The artist, in particular, once faced with the brick wall of the Victorian Period, now became aware of the pictures and structures that encompassed the world. Literary figures like Pound, Eliot and Ionesco juxtaposed topical images alongside man's place in society, forming a surrealistic representation of the absurdity of human existence. The result placed conceptual, cognitive meanings within the framework of the literary text. No longer could a simple reading provide the definitive answers; images such as "water" or "Summer" became key patterns or archetypes in analyzing literary works. Though not thought of as a primary approach to criticism, archetypes put into detailed perspective many of images that man faces everyday, broadening and perhaps challenging the established criticism of a

given work.

However, many of the predetermined images, that place man within his given universe, do not account for cultural interpretations. Rising out of the late 1800s and flourishing in the age known as the *Harlem Renaissance*, many African-American Literary figures, Wright, Baldwin and Toomer, centered upon the idea of the "black" man's position in a "white" society; this ideology was known as the "Negro experience." However, the established meanings of archetypal images, though universal in appearance, fail to allow for cultural definitions; one such definition is known as *signifyin'*. The idea of signifyin' rose out of the African-American's need to find their identity and communicate their experience, yet in such a way as not to draw attention to it, much the same way archetypal images function.

Taking Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize winning novel *Beloved* as an example, the question then becomes can a very African-American novel be critiqued both from an archetypal and a "Negro experience" point of view, and yet have the meanings hold true for either interpretation? Does one cancel out the other? Do they aide one another? Or are they two different types of criticism that need to be addressed separately?

THE ARCHETYPAL VIEW:
The history, the images and the meanings within the text

Archetypal criticism originated as a mid 20th century formalist movement dedicated to the detailed reading of texts and analysis of their textual information: imagery, beat (rhythm), mood, sound and structure.[2] Cataloged under the heading of New Criticism,

it strove to account for all textual information and organize it into specific details that were *supposedly* objective. However, the short lived New Criticism ended as quickly as it began due to the rise of the psychologist Carl Jung in the 1950's. [3] The Jungian Archetypal critic exposed some of the specific details of New Criticism and then proceeded into the areas that were underdeveloped, such as the relationship that literature had outside the boundaries of itself: history, personal experience, culture (remember culture when defining *signifyin"*). [4]

> ...we are forced to concede that criticism deals with literature in terms of a specific conceptual framework. This framework is not that of literature itself, for this is the parasite theory...[5] -- Northrop Frye

According to Jung and other psychologists, the "archetype" was a fundamental pattern of human unconsciousness; it formed patterns of human experience. While images like that of "rebirth" and "spirit" became associated with the wave of human unconsciousness,[6] literature relied on the virtual unimportant textual elements which formed patterns suggestive of archetypes.[7] The main organizing elements in archetypal criticism are, according to Davis and Schleifer, authors of *Contemporary Literary Criticism,* "(1) a narrative surface composed of images and (2) a textual "depth" where the connection with archetypes takes place."

An archetypal understanding of a text, in short, necessitates seeing how the appearance of suggestive details in a minimal sequence is, in reality, a disguised archetypal pattern.[8]

Perhaps the best archetypal criticism begins with Northrop Frye; within the literary circles (no pun intended), Frye is considered the "definitive" expert. What Frye has done is followed the pattern of many of the early poetical imagists of the 20th century and applied the technique of imagery into fiction and other forms of literature besides poetry. In looking at the symbols and pictures within *Beloved*, it will be Frye's cataloged system of archetypal imagery forms that will best explain the underlying meanings.

Beloved is the story of a former slave woman and her daughter living in Cincinnati in the late 1800's. Their lives are drastically changed by the appearance of what seems to be the woman's other daughter, killed by her own hands 19 years early. The novel chronicles the story of Sethe, Denver and the ghost Beloved by flashing back and forth between Sethe's days on the plantation in Sweet Home, Kentucky, to the birth of Denver in the woods, the bloody death of Beloved and the present day affair between Paul D and Sethe. Many of the images and experiences fall under the categorical level of the Human World. While there are many other imagery devices that occur, for now, let us first look at the book as a large encompassed, surrealist dream.

According to the "Mythos of Archetypal Imagery," within the Cyclical Imagery for Each Level of "reality," there exists the Human World. Contained within this realm, we see the cycle of waking and dreaming, life in experience and innocence, death and rebirth.[9] The novel itself is one large rememory of past events - at times, these so called flashbacks erupt into large scenes, while they are, at other times, short rememories triggered by a smell, a look or a thing. The events engulfed within this large framework of awaking and

remembering center around the central Human World theme of experience, life experience. Not only do we see the life progression of Sethe from young child to tired adult but we also see the events in between that shape the lives of the people around her: Denver, Paul D., Beloved, Baby Suggs. Each level of Cyclical Imagery has 5 different idealictic columns: Apocalyptic, Romantic, High Mimetic, Realistic and Demonic. In turn, each column has corresponding images that are associated with that level.[10] While the outer shell of the book falls under the heading of the Human World, that is not to say that many of the images contained within the novel are confined to that specific level. The easiest procedure would be to associate certain images with each column to show the all-encompassing form the archetypal has on all types of novels.

The Apocalyptic column, the first of the series of five, harbors many different types of images. At the beginning of pg. 148, the sentence starts with the phrase... "When the four horsemen came..." This chapter contains the death of Beloved at the hands of Sethe; her reason for murdering her child was so the four white men wouldn't take her back to the plantation.While the picture brings to mind the biblical reference of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, within this story they are seen as the 'society of men' contained within the Human World[11] Both images can be juxtaposed upon another to reveal the "judgment day" for Sethe. Using this as an example, it justifies the use of archetypal criticism as a means to heighten the seemingly unimportant images and bring new light onto the subject. The *roses* at the carnival that Sethe, Paul D. and Denver go to is another example that falls under the heading of Apocalyptic; Vegetable World; the references to the burning of slaves, Sethe's

mother, is represented by the 'ritual sacrifice by fire' within the Fire World. Drastic events dominate this column, hence the word 'apocalyptic.' For Sethe, the culmination of the events within the novel rises to a dramatic climax between the realistic world she lives in and the mysterious, unnatural world of Beloved at the end of the story:

> Building voice upon voice until they found it, and when they did it was a wave of sound wide enough to sound deep water and knock the pods off chestnut trees. It broke over Sethe and she trembled like the baptized in its wash.[12]

'Baptism' is a primary category of the Apocalyptic; Watery World; the image is that of a cleansing of the body and soul from sin. For young babies, their first baptism erupts into a horrific fit of tears and fright.

The 'spilled blood' of the Watery World, the "baby blood that soaked her fingers like oil" falls under the heading of the Demonic. There are many references to the blood of Beloved still on the hands of Sethe and how she can never forget or get rid of that blood, much like Lady Macbeth. In terms of what she did and how it is mentioned with the image of the blood, the act of murder that Sethe committed falls under the archetypal image of Demonic. The 'tyrant-leader' within the Human World is represented by the schoolteacher who became master of Sethe and the other slaves when Mr. Gardner died. He was the one who inflicted the "chokeberry tree" upon Sethe's back and it was the schoolteacher who was one of the four horsemen. While many of the images fall under one specific category, that

doesn't mean that they cannot be part of 2 or 3, as seen with the reference to the school teacher.

Animals play a very large role within the levels and columns of archetypal imagery. While there are many examples of specific animals, in Beloved the main ones are the crow and the dog, which fall under the heading of Demonic. Perhaps the most interesting picture is described early on in the book, when Sethe is running through the forest, escaping to freedom yet held down by the weight of pregnancy:

> But she could not, would not, stop, for when she did the little antelope rammed her with horns and pawed the ground of her womb with impatient hooves..... waiting for the antelope to protest, and why she thought of an antelope Sethe could not imagine since she had never seen one.[13]

The reference to the fetal Denver as an 'antelope' falls under the heading of High Mimetic; Animal World. The beast within this level carry some sort of divine aura about them; the eagle, swan, peacock and phoenix are some of the other examples. in light of the novel, the image evokes a picture of rising from the ashes, the phoenix, but perhaps a better example is that of a connection with the "nature"-al world. The antelope is a graceful beast associated with the archetypal *Green World*- it represents many of the key symbolic themes within the book: innocence, nature, freedom and sacrifice. What it also does it greatly influence the archetypal tug between the Dionysian world of unreasonable, unnatural man and the Apollonian world of rational

thought, reason and fate; this type of tug-of-war is a solid archetypal foundation on which many plays, novels and poetry are based.

While there are many minor referential images such as the ones mentioned above, the most important is the archetypal image of the 'circle.' If a novel is truly archetypal, it is so not only in subjective, specific details, but also circular in its events. Within *Beloved* is the "Mythos" of the seasons; the book starts off in the dead of winter with the death of Baby Suggs, Sethe's mother-in-law. All the images that happen during this time period are purposeful according to the season (i.e. WINTER=DEATH).

> In Ohio seasons are theatrical. Each one enters like a prima donna, convinced its performance is the reason the world has people in it.[14]

As the novel progresses, the seasonal cycle continues from winter to spring to summer until finally, at the end, with Sethe crazed and in bed, we see fall or the "fall." Sethe, after finally confronting what Beloved really was, succumbs to her age. "I'm tired, Paul D.. So tired. I have to rest a while." The book not only ends full cycle according to the seasons, but in the fact that Sethe is in the same position, same state of mind, same exact place Baby Suggs was when she died at the beginning of the book.

Much of what archetypal criticism depends on is the situation in which the images are used. Sometimes, the author has put them their intentionally, while other times, it is by pure accident. Whatever the case may be, in associating the images with preestablished meanings, we can see a broader picture of what the scene is about. In

terms of everyday human existence, archetypal criticism points us toward reflecting upon the everyday events within our own lives.

THE "NEGRO EXPERIENCE":
What is *signifyin'*, where it appears and what it all means

In terms of a cultural interpretation of archetypal criticism, *Signification*, the African-American theory of reading, takes many of the everyday archetypal images that we have seen in the first section and places them within the context of the "Negro experience."[15] Signifyin' is what Robert Abrahams calls the "technique of indirect argument or persuasion," "a language of implication," "to imply, goad, beg, boast, by indirect verbal or gestural means."[16] Essentially, signification becomes a type of subtle hint to the reader; like that of archetypal, it must be pulled apart and examined for its worth and not just taken literally.

> The Black concept of signifying incorporates essentially a folk notion that dictionary entries for words are not always sufficient for interpreting meanings or messages, or that meanings go beyond such interpretations.[17]

Many of the early African-American writers like Johnson and DuBois disguised their novel as "white" literature while many of the sections were outcries of signifyin' that held over after the Civil War.

The mythological archetypal signifier for the African-American is known as the Signifying Monkey; sometimes referred to as Èsù, it takes the role of translator or interpreter.[18] According to Davis and Schleifer, it literally translates as "to untie or unknot

knowledge." Although the monkey, as an animal figure, is rarely seen within today's literature, the archetypal image he represents still holds true for many of the African-American novels, *Beloved* being one of them.

Stamp Paid, the old man that helped Sethe to freedom in the forest, symbolizes the interpreter of the unknown knowledge. Within the house on Bluestone Street, where Sethe, Denver and Beloved lived, many strange events occurred, unnatural events. While others deemed them disentangleable, Stamp Paid comes through as the character of Èsù. He is one of the first to recognize the coming of the four horsemen that one frightful day, he also was the go-between that stopped Sethe from killing the rest of her three children as well. What might seem like a big stretch for comparison - The Signifying Monkey just isn't defined to an obscure character rendition. Much of what the 'monkey' represents is seen through many of the passages that truly underline the "Negro experience."

> Much of the Afro-American literary tradition can, in a real sense, be read as successive attempts to create a new narrative space for representing the recurring referent of Afro-American literature - the so-called black experience.[19]

One of the key "Negro experience" ideas is that of the constant struggle. Morrison is not the only writer to convey signified passages dedicated to underlining the struggle and affirmation of the African-American people. One of the interesting developments within *Beloved* is when she refers to the house that they lived in. On

page 29, Denver approaches the house "regarding it, as she always did, as a person rather than a structure." While the significance may not be totally clear within this context, a very similar image may shed some light on the *signified* house.

The image of the house and its relevance to the "Negro" experience" can be best illustrated by using the short story "Rhobert," by Jean Toomer, as a reference to get a better understanding of just one of the main ingredients of the "black" experience. Toomer's story presents many of the objects and images that are associated with pre and post-slavery African-Americans in such a surrealistic way, that is, in which objects and symbols are used to represent thoughts and feelings. What at first appears to be stream-of-conscienceness, is, in actually, a giant metaphorical affirmation of the plight of the "Negro" man trying to adjust to a white individual society. Rhobert, the character within the piece, is weighed down by a "house" strapped to his head; in this case, the house symbolizes the giant foot of society pushing him down as illustrated by one of the following lines, "He is way down." The word "way" represents the "weigh"ing down of Rhobert. What is presented within the first five sentences of "Rhobert" is the position of African-Americans in society at that time. They were always looked down upon as being different or "deformed" from the rest because of their color, which resulted in their constant struggle to climb the ladder to social recognition as individual human beings. Keeping this ideology in mind, we can now move toward some of the other passage within *Beloved* to see how they can be see as signifyin' items of the larger scale "Negro experience."

At times, many of the signifyin' points within the book can

easily be ignored. However, when dealing with such an imaginative, symbolically filled book, almost everything can mean something. Toward the middle of the novel, Morrison starts to talk about the Cherokee Indian and the plight that they have gone through. They are described of being "stubborn," once mighty, they have fallen under the influence of the white man. This section becomes, like that of the house, a key in to what Morrison speaks allusively about. Taken literally, it is the plight of the "red" man, but looking at it through 'black-tinted' glasses - it becomes part of the gigantic puzzle of "Negro experience."

> Decimated but stubborn, they were among those who chose a fugitive life rather than Oklahoma. In between that calamity and this, they hadvisited George III in London, published newspapers, drawn aconstitution, wrote a language and translated scripture. All to no avail.[20]

Although, this was the life of the black man, it wasn't the life he created. Major patterns that form the image of "Negro experience" and signifyin' are the references to 1) an undefinable identity and 2) the position that the white people have made for the African-American. These final two forms really tie in the theories inlaid within all African-American Literature. The novel even starts out with a double, illusionary image: a mirror. According to interpretation, the mirror symbolizes the double-image sign; the meaning behind it refers to the crossroads where humans meet their fate.[21] While this ties in some of the archetypal images found within

Frye, with relation to this novel and other types of this literature, it intensifies the question of Who am I?

> Could she sing? Was she pretty? Have I got a sister and does she favor me?...What's the matter? What's the matter? She didn't know what she looked like...[22]

The ambiguity has stayed with the African-American ever since the slavery days - this is one of the major reasons why we have a resurgence today for finding your roots.

...AND IN THE END...?:
What conclusions are there? What can we expect from the future?

The reason for signifying arose out of the same reason for archetypal imagery; it all was born out of a needed to understand words, phrases and images deeper than what was on the written page. Although, not wholeheartedly born of the same mother, these two types of criticisms can co-exist. *Beloved* provides a foundational canvas to assess the universal images of Frye's archetypalism, yet to truly understand what Morrison is saying, the "Negro experience" must grow out of the framework . Heavily weighing one type over the other results in a lopsided view; while feeding one off of the other, we can start to chart many new types of images related to the African-American experience. Like the fine-line between the Dionysian and Apollonian, we need to be able to interpret both worlds, white and black,and perhaps seen things from a whole new different light.

> The more colored people spent their strength trying to convince them how gentle they were, how clever and loving, how human, the more they used themselves up to persuade whites of something Negroes believed could not be questioned, the deeper and more tangled jungle that grew inside. But it wasn't the jungle black brought with them to this place from the other place. It was the jungle whitefolks planted in them. And it grew. It spread. In, through and after life, it spread, until it invaded the whites who had made it.[23]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Contemporary Literary Criticism, 2nd edition. ed. Robert Davis & Ronald Schleifer. New York: Longman Publishers, 1989.

Dramatic Theory and Criticism. ed. Bernard F. Dukore. Orlando: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1974.

Geiger, William. "Mythos of Archetypal Imagery." supplementary Critical Procedures in Language and Literature handout, adapted from Robert D. Denham's *Northrop Frye and Critical Method* [University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978].

Frye, Northrop. "the Mythos of Autumn: Tragedy," from The Anatomy of Criticism.[Princeton University Press, 1957].

Morrison, Toni. Beloved. [New York: Plume Publishing, 1987].

Toomer, Jean. Rhobert. Class handout for African-American Literature, Dr. K.Landis.

ENDNOTES

[1] Toni Morrison, Beloved, New York: Plume Publishing, 1987. pg. 4.

[2] Contemporary Literary Criticism, 2nd edition. ed. Robert Davis & Ronald Schleifer. New York: Longman Publishers, 1989, pg. 277-278.

[3] Ibid. 278.

[4] Ibid..

[5] Ibid., pg. 543.

[6] Ibid., pg. 278.

[7] Ibid..

[8] Ibid..

[9] William Geiger, "Mythos of Archetypal Imagery." supplementary Critical Procedures inLanguage and Literature handout,adapted from Robert D. Denham's *Northrop Frye and Critical Method* ,University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978.

[10] Ibid..

[11] Ibid..

[12] Morrison, pg. 261.

[13] Ibid., pg. 30.

[14] Ibid., pg. 116.

[15] Contemporary Literary Criticism, pg. 630.

[16] Ibid., pg. 632.

[17] Ibid., pg. 633.

[18] Ibid., pg. 631.

[19] Ibid., pg. 637.

[20] Morrison, pg. 111.

[21] Contemporary Literary Criticism, pg. 641.

[22] Morrison, pgs. 140 - 141.

[23] Ibid., pgs. 198 - 199.

The sightless eyes...

The sightless eyes stare deeply
Into the face of the unknown
Looking for something,
Failing to find it.
They want the friendship
That is no longer there-
Reaching for something
Pulling further
And further
Up the rope of the familiar.
Can anyone explain rejection?
Or passing rejection as it comes near?
The silent stare
Is blank with emotion,
Crowded, yet empty in despair.

—Tiffany Hilberth

Tulips

by Jenny Colville

It would be nice to be a tulip. A red one. A nice, bright blossom breaking through a folded leaf. I could wait and look at the world and choose just the right moment to pop out. I think I would sit and wait for a while. I would remain all folded up like arms over a chest. I can hear my heart thumping against them right now.

You never realize how important it is to pick the right moment to live, until you pick the wrong one. Me, well, actually my mother has always picked the wrong ones. But I have the feeling that because I am her only child and sole companion that I have something to do with her bad timing. From where I'm sitting I think I have a pretty good perspective on life. I've learned that it's good to observe things before you make your move.

I'm sitting in a window above the street. I can see the flower shop down below on the opposite side - across the bike lane, the oil stained street, two hoboes and a woman waiting for the bus. The flower shop is packed in among the other shops on the first floor of a building that reaches high into the air and ends with stone faces that look up and leak pollution from their mouths.

It looks as if the flower shop may explode today, from the weight of the buildings on top of it. Begonias are poking out from the windows and doors and daisies have spilled out on to the side walk in big white buckets. I would like to own that flower shop. I asked my mother what she thought of the idea and she said that she didn't think that we had the ability to stay in one place for that long. I think she should speak for herself.

There is a sale on hyacinths today. A man in a black bowler is bending over the buckets and fingering their light blue petals. I prefer tulips. They are passionate flowers. Hyacinths are so delicate that they look as if they might evaporate or float away and appear in a different place than the one that you put them in. Elderly people seem to like the hyacinths.

They put them in whole crate fulls, load them up in their bicycle baskets and put them in their apartment windows. During the afternoon, when the sun falls behind the buildings, apartment rooms are heated with their purple glow. Sometimes the neighborhood kids gather in packs and stare up into the windows. The subtle radiance that echoes off the the white plaster walls and turns them into fairy caves are the closest things to sunsets you can see in this city.

The man in the bowler is reaching into his pockets for silver quarters. The sun maneuvers its way under the wet canopy and blinks on them. I like watching people exchange money. I t really is a strange act. I think people get a pleasure out of it that they don't even realize. The quick flash of silver and the sound coins make bumping against each other. It makes them feel significant somehow. But I know it is not. To me it is like the quick flash of dental work on an acquaintance that says hello and then disappears into a crowd. It is one of those things that puts order in our life because we can always count on it happening. Order is comfortable. "I want some order in my life," is what my mom says right before she eats a candy bar or decides that we should move. "I want some order in my life" is what she said before we moved here. If you ask me, which she never does, I would say that her idea of order is messed up. She thinks she can create an illusion of order by buying us Milk Duds and Cokes at every gas station in the continental U.S. But how can I complain when we are zipping down the road listening to Rod Stewart and sipping sweet Cokes from thick glass bottle tops? It is only after the last Milk Dud is gone and the only thing left of the sweet is the sticky residue on my hands, that I remember my point of view. At this point I usually decide it's not worth it anymore and fall asleep.

Now the man in the bowler is crossing the street. The sun is shining brightly on his glasses and the pieces of chewing gum that have been flattened into the asphalt. Today the trash looks harmless. It floats gingerly by his feet like synthetic leaves. A group of boys are lighting firecrackers in front of the cemetery next to my apartment building. They must be

impressed by the noise the firecrackers make because it is too light outside to see any sparks. They throw them down into the drains on the street and put their faces down to the wire grates. They bob their heads up and down like stupid pigeons and wait for a pop. My mom says that soon one of them will lose a nose in an explosion. The man in the bowler walks by the boys, into the cemetery, and down the row of graves. I run into the living room so I can see him from a better angle. Our apartment is almost empty and the floor boards make a hollow sound when I run. Everything looks quiet in the cemetery. The man is walking through a grid of cubicle plots. Now that he is in the sun and closer to me I can see that his hands are old and liver spotted, like he has been soaking them in coffee instead of Dawn Dish Washing Detergent. He seems to be lost. He is wandering around like he is in a neighborhood that he is familiar with but is not his own. He stops at different graves, examines the flower arrangements; maybe he is plot shopping for himself. Now he has stopped to sit under a tree and I can not see him anymore.

.....

Tulips are self sufficient organisms. Their bulbs are their universes. They don't need much outside support except for a little moisture. You could put a tulip bulb on a plane from Siberia to Guatemala and it wouldn't know the difference. It draws on its energy, its own tiny roots curled up inside. I am trying to train myself to act like a tulip. It is hard. I think that humans draw their energy from the ground. Our roots run deeper then a maple trees. If someone lifted us up off the ground like a tulip bulb, we would panic and start kicking our feet.

This is the third apartment we have lived in in three years. The first was in Albuquerque, the second in Venezuela, and the third in Stockholm, where we are right now. My roots have been slowly worn down from driving around in a car all my life. The rubber on the bottom of my tennis

shoes is soft and my toes poke through. My mother tells me that I am too rough and that I should settle down a little. "Keep a pair of shoes for at least a month," she says through a sigh. But I know that it is just my roots longing for contact with earth that are tearing apart my shoes. Sometimes, like today, I want to throw them up in the air, run outside and dig my feet into the soft accepting ground.

My mom is crossing the hall into the kitchen now. Her ankle creaks every third step so I can always tell where she is. She sometimes likes to bring me photo albums filled with pictures of her family: my cousins, aunts and uncles, and grandparents. I like it when she does that. I try and match faces with voices and articles of clothing that I remember from the few times I have seen them. I remember Aunt Geena's knees because I was in the toilet stall next to hers at somebodys wedding. I remember bending down, pressing against the cold tile, to see them . Her nylons were rolled up just above to the top of her calf and choked the flesh so the skin was puffy and white. She was moaning to someone in another stall about men being blemishes on the butt of humanity and vomiting between words which made the whole speech very dramatic. "Evil," "Evil," she kept repeating. I stayed huddled in the cold bathroom stall until she left. It was like I had been to my first orthodox church service. Fire and brimstone lay all around me, steaming on the baby blue tile. I couldn't understand how someone her age could still be interested in men. I thought that the two sexes became one when people where Aunt Geena's age. And I, of course, had no idea that one of those sexes was evil! I had always thought that older people were like food on a cold plate, the gravy and the fruit salad at Thanksgiving that always blended together into a formless mass. My cousins were disgusted when I ate all the things that congealed on my plate. But I really didn't mind. I had been told all my life that they ended up in the same place anyway. Now, despite my Aunt Geena, I know that people are like that too. They are wonderful on their own like cheese fries or a root beer float, but not wonderful enough to forget that they all end up in the same place in the end. Poor Aunt Geena, she was never as

enlightened as I am.

The man under the tree has moved into the sunshine to a bench across from a fountain. He is taking out his lunch. He has spread different food items across the bench carefully and folded a white napkin over his lap. He has set the purple hyacinth plant on his knees. It serves as a makeshift centerpiece while he unwraps his food from tight cellophane packages. My mother loves plastic. She unwraps my lunches the same way. All our belongings are organized in Tupperware dishes. They are the main organizational tools of our life. Easy to pack and tough enough to stand up to the wear and tear of our lifestyle.

"Do you want a Kraft single?" my mother is yelling from the kitchen. I say yeah. I like the way the cheese feels cold when I peel away the plastic. I put it on my face and mold it around my nose. I wonder if this stuff would be good for plastic surgery.

The old man hasn't begun to eat his lunch yet. His napkin lays on his lap, crisp and devoid of memories as new fallen snow. Whenever I see patches of untarnished white I go crazy. I get the feeling that everything important lies ahead of me. I love it when the snow covers up our old Chevy Malibu and turns it into a cloud machine that will take us anywhere we desire, and when the clouds in the sky look so white you think you might be able to stand on them. I suddenly have the energy to go downstairs. I throw off my shoes and yell "Bye mom I'm going to visit the graveyard." I like to make her think that I am weird. She already thinks that I am pretentious.

Before I go to the graveyard I decide to cross over the street and buy a tulip. The canopy over the shop is still dripping with rain. It looks useless and soggy, the way things often do when the seasons change. A man walks under the canopy and a drop hits him on the back of the ear. He wipes at his neck and curses as the drop rolls under his shirt collar. People get upset about the smallest things. Another drop lands on the forehead of a baby in a carriage. He smiles with his pink gums and sticks out a shiny tongue.

Things are changing all the time, and so fast that there are left over

and out of place items everywhere. Umbrellas in the trunks of cars, Christmas fruitcakes in the backs of refrigerators, canopies that block the sun and drop annoying water beads down people's backs. And then, of course, there are people who travel around and live in foreign cities. There are all these things that have lost their purposes, forgotten them or are searching for them. And even though there are so many things that are forgotten or out of place, maybe 75%, people don't like to think about them. Babies and the dogs that sift through garbage cans are the only ones that seem to notice. People like me and my mom belong to this group of lost things. We are left behind and out of place because we keep moving in order to not be out of place. It doesn't make any sense I know, but that's not the point. Most people don't want to bother with us because they figure that we will be moving again anyway. My mom, try as she might, can never get a position on a PTA board. Little things like this upset her and we are off again trying to find someplace where we really will belong. But everyone seems to know we are strays. The minute they see our Chevy Malibu rolling down the street, carrying us along on fumes that make us high and our hair frizzy they head to their houses and lock the doors. I think that people are stupid. They should take any chance they get to meet world travelers like us. Geez,.....nothing in life is permanent.

The trash is still floating gingerly across the street. When the cars drive by they suck it under their wheels and then spit it back out like malfunctioning vacuum cleaners. The same boys are lighting firecrackers. Now they are throwing them at the heels of people walking down the sidewalks. They are testing their bravery and crying out for attention at the same time. Nobody tells them to stop. Nobody minds. People shrug their shoulders and give each other that "boys will be boys" look. It makes me feel sad. I know that they are becoming invisible behind their pre-pubescent bodies and baseball caps. Sometimes at night I look outside the window and all that can be seen of them are little puffs of smoke and a few sparks from their firecrackers.

As I turn into the graveyard the sun shines onto my face. I put my

hand over my eyes and feel like I am floating. I often get this feeling. Sometimes I feel like I need to reach out and grab hold of something so that I don't blow away. I close my eyes and give my feet a chance to take root. When I feel more steady I move on. Each grave is concealed in its own little cubicle of shrubs and is covered with fresh cut or plastic flowers. From above I bet they all look the same and the graveyard like a table full of tossed salads. I am walking over to the bench across from the old man. I sit down and put the tulip plant on my knees. The man doesn't seem to notice me. "Are you visiting someone?" I ask him. My voice sounds loud against he green. Something starts beeping and ringing and my voice diminishes. The man looks around and to both sides. He finally puts his hand on his ear and pulls out a hearing aid. He turns it over in his hands and presses his thumb down hard and shaky but his effort gets him nowhere. It is as if he where trying to squeeze a stone. Gradually the ringing subsides and he puts the hearing aid back in his ear and gets up to leave. As he stands his clean napkin slides off of his lap and into the dirt. He doesn't notice and steps on it.

I follow him through rows of knee high bushes until he stops and places his hyacinth plant on a grave. The grave is covered in hyacinths. Some are light pink and fading. I remember seeing a crate-load of the pink flowers outside of the flower shop two weeks ago. Others are light purple and have only begun to shrink in the new sun. The plants are lined up like boxes in a calendar. It is the last day of February and the man with the bowler bends over and places the new plant in its spot at the bottom corner. He stands still for a minute so I decide to tap him on the shoulder.

"I think you dropped this," I say. He turns around slowly, pausing every inch like the second hand of a clock and looks in my face. He looks at me like a child confronting a stranger. His face turns pale and he takes a couple of steps backward. "Erma," he says majestically. The trees and the sky and the spirits dancing in his eyes quiver for a moment. "No, oh, no.....I'm not Erma. I'm returning your napkin, I think if you take it home and wash it right away you can get the stain out." The old man's hearing

aid is ringing again and he starts walking toward me with out-stretched arms. He is walking slowly and carefully, the way you would walk if you didn't want to scare a ghost. He reaches for my hand and I try to give him the napkin. He takes my hand and the napkin and presses them between both of his palms, the way I remember my grandfather doing when I was little. Now he is leading me to a bench; we are promenading through the graveyard. He smells a little funny, like pea soup, but his hands are clean. We sit down on the bench and he looks up at the sky. The clouds are white and his eyes are glassy. He raises one of his hands to his heart and keeps the other placed neatly over mine.

I just sit and look up with him and wonder what it would be like if this man were my grandfather. All I remember about my grandfather were his crushing hands and his halitosis. This man must be full of history. I sit and imagine all the grandchildren and aunts and uncles and nephews and nieces that he must have in his life. I imagine his photo albums filled with black and white snapshots that have gone sour around the edges. We sit for about fifteen minutes and then he puts his head on my shoulder and falls asleep. I get up and try to move him onto his side, but he is heavy and his bowler comes off revealing a naked spot on his scalp. I feel sorry for him and try to make him look dignified by laying the dirty napkin over his arms. Maybe it will look like he meant to got o sleep there. I start walking down one of the aisles and turn around. He still looks funny. Like a clown in a graveyard.

I walk out of the gates and past the boys lighting firecrackers. There are only two of them left and they have become desperate. They are throwing them across the streets at the cars. The people inside don't even flinch, the sparks drop dead at their wheels. I walk under the canopy and turn my face to catch the drips. I smile as they slide down my lips. Out of the corner of my eye I catch the old man sneaking out of the graveyard gates. He stops, looks around to see if anyone is coming and then urinates on the cemetery wall. I want to run over and direct him behind a bush or back inside the cemetery, but it is too late. The world has already seen his

shame. He zips up his pants, wipes his forehead with his dirty napkin and wanders on oblivious to the boys that throw firecrackers at him and the people on the sidewalk that cringe and dodge his puddle. I sit up against the wall of the bakery next to the flower shop. The sun dries off my face and the scent of the trash that is floating by mingles with exhaust fumes. But the brightly colored wrappers still look harmonious and I just have to remember that I can always look up at the sky. I plant my feet firmly into the small patch of dirt before the sidewalk and close my eyes.