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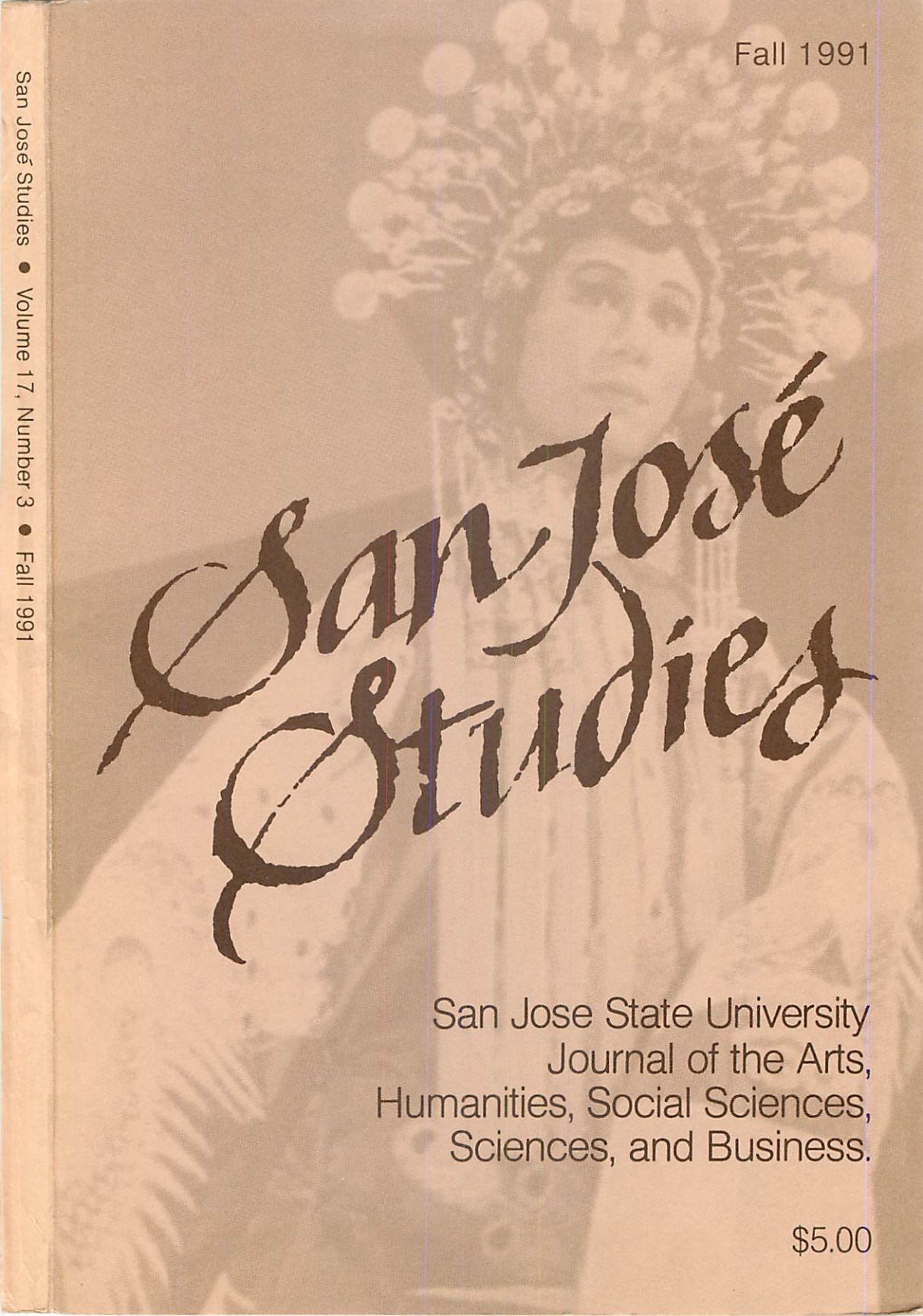

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ARTICLES

Cover: M. Butterfly

FICTION

ART

POETRY

Metamorphosis of a Butterfly

David Mesher

DAVID Henry Hwang's 1988 Tony-award winning play, *M. Butterfly,* is more than a cross-cultural, star-crossed, cross-dressed combination of the Puccini opera and a contemporary event; it is also the latest variation on a 19th century theme that has appeared in French, English, and Italian as novel, story, play, and opera. Hwang has said that he began work on his "deconstructionist *Madame Butterfly*" despite the fact that he "didn't even know the plot of the opera." Indeed, he "knew Butterfly only as a cultural stereotype" of the submissive Asian woman, "pining away for a cruel Caucasian man"—a presumption confirmed for him by listening to a record of the opera, in which Hwang reports finding "a wealth of sexist and racist cliches." (Hwang, p. 95)

That Hwang found what he went looking for may tell us more about modern perceptions than Puccini's opera. Though rarely challenged, his assessment blurs important historical distinctions—most notably that the opera recounts what happens when a Japanese geisha, conditioned to gender-based exploitation and repression by her traditional culture, is irresponsibly exposed to relatively enlightened Western attitudes toward women. Had Hwang reviewed the full course of the Butterfly tradition, he would have discovered that its American and European authors, at worst, had merely acquiesced in the institutionalized denigration of women practiced by Japanese society at that time and, at best, implicitly opposed it. Such a review might also have had an effect on Hwang's charge of racism since, compared to its antecedents, Puccini's opera greatly reduces (though it does not eliminate) the level of anti-Japanese bias. Indeed, seen as the end-product of the Butterfly tradition, Hwang's *M. Butterfly* represents less an ironic reversal than a natural evolution. Transformed by his late 20th century sensibilities, Hwang's Butterfly drama of accidental and occidental sexual orientation has more in common with earlier versions than might be expected.

Original Source

The original source of this intertextual tale may be not a butterfly, but a flower. *Madame Chrysanthème* (1887), one of a series of exotic romances by Pierre Loti, the pseudonym of French naval officer Julien Viaud, "set the fashion for the use of Japanese subjects in Western literature and opera." (Carner, p. 379) The popularity of *Madame Chrysanthème* in the United States, published at the height of an Orientalist rage in Europe and America that was prompted as much by Western economic and territorial colonization of the Far East as by any cultural appreciation, was sufficient to assure it a place, as late as 1920, among the first hundred volumes reprinted in the Modern Library series. In the novel, Loti's unnamed narrator arrives in Japan with a single plan in mind: "led on by ennui and solitude" aboard ship (Loti, p. viii), he resolves he will "at once marry . . . a little yellow-skinned woman with black hair and cat's eyes. She must be pretty. Not much bigger than a doll." (p. vii) After landing at Nagasaki, the narrator employs the oddly-named intermediary, M. Kangourou; and in a matter of days he is married to Chrysanthème, "about eighteen years of age," who, we are told, looked as though she had "almost an expression, almost a thought." (p. 39) This suggestion of intelligence in his bride is both an attraction and a surprise to the narrator, who is "almost persuaded that she—this one—thinks." (p. 42) But whether she is "a woman or a doll . . . time will show." (p. 43) Though he originally chooses Chrysanthème over Mlle. Jasmin because the latter is so lacking in individual expression that it seems he has seen her "on every fan, on every tea-cup" (p. 36), his enjoyment soon wears thin:

> What thoughts can be running through that little brain? My knowledge of her language is still too restricted to enable me to find out. Moreover, it is a hundred to one that she has no thoughts whatever. And even if she had, what do I care?
>
> I have chosen her to amuse me, and I would really rather she should have one of those insignificant little thoughtless faces like all the others.
>
> (pp. 48–9)

The narrator has chosen a human being, when he wanted only a doll—albeit one that looks a little less common and familiar than Mlle. Jasmin. Trapped in a marriage with a woman he finds "exasperating," the narrator is "overcome by a sadness full of tears." (p. 51)

With so little to attract him in his marriage, the narrator spends most of the novel becoming as disenchanted with Japan as with Chrysanthème. At one point, for example, he offers this summary of the country: "little, finical, affected,—all Japan is contained, both physically and morally, in these three words." (p. 166) His descriptions of the Japanese, whom he

often compares to monkeys, are replete with racism; and he is convinced that "under the obsequious amiability of this people, there lurks a secret hatred towards us Europeans" (p. 107)—hardly a surprising conviction, in view of his attitude that Westerners *"have absolutely nothing in common with this people."* (p. 122) Yet near the end of the novel, the narrator's attitude suddenly changes. As his scheduled departure approaches, he begins to call Chrysanthème by her Japanese name, Kikou, and seems to soften in his attitude towards her. And the narrator surprises himself by finding an inviting affection and sadness in Chrysanthème's request that he come back to see her on the morning of his ship's departure. At this late hour, the narrator's romanticism blossoms. Japan, which he has detested for months, is now "most delightful this evening, so fresh and so sweet, and little Chrysanthème was very charming." (pp. 217–8) But Loti has no intention of portraying a bittersweet parting of lovers who appreciate each other only too late. When the narrator returns to their house, expecting to find the touching scene of a wife tearful at her husband's departure, he discovers instead a mercenary Chrysanthème, "with the competent dexterity of an old money-changer," (p. 223) counting the silver dollars the marriage has earned her. Reaffirmed in his attitude toward the Japanese as a "Lilliputian curtseying people,—laborious, industrious, greedy of gain, tainted with a constitutional affection, hereditary insignificance, and incurable monkeyishness" (p. 229)—the narrator departs.

In its unrelieved contempt for the local population and its antipathy towards the central female character, *Madame Chrysanthème* is perhaps the bleakest of Loti's many semi-autobiographical novels about "exotic" lovers, set in locations from Turkey (*Aziyadé*, 1879) and Senegal (*Le Roman d'un spahi*, 1881), to Tahiti (*Le Mariage de Loti*, 1880). But even in his more romantic novels, Loti often uses animalistic descriptions of women to debase the love object, and the autobiographical sources of his writing have led critics to explain the art in terms of the artist. Irene L. Szyliowicz, for example, has decried "Loti's phallocentrisim," and his need to exploit women whom he considered his cultural, intellectual, or racial inferiors. (Szyliowicz, p. 54, p. 78). Of perhaps more interest in connection with Hwang's *M. Butterfly*, Clive Wake has argued, on the basis of the novelist's unpublished notebooks and other contemporary accounts, that Loti was actually a homosexual whose world-wide fictional and autobiographical affairs with women were part of a self-created myth; in an excess of Freudianism, Wake traces Loti's homosexuality to the death of his beloved older brother, Gustave, on a ship in the Bay of Bengal when the author was 15 (Wake, p. 32). Whether such psycholoanalytical approaches are justifiable as literary criticism or not, there is little surprising in the discovery that cultural and sexual orientations were as complicated in the world Loti described as they are now, in Hwang's.

Similarities

So many similarities can be adduced between Loti's novel and John Luther Long's story "Madame Butterfly" (1898) that early readers and critics asked, along with Montrose J. Moses, if Long's fiction did not "have a source in Pierre Loti's 'Madame Chrysanthème'?" (Belasco, p. 5) Both concern foreign sailors involved in temporary marriages with Japanese women—situations made possible by the traditional Japanese recognition of abandonment of the wife as a legal form of divorce. But the question of literary indebtedness is not easily settled. A Philadelphia lawyer who read and published often on Japan, Long probably knew Loti's novel; but he claimed to have had another source for his story, a tale repeated to him by his sister, the wife of an American missionary at Nagasaki. Whatever the original impetus for his fiction, however, as Mosco Carner has observed, "Long patently derived many details from Loti but modified them to suit his purposes." (p. 38) Though not an accomplished author when compared with Loti, Long managed to produce a work of less poetry but greater moral and cultural conflict, as may be illustrated by their differing presentations of geishas.

When Loti's narrator is awaiting his first interview with M. Kangourou, "suddenly there enters, like a night butterfly awakened in broad daylight, like a rare and surprising moth, the dancing-girl from the other compartment." (Loti, p. 26) The Frenchman immediately fantasizes marrying her, but Kangourou dismisses the idea with abhorrence, saying "No, sir no! Those are only *Guéchas,* sir—*Guéchas!*" (p. 30) The implication is that Kangourou's clientele are not geishas. But their names—such as Oeillet, Abricot, Jasmin, Chrysanthème, Jonquille, and Campanule (French for carnation, apricot, jasmine, chrysanthemum, jonquil, and rhododendron, respectively) are all such flowery appellations as geishas were wont to adopt professionally. Long's Cho-Cho-San, or Butterfly, on the other hand, is specifically identified as a geisha and yet, like Chrysanthème, she is dealt to a foreign husband by relatives. Both novels, as a result, distort the reality of the geisha as an institution, though more accurate accounts were available at the same time in the West. As Lafcadio Hearn recounted in his popular *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (1894), the typical geisha "begins her career as a slave, a pretty child bought from miserably poor parents under a contract, according to which her services may be claimed by the purchasers for eighteen, twenty, or even twenty-five years." (p. 531) Negotiations over a teen-aged girl, unlike those that we find in both novels, would have involved the geisha-mongers and not relatives who, in fact, would have years earlier sold any interest in the geisha. Such temporary marriages to foreigners, then, appear to have been made with women of a class Loti's narrator believes he has avoided; and the abandonment by her family that Butterfly suffers would have occurred when they sold her into the profession as a young child, and not

as a result of any decree by Pinkerton.

But the differences between Loti's *Chrysanthème* and Long's "Butterfly" are more profound than those of their characters's social status. In one sense, for example, the American work begins where the French left off. Loti's novel centers completely on its first-person narrator, but Long's B.F. Pinkerton nearly disappears after the first few pages. Once Pinkerton's ship sails, though he is the constant subject of Cho-Cho-San's thoughts and conversation, he is only glimpsed from afar near the end and never comes directly within the narrative focus of the story again. Like Loti's narrator, Pinkerton indulges his Western biases in his relationship with Butterfly, though in Long's story the disastrous consequences of this indulgence seem to accrue entirely to the woman. Pinkerton encourages Butterfly to be less submissive, in the Japanese way, and more assertive and independent. Anticipating Shaw's recreation of *Pygmalion* (1913) by some 15 years, Long's Pinkerton decides "to take this dainty, vivid, eager, formless material, and mold it to his most wantonly whimsical wish." (p. 59) He fosters "her pretty domestic autonomy. Her airs of authority were charming." (p. 6) And Cho-Cho-San learns to reason "as he had taught her—she had never reasoned before." (p. 23) But Pinkerton is hardly a feminist; he thinks of his Butterfly as "quite an impossible little thing, outside of lacquer and paint" (p. 8) and completely ignores or misjudges the long-term effects of mixing romance and progressive views in his treatment of her. Dependent in some ways and independent in others, Butterfly becomes "the most daringly happy woman in Japan," (p. 25) while waiting for Pinkerton's return.

Thus, though the narrators of both works share many of the Eurocentric prejudices of their day, one might almost say that the American turned Loti's predictable fiction of culture clash into a much more subtle combination of cultural influence and individual isolation. Cho-Cho-San's problem is that she has become too Americanized for Japan, but yet remains inescapably within the Japanese context. This problem is underscored by everything from her impossibly pidgin English and love for all things American, to the "odious lack of ceremony her independent life with Pinkerton had bred." (p. 30) Indeed, these are precisely the terms in which Butterfly contemplates her own suicide, after having met Pinkerton's American wife; her Japanese heritage "had taught her how to die" a ritual death but, in exposing her to new freedoms, Pinkerton has "taught her how to live—nay, to make life sweet." (p. 85) Even the romanticism of ritual suicide is denied Butterfly, however; she survives and, with her servant Suzuki and Pinkerton's baby, disappears the next day.

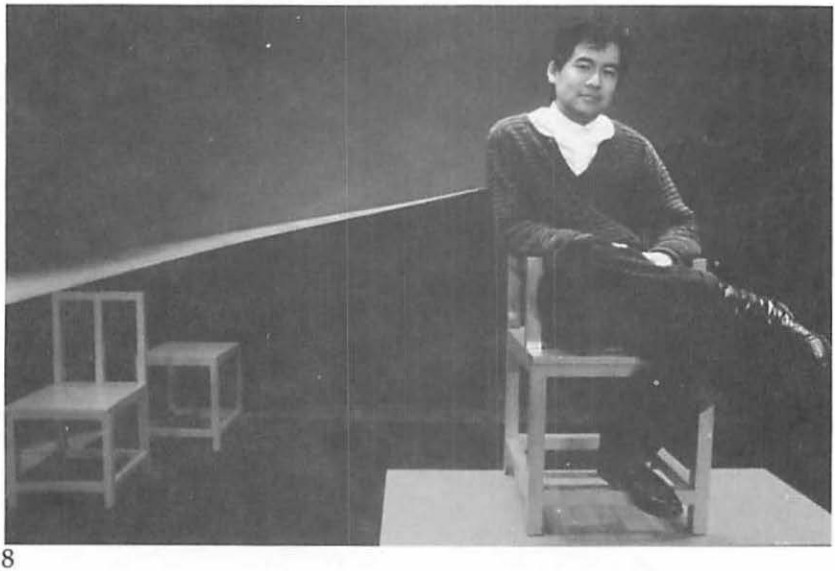
Hardly enlightened in its attitudes toward women, with all its comments about Butterfly's "little, unused, frivolous mind," (p. 74) Long's story manages to avoid much of the anti-Japanese bias evident in Loti's fiction. Yet it might be argued that the character of Butterfly is specifically anti-Japanese in its condescension toward her as a woman. When, for

example, Pinkerton's new wife accidentally meets Cho-Cho-San at the American consul's office, the American woman calls her Japanese rival a "pretty—*plaything.*" (p. 80) This is exactly the term used in the English translation of Loti's *Madame Chrysanthème* to render his repeated *un jouet* (Loti, p. 27; p. 162), and it recurs, as we shall see, in the subsequent versions of the tale as play and opera. But the alteration of the white lover, from Loti's narrator to Long's Pinkerton, does much to soften the presentation of Western attitudes. Not only is Pinkerton much less prominently as well as less positively drawn, but the introduction of another character in Pinkerton's absence, the colorless but well-intentioned consul Sharpless, who reacts to Cho-Cho-San's history with "impotent anger" toward Pinkerton (p. 65), serves to indicate Western disapproval of some of the naval officer's abuses.

Yet Pinkerton is not entirely a villain, nor can the transformation of Butterfly be completely condemned. After all, Pinkerton has not made her a geisha and, as a geisha, Cho-Cho-San is little more than a commodity in a traditional, but nonetheless demeaning, Japanese social system. In liberating Butterfly from some of the constraints of that role, in teaching her to reason, and in encouraging her independence, Pinkerton has (perhaps unintentionally) reversed the dehumanizing process she has endured for a lifetime. Unfortunately, Pinkerton effects her liberation within that same social system, which he first perpetuates by their marriage and in which he then abandons her. Long, however, succeeds as an author where Pinkerton fails as a character. By focusing only on Butterfly, Long empowers his title character and allows her to transcend the limitations of her time and place—to transcend, that is, the sexism of traditional Japan but only within the context of the sexual stereotypes of Long's America.

Stage Adaptation

Some confusion has surrounded the history of the stage adaptation of Long's story. Although *Madame Butterfly* premiered in 1900, its first publication did not come until Arthur Hobson Quinn's 1917 anthology of *Representative American Plays,* where the authors of the one-act drama are wrongly identified as David Belasco and John Luther Long, and the date given for the play's copyright is that of Long's story, which first appeared in *The Century* magazine in 1897. (Quinn, p. 622) Quinn's errors continued to be reproduced over the next 50 years, in seven editions of his anthology, and from there entered into such critical works as Carner's biography of Puccini. (p. 381) In fact, though Belasco and Long subsequently did collaborate in the writing of such plays as *The Darling of the Gods* (1902) and *Adrea* (1904), Belasco wrote *Madame Butterfly* on his own. As Moses J. Montrose explains in his note on the drama for Belasco's *Six Plays* (1928), Belasco had written to Long, "who at the time was unknown



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Following are the identifications for the photographs illustrating David Mesher's *Metamorphosis of a Butterfly:*

1 and 2. Illustrations by Rossi and Myrach from the original French edition of *Madame Chrysantheme* (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1893).

3. Pierre Loti a few years before his visit to Japan in 1885. Though an officer in the French navy, Loti is pictured in the uniform of a common seaman—a disguise he sometimes affected. [Photo from Lesley Branch: *Pierre Loti: the Legendary Romantic* (New York: Harcourt, 1983).]

4. Frontispiece from the first edition of John Luther Long's *Madame Butterfly* (New York: The Century Company, 1898).

5. From Left: Belasco, Toscanini, and Puccini, in 1910. [Photo from Howard Greenfield, *Puccini* (New York: Putnam, 1980).]

6. Salomea Kruscenika, who performed as Cio-Cio-San at Brescia (1904), the first production of the opera in its final form. [Photo from William Weaver, *Puccini: the Man and His Music* (New York: Dutton, 1977, p. 75).]

7. Licia Albanese, who first performed as Madame Butterfly at the Metropolitan Opera in 1940. [Photo from William Weaver, *Puccini: the Man and His Music* (New York: Dutton, 1977, p. 75).]

8. David Henry Hwang (1989). [Photo from *Mother Jones* Vol. 14 (Feb/Mar, 1989), p. 12.]

9. B. D. Wong, who created the title role of *M. Butterfly* on Broadway. [Photo from *U.S. News and World Report*, Vol. 104 (March 28, 1988), p. 52.]

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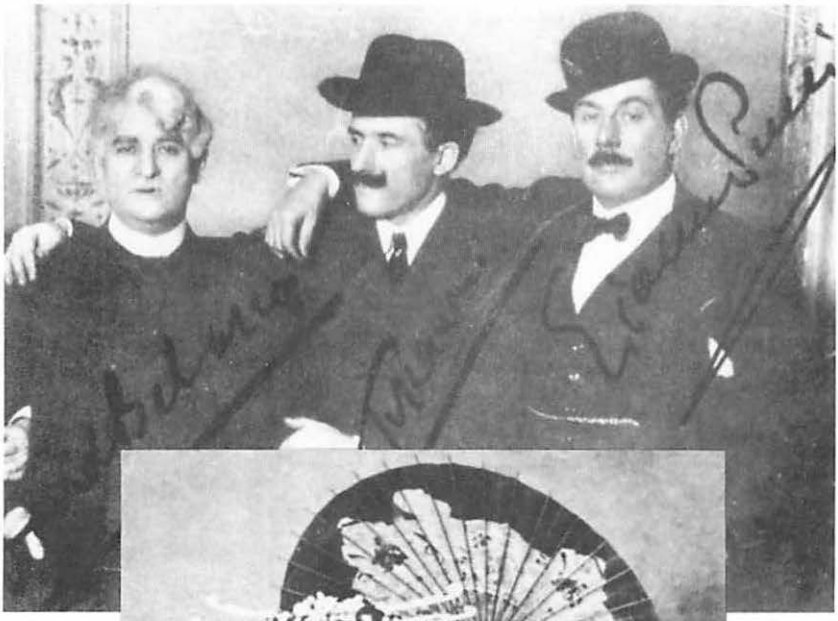

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to him, making an offer for the rights of dramatization," but "even before a contract had been drawn up," and with no collaboration at all, Belasco "had half completed his script, and within a fortnight it was finished." (p. 5)

Belasco's short drama borrows many of its title character's words directly from Long's story, pidgin English and all. Belasco himself appreciated the stagecraft of his play more than its dialogue; in his recollections, published as *The Theatre through Its Stage Door* (1919), Belasco claimed that "the scene of the passing of an entire night," as a solitary and silent Madame Butterfly waits in vain for the arrival of Pinkerton, was his "most successful effort in appealing to the imaginations" of his audiences. (p. 238) Belasco made other changes, however, in staging his drama. Madame Butterfly continues to be the focus of the story, always on stage except for one brief moment, when she is heard singing from off stage. But Belasco has collapsed the time frame of Long's story down to two days, and Butterfly's house is the only scene. There she discusses with Suzuki her hopes for Pinkerton's return, receives the consul Sharpless on a mission from Pinkerton that the consul has not the heart to complete, banters with Goro and the suitor Yamadori, and then, having seen the arrival of Pinkerton's ship and awaited vainly for his visit all night, kills herself.

Butterfly's suicide is one example of Belasco's tendency to sensationalize the elements of Long's story. Another is the greater emphasis Belasco gives to the Pygmalion motif in Butterfly's interview with Sharpless. Though in Long's fiction the consul sees in Cho-Cho-San's situation the lamentable caprice of the naval officer, in Belasco's play Sharpless comments on Butterfly as if she were indeed the creation of her American lover. Sharpless can "hear" Pinkerton in her words (p. 17) and see "Pinkerton's very wink" in one of Butterfly's coquettish gestures. (p. 20) The effect of Sharpless's observations is to emphasize Pinkerton's responsibility for Butterfly's fate, and implicitly to condemn him. The Pygmalion theme itself may seem unacceptable to modern sensibilities, requiring as it does the notion of an "unformed" adult woman, a lump of human clay to be shaped according to the will of the dominant male. Class is the chief obstacle to this shaping in Shaw's *Pygmalion;* in the Butterfly tradition it is culture. Shaw's Liza Doolittle only *seems* to be speaking another language and exhibiting the behavior of another society, but for Cho-Cho-San these are literally the case, and make Pinkerton's manipulation and later abandonment of Butterfly the more condemnable.

Unlike Long's story where Sharpless makes his disapproval explicit, the implicit condemnation in Belasco's play is further weakened by the appearance of Pinkerton near the end. Though he remains self-indulgent and irresponsible, Belasco's naval officer seems hardly the free-thinking, witty, and manipulative character of Long's story. He enters

during the brief period when Butterfly is off stage and at the first sight of her and the child retreats in disarray, saying, "I can't face it!" (p. 29) He has not had the courage, as did Long's Pinkerton, to tell his new wife, Kate, about Butterfly and the child; instead Kate learns of his son from Goro, who sees this as a way to separate Butterfly from Pinkerton and promote the match with Yamadori. As a result, in her matter-of-fact acceptance both of the child and of her husband's inability to handle the adoption satisfactorily, Kate leaves the impression that Pinkerton is himself a child that needs looking after. Even at the last, according to the stage directions, Kate must urge *"the reluctant Pinkerton to follow her"* to the scene of Butterfly's suicide. (p. 32) And while Kate's own character may, again, seem to mitigate the sexism of Butterfly's portrayal, it has, if anything, the reverse effect on the underlying racism: certainly Kate's condescending repetition of the dehumanized description of Cho-Cho-San, found also in Loti and Long, as a "pretty little plaything" (p. 30) makes the American woman much less sympathetic; Butterfly rejects the epithet, saying she is now "only Cho-Cho-San, but no playthin'." (p. 30) Perhaps most telling of all, Belasco's Pinkerton is a throwback to Loti's narrator. In excusing himself, Pinkerton explains he had second thoughts about abandoning Butterfly, but said to himself, "Don't do it; by this time she's ringing your gold pieces to make sure they're good." (p. 28)

Puccini Sees the Play

Giacomo Puccini saw the play of *Madame Butterfly* in 1900 in London, where Belasco had taken it after a successful run on Broadway. Struck by both the exotic setting and the pathetic suicide, Puccini came backstage, according to Belasco, to discuss the operatic rights to the production. The playwright later reported that he "agreed at once and told him that he could do what he wanted with the play and conclude any kind of agreement, since one cannot discuss a business deal with an excited Italian who has tears in his eyes and throws both arms around you." (Winter, p. 83) Puccini concluded the agreement with Belasco a year later and set his librettists, Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, to work.

Like Hwang some 80 years later, Puccini had conceived of his work with only an imperfect knowledge of his immediate sources. Oriental operas had been popular in Europe for decades, and he may have been influenced in his conception and design by such diverse works as Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* and Messager's *Madame Chrysanthème*, an 1893 opera based on Loti's novel. According to Carner, "Puccini's original intention had been to follow the design of Belasco's play and write a one-act opera with a prologue based on the introductory chapters of Long's story." (p. 383) At that time, however, Puccini was under the impression (as Carner continues to be) that the first part of Long's story shows "Pinkerton and the geisha already married and living in New York."

(Carner, p. 384) On that basis, Puccini had intended to write a prologue to the opera set in America; later, he expanded that proposed prologue into a full act, now set in Japan. Giacosa had different ideas, planning to create three acts, "Act I and II being derived primarily from the story, and Act III from the play." Despite these plans, Illica in fact worked for months on the libretto before he received a copy of Belasco's script, and had not bothered to finish reading the translation of Long's story before he handed Puccini a draft of the opera's first two acts . (Osborne, p. 158)

Not surprisingly, considering the cross-purposes at which they all seemed to be working, the premiere of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*—at the composer's insistence, in two acts—at La Scala in 1904 was a fiasco. The opera was reworked and performed to greater success later that year in Brescia, but received its final form only slowly, over the next two years. The American premiere came at the New York Metropolitan Opera in 1907, with Geraldine Farrar as Cio-Cio-San and Enrico Caruso as Pinkerton.

Charles Osborne has argued that "*Madama Butterfly* is one of those rare cases of an opera libretto which is an improvement upon its original source." (p. 159) In dropping Butterfly's pidgin English and rewriting Belasco's stiff dialogue, Puccini and his librettists certainly bettered their sources. But their changes to the Pinkerton role were less inspired. As we have seen, Belasco managed to decrease Pinkerton's presence on stage while expanding his influence. In Puccini's opera, however, Pinkerton becomes a typical Italian romantic tenor, dominating the stage until his climactic love-duet with Butterfly at the end of the first act.

That act tells a story barely suggested in the original fiction: how Pinkerton and Butterfly are married, surrounded by family and friends, and how Butterfly is ostracized by her family, beginning with her uncle the Bonze, because, as he explains, "she's renounced, let me tell you / Her true religion." (Puccini, p. 89) Only under the provocation of their curses does Pinkerton banish Cio-Cio-San's family from his house, leaving the newlyweds alone for "perhaps Puccini's finest, certainly his longest love duet." (Osborne, p. 167) But if Pinkerton's behavior toward Butterfly's family has become more excusable, even proper, in Puccini's treatment, some of the officer's other attitudes and conduct suffer. From his toast of "America for ever!" (p. 72)—sung in English even in the original Italian opera—and his leitmotif in the score of a quotation from "The Star-Spangled Banner," to Pinkerton's nationalist sentiments, the opera sometimes seems a piece of American jingoism written by Italians. According to Pinkerton,

> The whole world over, on business or on pleasure,
> the Yankee travels
> and scorns all danger. . . .
> And life is not worth living

If he can't win the fairest
Pearl of every country . . .
And then fire her with love.

(p. 72)

Sharpless resumes his role as the voice of conscience, which Belasco had mostly discarded, by telling Pinkerton that this is "a very easy gospel / Which makes life very pleasant, / But is fatal in the end." (p. 72)

The sense of impending tragedy is more finely wrought at the beginning of the opera than in either the story or the play, not only by such pronouncements as that of Sharpless, but also by Puccini's twice introducing into the score phrases containing a foreboding augmented fourth, one of which is repeated during the climactic suicide scene. And the sense of Cio-Cio-San's struggle against cultural boundaries is also enhanced by Puccini; when Butterfly's voice leaves the Japanese themes of the wedding guests's conversation ensemble to join Pinkerton's Western vocal line, as Charles Osborne has noted, "the Americanization of Cio-Cio-San has begun." (p. 167)

Puccini's second act follows Belasco's play closely in its broad outlines, though here too some important changes have been made. Confusion over Pinkerton's character, for example, is evidenced in these melodramatic final lines from a 1904 version of the opera, later cut by Puccini:

Farewell, O happy home!
Farewell, home of love!
Haunted for ever shall I be
By her reproachful eyes.
Farewell, O happy home,
I cannot bear to stay,
Farewell, farewell, let me fly!

(p. 119)

Such sentiments would have romanticized Pinkerton and turned the opera into another story of ill-fated love; but while Butterfly's fate seems thrust upon her, Pinkerton's is clearly of his own creation. Similarly, Pinkerton is not brought back to embrace the dying Butterfly at the end, though he does rush in with Sharpless after her last aria; nor are those final words Belasco's maudlin line (referring to Pinkerton's earlier promise to return), "Too bad those robins didn' nes' again." (*Six Plays*, p. 32) Instead, Puccini's Cio-Cio-San dies singing to and about her son. Her use of the phrase engraved on her father's ritual sword, "Death with honour / Is better than life with dishonour" (p. 124)—some version of which is used consistently in story, play, and opera—takes on a more powerful meaning. According to Long and Belasco, Pinkerton dishonors Cho-Cho-San by abandoning her; but Puccini's Madama Butterfly feels

she has dishonored herself in her mistaken belief in another's willingness to place the human heart above national or cultural divisions. Cio-Cio-San's lover has disgraced them both by his failure; but she has already forgotten Pinkerton by the time she sacrifices herself for her child's future, telling him:

> You must never know it;
> 'Tis for you, my love, 'tis for you
> I'm dying, poor Butterfly,
> So you can go away
> Beyond the ocean,
> Never to feel the torment when you are older
> That your mother forsook you!
>
> (p. 124)

Hwang's View

Though all of these earlier works are marred by condescending attitudes towards women and Japanese, David Hwang's view of the Butterfly tradition, as containing "a wealth of sexist and racist clichés," is justified only in part. Hwang's play was inspired by the curious case of Bernard Bouriscot, a French diplomat arrested in 1986 after an affair with "a Chinese actress, who subsequently turned out to be not only a spy, but a man." (Hwang, p. 94) *M. Butterfly* begins with its diplomat, Rene Gallimard, in prison but reveling in his notoriety. He has become "the life of every social function in Paris," (p. 2) for continuing to maintain that his lover of 20 years was not only a woman, but "the Perfect Woman." (p. 4) With its opening phrases playing in the background, Gallimard attempts to explain himself with reference to his "favorite opera: *Madame Butterfly.*" (pp. 4–5) Intermittently over the next few scenes, Gallimard takes on the role of Pinkerton in a modernized synopsis of Puccini's opera. Other parts from the opera are played by characters from Gallimard's life: his friend Marc as Sharpless, Comrade Chin as Suzuki, and Song as Butterfly. But, in Gallimard's summary, Butterfly never speaks; she is an image of the silent, Oriental subservience which Gallimard equates with "the feminine ideal, beautiful and brave." (p. 5)

This may be an ideal for Gallimard but Hwang's staging in fact reverses the proportions of Long, Belasco, and even Puccini, in each of which, as we have seen, Butterfly's voice dominates the dialogue and Pinkerton is heard from less and less as the work progresses. Allowing Butterfly to speak would have individualized her and thus made her less of an ideal; but Hwang's silent Butterfly is a distortion of Puccini's characterization. Unspeaking, Butterfly represents women as a commodity—an image of exploitation that suggests centerfolds, advertisements, and mail-order Asian brides. That image also recalls the description of Jasmin, whose

likeness Loti's narrator has met with "on every fan, on every tea-cup—with her silly air, her puffy little visage, her tiny eyes, mere gimlet-holes above those expanses of impossible pink and white which are her cheeks." (Loti, p. 37) By rejecting Jasmin in favor of Chrysanthème, Loti's narrative focuses less on stereotypes than on personalities. Long, Belasco, and Puccini all followed suit and, though none of these works is entirely free of the condescending, Eurocentric attitudes of their times, all but Loti created an individualized and sympathetically drawn portrait of a Japanese woman.

The image of the lover becomes an important issue at the end of *M. Butterfly,* when Gallimard, who has served as both narrator and main character, finally faces the truth:

> And the truth demands a sacrifice. For mistakes made over the course of a lifetime. My mistakes were simple and absolute—the man I loved was a cad, a bounder. He deserved nothing but a kick in the behind, and instead I gave him . . . all my love. (p. 92)

Gallimard's admission is an ironic reversal of the Butterfly tradition. Here the white, male lover, not the Asian, turns out to be Madame Butterfly. But Hwang also means it to invert the "racist clichés" he finds in that tradition. As Song explains, "the West thinks of itself as masculine—big guns, big industry, big money—so the East is feminine." (p. 83) Hwang seems to be equating domestic *racial* biases against Asian-Americans, regardless of their national origins, with the *national* images common in America of some foreign countries and their peoples. How likely is it, after the military and economic encounters of this century, that even the most bigoted Americans associate Japan with "feminine weakness" rather than "big industry" and "big money"—to say nothing of Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and so on? Sensitive to stereotypes perpetuated at the expense of American racial groups, Hwang may be too ready to find similar biases in the admittedly limited attempts at cross-cultural understanding that make up the Butterfly tradition.

But when viewed as part of that tradition, Hwang's play ends in no such ironic reversal. Like all of the earlier Butterflies, Gallimard is the dominant presence on stage and yet the most vulnerable. And like Puccini's Cio-Cio-San, Gallimard dies not for his own disgrace, but for the failure of his lover to reach beyond human limitations. For how can such a love "face the sin that implies all others?" asks Gallimard. "The devastating knowledge that, underneath it all, the object of her love was nothing more, nothing less than . . . a man." (p. 92) In concluding with this established climactic recognition of all the Butterflies, Hwang has joined Long, Belasco, and Puccini in describing a human tragedy that struggles to transcend sexual roles, ethnic divisions, and national boundaries.

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The *Perdition* Affair: A Question of Libel or Censorship

Edward R. Isser

THE British national attitude towards the Holocaust has been, and continues to be, an admixture of apathy and dismissiveness. The terrible trauma of the Second World War, the sweeping social leveling that occurred in its aftermath, the dissolution of the empire that it had engendered, and the relative tiny size of the English Jewish community, contributed to the formulation of a perspective that is quite different from the reverent attitude generally embraced in America. There is little sympathy in British intellectual circles for the particular interpretative perspective that is championed in the United States by Elie Wiesel, Emil Fackenheim, Cynthia Ozick, et al. British artists, and particularly playwrights, tend to view the Holocaust as part of a historical continuum and not as an unique and unprecedented occurrence.

British authors assert in a series of plays that the destruction of Europe's Jews and the establishment of the State of Israel are interconnected historical phenomena. The proposition is set forth that the Holocaust was a necessay prerequisite before Israel could gain moral and political legitimacy. A common theme is the suggestion that parallels exist between Nazis and Israelis; that the historical victims have been transformed into the contemporary tormentors. In three plays, Robert Shaw's *The Man in the Glass Booth* (1968), Christopher Hampton's adaptation of George Steiner's novel *The Portage to San Cristobal of A.H.* (1982), and Jim Allen's *Perdition* (1987), Israeli characters are represented as obsessed vengeance-seeking figures. Each play, to varying degrees, uses the Holocaust as a symbolic bludgeon to indict modern-day Israel. Jim Allen's *Perdition*, however, breaks new ground in its level of vituperation and raises serious questions regarding the limits of artistic freedom and the prerogatives of poetic license.

In January, 1987, *Perdition* became the first work in the history of the Royal Court Theatre to be withdrawn from public viewing. Max Stafford-Clark, the artistic director of the company, cancelled the production two days before the first scheduled preview. A vitriolic debate then ensued in the British press that was hardly noticed in America. Charges and countercharges of artistic censorship and anti-Semitism were put forth in a seemingly endless number of articles and commentaries. At the heart of the controversy was a piece of agitprop theater whose main thesis was that the Zionist leadership in Palestine aided and abetted the Nazis before and during the Second World War and thus contributed to the demise of the European Jewish community.

The play, written in direct response to the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, sought to undermine the moral legitimacy of the Jewish State. Jim Allen, incensed by Israeli leaders continually raising the specter of the Holocaust to justify foreign policy, used the vehicle of his drama to challenge their claims. Allen asserted that "Jews were killed because their leaders covered up for the Nazis . . . and people have a residue of guilt about what happened to the Jews which has been manipulated by the Zionists for years."[1]

The circumstances that form the background for the dramatic narrative of *Perdition* are loosely based upon a libel action that occurred in Israel during 1953 involving Dr. Rudolf Kastner. Kastner, a Holocaust survivor and then an Israeli citizen, was accused of collaborating with the Nazis. Allen, instead of dramatizing the Kastner trial, creates a fictitious courtroom in London shortly after the 1967 Six-Day War. A young researcher, Ruth Kaplan, is accused of defaming the character of Dr. Miklos Yoran, a Holocaust survivor, and prominent member of the British Jewish community. Yoran, a former member of the Budapest **Judenrat,** accuses Kaplan of libel because she has written a pamphlet, ironically entitled "I Accuse," that charges him with collaboration in the destruction of Hungary's 500,000 Jews.

Perdition is a typical British courtroom drama where barristers, in wigs and gowns, question a series of witnesses before a judge who sits on high. The testimony that is given is presented as documented evidence and the audience, as jury, is asked to reach a verdict. The play takes on the trappings of a docu-drama, and the director of the original production, Ken Loach, claims that although "the play's characters are fictitious—the evidence brought is factual."[2]

In *Perdition,* however, the techniques of documentary theater are subverted and manipulated. The presentation of evidence at the trial is biased and inflammatory. The accuser, Dr. Yoran, is portrayed as an ineffectual quisling who is self-destructive on the witness stand. Ruth Kaplan, the defendant, is presented as a dynamic young personality willing to risk her career and reputation in pursuit of the truth.

In addition, the portrayal of the attorneys is lopsided. The prosecutor,

Lawson, questions Yoran in a counterproductive manner and allows Kaplan to strengthen her argument during cross-examination. The defense attorneys, Scott and Green, are eminently effective and rip Yoran's case to shreds. Throughout Scott's cross-examination of Yoran there are numerous digressions that apparently have nothing to do with the issue at hand—Ruth Kaplan's pamphlet—but that enable the playwright to introduce doctrinaire positions. The defense attorney, without objection or interruption, takes the words of Ben Gurion, Weizmann, and other Jewish leaders out of context to justify his claim that a conspiracy existed between Zionists and Nazis. Various fictional "experts" are called to the witness stand to support the thesis. The fictitious historian Orzech quotes from Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* and, in a misleading manner, cites Raul Hilberg and Isaiah Trunk for corroboration. The prosecuting attorney does not challenge any of these points, does not object, does not correct the misappropriations, and does not call other historians to the stand for the purpose of rebuttal.

Kaplan, the defendant, is granted the status of an "expert" witness at her own trial and is allowed to explain Jewish and Zionist history to the court. Her claims—that the Zionists leaders "condemned all anti-Nazi activity," that "the entire Zionist leadership formulated policies which led Dr. Yoran into betraying the Jews," and that "Israel is a racist state,"—are allowed to go unchallenged. Kaplan sums up her position succinctly: "I am saying that what he [Yoran] did flowed logically from the Zionist policy of making deals with the Nazis both before and during World War Two, and that to him this act of collaboration was justified in terms of building the Jewish homeland."[3]

Yoran appears on the witness stand in the second act and admits under pressure from Scott that Zionists did collaborate with the Nazis in order to insure the establishment of the state of Israel. Scott leads Yoran into confessing that Israelis have become modern-day Nazis:

SCOTT: It is clear, Doctor Yoran, isn't it? That you, Kastner and other members of the Committee collaborated with the Nazis?
YORAN: We represented the best interests of our people.
SCOTT: By sending them to the gas chambers?
YORAN: I explain, but you won't listen!
SCOTT: Because the language is unequivocal. Betrayal.
YORAN: The creation of the Jewish state above all else.
SCOTT: Coined in the blood and tears of Hungarian Jewry.
YORAN: We had to subordinate our feelings.
SCOTT: The cruel criteria of Zionism!
YORAN: . . . We are no longer in hiding, Mr. Scott. The

> wheel and the ghetto have gone. We shout from the roof-tops: 'I am a Jew'—and people listen with fear and respect. (pp.65–66)

The final scene of the play occurs outside the confines of the courtroom when Yoran meets Kaplan and admits his wartime guilt. He reveals to the young researcher that he wanted to lose the libel case all along. He thanks Kaplan for publishing her pamphlet because "it came as a blessing." (p.69) Scott enters the room to find Yoran crying and being comforted by Kaplan. The play ends in a moralistic coda when Yoran explains that he brought the libel action not to prove his innocence but to expurgate his guilt: "To have offered myself for moral execution was not enough . . . I needed a judgement." (p.70) At the end of the play Yoran is transformed into a tragic figure who sacrifices himself in order to warn the world about the dangers of Zionism.

Jim Allen's play became mired in a bitter controversy even before it went into rehearsal when questions were raised regarding the historical accuracy of the piece. In 1985, when the Royal Court Theatre announced its intention of mounting *Perdition*, the press office, as was its custom with all new works, circulated copies of the text to certain members of the community and the press. The reaction to the script was swift and vocal ranging from skepticism to outrage. The Royal Court and the Manchester Library Theatre, which was initially co-producing the play, responded to the harsh criticism by commissioning two prominent historians—David Cesarani of Queen Mary College, London, and Martin Gilbert, of Merton College, Oxford—to analyze the historical veracity of the text.[4]

David Cesarani issued a blistering 22-page report on the play that concluded that the work was rife with historical inaccuracies and satisfied "all criteria by which anti-semitism is normally recognized."[5] Martin Gilbert was even more horrified and publicly stated that the dramatic text was a "travesty of the facts—in reality there are inaccuracies on almost every page of the script; not only errors of fact but innuendoes and allegations."[6] The Manchester Theatre, upon reviewing the reports, withdrew as a co-producer from the project, but the Royal Court decided to proceed with the production.

In the weeks before opening, public pressure began to build on the Theatre. This was due in part to the efforts of Martin Gilbert, who had gone to the London papers with his misgivings, and in part to protests raised by members of the London Jewish community.[7] On January 20, 1987, three days before the first planned preview of the production, the advisory body of the Royal Court Theatre, the Council, met to discuss the controversy. Members of the Council were dismayed that they had not been given copies of the script. They were also upset that no staff member had consulted an attorney regarding the possibility that the Royal Court could be sued for slander since individuals still living in Britain were

specifically referred to in the text. The Council then voted 11 to 4 to postpone the opening, to consult a third historian, and to have a lawyer review the script to check for possible libel charges.[8]

The next day, January 21, 1987, Stafford-Clark, the artistic director, without consultation, cancelled the production entirely, announcing ". . . we do not accept that there are factual inaccuracies in Jim Allen's play or that the play is in any way anti-Semitic. . . . But we do accept that going ahead with it would cause great distress to sections of the community."[9]

But Stafford-Clark's decision to withdraw *Perdition* did not end the controversy; rather it inflamed the situation. Defenders of free speech and artistic freedom blasted the theater for caving in to special interests. Jewish groups and a number of commentators were angered that Stafford-Clark had publicly maintained the accuracy of a work that they believed to be slanderous. Bernard Levin, who castigated *Perdition* as a work "written in a state of what may be termed moral illiteracy," was distressed by the cancellation.[10] Levin feared exactly what happened—the controversy would engender an anti-Semitic reaction and draw even more attention to a mediocre work that would have otherwise quickly disappeared:

> If the play is never seen it will increase anti-Semitism rather than diminishing it because people will believe, or be persuaded, that a cabal of Jews extinguished it lest the wickedness of Israel should be exposed, and that it must have been an uncommonly fine and well-written play to have provoked such wrath in its opponents.[11]

Levin's analysis of the situation proved prescient when letters poured in to the editors of the *Guardian, The Observer,* and *The Times* full of diatribes about Zionist influence. But the harshest and most vitriolic reactions came from the author and director of the cancelled production. Ken Loach, the director, launched an attack in the pages of *The New Statesman* against the staff of the Royal Court. Loach went so far as to state there was a Zionist conspiracy to suppress the play: "We can only assume that Zionist organizations, possibly the Institute of Jewish Affairs, were circulating an early draft of the script, with copies of hostile reviews from historians sympathetic to their cause."[12] Allen concurred with Loach's assessment of the cancellation and declared that "the play had uncovered a cloud of guilt. The play is pro-Jewish but anti-Zionist and anti-Zionist comment, it seems, is not allowed."[13]

Stafford-Clark, outraged by the allegations of Loach and Allen, broke his self-imposed silence on the matter and revealed his reasoning for prematurely shutting down the production. Stafford-Clark, torn between his belief in artistic freedom and the desire not to offend or libel anyone,

apparently felt that his trust in the author had been misplaced. In a long and often rambling letter that was published as a full-page article in the pages of the *Guardian*, the artistic director of the Royal Court revealed his thought process in the days preceding the cancellation. He admitted that he misled the public when he had stated his faith in the project:

> For the first time I saw the possibility that *Perdition* was a dishonest piece of writing; both because it was so half-hearted in including any mitigating factors, and because its passionate conviction led to a picture of these horrifying events that seemed less and less authentic. . . . I had thought *Perdition* fell within a spectrum of work whose views I could support. I now found it did not . . . Within 24 hours this action [canceling the production] had been called both "craven" and "courageous." Without doubt, it was the hardest decision I have ever had to take. The Royal Court's reputation as a champion of new writing is an enviable one. In 99 cases out of 100 of course an Artistic Director must protect the work he has chosen. In the hundredth he must admit he had made a mistake.[14]

Allen and Loach replied directly to Stafford-Clark's article. Both men refuted Stafford-Clark's claim that he had acted independently. They continued to maintain that a Zionist conspiracy existed to squelch the piece. Allen claimed that unnamed parties had made threatening phone calls to him, and he accused the president of the Institute of Jewish Affairs of blackmail by promising to ruin Allen's career because "he could influence funding bodies in London."[15] Loach's reply was equally distasteful: "The plain truth is that *Perdition* was stopped by public abuse and private manipulation by a political tendency, Zionism, that will not acknowledge its past because of the light it sheds on its present."[16]

During the acrimonious debate, the word censorship appeared again and again, but *Perdition* was never censored or banned. The British government did not resurrect the powers of the Lord Chamberlain and there was never any official comment on the affair. *Perdition* was cancelled by the artistic director of a theater group, and the author and director were free to seek other venues for their work. Bernard Levin's fears that *Perdition* would never be seen and thus gain mythical proportions were unfounded. On August 17, 1987, the play opened at the 100-seat Royal Lyceum Studio in Edinburgh with more people protesting outside the theater than were inside watching. Robert Dawson-Scott, reviewing the premiere for *The Times*, disregarded the controversy and approached the play as merely another theatrical entertainment: "I am a sucker for the natural drama of the courtroom and when a subject matter is as explosive as this, it is irresistible. I am not qualified to pass judgement on the accuracy of Mr. Allen's research but the lawyers invite the audience to be

the jury."[17]

In April and May of 1988, *Perdition* played a limited three-week engagement at the 500-seat Conway Hall in London. The show often played to full houses but failed to be offered a West End run. On May 14, the production quietly closed and slipped away, but hardly into oblivion.

Levins's prediction, that once *Perdition* was performed publicly the self-evident dishonesty of the piece would discredit it, proved to be inaccurate. Levin gave far too much credit to British audiences and theater critics. In 1989, Graham Hessel reviewing Joshua Sobol's play *Ghetto* in the pages of the British magazine *Plays and Players,* resurrected and promulogated the fallacious notion that *Perdition* had been "effectively banned by pressure groups two years ago." Hessel concluded that "it seems curious, if not suspect, that *Perdition,* hardly seen, became a pariah for saying little more than this praised production of *Ghetto,* and with a lot less song and dance."[18]

Hessel's review of *Ghetto* deliberately misrepresented the reasons for the public outcry against *Perdition* in 1987. There was no conspiracy of silence regarding the role of the **Judenräte** and the Jewish Police. Massive research had already been carried out on the subject and numerous articles and books had been published. In addition, the topic had been explored in various forms of popular entertainment. Plays such as Millard Lampell's *The Wall* and Harold and Edith Lieberman's *Throne of Straw* and novels like Leon Uris's *Mila 18* and Leslie Epstein's *King of the Jews* had explored the issue. The objections raised against *Perdition* were not based upon the fact that it explored a troubling and disturbing topic for Jews. The misgivings of many—both Jewish and Gentile—were predicated upon the belief that *Perdition* was, and is, a fallacious, slanderous, and anti-Semitic work that seeks to undermine the moral legitimacy of Israel by misconstruing documented evidence.

Ironically, Allen's play about a libel trial was itself to become the subject of a libel action. The published version of *Perdition,* released in 1987, had a page and a half excised in response to legal action that had been brought against the playwright by a Holocaust survivor.

Hessel's acceptance of the historical accuracy of *Perdition* is extremely troubling and points out the implicit danger in applying concepts like the probable and the possible and poetic license to resonating, near-term memories such as the Holocaust. His comments demonstrate how historical drama mythologizes the past and reduces complex and difficult issues—in this case the behavior of the **Judenräte**—to a simplistic and oftentimes erroneous level. Hessel, evidently ignorant about the historical catastrophe, had been convinced by the craft of Jim Allen's writing. *Perdition,* after all, invited the audience to be the jury. The play, in the form of a docu-drama, made the actions of the fictitious Yoran both probable and possible. The so-called evidence was carefully culled and edited, and opposing points of view were silenced. The conclusions

reached in *Perdition*—that Jewish leaders in Palestine aided and abetted the Nazis in their extermination program and that Israel is a racist, imperialistic state that seeks to drag the world into a nuclear confrontation—are, to paraphrase Jean Amery, "unadulterated Streicher."[19] Allen, however, through the proficiency of his craft, is able to make a convincing case to support such beliefs.

Perdition is not a historical drama, at least not in Herbert Lindenberger's sense of the term, because it does not use a distant historical figure or event to comment upon the contemporary situation.[20] *Perdition* is a piece of agitprop theater addressing contemporary concerns. The validity of Allen's conclusions, moreover, are suspect. The vehicle which the dramatist employs to champion his position regarding Jewish behavior and Zionist action during the Holocaust is severely flawed. Allen creates a fallacious dramatic situation structured to support his position. He grounds *Perdition* within a resonating and contentious historical model that employs the highly charged symbolism of the swastika. He draws upon the collective memory—or lack of memory—of his audience to create dramatic tension and places the action within the confines of a courtroom setting where the participants are sworn to tell the truth. In the end, however, the play lacks artistic integrity because the historical model is perverted in order to justify the play's own rhetoric.

Individual memories—firsthand testimonies—are extinguished with the death of each Holocaust survivor. The responsibility of memory—of memorialization—will be passed on to the next generation. As Lawrence Langer has said, "As nature engulfs the evidence, which then vanishes, the artist-as-survivor (or assuming the role of one) will be forced to draw on memory alone . . . and then both artist and audience will be faced with the perplexing question of when to stop trusting, and whom."[21] Nowhere is this point clearer than with Jim Allen's *Perdition.* When the play premiered in Edinburgh, prospective audience members had to walk past a group of Holocaust survivors protesting outside the theater.[22] There will come a time, in the not too distant future, when there will be no survivors left to speak out.

Works like *Perdition* that deliberately ignore readily available sources and/or misconstrue the documented record to champion parochial attitudes threaten the didactic and social function of the theater. The theater under such circumstances loses its ability to serve as a place where ideas can be debated and is reduced to a venue for propaganda. History is made fraudulent and political discussion meaningless in a theater that has no respect for historical models and does not differentiate between fact and fiction.

Notes

[1] Barbara Amiel, "Perdition: Killed By Its Blatant Lie," *The Times,* January 24, 1987, p.16b.

[2] Ken Loach and Andrew Hornung, "Censorship and Perdition," *New Statesman,* February 20, 1987, p.18.

[3] Jim Allen, *Perdition* (London: Ithaca Press, 1987) p.35.

[4] Victoria Radin, "Totalitarian Rabbit Hole," *New Statesman,* February 27, 1987, p.25.

[5] Radin, p.25.

[6] Christine Toomey, "A Curtain for Courting Perdition," *The Sunday Times,* January 25, 1987, p.32.

[7] "Play Attacked For 'Slur' on Zionists," *The Times,* January 15, 1987, p.2a.

[8] Radin, p.25.

[9] Irving Wardle, "Why We Should Rue Perdition Cast Out," *The Times,* January 23, 1987, p.20.

[10] Bernard Levin, "Waking The Dead To Revile The Living," *The Times,* February 2, 1987, p.16b.

[11] Levin, p.16b.

[12] Loach and Hornung, p.19.

[13] Toomey, p.32.

[14] Max Stafford-Clark, "Why I Axed Perdition," *Guardian,* March 13, 1987, p.19.

[15] Jim Allen, letter, *Guardian,* March 19, 1987, p.12.

[16] Ken Loach, letter, *Guardian,* March 18, 1987, p.14.

[17] Robert Dawson-Scott, "High Tension," *The Times,* August 18, 1987, p.14h.

[18] Graham Hessel, "Ghetto," *Plays & Players,* 429 (1989), p.25.

[19] Jean Amery, "Antisemitism of the Left." *Radical Humanism,* ed. and trans. Sidney Rosenfeld, Stella P. Rosenfeld (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p.46.

[20] Herbert Lindenberger, *Historical Drama: The Relation of Literature and Reality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p.4 n6.

[21] Lawrence Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), p.289.

[22] "Jewish Protest At Premiere Insult," *The Times,* August 28, 1987, p.1.

The Red Badge of Courage as an Exercise in Hegelian Dialectic

Paul H. Lorenz

Roaming in Thought over the universe, I saw the little that is Good steadily hastening toward immortality, / And the vast all that is call'd Evil I saw hastening to merge itself and become lost and dead.

—**Walt Whitman, *"Roaming in Thought (After reading Hegel)"* (1881)**

WHEN Walt Whitman read Hegel, as the poem "Roaming in Thought" indicates, he discovered a philosophy that not only supported his optimistic assessment of the American potential but also described the mechanism through which that potential was being actualized. That mechanism—the Hegelian dialectic in which a thesis confronts its antithesis and does battle with it until it is purged of its flaws to emerge as a new thesis or synthesis—influenced not only Whitman, but, it can be argued, also Stephen Crane, whose *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895) was clearly influenced by Whitman.[1]

Crane's use of dialectical patterns is evident from the first chapter of the novel. Crane is careful to introduce each of the principal ideas or theses of the novel in a way in which it is linked to its actual or perceived antithesis. Henry's great desire to enlist is coupled with his despair of ever witnessing a Greek-like struggle because now "men were better or more timid. Secular education had effaced the throat grappling instinct or else firm finance held in check the passions." (I, p. 7) On the first page, Jim's report of the rumor that the troops are going to move is immediately confronted with its antithesis, that the rumor is false. The dialectical struggle nearly erupts in violence as the soldiers, without evidence, debate the truth or falsity of Jim's thesis. (I, pp. 5–6) This dialectical struggle can only be resolved by the evidence of time and experience. When the army does not move, Jim's false thesis merges itself with its antithesis and becomes

"lost and dead." (II, p. 13) Similarly, Henry's dream of being a modern-day Achilles is introduced along with the antithetical opinion that Greek-like struggles are impossible in America, where individual soldiers are just part of "a blue demonstration." (I, p. 7)

Even the most basic issue, to Henry at least, whether or not he is a man, is introduced in the context of a thesis confronting its antithesis when Henry asks Jim whether he and his compatriots will stand and fight, or run, when confronted with the test of battle. There is no evidence to resolve this burning issue until the decisive battle between thesis and antithesis is fought, until all the evidence is in, and synthesis is reached in the last chapter. In all chapters except the last, Crane consistently links each thematically important idea that is presented with an immediate discussion of its antithesis. There are examples of this dialectical presentation on nearly every page of the novel before the synthesis is presented in chapter XXIV.

It is clear that the Civil War itself is not the principal focus of Crane's dialectical study. Throughout the novel, the essential similarity of the Northern and Southern troops is emphasized. When Henry finally sees clearly enough to observe the Southern troops, he finds that they are not devils, but men as brave and fearful, as seasoned and inexperienced as the men of his own regiment. (XX, p. 93) In battle, Crane characterizes the equal interaction of the troops as "the encounter of strange beaks and claws, as of eagles." (XXIII, p. 105) As in Whitman's poem, "The Dalliance of Eagles," the treacherous mid-air engagement of the eagles in which the struggle for life involves the risk of precipitous death, the troop's loss of identity and the reemerging of their individual selves are necessary prerequisites, not only for the resolution of conflict but also for the preservation of the species, or, stated politically, for the preservation and redefinition of the nation. In Hegelian terms, the violent dialogue between North and South which forms the background of Crane's novel is the necessary prerequisite to the actualization of a nation of historical significance.

Neither is it correct to view the novel solely as a conflict between the armies and nature. It is true that the armies are frequently described as reptilian monsters and that they seem to be directing their fire at nature, at the trees and the grass, rather than at the enemy; but this strange warfare can be interpreted in terms of the Hegelian dialectic between spirit and nature through which civilizations are defined. In fact, both the first and the last paragraphs of this novel reveal a harmonious relationship between the armies and the nature which surrounds them. The last sentence, which describes the sun breaking through the storm clouds, indicates that nature is satisfied that the dialectical discussion portrayed in the novel has reached a satisfactory synthesis. That synthesis is personified in the changed characters of Henry and the loud soldier Wilson, who has learned to be "the friend." (XXIV, pp. 70–71)

Hegel as Key

The Hegelian text that provides the best key to the interpretation of *The Red Badge of Courage* is *Reason in History: A General Introduction to the Philosophy of History,* a collection of Hegel's lecture notes published posthumously in 1837.[2] These notes describe the operation of dialectical processes in the actual world. The world, which for Hegel operates on rational principles (p. 11), consists of both physical and spiritual realms. Nature or the physical realm comes first, but nature generates its own antithesis, humanity. Human beings generate the realm of spirit which enters into a dialectical struggle with the realm of nature. (p. 20) The realm of the spirit includes everything that has ever or will ever interest humanity.

The study of history interested Hegel because it reveals human nature, that is, the point where the realms of the spirit and of nature intersect and interact. History "represents the rationally necessary course of the World Spirit." (p. 12) Even those events which seem to deviate most strongly from the true nature of the human spirit (such as participation in a civil war) tend, because they are part of the dialectical process of opposites defining the world through confrontation, to reveal that which is truly human within our selves. (pp. 20–21) Thus, history is closely related to the expression of a people's soul and as such is closely tied to morality.

The significance of Henry's actions throughout the novel is related to the Hegelian concept of dialectical definition. Hegel argues that "the criterion of spirit is its action, its active essence. Man is his own action, the sequence of his actions, that into which he has been making himself." (p. 51) When any human being identifies with the universal principles of the spirit, that individual becomes an historical figure, an actualization of the spirit of a people, an actualization of the Hegelian state. According to Hegel:

> All the value man has, all spiritual reality, he has only through the state. For his spiritual reality is the knowing presence to him of his own essence, of rationality, of its objective, immediate actuality present in and for him. Only thus is he truly a consciousness, only thus does he partake in morality, in the legal and moral life of the state. For the True is the unity of the Universal and the particular will. (pp. 52–53)

Thus, for Henry to be moral, he must unite himself with the group. He must reconcile his objective and subjective will into a harmonious whole which recognizes that his personal convictions do not reign supreme. (p. 53) He must recognize that he has a moral duty to unite with his peers to accomplish the common goals of the group.

But before Henry or any other person can be moral in Hegelian terms,

he must have knowledge of his own spirit and his own essence so that he can attain "the consciousness of his original union with it." (p. 63) In chapter I, Henry is aware that he must "accumulate information of himself" if he is to find out what kind of man he really is. (I, p. 11) At one point in chapter XIX, when Henry has enough confidence to lead his compatriots into battle, he looks through the blades of grass on the battlefield and sees everything "bold and clear" for the first time. At this point, he defines heroism as "the temporary but sublime absence of selfishness" and becomes aware that it is this absence of selfishness that gives reason to his existence and to that of the other common soldiers. (XIX, p. 87) Shortly after Henry has this insight, Crane tells us that "within him, as he hurled himself forward, was born a love, a despairing fondness for this flag which was near him." (XX, p. 90) In other words, Henry has been able to meld his personal desire to be a hero with the moral destiny of his state.

In this type of process, Hegel sees the basis of freedom. It is true that Henry seems to be losing something which we sometimes call freedom in joining his desire with that of the state, but for Hegel, all that he is losing is "the caprice of the individual," the "license of particular desires." (p. 50) For Hegel, "law, morality, the State, and they alone are the positive reality and satisfaction of freedom." (p. 50) What counts is the practice of acting according to a common will. (p. 50) When that common will is God's own will, freedom consists in acting in harmony with the divine will. (p. 25)[3]

Morality

Thus, the dialectical processes of Crane's novel, including the question of Henry's manhood, can all be tied to Hegel's conception of morality. While the prosperity or misfortune of Henry as an isolated individual is not essential to the rational order of the universe, Henry is in agreement with Hegel when he insists that good, moral, and righteous purposes should be the motivation for human endeavor. Hegel comments:

> What makes men morally discontented—a discontent on which they pride themselves—is that they do not find the present appropriate for the realization of aims which in their opinion are right and good—especially the ideals of the political institutions of their time. They contrast things as they are with their ideal of things as they ought to be. In this case, it is neither private interest or passion that desires gratification, but reason, justice, liberty. In their name people demand their due and are often not merely discontent but rebellious against the condition of the world.... In our time,... though passions are not wanting, history exhibits partly and predominantly a

> struggle of justifiable ideas and partly a struggle of passions and subjective interests under the mask of such higher pretensions. (p. 46)

As a result of the dialectical process, many of Henry's idealistic dreams, especially those which include being the great warrior, "founder on the rocks of hard reality" and are not actualized. This is in keeping with Hegel's contention that such personally isolated and subjective ideals are not relevant historically. Henry is not Achilles; but inasmuch as he struggles for reason, justice, and liberty, he is more than Achilles, for he is giving divine reason the power to actualize itself. (pp. 46–47) In his personal struggle, he is defining both himself and his nation in historically relevant terms.

A kind of moral heroism is defined by the dialectical struggle between Henry's desire to be an individual hero and his fear that he is merely part of a "blue demonstration." In the early chapters of the novel, before Henry runs from the battle and while he is wandering behind the lines, Henry sees himself as a miserable individual isolated from the other members of his regiment. At the end of chapter I, Henry's miserable individualism confronts its antithesis, the comforting sense of belonging to a group. He is reassured when Jim Conklin tells him that he too might run under certain conditions because it is proof that Henry is not alone in his lack of "a great and correct confidence." (p. 13)

Despite this obvious source of comfort in the group, Henry frequently reverts to his original thesis. When he runs, he feels that he has been betrayed by the group of men who did not run. (VIII, pp. 39–40) He feels alone and above his peers, "an enlightened man who looks afar in the dark," a man of "superior perceptions and knowledge." (VIII, p. 40) In this perception of superiority, of isolation and separateness, Henry reveals himself to be less than a moral man. He is like the squirrel he encountered who was "doubtless no philosopher of his race." (VIII, p. 41) In the chapel in the forest, Henry is appalled by the lesson he learns because it exposes the immorality of his motivations. In the chapel, in the womb of Mother Nature (VIII, p. 41), he discovers that his flight is not to "a religion of peace," to "a woman with a deep aversion to tragedy"; but rather that he, like the decomposing soldier who if nature were a woman would kill his mother, is following a solitary path which will end in the destruction of not only himself but also of the world around him. As Hegel taught, "the morality of the individual . . . consists in fulfilling the duties of his social position" and not in fleeing from these duties. "The basis of duty is the civil life," Hegel argues, "individuals have their assigned business and hence their assigned duties. Their morality consists in acting accordingly." (p. 37)

For Hegel, historical men—heroes—are those who understand the higher purposes of reason, justice, and liberty as goals for a people rather

than for an individual and who work to attain them. The hero's vocation and sense of purpose begin within his own inner spirit which, though it is hidden beneath the surface of the personality, is ready to shatter the established norms of a society with which it is not content. (p. 40) Heroes lead men because ordinary people find "the irresistible power of their own spirit embodied in them" (p. 41). Thus, as Henry's dialectical struggle moves towards synthesis in chapters XIX through XXIII, he is able to rejoin his regiment, accept Wilson as a man equal to himself, and then join Wilson and the lieutenant in leading the regiment into battle. Because Henry has joined his spirit with the spirit of the group, the soldiers readily follow the flag he carries. (XIX, pp. 89–91)

The Burden of Heroism

Given Henry's values, he should be reluctant to take on the burden of heroism. For Hegel there is a fundamental division between the attainment of "greatness" by a hero like Caesar or Alexander the Great or Achilles and the attainment of "happiness." In Hegel's words, it is the "awful fact, that historical men were not what is called happy—for only private life in its manifold external circumstances can be 'happy.' " (p. 41) In the novel, the initial conflict between Henry and his mother concerning the wisdom of his enlisting demonstrates this division. Henry's mother is clearly concerned with the happiness of her son. She argues "with deep conviction" that Henry was "of vastly more importance on the farm than on the field of battle." (I, p. 7) When Henry enlists in spite of her objections, she gives him practical advice about maintaining a moral stance as she goes out of her way to provide him with as many creature comforts as possible. (I, pp. 8–9) Though Henry dreams of "greatness" as he goes off to war (I, p. 9), his final desire, as the novel closes, is for "tranquil skies, fresh meadows, cool brooks—an existence of soft and eternal peace." (XXIV, p. 110)

After demonstrating his heroic manliness on the field of battle, Henry has decided that his mother was right, that happiness resides in private life. In making this decision, Henry seems to be joining Whitman in believing that American heroes need not always be great, that they may be ordinary, moral people who rise to the occasion, but who, when the need for greatness passes, have the wisdom to choose happiness. Crane seems to be joining Whitman's vision in "The Return of the Heroes": "I see the heroes at other toils./ I see well-wielded in their hands the better weapons." (pp. 93–94) Hegel believed that great men act in a realm outside of morality (p. 83), but that older people, like Henry's mother, "have a more mature judgement, which accepts even the bad, not out of mere indifference but because it has been more deeply taught by the grave experience of life." (p. 47) Thus the mature choice, the wise choice, is happiness when possible, greatness when necessary.

Hegel taught that history was not really shaped by individuals, in Henry's terms, "heroes," who act out of a desire to further universal purposes or out of "noble patriotism," but rather by people attempting selfishly to fulfill "their needs, their passions, their interests, their characters, and their talents." (p. 26) Despite the fact that people act to satisfy their own purposes, their actions, seen historically, become the means or tools for the accomplishment of ends which surpass the intent of the individual actor. (p. 31, p. 36) Thus, for Hegel, history is shaped by particular individuals, like Henry, who expect that their opinions concerning the goodness, justice, advantage, and profit of any endeavor which they are a part of be seriously considered as a condition of their participation.

In a comment which can be applied to Whitman's vision of the ideal American, Hegel remarks that "this is of particular importance today when people are moved to support a cause not by faith in other people's authority, but rather on the basis of their own independent judgement and conviction." (pp. 28–29) This mode of thought accounts, in part, for the hostility Crane's soldiers have for the generals, the "stupids" (III, p. 23), who order soldiers to their deaths without considering them to be human beings. (XVIII, p. 85) For Crane and the common American soldiers, such treatment is not morally acceptable. Crane brings this point home when Henry realizes that the statues of war heroes in the parks are the statues of generals who were essentially immoral agents: men who would shoot their own troops if it would accomplish their individual goals. (XX, p. 92) As Hegel contended, this type of great man must act outside of the realm of morality. (p. 83)

Yet what makes Henry and the United States historically significant is that Henry, true to his mother's behest, true to the American ideal, is willing to choose death rather than do "a mean thing." (I, p. 9) Hegel saw America as the "land of the future," the land of synthesis. (p. xiv) The United States, through the actualization of democratic principles, owes its historical significance not to the individual actions of Achilles-like heroes, but to the morality and wisdom of common citizens.

In this context, Henry and Wilson redefine the word hero in American terms. If Crane had wished to preach,[4] he might have paraphrased the words his friend Hamlin Garland used to describe the significance of Edward Smith's actions in "The Return of the Private." Henry and Wilson are the epic figures whom Whitman has in mind and whom he calls the "common American soldier." In the smoke of that far-off battlefield, their figures loom vast, their personal peculiarities fade away, and they rise into a magnificent type.[5] (Garland, pp. 151–152) In Hegel's terminology, such are the world-historical figures who have defined the American people and who, through that definition, have given America a place in history as the first nation to be filled with citizens who can be great when duty calls them to greatness, but who have the wisdom to put the moral life which generates happiness in the highest position of value.

Notes

[1] At least three times in the novel, Henry lies down among the blades of grass to reflect (Ch. II, XIX, & XXIII, pp. 17, 87, 105). At least two other Whitman poems, "The Dalliance of Eagles" (XXIII, pp. 105) and "Look Down Fair Moon," (III, p. 34) are referred to in the novel. "Roaming in Thought," it may be argued, accurately summarizes the thematic structure of Crane's novel. In *Democratic Vistas,* Whitman acknowledges that his vision of America and his ideas concerning the role of the poet are based on Hegelian formulas.

[2] The evidence tying any source to *The Red Badge of Courage* is meager at best. Crane was secretive about his sources, often insisting that he learned everything that went into his war novel on the football field. While I have been unable to locate any direct evidence that Crane had read *Reason in History* before composing *The Red Badge of Courage,* there is abundant evidence to confirm the kind of secondary connection suggested by the Whitman evidence presented in the text. Hamlin Garland admits that he shaped his world view after reading Hegel, as well as Whitman, Darwin, Herbert Spenser, and Hippolyte Taine—all of whom were strongly influenced by Hegel. (Garland, p. x) In a letter to a friend, Crane says that he matured as an artist when he discovered that his "creed was identical with the one of Howells and Garland." (Crane, p. 150) Howells lectured on Taine and was in friendly correspondence with Henry Adams who consciously drew from Hegel's views on history as he shaped his fiction. It would be surprising if Hegel's ideas did not form part of the discussions which took place between Crane and his literary mentors. Hegelian philosophy and the idea of purposeful evolution which his dialectic supported were a fundamental part of the intellectual atmosphere of the 1890s.

[3] When discussing the concept of God or the manifestations of the divine will in Crane, traditional Christian formulations must must be set aside. In his poem "A Little Ink More or Less," a "bastard mushroom sprung from a pollution of blood" is preferred to the "ordered walking of surpliced numskulls." In *The Red Badge of Courage* the chapel at the center of the novel is natural, not man-made. As in his poem "God Lay Dead," moral value is discovered in actions which are in correspondence with natural human inclinations—the sheltering of a loved one—and negative value is discovered in the actions of those who are not awake to the dangers which surround them—the sleeping man. Crane's God is not a general. For Crane the divine will must be interpreted in Hegelian terms: it is a kind of purposeful evolution toward a world of peace and harmony on earth.

[4] In a letter to John Hilliard, probably written in 1897, Crane addressed the issue of moral didacticism in literature:

> I have been very careful not to let any theories or pet ideas of my own creep into my work. Preaching is fatal to art in literature. I try to give the readers a slice out of life; and if there is any moral lesson in it, I do not try to point it out. I let the reader find it for himself. The result is more satisfactory to both the reader and myself. As Emerson said, "There should be a long logic beneath the story, but it should be kept carefully out of sight." (Crane, p. 131)

Many of these ideas which Crane claims he learned from Howells can be found in

slightly modified form in the introduction to Taine's *History of English Literature.* (p. 34)

[5] The paraphrased material from the conclusion of "The Return of the Private" is from the 1891 edition. The conclusion is substantially shorter and less didactic in subsequent editions.

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Romantic Secrets*

Mervyn Nicholson

Does the sower / Sow by night?
Or the Plowman in darkness plow?
—William Blake

SECRETS *are* romantic. Secrets entice, stimulate, and excite; they arouse curiosity and signify power. The technical term "Romantic," referring to Blake, Wordsworth, Byron, and the rest, in fact derives from "romance," meaning a tale of adventure consisting of wishes, marvels, terror, perilous quests. And secrets. The romance originates in antiquity and is one of the oldest literary forms (from it by various twists the mass market commodity labeled "romance" descends). It is characterized by a complicated plot adorned with secrets of all types, of which the birth mystery is central. Secrets form the texture of the Romantic narratives that became prominent in the 1790s: the precedent—indeed stimulus—for Romantic poetry. An elaborate example is Radcliffe's epoch-making Gothic novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). The idea of secrecy is thus built into Romanticism.[1]

Ironically, there really are no secrets in *The Mysteries:* anything that looks like one turns out to be fully explicable—a fact accessible to human reason and fully accepted by common sense. The novel's secrets are disguises for what Emily—and the reader—are not allowed to know until they have gone on unravelling the plot together for a few hundred more pages. The author chooses to display some things, and hide others; to present the action from one viewpoint so as to exclude or conceal other viewpoints. So the secrets are authorial secrets. For example, as *Udolpho* begins, Emily and the reader witness her father secretly weeping over a portrait of a beautiful woman, who is not Emily's mother. Hundreds of pages later we discover that the picture is not an illicit love but an ill-fated sister. The secret is a manipulation of reader by author. She could tell us

*The author wishes to dedicate this essay to the memory of Canada's greatest intellectual, Northrop Frye.

on page 6 who the mysterious woman was, instead of around page 600. But then there would be no story.

But that is the point: withholding parts of the story *makes* the story, the crucial final phase especially. The secret is like a game whose rules are known in advance by both parties, author and reader: some moves are allowed, others are not. The specific kind of exclusion—the content of secret allowed—depends on various factors. Radcliffe, for example, like Scott later, permits no supernatural events: the secrets that sustain the plot must all be plausible—annihilable in due course by reason. This plausibility convention still rules the mystery novel. At the story's end the secrets cease to be secrets: the story vanishes into assumptions about reality that author and (ideally) reader share. In some stories, the secret is brought out only to be at once dissolved, as in, to take a film example, Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey.* Having subdued the nefarious computer HAL (9000 series), the hero uncovers secret information. Here a secret that propels the plot is hidden from the hero but not from his audience, who know what his mission is. However surprising it may be when disclosed, a secret must be implicit in the narrative itself, even a secret that is unlikely or manipulated, as often seems the case. It cannot be wholly arbitrary: the secret must be implicit in at least the world view of the story—plausible in the sense of conformable to the cosmology that the narrative assumes.

This is the first of five cardinal points of secrecy: the arrangement creates the secret. Secrets are a result of narration; an author determines when to reveal what—a principle with many implications. The secret is diachronic in nature, constituted as a sequence in time: the untold—or the not-yet-told—is the secret. The secret as plot-arrangement is conspicuous in detective fiction, which originates in the Romantic narratives of Godwin and Poe. The secret is missing information about a crime—who, why or how (or whatever). On a simple level, say the Scooby Doo cartoons familiar to parents, the secret is literally a mask taken off at the end. Hence one of the conventions of the detective genre is the Explanation Speech at the end; thus Perry Mason holds forth to secretary and assistant (types that Henry James termed *ficelles*), going over the plot to erase any residual inconsistencies. The Explanation Speech sees the story from an author's-eye point of view: a synchronic vision, where the plot is visible from all angles, all at once. This convention is virtually built into the mystery genre—it appears even in works of genius like Chandler's *Farewell, My Lovely.* Skilled writers try hard not to let the machinery clank too noisily when they use it.

In a sense, this type of secret—what authors know but withhold from readers—*is* the plot. Such secrets are a narrative carrot authors dangle before their reader. After pursuing it to the end, the reader earns it—and the author hands it over. In the detective genre, the author begins with an anomalous appearance that eludes reason till the end, when the appear-

ance is cancelled—reduced to full intelligibility. The mystery novel deconstructs mysteries. First the secret looks real, prepossessing: then it is nothing at all; like silence—once you say it, it breaks. The mystery is a mirage: there really is no water on the road or palms by the proverbial oasis. This type of secret is crucial, but it is the lowest level of the secret kingdom.

The secret is double in nature: it implies two levels of reality—the revealed, and the withheld; an outer level and a hidden one that somehow supervenes in it. Only some people, by definition, have access to secrets; reality changes with such access. The disclosure of secrets is associated with the end of childhood and with initiation: a frontier between naive life and adult disillusion. For example in Blake's *Book of Thel,* Thel ("Wish") leaves a beauteous illusory world to find the sickening secrets of death below. The concept of childhood is breaking up according to Neil Postman, whose *Disappearance of Childhood* argues that TV, by giving children access to all secrets, has voided adult secrecy. Hence childhood is radically collapsing. The secret that is a truth hidden by authority is a recurring motif in disillusionment. Santa Claus turns out to be a fiction that masks an absence and so is really a deception or lie (lying is not only a marker of secrets but a form of secret too). The secret belongs to a hidden level of reality, again, that manipulates the apparent level. Typically, what fiction does—the detective genre is an obvious example—is to break this distinction: to make the hidden available and apparent. The secrets vanish.

A shift in perception accompanies secrets. For example, in Melville's *Pierre, or The Ambiguities,* Pierre uncovers a series of secrets, finding first—as revelatory lightning flashes—that he has a half-sister. This forces another perception-shift: the father he idealized was in fact an adulterer. A venerated image turns out to be false, and the whole edifice of Pierre's beliefs, expectations, values shatters. The unfolding of such a secret is what may be termed a "shockpoint": when something one had taken as absolutely true—had counted upon—turns out to be utterly false. Hence a whole way of seeing shifts: now anything may be possible. Keats's heroine in *Isabella,* a parent text of *Pierre,* reaches a shockpoint when she learns that her brothers murdered her lover. She knew things were bad, but had no idea *how* bad: "I knew not this hard life, / I thought the worst was simple misery." Her idea of reality, her world view, did not depict things as they truly are: "I thought some Fate with pleasure or with strife / Portion'd us—happy days, or else to die." Now, in the face of "crime—a brother's bloody knife!" her belief-structure shatters.

Another parent text of *Pierre* is *Hamlet,* which also uses this kind of secret. *Hamlet* begins with a shockpoint: the ghost reveals that Hamlet's uncle is in fact an incestuous murderer, a fratricide and regicide—so that when the court—and the nation—eagerly offer homage to the newly sanctified king, they are bowing to a brutal, appalling killer. The feeling of

nausea peculiar to *Hamlet* is a vibration from the shock of this secret. The secret is ultra-complex, with a myriad of socio-political and other ramifications—yet also as simple as anything can be, because it is, ultimately, the sheer fact of death itself. This "secret" is far huger than any human being can grasp—"the undiscover'd country, from whose bourn / No traveller returns" (3.1.79–80)—a metaphysical unknown. It is what Byron calls "the unknown thing / That hides the past world like to a set sun." (*Don Juan* IX.11)

Satirists mock the conventions of romance and so parody its use of the secret. For example Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* vows to disclose the secret of life, but when it is time to reveal it, a line of asterisks appears instead. A note explains that the MS is imperfect here—so the secret on which the whole work depends is missing. In the Romantics, the key satire is Byron's *Don Juan:* its last event parodies Radcliffe. A ghost turns out to be an amorous woman in disguise. Her identity is left secret—Byron did not finish *Don Juan,* but the incompletion is part of the form of the poem itself. *Don Juan* does reveal secrets—the secrets of human life: the truths that people are not allowed to say, the forbidden truths that people are exploited, sexually frustrated, oppressed. But Byron eschews secrets of plot.[2] Thomas Pynchon's satiric *Crying of Lot 49* uses a similar paradigm. The plot itself is an unravelling of secrets—but the final one, the lynchpin of the others, is deliberately not given to the reader. Here neutralizing one secret merely opens up another, which in turn, once solved, opens another. Revelation expands the scope of secret: the secrets do not vanish—they transform. Unravelling one secret by reason becomes, paradoxically, the deepening of secrecy into something far more threatening: something incapable of solution by reason.

Woman's Mysteries

This observation leads to the second cardinal point: some secrets are not withheld information but things that cannot be verbalized, things that cannot be simply imparted. Such secrets are not units in the manipulating of plot, generated by authorial withholding. Even *The Mysteries of Udolpho* has, as the title's "mysteries" imply, secrets that are "mysterious" almost in a religious sense of matters of faith withheld from reason. A "mystery" is not something that can be known, it is an experience one undergoes. Such experience is like the vision that an initiate in a mystery religion gains: "A sight to dream of not to tell!" as Coleridge says. (*Christabel* 1.253) Mysteries of this type include central doctrines of faith withheld from demotic reasoning and as old, almost, as the hills. Their ancestors are the Greek Mysteries of Eleusis and the rituals of neolithic religion that have long fascinated scholars—mysteries that are almost as little known today—as secret—as when they were practiced.

In Radcliffe, the actual "mystery" is the life cycle itself and its endlessly

unfolding phases—birth, youth (the power of sexual reproduction), adulthood, death. Critics have shown that key features of *The Mysteries*—Emily's secretive father with his papers and lockets, the scary waxwork of the dead people, the hidden existence of the crazed Laurentini—all mark major transitions of the human life cycle.[3] In particular, they emblematize phases of the *female* life cycle, traditionally three in number: maid, mother, crone (= wise woman, not hag)—phases clearly structured by the cycle of reproduction. The kernel of the life cycle—the Ur-secret that no one speaks—is sexual intercourse: a third cardinal point of secrecy. But it is intercourse as a synecdoche for the whole organic process emerging in coitus and terminating in the "wormy circumstance," as Keats puts it, of rotting in the earth: the Hamlet secret. It is the human expression of the same power that generates animals and plants in nature itself—or herself.

Thus we are sexually generated from the body of ancestors—we grow, reproduce, decay, die—and decay some more, turning into the physical means of organic existence. In short, we are a body making other bodies. At a deeper level, then, this secret is the reproductive force of life-in-time, of which the main node of interest is the regeneration of life out of decay and death. Thus the Eleusinian Mysteries of ancient Greece focused on the revelation of the life-power of apparently dead seeds: metaphorically the life-power of the human soul as immortal. The "secret" of the life cycle is not a unit of information but actual experience of intercourse itself, which acts as initiation to the organic rhythm of creation/growth/decay. When Emily "learns" this particular secret, the novel ends. Naturally: for she enters the "mysteries," stepping from the maiden phase into that of full sexual action. Having achieved the lesser "mysteries" of the twisting turns of the plot, the tale itself vanishes as Emily possesses this deeper secret.

The Romantic period coincides with changes in the social paradigm of sexuality. Put simply, a model of sex as private exchange was displacing sex as reproduction. This epochal change stems from shifts in social power as capitalist culture evolves. The market system supplies a new paradigm for affectional/sexual relations—as it did for all relations. Increasingly, sex is seen as a private individual transaction on the model of the free purchase/sale/consuming of objects. In Malthus, sex belongs to those with property; those without must do without: sex is a commodity owned by propertied classes. "An adulterous wife might be the means of implanting a fraudulent claimant upon its property in the heart of the family; to avoid this ultimate catastrophe, middle class women were regulated to . . . an inviolable rule of chastity."[4] Here the secret of sex is an analogue of property, which is also constituted by exclusivity: secrets are exclusively "owned"—like property (and increasingly sex too). The Romantics observed the new paradigm of sex as private exchange, but its full impact comes only in the 20th century, as the timing

of Freud's work shows. Freud signals the historic emergence of sex, not as an object of scientific investigation (which had begun long before, partly under impetus of the development of the microscope) but of medical/psychological therapy: the individualized, scientific brokering of private sex needs and anxieties.

But for the Romantics, sex is participation in a larger being—larger than the individual commodity-owning self: sex dissolves the individualizing imperative. Life begins as a union of two people (generated by four others); it is not a self-contained unit. One is part of something far larger than an isolated self, larger than the scope of private control-power. The writer best known for this view, that sex expresses an identity larger than the individual self, is D. H. Lawrence. True to his Romantic provenance, he hated sex as "dirty little secret," where "dirty" and "secret" are synonyms. As Blake put it: "Does the plowman in darkness plow?" Why deny the larger identity of sexual union? For it is not a commodity to own, use, control; it is not like an object. Love cannot be caged in marriage conceived as exclusive property-ownership. "Can Love be put in a golden bowl?" asks Blake. People driven by the compulsion to control have a predilection for keeping sex a secret, monopolizing access to it (as also to food).

But then secrets are a means of power as compulsion-power. If I know your secret, you are my hostage. What makes a secret secret is that revealing it would be dangerous. It is a secret because public scrutiny makes its owner vulnerable. Hence to be the holder of others's secrets is to become their emotional banker—more exactly their creditor. Or blackmailer. Thus we find the sinister Tulkinghorn, the lawyer in Dickens's epic *Bleak House*. Dickens, an adapter of Romantic narrative, calls Tulkinghorn "keeper of the secrets of the great houses." His power over the powerful, like J. Edgar Hoover's in more recent times, consists of knowing the secrets of the powerful. Tulkinghorn, one notes, is celibate—as is Dickens's other great (and similar) lawyer, Jaggers in *Great Expectations*. He has no sexuality: that is, it is wholly under control and so expresses itself as the control of other people (as in that form of sexuality known as sadism). One's identity in the sexual life cycle makes one vulnerable, not independent but subject to the needs, urges, and decay of the physical body. Having no "secret" of his own—that is, no sexuality—Tulkinghorn seems invulnerable, godlike. For a man like him this is the ideal position: to control others's secrets, while having none of his own. Hence others cannot control him.

But those who deny love, love denies; to kill love—to totally control it—is to be killed. Thus Tulkinghorn is murdered, but not by an aristocrat (one among whom he has authority). No; it is a French maid, a proletarian "guest-worker," who finally gets him: the lowly woman, the least powerful in the hierarchy, reaches up and knocks him off his high perch. This murder is not simple, however: the maid impersonates Lady

Dedlock, whom he has virtually blackmailed. And Lady Dedlock does have a secret: an illegitimate baby. Her daughter, we learn, is the Esther who narrates the story; her birth mystery contains the plot. The secret identity of Esther with her mystic mother is the soul of the novel. The woman with the sexual secret is a favorite figure of Dickens: indeed, a central figure of Romantic narrative as a genre—e.g., Wordsworth's "The Thorn," Scott's *Kenilworth,* Coleridge's *Christabel,* Shelley's *Cenci,* Keats's *Isabella, Lamia,* and *Eve of St. Agnes.*

Archetypally, the woman with the sexual secret is Eve, sexuality being traditionally regarded as inseparable from the fall of man. Thus the woman, representing the secret of sexual desire and the even more mysterious secret of sexual reproduction—and hence the other facts of the life cycle including death—entices the male, who would otherwise be immortal, into a disastrous fallen world. To penetrate the secret of the woman—to have sex—is to be susceptible to the contingencies of a life that inevitably ends in death and biological dissolution. It is, in essence, to lose control. The secret is thus enticing and deadly: lovely first—lethal afterwards. The prime secret—our third cardinal point, once again—is thus *female* sexual power. Because it attracts and frightens males, it is a natural object of control-compulsions by the power hierarchy in society, hitherto, by definition, male.

In Radcliffe, this secret—female sexual power—is converted into the narrative secret of plot construction. That is, she *invokes* mystery as a spiritual secret of the life cycle, but *uses* it as a plot puzzle. What this suggests is a need to rationalize the life cycle by submitting it to reason/control rather than letting it domineer. Thus the underlying secret in the novel, the mainspring secret, as it were, is a cautionary tale: the story of crazed Laurentini's murderous love. This tale is the irruption of a sex energy not properly controlled: a secret to be uncovered in order that the heroine may avoid, even neutralize it. Radcliffe is thus working with a model very like Freud's, with his procedure of recovering forgotten traumas (typically involving fantasies of improper sex desire) in order to expel them. One understands the sexual secret in order to control—or banish—it.

The Manfred Complex

The impulse to neutralize mystery, where mystery is identified with the sexual energy of the life cycle, informs Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*—the first science fiction novel, according to Isaac Asimov, who ought to know. Its symbolic key is the secret of life. Victor Frankenstein is obsessed with finding some big secret of nature to astonish male rivals and is by accident spectacularly successful: he stumbles upon the secret of life. To be able to animate a dead body is not only to be like God (in power) but to be able, presumably, to live forever. The secret of life that Victor finds by

luck is treated as an *object*—as if a chemical he can manipulate in various ways: it is not what one experiences (sexually) but an external—controllable—object. Thus Victor speaks of collecting "the instruments of life" when he starts up the sewn-together body of his adult baby, a body assembled from the flesh of slaughtered animals and human corpses.

Here life is an ingredient that one combines with other ingredients to "make" a human being: it is, so to speak, a chemical additive, not the body's forming-source. Christianity supplies the paradigm for such thinking. As Michelangelo's famous fresco indicates, God is visualized as fashioning an inert body—then adding life to it, like syrup on pancakes. Life is a thing one adds to something already there. Thus a dead body is a living body with the life "subtracted" from it. It seems natural to find a way, therefore, as Frankenstein does, to "add" life to it, and so to reverse death.

Treating life as a manipulable object has a nasty corollary, namely that women and thereby the mystery of reproduction are rendered effectively obsolete. Sexual intercourse—sexual reproduction itself—can now be discarded, along with, presumably, the female sex (all the females appearing in *Frankenstein* perish); and workers, too, with their annoying "habit of reckless breeding"[5] that the Reverend Malthus decried shortly before Mary Shelley's novel appeared. Sex could now be converted totally to private ownership. One could manufacture whatever workers one needed and not be at the mercy of their re/productive powers. For Victor, the secret of life means the control of life. But the control of life, in practice, is death-power. The secret ceases to be a "mystery," in the sense of being real but inaccessible to reason, and becomes a weapon of control: a means of (inflicting) death—precisely what the wretched monster in the novel becomes.

A secret is by definition exclusive. To receive secrets exposes one to power—either power in the sense of manipulating others or of being manipulated. Secrets thus belong to the area of power poetics—the shaping of texts by power relations. The fourth cardinal point of secrecy is thus that secrets are a unit of control. Plato's Noble Lie in *The Republic* is an archetype here: subordinates are told that rulers are made of gold, guards of silver, and workers of clay, and that all human beings are born of the same parent, the Earth. The secret is a lie to hide truth. Secrets = exclusive truth = social power = coercion. Typically this fourth cardinal point comes down to male control of (female) sexual power. Secrets enable the powerful to control others (as in Tulkinghorn's case). The secret thus enables tyranny. This is a basic reason why secrecy is so much distrusted, even despised, by the Romantics and their heirs, writers like D. H. Lawrence.

In *Women in Love,* Lawrence repeatedly links secrecy with evil, notably with the compulsion to control others and the self—to turn oneself into a rigid structure, a machine not an organic body. Lawrence is close here to

Wilhelm Reich's theory that personality is encoded in the body; repressed emotion presents as chronic muscle tension. Muscle tension (Reich calls it "armoring") makes release in orgasm impossible. Lawrence's Loerke tries to capture the "souls" of living beings in his sculptures; that is, he reduces the secret of life to a controllable object. Chillingworth in Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* displays this impulse, sadistically preying on Dimmesdale. He manipulates Dimmesdale's sexual secret to torture/control him. The compulsion to control naturally perceives sexual love as domination, that is, as violence; converting living bodies, in effect, to dead ones. Hence the sexual creating of life is bizarrely equated with destroying it, which is not so paradoxical: there is a common factor between giving life and taking it—control power. Such control has the intensity peculiar to displaced sexuality. Indeed, it yields the killer's addictive "high"; as mystery writer P. D. James says, "what it felt like to be a god. He had the power to take life or to bestow it." (*A Taste for Death* [New York, 1985] p. 406)

The secret begins as a unit of plot manipulation: what the author withholds in order to reveal later. In a sense, that is what the plot is: the revealing of secrets. Next, the secret is something that cannot be revealed; by its nature it is not accessible to knowledge, only experience. On this deeper level, the secret is the life cycle and its mysterious energy: the secret of woman. Hence the secrets in the narrative are points of access to this deeper phase of the secret. Not approachable directly, this numinous power is hedged round with protective screens, sacrifices, rituals. Power is often articulated as controlling access to this numinous reality. The secret is secret *power,* something women embody but that men wish to control, and in the attempt typically bring disaster to themselves and others.

In Coleridge's Romantic narrative *Christabel,* the title character, a beautiful maiden, finds another beautiful maiden, Geraldine, in the midnight forest outside her castle and brings her home. Geraldine—a witch—casts a spell on Christabel. Cradling her, perhaps seducing her, Geraldine reveals her own naked body: half beautiful, half like a corpse. Coleridge carefully unites in Geraldine the phases of the life cycle: birth/sexuality/death. Her bodily revelation paralyzes Christabel, who is rendered speechless, like Zacharias dumbfounded in Luke 1. Geraldine is a complex figure of duality, presented as both victim and victimizer. She shows Christabel a secret—a power not known to her—even as she takes control of Christabel's life away from her.

Christabel is one of the parent texts of Byron's *Manfred.* Manfred is a man of greatness, but he is paralyzed by guilt for having hurt his beloved Astarte. Astarte may (not) be his sister—Byron is studiously evasive about this. But somehow his intimate self-disclosure destroyed her: "I loved her, and destroyed her!" he cries. (2.3.118) Manfred's deadly self-disclosure, like Geraldine's to Christabel, damaged her, but how—what

he showed or did to her—remains secret. One expects this secret, given the conventions of story described above, to be revealed after a respectable quantity of plot convolutions. Thus Byron dutifully produces two characters who act as a reader-friendly chorus to discuss what Manfred did, so that we can find out. But just as we get to the Big Revelation, the scene breaks off: the secret stays secret. Such teasing of the reader is not untypical of the inventive Lord Byron. Readers, frustrated by not knowing what Manfred did to Astarte, have filled in the gap with the most exciting and secret secret one could wish—namely an incestuous passion between Manfred and Astarte.

The real secret is much simpler: Manfred has violated the mystery of the life force as manifested not just by sex but by love/consanguinity. By hurting one he loved, Manfred was in fact destroying his power to love: damaging the life-energy within himself. Hence his state of paralyzing alienation. In this way, *Manfred* resembles Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter;* the male protagonist, Dimmesdale, has a secret: his improper love for Hester, his participation in the unfolding life cycle on its own terms of physicality and bodily desire. In Hawthorne, Chillingworth is a Mephistopheles who controls the paralyzed Dimmesdale by manipulating his secret; both males are existentially inauthentic. One recalls Dickens's Tulkinghorn, who, like Chillingworth, is visualized as magical: a being outside the sexual cycle.

This complex, so common in modern writing, consists of male alienation from (1) sexual love but also from (2) the authentic process of life-in-time. One of the oddest figures in fiction is Popeye in Faulkner's *Sanctuary,* whose sexual incapacity causes him, in a scene one seldom rereads, to rape a girl with a corncob. Hemingway uses this complex in *The Sun Also Rises,* more delicately. Jake's sexual incapacity spells alienation of an especially irritating kind. The behavior of these men makes no sense until we understand their secret. Faulkner, parodying romance, postpones the revelation until the end, where an Explanation Speech tells why Popeye is as he is. The secret is a disruption of the sexual life cycle (and its numinous energy)—here, male impotence, which acts as metaphor for a male's incapacity to participate in the sexual power of life. Psychologically this rupture is not just a failed or inappropriate approach to the life force—it attempts to manipulate life: like Frankenstein, to dominate without reciprocity. This is the Manfred complex: a male compulsion to control. Being inherently frustrating, this compulsion results in despair or (as in *Sanctuary*) enraged violence. Males suffering from the Manfred complex are outside life-in-time, cut off from its numinous reproductive power. Hence they are stuck in time, paralyzed by their need to control: what Blake calls "Jealousy."

As information withheld by author from reader, "Secrecy," Frank Kermode says, "is nothing more than our own bewilderment projected into the text." (*The Genesis of Secrecy* [Cambridge, 1979] p. 143) The

course of the plot, then, is to turn the secrets over, ending as the plot itself ends. Such a secret is a unit of plot-formation integral to Romantic narrative. But there is another kind of secret: secrets that are points of contact with a power that cannot be verbalized or intellectually contained. This power has a sexual form, the experience of the reproductive power of life-in-time. The power is thus transformation-force: it manifests as bodily existence: sexual genesis; eating; excreting; growing; decaying; dying—and rotting: the containing form of all human experience. For the most part this force is visualized as embodied in women, and in nature (which is visualized as female). The plot secret often involves a male encounter with this power and, as in *Frankenstein,* an attempt to control it, usually disastrously.

The Secret World

Secrets imply a split between two kinds of reality: a foreground world where secrets are secret and a background world where secrets are revealed. Hence secrets imply two kinds of people: those who know and those who don't; that is to say, those with power and those without. This secret background reality manifests as a force—the life-force embodied in women. But there is more to this background secret phase of reality than the unfolding of the reproductive power-in-time. This is the fifth cardinal point, then: ordinary experience blocks from view a different kind of reality altogether.

Secrets fascinate writers in the Romance tradition. Of these writers, Radcliffe, Scott, and Byron are especially important; Dickens is their heir in the Victorian era. Dickens was obsessed with secrets as a technique of both plot and character, splitting his plot into foreground and background. Characters in the foreground world are plausible; in the background the same characters are folktale figures. Thus, in *Great Expectations*'s foreground Miss Havisham is eccentric and rich; in the background she is a witch. Orlick appears as a surly worker; he is a demon in the background world. Joe in the foreground is kind and timid; the background Joe is an angel. In Dickens, everybody's identity is double, one part socially available in the foreground world, the other part hidden in a background that periodically intervenes in the plausible world, to cause explosive changes in the plot.

Everybody in Dickens, moreover, is connected to everybody else. This is the hidden truth to which all the secrets in the foreground action refer. Outwardly, society appears to be a heap of separate human atoms, each pursuing self-interest independent from all the others and brought together mainly by exchange-acts. The hidden world is visualized in mystic terms; Dickens associates it with fate; it is usually violent in its manifestations—irruptions into the foreground action, so to speak. Secrecy in Dickens is thus a hidden pattern that time explicates; time

draws forth possibilities hidden in a mysterious background world. The present is a disguise for the secret of future events, which can overturn, transform, and negate the solid, eternal-seeming forms of the present moment. Thus in *Little Dorrit* the Clennam house, symbolizing oppressive social/psychic control, collapses, as does the big Chancery suit in *Bleak House. A Tale of Two Cities* uses the same rhythm: revolutionary upheaval shatters the eternal-seeming monarchy. But however future-directed, the secret is a nugget of the past: a bringing-into-the-present of the past. Or rather, the secret belongs to another kind of time altogether than that of a vanishing present, vanished past. Thus it reveals outward reality as in fact the unfolded form of a hidden enfolded energy. This is the secret world theme again, except that here it cannot be visualized as a place or thing. It is a transformative power, which, mysterious as it is, has a literary history to be examined.

Changing Secrets

Romantic secrets have to be seen in the context of a complex experiment with an alternative cosmology. This new model makes more sense now than it did when many of the works discussed were written. The new cosmology emerged out of opposition to preceding models. By cosmology, I do not mean just a scientific or proto-scientific model of nature, but also a model of reality that embodies the social values of the culture that created the model: a way of seeing experience that is designed to organize social labor and rationalize the existing power relations in society. Of this immense topic, only features crucial for secrets will be dealt with here.

In precapitalist culture, the authority/subordinate paradigm ruled: society visualizes God as a male being not unlike the feudal lord who commanded the social hierarchy. Thus He is an invincible King who can do anything He likes: "For all we have is his: what he list doe [i.e., wishes to do], he may," Spenser says, articulating an axiom of his culture. (*Faerie Queene,* 5.2.41) Since He created everything, He knows everything; properly speaking there are no secrets. God is He "from whom no secrets are hid," as the Book of Common Prayer says. Hiding from authority is folly, as Eve and Adam find. Subordinates do not have secrets from authority. Authority, by corollary, must have secrets from inferiors, for secrets are the insignia of authority, as lodged in an immutable, pre-established social construct. God reveals secrets to humanity in His own time and way, but anything human is open to God. Jesus's aphorism that what is said in secret will be shouted from the rooftops may be contrasted with the cynical dictum of Benjamin Franklin that three may keep a secret, if two of them be dead. The old cosmology—Jesus notwithstanding—identifies the established power structure with God's will.

The cosmology that destroyed and replaced the old may be referred to

as the Object Cosmology because it visualizes reality as a pile of independent material objects in space, held together by impersonal forces. Society is visualized as a gigantic market in which each individual is competing/trading with other individuals, separately and on the basis of impersonal regulating laws, like Ricardo's law of comparative advantage or the law of supply/demand. Even marriage, like sexuality, is conceived as a contract or investment: "Marriage was not automatic, it was a choice, the outcome of *cost-benefit calculations* for both men and women."[6] Some people glue the old God onto the Object Cosmology, but its logic is atheistic. Nature and the market system run themselves and do not need a superior authority to regulate things any more than society needs a class of hereditary *rentiers.* Despite cracks, the Object Cosmology still dominates our society.

Secrets in the Object Cosmology disappear as the insignia of authority, and reappear as knowledge of nature: as essentially measurements of nature. Secrets in the Object Cosmology are material ones: a matter of probing the structure of nature so as to manipulate it according to one's wish. This is a market attitude; the secrets of nature are analogous to the secrets of the market. Indeed they *are* secrets of the market, for it is by knowing—and so controlling—nature that advantage over competitors is won. Modern science is a child of mercantile capital, notably in northern Italy and Holland.[7]

But as it revealed an unlimited field of secrets in the infinity of material nature, the Object Cosmology generated a problem unique to itself. The "real" nature of existence is an arrangement of objects in space moving by impersonal laws: a vision of meaninglessness. Thus the real truth—the ultimate secret—is that, as scientist Jacques Monod put it, "man knows at last that he is alone in the universe's indifferent immensity out of which he emerged only by chance." (*Chance and Necessity* [New York, 1972], p. 180)

If reality = material objects and nothingness, then what is hidden behind experience is literally nothing. Thus, Marlow voyages up river to the "heart of darkness" of Conrad's novel to learn from Kurtz an oracular final truth: "the horror, the horror." Such "implacable nihilism," as the editor of Byron, J. J. McGann, calls it, haunts post-Romantic literature.[8] When Mrs. Moore in Forster's *Passage to India* enters the famous Marabar cave, she has such a counter-epiphany: the heart of reality is evacuated—revealed as a mocking void—"ou-boom," like the gross grin of Yorick's skull in *Hamlet.* (The cave is traditionally the earth-womb: the site of the revelation of the female/natural reproductive power.) Beckett's "unnamable" and Ibsen's "Great Boyg" in *Peer Gynt* are other examples. By 1900, the vision of a devouring nothingness behind reality was common, flourishing in some authors but affecting all; yet it originated in the Romantics—the earliest example is probably Goethe.[9] This secret, again, is a mystery: it is not anything one can really verbalize, for it

presents as a chilling feeling—not as an intellectual construct. It is the alienation of the Object Cosmology.

C. S. Lewis's *Voyage to Venus* conveys this secret horror especially well. The scientist Weston—an "un-man" in process of demonic possession that steadily consumes his ego-identity—discloses an appalling nihilism:

> ". . . what all men get to when they're dead—the knowledge that reality is neither rational nor consistent nor anything else. In a sense you might say it isn't there. 'Real' and 'Unreal,' 'true' and 'false'—they're all on the surface. They give way the moment you press them. . . . All the things you like to dwell upon are outsides. A planet like our own . . . or a beautiful human body. All the colours and pleasant shapes are merely where it ends, where it ceases to be. Inside, what do you get? Darkness, worms, heat, pressure, salt, suffocation, stink."

Life is bad in the "un-man's" ghastly vision—death is worse. Claudio says it in *Measure for Measure:* life is "a paradise / To what we fear of death." The only rational behavior is to pursue self-gratification as distraction, a form of egoism that usually translates in practice as dominating others.

The model for Lewis's "un-man" Weston was the "un-Dead" Dracula—Bram Stoker's novel is a major influence in Lewis's science fiction. Dracula has replaced the sexuality of the life cycle with feeding on beings lodged within it; thus independent, he embodies superhuman control/domination. Like the nihilistic vision he symbolizes, Dracula has a Romantic—Gothic—ancestry. Indeed, he suffers the "Manfred complex" described above: the male attempt to externally control the power of the life cycle, which, impossible by its very nature, results in violence and despair. Dracula's precursor is Melmoth the Wanderer in Maturin's Gothic novel of that name, who uses extended life to prey on people in an effort to "win" a devilish contest over ownership.[10]

The secret is a paradox. It is known—but also non-known at the same time. A secret thus splits people in two groups: the knowers, and the non-knowers. This can be condensed into the phenomenon of the same person knowing and not-knowing at the same time—Orwell's "doublethinking." This paradox of knowing/not-knowing can be rationalized as a sequence: one doesn't know—then one does. What began as a secret disappears. But it is possible to forget what we know: unconsciously we know; consciously we do not—we have forgotten. Thus the secret marks a barrier, dividing levels of the self. This is our fifth cardinal point about secrets: a secret realm exists "behind" the normal screen of reality; here, the unconscious mind.

This secret level implies a model of the self very unlike that of the Object Cosmology. In the Object Cosmology, the self is monolithic—an atomic unit separate from all similarly atomic units, the self being fixed, as in the primitive but paradigmatic model of the ("not-cuttable") atom. But this self is illusory. In his original essay, "On Life," Shelley argues that "the existence of distinct individual minds" is "a delusion. The words *I, you, they,* are not signs of any actual diference subsisting between the assemblage of thoughts thus indicated, but are merely marks employed to denote the different modifications of the one mind." A self is not like a monetary unit—a single thing always identical to itself. The self is more like a light: it has a bright center but (unless blocked) an infinite range. Hence mind and self have degrees, levels; one is not a determinable unit. It further follows that body and mind are not separate; they interpenetrate, as if the body were really a form or phase of mind and vice versa.[11] The Object Cosmology privileges abstraction and control; its self is the conscious mind. But if so, where is one when one is asleep?

Here we approach a secret forming the inmost layer of Romantic poetry, as displayed in two major works: Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound.* Two secrets dominate *The Rime.* First, why does the Mariner kill the albatross? The Mariner baldly says he did it—no explanation. This Object mystery is bogus; the reason that there is no reason is that there is no reason. Except to display power by killing, to kill the albatross is an act of meaninglessness to prove life's meaninglessness—why *not* cruelly take a fellow life? The second secret marks a turning point: the Mariner, burdened by the body of the martyred Albatross hung round his neck, blesses the water snakes and miraculously feels release from the state of life-in-death alienation that grips him after murdering the bird. This "blessing" is not an act of the reasoning/acquisitive/verbalizing/competing self—the Object self—for it comes spontaneously: "Unaware" (the Mariner repeats the word). It is an act of grace visualized in religious form. Whatever it is, it is a secret reconnection with a hidden source of life-energy that is called divine, yet is at the same time natural and human. The Mariner kills the bird as a symbolic attempt to control the life cycle energy; by "blessing" the watersnakes, he acknowledges identity within that energy, abandoning his compulsion to externally manipulate it—and himself.

The heart of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*—one of the great scenes of Romantic literature—is the meeting with Demogorgon (2.4.6–160), who calls himself "Eternity." (3.1.52) Asia finds Demogorgon by recalling a forgotten dream. Thus Demogorgon is reached by Plato's *anamnesis,* "unforgetting," by unrepressing a layer of awareness, like Prometheus at the outset struggling to "recall" the past. Milton's Demogorgon in *Paradise Lost* is elemental chaos; Shelley's is primary reality, primary in the sense

of originating: where things come from—not the randomness that Object thinkers believe in. Demogorgon echoes Asia's own words; by her questions, she is penetrating more deeply into her own psyche. Hence the secrets Demogorgon shows are a revolutionary break in the barrier of her mind, a flowing upward of her own inmost knowledge. This revelation is too anxiety-arousing for ordinary awareness to entertain; it is the secret that one is in origin or nature divine; to recognize something divine within the self: a key Romantic belief.

In this respect Demogorgon is her own secret self. This self is not an atomic unit; it is rather the fundamental source, where reality is coming from, what Mary Shelley in her notes to the play termed "Primal Power." It is what Jung calls the "superconscious," and Jesus in the Gospels "the Father." It is the power by means of which faith and miracles are possible—"miracles" being, as Blake insists, not acts of external manipulation (an outside person changing another person or thing) but acts of releasing the power of faith within the recipient of the miracle.[12] Miracles, that is, are acts of self-transformation triggered by the faith of another. The secret here is not an external truth; it is a communication with the self, a revelation that one knew all along but could not accept, and thus never allowed into awareness. Owen Barfield terms it "creation . . . not some fantastic 'creation out of nothing,' but the bringing farther into consciousness of something which already exists as unconscious life."[13] Hence the numinous life cycle energy identified with women is something more like time itself: where time is coming from. Sexual reproduction thus manifests *temporal* reproduction: the replicating of things that constitutes reality, reality being not a pile of objects in space but transformation in time, as modern physics in fact says it is. What looks like solid objects is really a body of time-crystals.

The ultimate Romantic secret, therefore, is the existence of a power in time which is the substratum of all things. In the words of Klopstock that Mahler chose for his Resurrection symphony: "All that was created must die, and all that must die will rise again." Reality is not objects in space but the manifesting of an energy that is generating them—objects, space, and our identity included. We are part of it: it is not something external to us. This is central to Wordsworth in "Tintern Abbey," to Keats in *Endymion* and his Hyperion poems, to Shelley in *Adonais*—indeed to all the Romantics. It remains the core of Romantic-influenced poetry, for example that of Wallace Stevens. "I have felt" it, Wordsworth says in "Tintern Abbey"—

> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,

And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

Notes

[1] On romance see Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture* (Cambridge, 1975) and Jay Macpherson, *The Spirit of Solitude* (New Haven, 1984).

[2] See my "Indeterminacy in Byron," *English Studies in Canada*, 16:1 (March, 1990); pp. 35–53. "The real mystery, *the mystery of fiction* conceals several truths, some of which, like mystery itself, cannot be contained, not even by the fiction." (David Grossvogel, *Mystery and Its Fictions* [Baltimore, 1979] p. 107.

[3] For example Mary L. Fawcett notes that the recurrent "corpse-visions give out the secrets of sexual love," ("*Udolpho*'s Primary Mystery," *SEL* 23 [1983]: pp. 488–95, p. 493); the bed is an image of both sexuality and death.

[4] Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: the Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800* (London, 1981), p. 30. "Traditional Christian teaching on the subject [was] that sex interferes with the true vocation of man—the search for spiritual perfection. That is why Christian teaching exalted celibacy and virginity as the highest states of human existence." (Jeffrey Richards, "Manly Love and Victorian Society," *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity 1800–1940*, eds. J. A. Mangan and James Walvin [New York, 1987], pp. 92–122, p. 93). The shift in sex paradigm is the current focus of intense scholarly interest; for a range of references see my "Sex and Spirit in Wollstonecraft and Malthus, "*Journal of the History of Ideas* 51 (1990; pp. 401–23).

[5] J. Banks, *Victorian Values: Secularism and the Size of Families* (London, 1981), p. 19. On the "gynocidal" aspect of *Frankenstein* and related themes see Brian Easlea, *Fathering the Unthinkable: Masculinity, Scientists and the Nuclear Bomb* (London, 1985); Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters* (New York, 1988), pp. 89–114.

[6] Alan MacFarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction 1300–1840* (Oxford, 1986), p. 322; my emphasis.

[7] As Max Planck put it, "in its origins the whole of physics, its definitions as well as its entire structure, is in a sense anthropomorphic in character." ("The Unity of the Physical World-Picture," *Physical Reality: Philosophical Essays on Twentieth-Century Physics*, ed. Stephen Toulmin (New York, 1970), pp. 1–27, p. 7. Specifically, "Science's new way of seeing the world developed from the perspective of the new kind of social labor or artisans and the inventors of modern technologies." (Sandra Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism* [Ithaca, 1986], p. 218). Science originates in social conflict; see Mario Biagioli, "Galileo's System of Patronage," *History of Science*, 28, part 1, No. 79 (March, 1990), pp. 1–62. Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind: the Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago, 1987) probes what I term Object thinking, especially pp. xxii–xxiii.

[8] And criticism too. McGann, *The Romantic Ideology* [Chicago, 1983] p. 86) echoes Paul de Man's dogma: "Nothing, whether deed, word, thought, or text, ever happens in relation, positive or negative, to anything that precedes, follows

or exists elsewhere, but only as a random event whose power, like the power of death, is due to the randomness of its occurrence." ("Shelley Disfigured," *English Romantic Poets*, ed. Harold Bloom [New York, 1986], pp. 297–318, p. 317). This is Object thinking *par excellence*.

[9] See *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, tr. C. Hutter (New York, 1962), p. 63.

[10] *Melmoth* focuses on "existential themes: absurdity, isolation, failure of communication, loss of freedom, and the lack of responsible commitment." (Mark Hennelly, "*Melmoth the Wanderer* and Gothic Existentialism," *SEL*, 21 [1981], pp. 660–70, pp. 665–66): all are *Dracula* themes.

[11] Compare physicist David Bohm: a person is not "an independent actuality who interacts with other human beings and with nature. Rather, all these are projections of a single totality. As a human being takes part in the process of this totality, he is fundamentally changed in the very activity in which his aim is to change that reality which is the content of his consciousness. To fail to take this into account must inevitably lead one to serious and sustained confusion in all that one does." *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* [London, 1980], p. 210)

[12] See Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry* (Princeton, 1947), pp. 81–82.

[13] Owen Barfield, *Poetic Diction: a Study in Meaning* (London, 1962), p. 112.

General Uttermosts Confussion

Marian S. Robinson

JOHN Bishop's revolutionary study of the *Wake* begins with the comment that "sooner or later, a reader of *Finnegans Wake* would do well to justify to himself its stupefying obscurity: for even as its most seasoned readers know, *Finnegans Wake* was wilfully obscure. It was conceived as obscurity, it was executed as obscurity, it is about obscurity."[1] The basic obscurity stems from the fact that the *Wake* centers on the unconsciousness of a human being "blackedout" for the period of a full night's sleep: "You mean to see we have been hadding a sound night's sleep? You may so."[2] Such a "tropped head" human being "knows" no space or time. *Finnegans Wake* is set in what one might call the elusive present: there is no past, no future, no logical progression of events through time. Space disappears. Where we are at any given moment is also elusive and shifting. The reader is in the dim and deepest reaches of the human entity. We have simply the unknowable and un-no-able workings of the sleeping human body.

One of the odd parallels with Joyce's attempt in the *Wake* to give us the deepest, least accessible workings of the human organism is found in the work of physicists, contemporary with Joyce, attempting to ascertain the deepest constituents of matter. Werner Heisenberg in a 1934 address said that a fundamental assumption of classical physics attacked by post-Einsteinian physics was "the tacit assumption that there existed an objective course of events in space and time, independent of observation; further, that space and time were categories of classification of all events, completely independent of each other, and thus represented an objective reality, which was the same to all men."[3] This is precisely the tacit assumption in pre-20th century art that 20th century writers and painters were assailing in the 1920s and 30s. No one has gone further in shattering these commonly accepted beliefs about time and space than James Joyce in *Finnegans Wake.*

In the *Wake,* time and space are not only fractured, distorted but are both inter-dependent and totally subjective. *Finnegans Wake* takes place, from the interrupted sentence at the beginning of the work to the fragmented beginning of that sentence at the end, within this sleeping body, this man "tropped head." The problems for a reader of this "all-night's newsery reel" oddly echo the problems for modern physicists in Niels Bohr's concept of complementarity, which deals with the problem in modern physics of measurement. The elementary particles are so elusive that one cannot ultimately measure the particles themselves, but only the process of observation.[3] Similarly, the closer one studies and analyzes and dissects the individual words, phrases, and passages in the *Wake,* the more elusive and mysterious the whole becomes.

There are also parallels here with other art: with the mosaic wherein the closer one is, the more obscure the pattern; with Monet's post-impressionist water-lilies series, painted in the years when Joyce, having completed *Ulysses,* was beginning work on the *Wake.* There is no clear compositional focus in Monet's later paintings. Art critics note that in the nympheas series the lilies seem to float freely, as though continued beyond the margins. When one moves back from the canvas, the colors and brushstrokes coalesce into flowers in water; as one moves closer, the images disappear into individual brushstrokes and paint. This is exactly the case with the *Wake.* As the reader examines minutely Joyce's brushstrokes in the *Wake,* the form of the whole disappears. Another parallel with the *Wake* is found in the cubism of Picasso. Rosenblum, in defining cubism as it applies to Picasso, says that Picasso's spatial positions are in "a constant state of flux, shifting their relative locations according to a changing context." Time in the *Wake* is as ambiguous as space and, as with Picasso, forces the reader to assume that the work is "pieced together from multiple and discontinuous viewpoints."[4] The multiple and discontinuous viewpoints in the *Wake* are those of parts of the sleeping body—the blood rushing through the veins, the pounding of the heart, the pressure on the bladder, the stiffening of the penis—uncoordinated by the conscious brain.

Modern Physics in Parallel

But even more striking perhaps are the parallels with post-Einsteinian physics. Heisenberg again describes an analogous phenomenon in physics, a concept he says has become "an axiomatic foundation of modern physics": that there lies between what is called "past" and what is called "future" a small interval, the duration of which is determined "by the position of the observer who is deciding on 'past' or 'future' and by the location of the events whose course in time is being investigated."[5] There is no "past" or "future" for the "tropped head" in the shifting, relative, dreamlike world of the sleeper at Finnegans Wake; the reader, the

observer, in the very act of reading, analyzing, adds those concepts, determining the pastness or futureness of events which in the text itself elude such definitions. Heisenberg's uncertainty principle states that "a measurement of an electron's velocity is inaccurate in proportion as the measurement of its position in space is accurate, and vice versa; . . . [therefore] to speak simultaneously of a definite position and a definite impulse of a particle is meaningless."[6] The obscurity of *Finnegans Wake* stems in large part from exactly this shifting, elusive time and space. In a traditional novel, like Joyce's *Portrait* or even *Ulysses*, scenes, vignettes, events are woven into the flow of the novel. We can place them easily in time and space, with a clear sense of what is past and what is to come. *Finnegans Wake* cannot be rendered sensible in such a wideawake, goahead fashion. There is no definite position in the *Wake*. Just as with the measurements of an electron's velocity and position in space, the stasis and flow in the *Wake* are inseparable, elusive; it is meaningless to attempt to pinpoint the "allnight's newsery reel" of the *Wake* in either space or time.

Any passage at any point in the "seim anew" world of the *Wake* can illustrate this. But a passage about half way through—an "interlude" in Chapter iii of Book II, the longest and probably the densest chapter in the *Wake*—both illustrates this concept and indicates Joyce's awareness of and interest in the developments of modern physics. The passage is self-contained, one of Joyce's shorter "set-pieces" in the *Wake*. It is, perhaps, a radio broadcast, with moving pictures flashing simultaneously. William York Tindall calls it a " 'verbivocovisual' TV" and adds "What matter there was no TV at the time of Earwicker's dream or Joyce's writing?"[7] Here is the passage:

> The abnihilisation of the etym by the grisning of the grosning of the grinder of the grunder of the first lord of Hurtreford expolodotonates through Parsuralia with an ivan-morinthorrorumble fragoromboassity amidwhiches general uttermosts confussion are perceivable moletons skaping with mulicules while coventry plumpkins fairlygosmotherthem-selves in the Landaunelegants of Pinkadindy. Similar scenatas are projectilised from Hullulullu, Bawlawayo, empyreal Raum and mordern Atems. They were precisely the twelves of clocks, noon minutes, none seconds. At someseat of Oldanelang's Konguerrig, by dawnybreak in Aira. (p. 353.22–32)

The passage begins with a Joycean version of "annihilation of the atom." Atomic fission (Tyndall says Joyce invented that, too) is created from (Latin, *ab*) nothing (Latin, *nihil*) and in turn creates nothing, annihilates. Joyce includes the annihilation of the word (Greek, *etym*) as well as the

creation of the word—logos—from nothing. Polyglot portmanteau words like "grisning," "grosning," "grinder," and "grunder," besides being a Joycean ablaut (the transformation of the etym, word?), suggest both semantically and onomatopoeically noise and chaos. The passage, in fact, is full of "uttermosts confussion" stemming from fission and fusion.

In "first lord Hurtreford expolodotonates" there is reference to explosions and detonations coming from Lord Rutherford's splitting of the atom in 1919. "Perceivable moletons skaping with mulicules" which were "projectilised" reinforces the destructive potential of atomic physics: from experiments with molecules and nuclei come projectiles. "Skaping" combines "shaping" and "escaping," as "moletons" gives us the secret burrowing animal with the potentially destructive—and noisy—hammer (Russian, *molat*).

The Russian root reveals how international this "abnihilisation of the etym" is. The whole world is involved: England with Coventry and Piccadilly ("Pinkadindy") in London; Honolulu; Bulawayo in Rhodesia (as well as Russian, *balavayu*, I play pranks); Imperial Rome; modern Athens. In "Empyreal Raum" he includes the *lebensraum* of Hitler's Germany and the Empyrean itself, threatened by the murderous modern ("mordern") creation: the split atom. Russia is evoked earlier in the Urals ("Parsuralia"), Ivan the Terrible ("ivanmorinthorrorumble") and *groznyi*, terrible, in "grosning."

In "mordern Atems" Joyce compresses not only contemporary Athens, Edinburgh (the modern Athens), but the murdering of the spirit, "Atem," which is the creator in the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* as well as German for breath. Another deity, Thor with his avenging thunderbolts, appears here as well (". . . thorrorumble") reinforcing the noise and horror of this "mordern" world.

This passage is also a modern fairytale, as the world of modern physics seems a fantasy land to the laity. Immediately before this interlude, Joyce blends allusions to the nursery story of Cock Robin shot by the sparrow with Ragnarok, the final judgment of the gods ("With my how on armer and hit leg an arrow cockshock rockrogn. Sparro!" p. 353.20–1), just as here he merges the story of Cinderella with the countdown to ultimate world destruction. "Plumpkins fairlygosmotherthemselves" and "twelves of clocks" make us all 20th century Cinderellas liable, in the precarious new world of atomic physics, to disintegrate into ashes and rags at the zero hour of midnight—"noon minutes, none seconds."

The Bulletin Clock

This same phrase—"precisely the twelves of clocks, noon minutes, none seconds"—presages the clock on the cover of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, which began publication in 1946 (Joyce again func-

tioning as prophet). The hands on this clock are altered as the human race moves closer to, or retreats from, nuclear disaster. If the hands of the clock ever reach "precisely the twelves of clocks, noon minutes, none seconds," it would mark the end of civilization as we know it, as it marked the end of Cinderella's charmed hours.

Joyce ends the passage back in Ireland: at sunset of old Danelaw's kingdom (Danish, *Kongerige*), by the dawn breaking in Eire. "Dawnybreak" also gives us "Donnybrook," the noisy, brawling Irish fair. He juxtaposes opposites—sunset/dawn—as he does with the noon/midnight compression and fixes us in Dublin where the law of the Danes reigned, and where this paragraph began. The "first lord of Hurtreford" refers not only to Lord Rutherford but also to HCE, landlord/pubkeeper in *Baile Atha Cliath*, the Hurdle Ford town: Dublin. "Parsuralia" gives us Persse O'Reilly whose ballad is one of recurring motifs in the *Wake* as well as the Russian Urals and the German Parsifal and Lucan's *Pharsalia*, about the battle of Pharsalus—again the motifs of war and noise and destruction.

Both Parsifal and Persse O'Reilly are fictional prototypes of a national mystique—or stereotype. This interlude, in just a very few lines, evokes the chaos and destructiveness inherent in all nationalism, from the brawling Irish Donnybrook to the nationalistic fervor of Nazi Germany, to the ultimate annihilation of the word itself—logos—through the unleashing of atomic power. The interlude is set towards the end of the "Butt and Taff" section wherein the two warring brothers, Shem and Shawn, replay the Crimean War. Shem and Shawn, the eternal Cain/Abel, Set/Osiris, Cuchulainn/Ferdia, represent any and all warring states.

This interlude shows Joyce's layman's interest in the developments of 20th century physics, as Murray Gell-Mann's citing Joyce as the source of the term "quark" indicates at least one physicist's interest in *Finnegans Wake*, but, beyond that, this passage illustrates as well as any other the elusiveness of Joyce's last work. Who is speaking and to whom and why—basic questions for traditional literature—are totally unclear here. We also have no clues spatially—where are we at all?—or temporally—past? present? future? Furthermore, these questions—who and why and where and when—are not only unanswerable but at some level meaningless. We are, after all, "hadding a sound night's sleep."

The passage might be a dream about a news television program, broadcast in a suburb of Dublin to a drunken crowd in a pub run by an Irishman of Danish descent in the 1930s. Or it might not be. Joyce's own answer to the question "why?" is "Such me." The further one moves out of the immediate, limited components of the multi-lingual language to larger questions of point-of-view, setting, duration, and, above all, meaning—again absolutely basic concerns for the traditional novel—the more elusive and less precise the work becomes. It is not that *Finnegans Wake* is greater than the sum of its parts—a truism for any piece of literature—but

that the more one knows about its minutiae, the more puzzling the work as a whole becomes.

Besides the analogy with art—with Monet's waterlilies, with Picasso's cubism—there are also real parallels with the world of elementary particle physics, the subject of Joyce's interlude. In 1976 the president of the National Academy of Sciences, Philip Handler, wrote of the scientific advances of the last 30 years: "Man learned for the first time the nature of life, the structure of the cosmos, and the forces that shape the planet, although the interior of the nucleus became, if anything, even more puzzling."[8] *Finnegans Wake* has emerged somewhat more clearly through the research of the 50 years since it was published, but as we understand more of Joyce's technique, dissect more thoroughly the components of his "book of the dark," the more puzzling the interior world becomes.

The world Sheldon Glasgow describes in his article, "The Hunting of the Quark," sounds strikingly like that of the *Wake:*

> In our search for deeper levels of the structure of matter, we have encountered molecules made up of atoms, atoms made up of nuclei and electrons, nuclei made up of hadrons, and, finally, hadrons made up of quarks. Quarks seem to be truly fundamental, for how can we learn the structure of a particle we cannot produce? Perhaps the impossibility of finding quarks is Nature's way of letting us know we have reached the bottom of the line.[9]

In what Glasgow calls the "jungle of elementary particle physics," Joyce's three quarks ("Three quarks for Muster Mark!" 383.1) have been joined by a fourth, called "charm." A late theory—called chromodynamics and not yet, Glasgow says, completely understood, ascribes three colors ("with no relation to the ordinary meaning of the word") to each quark, and when it interacts with a gluon—which like the quark, like the charm, does not exist outside the laboratory—it changes color. Quarks and gluons "cannot be shown to exist in the way other particles are. Byrons, made up of three quarks, contain one color each and so 'appear' colorless."[10]

Byrons? Charms? Contain one color each and so appear colorless? Joyce would have come to this world as he did, late in life, to that of *Alice In Wonderland:* with great glee. Joyce's particles, too, change color (with some relation to the ordinary meaning of the word, in music at least) as they shift in and out of contexts, in each case forming a new kind of matter. One senses in *Finnegans Wake* as in cubist painting "neither duration nor instantaneity, but rather a composite time of fragmentary moments without permanence of sequential continuity."[11]

Add all this—cubist theory, elementary particle physics—to John Bishop's illuminating reading of the chaotic swirl of blood circulating and

heart pounding and bladder filling of the sleeping body at *Finnegans Wake* and we have the essence of the *Wake*, and of the human being "tropped dead."

In other words, we come to the "fragoromboassity amidwhiches general uttermosts of confusion are perceivable moletones skaping with mulicles."

Notes

[1] John Bishop, *Joyce's Book of the Dark* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), "Introduction," p. 3.

[2] James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), p. 597.1–2. All subsequent quotations are from this edition.

[3] Werner Heisenberg, *Philosophical Problems of Quantum Physics* (Woodbridge, Connecticut: Ox Bow Press, 1979), p. 11.

[4] Robert Rosenblum, *Cubism and Twentieth Century Art* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.; New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1976), p. 43. Rosenblum is here working out a definition of cubism, particularly as the term applies to Picasso, but the application to the *Wake* is clear.

[5] Heisenberg, p. 12.

[6] Heisenberg, p. 46.

[7] William York Tyndall, *A Reader's Guide to Finnegans Wake* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1989), p. 197.

[8] As quoted by Sheldon Glasgow, "The Hunting of the Quark," *The New York Times Magazine*, July 18, 1976, p. 37.

[9] Glasgow, p. 29.

[10] Glasgow, p. 36.

[11] Rosenblum, p. 43.

A Train Journey to Bratislava (Lucky or happy)

James Sutherland-Smith

From Presov in December, from Kosice in October

EVERY Friday at 13:21, a train goes from Presov to Bratislava. This train takes passengers through Slovakia for weekend visits and takes students back to their families for two days of good food and unwanted advice from parents. Students in Czecho-Slovakia usually go home for the weekend as dormitory conditions are quite uncomfortable. The journey takes about seven-and-a-half hours over the 450 kilometres. There is a faster train, the "Tatran," which covers the distance in five-and-a-half hours and starts from Kosice, the steel-making city over the hill from Presov.

On December 1, 1989, I took a seat on the train from Presov; a first class ticket costing 108 krone, about four dollars. This was the second trip I had made to Bratislava. The first had been at the beginning of October before the revolution. Then I had been ordered without explanation to meet someone mysterious at the Ministry of Education. I had been in the country barely three weeks and so was a little alarmed, this being an Iron Curtain country. What could I have done wrong?

The meeting was scheduled for the Thursday and on Wednesday I taught at Kosice. On this first trip, there was an overnight train (not the Tatran) which would get me into Bratislava at seven in the morning. The meeting was scheduled for nine o'clock. I taught at the Technical University in Kosice and finished lecturing and consultations at three o'clock. The English teaching staff there decided to entertain me. In Slovakia entertainment usually requires the emptying of several bottles. If there is singing and dancing, so much the better. However on this occasion we confined ourselves to the bottles, excellent cheap wine from the south-east of Slovakia and/or Hungary. You can get a good Tokay from Slovakia itself.

One by one, the staff slipped away home leaving me alone with M- who had spent several years in Leningrad. In my mildly paranoid state, which had not been helped by the contents of the bottles, this assumed a sinister significance. I reminded him of his wife waiting at home.

"No!" he insisted, "I cannot leave you alone waiting for a train in this terrible city."

"Who," I thought, "told you to keep an eye on me?"

He suggested another bar. So we lurched from the Alpha which had supplied us with some excellent placky (potato pancakes) and white wine for three hours. M- led me across Leninova Street to the supermarket, Prior. Why were we going to a supermarket? However, once inside the store M- led me upstairs to a small bar adjoining the women's clothing department. We ordered another bottle of white wine and sipped it eyeing middle-aged ladies finding their size in racks of pink lingerie. M- asked me to explain the difference between "lucky" and "happy," an old linguistic joke for Slavonic learners of English, as they use the same word for both, be they originally Russian, Polish, Slovak, Czech, etc. etc.

"James," he kept saying, "are you lucky or happy?"

I felt his repetitions might be the preamble to some mysterious warning.

"I want to be happy," I said at last, "I don't want to have to be lucky." I thought that would be careful enough.

"You mean you aren't going to want to have to be happy," said M- equally carefully.

Did this mean anything or was M- merely practicing his English grammar? I decided to bring matter to a simple declarative.

"I am happy now."

"Or maybe you are lucky now."

This conversation was going nowhere. Fortunately before I became aggressive, the waitress behind the bar decided to close. The store was very quiet. When I looked up from my glass I noticed that M- and I were the only people left. Most of the lights had been turned off. So we had to feel our way downstairs. The door to the outside was difficult to find and I lost contact with M-. Eventually I got out into the cold street and looked about for him.

Behind me there came a furious tapping on glass and I turned around to see M- staring anxiously at me from the store window. I made gestures and began to walk in what I thought was the direction of the door. M- followed me behind the window. As he did so he walked into successive pyramids of tinned tangerines, evaporated milk, French beans, and corned beef leaving tins rolling in his wake. I got to the end of the store and realized my mistake. So I walked back and M-followed me, stumbling over the tins. No one appeared in the store to shout at him. Occasionally he would come to the glass and try to say something to me. His breath

misted the glass. It was cold that night. I located the door and extracted M- whose immediate idea was to find another bar. I suggested something to eat to absorb the alcohol. It was only 7:30 and I had fears of forgetting to catch the train. M- led me to the Slovan hotel, Kosice's biggest though not necessarily best hotel.

Downstairs in the coffee lounge, gypsies meet to exchange gossip and illegal currency and to set up deals. Upstairs pretty girls in black uniforms serve businessmen and, in October, local Communist party leaders alongside alcoholic English lecturers. M- resolutely refused to eat. He had a meal waiting for him at home, he said. Once again I urged him homewards, but his response was to order another bottle of white wine. We worked our way through it slowly until nine o'clock. I decided that a wait for half an hour at the station would clear my head. M- insisted on coming all the way to the station with me. By this time I had resigned myself; Slovak hospitality or secret police supervision or Slovak supervision or secret police hospitality, I was becoming confused. At the station M- tearfully embraced me. His last words were "Are you lucky or happy?" The drink was getting to him as well.

There was one other person sharing my couchette compartment. After three weeks in Slovakia I knew basic greetings, "please" and "thank-you" in Slovak.

"Dobre vecer," I tried.

"Good evening," my travelling companion replied. "Are you the English lecturer who teaches at the Technical University?" All my earlier paranoia suddenly clarified. Coincidence? Was I happy or lucky? Later I was to learn that I was practically the only Englishman in East Slovakia and that my presence was a talking point in the academic community. My companion was therefore only making an educated guess. He was an engineering student at the technical university. Needless to say, at the time I reserved judgement. His English was excellent, too excellent, I thought. Besides he made only a token complaint about not being included in my classes for advanced English speakers. Normally students lobbied furiously to be included. I went to sleep uneasily.

However, in the morning I was grateful for his presence. Despite having an address for the Ministry and being able to buy a map at a kiosk (Slovak for "map" is "map."), I was completely lost in Bratislava. The engineering student was relatively quiet and uncommunicative during the latter part of the journey in the morning when we had woken up. This was the same for the other passengers and the car attendant. Everyone seemed to be perpetually on their guard and I guess I was, too. This attitude was in marked contrast to my students in Presov. They would regularly complain to me over a beer about the way of life and political system in Czecho-Slovakia. In October their discontent was evident and openly expressed.

"When do you think it will change?" I would be asked. I would give

non-committal answers about reforming the economy and allowing small-scale private enterprise. I avoided the subjects of free media and free creative self-expression. My contract specified no political activity.

So I arrived in Bratislava for the first time. My companion took me on a bus and walked with me to within shouting distance of the Ministry. He left me in a square which in five weeks would be packed day after day and night after night as speakers articulated demands, tactics, and policies in revolution. But in early October I was struck by the seeming passivity of the people. In a café they even sipped their early morning coffee cautiously.

The Ministry provided a welcome disappointment. I had done nothing wrong. I had been summoned to receive my contract along with lecturers from France, Russia, East Germany, and China. We listened to a tedious, mechanical speech of welcome from the head of the foreign section of the Ministry who promised little except efficiency, although I could not imagine what was efficient about sending me mysterious directives to be 450 kilometres away from my work. Afterwards I explored Bratislava with the two, lecturers from Russia, teaching at my university. We had a lively discussion on literature and politics in a park in the open away from eavesdroppers. In October Russia was still the leading liberalizing force in eastern Europe.

That was my first visit to Bratislava; a combination of drunken farce and paranoia. My second visit was due to romance, which had begun on November 17, the day the revolution began in Czecho-Slovakia. I had met Jane about three weeks earlier. A colleague at the university pushed a tall, beautiful brunette into my office with the words "You must meet the new English lecturer"—matchmaking at its bluntest. I put on my best standard British English.

"My English is very pure," said Jane.

The habit of correction is difficult to suppress when I am nervous.

"Don't you mean poor?" slipped out before I could stop myself. "Not that I mean your English is actually poor, it's just your pronunciation—" and my voice trailed off. Jane took no offense and I gleaned from her that she had graduated the previous year and was now working as a lexicographer in the Slovak Academy of Sciences. She even gave me her work address and phone number in Bratislava.

December 1. Presov Railway Station

I was too busy to hare off to Bratislava because of an attraction brought on by a five-minute meeting, and perhaps I had half forgotten her. But sitting on the 13:21 to Bratislava at Presov, I could think of no one else. By December 1, we were making jokes about the coincidence of love and revolution. Perhaps it was my new mood but the passengers who came into my compartment seemed completely different from those on my

first journey. A man sat opposite me grinning broadly. He pulled a thermos flask out of a canvas bag and poured out a large measure, not of tea or coffee, but of rum. He offered me a draught which I accepted, of course. We drank each other's health and the health of Czecho-Slovakia. He wanted to share his lunch with me, but I had brought my own. My Slovak had improved a little since October.

The train started on time. Foreigners generally complain about the slowness of Czecho-Slovak trains. Certainly local trains seem to take twice as long as the bus does. But long distance trains are faster and keep to published schedules. They are very cheap for Western Europeans and North Americans. (One cannot write "westerners" any more. Havel is a "westerner." Prague is West of Vienna.)

Our first stop was Kysak, a junction where trains going east to Russia stop and drop passengers who wish to go North to Cracow in Poland or South to Varna in Bulgaria. Kysak itself is a dismal marshalling yard surrounded by steep wooded hills. Its buffet serves the most indigestible sausage in Slovakia. It must be one of the most important railway junctions in Europe. At certain times of the day Poles, Slovaks, Rumanians, Russians, Bulgarians, Hungarians, and various nationalities from Yugoslavia wait for trains, drinking beer and complaining about the sausage. Even the Poles complain.

November 17. Evening, Presov

On the evening of November 17, I attended the Immatriculacia of the students at Safarik University at Presov. This is roughly equivalent to a freshman ball and is devoted to first year students. I had received an unexpected invitation, delivered by Vlado Polomsky, a second year student and the English student's representative in the Philosophy Faculty.

"Do I wear formal dress?"

"I don't think so," he replied somewhat ambiguously. So I wore my denims. Years ago I made the same mistake in Boston and was refused admission to the Ritz-Carlton. But this time, although the men students wore suits with thin, clip-on bow ties and the girls wore billowing party frocks, I was let in without comment, presumably in the role of resident eccentric Englishman. I sat with a colleague with whom I shared an office. I was under no illusions about why I had been assigned an office with this particular colleague. She was head of a cell in the Communist party in the university and I had no doubt that I was monitored in case of attempted subversion of the students. That noted, she loved and still loves a good political joke.

"Normally I would not be here," she whispered. "But there has been some trouble in Prague."

This was about 8 p.m. The "trouble" had happened about an hour pre-

viously. Prague was 700 kilometres away.

"We don't want the students to make a mistake."

The students didn't look as though they wished to make a mistake or, indeed, as if they had heard what had happened in Prague. We had been waiting until 8 p.m. when we could buy a drink, and the students seemed preoccupied with a rush downstairs to the bar. Tumblers of wine were placed in front of me. A Viennese waltz was played and solemn boys whirled their girlfriends round the dance floor. A polka followed and then an English waltz. I carefully steered my colleague round and a few of my students applauded, ironically I thought. Vlado appeared.

"A friend of yours is coming tonight from Bratislava at nine o'clock.

"A friend? From Bratislava?"

"You know. Jane!"

"Jane? Oh, Jane!" And I remembered the tall brunette, coping with an awkward meeting in my office.

She arrived wearing a backpack and old jeans. She didn't take much notice of me despite our rumored friendship but chatted with my colleague. She then vanished for 20 minutes with her backpack and reappeared in a black and gold evening dress and with fresh make-up. How she managed this transformation in the place where we were I will never know. The only lavatory I had been able to find had no water tap.

This time she talked to me. I apologized for my scruffy appearance and she made a characteristic Slovak gesture where the hand turns outwards. This means, "It doesn't matter."

"I don't know why I was invited," I said.

"I told Vlado to invite you."

Later I discovered that she was in regular contact with the students's hostel and that even before we had met I had been a point of gossip, not because of an extravagant mode of life or extraordinary teaching methods, but simply because I was new and different. Life and study for students under the old regime had become so stultifying that a well-travelled Englishman was a source of profound interest. After November 17, the students were to become profoundly interesting for me. They had things to tell me and to teach me.

Margecany to Presov, November 19

The stop after Kysak is Margecany, a small town by a reservoir where Slovaks have weekend chalets. Like Kysak it is surrounded by wooded hills. By this time the train is in the heart of the lower Tatras, which Slovaks say is much more beautiful than the High Tatras where tourists go. Many of Slovakia's 19th and early 20th century writers lived in little towns in the lower Tatras. Just before Margecany, I noticed two lakes on the right hand side of the track; one frozen over, the other not at all. It made a landscape with one eye shut. I speculated on possible reasons for

this oddity. In the compartment my rum-drinking companion had been joined by two women who chatted to me excitedly, oblivious of my 90 per cent incomprehension. On Sunday, November 19, Jane came for lunch. We did not talk about politics, but about ourselves, or rather the man talked about himself and the woman sent him up. When I asked Jane about the "trouble in Prague" she was cautious. There was going to be another demonstration in Prague and a first one in Bratislava.

"There will be more trouble," she said.

Jane had been head of the student's union in the previous year and was used to heading off awkward questions. At the time I did not mind being diverted. We listened to the World Service and learned that outrage had been expressed in the British Parliament over police brutality in Prague. Jane turned the radio off and asked if I would like to visit her in Bratislava.

To Nova Spissky Ves and Levoca, November 21

On Monday, November 20, my students came to class as usual. There had been talk of a student strike among the staff, half of whom were Communist party members. These re-arranged their classes so they could go to emergency meetings. The students seemed subdued, but in two of my classes I was asked to explain about the university system in Britain.

"Why?" I asked.

There was a pause. Then one student said, "We will have an exam about it."

The rest of the class laughed, excessively it seemed to me. Moreover, their interest in ways in which universities operated seemed to have intensified.

On Tuesday, November 21, I was invited to accompany the first year English/Slovak students on a coach trip to Nova Spissky Ves and Levoca. Both are towns important in the growth of Slovak as a language and in the growth of literature in Slovak. Nova Spissky Ves is the train stop after Margecany.

The coach first stopped at Nova Spissky Ves at a church and former Jesuit seminary. The leader of our trip, Docent Hleba, explained to us that the seminary was now a government training building. When we visited the place again in May, 1990, as part of a longer cultural tour of Slovakia, Hleba explained to us that the seminary used to be a police training college and was now in the process of being handed back to the church.

At Levoca we visited a museum, once a lycée for a number of 19th century Slovak intellectuals, the grammar school or gymnasium, and the church which features a massive wooden altar fashioned from limewood by "Master Paul." He was a 16th century carver of altarpieces, a genre unique to central Europe. Little is known about him, as his records and family papers were destroyed in a fire soon after his death. The visit to the

church was an impromptu affair organized by one of my students, Denisa. She persuaded the curator to let the "Englishman" see the inside of the church as the "Englishman" would not have seen anything like it.

Afterwards, going back on the bus, Denisa talked to me about exactly what was happening in the revolution. She was an interesting student, vegetarian in a heavy meat-eating society and a Yoga practitioner under a regime where such disciplines were regarded with suspicion. So for the first time I learnt what had happened in Prague and what students wanted from the revolution. They wished for no more lectures on Marxist-Atheism. They wished to concentrate on the subjects of their choice rather than on the compulsory general education they received at the time. They wanted fewer lectures, so that they could concentrate on reading rather than learning by rote. She also explained that students supported the demand for free elections and the abolition of the leading role of the Communist party in Czecho-Slovakia.

All these demands had been articulated within four days of November 17 and had been disseminated to all parts of the country.

To Poprad, November 22

On Wednesday, November 22, students went on strike at Presov and did not return to lectures until the first week in March. In Prague, students had been on strike since Monday. Hence it was said that "Presov is always two weeks behind Prague." Interestingly enough, student-led reforms in Presov appear to have gone further than they have in Prague. There, perhaps, the academic staff have more self-confidence and thus were able to resist student demands better. At Safarik University in Presov there has been a wholesale change in positions of authority with a new university rector, new faculty deans and vice-deans. Lecturers were subjected to a performance and moral evaluation, with the result that some were forced to resign. Hardly a department escaped, and some departments—for example, the department of Marxist-Leninism—were abolished altogether and new ones created. Safarik now has a Department of Pure Philosophy.

From Nova Spissky Ves the railway rises to the plateau under the High Tatras proper. Snow covered the fields and forests either side of the track. I could make out the slots of deer, prints of fox or wolf or even bear. The sky was clear except for odd cigar-shaped clouds like those in paintings by Magritte. As the train pulled into Poprad, I noticed buildings alongside the track, draped with banners carrying socialist slogans. The banners were dirty and ragged and the buildings had a deserted air. I fancied that inside might be diminished, desperate meetings of party faithfuls, either trying to save their own skins or still believing that a solution to the crisis could be found, a magic formula to rescue socialism.

To Zilina, November 23 to 25

On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, November 23–25, the Head of Department, Ladislav Simon, met the students in a series of dialogues designed to reach an understanding between staff and students. At first Simon refused the students's demands. He was howled down and immediately proposed a motion supporting the students. This motion at least enabled him and other Communist academics to leave the main lecture theatre. Following this event, he resigned the leadership of the Communist party in the university. It appeared that he had never wanted the position in the first place. He is a decent man if a little autocratic in his attitude to students, an academic fault not uncommon throughout the world. Following his resignation Simon locked himself in his office and all we could hear was the sound of his typewriter. Once he emerged and, catching sight of me, came over and shook my hand. "Basník (poet)," he said. Simon in also a poet and translates German poets into Slovak. Perhaps he was re-discovering his vocation.

On Friday evening, I telephoned Jane at her parents's home in Piestany, the last stop on the railway journey to Bratislava. It was just before the whole of Czech-Slovakia was to see a few minutes of the video recording of the demonstration in Prague and evidence of police brutality, which was the first time that Czecho-Slovaks were to see uncensored television. By Friday the actors's and students's strike had extended to the media with the result that they had been taken over by directors, actors, and technicians. Party control had been relinquished; and from November 24, Czecho-Slovakia was to have some of the freest television in the world, freedom in terms of access for different interest groups and in terms of the time they were given to express and discuss their grievances. In the following two months, political dissidents, religious dissidents, environmentalists, nationalists, prisoners, industrial workers, gypsies—to name the most prominent groups—were to have extensive air time.

The showing of the Prague video tape was the start of this unprecedented freedom. It seemed to me that in Britain the broadcasting media were not free in the same way, as discussion programs tend to be dominated by presenters rather than people with something to say. Discussion programs are organized so that an individual does not speak for very long, presumably because of a fear that the viewer or listener might get bored. A typical program in Britain is "Question Time," where the presenter, formerly Sir Robin Day, distinguished by the peremptory way with which he dealt with questions from the audience, allowed the invited experts to dominate. The experts, invariably including a carefully balanced selection from across the British political spectrum, gave equally carefully balanced answers. Party is represented, but not genuine individual opinion. By contrast, on Czecho-Slovak television a speaker

was allowed to have as much time as it took for him or her, and a whole nation was riveted. While special circumstances gave special interest, it is also true that, at this time, television was a genuinely popular medium.

After Poprad, the train passes through Strbske Pleso, Liptovsky Mikulas, Ruzemborok, and Zilina. By this time it was 4:30 p.m. and the sun was setting. For a short while, the forest closed in around the track, cutting off the landscape with conifers and the occasional clearing with a wooden hut reminding me of foresters, horse-drawn sleds—a background for fairy tales. I had arranged on the phone to visit Jane in Bratislava. Rum, sandwiches, and the motion of the train made me drowsy and I half-closed my eyes . . .

From Zilina to Bratislava, November 27, the General Strike

On Monday, November 27, there was a general strike throughout Czecho-Slovakia. I wondered what the old Communist party would do. In the university their response was simple. They joined the strike. Despite my contract I, too, joined. Later I discovered that my English colleagues in other universities had done the same thing.

The students at Safarik were largely responsible for organizing the strike in Presov. At midday we set off from the campus and marched about half a mile to the city center. The students led and the academics brought up the rear of the march. Bus drivers and truck drivers flashed their headlights in support. School children leaned out of their classroom windows cheering and chanting slogans. It was more like a carnival than a serious occasion. It was the coldest time of that particular winter, and I discovered that taking part in a revolution included stamping to ease the pain of chilblains and blowing on cold fingers.

With me on the march were two of my colleagues, Anna Grmelová and Lunilla Urbanová.

"I know why you came on the march," said Anna." "You want to be part of history."

The local government was still controlled by the Communist party. So the demonstration could not gain access to the public address system. Speeches had to be bellowed through a small microphone. There was little substance in the speeches. Indeed, substance would have been out of place as well as inaudible. It was only necessary to indicate one's presence or the presence of the group one represented. Anna and Ludmilla translated the gist of what was happening:

"The brewers support the strike."

"The ball-bearing workers say they have been locked out by the directors of the factory."

"The police have sent a delegation to apologize for past brutality."

All round the central square people stood on pavements or leaned out of upstairs windows and cheered. The bells of the Greek Catholic church

rang continually. There was a suggestion that the ringing was a Communist party ploy to drown out speeches. All the shops had written slogans taped in their windows supporting the revolution, just ten day after it had all begun. Afterwards we dispersed quietly. Anna, Ludmilla, and I had coffee and a cake in a café at a table next to two policemen.

After the day of the general strike, the staff and students at the university began a series of dialogues relating to student demands for reforms in the university. At first these consisted of rhetoric, with semi-dissident academics standing up and apologizing to students for the cowardice in the previous 20 years. Chief among these was Stanislav Rakús, a Slovak magical realist writer who teaches in the department of Slovak language and literature.

The dialogues then developed into discussions about specific, concrete reforms. Some of these reforms included the staff evaluations mentioned earlier in this article. Students also gained reforms in their curriculum and greater freedom to decide what they would study. They gained representation on all university committees, including staff selection. I was requested to write a description of the way a British university operates. The new government of the university has some similarity with my description, but that could have been coincidence. A disappointment was the failure of students to organize a students's union to manage their political, social, sporting, and extra-curricular interests. The notion of a political club having the same status as a sports club or music society is one which has yet to take hold. There is also the question of finance.

I was asked to lecture on political systems in democratic countries, and much of my teaching activity in January and February consisted of lectures in East Slovakia on political topics, with my dredging up from the depths of memory information from my first degree. There were no reference books and so it was hard work, but exhilarating.

To Bratislava

I had dozed off and awoke as the train slid into darkness. There was water either side of the track. We were crossing the lake near Zilina. After Zilina we passed Trencin, the farthest the Romans got in Europe. We passed Leopoldov, the site of Czecho-Slovakia's worst prison. Prisoners were soon to revolt. Their leaders were given parole in order to put their case to the public on television. Czecho-Slovakia had the highest per capita prison population in Europe, with individuals in prison for stealing small items of food. President Havel was later to give an amnesty to 20,000 out of a prison population of 30,000, leaving the truly violent in prison. There were, of course, problems with so many released. But there are also problems when the military go on leave en masse. This is true for all countries.

An hour before Bratislava the train passed through Piestany where

Jane was born. It is a spa town specializing in rheumatic complaints. In summer Arabs from the Persian Gulf dominate the town and Piestany temporarily has the highest prostitute population of Czecho-Slovakia. Whether this will change remains to be seen. Jane told me that when she was a little girl the Communist party converted a local church into offices. The graveyard adjoining the church was dug up and she remembers playing football among the bones.

Between 1969 and 1989 was "the era of consolidation." The poet Milan Rufus, Slovakia's grand old man of literature, has written that most Slovak writers are children of this era. For this he has been criticized. Jane grew up during this time.

On December 1, 1990, as the train rolled through Piestany, I knew little about her and how her mind had been formed. I was thinking about what she would be wearing and about love at a time of revolution, not about how she might cope with a free-booting Britisher or about how Czecho-Slovakis might cope with free-booting democratic societies.

The Time I Saved Gene Autry

Tom Deiker

GENE Autry was the greatest cowboy that ever lived. It's always been a mystery to me how anybody could argue different. Somebody needs to explain it to those who never studied it scientifically like they should of. I've seen them come and go, and all the rest were just copy cats. Especially that sissified Roy Rogers. King of the Cowboys, my foot.

Gene's known the real story all along about Mr. Roy Rogers, but he never told. That's just like him, and just like it says you should do in the Cowboy's Code, which Gene Autry was the one and only invention of. The first rule of the Cowboy's Code, in case you don't know it or forgot, goes: "The cowboy must never shoot first, hit a smaller man, or take unfair advantage." And for sure Roy Rogers is the smaller man, if you know what I mean.

Why, we could just go down the Cowboy's Code's ten rules, one at a time, comparing Gene Autry to Roy Rogers, and each and every time there would be no comparison whatsoever. Gene would be so far ahead of Roy Rogers it wouldn't even be funny. Like, for example, Rule #3: "The cowboy must always tell the truth." Gene has always told the truth, and you can't tell me one time he hasn't. Gene's always just been Gene Autry, even in his pictures. He never played some make-believe cowboy. He grew up in the real wild west, Oklahoma and Texas, and his family were real western people, such as his father, who sold horses. Gene rode a horse five or six miles to school every day. He even got robbed when he was a telegraph operator for the Frisco line, by the Matt Kimes gang. They locked him in a meat car. Bet you didn't know that. Most folks don't. Another time he actually saw a bank robbery. You would never hear about those things from Gene. He's much too humble.

Now, let's look at Mr. Roy Rogers as far as "The cowboy always tells the truth" goes. Or maybe I should say Leonard Franklin Slye; that's his real

name, you know. Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, not in Cody, Wyoming, like Republic Pictures tried to make you believe when they spent about a million dollars to replace Gene Autry with Roy Rogers while Gene was off serving his country in the War. That's another Cowboy's Code, you know, Rule #10: "The cowboy is a patriot."

Why, I bet you didn't know they had to send Roy Rogers off to Montana for practically a whole year to learn which side of a horse to get up on. That's a fact. Just ask anybody in the know at Republic Pictures. You don't learn about horses and guns working at the U.S. Shoe Company in Cincinnati, which is what he did. Now, nobody had to show *Gene* how to ride and rope and shoot and sing.

Anybody who cared to study it would see how jealous Roy Rogers was of Gene. It would take a whole book to list all the things Gene done, and Roy Rogers just coming along behind copycatting it all. Gene was the first genuine singing Cowboy, and also the one who made the first singing cowboy movies. What's more he wrote all his own songs. Hundreds of them. He had the world's first gold record. Fact is, he *invented* the gold record. And he got lots more of them after "That Silver-Haired Daddy of Mine." Gene had the first cowboy radio show, the first cowboy T.V. show, not to mention comics, rodeos, and everything else he did. Who wouldn't be jealous if he was going around telling everybody he was the King of the Cowboys but knowing in his heart that Gene was the real King of the Cowboys?

All the people who know about the time Roy Rogers tried to bushwhack Gene—and they never talked about it since, because they were too ashamed and besides they didn't do too good themselves when it came to the Cowboy's Code—they all probably thought he did it out of pure jealousy. But I know better. I've studied on it since. The real reason, and if you think about it you'll see I'm right, was that Roy Rogers just never got over the time Gene showed everybody right up there on the movie screen who was the world's best cowboy.

A lot of folks don't even remember that movie, "The Old Corral." That was in '36, a year after "Tumblin' Tumbleweeds." That movie showed up Roy Rogers for what he was, and the Sons of the Pioneers, too. They were singing bandits in the movie, so that should tell you what they're really like in person. Now in this movie Roy Rogers was going by the name Dick Weston, but that was just the name he made up before he made up Roy Rogers, which he stole from Will Rogers, the famous American humorist from Oklahoma, who discovered Gene Autry, as any history book will tell you. That's just one more example of Roy Rogers not following the Cowboy's Code about telling the truth, and I'd even throw in Rule #9, "The cowboy must respect women, parents, and his nation's laws," because if you ask me making up a phony name is not respecting your parents. In this movie, "The Old Corral," Dick Weston, which is to say Roy Rogers, makes the mistake of trying to take on America's Favorite

Cowboy, Gene Autry. Gene took care of him quick, like he's done lots of thieves and bandits before and after Dick Weston. And then Gene made him sing a song at gunpoint, which just rubbed it in even more. And that was in front of the Sons of the Pioneers, Smiley Burnette, Hope Manning, even Lon Chaney, Jr, not to mention millions of kids who saw it when the picture came out later. Whenever I hear people argue that Roy Rogers is the best cowboy, I let them go on and hang themselves good, then I just say: "Hey, why don't you go watch 'The Old Corral.' Gene and Roy Rogers already had a fight, fair and square, and Gene Autry won!" That shuts them up every time.

It was more than Roy's pride could take, that picture. From that moment on he vowed revenge on Gene. I'm sure of it. And he might have gotten away with it, too, if I hadn't come along and stopped him. It so happens I've kept an eye out for Gene since '38, and it's a good thing for him, and for America, that I have. Here's a man every bit as important as the President himself, and with no protection. Of course Gene would never have agreed to needing protection. He would've said that he can take care of himself, that he's been in a lot of scrapes before and always got out of them. But I know better, and wasn't about to let something bad happen to him. I worked there at Columbia Drugs, where all the extras and stunt men hung out waiting for casting calls, there at Gower and Sunset—what we called Gower Gulch. Our specialty, which we were famous for, and which I learned how to make myself, was scrambled eggs and bacon for 40¢.

So working at Columbia Drugs like I did I always knew what was going on at the Republic Picture lots. That's how I kept my eye on Gene. On this day I'm talking about he was at Melody Ranch. Now this was the first Melody Ranch, the one out in San Fernando Valley, not the one in Oklahoma which burned down and where America lost so much of the irreplaceable history of the American West which Gene had there. You probably saw all the write-ups about Melody Ranch when it was first built, back in 1940. It was one of the finest spreads in the West, still is—with mountains, streams, pastures, corrals, an orchard, and a regular mansion of a ranch house, which I got to see myself that day in 1947. It's got real pine paneling in just about every room, hides and Indian rugs on the floors, western paintings and statues, and a glassed-in wall like you see in museums, with a western scene that has cowboys and animals all hand carved [says Gene.] He's got a giant leather chair in the parlor with a back made of horns from just about a whole herd of longhorn cattle.

It was in March of '47—March 17, to be exact. Roy Rogers was filming "Bells of San Angelo"—another one of those fake Roy Rogers movies where he's supposed to be a Mexican border agent. Gene was just getting back into pictures after the War. He'd started his own company and didn't have to put up with Republic Pictures any more, like Roy Rogers was still doing. All the talk at Columbia Drugs and *Variety Magazine*—

that's practically our Bible in Hollywood—was about Gene Autry coming back to movies, and about him starting up his own company, and about his upcoming movie, "The Last Roundup," which was just getting going.

I knew this Saturday that Gene was going to be out at Melody Ranch, so I was there on the ridge overlooking the road coming in, where I could also see the two hills by the back of his ranch—so no one could get there from any direction without me knowing it. I had seen Gene come out of the stable once, carrying a saddle, which he threw over the fence, and then he went back into the stable. He's got 62 saddles, you know, all hand stitched. So I knew he was in the stable when I saw the horses coming down the front road which goes by the ridge. It was getting on towards noon.

They were all there, Roy Rogers and his whole gang. Rogers was in front, with Gabby Hayes, the lowest snake that ever crawled on its belly, and Andy Devine, that big bag of hot air. Coming along behind was Bob Nolan, who can't sing or act either one; Pat Brady, who as you know gave up trying to ride a horse; Gordon Jones, who just plain gave up, and Dale Evens. Yes, he was even bringing Dale Evans along to do his dirty work.

What a sight. It was downright embarrassing. I don't know which looked sillier, Roy Rogers or his gang of horse thieves—them all dressed every one worse than the others, or Roy Rogers looking worse than a regular sissy. His outfit that day was a light blue—what they call "baby blue"—shirt and pants, and dark blue boots and gunbelt. His shirt, of course, was covered with frills and fancy designs, like the carvings in his boots. And one thing I just can't hardly stand, he still goes around with his pants stuck in his boots. Now I know Gene can dress as fancy as the rest of them and even got an award for being one of the ten best dressed men in America, another thing that makes Roy Rogers see red for all his trying to dress fancy. But if you look at Gene's pictures since the War you'll see he dresses more like a regular cowboy, just a plain shirt and jeans *over* his boots. And of course Roy Rogers had one of them silk scarves tied around his neck, not the real working cowboy cotton scarf for sweating or keeping the dust out of your lungs. I won't say a word against Dale Evans. She was dressed nice like she always is, and I've always thought she'd probably be a fine lady if it wasn't for Roy Rogers. Gene always treats the ladies with respect and I aim to do the same.

They headed straight for the stable. I could tell they meant business. But I meant business, too. I had been getting ready my whole life for just this kind of real life adventure, ever since as a boy when I got my first Gene Autry Western Pistol, with its nickel plate finish, revolving barrel, and side loader with automatic release. But I don't just mean learning how to use a gun or fight, I mean following the Cowboy's Code, all of the rules, especially those about clean living and fair play.

Now, the most important rule of the Cowboy's Code, in my opinion, is

#6: "The cowboy must help people in distress." It was what Gene Autry had done all his life, and the least I could do was help him when he needed it.

I came down from the side of that ridge without any regard for my own safety, only thinking of the trouble Gene was about to get into. I ran around to the side of the ranch house and slipped in a side window, just like I had seen Gene do many times, like in "Western Jamboree," for example. I went straight to the parlor like I had lived there all my life, and opened Gene's rifle case—a real beauty with polished oak doors and cut glass— and took out his Winchester .45 lever-action rifle. Now, at Melody Ranch you can step right out from Gene's parlor into Champ's. That's because the ranch house and the stable, which has 22 stalls and is air conditioned, are connected.

I could hear them all talking in the stable, so I raised the window without making a sound and looked out, laying the rifle onto the window sill. They had walked right in on Gene, who was alone and unarmed, and they spread out to block the way out, Bob Nolan and Gabby Hayes moving over to cover the door into the ranch house.

"I reckon we got an old score to settle, Autry, you and me," Roy Rogers was saying.

Now, I wish you would of been there, because just looking at the two of them you would never again have any doubt who was the best cowboy. Gene was just as cool as you please, even though he was in quite a spot, one that would make anybody afraid. But Roy Rogers, even having the upper hand, and with all his ruffians along, he was as nervous as if it was him being ganged up on.

Gene says, slow and steady: "I always thought I'd see you someday, Roy, but I never figured you to walk in the front door. Is this about how much help you think you're going to need?" says Gene, waving his hand around to signify the others—just like he had the upper hand instead of Roy Rogers, which in a way he did if you really understand the Cowboy's Code.

"You talk pretty big, Autry, for somebody without a gun," says Roy Rogers.

"Throw me one and I'll talk even bigger," says Gene right back.

I didn't give Roy Rogers a chance to answer. I drew a bead on Andy Devine's hat—he was over by the stalls opposite—and squeezed the trigger. His hat flew off and that very second I shouts: "Reach for the sky, everybody! Make one move and it'll be your last!"

I swear, cool as he was, Gene himself was as surprised as the rest of them.

"Why, gentlemen," I said, as calm as Gene himself, "I do believe you forgot to check your guns at the door. How about if you just slip them off, one at a time, nice and slow like. You first, Mr. Leonard Franklin Slye." I thought he was going to die right there on the spot, Roy Rogers, when he

heard that. I almost felt sorry for him. You could tell he was beat. He dropped his gunbelt to the ground, and then the rest did the same.

"I reckon you all know the way out," I says. "Now git!"

What a bunch of cowards! They all scrambled out the door, and in a little bit we could hear them riding off.

Then Gene walked over in that easy way he has, like he's one of those tour guides at the studios, not like a man who practically lost his life in an ambush.

"Stranger, I reckon I owe you my life," he says.

I told him it wasn't nothing he wouldn't do himself. He was real friendly-like and asked me all about myself but I didn't tell him about looking out for him all those years, just said I happened to be in the neighborhood. He said I had really showed them and he didn't think they would ever try that again and that it wouldn't do no good to blab it around because nobody would believe it anyway and they had learned their lesson and that was the important thing. Then he showed me all around the Melody Ranch, like I said before, taking all the time in the world and explaining everything like we had been knowing each other all our lives. I didn't say a word the whole time, I was so flabbergasted.

When we got back to the stable which has air conditioned stalls, Gene pointed to the gunbelts:

"Pardner, I think we got us some mighty fine souvenirs here. Which ones would you like to have?"

I told him I thought he had earned Roy Roger's gunbelt for himself.

Gene said, "I got to admit, I sure would like to have that hanging in my parlor next to the diorama."

I told him to go ahead and take it.

Then Gene says, "I'm indebted to you again, pardner. Why don't you go on and keep the rest for yourself." So I did, and I still have them to this day, if anyone doubts my word.

I told Gene it was time for me to be moseying on, and thanked him for being so neighborly.

"So long, now, Mr. Autry," was the last thing I said.

"Please," he said. "Call me Gene."

I couldn't hardly believe it!

Call me Gene, he said.

Brick Red

Janis G. Wick

WHEN Ellen arrived at the party, an hour late on purpose, she saw Sutton right off. He was standing by a floor-to-ceiling window surrounded by party-goers. The sunlight streaming in behind him made the black silk of his Armani suit shimmer and the white silk of his Armani shirt glow against his dark skin and dark hair. Though the temperature in the room must have been over 90 and though the armpits and backs of many party-goers's shirts and dresses were stained with sweat, Sutton looked cool and dry.

Ellen edged up on the admirers to catch something of what Sutton was saying, but he wasn't saying anything. Everybody else was talking to him. They interrupted each other and talked over each other in a rabid eagerness to catch Sutton's ear. Ellen was amused. As secretary to the professors of the Industrial Psychology Department, she was having the unique experience of watching her bosses, beings generally not plagued by low self-esteem, suddenly metamorphose into sycophants.

Ellen was handed a drink, and she eased herself away from the frantic crowd and sat down on a sofa near another floor-to-ceiling window. The limitless vista the window was meant to provide of the valley below was obscured by dirt brown smog that had spread across the sky like a huge smudge. The valley itself, once blanketed with fruit orchards, nurseries, small vegetable farms, and horse stables, now grew computer chips, toxic chemicals, hamburger stands, and freeways faster than it had ever grown an apricot.

Ellen took another look at Sutton. He was the kind of guy, she imagined, who believed that dioxin and cholesterol-rich burgers represented progress and the American way whereas avocados and petunias simply didn't.

David Sutton was an industrialist from the East who was reputedly in possession of enormous and growing wealth despite the apparent demise of heavy industry. He was also, allegedly, in possession of a number of women. Apparently lots of money and Armani suits made him as appealing to models and movie actresses as he was to Industrial

Psychology professors. Or maybe, Ellen thought, they all appreciated the *real* David Sutton, the inner man. In any case, Sutton, real or otherwise, had come to the smog-smudged valley for in-depth study of the silicon chip and the secret to its wildly successful manufacture. No unions in Taiwan, Ellen mumbled.

The man himself still wasn't saying anything. He didn't even smile. Ellen figured he had the routine down pat—stay aloof, allow the masses to grovel. She pulled the back of her sweat-soaked blouse from her skin and wondered how Sutton, standing in a silk suit in full sunlight, managed to keep dry.

She got up in search of another drink. Dr. Portner, the host and chair of the department, was manning the wet bar. He had been given the chairmanship based on his discovery that lavender paint was a subliminal incentive for office workers.

"*Talk* to him," Portner hissed at Ellen. "Be *friendly*. He seems to be bored."

The "he" was understood. Sutton was now alone, standing by a window not ten feet from the wet bar. What was meant by "friendly" was also understood. Portner grabbed Ellen's elbow in a crab-like grip and dragged her towards Sutton.

"Why, David, you know Ellen. She's our secretary."

Ellen thought she should ask for cash in advance.

"Secretary?" Sutton asked, blinking.

"Yes, *secretary*," Ellen said.

"It's lonely," he said.

Ellen didn't know if that were a statement, a question, or a joke. Portner handed Sutton a drink and then disappeared. Sutton took the glass, but his hand was shaking so badly that the drink sloshed over the side.

"I'll have a sip," Ellen said. Sutton didn't look aloof anymore, grateful was more like it. It reminded her of when Nortie Hubber had asked her to dance at high school graduation. He had waited until midnight but he had still asked, and he had been the only one who did.

"Get me out of here," Sutton gasped. Ellen sensed that he felt the way she had at 17 standing against the gymnasium wall in her ill-fitting taffeta. But she didn't know why he felt like that. *Everybody* wanted Sutton to dance. She said sure, anyway, and took hold of his elbow to guide him out of the room. But he jumped at her touch and seemed to curl up, like a sea anemone, sort of folding into himself. They made it out the front door with her whispering words of encouragement.

"Where's your car?" she asked.

"Somebody br-br-ought me," he murmured.

"Somebody brought—"

Sutton's entire body suddenly seemed to be seized by a fierce tremor.

"Okay," Ellen said. "Okay. It doesn't matter. I'll drive."

Sutton gave his address, and Ellen headed south on the freeway.

"God, it's hot," she said.

"Hot?"

"The weather," she said. "You know, the temperature."

"Oh yes, hot," he said. He stuffed his hands into the pockets of his suit jacket.

"It'll cool off," she said. "It always does. The fog comes in sooner or later."

"Fog?" he asked.

"Uh, fog, you know, sort of like clouds, only lower." Ellen felt as if she were speaking to someone who not only was not completely conversant with the English language but was not especially familiar with the planet as a whole.

"Yes, fog," Sutton said with a sigh.

When they arrived at the house, Ellen stopped in the driveway and asked, "Are you sure this is it? Five, three, zero?"

"Yes, yes," Sutton said. He had already begun to climb out.

Ellen couldn't believe it. The house was an old orchard shack, a wood frame and plaster cubicle with steps up to a small, enclosed porch. An ancient palm drooped over a few overgrown rose bushes in the front yard.

A tiny woman as ancient as the palm tree stepped out on the porch. She wore a faded but starched cotton dress and black shoes that laced up to her ankles.

"Hello, David," she said softly. "Not much fun?"

"Uh, no," said Sutton as he walked past her. "Oh—uh—Ellen here b—b—brought me. . . ." He flung a shaky hand in Ellen's direction and went into the house.

The woman smiled. "Come in and have some iced tea, dear."

"Thank you," Ellen said, "I will." Her clothes were drenched and her throat was dry, now that she took the time to notice, but also, she had to admit, she wanted to see inside. She had a notion that if she went in, somehow the woman would explain everything and they could get Sutton back to himself—whoever that was.

The house was clean and neat and furnished simply, but it was not plain. A couch and over-stuffed chair were covered in bright blue fabric and a hand-stitched quilted pad covered a rocker's cane bottom. On the mantle an orchard smoke pot repainted fire engine red and a basket of fresh fruit had been placed opposite each other.

Above the fireplace hung an oil painting. In it thick bold brush strokes of red, orange, yellow, green, and blue oils brought a modest bedroom to life. On an iron bedstead lay a mattress spread with white sheets and a red coverlet. Sunlight entering the room through shuttered windows softly lit a night table on which two books lay next to a small sculpture of a nude

woman and a pale blue bottle of water. The wall above the bed was covered with oil paintings. And all of it, the table, the chairs, and the bed, seemed to float above a brick red tile floor.

Sutton sat on the couch like a stone. Sweat dripped from his forehead onto his jacket.

"I'm Katherine," said the woman. "You can call me Kate." She held out a small, gnarled hand. Ellen's hand was damp and sticky, but Kate didn't seem to notice, or pretended that she hadn't. She turned instead to Sutton and asked, "Would you like some lemonade?"

After a few seconds, in which Sutton seemed to have heard nothing, he gave an almost imperceptible nod.

"Fine, come along, Ellen," Kate said and then added in a whisper, "He needs a breather, I think."

Ellen sat in a corner of the kitchen and sipped iced tea. Kate had drawn the shades, and the room felt cool and clean.

"Are you David's, uh, Mr. Sutton's mother?" Ellen asked.

"Oh, call him David," Kate said. "He certainly won't mind. No, I'm not. I'm his housekeeper. Well, his parents's housekeeper. I came out West to cook and clean for him and keep him company."

"Is he troubled?" Ellen asked. A stupid question. Kate ignored it.

"It was so nice of you to bring him home," Kate said. "I can't think why he didn't call me."

Had Kate taken him to the party? He didn't drive?

"Oh, it was no trouble," Ellen said, though it was 20 miles out of her way.

"I'll take him his lemonade," Kate said.

Ellen followed her into the living room where they found Sutton curled up on the couch. He was shaking violently as if he had caught a bad chill.

"Would you like a blanket?" Kate asked.

"I'll get it," Ellen said, in need of a breather herself.

When she found Sutton's bedroom, she was sure that it was his because this room *was* plain. The furniture was metal and bare, the carpet a drab institutional green, and the walls and dresser-tops stripped of anything personal. The only exceptions to the barren asceticism were a few drawings that lay on Sutton's bed next to a worn gray blanket. Ellen looked at one, a stark but intricate pen and ink drawing of a tract house—gingerbread eaves, well-tended lawn, absolutely pristine and unremarkable, except for one torn tennis shoe lying at the edge of the driveway. The torn shoe was riveting. Nothing else mattered.

Ellen felt as if she shouldn't be looking at the drawing, as if she were a voyeur of sorts, but there was something in it that made her want to keep looking, and then again something in it that made her want to stop. She grabbed the blanket and rushed back into the living room where things seemed saner though Sutton looked as if he had curled deeper into him-

self. Kate took the blanket and draped it over him without touching him.

"I'm sorry," Ellen said. "I've really got to go."

"Oh, of course," Kate said. She walked with Ellen out onto the porch. Sutton didn't budge.

"He *is* troubled," Kate said, stepping down onto the front path. "That's perfectly obvious. But he's a wonderful person, you know. I don't suppose you can see that."

It wasn't until much later in the evening that Ellen herself felt a chill that set her bones rattling against each other. She had sat down with a glass of wine and a manuscript to proof but found that she couldn't dislodge the memory of the tennis shoe. It's a self-portrait, she had thought suddenly, and, though the thought didn't make any sense, she immediately began to feel cold—as if she were freezing from the inside out, first in the marrow, then the bones, then muscles, fat, and skin. She had felt such a chill many times before, of course, when she'd suddenly realized that the layer of cynicism she used as a buffer against life was permeable.

Ellen didn't expect to hear from Sutton after the party, and she figured it was just as well. Who needed that kind of trouble?

Five days later, she was walking down a hallway at the university when Sutton suddenly stepped through a door and looked directly at her and smiled. His smile startled her. His eyes startled her more. They looked as if they had witnessed something in life that had given him a bad fright.

The smile was brief. Sutton bent and studied the tops of his shoes and said, "Would you—w–w–would you . . ."

"Yes?" she asked.

"Uh, I'm late," he said and walked off. Ellen turned to watch him go. He walked like an industrialist then, steady, sure, determined.

"An odd bird," Professor Portner said. Ellen jumped. "You know where he does his *research?*"

Ellen shook her head no.

"At the Ford plant, on the line. Dexter Webb, the plant manager out there told me. He couldn't believe it."

"What's wrong with studying an assembly line?"

"He isn't studying it, Ellen. He's *working* on it. The guy's cuckoo. I mean, for him—well, that'd be like me deciding to be a secretary." Portner laughed.

Ellen spent the afternoon planning a homicide but decided in the end that Portner wasn't worth the death penalty.

Kate phoned later that evening. "David would like you to come to dinner."

"David? Why didn't he—"

"Don't feel you have to," Kate said in a whisper, "but it would please him a great deal."

Ellen suddenly realized homicide wasn't the only thing she had been considering all afternoon. She imagined Camelot with a seismic fissure. She imagined Tara with locked wings and men in Confederate white suits.

"Sure," she said. "Thank you."

Ellen's hands were shaking as badly as Sutton's by the time she got to his house. She arrived in linen and silk. He waited on the porch in jeans and a polo shirt. She felt as if she'd spent a lifetime overdressing or underdressing for dinner parties at which everyone else knew precisely what to wear without ever having to ask.

"Hello," she said. Sutton's entire body was caught up in a slight but noticeable tremor. What was also noticeable to her was that he *had* a body, a flesh and blood body over which the flesh was nicely spread.

"Thank you," he said, studying the tips of his tennis shoes.

"Thank *you*," she said.

Apparently that was enough conversation for David. He turned and entered the house, letting the screen door slam behind him. Ellen thought it might have been better to spend the evening plotting Portner's assassination. But Kate opened the screen door and said, "Come in, come in."

David had disappeared into his bedroom behind a closed door. Ellen sipped white wine in the cool clean kitchen while Kate cut up apricots, melons, and plums for a summer fruit salad. Ellen saw a photograph framed in ornate silver above the refrigerator, and took it down to have a look. The frame was tarnished and the photograph mottled with spots and fingerprints. An infant, perhaps two years old, stared out as if into a void. There was no mistaking the eyes.

"My God," she whispered.

"I know," Kate said. "But look again."

The photograph had been taken in the child's room. There were toy fire engines, toy service stations, an electric train, building blocks, and metal pots and pans. But the room was strangely bare—no carpet, blinds instead of drapes, a plain bedspread thrown over a bed with no pillow.

"It's so—cold," Ellen said.

"Exactly," Kate said. "Mr. Sutton, David's father, was fond of saying, 'There are no pillows in the *real* world,' though he permitted himself a good many comforts of his own."

"What about David's mother?"

"Well, comfort was important to her, too, and an infant was simply a nuisance. She hired a nurse to take care of him. The nurse didn't believe in pillows either."

"But you were with him then, weren't you?" Ellen asked. "He had you."

She wanted a silver lining for David, a sliver of redemption.

"Yes, I was there," Kate said, "but I was the housekeeper. The Suttons wouldn't let me touch him."

"But—," Ellen began. She still had to know one thing.

"Oh, honey, that's enough for now. Go see David. He really did want you to come, even if he can't say so."

The door to David's room was ajar. Ellen could see him hunched over a pad, drawing with one hand and running the fingers of the other through his hair as if he were trying to smooth it and yet leaving it more unkempt each time he did it. Ellen wanted simply to watch, but she felt again as if she were a voyeur and knocked on the open door instead.

"Oh, Kate, I can't get it right."

"No, David, it's Ellen."

He turned slowly and looked at her and blinked as if he'd seen a vision he was trying to clear.

"Oh, Ellen. Ellen," he said. He turned back to his table and drew the lid over the drawing pad very slowly.

"Please don't," Ellen said. "Couldn't I see it?"

"Oh, no," he said, "it's not finished." He held his hands flat against the cover of the pad.

"Are there any that are finished? May I see those?"

"Well, yes. Well, no. I mean they're finished, but—"

His hands began to tremble so badly that they rattled the paper on the pad, and his face worked as if the muscles of it were waging a war against each other. Ellen immediately regretted having asked, but he said, "Well, yes, then. If you would like to."

He walked across the bare room and opened a closet door. Inside, the shelves and racks were stuffed with belongings—clothes, shoes, ties, a red blanket, books, bottles of green and blue glass, and canvases and empty frames haphazardly stacked against each other. He ignored it all and made his way to the back to a deep shelf on which a sheaf of papers lay two feet high. He lifted the entire pile up and carried it to his bed.

"These are finished," he said. "I'll just—I'll just—" He fled the room on wobbly legs.

The drawings, all wrought in pen and ink, were intricate, precise but strangely barren. There were drawings of men and women bent over assembly line belts, of parks where old people fed pigeons, young mothers rocked babies in strollers, and teenagers embraced, and of fast-food restaurants, supermarkets, and service stations.

The drawings made a stark record of the people and places Ellen knew well and had come to ignore, but they did more than that. Each drew her eye to one detail—beneath the Formica tables, the families of four and the styrofoam detritus of a busy fast-food restaurant, a knit baby bonnet lay in a pool of spilt Coca Cola and globs of thickening catsup; in a manicured, well-swept park, an old man had taken an elegant pose on a freshly

painted park bench, though cracked nails that had curled into the parchment flesh of his toes had broken through the stitching of his once elegant wing tips; as the last man riveted the last bolt and the gleaming white car rolled gently off the line and the wide flat belt dipped to turn under and begin its inexorable circle again, a pair of wire-rimmed glasses were caught between smooth rubber and smooth metal, one lens shattering into a starburst.

Ellen was weeping, but she sensed that David had returned to the room and she tried to stop.

"Oh, don't," he said. He sat down next to her but just far enough away so that their bodies didn't touch. "So you looked at them, then," he said.

When Ellen nodded, he leaned over and kissed her cheek. "You smell so nice," he whispered.

Ellen turned and kissed him back. She felt his cool, dry lips withdraw immediately.

"No!" he said. "No."

She scrambled to her feet.

"No," he said again. He wasn't stuttering and he wasn't trembling. He sat absolutely still, absolutely frozen, like cool dead marble.

Ellen ran from the room and from the house. She drove home and stayed there for five days. The phone rang on and off. She didn't answer it. There were knocks on her door. She didn't answer those either. The only thing she looked at with any interest was a photograph of herself at five. By the time the photograph had been taken, her father had already disappeared and with him he had taken his wife's interest in life and in Ellen. At five, Ellen hadn't looked into the camera as if into a void. She had looked into it with eyes that were already dead. Ellen didn't want line drawings and marble sculptures.

On the fifth day, the phone rang and she answered it.

"David wants to see you," Kate said.

"No," Ellen said.

"Honey, he wants to see you very badly."

"Then I want to hear it from him."

She thought the phone had been dropped or was merely being held. All she heard was an eerie silence that seemed to have some life to it.

"David?" she asked.

"Ellen—I—would—very—much—like—to—see—you—I—"

"Okay, David," she said. It was all she had wanted.

"—realize—that—it—would—be—more—proper—for—me—to—come—to—you—but—since—"

"David, I said okay."

"—I—don't—drive—at—the—moment—I—was—hoping—that—you—would—come—to—see—me."

"Yes, David. I will. Now?"

"Thank you," he said.

Ellen washed her hair for the first time in five days, changed her clothes, and drove south to the orchard shack.

"Have a seat, honey. I'll get you some tea," Kate said as she ushered Ellen into the living room. She sat down on the bright blue sofa and looked at the painting above the fireplace. She wished that it were possible to be in that lush world of red, blue, and green oils and sunlight, bottles, and books. Then suddenly she realized that she *had* been in it.

Kate returned with iced tea for both of them. "I know I haven't answered all your questions," she said. "David is a very private person, Ellen. I wish he knew how to tell you himself so that—"

"I know," Ellen said quickly. "I know it isn't fair, but I feel I'm in so—*deep*." Despite her days in a stupor, she had not realized just how deep until that moment. Falling through the seismic crack in Camelot terrified her; the descent, though, was somehow familiar.

Kate sighed. "David was considered a very fortunate man. He went to the right schools and did well. He went into business and made more money than his father ever had, and what his father had made was considerable. David had his choice of women and his choice of famous friends, but he was frozen out somehow . . . Or maybe by that time, he had frozen himself out."

"But what *happened?* I mean, how did he get here?"

"He made a routine visit to a plant one day and saw a familiar sight—an assembly line and his employees along either side of it. I think it looked too familiar to him that day. He wouldn't leave the line. In the end, they had to carry him off in restraints, and his father had him locked up in what amounted to a very expensive prison. I got him out by offering to take him away and take care of him. The Suttons let me, I suppose, because he was more than a nuisance by then."

"But he's *working* on an assembly line, why would he do that?" Ellen asked.

"I don't know," Kate said. "I know so little. Just what I see. David doesn't talk to me either, you know. He doesn't talk to anyone."

Kate smiled. "David's waiting for you in the garden, honey. Go on out back and have some tea with him. I'll be in the kitchen if you need me."

David sat in jeans and a T-shirt in a worn wicker chair. He would have looked handsome if it hadn't been for his arms that he held rigidly by his sides and his eyes that seemed to stare straight out into the apricot orchard without seeing. Ellen sat down a foot away from him.

"You mustn't love me," he said.

"Why not?" she asked, realizing suddenly not only that she did love him but that she'd already made many assumptions about why he could

never love her, none of which had anything to do with seismic fissures or Confederate white suits. All of it was temporary, she had thought, the orchard shack and the assembly line. David would return to himself, and he would never love her then. She was an employee.

"There's nothing to love," he said. "I'm not a person."

Though it wasn't the answer she had expected, she understood immediately when she heard it.

"You're the tennis shoe on the lawn, the eyeglasses caught in the line?"

"No, just the line—the pulleys and the belts, moving around and around the edges of things, sometimes crushing them." He spoke almost normally now, without stutters or hesitation.

"But the drawings—you wanted somebody to notice? So you could stop?"

"Yes, I wanted somebody to notice. You did."

"And did you stop?" Ellen asked.

"When I touched you," he said. "I felt as if I'd finally gotten into the middle."

Ellen wasn't about to risk another attempt to cross the fissure. She looked out into the orchard of fruit-laden trees. The grove was an endangered species that would soon be subdivided. And though the sky seemed clear and blue, she knew that between her and the heavens lay an invisible smudge of airborne waste. Still, she wasn't prepared to lose interest, not yet anyway.

"The painting over the fireplace," she said, "that's yours, isn't it?"

David began to tremble. He could not bring his hands to a rest.

"And it's your bedroom?"

David shook more violently but managed a wobbly nod.

"Was your bedroom like that once?"

Suddenly David stopped shaking altogether.

"Please—come—with—me—Ellen—if—you—would—like—to."

She followed David into the institutional gloom of the gray-green bedroom. He went to a corner and pulled back the bare carpet. Beneath it was a worn hardwood floor painted brick red.

"When I first came," he said, "I had a dream—about the floor. I liked it. The color."

"Why didn't you pull up the carpet?" Ellen asked.

"Oh, I couldn't, I couldn't do that. No." David said. "So I—so I—painted it—like a wish." He smiled at the patch of brick red wood.

"It's a lovely color," Kate said from the doorway. "Perhaps we should take up the carpet."

David looked from the brick red wood to the institutional green carpet and back again.

"Would you like that, Ellen?" he asked.

"Yes, I would."

He knelt down and pulled the carpet back an inch or two more and then peeked underneath it.

"Do you think it's brick red all across the room?" he asked.

"That'd be my guess," Kate said.

"Ellen?"

Rather than answering, Ellen knelt down beside him and began pulling the carpet up. It was tacked down in some spots and glued down in others. Kate got paint thinner and a hammer, and Ellen and David set to work softening glue and prying up carpet tacks. When they had lifted the last corner, they were dripping with sweat and out of breath. They rolled the gray-green carpet up tight and carried it out to the backyard.

"I'd bury it, or burn it," Ellen said.

David laughed—for the first time, in her memory anyway.

When they returned to the bedroom, Kate had a pitcher of lemonade waiting. The two women sat on the chairs covered with Naugahyde and David sat on the bed with the metal frame. The brick red floor seemed to glow beneath their feet.

"To a lovely color," Kate said, lifting her glass.

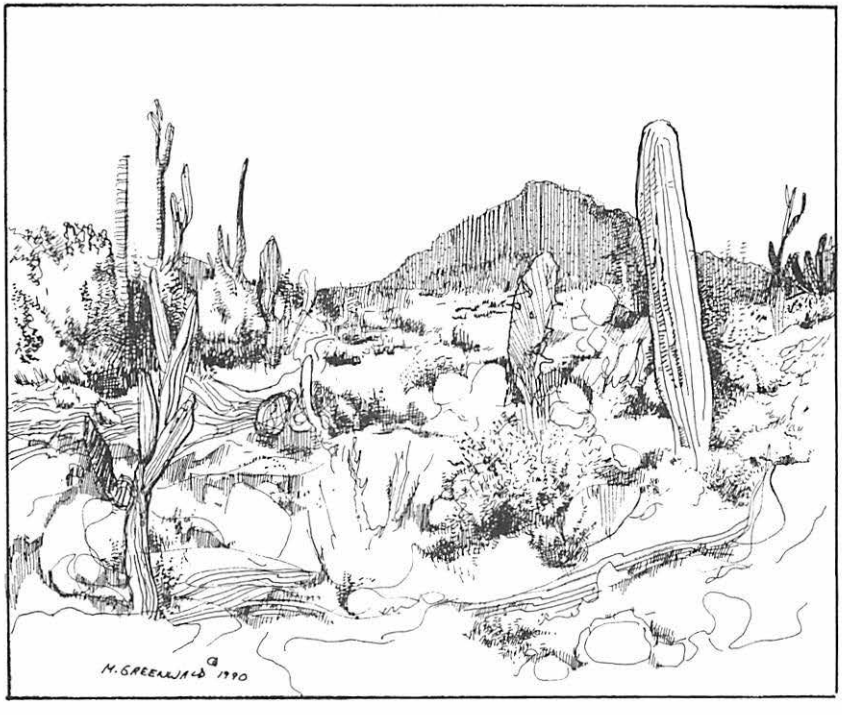
"I like it," David said.

"So do I," Ellen said.

When she looked at the brick red floor she felt as if it might be possible to see through the smudge in the sky to something clean and clear beyond.

Arizona Desert

Miriam Greenwald



John Grey

Only the River Separates Us Now

We are walking on either side of the river.
The stream is narrow like a debutante's gloved hand
and I long to stretch across it,
touch your arm.
I feel you want it too but our mouths don't make a sound,
just small parcels of white wind,
solidified inches from our lips.
This will be one of the last walks of the season.
November is itching to be set free
and most of the trees have already begun their downward slide,
spreading witness on the ground
in a thousand shades of hazel.
I sniff snow in the air
the same way I knew my red retriever was about to die,
stroll upon these blue-washed banks,
counting down the days from a secret calendar of humanity,
hating the thought of zero,
one eye watching strands of sophomore hair
sprint across your ruddy face,
the other on my shoes as they slip into mud.
I am falling in love in this shadowy eclipse of seasons,
filtering out what I remember of summer
and rubbing it into your cheeks
as we measure each other's footsteps,
while a boat-load of middle-aged drinkers
slips between us unnoticed.

Loss in the Snow

1
In mid-western winters,
trees sing like bees
as ice freezes raw whiteness
along their branches.
My wife and I walk
across the field,
flakes pocking my beard,
bejewelling her grey hair.

Despite the cold that taps
at bare parts of our bodies,
we come out here to escape
the house's numbing air
and look back at footprints
that secure us in place and time
when the red around our eyes
has soured dreams to the point
we doubt we were ever here.

I carve tiny crosses
in the ground with my shoe,
punch away at the rough edge
of frigid air,
think of Paul,
the boy we don't talk about
even out here
where memories are too far away
to be heard.

2
I felt them walking on me,
high leather boots corking the
rocky earth's pores,
pushing snow into my face
as I lie here
staring solemnly at the under-edge
of land he could never make pay.
I want to shout at them,
let their loneliness know how close I am,
but in death I am only allowed whispers
and no matter how loud I say it,
it comes out as wind
whistling on top of wind.

When We Are Winter

The winter-cold compresses sky from here
to twenty miles out to sea.
Trees billow gingerly in their reduced surroundings.
Color dreads the coming of the westerlies.
We watch from the bedroom window,
part the haze of voice on glass with a chilly finger.
Night creeps in through our patch of light,
reduces the yellow curtains to lace shadows,
our lips, our eyes, to monochrome.
It is a moment when I feel that weather can separate us,
gray gloom settling on emotion like a cold blanket,
fingers gripping inside each other for protection, not love.

Below us, through the parting tears of trees,
we see the wary bones of your garden where
frost clings to phantoms, sculpts their shapes for our benefit:
tow-headed lovers, young as the mirrors behind our brittle eyes,
stolen from the past for one futile summer moment,
running to cliff edge or sprawled across the languid grass.
You want to clap your hands so that frozen monument will crack,
blow on those diamond eyes until they blink to life,
drag the moment inside where it is needed,
to swell in our bodies, rush up the stairs to this bedroom,
extinguish the candle, laugh at the brumal beast
who thinks he can reduce us to skeletons, to shadows,
fall upon the mattress, its eternal spring coiled in victory.

Breakfast without Jane

I was wondering how breakfast without
Jane would compare to breakfast with her.
Newspaper still rubs off like charcoal.
I trip over the sports section. Circulars
spill out but there's no one to scoop them up.
Or complain how we can't afford to live.

Corn-flakes have a thousand tan edges to catch
bleary early morning light. Milk plops on
top, seeking out little wheaty sewers
to splash inside. She's not talking to me
but they taste as soggy as they ever did.
I'm uneasy slurping spoonfuls without a
single comment about my hair.

And eggs spread white wings all over that
slithery frying pan.
She'd stand sentry, waving a spatula.
I let them come to their own terms.
But they taste the same.
Still break with the fork's prick.
Skate yellow down the sides of bacon.
Maybe I could have bought bacon with
less fat.
She was a stickler for cutting down on
grease through the arteries.
It's a trade-off I guess.
Whatever years of my life I've added
through her not whining at me
will be sliced away by these
slimy rinds of fat I'm gulping down.

And coffee.
Gallons of coffee.
Sure it will keep me awake forever.
But I'm glad to be awake now.

Robert Wexelblatt

Fear in the Heroic Age

We cherish it as if it were tomorrow.
The grapeshot rain, the boulder wind,
us barking up the eisenglass rocks
lung to lung, how the night was ripped like
a black envelope, our white manifestos
scrawled across the deep violet sky.
That night our complexions cleared.
That week we thought, "We were made for this."
That month our puerile plump bodies grew hard.
That season we learned to think and love and smoke.

In a lull Tommy wrote his theodicy.
He's a live stockbroker now,
but then he was a dead man who explained
the tuberose, Verdun, mosquitos,
Disneyland-hell, Chief-Joseph-heaven;
God, Tommy wrote, sits on the sidelines behind
ranks of cherubim with golden pompoms
forming nine-layered pyramids and cheers.

We battled on for weeks in mists,
in hail and sleet; we felt like Danaë
and nobody admitted catching cold
or wanting food or hearing women cry.
We edited our slogans. They made it
plain how the world's cumulate injustice
had spun to this single point,
this instant when the anagnoritic bull at
last ignored the cheating cape and gored
the fake brocade with his analysis.
Muscular, poor, awake at 4 a.m.,
boogying under fire, singing to distill
sweet implausible nostalgia. Oh yeah.

There was only one fear and it grew
on us like lichen, impossible to
brush off, green and tough; it crept over
us like cold daybreak, stupid and grey
as lead, making our eyes itch and our
guts tremble; it took us over like a
tomcat a vole, an idiot gun
a brilliant riposte, a nasty
truth a delicious lie.

Now we have our tokens. Our fringed
armbands and frayed puttees. Our
unhinged shades and U.S. Keds. A few
snapshots of happy fists, blurred grins,
faces that don't even look like our kids'.

We knew it couldn't last.
We feared we'd outlast it.

Dinner Party

Sam and Gillian had Ivor and Jan over
for supper, seeing how they'd moved next door.
They were sitting around before dinner
sipping sherry, cabernet, and scotch,
wolfing down Gillian's clam dip, when
all of a sudden Ivor said that if
all of a sudden there were a fire or
all of a sudden the air were sucked out or
all of a sudden somebody began shooting or
all of a sudden they were dying of thirst
then they wouldn't give a shit about
each other. On the contrary. From this
Ivor deduced that all social life
is a lie and he, for one, would give
it up, if it weren't for Jan here.

Flushing, Jan said Ivor had these fits, that
Sam and Gillian should just ignore him
and that the clam dip was super and could
she possibly have, you know, the recipe?

Gillian had been to college where she
majored in something and she replied,
looking instructively at Ivor, that it was
just a matter of the Hierarchy of Needs
or, if he preferred, the three kinds of
Aristotelian soul, only the last and
highest of which was human. We
had to be fed first, aired, secured,
but at heart we are political animals
made for the occasional coup d'état
and for suburban dinner parties.

Sam, the host, sat dourly sipping his scotch,
thinking about what vacuum could
suck the air out of his living room
and who might start the shooting first
and wondering what kind of name was
Ivor anyway, when all of a sudden

Ivor leapt to his feet and began a
scatological philippic about the school
committee which had voted to adopt a
textbook that didn't blame the Indians,
that said slavery called the moral purity
of the Founding Fathers into doubt, not
to mention spattering various other blots
on the escutcheon of the greatest nation
in the history of the world, the only
one ever founded on a good idea, he
quoted, and then Ivor looked down at
red-faced Jan who had begun slowly weeping,
her head bent over the bowl of clam dip,
and who sobbed, "Oh, this *always* happens."

At the Club

The afternoon was ripe with women
dressed in white on green divans,
suave men beneath the awnings talking
of trade and pars. The bar's two fans
were stirring breezes blue as the sound of ice
striking glass across the turquoise patio
where shadetrees bent. "How nice,"
you said, "how nice it all is." And
you turned about, smiling on everything.
But mostly you were touched by the soft hands
of the man at the piano, the one whose wife
had, so unexpectedly, taken her own life.

Licensed

Before I got it I hardly
knew why I did what I did.
My prophecies were like talent shows,
impromptu and incompetent.
The girls would laugh behind
their white soft hands, the tiny
giggle of tiny seas at tiny wader;
and nothing meant a thing.

Then, I rolled in the dust
clear up to here, without
a hole for my soul, a space
for my race, a hex for my
sex, a south for my mouth;
lots of hurt for my flirt
and a bind for my mind,
but no dish for my wish.

Then was the time of time lapsed
photos, news of the newsreports,
weather of the air-conditioned.
Pictures broke off of picture-shows,
dances from dance-lessons. I just
rolled in the handfuls of dust
I kept prophesying—not yet
being authorized to predict;

i.e., what I did was pretty much for
the hell of it—irresponsible, je m'en
fiche. Hell, I didn't give a damn,
not one. Whoever listened, heard;
whoever watched, saw. As I said
before, it was just gotten up. But
things are different now. Thank you.
I care a lot. Honest. You'll see.

Elegiac Sonnet

Some things are more elemental than others,
viscous as lava, serious as stone;
real, brute things like the death of mothers,
like the unveiled allegory of bone.
People hide; they cover up; they ignore
moments that might move them most; so we try
to palliate the sea with pools, too poor
at heart to brave the wave and breathe the sky.
Still you swamp the irony of my days.
Ebbing and flowing, you serenely move,
rippling brightly right through my mangled maze,
with a sure and oceanic love.
Or so it still seems with me, with you:
hard to believe a thing so truly true.

Harold Witt

Advice

If you should smile and someone only stare,
put on a so-what face and turn away—
be careful not to show how much you care.

Act nonchalant, practice savoir faire,
go right on, with an air that stays blasé
if you should smile and someone only stare.

You still can dally, just as debonnaire;
it doesn't have to spoil a summer day—
be careful not to show how much you care.

There are worse pains you'll probably have to bear,
and love's a fool's illusion—wise men say—
if you should smile and some only stare

wink away that flicker of despair,
it isn't worth an early turning grey—
be careful not to show how much you care.

Take the advice of one who used to wear
a coeur décor, but no such sleeve today—
if you should smile and someone only stare
be careful not to show how much you care.

Gigantea

Dick's driving, Emily's in back
with Barbara, this mountain afternoon—
onward, upward—while the day stays grey—
huge lodgepoles, dark green incense cedars
on both sides of our wheelrolling way.

"My ears keep popping." "I know, so do mine."
We stop at a shop of souvenirs and tour
the park museum, where in a round room
the size sequoias grow, a tiny speck's
the seed from which immensity can loom—

not *sempervirens* but the *gigantea.*
Upward—and among the greens and browns,
and shadowed blues of pointed conifers
there are some luminous trunks of braided red
and later in the higher air some more.

"You can't miss them," Dick says. "They don't look real—"
and Emily and Barbara also "Ah—!"
I try to catch one in my Ricoh frame
but can you fit an ocean in a sieve?
A sawed cross-section shows Columbus came

about an inch or so from the outer edge,
and workmen sweated to build pyramids
somewhere near the center of the tree.
We walk and gape at tall improbables.
Downward again I'm telling Emily

" 'It makes you feel about that big' is what
your Granddad used to say of any grandeur."
We stop at turnouts and I click more views—
spiky yuccas' creamy candleflames,
ridges past ridges of dissolving blues—

dogwood, buckeye heavy with white blooms.
Dick wants to know if this will be a poem.
"Maybe—though—" Now it's less treed.
"What are those glorious trumpet flowers called?"
Barbara says they're deadly jimsonweed.

Contributors

Tom Deiker has been published in a number of journals, both literary and professional. His literary work has appeared in *Cimarron Review, Galaxy,* and *Portland Review.* His varied articles in psychology have appeared in more than a dozen professional journals. His Ph.D. in clinical psychology is from Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge.

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To Prospective Contributors

San José Studies, a journal sponsored by San Jose State University since 1975, is published three times each year—winter, spring and fall. The contents include critical and creative prose, as well as poetry, interviews, and photographs, directed to the educated reader but providing resources for the scholar as well.

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San José Studies is in its 17th year of publication. It is published three times a year - winter, spring, and fall. Other recent special issues have been devoted to John Steinbeck's THE GRAPES OF WRATH, to cultural diversity, and to women poets.

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