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ARTICLES

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SAN JOSE STUDIES

Volume VI, Number 1 February 1980

The Bill Casey Award

The Bill Casey Memorial Fund annually awards $100.00 to the author of the best article, story, or poem appearing in each volume of *San Jose Studies*. Friends and relatives of Bill Casey, a faculty member at San Jose State University from 1962 to 1966, established the fund at his death to encourage creative writing and scholarship. The recipient of each award is selected by the Committee of Trustees of *San Jose Studies*.

The Bill Casey Award in Letters for 1978

has been presented to

J. Jorge Klor de Alva

for his article

"Christianity and the Aztecs"

The Committee of Trustees also awards a one year subscription to *San Jose Studies* to the author of the best work (exclusive of the Bill Casey winner) published in the categories of (1) poetry, (2) fiction, and (3) articles. The 1978 recipients of these awards are:

Poetry	**Suzanne Juhasz**, whose poem "Reply" appeared in February 1979.
Fiction	**Frances Hall**, whose short story "To Make An Ending" appeared in May 1979.
Articles	**Emmanuel Diel**, whose article "Mark Twain's Failure: Sexual Women Characters" appeared in February 1979.

Plate 1. Birds, Sweden, 7'' x 9''

STRAW: SYMBOL, BEAUTY, PLAY

James Steel Smith

Photographs by Tom Tramel

I. Shapes of Straw

Craftsmen around the world use straw not only for making things for everyday, practical use—roofs, coats, hats, shoes, brooms, mats, ropes, baskets, screens, fishtraps, scarecrows— but also for symbolic, amusing, or decorative objects. Frequently straw forms that were originally shaped as symbols of forces human beings sought to invoke, such as the straw fertility symbols found in many cultures, have become, in later days, primarily amusing and decorative. In England these forms are called "corn dollies," which have gradually taken on a generalized meaning of good luck. And for most present-day Englishmen—including the corn-dolly makers themselves—they have come to be thought of as ways of decorating their environment, of making it more lively and interesting. A similar shift may be traced in the history of the corn-dolly counterparts in Scandinavia, Central Europe, and Central America.

Of course, like the Swedish birds of Plate 1 and the Japanese squirrel of Plate 2, many beautiful and amusing shapes of straw may never have been intended to be other than beautiful or amusing. Their designers obviously meant to make

Plate 2. Squirrel, Japan, 8" x 6" x 4"

them objects of play in the largest sense—things that beguile, amuse. It is not surprising that straw should so frequently be used for such purposes. Workers in straw are not under the pressure that workers with more expensive materials—marble, brass, silver, gold, bronze—would very likely feel. If they wish to fashion something frivolous, playful, and temporary, they can go ahead and make it without worrying that they may be wasting rare or costly materials. In conceiving things out of straw they do not become involved in a clash between triviality and seriousness, recreation and creation, responsibility and irresponsibility, labor and pleasure, thrift and prodigality. The Yorkshire farmer need not fret over waste when he devises a pretty whirling contrivance out of straw.

Further, the light weight and yellow color of straw themselves connote playfulness, decorativeness, rather than solemnity of purpose and treatment. The spindly, bright straw fibers are entirely appropriate to a Swedish bird spinning at the end of a thread. The spirit of straw is gaiety.

Still a third aspect of straw—its slim, brittle, fibrous nature—would seem to lend itself to the creating of suggestive, free shapes rather than the careful representation of reality. Although straw workers sometimes try for *tour de force* imitations of structures like the Concorde plane and Westminster Abbey, most realize that their ability to capture close likenesses is more limited than it is for the wood carver, potter, or metalsmith. The natural direction of work in straw is towards simplification and fancy.

For these various reasons the worker in straw, more often than not, invents objects that are funny, witty, merry, whimsical, decoratively abstract. Even utilitarian objects of straw—straw hats, brooms, fans, screens—usually possess a special jauntiness. And the non-utilitarian straw designs—the Mexican musician figures, the Scandinavian twirlarounds, the English corn dollies, the Japanese and Mexican straw animals and birds, the Polish bucks and chandeliers, the Scandinavian and German stars, Italy's barnyard caricatures—all of these are lighthearted, playful. In achieving this playfulness their makers are working within the natural bounds of their medium.

II. Lucky Harvest: Corn Dollies and the Like

British corn dollies and their counterparts in Sweden, Poland, Mexico, Japan and other countries are straw creations that in the far past probably were, according to the most widely accepted theory, fertility symbols, invocations of the benevolent forces in nature and protections against evil forces. Whatever their prehistoric origin, they have generally been associated with harvest time and regarded as assuring good luck for the next year's harvest.

They would appear to have been a way of propitiating the nature spirits, an attempt to assure an abundant next year's harvest by preserving, in some appropriate figure, the grains of this year's harvest. They represent a concrete recognition of the procreative forces of nature, a making of connection between the present harvest and the one to come. The ancient forms and the customs

surrounding them are largely a matter of guesswork based on the practices that lingered on into the Christian era. These had a stubborn life in the rural England of later centuries. Firsthand accounts of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries suggest that the ancient customs persisted tenaciously in modified forms, even though their origins and early meanings may have been lost to the people who still practiced them, and the oral and written accounts of harvest homes of the recent past—the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, before the triumph of the combine harvester—indicate that, in a vague way, the dollies and their part in the festivities still retained something of their fertility symbolism. Today some Yorkshire farmers can recall their fathers or their grandfathers fastening a corn dolly to the last wain coming into the barn, where the harvesters would later in the evening celebrate their harvest home. And traces of the old harvest celebrations linger in the present-day festivals of thanksgiving in churches and public halls.

The corn dolly played its part in harvest festivities in a variety of ways. Sometimes it was made from the last sheaf, or it was made prior to the last load, taken to the fields, and then brought home on the last-load wagon. Or it was woven during the harvesting by old men, who selected the best straws they could find in the field. In some parts of Europe this figure—the Mother Sheaf—was greater than life-size, as in Picardy, where it was carried through the streets at the Bread Festival, sometimes with a straw baby inside it. It might be decorated with ribbons. In some cases the dolly was dressed in women's clothes. In Britain this harvest symbol acquired various names—Harvest Queen, Earth Mother, Kern Baby (or Babby), Churn, Crook, Maiden, Hag, Turnip, Ivy Girl, Mell, Scottish Maiden, Clyach, Puppet, and Knack (pronounced "neck").

Simple ceremonies, called "crying the Knack," were carried out in the fields by the harvesters. They might cluster around the knack and shout such rhymes as "Well cut! Well Bound!/ Well shocked! Well saved from the ground." According to one acount, the North Devonshire harvesters would gather around the knack-maker, an old man, who would touch it to the ground; the men bowed towards the knack, and then, waving their hats, shouted "The Knack!" while the old man lifted the dolly high three times to shouts of "We yen" ("We end"). These rituals could lead to such horseplay as a harvester's racing to the farm house with the knack to get a first kiss from a waiting girl, who would be armed with a bucket of water.

Whether tied to the last wagon or carried in procession or raced back by a runner, the dolly was brought to the barn or farmhouse and there was hung in a prominent place for the harvest home festivities—eating, drinking, toasts, dancing. Usually the dolly was kept in the house until the next harvest in the belief that it would secure good luck for the new year, a custom that might well be the remnant of the ancient belief that the dolly actually contained the earth spirit.

Over the centuries the corn dolly took on many diverse functions and forms. It was associated with major festivals other than the harvest thanksgiving. In

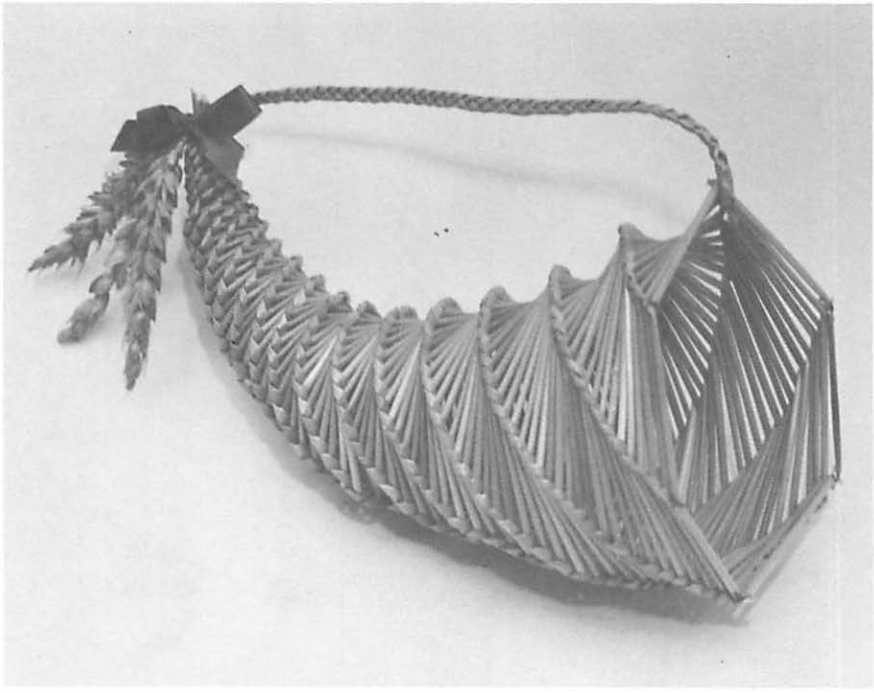

Plate 3. Cornucopia, Lavenham, England, 6" x 3" x 10"

rural areas it came to be very much a part of the Christmas decorations. In many of these straw inventions the connection with the planting and harvesting of crops is fairly obvious—the cornucopia (Plate 3), the female figure or knack (Plate 4), the bell (often a bell was rung in the harvest procession) (Plate 5), the cider jug within an apple, the terret (similar to the ornaments on the crownpiece of a horse's harness), the horns (Plate 6), the knot (an abstract representation of rope), the horseshoe and whip (Plate 7), and the mare (Plate 8). (The mare dolly was associated with the harvest custom of "Calling the Mare"; on the completion of one's own harvesting, the last sheaf in form of a mare was sent to harvesters still working, as a sort of taunt. Another ritual called for the harvesters to build a straw mare in the last field, then throw sickles at it to cut off its legs; he who succeeded in doing this was honored at the harvest feast and wove the straw from the mare into an ornament. This version would seem to exemplify the belief that the nature spirit must not escape.) In some dollies neither harvest nor good luck seems clearly suggested. Such are the lantern, the bird cage, the chandelier, and the rattle, a dolly with a dried pea or stone in it (Plate 9, left)—but in their graceful sprightliness they seem appropriate decorations for any joyous festivities.

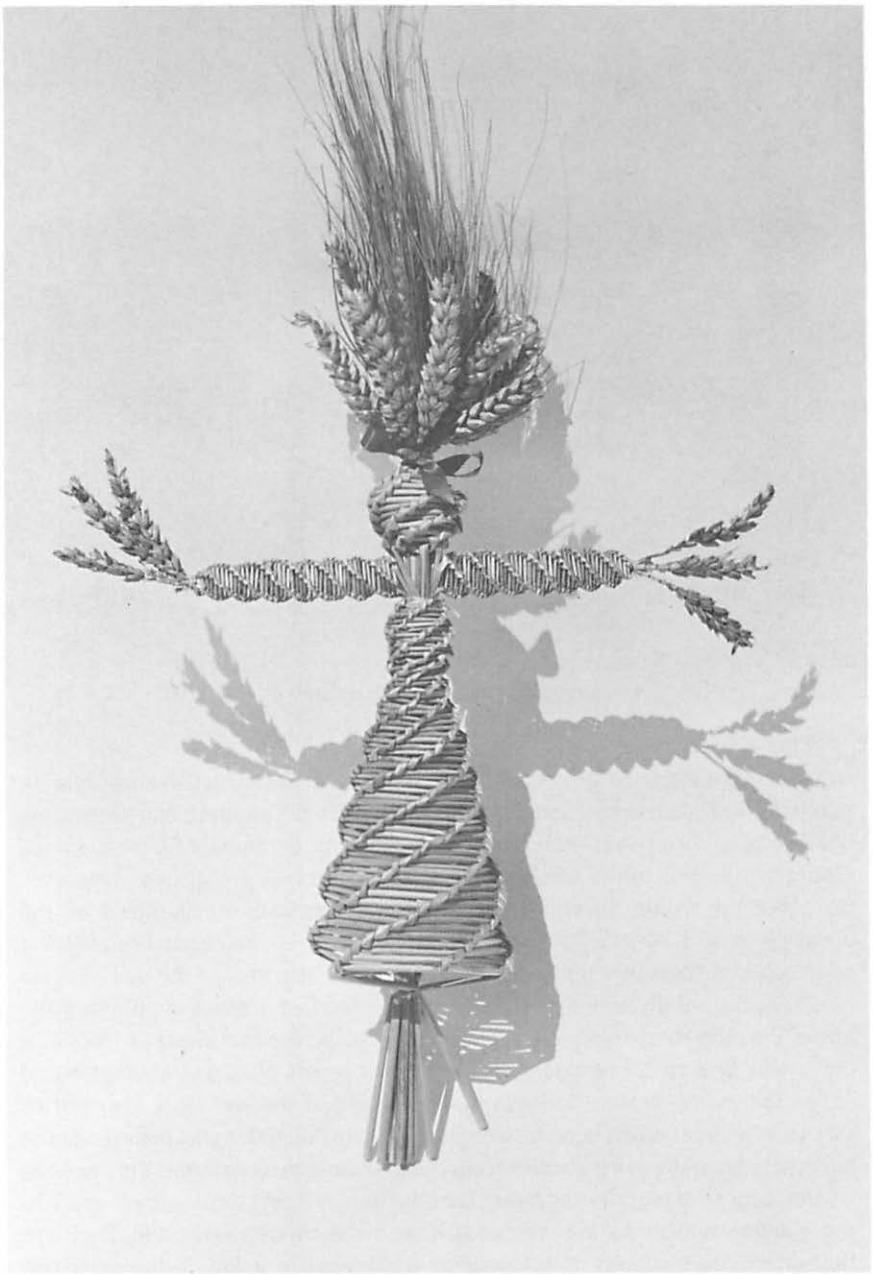

Plate 4. Earth Mother, made by Laura Richardson, Pool Foot, Ambleside, England, 12" x 20"

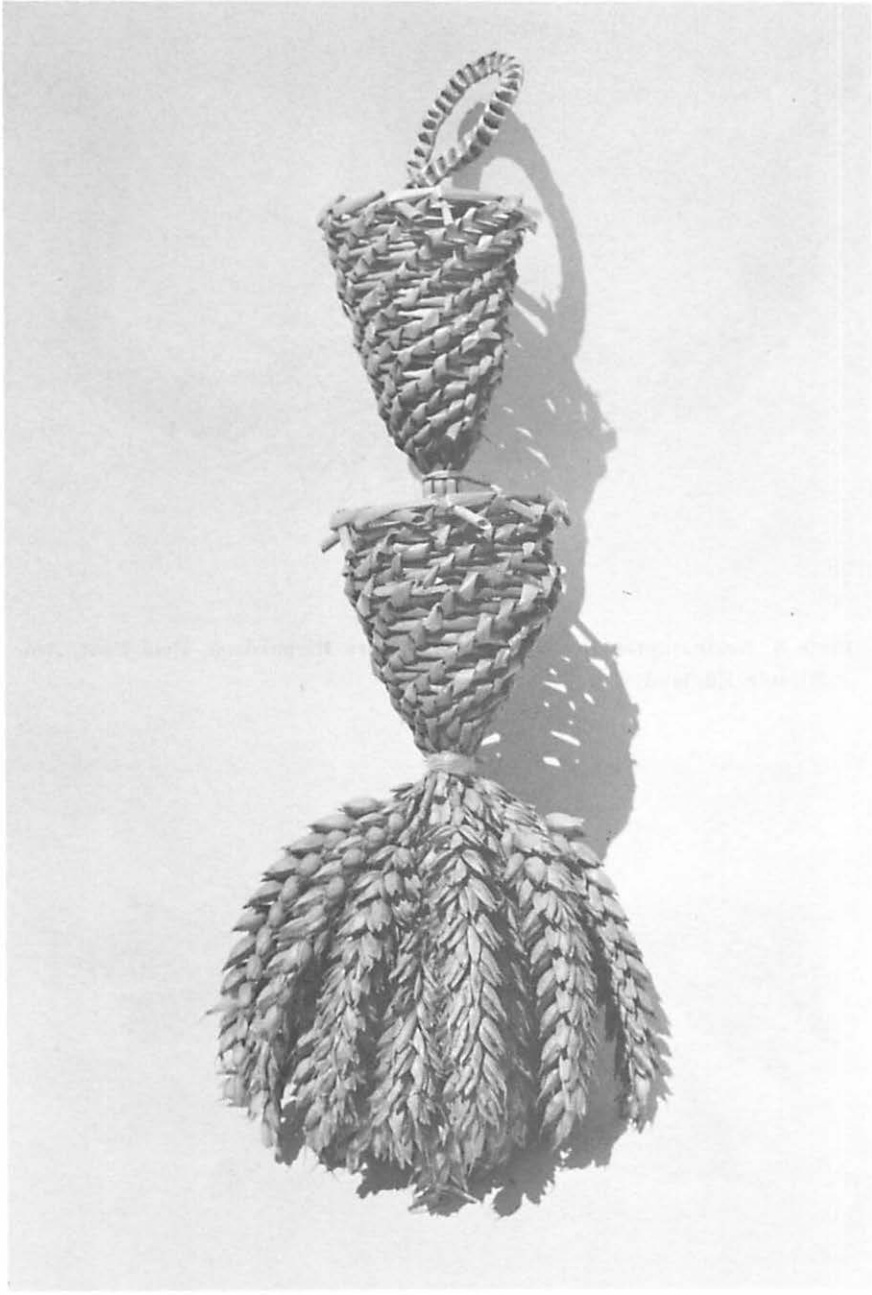

Plate 5. Suffolk Bell, made by Laura Richardson, Pool Foot, Ambleside, England, 11" x 3"

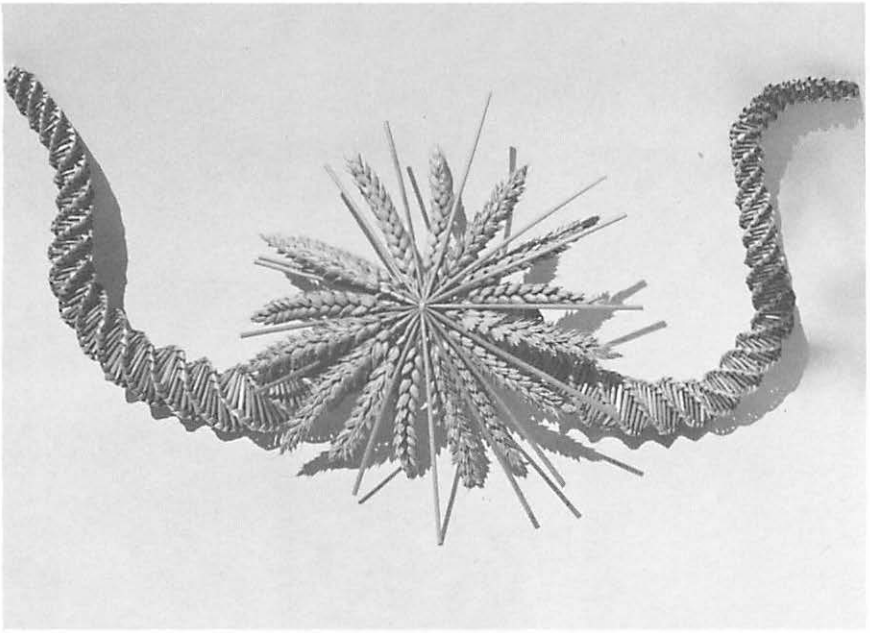

Plate 6. Northampton Horns, made by Laura Richardson, Pool Foot, Ambleside, England, 9" x 18"

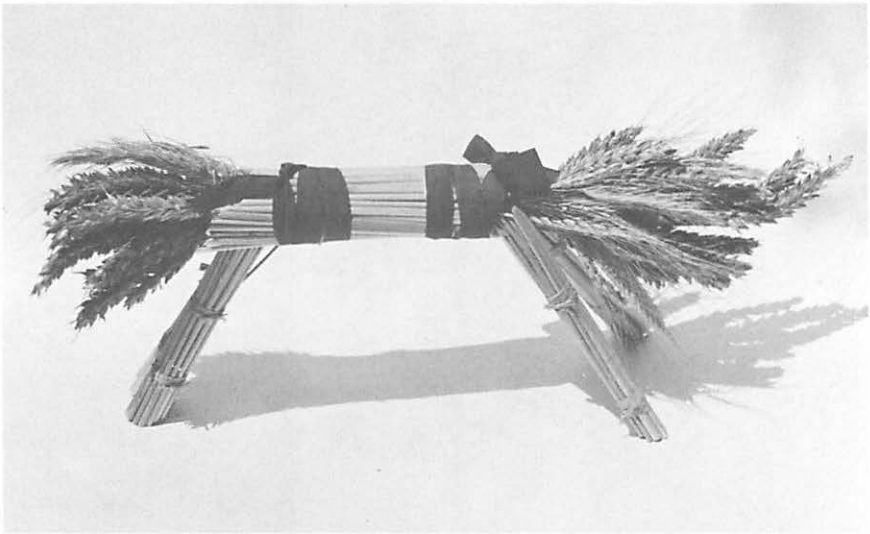

Plate 8. The Mare, made by Laura Richardson, Pool Foot, Ambleside, England, 6" x 3" x 16"

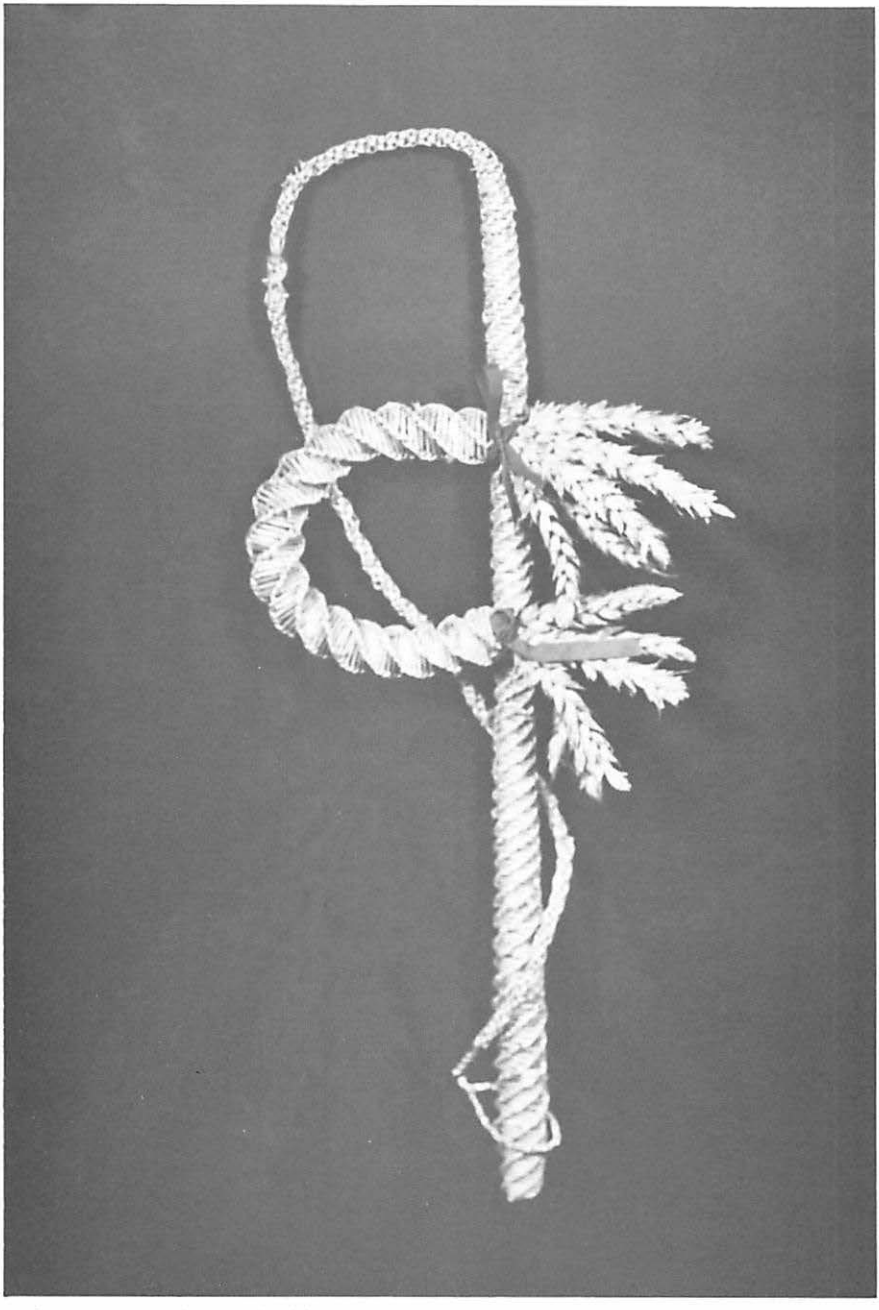

Plate 7. Horseshoe and whip, made by Fred Smith, near York, England, 20" x 7"

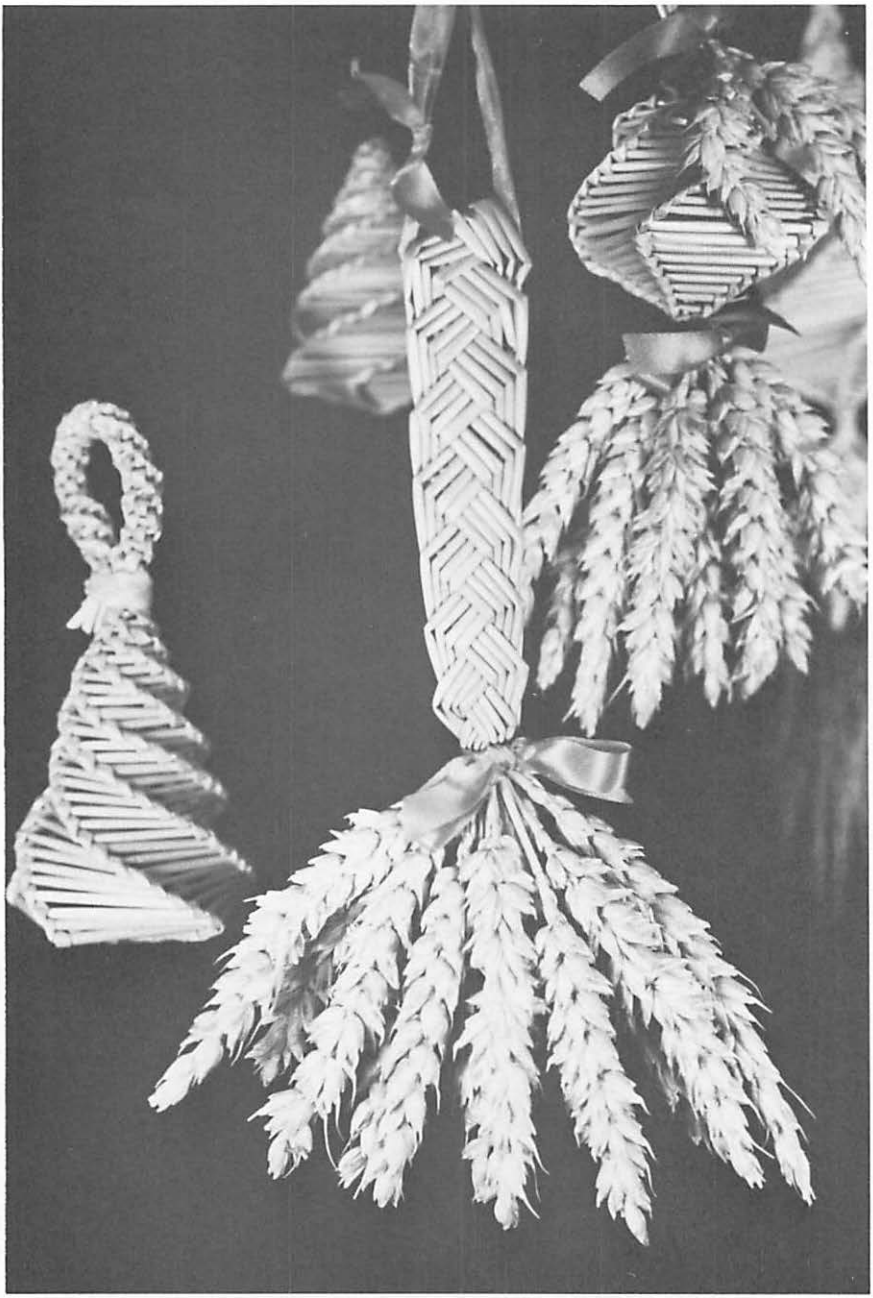

Plate 9. Rattle, Yorkshire, England; 5" x 2"; Glory Braid, York, England, 8" x 6"; and Twirl, Lavenham, England, 5" x 3"

Naturally enough, Christian symbols found their way into the dolly makers' repertory of forms—the star, the cross (Plate 10), angels, the Keys of Saint Peter (Plate 11), the anchor (symbol of St. Clement), the crown, the scepter, the cockerel (Plate 12), the sheperd's crook. These were—and to some extent still are—used to decorate village churches and homes, particularly at Christmastime. In the Christmas decorations of church and home, of course, one will find along with the clearly Christian symbols some of the old pagan harvest shapes and new "ornaments." This mixture is also true of the now seldom seen rick finials, straw figures placed along the top of a haystack.

It was to be expected, given their visual attractiveness, that, while their pre-Christian and Christian symbolic purposes might weaken and even vanish, the corn dollies would be retained as ornament and that new forms handled in the same way—the umbrella, the sea horse, the windmill, for example—should be developed. Even if any general connection with good fortune or certain celebrations is lost, they will probably continue to be made and used as ornaments.

Many of the straw objects from other parts of the world have a history similar to that of the British corn dolly: from particularized symbol of some specific natural force, figure, or event to more generalized symbol of a more general theme or feeling and, finally, to ornament. In various parts of Europe, particularly Scandinavia and Poland, the straw "Yule buck"(Plate 13) is still fairly common; quite probably it was a pre-Christian fertility symbol, but in later centuries it came to be associated with St. Nicholas and Christmas. Still a Christmas ornament, it has also come to be thought of as a non-symbolic amusing animal, a vigorous sculpture in straw. In Scandinavia straw-workers make for Midsummer's Day a straw sun-circle surrounding a sunflower. In Scandinavia and Germany delicately beautiful straw stars (Plate 14), angels, and Nativity scene figures are made for the Christmas season. In Ireland farmers still make the St. Brigit's cross, a practice that derives from the tradition of hanging straw crosses in barns to protect them against evil spirits. In Poland the Harvest Queen is still crowned with a straw crown. The traditional Greek corn dolly (Plate 15) is similar to the abstract figures of the British harvest tradition. In Mexico one can find today a variety of Christian straw symbols—stars, angels, Nativity figures—and a fanlike shape, the Corazón de Trigo (Plate 16), which is hung as a good-luck symbol above doorways. Presumably this symbol was originally made in Spain and later carried to the New World by the Spanish invaders.

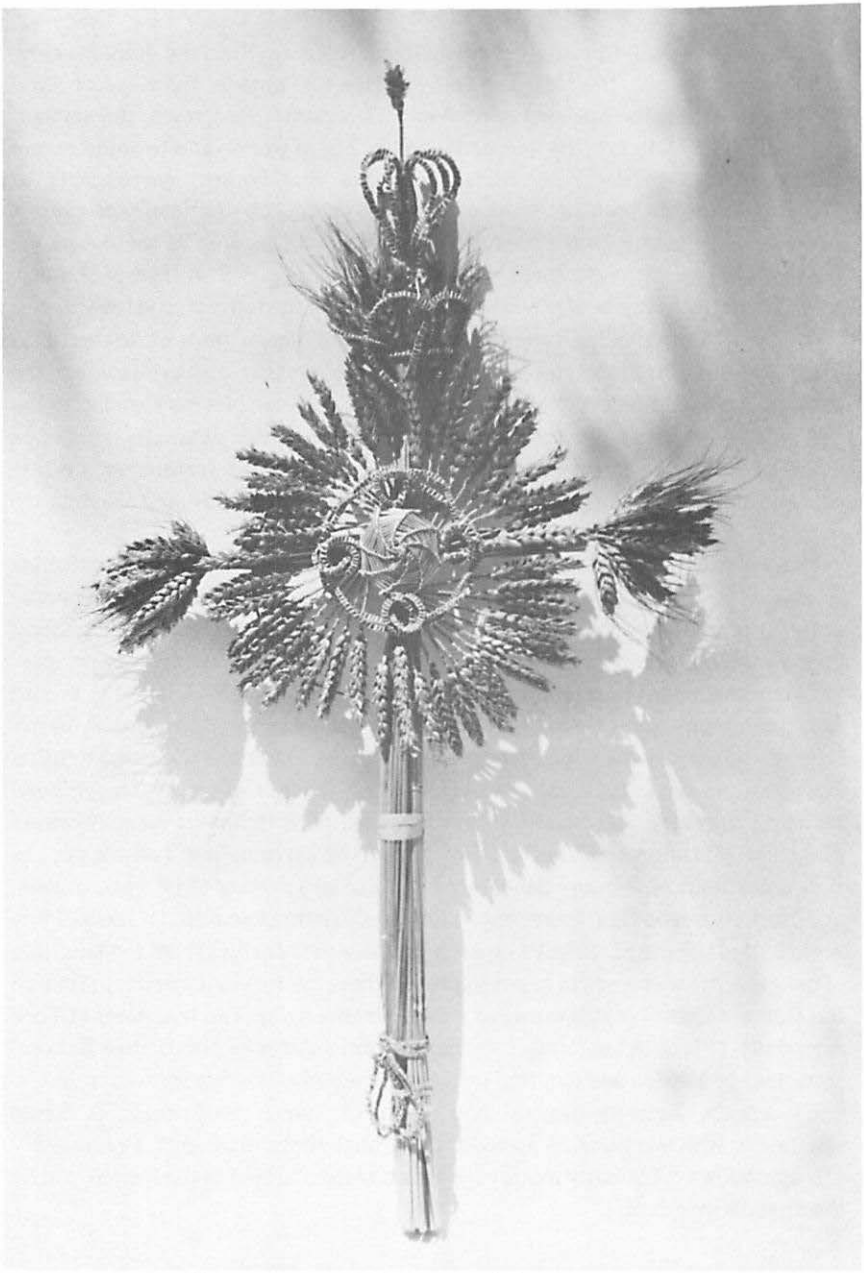

Plate 10. Devonshire Cross, made by Laura Richardson, Pool Foot, Ambleside, England, 32" x 18"

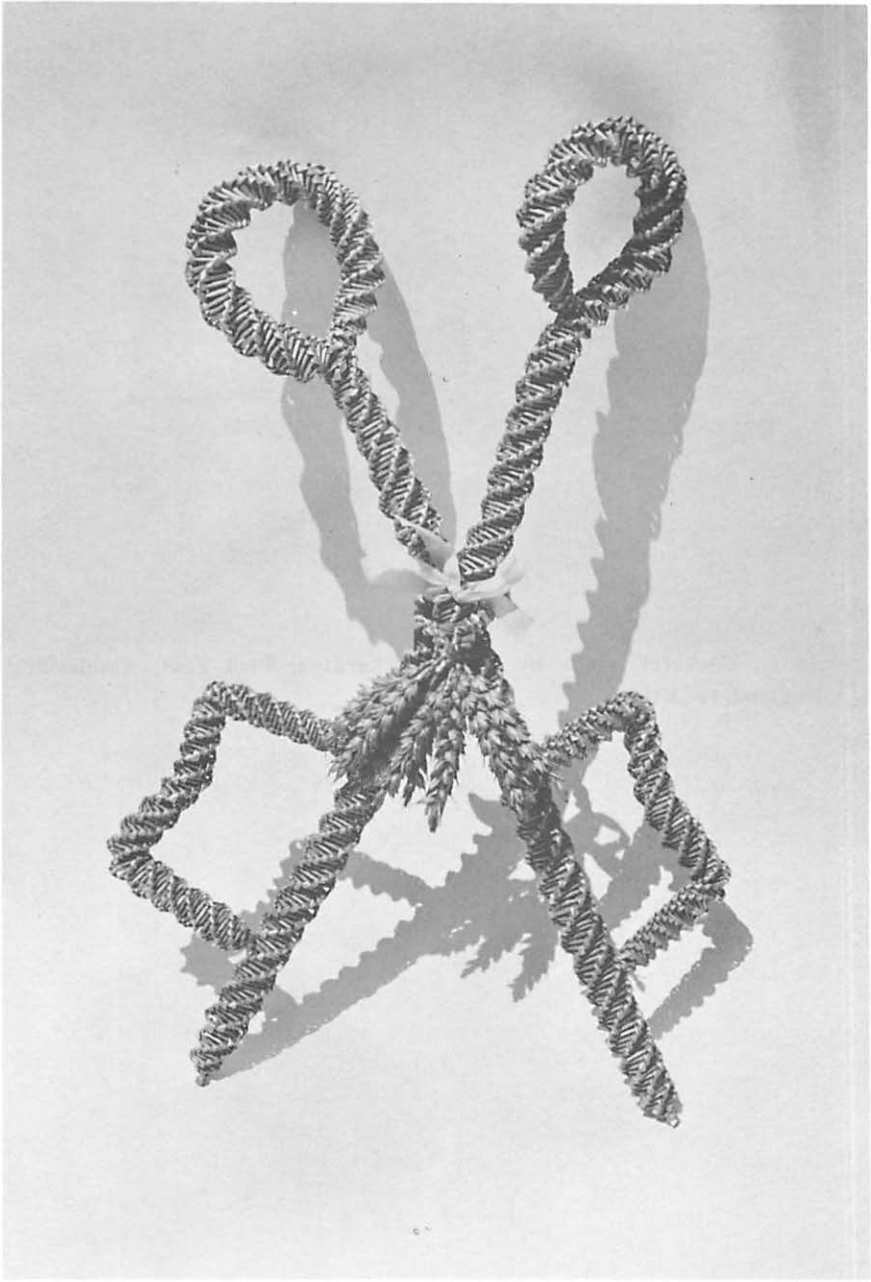

Plate 11. The Keys of St. Peter, made by Liz Daniels, Slingsby, Yorkshire, England, 16" x 12"

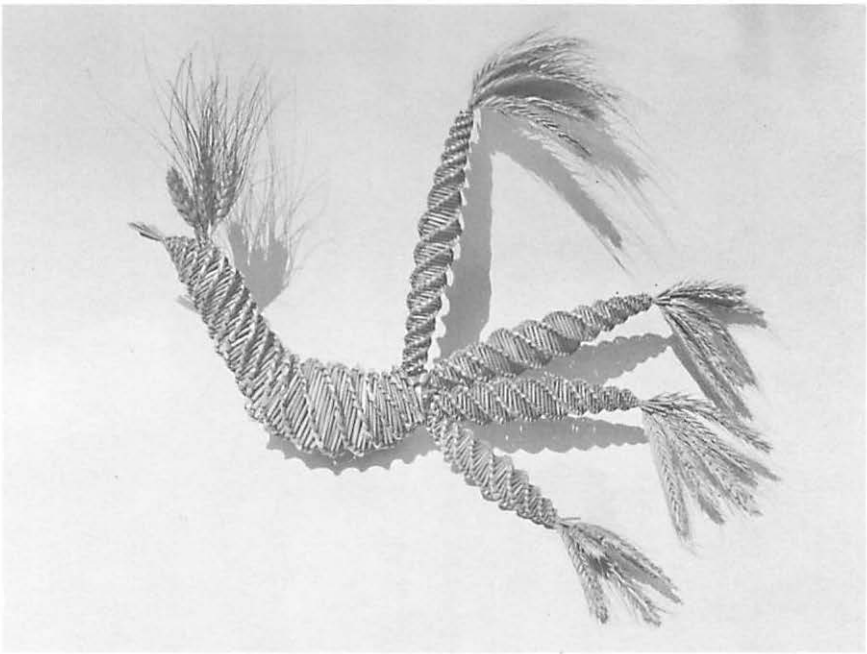

Plate 12. Cockerel, made by Laura Richardson, Pool Foot, Ambleside, England, 19" x 13"

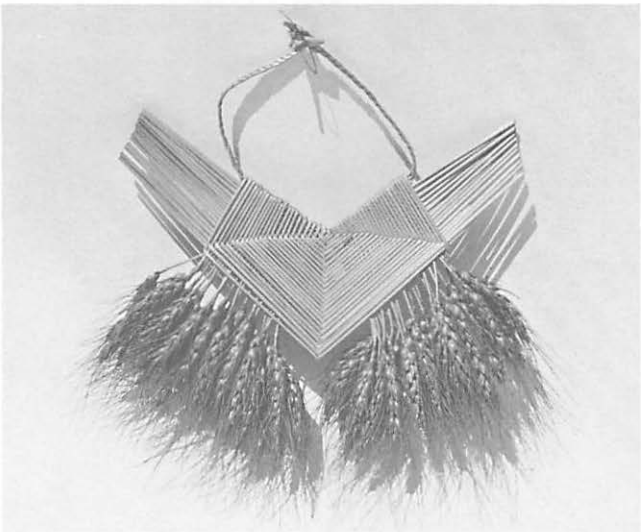

Plate 16. Corazón de Trigo, Mexico, 8" x 12"

Plate 13. Yule Buck, Sweden, 18" x 4" x 12"

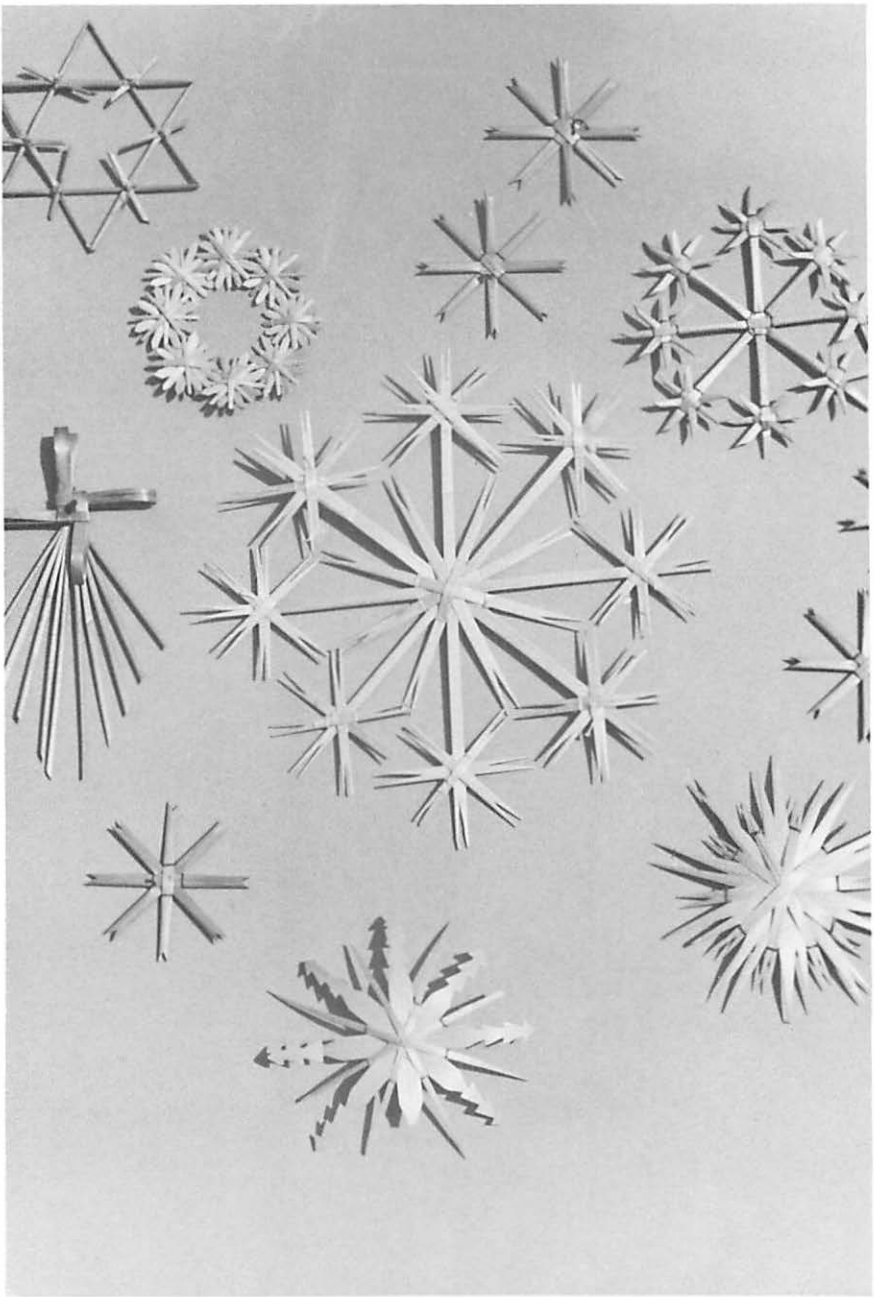

Plate 14. Stars, Sweden, size range from 3" to 7" diameter

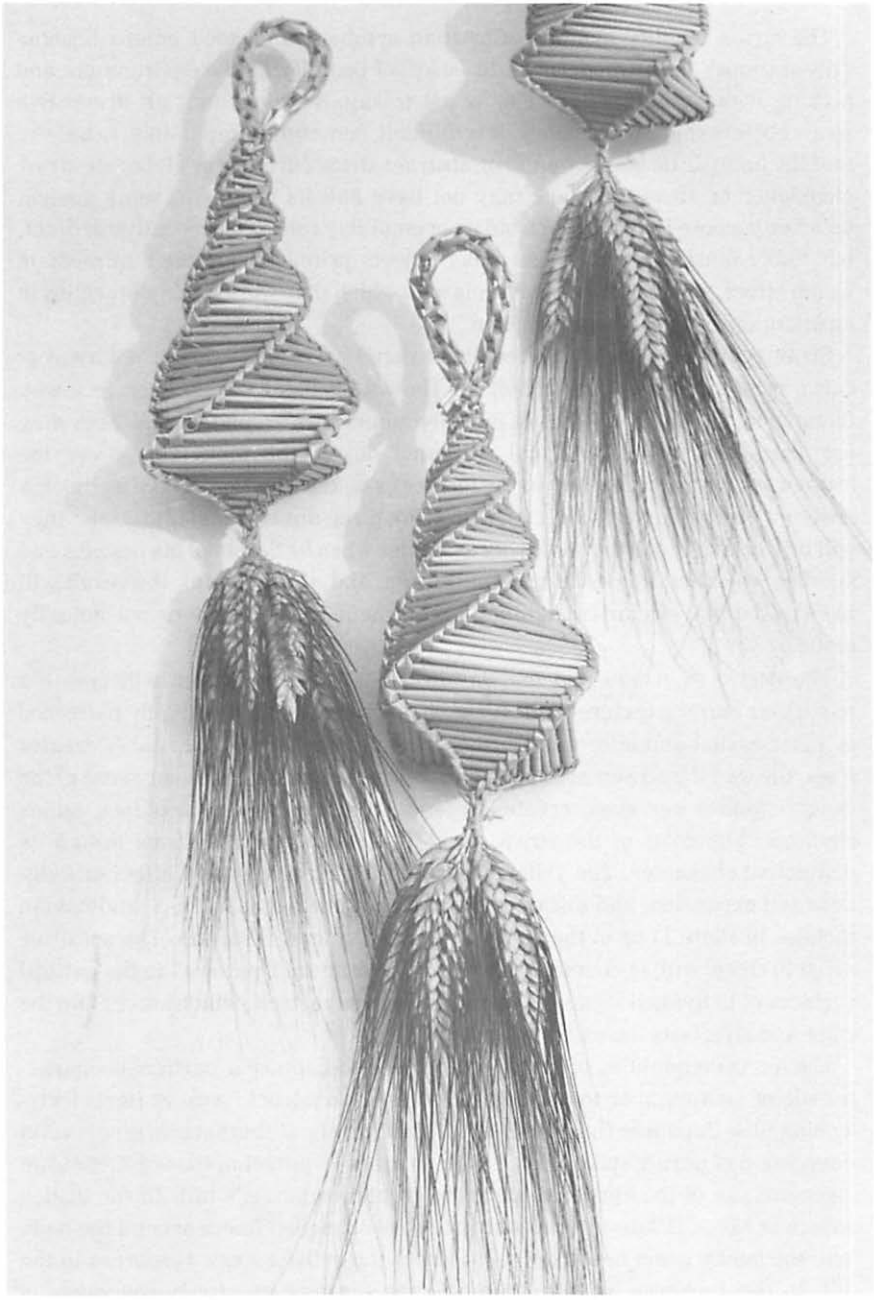

Plate 15. Corn dollies, Greece, 16" x 4"

III. Straw as Decoration

The straw fertility symbols, Christian symbols, and good omens become "decorations" in the modern world—ways of beautifying the environment and making it more interesting. This is not to say, however, that all decorative straw objects share that history. It is difficult, sometimes impossible, to be sure that the funny little straw animal or abstract straw curlycue or elaborate straw chandelier or straw necklace may not have had its origins in some ancient belief or purpose far removed from its present-day role as a decorative artifact, but today most straw workers make objects primarily for their immediate visual effect, whether or not the forms with which they work had their origins in an intention different from their own.

Straw sculptors work with three-dimensional space. They do not hew away or carve or scratch into their material. They must build the skeleton in a way dictated by the medium—that is, into, and sometimes around, space. They may use that skeleton as the total, revealed design, or they may cover the framework with more straw. In the former case, the creation will be as much a design-with-space as it is a design with solid, three-dimensional materials; they will be working much the same way as Calder when he designed his mobiles and stabiles with metal pipes, strips, and sheets, and, if successful, the result will likewise be one of clarity, lightness, movement (even if it does not actually move).

The choice of straws and the way in which they are woven will create a particular surface texture—smooth or rough, delicate or bold, highly patterned or more casual and informal. Further, because each straw inevitably creates lines, the way the straws are bound into the shape contributes to our sense of the design—guides our eyes, creates accents, complicates or simplifies, builds rhythms. The color of the straw, too, will help to give the straw design its distinctive character. The yellow tones add to straw's general effect of lightness and expansion, and this effect is just what one wants in the Scandinavian mobiles in Plate 14 or in the perky Japanese squirrel (Plate 2). The sensitive artist in straw will, of course, be aware of the range of "yellows" in the natural surfaces of individual stems, as well as of the weave itself, which enters into the color and affects its intensity.

The intrinsic qualities of straw can be used to capture a particular characteristic of an animal or to develop some desired abstract form. In the prickly-looking little Japanese figure in Plate 17 the clusters of short stems give a vivid impression of unruly spikeyness. In the Japanese squirrel in Plate 2 there is an ingenious use of the clustered grains to create a squirrel's tail. In the loaded Japanese horse (Plate 18) the contrast of the stretched fibers around the body with the nubby grain heads of the load uses the artist's straw resources to the full. In the Japanese bullock (Plate 19) the sense of his sturdy roundness is reinforced by the clear outlines of the fibers. In some dollies—for example, the

Plate 17. Animal basket, Japan, 3" x 5" x 10"

Greek dollies in Plate 15—the use of the dark beards of the grain makes the composition highly dramatic. The contrast of gnarled seed-patterns with long, thin straws can add to the liveliness of a design.

It might seem that the fragility of straw would be an insuperable handicap in the way of the straw worker. Although straw may be made fairly malleable by moistening, it cannot be molded as freely as clay or metal. It has very definite molding limits. But this very delicacy may underlie the artist's initial conception. One might note, for example, the sensitive use of the narrow, spindly stems to make the turning set of stars in Plate 14 and the use of fragile heads of grain to create a spray in the Devonshire Cross (Plate 10).

A question arises concerning the future of straw decorative design: if it becomes better known and more popular beyond the rural regions where the craft is now practiced, will it come into mass production and be threatened by the slickness and sleaziness of so many mass-produced products?

Plate 18. Horse with load, Japan, 12" x 4" x 10"

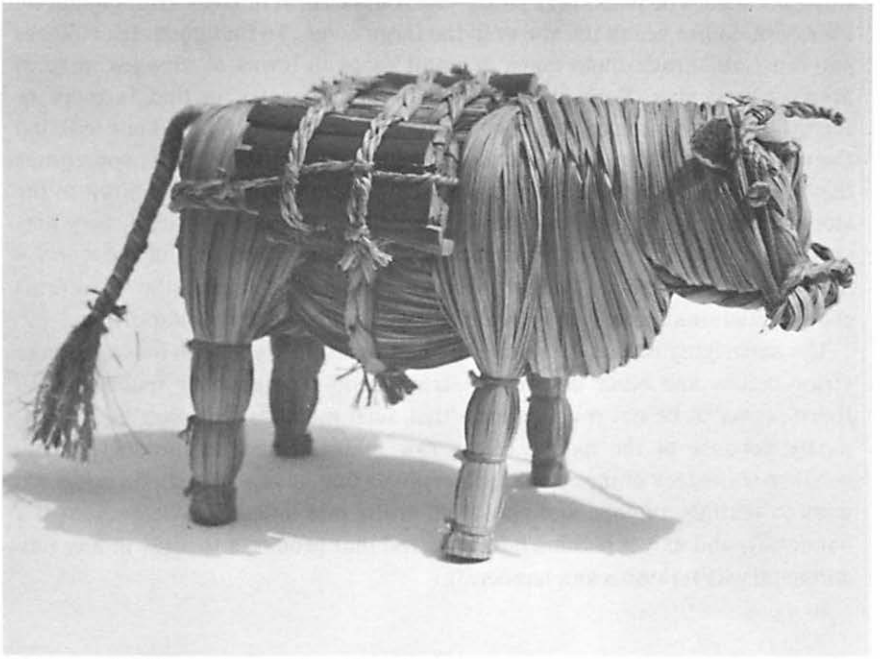

Plate 19. Bullock, Japan, 6" x 4" x 10"

For several reasons that does not seem likely, at least in the near future.

Oddly enough, the industrializaton of modern society brought to grain-producing areas new harvesting methods that have drastically reduced the supply of straw useable for making straw objects. The vagaries of weather have always affected the amount of suitable straw available to craftsmen, but now, in addition to such shortages, straw workers have to face the fact that modern farming methods destroy the straws they need. Even in grain-producing Yorkshire corn dolly makers sometimes set aside a small plot of land for the growing of grains as a source of straw for their dolly making.

Recent British history suggests that commercialization may not be an immediate threat to the straw craft. In the early decades of this century the corn dolly craft almost died out, but in the years after World War II interest in it revived, partly as a result of the straw-making demonstrations and exhibitions at the Empire Exhibition in 1951. Since then straw-making classes and demonstrations at fairs, bazaars, and schools have become commonplace; a number of how-to-do-it pamphlets and books have been published; and some commercial organizations now package and sell corn dollies. Yet no large

central manufacturing or distribution organizations have developed in the past three decades. The packagers still depend on the rural makers as their source. Few corn dollies reach the stores in the large cities. To find good straw pieces one must still track them down in small shops in towns or villages in rural areas—Shropshire, Yorkshire, and East Anglia—or try to find farmers or farmwomen who still practice their craft on their own farms. And one will find them to be very independent-minded people, proud of their craft; sometimes they are reluctant to sell. Even those farm people who take their work to the stores or packagers seem to regard their dolly making as a special, very personal kind of activity. In other principal straw-making regions of the world—Scandinavia, central and southern Europe, Mexico, and Japan—the straw craft shows the same signs of remaining a low-key, highly individualistic craft.

The underlying reason is that no way has apparently yet been found to make straw dollies and other decorative straw forms primarily by machine, and there seems to be not much chance that such methods will soon be found—partly because of the nature of the raw material and the product, partly because of the lack of the economic incentives that have so deeply transformed work in textiles, metals, and clay from crafts into industries. Straw is still a handcraft, and as yet nothing has appeared that promises to alter in any fundamental way its status as a handcraft.

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The Diminishing Private World:

A Case For Volunteerism

Lawrence G. Brewster

IF the things you can never escape are death and taxes, then, while you live, it is really only government that is inescapable. Government does vary, however, in the scope of its authority and in the extent of citizen participation.

The United States has a tradition of limiting the scope of governmental authority and of encouraging citizen participation—although not always successfully. In fact, the size of government and its impact on the private sector would astonish the founding fathers if they lived today. Governor Brown, President Carter and others have waged successful election campaigns based on the premise that we can no longer rely on "Big Government" for solutions to America's ills and that we must return to the private sector and individual effort. With all their talk, however, little change has come in the scope or direction of government. Both Brown and Carter have increased, not decreased, the size of government—beginning with their office staffs. And economic institutions are no less dependent on government than before these prophets of small government rose to political power.

While procedural features of the democratic process at one time were left for the private sector to determine, the government now develops policy on family life, on health protection, on workers' rights, and, above all, on overall economic policies. Issues which either were nonexistent or formerly private matters are now public questions. Taken together they spell both a mixed economy and a base of expectations for further demands, a situation suggesting that government is not only here to stay, but that it is an integral, even intimate, part of our lives. Yet, at the same time, we are witnesses to the crisis in public authority. In desperation we have looked to public authority for answers, but the problems of modern society multiply. We reluctantly allow government intervention into our private world and find too few dividends forthcoming. The question remains, then, where do we turn for assistance? How do we proceed?

There are no complete answers to these questions to be found anywhere at the moment. It is useful, however, to place the questions in their proper perspective so that we may have a better understanding of why we are where we are today. A review of our economic and political history will provide the perspective. It will also suggest that a partial solution to the problem of the "crisis in public authority" can be found in a comprehensive volunteer program in government.

A Brief Social and Economic History: The Emphasis on Individualism

Before the Civil War, and for some time after, America was an agrarian society. Most Americans were small capitalists—independent, land-owning farmers who accepted Locke's view of the sacredness of private property, the individuality of man, and limited government. Adam Smith's law of supply and demand governed their economic interaction with fellow farmers; they did not want government interference in the economy at any cost. As a result, during this period, power in America—political, social and economic—was highly decentralized. In this context, de Tocqueville observed that American democracy was to a large extent the result of the social reality that great equality of condition existed among Americans.

It was really between 1800 and 1836 that the belief in democracy as the only constitutional and political system for Americans was consolidated. Although democracy mainly meant adhering to democratic procedures in the operation of the government, it also carried with it notions of a society within which social and economic conditions would favor the high degree of political, social, and economic equality necessary to democracy. By extraordinary luck, such a social order already existed in the United States. Because it was an agrarian society, with an economy predominantly of family farms, the adult white male citizens, at least, likely lived with fewer social, political, and economic inequalities than in any national culture in history to that time.

Yet that agrarian order had no future. During the harsh struggles over the new socioeconomic order that was to replace it, proponents of the old order were numerous and persistent. But even with the whole weight of tradition on their side, they were unable to prevent the displacement of the agrarian culture by a new one based on commercial and industrial corporation. And so in the generation following the Civil War, American society was radically transformed.

By 1900, the United States had become the leading industrial power in the world. On the one hand this change led to a dramatic rise in the American standard of living. On the other, it meant that most Americans lost their contact with the land, owned no wealth-producing property, and were employed by others. Widespread hardships were engendered by an economy with as little public control as the dominant political coalition demanded. These hardships were real enough to ensure a following for certain brands of reform politics—so long as they did not attack the basic commitment to private property.

What happened to America's belief in limited government and *laissez faire* economics? It became more myth than reality. Business, of course, had always relied to some extent on government for aid. This reliance grew considerably by the 1900s. Price competition, which by this time had largely disappeared in many industries as well, gave rise to government intervention in trust-busting. Adam Smith's economic laws—designed for a pre-industrial economy—had little applicability to twentieth-century American reality. As de Tocqueville

and Jefferson understood, Locke's political theory made sense only in a society with real equality of economic condition.

Even so, a majority of Americans continued to believe in the American ideology. It was only a small (albeit, vocal) minority who spoke against "big business" and called upon government to intercede in protecting the majority who did not share in corporate power. The country's commitment to only a modest level of interference by government in the conduct of corporate capitalism prevented any serious attempts by government to regulate business. It took the trauma of the Great Depression finally to convert a hitherto oppositional minority into a majority coalition.

The product of this coalition gave rise to a belief in the idea and institutions of the welfare state. The earlier commitment to private ownership and control of economic enterprises, and thus to corporate capitalism, was mainly upheld. Yet some of the most acute hardships and injustices generated by this socioeconomic order were attacked through government programs. The emphasis was still on individualism and self-interest; the only change was that Keynesian economics recognized the need for mixed economy—government and private enterprise wedded in mutual (and at times uneasy) self-interest.

Keynesian economics is based on the assumption of unlimited resources and continued growth. In other words, economic expansion is a necessary condition of capitalism. Unfortunately, we no longer live in a world of unending population and economy. Expansionist economics, whether capitalist or socialist, are incompatible with the survival of the planet. And yet a successful non-expansionist capitalist economy has proven to be difficult to engineer.

Individualism and Privatism

What does the future hold for individualism and privatism? Can we still afford them? The answer is no. So long as economic institutions and social responsibilities were a private affair, the ethic of individualism and self-interest made considerable sense. Citizens were reasonably self-sufficient, and when help was required, they had a ready pool of volunteers in their family, neighbors, church group or community. Whether people in fact had a chance to "make it" in the economic world, the important psychological factor was that they thought they did. It was this belief, and not reality, that promoted the American dream. Unlimited resources (so we believed) and constantly expanding markets helped perpetuate the system. It did not matter that corporations exhibited many of the behaviors that we now dislike in public bureaucracies. The waste, inefficiencies, and mismanagement evident in many private industries were ignored, and the costs were either passed on to the consumer or the business simply failed.

Things are quite different, however, in the 1970s. Public bureaucracy has grown to fill a void left by a private sector no longer capable or willing to uplift the human condition. But even though we have reluctantly become public people, we have not adopted the prerequisite attitude of public involvement. In

fact, the ethic of self-interested individualism has contributed to certain bureaucratic pathologies, e.g., bureaucratic expansion for the sake of personal power, territorial imperative, and concern for status.

A first step in reducing these undesirable behaviors in public agencies would be a change in the American ethic of self-interest to an ethic of public interest—a push for public service rather than personal aggrandizement. We must adopt the idea of a morally conscious collectivity, an ethic of public responsibility.

An important first move in this direction would be to encourage public participation at every level of public service. Active support of volunteerism by government officials would at the very least help solve the problem created by too few resources and too many demands within the American political system. Beyond this, however, is the possibility that a comprehensive volunteer program in government will contribute to an easing of the "crisis of public authority." The mere fact that citizens are actively sought by public officials to provide information, help determine policies, and aid in the delivery of services may foster a more positive attitude toward public programs.

Unfortunately, there is not a strong tradition of citizen participation in this country. This lack of historical commitment reinforces the reluctance of public administrators to incorporate citizen volunteers into their agencies except as low-level support personnel.

The History of Limiting Citizen Participation

This country's commitment to democracy came after, not before, the formation and adoption of the Constitution. Even as late as the Constitutional Convention, the desirability of a representative democracy was a hotly debated issue. Consequently, the framers of the Constitution could not, and did not, agree to establish a truly democratic framework of government. In their insistence on the preservation of certain basic rights to life, liberty, and property, which they held to be morally inalienable, they were liberals but not democrats.

And although the agrarian economic order allowed democracy to win its day, the new economic order of corporatism and its despotic and hierarchical structure soon emerged. In fact, the basis of the agrarian order, the right of private ownership, was adopted by the corporation in its defense. Through a highly successful case of ideological transfer, the Lockean defense of private property, which in agrarian society made good sense morally and politically, was shifted over intact to the corporation. The result was that the quite exceptional degree of autonomy the farmers had enjoyed under the old order—an autonomy vis-a-vis both government and one another—was now granted to the corporation.

A major consequence of this new economic structure was that a majority of the citizens would live out their working lives, and most of their daily existence, not within a democratic reality but instead within a hierarchical structure—a condition necessary to most industrial organizations. The problem for citizen participation is the lack of opportunity to participate in decision making.

People learn, after all, by experience, and in the corporate world the experience of participation was missing for the worker.

The impediment to citizen participation has continued into the welfare state. In fact, the advent of expanded government control in the economy, as well as social structures, has extended the domain of hierarchy even further. On the one hand, the New Deal reduced the autonomy of economic enterprises. By protecting the rights of workers to join unions and bargain collectively with employers, it democratized some aspects of some enterprises for some employees. By regulatory devices of various kinds, it also reduced the autonomy and thus the arbitrary and sometimes despotic power of the rulers of economic enterprises. On the other hand, if the welfare state has altered the adverse consequences of the corporate economic order for democracy and its requisite citizen participation, it has not profoundly reduced them.

Nor has the welfare state helped in another regard. The new corporatism generated much greater differences in political resources, skills, and incentives within the political culture itself. The degree of social and economic differentiation that had already been foreshadowed in the industrial cities of the East was no longer marginal—as it had been when the socio-economic order was overwhelmingly agrarian—but became instead very central to the new order. Even with the growth of the middle class, the welfare state has almost certainly not brought the social classes closer together. Moreover, the welfare state needed extensive governmental bureaucracies. And, like the governments of corporations, the bureaucracies in the government have become hierarchical in structure. Bolstered by tradition and concerned with self-protection, bureaucrats have been reluctant to allow citizens access into the hierarchy except at the lowest levels. Far from diminishing hierarchy and its effect, the welfare state, even in the course of regulating economic enterprise, has multiplied the number, scope, and domain of hierarchies in American life.

Volunteerism: A Challenge to Traditional Bureaucratic Organization and Performance

In the face of shrinking economics, expanded governmental responsibilties, and a determination to confront social as well as economic issues, what can we say about the future role of public decision-makers and the citizen in deciding public policy? What might the criteria be for deciding issues? Where should we look first to find an answer to these questions?

We might begin with some aspects of the earliest American ideology outlined above. These may be seen as an aspiration toward a society with a political system in which liberty, equality, and justice would jointly prosper—a society requiring a socioeconomic system that would foster these ends by supporting the kind of policy necessary to them. Thus interpreted, these early commitments would give priority to political ends over economic ends, to liberty, equality, and justice over prosperity and growth. Corporate capitalism

reversed this priority, however, both in ideology and in practice. It remains reversed to this day.

The guiding criteria with which to measure the kinds of performance implied by this interpretation are, in my view, the criteria of procedural democracy. They necessarily imply provisions for direct citizen involvement in political decision making. To become fully operative with respect to any association, procedural democracy presupposes a judgment that at least two conditions exist within the **demos**. First, there is a need for collective decisions that are binding on the members of the **demos**. Second, every member of the **demos** must be **equally qualified** to engage in decision making.[1] In a discussion on "Removing Certain Impediments to Democracy in the United States," Robert Dahl explains these two criteria:

> The criterion of effective participation. In order for the preferences of each member of the demos to be equally taken into account, every member must have equal opportunities for expressing preferences, and the grounds for them, throughout the process of collective decision making. This criterion implies, then, that any putatively democratic government ought to be evaluated according to the opportunities it provides for, or the costs it imposes on, expression and participation by the demos.
>
> The second criterion involves enlightened understanding. In order to express preferences accurately, each member of the demos ought to have adequate and equal opportunities for discovering and validating, in the time available, what his or her preferences are on the matter to be decided. This criterion thus ought to be evaluated according to the opportunities it furnishes for the acquisition of knowlege of ends and means, of oneself and other selves, by the demos.[2]

Undoubtedly no one who aspires to full procedural democracy thinks that it must hold for all matters, including judgments on highly technical, judicial, and adminstrative matters of every kind. Obviously there are questions best left to the "experts" to decide. But even here citizens can help determine general preferences in defining policy.

Finally, I must state the obvious: that all societies, including the United States, fall far short of satisfying the criteria of procedural democracy. If in the United States we are to reduce the gap between criteria and performance in a meaningful way, we shall have to make changes of great moment. All that we can hope for in the meantime is that public administrators and politicians will more actively seek citizen participation in policy making, as well as allow citizens more responsibility in the delivery of services. Provisions for public involvement are an important challenge to administrators and the traditional hierarchy of public organizations. It is necessary that administrators become more sensitive to their agency's response to citizen participation and to the impact this response can have on citizen attitude.

Volunteerism: Relationship to Political Authority and Incentives

The specification of responsibilities for both agency and citizens is crucial to the shared exercise of authority. Without specification of responsibilities for the agency, the agency tends to use greater information and experience in a discretionary way, which minimizes citizen participation. Without specification of responsibilities for the citizens, citizen participation can create bedlam. Yet it is time-consuming and expensive to specify responsibilities and train both agency officials and citizens in the techniques of sharing authority in policy formulation. For example, the costs of citizen participation might include:

Time:	Adequate provision for citizen participation takes time—to arrange meetings, notify participants, distribute relevant information, hear the participants in a full discussion, reach an agreement. This often means drawing out policy formulation in a lengthy process.
Money	Arranging for adequate citizen participation requires staff—either agency staff or citizen volunteers. Expenses are involved for paper, postage, telephone service, meeting space, secretarial services, training.
Efficiency:	Developing and utilizing citizen participation in the formulation of public issues that can be considered within limited resources and limited period of time.
Authority	The effective use of citizen participation tends to limit agency authority in formulating public policy in significant ways.

Although it is costly to lay a proper foundation for citizen participation and then to follow through in its construction, there is little doubt that to do less than this is more costly in the end—assuming, that is, citizen participation is a matter of public policy. This last statement can be perhaps made clearer by the following case study.

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964—A Call for "Maximum Feasible Participation"

The federal government created service programs during the New Frontier and Great Society eras in an effort to "break the cycle of poverty," identified at that time as a national problem. Unlike most of the economic recovery programs and interventionist policies of the New Deal, most of which viewed poverty as a temporary condition, the programs of the 1960s and 1970s sought to remedy a wide variety of social problems that were perceived to be the cause of persistent poverty. Education, skill development, social services,

discrimination, health, and a multitude of other discrete problems were addressed by the enabling legislation and categorical grants authorized at that time. As the service delivery system grew in the 1960s and 1970s, advocates of economic self-sufficiency sought to address the issue of accountability through demands for citizen participation in categorical programs. Leaders of the poor recognized the power held by professional elites and chose to deal directly with them through the service delivery system. Consequently, some form of citizen participation came to be required in most Federal categorical programs.

Passage of Economic Opportunity Act 1964 represented a frontal assault on the existing service delivery system. Lodged in the Executive Office of the President, the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) sought to coordinate and redirect the categorical program system at the Federal level and make the bureaucratic networks more responsive to the needs of the poor through "maximum feasible participation" at the local level. Local Community Action Agencies were also mandated to develop alternative (and thus competitive) service delivery systems where those existing were found to be unresponsive.

At the heart of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 was the idea of community action, the idea that broad coalitions of people and interest groups at the local level could most effectively forge the weapons of a war on poverty. Apart from the goal of self-sufficiency for the poor, community action was seen as a means of altering the structure by which our society allocates its resources. In setting forth the mission of the Community Action Agency (CAA), OEO Instruction 6320-1 made explicit the following:

> The key phrase . . . is to stimulate a better focusing of all available . . . resources. The Act thus gives the CAA a primarily catalytic mission: to make the entire community more responsive to the needs and interests of the poor by mobilizing resources and bringing about greater institutional sensitivity. A CAA's effectiveness, therefore, is measured not only by the services which it directly provides, but more importantly by the improvements and changes it achieves in the community's attitudes and practices toward the poor, and in the allocation and focusing of public and private resources for antipoverty purposes.

Changes in attitude and practice were thus to be achieved by new catalytic organizations employing three basic strategies: giving poor people themselves a large share of the responsibility for planning and implementing programs in their own communities; stimulating a hitherto unrealized coordination of community effort; and effecting a massive new mobilization of available resources.

The language of Title II of the EOA allowed great latitude to CAAs in the planning and establishment of programs. Provided the poor or their representatives participated in the choice, almost any effort designed to remove or lighten the burden of poverty could be funded. But this flexibility did not immediately result in a great many new and imaginatively planned ap-

proaches to antipoverty programs. Although more than a thousand CAAs were launched, only some of them were launched, only some of them were able to get themselves expeditiously organized and then to move quickly and surely to the implementation of well-conceived programs.

At the same time, in these early days of the poverty war, OEO felt itself very much on the spot to show solid accomplishment. In these circumstances, OEO adopted the practice of developing programs at the national level and offering them to the CAAs. In this way, Headstart and other so-called national emphasis programs came into being, and by 1967 they accounted for more than half of CAA expenditures.[3] Most of these programs (including Follow-Through, Upward Bound, Comprehensive Health Services, and Legal Services) have now been transferred to other Federal agencies. Those programs that were conceived, developed, and implemented at the CAA level became known as "local initiative" programs.

Both the Model Cities and the Community Action programs underestimated the power of the existing service delivery system. Despite Presidential support neither the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) nor OEO was able to coordinate, must less redirect, Federal agencies and their state and local counterparts. Most CAAs and CDAs (City Demonstration Agencies) experienced a similar lack of success at the local level. Citizen groups organized by local CAAs had neither sufficient resources nor political clout to organize truly competitive service delivery system or exercise significant influence over the use of existing categorical aids. Similarly, CDAs found that the support of mayors was not sufficient to meet needs for change in established systems expressed by citizen groups organized by Model Cities.

Competition between the CDAs and CAAs, with largely the same mission, was also a constraint as was the fact that both programs were trying to do too much with too little money. However, this was only one aspect of the problem. Both CDAs and CAAs found that the service delivery network had already extended to the local level prior to their entry into the citizen participation market. Citizen groups were organized in various ways around education programs, social services programs, and housing programs, not to mention those organized around local issues and programs having no relation to the categorical grant system. While these groups had only minimal representation from the poor, they were established, accepted, and closely tied to the service delivery networks. Moreover, with their functional orientation, they controlled the major resources, Federal and local, which were the subject of citizen concern.

Given this situation, both OEO and Model Cities citizen groups naturally drifted in the direction of the resources and began to focus their major efforts on program management. Over time, the intended attack on the service delivery system became collaboration in the operation of their own service delivery programs which were funded through OEO and HUD.

It is axiomatic in the parlance of public administration that operations drive out policy. As citizen groups and their staff became more embroiled in the day-to-day problems of operating HUD- or OEO- funded programs and securing continued funding through other Federal agencies, they found little time to consider the rules and regulations being adopted by local government or the effect these might have on their objectives. Thus, while some citizen activists, and occasionally staff, entered the mainstream of local politics and policymaking, most did not. Instead, they accepted their new role as an extension of the service delivery system bureaucracy.

New Objective for Citizen Participation in Nonservice Planning

Citizen participation has taken a great many operational forms in the past. Throughout the past decade in particular, there has been wide disparity of views regarding the ultimate purposes of participation. Not only were there recognizable differences among the several program components of the Great Society, but there were (and are) a number of alternative conceptions of citizen participation that cut across the various systems and competed to some extent in each program for official and popular support.

To the social worker of the early 1960s, for example, participation of individuals was seen as therapeutic, serving to counter deep-rooted feelings of powerlessness and alienation and to bring such individuals closer to the dominant society. To today's local community leader, citizen participation may be synonymous with "community control" or "minority power," or it may simply stand for extended political confrontation with the established order. To various architects of the Great Society, the term came to symbolize a way to make government more responsive to the needs of individual citizens, an appeal to growing blocks of new urban voters, or a strategy for defusing militant dissent. Each of these views had its following among those involved in the categorical programs of the 1960s.

Despite debates regarding ultimate purpose and appropriate structure, the basic result of citizen participation requirements has been to give those most directly affected by a specific program some control over its operation. Where policy was mentioned, the reference was invariably to program policy (i.e., service, not nonservice). Advocates of citizen participation in the 1960s perceived that the control they sought must be focused on the bureaucratic network that managed the allocation of resources in the service delivery systems. Moreover, these were primarily new resources which were being made available through the Federal govenment to make up for deficiencies in local expenditures. Therefore, both citizens and professional advocates devoted their attention to ensuring the maintenance and/or continued growth of their program.

This approach to citizen participation was perhaps consistent with the realities of the 1960s and 1970s. In varying degrees, it gave clients a modicum of

control over the resources being made available to address their particular problems, and in some cases, provided access to other elements in the political process. However, few citizen groups or their advocate staff devoted time and energy to achieving the broader policy objectives by employing strategies that might lead to a change in the allocation of their Federal or local funds, or the development of interventionist policies that might lead to self-sufficiency.

It has been widely maintained by students and practitioners of community participation that citizens are best organized around specific issues. However, the experience of the 1960s indicates that the specific issues most often chosen were basically a reflection of the existing delivery systems and their fragmented single mission objectives. If the issue was jobs, the focus of citizen participation was on manpower programs funded by the Department of Labor and administered through State Employment services agencies. If the issue was housing, citizens organized around the programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development administered by local housing authorities and renewal agencies. Grant consolidation of the 1970s brought little change. Citizens still focused on the same set of programs funded by the same agencies and administered through the same or similar Federal/state/local systems.

Citizen groups, therefore, have little or no opportunity to consider or affect major local policy decisions that relate to achieving economic self-sufficiency through forms of intervention affecting both jobs and housing, as well as a variety of other economic self-sufficiency objectives. For example, local policies regarding the mix of residential and commercial/industrial land uses projected for the community have a major and overriding effect on the number and type of jobs available as well as the mix and location of housing. These decisions are made in connection with the general planning process, including revisions to the zoning code. Citizen participation in this process is primarily achieved through public hearings and neighborhood forums conducted by the Planning Commission and/or the local legislative body.

At the same time, the poor spend a great deal of time and effort attempting to manipulate the limited Federal resources for jobs and housing through the manpower and housing service delivery systems, but little or no time attempting to influence the policies of the general plan that set the basic parameters for attaining economic self-sufficiency. Reliance on the traditional political process by the poor is insufficient. As has been pointed out by a representative of the League of Women Voters:

> In discussing citizen participation as a policy management tool for state and local government, the first question always raised is, Isn't voting enough? Generally, the answer is no. Voters have very little idea of the specific actions which have been taken by their elected representatives and, in any case, have no mechanism to demonstrate approval or disapproval of the specific decisions made in the many functional areas for which the general purpose governments have responsibility.

If accountability for public policy is to be attained, especially with respect to the poor, new approaches to citizen participation must be developed. The political process must be expanded to include general purpose citizen groups who are not tied to a specific set of service delivery structures and who focus their primary concern on the policies of government that affect their neighborhoods and lives. The issues around which the poor must organize in the future are the major policy issues on which local decisions are routinely made, rather than resource allocation decisions.

This will be no easy task. The issues of citizen control which surfaced but were never resolved in the 1960s and early 1970s will need to be reexamined. Equally difficult questions such as what constitutes a "neighborhood" or "representative citizen group" will also need further exploration, as will the question of legitimacy and relation to the existing political structure and process. Differences between the poor—whether in the same neighborhood or in different neighborhoods—need to be recognized. The need to shift from service delivery to "policy" approaches makes it imperative to deal with these issues if accountability for public policy is to be maintained and the objectives of citizen participation realized.

The Problem of Governmental Response

It is time to return to the question of volunteerism and its relationship to authority and political incentives. Citizen participation by itself is like "one hand clapping." That is, the efficacy of particular institutional arrangements for citizen participation is ultimately determined by the adequacy of the program in which participation takes place.[4] In case after case, the fundamental constraint on the development of effective citizen participation in the late 1960s and early 1970s was the limitations that characterized categorical social welfare and community development programs. Even where programmatic results were not sought—where, for instance, organizers wanted to use a program only to organize a community—categorical social welfare and community development programs significantly limited the type and degree of citizen participation that developed in particular neighborhoods.

The ultimate constraints on citizen participation are authority patterns internal to an agency and political incentives available to citizens. For example, the traditional exercise of authority in an agency, coupled with low political incentives, tends to engender citizen apathy which, in turn, reinforces the existing pattern of agency authority. An alternative is for traditional authority, combined with high political incentives, to breed crisis and challenges to agency authority.

Intermittent or arbitrary exercise of authority by agencies, coupled with low political incentives, tends to foster distrust and lead to wariness, skepticism, and disregard of agency authority by citizens. Intermittent or arbitrary exercise of authority, combined with high political incentives, tends to breed cynicism toward agencies among citizens and leads to efforts to manipulate the

agencies to respond to citizens' interests. Either of these latter conditions represents a threat to agency stability, creates ineffectiveness in public programs, and demonstrates misuse of both agency authority and citizen participation.

On the other hand, shared exercise of authority (with specified responsibilities for both agency and citizens) combined with low political incentives tends to elicit low citizen participation in policy formulation, but fosters general legitimacy of agency authority. Shared exercise of authority (with specified responsibilities for both agency and citizens) coupled with high political incentives will draw high citizen participation and lead to genuine cooperation between agency and citizens in formulating effective public policy.

The specification of responsibilities for both agency and citizens is crucial to the shared exercise of authority. Without specification of responsibilities for the agency, the agency tends to use greater information and experience in a discretionary way, which minimizes citizen participation. Without specification of responsibilities for the citizens, citizen participation can create bedlam—represented in the case of OEO.

When there is achievement of genuine cooperation (and communication) between agencies and citizens, it is a rewarding achievement in participatory democracy. The challenge is to have this cooperation be the norm rather than the exception. But before this can happen, we must accept that such cooperation is no longer a luxury of participatory democracy, but an essential ingredient to our survival.[5] Citizen participation represents an expensive but essential means of maintaining agency responsiveness to citizens' needs in a democratic political system. It is expensive for the agency in training volunteers and sharing in authority, but it is destructive to the political society generally if participation is not maintained.

NOTES

[1] Robert Dahl, "On Removing Certain Impediments to Democracy in the United States," *Dissent* (Summer 1978), p. 317.

[2] Dahl, p. 318. Dahl mentions a third criterion for procedural democracy: The criterion of political equality. The decision rule for determining outcomes most equally take into account the preferences of each member of the *demos* as to the outcome. To reject this criterion is to deny the condition of roughly equal qualification, taken all around. This criterion implies that the procedures and performance of any putatively democratic government ought to be evaluated according to the extent to which the preferences of every member of the demos are given weight in collective decisions, particularly on matters members think are important to them.

[3] Sar A. Levitan, *The Great Society's Poor Law* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), p. 123.

[4] R.L. Warren, *et al, The Structure of Urban Reform* (Lexington Books, Lexington, Massachusetts, 1974).

[5] See Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1970) for an outstanding defense of participatory democracy. In her book Mrs. Pateman argues that it is through participation that "the capacity of mankind for self-government" can be realized. She chides a number of contemporary political theorists—Schumpeter, Berelson, Sartori, and Echstein among others—for sneering at the "classical" theory of government by the people and for limiting democracy to freedom of choice among governing elites.

Mrs. Pateman does not say so, but this view, prevailing not only in academia but in Washington and in a thousand bureaucracies, is a major cause of contemporary revolt against the Establishment. She denies that early democratic theorists were ever so naive as to believe that a nation could be governed by direct participation of all the people. A delegation of sovereignty to representatives is always assumed. But what Rouseeau and John Stuart Mill were concerned with was not only government by consent but a participatory society, not only freedom from arbitrary power but enrichment of life. The fullest development of the participatory theory of democracy exists in the Guild Socialism of G.D.H. Cole.

Pateman advances the useful notion that only as people share in decision-making in their daily lives, particularly where they live and where they work, can they gain the self-confidence—she calls it the "sense of political efficacy"—to participate fully as citizens. And in the "workers' self-management" of Yugoslav enterprises, she finds ground for a healthy optimism. Whatever the challenges of new technologies, men do have the capacity to govern themselves, given the opportunity through appropriate institutional devices.

The Wayward Bus: A Triumph of Nature

Louis Owens

JOHN Steinbeck set one of his early stories, "Flight" (1938), in the heart of the Santa Lucia Mountains on the western flank of the Salinas Valley, where Pepe Torres, "Flight's" doomed protagonist, found that these mountains encompassed a strange land of death in which man came face to face with the inexorable fact of mortality. In *The Wayward Bus* (1947), Steinbeck describes an intense journey into a range of hills strikingly similar to the Gabilans which form the eastern boundary of the Salinas Valley. Whereas the primary force operating in the Santa Lucias, as Pepe in "Flight," Gitano in *The Red Pony*, and Joseph Wayne in *To a God Unknown* discovered, is death, the forces of life predominate in the eastern hills, and the passengers of the wayward vehicle enter these hills to face a stark experience with these forces. When the old, battered bus named "Sweetheart" is turned aside from its everyday course by a flooding river, Juan Chicoy, "Sweetheart's" owner and driver, guides the bus into the hills, attempting to find a way around the flood on the "old road." Once they are in the hills, it becomes clear that the key to the spiritual rejuvenation, or salvation, of Juan Chicoy's passengers lies in the ability of each to face honestly and to accept the intimate sexual, psychological, and emotional contact which life demands when the masks and facades of Hollywood-style daydreams break down.

The theme of fecund, sensual nature is introduced early in this novel, at the same time that Steinbeck brings in Juan Chicoy, the most potent, physically and spiritually, of the characters:

> In the deep spring when the grass was green on fields and foothills, when the lupines and poppies made a splendid blue and gold earth, when the great trees awakened in yellow-green young leaves, then there was no more lovely place in the world. It was no beauty you could ignore by being used to it. It caught you in the throat in the morning and made a pain of pleasure in the pit of your stomach when the sun went down over it. The sweet smell of the lupines and of the grass set you breathing nervously, set you panting almost sexually. And it was in this season of flowering and growth . . . that Juan Chicoy came out to the bus . . . .[1]

In this paean to natural fertility, Juan, who will pilot the fated busload into their confrontations with themselves and with one another, is immediately and unmistakably identified with natural sexuality. Juan, "a fine, steady man . . . part Mexican and part Irish" (p. 6), believes in "the power of person as responsible and proud individual" (p. 20). Juan's religion is "practical." He is vaguely identified with Christ both by his eye-catching initials (the same as those of Jim Casey, the preacher in *The Grapes of Wrath)* and by the "dark Virgin" who "was his mother" (p. 20). In the course of the novel, Juan will face his own crisis and, like Christ, will accept responsibility for his fellow man, and he will present his passengers with an opportunity for salvation, with an opportunity, in this vibrantly alive time of "flowering and growth," to break out of their spiritually dead and illusory lives and be reborn with the new season.

The passengers of the wayward "Sweetheart" include Pimples Carson, Juan's painfully adolescent helper in the bus driver's Rebel Corners gas station-garage, and Norma, a young ex-waitress at the Rebel Corners cafe run by Juan's wife, Alice, and victim of Hollywood-inspired fantasies concerning Clark Gable. Also along on "Sweetheart's" journey are Ernest Horton, cynical war veteran and hawker of deceptive and "funny" gadgets, and Van Brunt, a dying man who suffers from disturbingly uncontrollable sexual desires and a hatred of all who are not dying as he is. Making up the balance of the original passengers are Mr. and Mrs. Pritchard and their college-age daughter, Mildred, all three bound for a vacation in Juan's native Mexico. Mrs. Pritchard is frigid, and during a long, "successful" marriage, has succeeded in suppressing most of her husband's sexual desires to the point where he does not believe such things "matter" any longer. Pritchard is a man who "had given up his freedom and then had forgotten what it was like" (p. 41). Mildred, in contrast to her parents, recognizes and enjoys her own sexuality and from the beginning is strongly attracted to Juan.

As Juan is preparing to ferry his few passengers to the small town of San Juan de la Cruz, the daily Greyhound bus deposits one final passenger at Rebel Corners. With the addition of Camille Oakes, the sexual nature of

"Sweetheart's" journey becomes intense and unmistakable. Camille, a beautiful blonde who makes a living by taking off her clothes and sitting in bowls of wine at men's club parties, has an effect on men almost identical to the effect of the season of "flowering and growth." Camille, who selects her name after arriving at Rebel Corners, "was the kind of girl everybody watched walk by," a girl who "put out a strong, strong feeling of sex" (p. 103). Pimples is powerfully affected by Camille; we are told that when Camille spoke, "A quick spasm kinked Pimples' stomach at the throaty tone" (p. 122). Even the worldly and mildly sinister Louie, driver of the Greyhound and exploiter of women, felt when near Camille that "his throat was closing, and a rising pressure was in his chest" (p. 114). Camille recognizes and even regrets her overwhelming sexual power, but she also accepts it: "All men wanted the same thing from her, and that was just the way it was. She took it for granted and it was true" (p. 109). John Ditsky appropriately labels Camille the "Aphrodite of California"[2]; she is a personification of the potently sexual nature surrounding "Sweetheart's" passengers on their pilgrimage. Her chosen name underscores both her identification with this nature and her important role as a goddess of natural sexuality. Her surname is the name of the dominant feature of the landscape, the oaks; her first name, Camille, translates from Latin as "a virgin of unblemished character." Camille's role in the novel is to bring the overpowering sexuality of the springtime environment into the bus, so that even during the darkest hours the passengers have no chance to forget or ignore their own sexuality with its dual potential for a natural, healthy realization or a perverse and destructive one. Acting as a catalyst, Camille causes the other characters to respond to their own sexualtiy.

As Ditsky has pointed out, sexuality pervades this novel and is critical in offering "whatever hope the novel presents."[3] Indeed, hope in this novel rests on man's ability to reconcile the sensual and spiritual aspects of life harmoniously, and Juan Chicoy is the priest of this reconciliation.

The words on "Sweetheart's" front bumper emphasize this theme of reconciliation. Still barely readable beside the name "Sweetheart" is *"el Gran Poder de Jesus."* Rather than indicating a corruption of religious faith, or what Ditsky terms "gushiness,"[4] this important juxtaposition serves neatly to define Juan's natural and practical religion. "The great power of Jesus" here is the power of the life-force, that force which unites the sensual with the spiritual. For the same reason, Juan has placed a small statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe on "Sweetheart's" dashboard, and directly above her he has hung a "little plastic kewpie doll with a cerise and green ostrich-feather headdress and a provocative sarong." This doll "was for the pleasures of the flesh and of the eye, of the nose, of the ear" (p. 20). Throughout the novel, Juan, as a "responsible and proud individual," remains firmly in control of his sexuality and firmly retains his belief in the spiritual powers of the Virgin.

Opposed to the positive sexuality of Juan and Camille is a world of superficial and corrupt sexuality, from the artificially big-busted calendar girls at Rebel Corners to the hollow viciousness of Louie, the bus driver. Through Louie,

Steinbeck introduces the theme of debased sexuality: "Nearly all his waking hours Louie thought about girls. He liked to outrage them. He liked to have them fall in love with him and then walk away. He called them pigs. 'I'll get a pig,' he would say, 'and you get a pig, and we'll go out on the town' " (p. 99). Edgar, the ticket clerk in the bus station, admires Louie and wishes he could be like him, but Edgar always "ended up by going down the line"--to the whorehouses (p. 106). Even the swamper and the "punk" who cleans the bus windows echo Louie's debased and unhealthy attitude toward sex.

The two bus drivers in the novel are set in deliberate contrast to one another. If Juan Chicoy, with his suggestive initials, is the potential savior of this wayward crew, Louie is the sleazy Satan of his corrupt world. With his one long nail and sneering facade, the pilot of a great gleaming Greyhound, Louie epitomizes the corruption from which Juan's passengers must be delivered.

Louie tries to make time with Camille and fails, but he leaves his taint behind in the form of "Mother Mahoney's Home-Baked Pies," which he delivers to Rebel Corners. The pies, subjects of widespread critical interest, are not even home-baked; they, too, represent the prevalent corruption of values, and the impressionable Pimples, addicted to the sweets which are the cause of his nickname, is their too-willing victim. Throughout the novel, Pimples' thoughts are never far from the pies, even as he is stuffing his pockets with such carefully named candy bars as "Love Nests" and "Coconut Sweethearts."

As the passengers settle into their various roles aboard "Sweetheart," Juan attempts the journey to San Juan de la Cruz, but the bus is turned back at Breed's store by the destructive, rain-swollen San Ysidro River. Breed, guardian of the bridge and witness to the river's annual rampages, stands on the weight of his name alone as a kind of priest of this fecund valley; guardian of the threshold, he is immune to the destructive power of nature--fearless of the flooding river, but apprehensive of the arbitrary flow of civilization, which may one day build a new highway a quarter-mile away and ruin his business.

Faced with the prospect of turning back, the passengers vote to attempt a detour around the flood on the back road, "a very old road, no one knew how old" (p. 216). The sexuality of the landscape becomes more pronounced: "The road ran straight toward the little foothills of the first range--rounded, woman-like hills, soft and sexual as flesh . . . .The hills were rich and lovely with water, and along the smooth and beautiful road 'Sweetheart' rolled" (p. 141). Life, rich and sensual, is the predominant force in these hills, and at this point "Sweetheart" is identified with that force. Before long, however, as Steinbeck's lumbering vehicle approaches its darkest hour, "Sweetheart"changes to reflect the moral and spiritual condition of her cargo.

The nearly explosive fertility of the foothills is framed by an austere and threatening outer landscape. The names and descriptions of landscape features underscore the ominous quality of the external world which is forcing the bus up into the hills. Unlike most of Steinbeck's works, this novel contains no authentic place names; nor is the setting easily identified with an actual place as in other

of Steinbeck's works. Steinbeck set *The Wayward Bus* in a valley much like the Salinas Valley and in a gentle range of hills much like the Gabilans on the eastern side of the Salinas Valley, but the valley in this novel bears the name of the patron saint of agriculture--San Juan--as is befitting such a fertile region, and it winds toward the sea rather than north-south like the Salinas Valley. The river which has formed this valley is not the Salinas, but the San Ysidro, which "runs through the San Juan valley, turning and twisting until it discharges sluggishly into Black Rock Bay under the protection of Bat Point" (p. 161). The travelers' destination, San Juan de la Cruz, may be intended to remind us of the mysticism of the author of *The Dark Night of the Soul*, but it may also have been suggested to the author by the actual coastal town of Santa Cruz near Monterey, where the Salinas River empties into the Pacific. By wrenching the setting in this way from the solid anchoring of real places and names, Steinbeck universalizes this pilgrimage. At the same time, the portentous names amplify the suggestion of malevolence in the river. The river symbolizes the destructive forces operating in the world which have maimed the passengers spiritually and physically, and at one instance it becomes a serpent, threatening this garden-like valley, "casting its coil against the mountain on the eastern edge and moving away to cross the field and farmlands" (p 162). The river seems to threaten not only wayfaring pilgrims, but the very fertility of the land as it rips away at the earth and crashes toward the sea at floodstage, carrying prize cattle and barns in its current. At one point, a great black bull, sexual symbol of mythology and reminder of the mysterious black bull in *To a God Unknown*,[5] tumbles past Breed's store in the midst of the torrent, sacrificed to the flood.

"Sweetheart" moves into the hills seeking high ground and safe passage, and the ominous rains, threatening destruction for the sinners, are swept in over the coast range. Even before the bus has left Rebel Corners, these mountains and their threatening rain are introduced: "Juan glanced up at the sky. The air was still but up high a wind was blowing, bringing legions of new clouds over the mountains, and these clouds were flat and they were joining together and moving in on one another as they hurried across the sky" (p. 137). From this point on, the clouds will be a constant reminder of the destruction hanging over the heads of the passengers. At the novel's end, however, the clouds will part and the western mountains will reappear as symbols not of danger, but of hope.

As the experience of Steinbeck's travelers intensifies, the face of nature becomes dark and frightening, and the lovely "Sweetheart" becomes a reflection of the evil condition of her cargo:

> The clouds piled in gray threat on threat and a blue darkness settled on the land. In the San Juan valley the darker greens seemed black and the lighter green of grass, a chilling wet blue. "Sweetheart" came rolling heavily along the highway and the aluminum paint on her gleamed with the evil of a gun. (p. 181)

At this point, it is too late to turn back; the curtain has fallen, cutting off the line of retreat, and the passengers must push on toward their confrontations. The facade has fallen away, and the trip has become deadly serious.

Shortly after "Sweetheart" has begun her precarious detour along the old road, Juan succeeds in miring the bus in the mud. He abandons the bus and passengers and walks off toward a dream of the good life in Mexico, vowing, "I will never go back . . . I will take off my old life like a suit of underwear" (p. 222). In abandoning the bus, Juan is abandoning his role as "responsible and proud individual"; at the same time, he is shrugging off his role as savior for the souls aboard "Sweetheart."

While the driver is absent, the passengers come into intimate contact with one another in the stranded bus and within three "deep, dark caves" beneath the weathered word, "Repent." The caves, natural limestone formations near where the bus is mired, are very old, having sheltered coyotes and grizzlies and bands of Indians and, finally, wandering white men. They represent a primitive world where delusive values afford insufficient protection from intimate contact with one another and with one's hidden self. The moment of salvation has arrived for the spiritual refugees; it is in the womb-like enclosures of the bus and caves, beneath the word "Repent" which some "wandering preacher" has painted in black, that the passengers are offered their opportunities for spiritual rebirth. In this moment of truth, some of the passengers show promise of "flowering and growth," while others remain, in the end, trapped within their spiritually corrupt lives.

Though it is Louie rather than Van Brunt who is the Satan of this novel, Van Brunt is doomed by his rejection of all that is not dying as he is. There is no place for Van Brunt in this time of "flowering." In direct contrast to Camille, who radiates a strong life-force similar to that of the environment, Van Brunt is the living embodiment of death. He rejects everything, refusing to go on the journey and refusing to be left behind. It is appropriate that, in the end, Van Brunt suffers a living death as he lies unconscious and gasping for breath on the back seat of the old bus.

The Pritchards, too, are doomed–she by her physical and spiritual frigidity, and he by his inability to face the truth about their relationship. When Pritchard is rejected by Camille, he returns to one of the caves and rapes his wife. We are not, as Ditsky suggests, "intended to approve this last crow of an old cock who is under the influence of young sexuality";[6] rather, the rape (and each character's reaction to it) is the final indication of the pathetic and hopeless sterility of this couple. With that scene, Steinbeck has barred the Pritchards inexorably from the "season of flowering and growth." It is evident that the Pritchards' "successful" marriage will go on just as it has in the past.

Norma and Pimples suffer an awkward and brief encounter within the mired bus when, encouraged by Norma's sympathy, Pimples attempts to make forceful love to Norma and is vigorously repulsed. Norma and Pimples, however, though both deluded by questionable values in the form of Hollywood fantasies and Mother Mahoney's Home-Baked Pies, have a glimmer of hope at the end of

the novel primarily because they are young and capable of development. Norma has a wise mentor in Camille (who, nonetheless, thinks of Norma as an "incipient millstone"). Pimples has Juan, who at the last moment remembers to call Pimples by the new name, Kit. As Howard Levant suggests, in these two relationships rests the possible flowering of the adolescents.[7]

Ernest Horton's only outstanding virtue is his honesty, but because of it he is one of the elect of this assemblage. His advances to Camille are straightforward, and she reacts with an appreciation of his honesty. Camille, though scarred by life, both literally by the forceps marks on her jaws and figuratively by her somewhat cynical perspective, remains spiritually unblemished and physically unviolated throughout the novel.

The relationship between Mildred and Juan is the literal climax of the novel. The other scenes of intimacy have been acted out in the caves and on the bus by the time Mildred and Juan walk out of the barn into the evening light. Each of these characters responds to the other in an honest and natural manner here near the end of the book, and their lovemaking, rather than being a ploy to sell the novel, as critics have suggested, is the natural culmination of the theme of sexuality running through the book. By the time Mildred enters the barn, Juan has already decided to return and dig the bus out. He has had his moment of decision and has accepted his responsibility. As the couple walks out of the barn, the western mountains are reintroduced and suggest now, rather than rain and threat, the positive note on which the novel will end. Mildred tells Juan, "Look, the rain has stopped. Look at the sun on the Mountains. It's going to be beautiful" (p. 289). The sun is setting on the coast range: "The sun touched the western hills and flattened itself, and its light was yellow and clear. The saturated valley glittered under the level light. The clean, washed air was crisp. In the fields the flattened grain and the thick, torpid stems of the wild oats tightened themselves, and the sheathed petals of the golden poppies loosened a little" (pp.295-96). The powerful sexuality of nature is reinforced again in this highly phallic description, and the imagery serves to underscore the healthy, positive quality of the relationship between Juan and Mildred.

The western mountains appear one last time just before the sighting of the exotic lights of San Juan de la Cruz and the end of the novel, and their symbol of hope cannot be mistaken: "There was a little rim of lighter sky around the edge of a great dark cloud over the western mountains, and then as the cloud lifted the evening star shone out of it, clear and washed and steady" (p. 312). The evening star is Venus, goddess of spring, bloom, beauty, and passion. Her appearance "clear and washed and steady" tells us that this springtime season of "flowering and growth" is once again as it should be. The taint is gone from the land, and "Sweetheart," with passion and nature in harmony, is free to roll happily toward the heavenly city.

This unmistakably happy and positive ending poses some questions for readers of *The Wayward Bus*. As Peter Lisca has suggested, there is little indication that any of the characters on the bus has changed significantly; the most any of them has gained is a "measure of self-knowledge."[8] Nor is there a

suggestion that the characters all "live happily ever after." It is even difficult to find much consolation in Antonia Seixas' suggestion that "We are not deserted; the Juans walk back and dig us out, and the battered old bus lumbers on. But though we go forward, it is only to more of the same."[9] Yet there is a strong sense of triumph and resolution, which Steinbeck has taken great pains to insure, in the climax of the novel.

The novel ends with a celebration of nature, much as it began, because the message that Steinbeck is delivering is that life will go on; the hills will take in rain, and they will flower and grow, just as certain men and women, such as Juan and Mildred, will find honest, natural fulfillment in spite of the corruption around them. Steinbeck is affirming the positive faith that life and the earth from which life comes are powerful enough to contain both the periodic, seemingly destructive rampages of nature and the twisted, destructive urges of men and women. The river will always abate, the flowers will unfurl their petals, and the evening star will shine again because this abiding, regenerating fertility is part of the underlying plan. Like Camille, nature is forever unviolated in the midst of violence and apparent corruption. The several moments of truth for the passengers have altered nothing; they simply serve to illuminate more clearly the pathetic condition of much of mankind--they do not change that condition. The novel is not, as Ditsky suggests, about "the restoration of realistically revised dreams";[10] the dreams are not realistically revised, and this does not matter.

According to Steinbeck, this novel was first "projected in Mexico," and at that time was called *El Camion Vacilador.* Of this title, he wrote: "The word *vacilador,* or the verb *vacilar,* is not translatable unfortunately, and it's a word we really need in English because to be '*vacilando*' means that you're aiming at some place, but you don't care much whether you get there . . . ." [11] It does not matter whether the bus arrives at San Juan de la Cruz; what matters is the quality of the journey. This is the clue in the epigraph from *Everyman:* "How transytory we be all daye." When F.W. Watt says, "How utterly removed from the dignity of permanence are the daily lives of these modern pilgrims,"[12] he is touching upon Steinbeck's key: there is no permanence for man--dignity must be found in transit. Life is permanent and nature is permanent--floods and individuals are not.

The book ends on a note of triumph precisely because nothing has changed. Steinbeck is saying that this is the way things are, and in spite of this the world will endure and remain strong and beautiful. It is perhaps the most positive statement in all of Steinbeck's fiction.

Notes

[1] John Steinbeck, *The Wayward Bus* (New York: The Viking Press, 1947), pp. 12-13. Subsequent quotations from *The Wayward Bus* are from this edition and are identified by page number in the text.

[2] John Ditsky, "*The Wayward Bus:* Love and Time in America," *San Jose Studies*, 1 (November, 1975), 94.

[3] Ditsky, p. 97.

[4] Ditsky, p. 95.

[5] John Steinbeck, *To a God Unknown* (New York: Covici-Friede, 1933), p. 55.

[6] Ditsky, p. 93.

[7] Howard Levant, *The Novels of John Steinbeck: A Critical Study* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1974), pp. 224-25.

[8] Peter Lisca, *The Wide World of John Steinbeck* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1958), p. 241.

[9] Antonia Seixas, as quoted in Levant, p. 214.

[10] Ditsky, p. 100.

[11] John Steinbeck, *Steinbeck: A Life in Letters*, ed. Elaine Steinbeck and Robert Wallston (New York: The Viking Press, 1975), p. 284.

[12] F. W. Watt, *Steinbeck* (Edinburg and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1962, rpt. 1966), p. 88.

REVIEW ESSAY

Looking East from California's Shore: Steinbeck in Japan

Robert DeMott

Tetsumaro Hayashi, Yasuo Hashiguchi, and Richard Peterson, eds. *John Steinbeck: East and West.* Muncie, Indiana: Steinbeck Society of America/Ball State University, 1978. Steinbeck Monograph Series, No. 8. Pp. xii, 95.

It should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with the changing temperaments of American critics and reviewers that John Steinbeck's work has often been more deeply appreciated and more avidly sought abroad than at home. Throughout his career, Steinbeck was acutely aware of these vicissitudes. In a couple of rare statements about his craft published in *Saturday Review*—"Critics, Critics, Burning Bright" (Nov. 11, 1950), and "Critics—From a Writer's Point of View" (Aug. 27, 1955)—he offered some judicious reasons for the "anarchy" of standards among critics. Privately, his reactions ranged from hostility and arrogance (he once called them "lice") to resignation. By the thirty-fourth year of his career, he was no less puzzled by his treatment, though he seemed resigned to its cause: "I have been thinking how styles change, in criticism even more than in writing," he wrote his agent, Elizabeth Otis, on August 10, [1963]. "Have these critical gusts to do with the times or with the private lives of critics?" (Shasky and Riggs, eds. *Letters to Elizabeth*, 1978, p. 111).

The situation abroad was quite different. American critics had the luxury of witnessing Steinbeck's entire career unfold; abroad, it was seen piecemeal. With the advantage of cultural distancing, foreign readers prized his overt thematic, moral and ethical concerns, as well as his ability to delineate the national "character." According to his editor, Pascal Covici, Steinbeck was the most popular American writer in France. (PC-JS, Aug. 5, 1949, courtesy of Humanities Research Center, Austin, Texas). And Steinbeck actively cultivated the overseas market. While he generally refused to grant interviews in the United States (late in his career he agreed to an interview for *Paris Review*, but died before it could be arranged), he frequently spoke to reviewers, interviewers, students, literary agents, publishers and book sellers in France, England, Norway, Italy, Viet Nam, and Japan. In 1965, quick to recognize the potential market for translations of his books in the Iron Curtain countries, he told Elizabeth Otis that ". . . there is going to be a great rush for Western books and I know that my books, in the few titles that have been permitted, have proved very popular" (*Letters to Elizabeth*, p. 118).

In 1957, Steinbeck, John Dos Passos, John Hersey, and Elmer Rice were American delegates to the P.E.N. Congress in Tokyo. It was, by Steinbeck's account (in *Steinbeck: A Life in Letters*, 1975, pp. 566-72), a triumphant but exhausting time. He discovered, as William Faulkner told him he would, that the Japanese hold writers in extremely high regard, and that they were thoroughly knowledgeable about his work. Twenty years later there is no indication that this attitude has changed. The essays collected in *John Steinbeck: East and West* comprise the Proceedings of the First International Steinbeck Congress, held at Kyushu University in August, 1976. The Congress, which drew four American and seven Japanese scholars, was organized by Tetsumaro Hayashi of Ball State University, editor of the *Steinbeck Quarterly*, and Yasuo Hashiguchi of Kyushu University, one of Japan's most distinguished American literature scholars.

The tone of these essays is assertive and positive, analytical and demonstrative rather than patently critical. They constitute part of the past decade's continuing renaissance in Steinbeck studies and are motivated by a refusal to accept the reductive judgment that his reputation is inflated or undeserved. Steinbeck will never eclipse Hemingway or Faulkner in the highest reaches of the academy, but as the essays by Richard Astro and Takahiko Sugiyama claim, his versatility as a story teller and stylist, his fulsome and prophetic ecological vision of life, and his memorable portrayal of dispossessed characters have made him accessible and meaningful to a discriminating range of readers. Indeed, to judge by the 1979 issue of a postage stamp in his honor (and earlier, Aaron Copland's *Red Pony Suite*, and Jack Kerouac's homage to *Of Mice and Men* in *On the Road)*, Steinbeck has entered the American consciousness in a unique way.

Several of these essays make solid contributions to knowledge of Steinbeck's achievement. The comparative point of view is taken by Tetsumaro Hayashi and Kiyohiko Tsuboi. Hayashi examines the similarities and differences in the theme of revolution in *Julius Caesar* and *Viva Zapata!* (film, 1952; script, 1975). Both works "recreate the dynamic pulse of the nature of revolution by capturing the tensions of men and women of action caught in the web of violent political and social conflict" (p. 28). The ironic deaths of Brutus ("in vain—a cautionary example") and Zapata ("an inspirational example") point up the authors' differing attitudes toward revolution. In his comparison of *The Great Gatsby* and *Cup of Gold* (1929), Tsuboi deftly embroiders a cloth already cut by Warren French *(John Steinbeck,* 1975); in so doing, he has produced an eminently readable discussion of the dozen or more similarities in theme, character, and plot between the two novels. Questions of the achievement of *Cup of Gold* aside (it is a flawed novel with a number of interesting internal elements), Tsuboi reasons that Steinbeck read *Gatsby*. Although there is no explicit proof for this, his hunch is borne out in one of Steinbeck's recently published letters to Elizabeth Otis, in which he speaks of Fitzgerald's career with some familiarity.

That Steinbeck utilized and transmuted external sources for his fiction is not only becoming increasingly apparent, but it also constitutes one of the most important directions for future scholarship. Despite the leveled directness of Steinbeck's prose, which tends to reduce the outward manifestations of these borrowings, he was truly indebted to vicarious experiences, primary information, and his own reading. Martha Heasley Cox, in one of the two most illuminating essays in the book, "Fact into Fiction in *The Grapes of Wrath:* The Weedpatch and Arvin Camps," thoroughly documents Steinbeck's use of migrant camp reports. Tom Collins, the model for Weedpatch's Jim Rawley, and the man to whom *Grapes of Wrath* (1939) is dedicated ("To Tom, Who Lived It"), provided Steinbeck with copies of his 1936 supervisor's reports from the Arvin Migratory Labor Camp in Kern County, California. Steinbeck drew upon these materials (plus his own direct observations of migrant conditions) for "character, scenes, episodes, motifs, themes, and settings," primarily in chapters 22-26 (p. 12). Information from these reports gave *Grapes* its compelling verisimilitude (p. 21). However, some elements merely noted in Collins' reports were fictionalized by Steinbeck so that they assume an entirely dramatic and contextual significance. For example, Collins noted that migrant men were dependent on the women during times of unemployment. In Steinbeck's novel, this fact indicates more than a simple reversal of roles. Pa Joad's response, " 'Seems like times is changed' " (Chapter 26), underscores the tragic dimensions of the book and deepens its thematic and philosophical richness. Cox also notes that "Steinbeck's evocative descriptions of the land, particularly the paean to California springtime" which opens Chapter 25, have no basis in anything but his fertile imagination and clear perception (p. 21). Now, with Cox's essay, and one by Jackson Benson (*Journal of Modern Literature,* 1976), the definitive account of Steinbeck's fictive technique regarding this episode is available.

Steinbeck's appeal to Japanese readers stems at least in part from a shared interest in Eastern and Oriental influences. Steinbeck owned a copy of the Hindu *Ramayana,* utilized Laotzu's *Tao Teh Ching* and the Sanskrit *Black Marigolds* in *Cannery Row,* and once said the Tibetan *Book of the Dead* "is as good and highly developed as anything in the 20th century" (*Journal of a Novel,* 1969, p. 9). The "Oriental equivalents" of Steinbeck's work, Kiyoshi Nakayama writes, also have some basic affinities with Buddhism. He traces the applicability of samsara (cycle of birth and death), sunyata (emptiness), and Klesa (covetousness, lust) to Steinbeck's fictional characters. Nakayama correctly assesses Steinbeck's eclecticism, but he cannot sustain a clearly balanced relationship between novels and concepts. When he confronts Steinbeck's Western sense of morality, he concedes that Steinbeck and his characters "go too far in their desire to be human" (p.81).

Steinbeck's sense of sinfulness, however, and man's universal necessity to rule over it, are precisely what John Ditsky considers the heart of Steinbeck's most eastern novel. Numerous critics have written on *East of Eden* (1952), but

few as evocatively or lyrically as Ditsky. "The 'East' in *East of Eden*" traces the complex meshing of Christian cosmogony with the perceptions of Steinbeck's only major Oriental character, Lee. His evolution as the extreme (and therefore necessary) example of the "value-testing drama" (p. 69) becomes one of the paradigms for redemption, acceptance, and wisdom ("the new humanity") by which the main character, Cal Trask, can be judged. Ditsky's prose is often dense and highly referential, but it pays large dividends for the reader who stays with him. If at last, he writes, Steinbeck "came to feel that choice was necessary—that yin and yang in balance made no human progress possible—then he betrayed ideas unremittingly Western in their approach to Eastern values. Perhaps he was American at heart beyond his knowing, ready to follow a future Eden once having done with the past one. Yet I cannot but feel that the eastward progress . . . was . . .quite matched by Steinbeck's westering; that in the end both 'East' and 'West', in Japan and California, stand looking at each other, as if into a mirror. In the end, there is no ocean there" (p. 70). Close scrutiny of Ditsky's *Essays on East of Eden* (Steinbeck Monograph Series, No. 7, 1977) should convince the most truculent reader that *East of Eden* ranks only behind *The Grapes of Wrath* as Steinbeck's greatest achievement.

The critical gusts which Steinbeck puzzled over seem now to be blowing in his direction. It is tempting to think that he might have approved, at the very least, of the positive attitude demonstrated in this collection. Certainly in his own lifetime he rarely had the benefit of such impeccable concern or international appreciation.

POETRY

Brian Swann

MAKING

This is what I saw:
a shower of early light on the tree,
a lone bird cropping up and the branches
taking it in, then birds of all colors
diving and darting like tropical fish
among the leaves.
They said:
follow where the boughs point.
I went,
and this is what I saw:
in the distance, seals lay on the white sand
of their cave. The blue light
in a half-moon at the entrance
had Eskimos in it. They had spent
weeks searching for the breeding-grounds.
But once there they said:
the water and the air
at the mouth told us to watch and be silent
and do no harm.
Bring this back,
they said, and make it.

DEER

There are still tracks
in the garden I dug last year.
Snow keeps what air scatters:
tracks are scents that last,
secrets that show
how close the distance we call
beast.

Air still retains some of their warmth.
I push by their shapes
to look up the stream frozen
in its sleep,
kin to glaciers I use
to get myself to sleep, imagining ice
crushing & cleaning.
I pick out the twin points
as they cross & recross,
and I walk far enough to see paws
dogging them, in & out,
and footprints across the snow,
over the pond, over fish hanging
by gills
delicate
as Queen Anne's lace.

The deer are somewhere at the end of tracks
they call home to bodies whole
& waking again on beds of dry leaves that register
the slightest touch. Their ears flick,
their nostrils sift snow grains that drift
harsh as sand
& grate against the sun's dying steel blue.
Something across the valley takes up
the last gleam & turns it back sharper
to their bed.
In the new night
their antlers fall & they
lay aside their skins.
Their silhouettes slip
off the hill.

LINES

There can be no power in a square.
Nor a straight line. Nor lines of
any sort. Lines take off directly
& find what it is they're chasing
isn't for catching. After a while
they stop & lie still. More lost lines
cross them & lie heaped. As they cross,
angles for dust form, and angles
for darkness. Try as hard as they can
with whatever life is left, they cannot
turn and twist. They were meant to go
the shortest way
to the longest objects.
They cannot become the circle of the horizon
or the bowl of the sky.
They cannot enclose anything.
If they are made into a house,
whoever lives in that house
will continually be banging off edges
& looking at the waste space in corners
where no one can get at it.
So they'll make things with edges
to fit in those corners. They'll
fit & fit & fit till they grow
tired and scared and start praising
round things, things rubbed with hands—
tents, pitchers, the bellies of women.
They praise the power of round things.
Then they try making everything round.
They fit & fit & fit . . . .

CAVEAT

At night in the monastery
sleep is an echo of muffled bells
and the cry of a lost bird
in the wilderness outside my window.
Caveat in the mind is
a little more than the
snap of a twig.
*
At breakfast we eat in silence. There is
nothing to say. Grumbling is also forbidden.
To relieve the mind we think in quotes.
What time is to others, eternity is to us, but
instead of a white image I get
something like garlic when I
think of it. Something like the still
pungent cloves I found in deer pellets
last fall. Last week I found a deer carcase
poking through the thaw. Wolves
had started on it. We ate the rest.
*
Morning light now stains
clerestory windows, and the mind
that rises through images
to God also
falls
through images back into the night of frozen deer
and a bird calling in the undergrowth,
its cry, like a scent,
giving it away.

AT CURI-CANCHA

At Curi-Cancha all things
were possible. When the eyes
cleared there was still more to
clear. It seemed the eyes would
never clear. And yet we saw
enough. And time was short.
It was all so easy we
expected a trap. But there
was none. Only echoes of
our own hearts' grumbling, and the
echo of the metal
wrapping us in glitter,
turning us too to gold.

The melting of the Field of
Gold did not put out our Sun.
The fountain still spurted
at the center after we'd
bashed in its yellow panels
and torn off its sun, though the
water turned white. The gold
corn clods and llamas grazing
on gold stalks, they crumbled and
were carted off. The only
gold left when we left was the
sun. It didn't look real.
Some of the drunks said it
was there for the taking.

INDIAN SUMMER

Now the ducks are mostly gone, leaves
mostly fallen, antlers scraped clean
of velvet. The bears are fat and ready.

It is Indian summer, brief gold after
Squaw winter's cold rain. She sits on the balcony,
complaining of her head. I say

Look at the birds beside you: small pigeons.
She will not look. Someone crosses the pond
on a dinghy. She sees this: the small pond.

At the other side of the sea I notice
a yacht, and hear a cool yelp. She wakes.
An animal has been trapped, he says.

THE TRUTH

The birds come back in their cries
over bauchy snow. Six a.m. light
carries the little stream from
the quarry melt faster & faster
past the empty bird-feeder
that waits for the child to fill it
from a jar bigger than her pot belly.
But she is still asleep, wrapped
like a new-born near her mother,
snoring like a soldier, dreaming
perhaps of the icy stream she
washes her doll in, to get her
ready for the king of the mountains
and the people in the purple sky
she sings about who say
"you should be grateful for what
we've done for you."

I pad round the silent house,
the cold creeping into the
small of my back. I pick up
her drawings with their bug-eyes,
crowns, and feet on sideways.
"Is it fair to expect the truth
from a child?" she'd asked.

The silence is so constant
it goes unnoticed. I hear as silence
one bird almost overhead calling
after the flock already in the pine-stand.

Everything is needed
less & less.

FICTION

The Molester

Duff Brenna

October 11

AFTER what was said about me today I feel that some kind of record of truth is in order. Perhaps if I write about what is being done to me and how I feel about it (there is no doubt I am being made an example), then some day someone will read this and the atmosphere of hysteria will be long past and the calm and common sense I represent will prevail and I shall be vindicated. Perhaps this may happen. I hope it will. But I have little faith in it. What I am alleged to have done is beyond forgiveness. I am the lowest of the low, the scum of the earth, the most hated, the most perverted, worse than robbers, rapists, even mass murderers---I am a child molester. Or so they say, they being the city of White in the county of Arapahoe in the state of Colorado.

At last census there were 48,000 people living in this bright White city. According to the papers, every last one of them would like to tear me limb from limb. This even seems to include my wife who refuses to come and see me or provide for my bail. I could get a bailer on my own, but I am assured that the safest place for me right now is here in the county jail behind thick brick walls and gray iron bars. It is peaceful here. I have my own cell on the second floor. I have a bunk that hangs by chains from the wall. I have a thin blue striped mattress and pillow and a maroon woolen blanket with the letters PAC stenciled largely across the center—Property of Arapahoe County. I have my own commode and wash bowl, which I clean to sparkling pearl every morning. There is an overhead recessed light that never goes out. The floor is cement, painted maroon like my blanket, it leads to three riveted walls and a wall of bars. There are no windows. When I look through the bars I see other cages to my right. A wall is on my left. In front of me is a stairwell with wooden steps wearing aged dimples from the tread of countless feet.

This will be the twenty-fourth day since I was arrested, since I was taken bound with handcuffs, like a dangerous criminal, from my third grade classroom in front of all my helpless, petrified babies. I saw some of them today in court, sitting with their mothers and fathers, staring wide-eyed, flushed with excitement, convinced I am a very bad man. I smiled at two or three of them but gave it up quickly. No one was smiling at me. I have never in my life imagined that hatred could be transmitted through the air and thrust itself upon one like an assault or like a steady physical weight pressing down upon one's shoulders and back. That is how it was for me today—an anvil of loathing laid upon my spine. It hurts the worse because my babies will come to believe what is being said and they will hate me too. When the police entered our classroom, those blue uniforms and badged hats, guns swinging with saucy menace on their hips startled us into a silence that roared. Something in the way they walked, a sort of purposeful clack clack clack clack across the floor, jaws jutting, eyes pitiless, signaled instantly that this was no Officer Harrington and partner come to further public relations with safety talks and drawing board full of cartoons illustrating good little boys and girls obeying traffic signs. They paused in front of me, backs to the children, and asked if my name was Darwin Heath. Of course it is, you know that, I said and laughed. It was a forced nervous sort of laugh that revealed how suddenly frightened I was. None of my babies laughed with me. The officer who spoke told me I was under arrest and read me my rights. I was in shock. I had the sensation of melting, that I was dripping like molten lead down the sides of my desk. Then the handcuffs came out and they snapped them on my wrists. That sort of woke me up. What is going on? I cried. Is this a joke? Is this for real? Am I dreaming? What's the charge? Why have you come to arrest me? I demand to know! They asked me to be quiet, told me they would tell me on the way downtown but not here in front of the children. It sounded very grave but I rallied a smile and told my babies there was a mistake, that I would straighten it all out and be right back. I passed by the principal on the way out. He frowned deeply at me and shook his head. But none of it truly worried me at the time. What the heck, I was innocent of whatever the charge and I knew it. You got the wrong man, fellas, I said, and believe me, I believed it.

Now I'm not so sure. If so many people believe that what I've done to my babies was molesting them, can I still be right in believing they are wrong? Look at that face! I heard Mr. Allison say when I arrived to take my place. Simpy lookin' guy. Tell by lookin' he's a pervert. Look at his face. Mr. Allison was saying this in a loud whisper to his wife. She said nothing but her stare was a little wild. It is their daughter who is my main accuser. But about my face . . . I'm darned if I see it as simpy or perverted. It's not a great face nor overly memorable, but most people seemed to like it well enough, or used to. I suppose a major point of interest would be the glasses, because of what they do to my eyes. They are the thick coke bottle type of glasses and my eyes magnify behind them. I imagine that looks suspicious to some, but I can't help it. The moustache is interesting. It's thin and black, just a line above my lip. I wear it

because I've always been conscious of the space between my nose and mouth and a short little moustache fills the area, giving it balance as I see it and a certain distinction. I'm afraid the moustache was used as evidence against me. Strange what kind of marks stiff bristles of hair can leave.

Dinner has arrived. Back to this later.

October 31

Trick or Treat! God how I used to love singing that. It wasn't a question, it was a demand--gimmee gimmee. And the kind people gave, bless their hearts. I would give anything to be a child again, to be free on this crisp autumn night to roam the leaf cluttered streets of White and pound on doors, with bag in hand, and yell, Trick or Treat! Children are so lucky, so innocent of reality, of the way the world really is. There is no evil for a child until we teach him evil. Everything is good that feels good. Yes, exactly like an animal. We can train them to our bias, make them see evil where none exists. Children are *tabula rasa*. We may etch what we please upon their virgin slates.

But oh, to be a child now, this night. To have that first encounter with the freedom and magic that only a Halloween can bring. To see those candies and popcorn balls and apples and cookies piling up inside my grocery bag—Heaven! There was one apartment that stays forever vivid to my mind. I was very small, perhaps four or five, and I climbed the stairs alone and knocked upon the door. A man answered and I yelled, Trick or Treat! He laughed. He was very jolly. Behind him were many deep voices talking and laughing. Music played. He told me to come in. Look what I found, he said. Everyone's attention came to me. I was cute in my sailor suit. Someone picked me up and hugged me. They passed me around like a doll, kissing me and patting my bottom. A man who smelled strangely of perfume and sweat held me on his hip and danced with me. I was having a wonderful time. I loved them all. They were kissing each other and hugging and singing and shouting. I had my bag clenched in one arm and the men dropped coins in it. The man who answered the door took me back. He set me on the table and gave me a giant bottle of 7-Up. While I drank from it he pulled my sailor blouse up and kissed my belly. I giggled. He blew bubbles on my belly. His eyes looked very shiny and happy. I felt very very good and was happy to let him go on kissing my belly. Someone stopped him. He's just a baby, the someone said. He likes it, said the man. It won't hurt him. No, said the someone, we could all get in a lot of trouble. They set me outside the door with my bottle of 7-Up and said goodbye. I left but I remember them affectionately to this day.

I suppose I should say something about the trial. It was over days ago. I've been so depressed I couldn't write. They found me guilty of molesting and perversion. I've been sentenced to an indefinite term at the Pueblo Mental Hospital. I leave tomorrow.

December 24

Deck the halls with bowels of Molly, fa la la la la. Used to sing that one when I was a kid. The halls here are decked out with holly and evergreen (no mistletoe, they wouldn't want anyone remembering), and a small Christmas tree sits blinking and shimmering on a table near the middle of the ward. Behind all the green and glitter, the walls are dead white. Beds are lined up at exact intervals-four beds, each spaced two feet apart, a nightstand in between with a lamp like a dandelion at seed. The beds are made up with beige blankets that have a deep blue caduceus in the center. None of the beds are occupied that face me. There is one other patient in this ward, an old man whose features were long ago lost in a mass of webs drawing his face into a baked deformity. Such is the power of gravity. The old man has a tattoo on his right forearm. The tattoo is blurred but you can see it is a woman in a grass skirt looking over her shoulder, long hair flowing, hips swaying, lips smiling. That ancient skeletal arm frames her, a beautiful woman forever young. The old man is seldom awake. He moans and smacks his gums in his sleep. I feel a tremor as I look at him now. I think, Save me! Save me from this! He is disgusting. He should die. I shall look like him someday. How can this be?

A group of patients came in just now and gathered around at the foot of our beds to sing Christmas carols. They were all in white hospital robes standing side by side. The effect was strangely like that of a choir of angels. It must be the drugs or the beating I took but how wonderful and ethereal they seemed—four crazies singing so sweetly of God and Jesus Christ and Joy and Peace on Earth. I wept happily and I feel much better now. The old man slept through it all, deaf to love and hope. His is the natural condition of old age when all innocence is destroyed. I compare him with my babies and I see perfectly now why I loved them and why I wanted to be constantly caressing them. Something that life hasn't defiled. Something that time hasn't etched with sin, etched with that dissipated look that comes in the eyes of every living adult in this world, cowers at the edges and flashes out in a moment of unguarded nature when the true soul belches forth. The wrinkles on this old man's face represent him fully, there lies his tattered spirit, there his countless crimes, his selfish, mean, contemptible life, there carved upon his face, the universal score of humanity. And I lie here half-beaten to death because I preferred to touch with tender love the opposite of this old man.

I am guilty. I admit it. I touched where I shouldn't have according to the law. But it wasn't perversion or lust that made me do it. No one can make me convict myself of that. My touch was pure, as pure as the flesh I stroked.

So what more can they do to me now? The court convicted me. Vesta's father spat on me. My wife divorced me. The prisoners in the holding tank tried to kill me. I've lost an eye, my nose is broken, my testicles are swollen black and blue. I've been six weeks flat on my back trying to recover so that I can be sent down to the mental ward and given shock treatments. Merry Christmas.

I should have stopped writing after the four crazies sang. I've worked myself into a state. Well, it's nothing new. I've been nearly convinced several times

that my mind isn't balanced. It's the pressure of so many who believe it, believe I'm a crazy. Perhaps I'm even dangerous they say. A psychiatrist said as much at my trial: He seems a mild kindly man on the surface. But I detect underneath a potential for great violence, explosive violence without warning. So he said. I'd like to know how the hell he was able to detect something I've never felt in my life. Oh I get angry, I'm normal, but I've never raised my hand in threat to anyone. I did jump up and lunge at Mr. Allison when he spat in my face, but who wouldn't? I wasn't going to hit him. I was going to spit back at him. My lips were trembling not from rage but because my mouth was so dry that I had no spit. I felt utterly defeated. It was his testimony that really did me in. If they had let little Vesta tell the story I might have been all right. But her father made it sound like the fabled animal rape of Leda.

- We might never have been the wiser if she hadn't had a bit of a limp and we asked her what was wrong.
- And what did you find, Mr. Allison?
- Her mother and me found she had a nasty scrape on her hip and backside.
- And what was the explanation for this, uh, injury?
- She said she fell down on the playground at school. She was running backwards after a ball and tripped.
- What happened after the injury occurred?
- She says that he picked her up and carried her into the classroom.
- Isn't it standard procedure for injured children to go to the school nurse?
- Ask him.

He looked at me with venom. I couldn't muster the courage to return his stare so I looked down. It must have looked like I felt shame. I glanced at the jury and there was not one sympathetic face. When it came to my turn I kept my eyes down. Bad mistake. But to see all that hatred collected together and meant for me was more than I could stand. It must have sounded pretty lame when I explained about tending to Vesta's hurt. I've always done it. I could have sent her to the school nurse, but I've always wanted my babies to think of me as their Everything. I'm the one to go to no-matter-what. I love them. I'll take care of them. I have a first-aid kit that is the equal of any school nurse. Yes, so why not? Vesta had scraped the skin on her bottom and hip. I cleansed it and put mercurocrome on it and a couple of bandaids, it was all better. Who needs a nurse?

- And what did Mr. Heath do next, Mr. Allison?
- He did things to her with his mouth.
- What things, sir?
- Horrible things.
- Did he kiss her?
- Yes. And licked her she said.
- Where, Mr. Allison?
- Where? Why b-between her legs that's where.
- And how do you know this?

- Because of that stupid moustache of his. I saw it was roughed up and red around her . . . around her . . .

- Pubis?

- Yeah, around her tummy, that area down low. I asked her why it looked so scratchy, and she said Mr. Heath's moustache did it. When she said that I went crazy. I don't need to be told anymore, I can add two and two.

That was my major downfall—the moustache. After saying it was my moustache that made those marks, the jury was ready to believe anything. Suddenly there was a regular parade of parents saying that, upon questioning, their children admitted I had touched, stroked, kissed, and otherwise fondled where I shouldn't. Even I was ready to agree I was an animal, a monster in their midst.

But there are ways of touching and there are ways of touching. My touch was not the touch of prurience. I was not out to seduce my babies. What I did to Vesta that day was done out of love. I stood her on my desk and took her clothes off. So what of that? I have two daughters of my own that I've bathed since they were born. One is ten, the other twelve and I still bathe them. Vesta's little body is no different from my daughters, is it? The clothes would have made things awkward had I left them on her. Once I had her patched up, I still had the problem of her crying. She wouldn't stop with the boo hoo. I kissed and hugged her and told her she was a big girl, but she kept sniffing and mewling and rubbing her eyes. I tickled her by blowing bubbles on her tummy. She started to giggle, so I did it all over. It works every time. I've done it to dozens of kids. They absolutely and innocently love it. I lick and blow the bubbles, and they end up laughing and pulling my hair. It is all in fun. It doesn't warp them. It is not an evil thing in and of itself. We make it evil by the evil in our hearts!

June 6

I'm excited today. I met the sweetest little girl, an absolute angel. She and her friends play in the park. She is very bold, not in the least afraid of me. She climbed into my lap and helped me eat my lunch. Her name is Jenny and she says she plays in the park everyday during the summer. My heart surged at the news. It has been a long while since I've been so happy.

Of course I must be careful. I've only been out a month and I'm sure they'll send spies from time to time, even though I convinced them I was cured. Probably the best thing would be to have Jenny visit me in the canyon next to the park. It is isolated and full of trees. I'm sure she'll come if I give her a few pennies each time. I gave her one today and she stuck it in her mouth and ran off. Cute little thing. In time the probation people will forget about me, then Jenny and maybe some of her friends can visit here in my apartment. That would be nice. We could have a little party.

I've been sitting here for the last few minutes thinking about this journal. I started it in an effort to establish my innocence to posterity. But I've been too busy to bother with it most of the time, and when I finally do write something

down it seems to me that I never say it convincingly enough. I guess it might be best to forget this whole idea. My innocence no longer seems so crucial to me now that I live where no one knows me. I'm just Darwin, the guy who pumps gas at the Mobil station. If someone around here reads this, then I'd be right back in a big mess again. Who needs it? The past is behind me now. I'm going to make a new life here. I'll have my babies too, but this time I'll be very very careful. There are ways to keep things quiet if you can just get the children to love and trust you. They mustn't see evil where it doesn't exist. They mustn't see me and what I do to them as evil. I would just hate it if they did. I would just rather they all die than become so warped, so nasty and ugly as grown-ups are. Probably the best thing would be for a little angel like Jenny to never even grow up. Yes. Innocent forever.

Well, no more of this. I'm a changed man who is about to begin a new life. I've made mistakes but I've learned from them and they won't be repeated. No more openness, no more first aid kit, no more dependence on my babies to keep their sweet little mouths shut—I'll make them understand that grown-ups see good as evil and will hurt them badly for it. We will make a pact against the grown-ups. We will swear to always be children. It will be wonderful. They will love me and let me kiss them, and there will be no more chafe marks to crucify me. No, I've learned from my mistakes. My moustache is gone. My upper lip is as smooth as a baby's belly.

* * * *

The above is an extract used at the trial of Darwin Heath, September 18, 1977, who was accused of murdering four children over a span of five years. He was convicted and is now serving an indeterminate sentence at the Pueblo Asylum in Pueblo, Colorado.

Rocking Chair

Robert W. Witt

DOTTIE automatically slowed her pace when she noticed the stranger standing on the porch of the apartment house. She hoped that she could walk past him without having to speak. She never spoke to strangers, particularly men. Since, though, she could not get to her apartment without going up the steps and crossing the porch directly in front of him, she continued slowly toward the house, trying to conceal the fact that she walked with a limp.

"Do you live here?" he asked as she approached the steps.

"Yes." She stopped.

"I'm looking for the manager or owner or somebody. Can you tell me where to find him?"

"She lives in that little yellow brick house just across the street."

"Oh, I see. Well, I'm glad to find that out. I've knocked on just about every door in this place trying to find somebody."

"Most folks aren't off work yet." Dottie glanced covertly at the stranger but quickly lowered her eyes. He was young and handsome.

"You coming up?" He moved back slightly from the head of the steps.

"Yes." Dottie didn't look at him but started slowly up the steps.

"Do you work?"

"Yes. I work at the factory."

"Which factory?"

"There's only one factory in Allendale." She moistened her lips.

"Well, I'm new here, so I don't know those things. What kind of factory?"

"A shirt factory."

"I see. And what do you do there?"

"Uh, I'm an inspector." Dottie looked at him again. He had good features and was beautifully tanned. She felt the pallor of her own skin in comparison. She

glanced into his eyes but quickly lowered her head because his stare was penetrating. She was afraid that he had seen inside her. Feeling herself begin to color, she moved toward the door.

"Don't mind me. I always ask too many questions," he laughed. "But before you go, tell me one more thing."

"If I can."

"Is there by any chance an efficiency apartment vacant here?"

"Yes. It's on the first floor just down the hall to the left."

"Great. Somebody told me there'd probably be one here."

"Are—are you thinking about moving in?"

"Yes. I'm going to be in town for the summer, and I thought something like this'd be cheaper than a motel room."

"I guess so. But a motel'd probably be better."

"Oh, this place doesn't look so bad." He surveyed the front of the building. "Besides, I'm more interested in saving money than being comfortable."

Dottie moved closer to the door. "Well, now'd be a good time to catch Mrs. Franklin."

"The landlady?"

"Yes."

"O.K." He turned and looked across the street. "I'll just go over to that little yellow house and speak to Mrs. Franklin." He started down the steps. "Thanks for the information. By the way"—he turned back just as Dottie was opening the door—"since we're probably going to be neighbors, we'd better introduce ourselves. My name is Charles Newell." He came back up on the porch and held out his hand.

"I'm Dottie, uh, I mean Dorothy–Dorothy Hughes." She shyly took his hand, noting that it felt soft—firm yet soft.

"I like Dottie better, so that's what I'll call you, O.K.?" He released her hand.

"O.K." Dottie's eyes furtively sought his and then quickly fixed on the concrete porch again.

"In case you're interested, my friends call me Chuck," he said over his shoulder as he went down the steps.

Dottie had already started through the door and didn't respond, but once inside the hall she turned and watched him as he went to the end of the walk and crossed the street. She saw the muscles in his back underneath the white knit shirt he wore and the graceful curve of his hips underneath the light summer pants. "He's pretty," she breathed almost inaudibly. She watched as he went to the door of the house and knocked. Almost immediately a woman appeared in the door, and, after a brief exchange with her, Chuck disappeared into the house. Dottie sighed and turned to go into her apartment, the first one on the right.

Dottie didn't see Chuck anymore that evening, but she heard him in the hall talking to Mrs. Franklin. She gathered from their remarks that he was moving in and that Mrs. Franklin had come to see about getting something fixed in the apartment. Dottie felt excited about his being in the same building. She didn't

have an opportunity, though, to see him again for several weeks. He never seemed to be stirring when she went to work in the morning and apparently was gone when she returned. She did learn, however, what he was doing in town. She heard two women in the hall talking about him.

"What's that fancy college feller do, anyway?" the first woman asked.

"Miz Franklin told me he's a salesman."

"Salesman! What's he a-selling?"

"Oh, I don't know—books of some kind."

"Books?"

"Yeah, dictionaries or 'cyclopedias or something like that."

"Well, he won't find nobody much around here who wants them things. Course, I reckon he's 'bout pretty enough to sell anything."

The two women laughed and moved on, and Dottie repeated the woman's words. "He is pretty enough to sell anything," she whispered. "He is pretty—everybody thinks he's pretty." Her heart raced a little as she remembered holding his hand, looking into his eyes. She went into the bedroom and studied herself in the mirror. She wished that her hair were a darker red and that her chin were more prominent. Still her body was well developed, except for the short right leg which caused the limp. "And boys have come around," she said to herself. "There have been some—" but she turned away in disappointment as she remembered that none of them had stayed around very long. "No," she sighed, "I'm not pretty enough for him, not pretty enough for anybody."

Not long after hearing the conversation in the hall, Dottie saw Chuck again. She was sitting in her apartment late one afternoon after work when someone knocked on the door. She got up and went to the door, unconsciously smoothing down her hair. When she opened the door, Chuck was leaning against the facing.

"Hey, neighbor," he said in a somewhat self-assured manner. "Remember me?"

"Why, yes—yes, of course."

"How've you been?"

"Just fine, thank you. Uh, How've you been?"

"Fine. Mind if I come in?"

"No—uh, come in." Dottie hesitated for a moment and then moved back from the door to allow Chuck to enter.

"Your place is larger than mine," he said, looking around the room.

"It's a one-bedroom. Yours is an efficiency."

"Uh huh."

"Have a seat." Dottie closed the door and walked slowly to a chair across the room as Chuck sat on the sofa. She sat down and looked quickly about the room as if she were locating escape routes.

"Where've you been keeping yourself? I haven't seen you since the day I moved in."

"Well, I—I've been here."

"I thought I'd see you sometime, though."

"I guess we, ah, keep different hours." Dottie started to color slightly.

"Yeah, that's probably true. What time do you leave for work in the mornings?"

"Bout seven or a little before."

"I'm still asleep then. I don't usually get up until eight or eight-thirty."

"And you never come in until night." The slight color became a full blush.

"That's right. I always try to call on some people after dinner. I wasn't doing any good today, though, so I decided to call it quits and come in early for a change." Chuck paused, but Dottie sat in silence folding and unfolding her hands. "Say," he continued, "I'm not keeping you from something, am I?"

"No—no, I'm not doing anything."

"Are you expecting someone?"

"No."

"Your boyfriend, maybe?"

"No! no, I, ah, don't have a boyfriend."

"Aw, I bet you do."

"No—no, I don't."

"Between boyfriends, then."

"No. I've never had—" Dottie glanced nervously about the room. "I mean, I've dated some but never anybody steady."

"I didn't intend to get personal." Chuck shifted uncomfortably on the sofa. "I was just making conversation. Tell me something about your family. You live here alone, right?"

"Yes."

"What about your folks—where are they?"

" They're dead—my mother and father, I mean. I don't have any other folks."

"Gee, I'm sorry. I didn't—"

"It's all right. I—I can talk about it."

"Accident?"

"No. I guess it was just old age."

"Old age! But you're young."

"They were both kind of old when I was born. I don't know why they waited so long to have a child." Dottie forced a laugh, "Maybe they shouldn't have had any."

"Hey, now, none of that. Did you all live here, or did you move here after, uh, after—"

"We lived on a farm until my dad died, and then Mom and me sold the place and moved here so we could work in town. We didn't think we could keep the farm going by ourselves."

"I see."

"Mom didn't work very long, though. I guess she was just worn out. Finally, she got to where she wouldn't do anything except sit in that rocking chair." She pointed toward the chair by the front window. "Just sit there all day long and stare into space and sing hymns. I found her there one afternoon when I came in from work. She was—she was—"

"It must have been a terrible experience for you."

"Yes—yes, it was."

"How long ago was that?"

"A year ago this past March."

"So you've been by yourself just a little over a year."

"Yes. It was terrible that afternoon. I'll never forget it. I think about it everytime I look at that chair."

"Why don't you get rid of it?"

"I should, I know. But somehow I can't. It's like then she'd really be gone. As long as the chair is there, she's still here with me—kind of." Dottie shook her head abruptly. "I'm sorry. I'm talking crazy. I don't know what got into me. I—"

"You're not talking crazy. I understand, but I still think you'd be better off to get rid of the chair and try to forget about it."

"You're right, I know. And maybe I will soon. But tell me something about yourself."

"Oh, there's nothing of any interest to tell. I'm a pre-law major at the University of Tennessee, will finish next spring, and go to law school—hopefully. Meanwhile I'm working at a crummy summer job selling encyclopedias. But it helps pay the bills."

"Can you really do any good in a small town like Allendale?"

"Yes. You'd be surprised. As a matter of fact, I just got a check today and decided to find a pretty girl to take out to dinner."

Dottie looked quickly at the floor and said nothing. She started to blush again.

"Well, how about it? Have dinner with me?"

"Uh I, ah, I couldn't do that." She kept her eyes on the floor.

"Why not?" Chuck leaned forward on the sofa. "You just told me you weren't doing anything."

"Well, ah, I just couldn't."

"So give me one logical reason."

"I—I—" Dottie bit her lower lip.

"See, you don't have a reason. It's settled then. I'll be back in about an hour, O.K.?" Chuck started to get up.

"No. I—I can't." Dottie clutched at the arms of the chair.

Chuck sat back down. "Then tell me why not."

"I just couldn't." Dottie paused and then continued. "I never go out to restaurants to eat."

"Then it's time to begin. Come on, what'd you say?"

Dottie shook her head.

"You don't like me."

"Yes! I mean no—uh, I mean I don't know you."

"So we'll get to know each other during dinner. Come on."

"No—no."

"O.K. if that's the way you want it." Chuck got up and started toward the door.

"I appreciate you asking." Dottie stood up slowly.

"Sure." Chuck put his hand on the door knob but then turned to face Dottie. "I'm lonely," he said simply. "I've got nobody here. And from what you've just told me I'd say that you're lonely too."

"Well, I—"

"We would be good for each other. Keep each other company—have a few laughs." He paused, but Dottie didn't say anything. "Sure you won't change your mind?"

"I—I can't."

"See you around." He started out the door.

"Wait! I—" Dottie took a couple of steps toward the door.

"Yes?" He stepped back inside the door.

"I was just thinking." She took a deep breath and then spoke rapidly, avoiding Chuck's eyes. "I'm going to fix supper for myself, and I—I have enough for two, and, ah, if you wanted—uh, you can stay and eat supper with me—if you want to."

Chuck smiled. "Sure. That'll be even better than going out. Great. Hey, I'll help you fix things. I'm a pretty good cook myself."

"O.K."

"Just give me a few minutes to change—it's not formal, is it?"

"Gracious no." Dottie smiled at Chuck for the first time. She felt as if she were going to start laughing.

"Great. Be right back." He went out the door again but turned back. "Can I bring anything?"

"No. I've got everything I need."

"O.K. See you shortly." He closed the door behind him.

Dottie turned quickly and her eyes focused on the rocking chair. She looked startled. She stared at it for a moment but then with a little shake of her head she went hurriedly into the kitchen to see if she did indeed have everything she needed. She was nervous and knocked over a couple of jars as she searched for things in the cabinets. After assuring herself that everything was there, she hurried into the bedroom to survey herself in the mirror. She thought about changing but decided that would be too obvious.

Chuck returned soon. He was dressed in cut-off jeans and a tank top. Dottie thought she had never seen anyone so attractive outside the movie magazines she sometimes purchased at the drug store. They prepared the meal together. She was still nervous and said very little, letting Chuck do most of the talking. He represented a whole world that she knew nothing about, and, as she listened to him, she began to think that she had lived a very dull life without even realizing that it was dull. By the time they had finished eating, though, she had begun to relax and open up a little. She told him about growing up on the farm and about her work at the factory. After they finished with the dishes, they watched television for a while. Chuck sat on the sofa as he had earlier and she in the chair opposite him.

"Say," Chuck said during a break in the program they were watching, "you got anything to drink?"

"What'd you mean? I've got more tea."

"No, I mean a drink—liquor, wine, beer."

"No,no, I don't have anything like that."

"I've got some beer in my apartment. O.K. if I get some and bring it up here?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Be right back."

Dottie shifted in her chair as he went out the door. She looked quickly at the rocking chair but then fixed her eyes on the television set. Her eyes strayed, though, again to the chair. She got up and went into the bedroom and checked in the mirror to see if her hair was still in place. She walked to the bed and stared down at it. She wondered if she could. Other girls did. Why shouldn't she? "No!"she said to herself. "No, no, no!" She went back into the living room and sat in the same chair.

"I'll just put this in the refrigerator so it'll stay cool, O.K.?" Chuck asked as he came in. He was carrying a six-pack.

"O.K."

"You want one?"

"No. No, thank you."

"You want anything?"

"No thanks, I'm fine."

He went into the kitchen and returned shortly drinking from one of the cans. Instead of sitting on the sofa, though he walked to Dottie's chair and sat on the arm. She stiffened. He put his hand on her shoulder. She shifted her position nervously. "Hey, relax–relax," he said soothingly as he slid his arm around her shoulder. She straightened up in the chair and started to get up. Her arm brushed against his thigh, and she jerked away abruptly as though she had touched something forbidden. "Hey, hey," he said, "what's wrong? Relax."

"No, I—I—" She sat on the edge of the chair.

"What's the matter? Don't you like me?"

"Yes. That's not it."

"Then just take it easy."

"I—I think you better sit on the sofa."

"Hey, come on—." He started to rub her back gently.

"No—no, don't." She glanced at the rocking chair.

"You said you like me."

"I—I don't know you."

"Nonsense."

"I've just met you."

"Nonsense." He leaned toward her, but she got up quickly and moved to the sofa.

"We musn't do that," she tried to control her breathing. "We must just be friends."

"We are friends—at least I hope so." He moved to the sofa and sat down beside her.

"Just friends."

"That's what I said." He reached over and took her hand.

"I said friends!" She jerked her hand free.

"So what's wrong with friends being close? What's wrong with a little affection? Calm down. Relax—let yourself go. Don't you ever enjoy life?" He moved closer to her.

"Don't, don't—I—I—"

"I'm not going to hurt you."

"Don't, please."

"You've got pretty eyes, you know that?" He put his arm around her. She looked questioningly at him, looking deep into his eyes for the first time that evening. He smiled and leaned toward her again. She shook her head as if awakening from a daze, struggled to free herself, and got up.

"Please sit down and relax," he pleaded.

"No—I, uh, I think you better go." She stood in the middle of the floor.

Chuck took another drink from the can and set it down. "Are you sure?"

"Ye—yes, you'd better."

"O.K., if that's the way you want it." He got up and moved slowly toward the door.

"Ch—Chuck."

"Yes?" He stopped but didn't turn around.

"We—ah, we can, uh, still be friends, can't we?" Dottie was trembling and she feared that her teeth were chattering audibly.

"Sure." He took another step toward the door.

"Chuck—"

"Yes?"

"Chuck—I, uh, I—"

"Yes?" He turned to her.

"I, uh, I—" She looked helplessly at him.

Chuck shook his head and smiled. He walked to her and put his arm around her waist. She didn't resist. "Hey," he said softly, "calm down—you're shaking all over." He pulled her against him and kissed her. She held her arms rigidly at her sides, but, as the warmth of his body melted into hers, she began to relax. Slowly she lifted her arms and put them around his neck.

Chuck was sleeping when Dottie woke up the next morning. She went quietly about getting ready for work, hoping that he wouldn't wake up. She didn't want to face him just yet. When she was ready to leave, she went just inside the door of the bedroom and looked at him for a long time as he lay asleep on the bed. He lay on his side with his arms around a pillow, his face turned upward. The look of youthful innocence surprised Dottie. A sense of guilt came over her as though she were the seductress. She fought the urge to go to him, to touch him, to let her hand feel again the marvel of his almost perfect body. Instead she turned and went hurriedly through the living room to the door, not letting herself look at the rocking chair.

Dottie didn't accomplish very much at work that day. She would suddenly

come to herself and realize that she had been sitting staring into space while the garments piled up on her table. At one point the floorlady came to ask if she was ill. Dottie thought about saying that she was and leaving, but she decided against it and stayed until the horn sounded at four o'clock. She walked home slowly. The sense of guilt had increased and all day she had felt as though the other women at work were staring at her and whispering about her. She had decided that she would have to tell Chuck that she couldn't see him anymore.

Dotttie put the key in the lock and opened the door. She stood for a moment suddenly aware of the stillness. She heard only the faint sound of the refrigerator in the kitchen. She apparently expected Chuck to be there although she didn't know why. He would, of course, be out working as usual. She went into the bedroom to look for some sign of him, something he might have left behind, but she saw nothing. The bed was still unmade, but no article of clothing, no change from his pocket, nothing of Chuck remained. She went to the bed and sat on the side where he had lain. He filled her mind—his voice, his kiss, his body—both the pain and the joy. She got up quickly and with the characteristic shake of her head left the room.

She went into the kitchen, took a Coke from the refrigerator, and poured it into a glass. Hesitating to go back into the living room, she sat at the small table. After a few moments, though, she went into the living room and switched on the television. She flipped through the three available channels but could find nothing that interested her. The emptiness of the apartment became oppressive. She felt more alone than she had even when her mother died. She thought about going uptown and walking around to look in the store windows for a while but decided not to. Taking the glass back to the kitchen, she went to the bedroom to make the bed. Afterwards she continued to busy herself by straightening things in the apartment. By the time Chuck knocked on the door, she had given over all thought of telling him she could no longer see him.

"Hey," he smiled as she opened the door, "how you doing?"

She smiled but didn't say anything and then stepped back for him to enter.

"Come here," he said as she closed the door. He put his arms around her waist and kissed her lightly. "Everything go O.K. today?"

She merely nodded.

"Say, you should've waked me up before you left."

"I—I didn't want to bother you. You were sleeping so peaceful."

"I sure was—till almost nine-thirty. But," he took his arms from around her waist and stretched as he walked to the center of the room, "I feel great—just great. You hungry?"

"Uh huh."

"So am I. Get your things—we'll go out and get something."

"No, I—I can—"

"Hey, now, wait a minute. We're going to get you out more, make you do things, enjoy yourself for a change, O.K.?"

"O.K." Dottie's eyes brightened as she looked at him. His presence seemed to

fill the room, the room that had been so utterly empty. She went into the bedroom to get her purse. "Ready," she said as she returned.

For the rest of the summer Dottie experienced happiness which she had never known to exist. They went to movies together, to an amusement park in Centerville, on picnics in the country. She cooked his food, washed his clothes, and she was ecstatic. At times she allowed herself to slip completely into the dream—an apartment in Knoxville next year while he finished college, then a home somewhere, children. But she remained aware that it was a dream. "This is enough," she would say to herself, "this is enough, more than I had a right to expect."

As the time approached for Chuck to leave, both of them avoided talking about it. He casually mentioned one day that he would be leaving in just about a week and then quickly changed the subject. Dottie didn't say anything. She dreaded the day as she had never dreaded anything before, but she knew that it was inevitable. When the day came, Dottie cooked breakfast for him. It was a Saturday, so she didn't have to worry about missing work although she would have if it were necessary. When breakfast was ready, she woke him, and he came into the kitchen and sat at the table. They ate mostly in silence. He seemed unable to find anything to say, and Dottie feared that if she tried to say very much she would cry. After they finished with the meal, he left to go put the remainder of his things in the car. He had packed most of the things the night before. Dottie immediately started washing the dishes. She tried to keep her mind blank, not to think at all. "It'll be a beautiful memory," she said one time half aloud. When Chuck got everything in the car, he came back to the apartment.

"All finished." he said as he came in.

"You turn your key in?"

"Yep. Everything's taken care of. Well, I—"

"You want another cup of coffee?"

"Ah, no. I'd better get on the road." He went to her and put his arms around her. "It's been a wonderful summer."

"It has for me."

He looked at her for a moment as if trying to decide what to say. Finally he spoke hesitantly. "Ah, Dottie, you understand, don't you? You, ah, understand why I, that is why I'm not--"

"I understand, Chuck. Don't say anymore."

"You're a wonderful girl, Dottie--the greatest--just remember that. You'll let me hear from you, won't you? Let me know if you're all right?"

"Yes, Chuck." Dottie knew, though, that neither of them would write.

Chuck pulled her closer and kissed her for a long time and then released her and walked quickly to the door. He opened the door and then turned back. "Be seeing you."

Dottie nodded and tried to smile. Chuck gave a little salute, then went out the door and closed it behind him. Dottie stood staring at the door for a moment and

then went quickly into the bedroom. She looked at the bed and gasped. She felt that she would never be able to sleep alone in the bed again. "He's mine!" she said in a near hysterical voice. "He's mine—he belongs to me. He's got no right to leave me!" She looked wildly about the room. She thought about running out of the house and into the street, yelling after him, making him stop, demanding that he take her with him. "I'll do it!" she almost shrieked. "I'll do it!" She lunged toward the door but stopped suddenly and clasped her hand over her mouth. "What am I doing?" she said. "What am I doing?" She went back into the bedroom and threw herself violently on the bed, giving vent to her emotion in loud, painful sobs.

She lay there for long time even after she had stopped crying. Finally she got up slowly and started toward the living room. At the door she paused and turned back to look at the bed. "It's enough," she said to herself. "It's enough—more than I had a right to expect." Then she turned deliberately and walked to the rocking chair. She sat down and leaned back. Staring into space as if at something in the far distance, she slowly began to rock to and fro. Quietly, almost inaudibly, she began humming an old hymn.

ARTICLES

In Search of Lanny Budd

Jeffrey Youdelman

I GREW up in a room filled with someone else's books. It was my room and my father's library. Everywhere I sat, they would face me—hundreds of books, Books-of-the-Month mostly, books of the 'Forties mainly. There were cloak and daggers, sword and scabbards, historical-romance adventures set in twenty centuries—F. Van Wyck Mason and Thomas Costain and Frank Yerby and Edison Marshal (*Yankee Pasha* was my father's favorite). There were best sellers galore: *The Robe, Keys of the Kingdom, Song of Bernadette, A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* and *Forever Amber.*

I never really read these although I learned how to browse right to the tepid parts of *Amber* (this some years before I fortunately found both *Peyton Place* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in the same trash can on Manhattan's Columbus Avenue—and more years before I would discover the book racks in the local drug store where I would make such even-handed selections as *Suburban High School* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* or *Summer Swap* and *Writers in Revolt).* I did become more familiarized with the history books, with the popular accounts of the War against Fascism and its aftermath, where the titles ranged from *My Three Years with Ike* to Edgar Snow's *Why Stalin Must Have Peace.*

Other books I ventured into more boldly and read. I particularly liked the biographies. I loved the story of *The American,* of John Peter Altgeld, the German immigrant boy with a harelip who became Governor of Illinois—who pardoned the railroaded Haymarket Anarchists and fell from his "high" place. So when my school anthology covered Vachel Lindsay, I alone knew the reference to

> Where is Altgeld brave as the truth
> Whose name the few still say with tears?

And I was of the few. It was a comforting notion. You didn't have to stay among the people. You could use your "position" to help their struggle, to take the

right side, to be fair and just. When the English teacher one day mentioned that his favorite book was *The American*, my head nodded coolly in assent. When we pursued the point after class, heaping general praise upon the book, he never suspected that my "American" was written by Howard Fast. And I didn't know until some years later that his was written by Henry James.

In 1962, when I was fifteen years old, my father died. Some months later, my older married brother and I split up some of the family books. He got Leo Huberman's *We the People* and Snow's *Patterns of Soviet Power*. I got to keep the eight volumes we had of Upton Sinclair's eleven volume "Lanny Budd" series—a novelized history of Europe from 1919 to the end of the Anti-Fascist War. My father had read the Lanny Budds what seemed like a dozen times. I could never find a pattern in his reading, but he clearly favored these the most. So they became an object of my curiosity. After his death, I began to read this bequest, and I read them pretty much 500-page volume after 500-page volume. This was the first elaborated view I had containing any "leftist" interpretation of history, particularly modern European history.

It was what the book reviewers call "panoramic history." Through Lanny, I first saw many of the "events" in history I would learn more about later. I kind of liked Lanny's character. He is the illegitimate son of Robbie Budd, European representative of Budd Gunmakers who understands the coming importance of aviation and eventually transforms his father's company into Budd-Erling Aviation. Lanny is suave and "cultured," and, in his mind, run all the bits of Romantic poetry Upton Sinclair can comfortably place there. When a friend of Lanny is in a Nazi dungeon, he is a Byronic prisoner of Chaillot:

> Endless spirit of the unchained mind
> Brightest in dungeons Liberty thou art.

I liked learning the poetry along with the stories and history.

Suave and "cultured," Lanny is also a "Pink." Sinclair seemed to suggest that this was someone interested in Socialism who is not a heavy revolutionary. Often he would use the word "social-democrat," but, at first, this had little meaning for me. To me, Lanny was a credible character for popular fiction. He wasn't a worker, but he had progressive sympathies.

Lanny grows up on the Riviera, and in the Delacroze Dancing School he meets a number of young people who are later to become important Nazis or fiery socialists. He operates out of his mother's chateau, Bienvenu, in Juan-les-Pins. His mother, Beauty, is now the widow of an avant-garde French painter who was killed during World War 1, and the adult Lanny makes his living as an art expert and art dealer.

Through his personal and family relationships, Lanny comes into contact with different classes, nations and world-views. His "Red Uncle," Beauty's brother Jessie Blackless, is a Marxist whom Lanny always visits in a small working class apartment in Paris and from whom Lanny first learns about

Socialism. Through his Red Uncle, Lanny meets other socialists such as Raoul Palma, with whom he sets up a worker's school on the Riviera, and the mysterious Monck, soon to inhabit the underground of workers' resistance against the rise of Fascism in Germany.

Some contacts come from the "other world," from the seances conducted by Madame Zyszynski, a Polish medium living with Beauty at Bienvenu. When Madame falls into her trance, one of her favorite "controls" is Basil Zaharoff, the "Munitions king of Europe" and a former associate of Robbie Budd. From the mouth of the dead Master of War, whom Lanny had first met at the Versailles Conference, comes the inside tipster info on the wheelings and dealings of the ruling classes of Europe. (I liked the psychic stuff so much I was soon off reading up on parapsychology. In the bibliographic corner of my mind, I stored the title of Sinclair's strange sounding book *Mental Radio.*)

On a more worldly level, Lanny soon swings into an active role in the struggle against Fascism in such volumes as *Dragon's Teeth* (1942) and *Wide Is the Gate* (1943). He goes to Spain to help the son of some liberal ruling-class friends in England, a son who's fighting on the side of the Republic. Inside Germany, Lanny comes to the aid of the Robbins family. The father is the Budd company's German-Jewish partner, and his children (naturally) are socialists. In both Spain and Germany, Lanny uses his father's connections and his art dealings to create a cover while using his Pink and Red contacts to help the victims of Fascism. Lanny helps sneak the Robbins family out of Germany and, with the help of Monck and his comrades, busts one of the Robbins' kids, tortured and soon to die, out of jail.

Another Robbins, Hansi, a famous violinist and Communist Party member, will soon marry Lanny's half-sister from America, Bess, also a famous musician. Thus each family will have capitalists, Pinks, and Reds in it. The couple, given the collective name HansiBess by Sinclair, are always arguing with Lanny about Popular Front politics. For Lanny, the Communists will always be sabotaging things. I never saw much wrong with HansiBess although it was obvious that Sinclair didn't like them.

As Lanny works with the resistance, he meets and falls in love with the artisan partisan Trudi Schultz who becomes his secret second wife (his first and ex-wife has re-married into England's pro-Nazi Clivedon set). Trudi is completely dedicated to the struggle, and she steals back into Germany one last fatal time—where she is captured and killed in Dachau. Lanny parleys all his contacts and secret agent maneuvers, getting into jails to look for her, but all to no avail.

Beginning with *Presidential Agent* (1944), Lanny gets to use the double edges of his life as an official secret agent, and Sinclair gets to introduce a real-life "hero." Lanny becomes Presidential Agent 103, reporting directly to FDR. Lanny always enters the White House through a special door, where he is let in by the faithful Negro retainer "Prettyman" to the bedroom of FDR, who is always in his blue and white striped "pongee pajamas" with a stack of bur-

dening documents at his bedside. FDR is ill, but he carries the burden of the world on his shoulders, on the shoulders of his pongee pajamas.

Lanny travels around Europe visiting all the contending social forces, who know Lanny in one guise or another—as either an old Pink and friend of the workers, a now apolitical Pink, or simply as the art dealer extraordinaire whose father is a big fighter-plane manufacturer doing business with the Nazis. In this last guise, Lanny gets buddy-buddy with the higher-up Nazis. He deals in paintings with Herman Goering, who has lined his mansion Karinhall with thousands of old and new masters pillaged in the wake of political and military conquest. Lanny's "You Are There" presence extends to all the major diplomatic events. He is Hitler's guest at Berchtesgarten when Prime Minister Chamberlain comes to appease over Czechoslovakia.

Lanny comes home every now and then to report to FDR, to whom he explains such things as Hitler's relationship to the capitalist class. Lanny is to the left of FDR, and he urges the President to speak out more strongly. FDR advises that the art of "practical politics" requires more caution, that he can only lay "one or two new ideas at a time" upon the backward masses. Once, in an offhand gesture, FDR asks Lanny to write him a little speech. Lanny goes off to one of his many homes around the world and knocks off an analogy between Fascism and illness. When a person has a deadly disease, Lanny writes, he is quarantined. And that is what we should do with the Fascists. Lanny thus writes Roosevelt's "Quarantine the Aggressors" speech.

After Pearl Harbor, P.A. 103 is all over the place: staying with Einstein in Princeton; sneaking atomic secrets out of Germany; fingering the Nazi's heavy water plant in Scandanavia; inside Vichy France; on the front lines in North Africa.

In *A World to Win* (1946)—the largest selling and most easy to find Lanny Budd—Lanny and his new third wife, Laurel Creston of an old stock missionary family, go on a Wendell-Willkie-like trip around the world. They travel to China, and, like Edgar Snow and Agnes Smedley, take the long trip to the caves of Yenan, the leading Red Base area of the revolutionary people and army. On the way there, Lanny remembers reading that "extraordinary story" he had found during his young Pink days while browsing through the Rand School worker's bookstore in France: Agnes Smedley's *Daughter of Earth*—an author and novel my father's library didn't contain. (It would be the early 1970s with the republication of *Daughter of Earth* by Feminist Press that I would first get to read her . . . and begin the junk-store trek for such lost volumes of her 'Forties reportage as *China Fights Back* and *Battle Hymn of China*, which opens with a great autobiographical sketch that compliments and amplifies *Daughter of Earth.)*

In Yenan, Lanny and Laurel meet Mao in his cave and answer questions about American politics. They decide the Chinese Communists aren't really Marxists; they're closer to "early American Utopian"—closer to Robert Owen's colony than to Lenin. (I wanted to find out more. Up on the top shelf was a copy of Theodore White's *Mountain Road*. I searched the index of this book

about wartime China but could find only a lonely and skimpy reference to Mao Tse Tung. As the luck of the draw would have it, my brother had gotten Snow's *Red Star over China*, containing an authentic earlier interview with Mao in Yenan. But I wouldn't come across this book for a few years until the period when it seemed like every single paperback I bought was published by Grove Press: William Burroughs, Hubert Selby, Malcolm X, Franz Fanon, LeRoi Jones, Evergreen Review, and Edgar Snow.)

After meeting Mao, Laurel, the old missionary, wonders what role the U.S. could play in the post-war world, a world marked by the growth of national liberation movements. Maybe a little more of the old colonial missionary routine would do. "Haven't we shown how to help a backward people in the Philippines?" she asks Lanny. To which the now grown-up Pink replies in his new found pluralism: "I will be a Red for Yenan and a Democratic Socialist for the United States."

Lanny gets to argue his developing views in tete-a-tete meetings with Stalin, to whom he finally gets to speak about all the edges of his double life—an unfolding only to be equaled when in a later volume Lanny unmasks at the Nürenberg trials to testify against Goering.

By the end of *Presidential Mission* (1947), Lanny surveys the state of the world (it is 1944 in the book) and prophesies his theory of three worlds: the socialist world, the capitalist world, and his democratic-Socialist world hopefully to be operating in Europe.

My father's collection of Lanny Budd had stopped with *Presidential Agent*—volume seven. And I stopped there too. It was about 1964. Now and then I would read more Sinclair, among them such books as *The Jungle*, of course, and *Oil*, in which Lanny is prefigured in the Pink Playboy whom Sinclair named Bunny Ross. The background Sinclair had given me in his version of this century's history had led me down a lot of paths—which I tracked, along with my then "avant-garde" literary interests, in the junk-book stores, the storage vaults of a history rarely mentioned in my formal schooling and kept out of paperback print by the publishing companies. Now and then I would see the three remaining volumes of Lanny Budd but would pass them up.

Whenever I was in a new paperback store, I would, out of habit and curiosity, always check the spot between Silone and Issac Singer where Sinclair lived. Usually, if anything, there was only *The Jungle*. When I was younger, the Pulitzer Prize winning *Dragon's Teeth* had been in paperback, but that had disappeared too. Around 1969, the entire Lanny Budd series came out in an inexpensive paperback edition, but it was rare to find a store with the complete set. The drug and cigar stores had the most. One day I saw a set in the rack of Mac's Smoke Shop, in Palo Alto, California, where they stood, all ten volumes, across from the porn books. We had all, including the porn books, come a long way from the era of *Suburban High School*.

Still I hesitated finding out what happened to Lanny or how Sinclair viewed the conclusion of the world-wide war against Fascism. My own world view—

nurtured by my own experience in the world around me, the experience of other people in our world, and my reading of the experiences of the masses of people in history—had developed to where I was no longer primed to be a Lanny-like Pink. I had, in fact, become a Red, something old Upton Sinclair would not approve of.

Finally the time came. 1975: in the Asthma Thrift Store on a burnt-out block of Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn, I saw the remaining volumes. I hesitated, but I took them home. And eventually read them.

In *One Clear Call* (1948), *O Shepherd Speak* (1949), and the delayed sequel, *The Return of Lanny Budd* (1953), Sinclair concludes Lanny's adventures during the war and outlines his stance on the post-war world—the stance of "liberal" anti-communism which so dominated the established cultural environment during my own childhood.

Lanny has become far less of a dilletante. He is now a professional spy, a key cog in the apparatus of "Wild Bill" Donovan's OSS—an agency soon to be called the C.I.A. He is no longer just helping people fight Fascism. He is now openly aiding U.S. Imperialism in its attempted re-arrangement of the post-war world—a world in revolution. For Lanny, the battleground is Europe where, with the war rushing to conclusion, imperialist activity has become the main aspect of the situation. When Lanny talks to Churchill, Churchill is shown as wanting to dust off the closeted dukes and kings and put them back on semi-feudal thrones carefully tied to the British Empire.

FDR pursues a double dealing policy. He sends Lanny into collapsing Italy, Germany, and still-occupied France to convince both the aristocracy and certain sections of the bourgeoisie to turn against the Nazi regime. In FDR's and Lanny's reasoning, they are the best possible U.S. allies because they know the Nazi end is near and yet fear turning over "their" nations to the "red rabble." Lanny also meets with the AFL-CIO officials stationed in Paris, and they talk up plans for driving Communists out of the European trade unions. Finally Lanny sees his old friends among the partisans of various nations. They ask whether the U.S. will accept a socialist Europe. Lanny always replies with the rubric of "free elections," adding that FDR, the liberal capitalist, opposed the "economic royalists" in the U.S. Therefore, he would be somewhat sympathetic to "Democratic Socialism."

Lanny even gets to lecture FDR on the virtues of social democracy, advising him that "you have to show these Congressmen that they have to choose between a parliamentary and democratic socialism and a violent and fanatical communism." Yet the biggest lecture is reserved for Josef Stalin. *In O Shepherd Speak,* in what was originally planned as the final scenes of the whole novel series, Lanny goes to see Stalin one last time—as a "life-long socialist" and as a representative of Truman, as a representative of Sinclair's now comfortable doubleness reconciled.

Lanny tells Stalin that the U.S. capitalists would like to start another war and that Lanny is opposed to capitalist war. That is why he and Laurel have started a radio show urging peace and disarmament. But Lanny and Truman are going

to have a hard time stopping the capitalists if the Soviet Union keeps being "provocative." To which Stalin replies. "There will be none from us, Mr. Budd." But Lanny continues lecturing Stalin to "carry out your warfare against capitalism by constructive methods." They argue well through the night (one learns in the Lanny Budds that Stalin always worked at night). From Stalin, Lanny then learns that his Red Uncle has died of pneumonia in Moscow and wonders if Jessie was killed for opposing the "dictator's policies." Returning to Washington, he assures Truman that "the words I spoke to him would have moved any true socialist."

In 1949, having written ten volumes in ten years, Sinclair conceived this ending: of social-democracy, at the service of capitalism, rarin' to lead the ideological charge at Marxism-Leninism.

I didn't close the book, for I lingered awhile in the cumulative index of the *World's End* series (the formal name of the Lanny Budds). I went down the columns of the twenty-six pages of some ideas, some places, some events, but mostly people's names (for Sinclair ultimately saw the public leaders, not the masses of people, as the makers of history), testing myself and recalling. All in all, it was a list worth knowing about, for here, in the boundaries of a novel series, were (to cite a few)

> Louis Adamic, Anarchists, the *Appeal to Reason*, General Bagdolio, Barcelona, Bernard Baruch, Lord Beaverbrook, Edward Benes, Ernest Bevin, William Blake, Leon Blum, Senator Borah, William Bullit, Neville Chamberlain, Winston Churchill, the Comintern, Father Coughlin, Ching-Ling, Chiang Kai Shek, Eugene Debs, Gestapo, Goebbels, Goering, Guernica, Hearst, Hess, Himmler, Hitler, Hoover, I.G. Farben, the International Brigade, Lenin, Jack London, Mao Tse Tung, Marx, Melville, Tom Mooney, the OSS, Robert Owen, Tom Paine, Pareto, Petain, Russia, Smedley, Spanish Civil War, Stalin, battle of Stalingrad, Lincoln Steffens, Syndicalism, Trotsky, Truman, Vanzetti, Wordsworth, and Zaharoff.

Finally, in 1977, fifteen years after taking down the first volume of my father's bequest, I felt I had to read the one I was putting off—the 1953 *Return of Lanny Budd* whose cover announced that

> as peace after World War II dissolves under the insidious pressures of the Cold War, Lanny Budd comes out of retirement to search out a post-war ring of Nazi counterfeiters and to do desperate battle with our enemies behind the Iron Curtain.

Here, in a world going Red, Lanny is a thick-skinned cold warrior, fulminating against Stalin on almost every page. The more cautious Laurel asks Lanny whether or not "we're letting ourselves get turned into redbaiters," and Lanny

replies that his present beliefs represent a slow but consistent development of his old ones.

Lanny intrigues around Europe working with Monck, the old Social-Democrat now a German operative for the C.I.A. In Berlin, during the "Airlift," Lanny under the alias "Herr Frölich" delivers propaganda broadcasts over Radio Berlin. Monck gives Lanny many of the writings of Lenin and Stalin to take to Truman to show him what the Communists are up to. Sensing the growing revolutionary storm center in the colonial world, Monck is particularly eager for Lanny to turn Truman onto Stalin's *Marxism and the National Question*. "In it," says Monck, "Stalin deals with any country of any importance, and he analyzes the conditions in that country; he has all the facts and he is clear and precise about what he is going to do."

Lanny had finally connected spiritually with Captain America—"Commie Fighter"—a comic book I had often wondered about but never read in my early comic book years. After many hair-raising escapades, Lanny reaches the end of his 6,000-page fictional journey and commits his crowning acts. There are some doubts and difficulties, to be sure, but Lanny does it all right. On the domestic homefront of the war against communism, Lanny works at removing the last Red taint on the Budd family. He connives with the now disenchanted Hansi (the collective monster HansiBess must be untied) to help the F.B.I. arrest Bess as an Atomic Spy—for which she is tried and convicted. Lanny then isolates Bess from the Party by planting rumors that she is an F.B.I. double agent and, in turn, convincing Bess that she is in danger from her comrades. "If you break with the Reds," Lanny further cajoles, "your Mom and Dad will be the happiest couple in Connecticut." Thus Lanny's and Sinclair's Pinkishness comes to its just about expected end.

Still my eye connects whenever I see any of the dozens of Sinclair titles, written over a seventy-year period, lying in the boxes at the used-book stores. Just the other day, in a mess of a store in downtown Brooklyn, I saw volume one of a two-volume edition of Sinclair's *Boston* (1928). I don't too often take out books from libraries. I like to stumble across them, come upon them in my travels, and pick up the ones which relate to some particular thread I'm tracking down. Sometimes the threads start to pull together. Although I liked the idea of just reading volume one (waiting some time for the rest), Sacco and Vanzetti was not then the most proximate thread. So I put it back down, hopefully to be picked up by someone who might get turned on to a world systematically eliminated or distorted in the institutions of education. Maybe one of Sinclair's old books will lead someone on to other threads, other connections (practical and theoretical), on to other old books, passed long out of print and buried in an all-too-quickly receding past.

Some things, however, I can't resist. So I think that if I would ever see a copy of Sinclair's *Mental Radio* or his version of how he screwed Eisenstein around the filming of *Que Viva Mexico*, I'd snatch it up. I already have an opinion without hearing the "other side." But I don't know the full story. And it's possible I might get "new ideas."

Reading Barthes

Reading Melville

Reading Barthes: M-D

Robert S. Levine

Prefatory Note: Roland Barthes' S/Z, *a book-length reading of Balzac's short story "Sarrasine" (the tragic tale of a young man's love for what turns out to be a female-impersonator), is a brilliant but troubling tour de force of exegesis. Attempting to demonstrate the limitations of standard readings of classic texts, Barthes breaks his reading of "Sarrasine" into 561 units, and centers his textual study on what he perceives as being the major "codes"[1] of the text. As one critic puts it, " For Barthes, there is no such thing as a pure context. All contexts come to man already coded, shaped, and organized by language, and often shaped in patently silly ways."[2] Classic texts, according to Barthes, do not contain one absolute meaning: as one pierces through man's artificial codes one discovers a plurality of meanings, a pluralism seemingly generated by the principle of eternal antithesis, what Barthes terms "S/Z."[3] But in deciphering the fiction of codes, in de-mythicizing the classic text, is not Barthes creating a*

counter-myth of plurality and antithesis? Perhaps a richer classic text, Melville's Moby-Dick, *would be capable of addressing the questions raised by* S/Z's *probing of "Sarrasine." The following paper, then is an experiment in literary confrontation:* S/Z *shall be allowed to "read"* Moby-Dick, *whereupon, in Part II, the literary text shall reciprocate the favor. To facilitate the experiment, I shall attempt to submerge my own voice within the terse and playful voice of* S/Z. *Further, so as to permit the argument to flow with a minimum of impediments, most of the critical concepts discussed in* S/Z *shall not be defined within the paper, although annotation, when considered necessary for comprehension, shall be provided in the footnotes.*

Part I. Enigma and Antithesis: The Plurality of the Text

1. *The Whale as Book—The Book as Whale:* Ishmael joins the crew of the *Pequod* and he voyages off to pursue a whale. A whale? It is Moby Dick, the most malignant and elusive Sperm Whale in the wide blue sea. The voyage has a heroic, almost epic character to it, so much so that without some sort of narrative control, some sort of rigorous effort towards obtaining objectivity, the reader would necessarily remain stranded at the harbor, a mere observer of a mad, fruitless pursuit. So Ishmael steps back, affects a breakage of the proairetic movement,[4] and tells us about whales: "First: According to magnitude I divide the whales into three primary BOOKS (subdivisible into CHAPTERS) . . . ."[5] The whale, it seems, is a book. Book I, Chapter I, the narrator asserts, represents the Sperm Whale. This pursuit, then, is not merely of a whale; we are pursuing an elusive and malignant plural text.[6] "Already we are boldly launched upon the deep; but soon we shall be lost in its unshored, harborless immensities" (p. 116). The "deep" is language. The text, *Moby-Dick*, is open, plural, "unshored, harborless." Melville is calling to us, daring us, to plunge into a plurality where "we shall be lost." He has rejected the closed codes of the readerly,[7] and in doing so has made the experience of reading as demanding a task, spiritually, mentally, as anything we shall ever do. Melville knows this, and he taunts us: "There are those this day among them, who, though intelligent and courageous enough in offering battle to the Greenland or Right Whale, would perhaps—either from professional inexperience, or incompetency, or timidity, decline a contest with the Sperm Whale . . ." (p. 157). The whale is the plural text. To plunge into the welter of plurality is to pursue a Sperm Whale.

Motivated by our experiences with the classic text, we turn to the opening page. We find an etymology for the word *whale*. Immediately following are "extracts," passages about whales from a wide range of sources. A referential code[8] reminds us that extracts traditionally are placed at the front of Bibles. We

have a book, then, that is striving to be a Bible: a storehouse of language and myth, a cultural root. But let us look at the etymology. We have *whale*, then the French *Baleine*, the Spanish *Ballena*, and then the Fegeean *Pekee-Nuee-Nuee*. We sense a cultural diffusion here, a movement toward moral and cultural relativism. We need a narrator who can stand at a moral and cultural distance, who can look dispassionately at man's activity. And we have one.

2. *The Amoral Narrator:* " Better sleep with a sober cannibal than a drunken Christian" (p. 31), Ishmael tells us early on. The sentence sets into a parallel relation physical states (sobriety-drunkenness) with theological, cultural orientations (cannibalism-Christianity). Suggesting that drunkenness and sobriety are as freely interchangeable, or variable, as Christianity and cannibalism is extraordinarily subversive. And of course, in an amoral world, which is the world of the *Pequod*, of landlessness, we can only note the aptness of such a comic leveling. But this is a protean narrator in control here, and after working a plethora of subversive effects, after ridiculing the very basis of Christianity (we learn it is a religion of surface appearances), Ishmael disappears and leaves us with a text that continually posits antithetical possibilities while absolving itself of the responsibility to give competent moral guidance. Let us watch him disappear: "I, Ishmael, was one of that crew; my shouts had gone up with the rest; my oath had been welded with theirs . . . . A wild, mystical, sympathetical feeling was in me; Ahab's quenchless feud seemed mine. With greedy ears I learned the history of that murderous monster against whom I and all the others had taken our oaths of violence and revenge" (p. 155). Now and then Ishmael resurfaces, most notably when he pursues his first whale; but for all intents and purposes, from this moment, until the Epilogue, he is gone. He has aligned himself somewhat with Ahab, and this alignment will endow the narrative with a daemonic, metaphysical tone, but he has also promised to learn the "history of that murderous monster," and what he learns is that a Sperm Whale is also a sack of guts, a bunch of bones, and a repository of valuable sperm. "With greedy ears" he also discovers that Ahab is mad (or is he?), he learns that the crew's pursuit will almost certainly lead to the death of all concerned, and he realizes that even if they do survive they will be penniless. In effect what he learns is that Ahab has created a universe of absolutes (by virtue of his infectious monomania), in which an antithetical notion of equal force exists for every posited notion. So where does this leave the reader? How does one judge Ahab? We turn to the narrator and find that he has departed. He has left us with a text which posits alternatives, but which lacks answers and direction. This is, to be sure, irresponsibility, and yet it is an irresponsibility which breeds plurality. Plurality is a positive attribute of a text. so we relent in our quest for definitive answers. We are grateful to this narrator.

"The more indeterminate the origin of the statement, the more plural the text."[9] Indeterminancy is not only to be protean, or invisible; it is a sensibility

as well. Consider Ishmael on the metaphysics of water: "Let the most absent-minded of men be plunged in his deepest reveries—stand that man on his legs, set his feet a-going, and he will infallibly lead you to water, if water there be in all that region. Should you ever be athirst in the great American desert, try this experiment, if your caravan happen to be supplied with a metaphysical professor. Yes, as every one knows, meditation and water are wedded for ever" (p. 13). He is laughing at himself and his text. He recognizes the limitations of pursuit, be it for whale, language, or meaning, but it does not bother him. This is his tragi-comic vision: a conceptualization that at once suggests and undercuts, but never ceases suggesting. Our narrator, whether visible or invisible, is the American Sisyphus.

Let us further consider Ishmael's disappearance. We have seen how it leads to a breakdown in morality; it is time we consider the breakdown of the classic readerly codes. Ishmael has set into motion the hermeneutic and proairetic codes,[10] and then he vanishes into the text. We read on and find that while the proairetic code moves toward closure (as the *Pequod* moves toward Moby Dick), the hermeneutic code remains wide open. Enigma is maintained. Thus, the hermeneutic and proairetic codes are freed from their classic readerly qualities. We approach the writerly.[11]

3. *Writerly Aspects of the Hermeneutic and Proairetic Codes:* "All the enigmas are now disclosed, the vast hermeneutic sentence is closed."[12] This is what has transpired by the end of the readerly text. Everything has held together; the enigmas have been "distinguished, suggested, formulated, held in suspense, and finally disclosed."[13] Governing such closure is the proairetic code, in which sequences of action suggest and depend upon logic in human behavior. By "logic" is meant not only our subjective vision of logic, which is, of course, a mythology (a door is opened, that door will be closed), but also a series of actions which conforms to the objectivity of physical law (a ball is thrown up into the air, it will fall back down). But how objective, or real, is such a physics? In the readerly text counterthrust is "natural" for all actions, so natural that we seldom bother to note its unnaturalness; further, a lack of final resolution would seem immoral. So what do we make of the fact that the central enigma of our text, the whale in *Moby-Dick*, remains an enigma? Ishmael poses the enigma when he informs us of his motives for going out to sea: "Chief among these motives was the overwhelming idea of the great whale himself. Such a portentous and mysterious monster roused all my curiosity" (p. 16). And closely following this declaration we come to an artistic rendering of the enigma itself. Ishmael arrives at a tavern, finds a picture hanging on the wall, gazes, and muses: "But at last all these fancies yielded to that one portentous something in the picture's midst. *That* once found out, and all the rest were plain" (p. 20). But having begun the vast hermeneutic sentence, Ishmael soon steps aside, and no one comes forward to complete the sentence.

Just how open the text is can be seen by a cursory look at the place of prophecy in *Moby-Dick*, for we find that certain questions raised by the

prophets' seeming accuracy are never resolved. The most disturbing prophet is Fedallah because he makes the most accurate predictions, and because the language describing him is the most enigmatical and mystical in the text. He tells Ahab that the ship could not capsize if the heads of both a Right Whale and a Sperm Whale are mounted on the bow. Thus, Ahab has his men kill a Right Whale (they already had a Sperm Whale) for the sole purpose of fulfilling the terms of Fedallah's prediction. But when Tashtego taps the Sperm Whale's head for oil he falls into it, and his rescue by Queequeg necessitates that the head be lost. This is an ominous sign, and the destruction of the ship, within the supernatural world posited by the text, seems related to this event. Fedallah's most impressive prophecy is his vision of the hearses. He informs Ahab: "But I said, old man, that ere thou couldst die on this voyage, two hearses must verily be seen by thee on the sea; the first not made by mortal hands; and the visible wood of the last one must be grown in America" (p. 410). Fedallah places two conditions on Ahab's death, one grounded in the solid world, the other in a metaphysical universe. Just before Ahab dies he sees Fedallah's corpse tied around the back of Moby Dick, and he thinks that this must be the first hearse. The second hearse, he soon decides, is the wood of the *Pequod*. Ahab's interpretation of Fedallah's prophecy imposes mystical forces on an objective action: whale smashes apart ship. Hence we find that interpretation is inextricably linked to prophecy: what happens to Ahab is in large part psychodramatic.

This notion that prophecy requires good interpreters anchors the text within its realistic framework, but that residual hint that prophecy is a legitimate phenomenon in a supernatural world subverts the text's readerly hermeneutic and proairetic codes, endowing the book with a measure of plurality. The deliberate aim of the book is to keep the metaphysical, daemonic side of experience open as a possibility, while also suggesting that there is a realistic framework through which we can understand the mysterious. Through the prophet Fedallah, though, we move to the very edge of the supernatural. For example, we have this description in the chapter entitled "The Symphony": "Ahab crossed the deck to gaze over on the other side; but started at two reflected, fixed eyes in the water there. Fedallah was motionlessly leaning over the same rail" (p. 445). The narrator relates what has occurred, but has refrained from judging or interpreting. Throughout the text it has been suggested by a variety of images, and characters, that Fedallah is the devil. Devils do not have reflections. Four eyes are peering into the water, but there are only two reflected. Have they merged? Or is Fedallah in fact the incarnation of Satan, guiding the ship to a certain destruction? When four eyes look into water and only two are reflected, is there not a breakdown in the proairetic code? Ishmael informs us: "that hair-turbaned Fedallah remained a muffled mystery to the last" (p. 199). As does the whale. The subordinate hermeneutic sentence—the enigma of prophecy—remains as open as the vast hermeneutic sentence—the enigma of the whale. The enigmas exist within the larger superstructure, the text, which gives life and substance to antithetical

possibilities. The metaphorical slash mark separating the antithetical elements S and Z is indeed quite rigid, though the openness of the proairetic and hermeneutic codes endows the slash with a certain permeability and suggests the tenuousness of the very conception of S/Z.

4. *S/Z*?: "The antithesis is the battle between two plenitudes set ritually face to face like two fully armed warriors; the Antithesis is the figure of the *given* opposition, eternal, eternally recurrent: the figure of the inexpiable."[14] Antithesis then is essentially a symbolic code expanding into the infinite. We see this occurring in the text, for example, in the sentence describing an uncivilized Black at work carrying a white mercenary: "On his broad back, flaxen-haired Flask seemed a snow-flake" (p. 191), a sentence which sets up an antithesis of black/white, dark/light. Gaining its connotative dimension (uncivilized/civilized) from preceding symbolic structures, the image enlarges to take on ultimate symbolic resonances. Thus it is an image, finally, of evil/good, as the original referents, Daggoo and Flask, dissolve to leave us pure essence. And this imagistic conception of antithesis amounts to a structuring principle: we find virtually all elements of the text operating within the S/Z paradigm. In terms of characterization, throughout the book we find numerous paired characters embodying antithetical qualities. We have the first mate, Starbuck, a man profoundly worried by death, a good man who recognized the suicidal aspect of the guest. The second mate, Stubb, is described like this: he "converted the jaws of death into an easy chair" (p. 105). Observing their antithetical characteristics, Ahab comments: "Starbuck is Stubb reversed, and Stubb is Starbuck; and ye two are all mankind; and Ahab stands alone among the millions of the peopled earth . . . " (p. 452). By taking note of their polar attributes, Ahab thinks he can equate the two characters ("Stubb is Starbuck"), but he is misperceiving because at best he can transpose the configuration of the antithesis to Z/S. At the heart of his misperception, and indicative of his vanity and pride, is his assertion that he "stands alone" outside of the scheme of antithesis. Clearly Pip, the mad fool, stands at an antithetical relation to Ahab: Ahab is a demented myth-maker; Pip is an insane demythicizer.

What sets Ahab apart is that he himself, in his person, embodies the prime antithesis of the text's symbolic code. Life/death, good/evil, are initially given coterminal existence with Ahab's being. Symbolic of this is a scar from a lightning bolt which divides Ahab straight down the middle and irrevocably restricts the antithetical elements from integrating. So Ahab must choose. What are his choices? The narrator gives us a provocative description of Ahab, the man who lost one leg to the white whale, in the act of walking: "While his one live leg made lively echoes along the deck, every stroke of his dead limb sounded like a coffin-tap. On life and death this old man walked" (p. 200). We also have Peleg's account of Ahab: "He's a grand, ungodly, god-like man . . . " (p. 76). In the first half of the book, dark, satanic descriptions of Ahab are balanced by heavenly, Christic images. And the totality of those moments when

he stalks damnation is balanced by the famous passage in "The Symphony," when "From beneath his slouched hat Ahab dropped a tear into the sea . . . " (p. 443). But Ahab vengefully seeks to destroy his (and the universe's) "light" half. He chooses darkness, and in so doing creates the darkness and asserts the impermeability of his own slash. His pursuit inevitably fails; he drowns in /Z.

The pursuit itself is conceived from antithetical perspectives. The crew is pursuing, at once, meaning and blankness, the whale as the overriding potent symbol (of what?), and as a sack of guts. On one side of the slash we have meaning: on the other we have emptiness. Whaling is either a metaphysical pursuit, as it is on the *Pequod*, or good buiness, as it is on *The Delight*, a whaling boat filled to the brim with sperm oil. Extending the slash to the process of reading *Moby-Dick*, through the whale-book equation offered in "Cetology," we find the same sort of antithesis at work, and we necessarily conclude that all which we gain from reading, all which we apprehend through language, can only emerge from the slash (/): "it is the slash of censure, the surface of the mirror, the wall of hallucination, the verge of antithesis, the abstraction of limit, the obliquity of the signifier, the index of the paradigm, hence of meaning."[15] But does meaning truly reside in the metaphorical slash? Does it not exist in the very act of positing a paradigm, be it S/Z, M D, or M-D? Is not the slash, and thus the S/Z paradigm, a thoroughly subjective interpretation of nature that attempts to pass for nature itself? Has not Barthes insidiously created a myth of plurality when he suggests that S/Z somehow represents an infinite nature, that it somehow exists in nature?

It is time to decipher the myth of antithesis and see it for what it is: interpretation. Further, it is time we reassess the negative value we place on subjectivity. To discover what is truely natural we must temporarily take leave of S/Z: we must leave the world of infinity and sink into the world of M D.

Part II. The Blankness Abounding to the Chief of De-mythicizers

1. *The Doubloon: Plurality as Madness:* Chapter 99, "The Doubloon," can be seen as the central chapter of the text. It is about interpretation, the rise of myth, and the dangers inherent in de-mythicizing. We first meet the doubloon, and Ahab the myth-maker, earlier in the text. The captain calls the men into assembly and shows them the doubloon: "Look ye! d'ye see this Spanish ounce of gold? . . . it is a sixteen dollar piece men,—a doubloon" (p. 142). It is first an ounce of gold; then it takes on socio-economic significance, becoming sixteen dollars. When Ahab nails it to the main-mast he endows it with a new meaning: ". . . . whosoever of ye raises me that same white whale, he shall have this gold ounce, my boys!" (p. 142). So now the doubloon, originally signifying sixteen dollars, is connected to a task: it is a reward for work. And as the men's attitudes toward the work changes, so does their reading of the doubloon.

"The Doubloon" chapter occurs much later in fictive time, after the ship's crew has realized the nature of Ahab's monomaniacal quest and been infected by it. Each central character, except, of course, Ishmael, returns to the

doubloon and one by one examines it and soliloquizes. Ahab is the first to look. He comments: "The firm tower, that is Ahab; the volcano, that is Ahab; the courageous, the undaunted, and victorious fowl, that, too, is Ahab; all are Ahab; and this round gold is but the image of the rounder globe, which, like a magician's glass, to each and every man in turn but mirrors back his own mysterious self" (p. 359). The Spanish ounce of gold has become the receptacle and reflector of Ahab's inner consciousness. It can mean what he wants it to mean. Starbuck is the next to look, and he takes note of its connection to Ahab's dark self: "No fairy fingers can have pressed the gold, but devil's claws must have left their mouldings . . . " (p. 360). Flask, the mercenary, comments: "I see nothing here, but a round thing made of gold, and whoever raises a certain whale, this round thing belongs to him" (p. 361). Pip, the final viewer, a Black from Mississippi who lost his mind—"So man's insanity is heaven's sense" (p. 347)—when abandoned at sea, and who has since become a sort of Shakespearean fool, states: "I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look" (p. 362). He repeats this two more times. By applying to his act of perception the seeming objectivity provided by the grammatical construct, he explodes the myth of the doubloon, reducing the act of interpretation to its bare reality: "I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look." The doubloon does not *mean* without interpreters; meaning arises from the act of interpretation. Pip subsequently applies this knowlege to Ahab, and unable to perceive him as anything but a physical specimen, he reduces Ahab to the pitiful reality of his anatomical make-up: "There he stands; two bones stuck to a pair of old trousers, and two more poked into the sleeves of an old jacket" (p. 362).

It is important to note that Pip is not a dispassionate truth-sayer; he's mad; the plurality of the interpretations has sent his head into confusion. He thus negates pluralistic "readings" by stripping objects of interpreted meaning, and returns to "nature." And what does he find beyond subjectivity? Nothing, M D; objects disappear, leaving but a blankness.

2. *The Whiteness of the Whale: M D:* The act of de-mythicizing, whether done by a literary critic or a madman, can often produce frightening results. Once we have cut through the levels of a symbol, exposing them for what they are, culture-bound interpretive ascriptions, do we discover a meaningful essence, or are we not left with an emptiness, an object devoid of connotative being? When we de-mythicize do we not find that a return to "nature" is hardly a return to the abundance of antithetical plenitudes?

The whale, is white, we are reminded once again in Chapter 42, a blank. It is characterized by "a peculiar snow-white wrinkled forehead, and a high, pyramidical white hump" (p. 159). When the whale has a subjective reality, imposed by Ahab, Starbuck, Bildad, even Flask, Ishmael can then do his disappearing act and let the pursuit go on. But when de-mythicized, its very lack of essential meaning suddenly revealed, Ishmael is horrified: "It was the whiteness of the whale that above all things appalled me" (p. 163). It is a vision

of utter nothingness, of matter stripped to bare matter, of the related pursuit transformed into empty dance. It conveys a horrifying insight into the nature of language: language simply represents an empty material world. Moby Dick become M D: a solemn dirge: em dee: empty.

We have reached a numbing abyss, an inevitable terrifying point Melville has brought us to experience in our pursuit of the Sperm Whale. But the text, *Moby-Dick*, does not leave us mired in the void. We return to reconsider that blankness: "whiteness is not so much a color as the visible absence of color and at the same time the concrete of all colors; is it for these reasons that there is such a dumb blankness, full of meaning . . . ?" (p. 169). "A dumb blankness, full of meaning?" It is the critical paradox of the text, a final challenge to the intrepid seeker of the Sperm Whale. We have constructed a myth, and then deconstructed it. We have endowed a doubloon and whale with meaning, and then stripped them of that meaning. But in the process we have learned that myth-making *is* a process, an interpretive process, the triumph of subjectivity. "A dumb blankness, full of meaning?" It is a paradox, and *the* natural antithesis: blankness/meaning; an antithesis that exists only by virtue of the transforming capacity of human subjectivity. That imposition of consciousness on a blankness is the epic achievement of the Sperm Whale hunter. And he who can embrace the pursuit in its totality, in its recurring movements from blankness to meaning to blankness to meaning, and can communicate this process in a pluralistic whole, in a white text with "a dumb blankness, full of meaning," who can ultimately give to the reader a consciousness of the centrality of interpretation, and thus a consciousness of interpretive consciousness, is the artist. Art is the horizontal slash; the slash is art. We have the text: M-D.

3. *M-D and the Artistic Consciousness:* Ahab is not an artist. The very idea that his interpretation of experience is only interpretation, but a subjective imposition on reality, would, and does, drive him to hysteria. But he is a hero, an epic hero, because the pursuit is his creation. The blankness is Christianity as it took form in nineteenth-century America. *Moby-Dick* stands in an adversarial relation to a prevailing consciousness that could not perceive, for example, the limitations of evangelical Protestantism, the audacity of millennialist expectations, the implications of naive nationalism. Ahab's "madness" liberates him from culture-bound assumptions, from "land," to take him to a world of moral absolutes, a world that is ahistorical and individually defined. But what does it mean to leave the land? It is simply this: it is to perceive the unnaturalness of that which is regarded as natural, and consequently to de-mythicize and reinterpret. Ishmael goes through such a process in the opening sections of the text; he does it by recognizing the relativity of morality and of adhered-to values, and this recognition is achieved, in the case of Ishmael, through a consideration of the similarities and differences between the cannibal (Queequeg) and your average Christian. The third mate, Flask, never leaves the land, yet he is on the boat: throughout the voyage he can only view the pursuit in terms of his land-conceived vision of

money. Ahab leaves the land, Ishmael leaves the land, the implied author leaves the land, Starbuck and Stubb leave the land; Queequeg does not. We do not see every character as he "leaves land," but we know who they are. They are those characters who confront the stark ontological and epistemological questions which inevitably emerge from large-scale reorientation. They are those characters attempting to salvage meaning, but who are tragically bound to the interpretation imposed by Ahab's will.

Ahab has rejected Christianity and reinterpreted phenomena. But he loses perspective of the interpretive process and accepts his unbalanced, monomaniacal interpretation as nature, as the only reality. As he sees it, the whale is a typological aspect of God; God has made man inferior, mortal, limited; God has chopped off Ahab's leg because he was prideful; thus, Ahab, like Satan is motivated by two primary concerns: revenge and hate. "He piled upon the whale's white hump the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by the whole race from Adam down . . . " (p. 160). He cannot perceive antithetical, or mitigated, possibilities. He believes his view of the world is the one correct vision, and as a result he creates a world of absolute fate. In Ahab's world there is no turning back and no direction. He destroys his compass, he smashes his quadrant, he relinquishes the ship of its lightning rod. He becomes swallowed by his world because he loses sight of the role he played in creating it: for Ahab the world must abound in meaning outside the self. He repudiates the notion of multivalence, and the plural text reveals to us that this is a form of self-destruction.

So who has preserved the multivalence? It can only be the implied conciousness of the author, that consciousness which has endowed the text with a superstructure, that has taken us from the world of M D, by virtue of the horizontal slash, the harpoon of the artist, to give us M-D. *Moby-Dick* is the title of the text; the hyphen never appears in the body of the work; the whale is always "Moby Dick." Why the hyphen on the title page? We may simply posit: it is the hyphen that abhors a vacuum and insists upon the necessity for interpretation; it is an eternal challenge to renounce the totality of emptiness for the tenuousness of meaning. It is the author's acknowledgment of his imposition of interpretive consciousness, and of the directing properties of art. Art becomes the quadrant, the compass, the lightning rod that Ahab has rejected. Art is meaningful direction: it takes us to a confrontation with the blankness of nature and tells us that reconstituted myth, interpretation, is the only reality man will ever know. It exposes the anti-bourgeois Marxist myth of the possibility of "a reconciliation between reality and men, between description and explanation, between object and knowlege."[16] It challenges us to experience; it asserts that neutrality is immoral. It shows us that the conceptualization of a universe of S/Z is a subjective vision, one possible way of viewing and understanding the universe, but that its reality is only mythic, in a positive sense. It suggests the interchangeability of the slash with the hyphen: S-Z, the yoking together and permeability of antithetical elements become a real possibility. And we

recognize the value of the hyphen when Ishmael returns to the text and reveals to us the effects of interpreting nature in absolute terms.

4. *A Pensive Nullity: The Return of Ishmael:* "The Chase," the final chapter, concludes with a bleak image of the result of Ahab's dispute with God. A bird becomes entangled in the folds of the sinking ship, and we have this description: "the bird of heaven, with archangelic shrieks, and his imperial beak thrust upwards, and his whole captive form folded in the flag of Ahab, went down with his ship, which, like Satan, would not sink to hell till she had dragged a living part of heaven along with her . . . " (p. 469). Who is speaking here? Who has come up with this reading of experience? Are we to assume that the text has approached the writerly because it keeps "the question *Who is speaking?* from ever being answered?"[17] Or can we take the opposite stance, and see this passage as a reflection of the author's failure to keep his distance, in that the final assessment seems to be that of Herman Melville? And if we accept this second reading, would we not then further argue that an imposition of such an interpretation by an implied narrator negates the pluralistic elements of the text we so admire? Certainly we begin to answer these questions if we consider the meaning of Ishmael's return in the Epilogue.

Moby Dick has torn the ship apart. The entire crew drowns, except for Ishmael, who survives clinging to the liferaft, which is, ironically, the coffin originally built by Queequeg. And then a ship comes to the rescue: "*It was the devious-cruising Rachel, that in her retracing search after her missing children, only found another orphan*" (p. 470). This is a stunning conclusion. It reveals that Ishmael has made a commitment to Ahab's world view. It reveals that he has undergone a transforming psychic experience and, as a result, now feels disconnected from heaven: Ahab has killed the Christian God by redefining Him in all His horror, thereby leaving humanity "orphaned." Further, we note a remarkable correlation between the image in the final paragraph of "The Chase" and the sentiment expressed by Ishmael at his return. Ishmael, it seems, has never disappeared; he has been with us all along. He is that part of the author's consciousness which relinquishes itself of its artistic responsibilities and commits itself to the experience of the text. He is that portion of our consciousness which has gone down in the ship and been irrevocably altered by the experience of the text. The text encourages and moves us to experience, but the hyphen is there to remind us that it is art, that the pursuit takes place in a fictive world, and that no final meaning can be imposed on the journey. It reminds us that lurking behind meaning is the natural: a nothingness, a maddening whiteness. The hyphen is predicated by the whiteness. It is a way of going on; it is a strategy for survival.

Notes

[1] Codes "are so many fragments of something that has always been *already* read, seen, done, experienced; the code is the wake of that *already*." Roland Barthes, S/Z (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), p. 19. The French edition of *S/Z* appeared in 1970.

[2] Robert Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature: An Introduction* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1974), p. 150. Scholes serves as an excellent introduction to structuralist poetics.

[3] "S and Z are in a relation of graphological inversion: the same letter seen from the other side of the mirror." Barthes, p. 107. Barthes' reflections on S/Z are prompted by his meditation on why Balzac should choose to spell his character's name "Sarrasine," when "French onomastics would lead us to expect *SarraZine*." Barthes, p. 106.

[4] Sequences of action implying logic in human behavior and activity; those sequences governing the reader's construction of plot. Barthes, p. 19.

[5] Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, ed. Harrison Hayford and Hershel Parker (New York: Norton, 1967), p. 120. Further citations in parentheses are to this edition.

[6] The "ideal text . . . has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances . . . the codes it mobilizes extend *as far as the eye can reach* . . . the systems of meaning can take over this absolutely plural text, but their number is never closed, based as it is on the infinity of language." Barthes, pp. 5-6.

[7] The classic text which ends, fills, joins and unifies. "They are products (and not productions), they made up the enormous mass of our literature." Barthes, p. 5.

[8] Cultural codes, which "merely indicate the type of knowledge . . . referred to, without going so far as to construct (or reconstruct) the culture they express." Barthes, p. 20.

[9] Barthes, p. 41.

[10] While the proairetic code sets up the plan of action, the hermeneutic code, by snaring and equivocating, distinguishes, suggests, formulates and holds in suspense the enigma of the text. See Barthes, p. 19.

[11] "The writerly text is a perpetual present, upon which no *consequent* language . . . can be superimposed; the writerly text is *ourselves writing*, before the infinite play of the world (the world as function) is traversed, intersected, stopped, plasticized by some singular system (Ideology, Genus, Criticism) which reduces the plurality of entrances, the opening of networks, the infinity of languages." Barthes, p. 5.

[12] Barthes, p. 209.

[13] Barthes, p. 19.

[14] Barthes, p. 27.

[15] Barthes, p. 107.

[16] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), p. 159.

[17] Roland Barthes, S/Z, p. 140.

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