Spring 1992

San José Studies, Spring 1992

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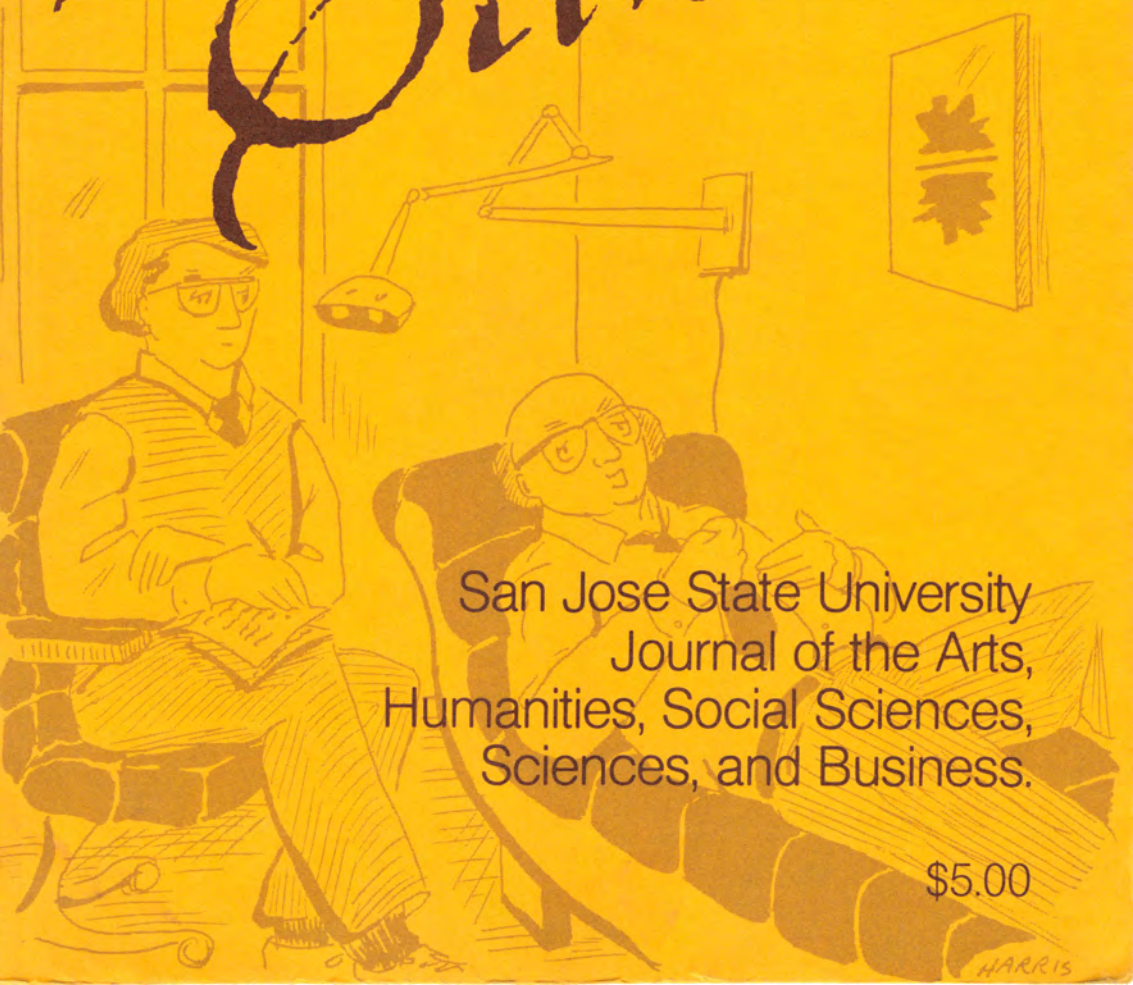

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San José Studies

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SAN JOSE STUDIES 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.

Guest editors for this issue will be Professors Roberto P. Haro and Patricia C. Nichols, SJSU

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SAN JOSE STUDIES

Volume XVIII, Number 2

SPECIAL POETRY SECTION
IN HONOR OF O. C. WILLIAMS

SHORT STORY

ARTICLES

ART

Cover: Detail from cartoon by Dan Harris, p. 107.

Permission to reproduce six works of Sherrie Levine was kindly granted by Mary Boone Gallery, 417 Broadway, New York city, on behalf of the artist.

The Bill Casey Award

The Bill Casey Memorial Fund annually awards $100 to the author of the best article, story, or poem appearing in each volume of *San José Studies*. Friends and relatives of Bill Casey, a faculty member at San Jose State University from 1962 to 1966, established the fund at his death to encourage creative writing and scholarship. The recipient of each award is selected by the Committee of Trustees of *San José Studies*.

The Bill Casey Award in Letters for 1991

has been presented to

Elsie Leach
for her article in the spring issue

Building One's Own House: *Walden* and
Absalom! Absalom!

The Committee of Trustees also awarded a one-year subscription to *San José Studies* to the author of the best work (exclusive of the Bill Casey award) published in the categories of (1) poetry, (2) fiction, and (3) articles. The 1989 recipients of these awards are:

Poetry — **Leonard Nathan** for his poems in the winter issue.

Fiction — **Michael Kernan** for his story, "Maneuvers," in the winter issue.

Essay — **Douglas F. Greer** for his essay, "The Meaning of the Merger Mania," in the spring issue.

A special citation to **Phillip Persky**, Guest Editor of the Margery Bailey Letters in the winter issue, has been awarded by the editors.

SPECIAL POETRY SECTION IN HONOR OF O. C. WILLIAMS

For O. C. Williams

O. C. Williams, poetry editor and chair of the Committee of Trustees since 1975 when this journal was founded, has decided to turn his manifold responsibilities over to others at the close of this academic year. This special, larger-than-usual section of poetry is offered in his honor and as a way of saying thank you to one who has been so vital to the efforts to make *San José Studies* an interdisciplinary journal of evident excellence that we wonder how we can function well without him.

Otho Clinton Williams has had the necessary vision to help shape our special issues, such as those on Darwin, Ezra Pound, women poets, John Steinbeck, and Margery Bailey. Himself a poet and scholar, he has had the needed taste and knowledge to evaluate thousands of manuscripts. And he has had the essential grasp of detail to keep our finances sound and our subscription list up-to-date and growing.

But Dr. Williams—who began his career at San Jose State in 1946 and went on to chair the Humanities Department for more than 20 years until his ostensible retirement in 1974—says that at 85 it is time to pass the mantle on. Furthermore, having had successful replacement of one arthritic knee last year, he wants more leisure to recuperate from having the other one done. Then he expects to resume his rightful place on the golf course. We expect that too, having observed over the years his remarkable ability to plan for and accomplish what he sets out to do.

—The Trustees and Editors

Mark DeFoe

Moth

Breath of night, buffeting against her screen.
She feared the dark, but leaned through the hedge, scooping
the thing into a plastic butter bowl.

No crayon could match that luminous orange,
that velvet green. No dress in her closet
frilly or feathered as those curling antenna,
like the headdress of an Indian princess.

In the night she heard its muffled flapping,
placed her hand on the bowl, whispered "Hush Hush."

By morning the wings were rags, antenna
drooping, one tangled under a foreleg.
But each kid she let peek into the bowl
shaped his mouth into an "O," stretched hands toward
its iridescence. That night, she touched it,
the green flaking like pollen. She trembled
when it trembled, when she touched the long tails
of its wings, sweeping like a fairy gown.

Pulling up the quilt, swaying her skinny arms,
she whispered, "I could fly, fly." No sound came
from the plastic bowl. No matter. She touched
the buds of her breasts. An angel, she thought,
I'm an emerald angel, and soared, cresting
the clouds near the kingdom of sleep. She knew
if she looked down her wings might shear, crumple
like the boy they read about. So before she fell
she incanted the words that could not fail,
the words she had learned that day in school:
"Nocturnal. Metamorphosis.
Lepidoptera. Luna, Luna Luna."

First Car

At the mall's antique car show one whiff
of an old Packard—dust and tobacco,
a sweet-sour minty reek—and again I
am riding in my grandpa's DeSoto,
admiring his straw hat, his wispy white hair
that curled the red wrinkled geography
of his lean neck, a boy lost again
in the mystery of an old man's voice.

We came by one of his relics, a Dodge,
'48—a bulge-fendered klunker dabbed
with baby blue primer. Through the heat-scoured
Kansas summer I herded this embarrassment
to the warehouse where I screwed together
lawn chairs and hoisted sofas and still
didn't put on weight for football.

Drove it even when it blew a gasket.
Oh, it cruised till it hit 35. Then
hell's racket shook that chassis as hot gas
machine-gunned out her block. At every light
my buddies and I guffawed at commuters
who feared their new Detroit steel spewed out
that cacophony of misfires.

Crippled, it became our wrong-doin car,
our scabby chariot, mud-hog,
go in the snow car. It had Fluid Drive—
pop the clutch, the old hulk would plug ahead—
never stall. We rode shotgun, swaying on
its running board, one hand through the window
to steer, one hand gripping a .22,
rolling along at rabbit zapping speed.
More than once we bailed out to blaze away,
and the old Dodge chugged on, grooved in the ruts.
But someone always leapt aboard just
before she nosed into the tumbleweeds.

And my makeout car, the plush seats the couch
of lust, where lost in the paradise of flesh,
I swooned with my latest Sandra Dee, panting
to at least get a hand inside a bra.
Then grandpa, suffering some slight, demanded
the car's return. I put up no howl, suspecting
a minefield of family wounds, not wanting
to know grandpa could be vindictive and cold.
Besides, the Dodge was a bomb, uncool.

I made a last trip, out to hedgerow country.
Alone, the sport seemed too much like killing.
But in deep snow the rabbits sat for me.
I was steady—three shots, three cottontails.

Standing in the slush to watch the sunset.
I thought of Christmas, thought of the fuzzy
white sweater for my latest Sandi, thought
of potato cakes and fish sticks, of my hands
washed clean after I had gutted my game.

I'd get new wheels (not knowing then the drab parade
of sedans I would mope through town). I watched
clouds catch fire, rifle crooked, my breath pluming,
one hand on the hood of the old blue beast.
And I knew then I'd have a happy life,
that I'd be somebody. Stood watching sky
turn molten, cool toward purple, watching
cottonwoods blacken in the dying heat.

Then I fired her up, flicked on the static mad
radio with the cracked pearl tuning knobs,
and found Elvis singing "Blue Blue Christmas."
And not at all blue, pointed the old car
toward home, coaxed her up to 40,
and keeping the beat on the steering wheel,
rocked all the way home to supper.

The WASP Admires His New Volvo

She has sturdy Swedish lines. Her finish
matches the gloss of his silver-gray hair.
She is functional, with class, just like his
new docksiders. He believes in this car.

Wife to aerobics, son to lacrosse,
daughter to viola—all will be safe.
Do not scoff, dear reader. This man has worked
60 hours a week for 25 years.

Do not tuck him in the tiny closet
of your smugness. He played football; he served
in the army, though not at war. He tries
to believe in God. And he does not say

Nigger, Hebe, Spick, or Gook. What do you want?
Get away with your demands for perfection,
your sneering cynicism. When did God
anoint you judge? Leave this man to admire

his fine, fine car. He does not ask the world
to weep at his troubles. This man's mother
has a mind that's broken. And his father
has a heart as thin as tissue. Come back,

reader, when you are as good as this man,
when you have met real evil. Stop preaching.
Then we all shall sit, talk of humble things—
of casseroles, compost, and loneliness,

of snow tires, divorce, and the beach. And how
we hope, though they seem a bit lost right now,
our children, if we give them time and love,
will tomorrow find themselves and prosper.

Charles Edward Eaton

African Afternoons

It was brilliant summer and the time for orange chiffon—
But you were tired of the woman, did not want to wrestle with her moods,
And did not care what she was taking off or putting on.

Some rich nerve connected with her was no longer being fed.
Yet here she was coming toward you, golden-haired, lucid, loosely draped,
As if, in the old way, by making love alive, to knock you dead.

Strategically placed, the orange lilies in a vase
Would give their muted, or more blaring, background music
While she decided what tempo and what action were demanded by this latter phase.

So hot and heady, it was like afternoon in Africa to you—
The lioness had hunted and you had fed and fed and fed,
A time for lying down beneath the trees with nothing thrilling left to do.

Ah, the stretching, the lolling, the letting-go—this time I pass—
You have absolutely lost your dark, mysterious sense of avatar:
Just wait until she rises, golden, burnished, from the tallest grass.

Don't ever think that, for the over-petted one, Africa is over—
Night comes on, the lilies drop their pollen, chiffon rustles,
And you are still the unfed cub who needs some practice as a lover.

Jeanne Elliott

The Stepsister Recalls

Curly hair that stuck out like a tumbleweed,
a smile to draw flies, fingers like white radishes.
I hated her. What use her whey-faced simper
on our handscrabble farm? Fine words butter
no parsnips, Ma says. She married Len Wilkes
for Bess and me, to get us the best that's going,
which wasn't much: the big upstairs bedroom,
store-bought bureaus, shoes—no bare feet
for her two girls. "But Ellie's turn'll come,"
she told Len. "She's still a child. Right now
it's my two ought to meet a couple lads
who'll come in for a good half-section."

After Len fell off the barn roof, Ma worked
for us. Had her eye on Billy Henshaw, and I—
didn't mind. For their harvest dance I sewed
the dress myself: sprigged lawn, flounces, lace;
Bess had voile trimmed in hand-made ruching.
We looked nice as a new Sears catalogue. But
you can't beat out magic. Transparent shoes!
We all told him what any sane person knows:
a skinny chit like Ellie'd never lift a churn,
keep the poultry thriving, give him boys
strong enough to work that river-bottom land.

She packed us off quick as they was married.
Why not? A corner shop in town came cheap.
He can afford to stick her precious foot
on red velvet cushions, keep two hired girls.
And the way his farm looks now! Hazel trees,
a pigeon loft, red roses all over the chicken house.
I bet old Henshaw's whirling in his grave
at the waste of growing space. That black loam
could bring in forty bushel.
Here, I wrapped
your tea all nice. Sorry we're outa sugar.

Mulberries

Thick leaved, spreading,
tall enough to hold up the sky
on cloudy days, our mulberry tree
stood in the poultry yard.
Blessings of its summer harvest
fell on chicken and child alike.

Mulberries. Reliable as the well,
our tree showered dishpans of fruit,
to piece out cherry pies, to can
for winter sauce. Twenty quarts
at the back of the cellar, waiting
until peaches ran out in March.
I loved them. All the mulberries
I could want, every day for weeks:
red streaks across my gingham dresses,
my mouth stained purple, no limit
set on my marauding. Mulberries
gave more than Mother could put by.

Beulah Lee had white mulberries in her yard.
Bland, pulpy, dry. No juicy red drips,
no taste of sun in your mouth.
"Mulberry wood made Jesus's cross,"
she told me. "Some trees blushed for shame.
You got the wicked kind." Pushed her
in the cattle pond, went eating mulberries.

Dark red, sunwarmed, this bowl of mulberries
pieces out old memories. I eat them slowly,
not bothering to mix with cherries.

Elizabeth Hahn

The Ripening

What to us seems merely
heat, a summer heaviness,
a Monday,
to her
is time perfected as
the cipher changes,
and the annals of childhood
fold slowly closed within.

The unhurried muscadine sweetly
rounds to fullness in
that chalice where,
rubicund,
the domed construction
builds, brims,
and spills,
indelible.

At that certain time,
the girl-child rises from
the sunhot swimming pool
to confront the clutch of
waiting women:

"Oh, see? I've cut myself.
I'm bleeding."

Waiving Good-Bye

some ancients never said it
using extended presence
to perfect their compass

unadmit this distance

as rocks lengthen their shade across
the leveled lands
the disparate trees interlace
above below
flesh resurrects itself

turn this news

like some cumbrous gem
in all directions
splaying unpresenced rooms

with reckless speckles:

transient indigoes quicksilvers

wild vermeils

until the near and far,
each scene, unseen,
are only loci satisfying

all our known conditions

The Former Daughter

She comes to lunch at Christmas when
we share the recent snapshots and keep
the tense to present, future

how tall he is and
still so shy
how sweet she looks, how
well she reads
can this one travel by himself
will that one outgrow envy

We are self-taught in this language of
selected confidence, the dampened impulse,
and listen to our words fall with
gentle honesty or remain

unspoken

in our silence rise the earlier tableaux:

days of breast milk drying up
of beds wet with misgiving
those graying, draftswept mornings when
we hunched, hands cupping over coffee, in
beds heaped warm with quilts and
hidden children.

This is it: this nonconclusion.
Our dismantled past seeking
some new passage.

My Father at 36

From what I knew of Father, direct,
untemporizing, that was how
one died:

within a week; pneumonia.
Mother, too, had learned
his ways:

how to handle
bills (call creditors)
the children (off to relatives)
remains (cremation).

But I
being the deliberate, newly hardened
one
took badly to such firm dispatch

and in those plain, vacated days,
scissored the mail,
hid his recent presents,
refused embrace,
and slept
only after naming
other men more destructible

soon to fall
to burn
be scattered.

Robin Johnson

Drought

In a time of drought, we must find earth again,
must walk in the burn of summer, cross
the arid valley to the riverbed.

All we need is wind, —wind,
over young bones. Spirit life shrinks,
flake-dry cracking, gauges itself by new-stiffened
tongues.

No breath from earth, no answer.
Wind lies trapped in swales. Heat shimmers
like mock-rain over plates of fallow fields.

Our summer feet bare,
through skin we feel the bone-bruise of unyielding clay,
feel between toes the harsh stubble,
learn life's inevitable cycle.

Earth resists. Our soles scrape
stubborn trenches disc-harrowed by mortal tractors.
Sun's hot wheel shreds life inside clods to minimal
seed, tight and waiting, waiting
the stifle of days, of nights, to grow up
along rough banks of the greater San Joaquin.

We lie at one with reft fields.
Immense, they stretch like bodies of beasts, long
extinct, and watch their hides ripple, a corrugated
species, unremembered.

But even earth must change its skin. So we walk
to find the river, across the valley floor.

Ahead, wild poppies parch
rigid, caught like desert bouquets, perfect as fossils.
Our nostrils ache with dust.

Nearer the river, Indian rocks lie pocked near pestles
waiting, mouths agape for acorns, begging
sustaining seed.
Our fingers scrape deep mortars, but
they sieve only powdery sift.

Beyond Indian rocks, tall cattails crackle.
No water flows where devil rapids swirled. Stark
babble of stones dry bleaching,
wearing a deathskin of chalk.

We wade in gravel, searching sharp shale beds
for pale skulls of horses, —pioneers' horses,—
long seen underwater as deep-water ghosts.

Call out to the white beasts! Coax them to surface,
as witchers call well-water up from the deep.

These weir bones are ours!
That skull, and that ribcage, mark a corral:
the corral of death. We must escape.

Our fingers make handles of eye sockets,
loosen, raise the lost braincage, lug the bleak skull
toward safe river banks.
Native tules weave and waver, rustling angst.

Overhead, the still sky quivers,
tiny winds skim a lifting of powder
off acrid skin;

hurry, hurry to beat the coming storm,
the rising weather,
until we feel our new bodies, aswirl
in a rain of violent air.

Soon all we feel is wind, —
wind, —rising like a river spilling over flooded banks
of the coastal mountain ranges,
the long moist tongues of wind carousing
and waking the sleeping beast who, once more,
kisses into wellhead
the brittle, fragile valley beneath our lives.

Dionisio D. Martínez

Fog Effect

In Pissarro's work, what is missing
is more important, clings
harder to the world. You do the rest:
add your own details, darken
one color, smear the smoke rising
near one corner. So far the fog
is the only hint of weather.
Try to count all the meanings
of weather. Think of all the meanings
of the word *effect.* Pissarro
was so concerned with the illusion
and the idea of fog that everything else
seemed irrelevant. This was weather
as statement. Fog as a point
of reference for those of us
in the world of lights. In the larger
world, he wanted to say, there was
all that reality. Too much for our own
good. Someone had to stop seeing
the excess. If there was going to be
an effect, he was going to be its cause.
The effect had been there before the
beginning. The cause only became

necessary after too many questions
overloaded the circuit. This explains
God and the rivers and the vapor
rising from the rivers—especially
from this one—to make a fog so prominent
in the composition that it transcends
its own substance, becomes
only an effect. A newspaper gone wild
in some other meaning of weather,
say, wind, would've been inconceivable
to Pissarro. A newspaper caught
by the mast of a boat in the harbor;
a newspaper in the water,
the news bleeding out of its pages,
the news turned pure substance, turned
a perfect shade of dark spiraling
into the river. And yet for me it is
this perfect image of a newspaper
at the mercy of an invisible weather,
it is only this image that claims
and assumes whatever space Pissarro
might have intended for some unexplained
effect of fog, its calculated vagueness.

Portrait of a Woman as a Woman in a Degas Pastel

Invariably, the caption will read: *This*
could be you.
Above it is the image she wants to become.
Or the image that is expected.

Certain things have come to be expected.
She will not question them.
The images alone will suffice. And the fact
that they lack the substance necessary

to give them life is not a disturbing thought.
She is absent-minded. Or is expected
to be. So she steps out of the shower dripping
suds. She doesn't realize that she forgot

to towel off, that she left a trail of puddles
from the bathtub to the sink. The teeth
of her comb break in her thick hair
which becomes knotted and thicker when it's wet.

It is her first morning since the separation.
His absence has peeled the steam from the mirror.
She was promised more than water.
Now she's trying to convince herself

that even if at one point the images, by chance,
do not suffice, the water will.
After all, she remembers when there was much
less than this. Almost nothing, in fact.

In time she will discover the tiny puddles
between the bathtub and the sink.
Each morning her face will reappear
in the mirror strictly as an object of faith:

the fog will have claimed the glass again,
defying the persistent absence that once cleared
everything. The man of her dreams will turn
out to be a sleepwalker with dreams of his own.

Seven A.M.

In this Hopper there is no hint of the richness normally associated with the morning. It lacks that light so thick you think you could scoop it out of the air if only you had the right tools.

What we see here is less than liquid, less than whatever promises to be there for us when what we bargained for, as the locals like to say, is more than we can handle. The only real bargain, as far as the hour is concerned, is its own passing, that brief gasp, that small sigh of knowing the inevitable and not quite admitting it only to have it turn on you, making the blow that much harder, the pain that follows that much easier to understand.

Coltrane and Monk at the Five Spot, Summer 1957

The joke's on anyone who thinks it'll really end. They're making art for the revolution. Not revolutionary art, which is altogether a different thing, a way of knowing this or that and never letting on. One of them realizes that they've only heard rumors, that they don't really know much about this thing they're supposedly playing for. He says to the other: How can you play for the revolution when you're not hungry? And the other says: Faith, etcetera. And this seems to make the night go down more easily, like bad medicine in a good spoon. Music for the revolution, says one of them, almost laughing. Ultimately, the joke is on the few who survive the revolution and go on believing that it was more than history playing another bad joke on itself.

Jeredith Merrin

Opening Up

Tulips, doors, thighs, of course,
and so on—the predictable vistas
of music, mirrors, and other surfaces
that might disclose suddenly
my own startled face,
are what I think of;
also, an elm on an ample estate,
offering its large vase of limbs
at the end of the several
greens of imposing grounds;

the terrible holes of sharks'
mouths, and closets,
and occasional bad dreams;
roses, too, in time-lapse photography
toward an old age and death
by fits and starts, their moths
of blossoms extending
thoughtlessly, and then it's all over.

And I think of what I never noticed,
the incessant constellations,
and more: rooms where we left
each door and window open,
how the moon made a pale spot
on one focal wall,
so that I finally saw through
to what else was possible—the rain
sounding on the low roof
like a long sheet of canvas tearing,
as if some titan had imagined,
unfolded, and pitched the huge tent
now being slowly ripped
open over our heads.

End of Summer

Under your high window's brandy light
our tousled bed's transformed:
the gold sails we admired
in the Dutch print on your wall
have again become our sheets;
the bed our *bateau ivre;*
about us, water.

It took me half my life, or more, to get here.

Summer, like this day, is almost over.
I see her stoop to gather
with a little shiver
her flimsy yellow shawl
—the landscape's scattered lights—
then wrap herself, stand tall,
and start away.

Paul Petrie

The Meeting

Always at the mind's edge lurking—
that forgotten land.

Reflections haunt the air.
(Brief mirrors, sudden pools)

Two shadows stalk the grass.
(Just as we're living here,
we are living there.)
Whatever happens,
happens
twice.

Sliced in, the finger bleeds.
Disconsolate rubies swell
and drip.
Pain leaps the gap.

The act is identical.
Except that in that world that haunts this world
the image is transformed, endured
as truth.

Almost of its own free will
the finger parts.
Nerves send forth their music.
Blood seeks the sun.

On two sides of a mirror,
two men
are pondering
two worlds.

Their eyes meet in the glass.

The mirror
cracks.

To Chasten the Optimist

Take away his joys.
Make him bend
like a hundred-jointed
thorn.

Plunge him
into deep pools,
from which the sky is an old
imagining.

Smear his face, hands, skin
with disgust
for the sun.

Submit him to the annihilation
of mirrors.

Invest him
with the dark vision
that lies
in the vacant eyes
of wells.

Like a dead animal, strip him
of his hopes.

And if he should dream—
let him dream only those dreams
that shall come true.

Hospital Casualties

Incorrigibly alive,
I am wet with fear
to hear those white beds edge,
with shuffling feet,
toward the dim corridor.

A traitor
who has deserted the lines of battle,
I shall live.

Soldiers,
fly up like birds
if you must depart!
But they cling
with grim jaws
and are dragged through the dark
like ploughs.

On the blank screen of your agony
you flash a vision.

I must show the world—
its unleavable face.

Small Boy in Heaven

One day he asked his father if you would be allowed
to make noise in Heaven.

The boy is making noise.
He is shouting, pounding, stamping upon the floors,
making red noise, green noise, black.

The walls are holding their ears.
Pictures tremble. Doors are athrob like drums.
Arched windows bursting out.

In adjacent rooms,
the old men sit, listening to the boy make noise
through the ears of memory—

sounds from lost days,
filtered by all that distance to a tongueless joy,
a happy, listening calm.

And though the boy may try
to keep his mind in his feet, his throat, his fists,
into his ears there comes

the still music of the past,
and walls, windows, and doors all vanish in the noise
of a soundless praise.

An Essay Concerning . . .

Lethal as atomic waste—
it lies
at the bottom of the deepest well
in the darkest forest.

(How lonely we are.
How little loved and loving.
How little missed.)

Standing in her hat and coat,
looking down she said:
"There's something that I think
you ought to know"—
and I ran for years,
dropping the dark rubies
of my life.

Even whispered
privately
in the ear of night
it may cause the moon to shrink
to a black pearl.

Nothing's invulnerable.
The sun slips under clouds
to escape.
Stars flee backwards
from their own light.

It is the last refuge
for liars, thieves,
and saints.

Donned carefully
(like your own death mask)
it may make your face
shine luminous
and pure.

Leonard Sanazaro

Warren and Sylvia Plath, 1955

They stand together now
for all time in the backyard,
late summer's edge at early autumn.

He, handsome yet still boyish,
trim in a dark suit and tie,
arms a bit stiffly at his side,
legs spaced evenly apart,
self-conscious, hesitant
face turned shyly away.

She smiles over his left shoulder,
head tilted attractively outward
toward the camera, her right shoulder
just brushing him, her left hand on hip
where she has pushed her wool suit jacket back
revealing a dark jersey blouse and leather belt
smartly about her thin waist, one foot forward
poised for the first step.

The late sunlight slants
down through the trees and lush
leaves behind them.

The whole world is opening
its perfect moment
and their bags are packed.

Authority

Anne Frank, Peter Van Daan
Amsterdam, 1944

The attic roof
vaulted to the window above
too high for them
to touch.

At one corner a branch
of the tall chestnut,
vivid with buds
heavy with sabbath dew,
shading their hiding
place.

The Westerkerk struck
the hour.

Then two white cranes,
their long full wings
bearing them slowly
into blue distances.

Do you know what
I call this? he asked her.
I call this taking a look
at the history
of the world.

She neither turned nor replied
but each deliberate
breath took in all the day
offered.

Evening
alone in her room,
she placed the combing shawl
over her shoulders, tying it
carefully under her chin,
moved the brush through
her thick dark hair
with thoughtful
intent.

Refusing one by one
the hard stars climbing
the night sky
over the house.

The Fisherman, My Brother

Mornings, afternoons, extended
meditations upon blankness,
excluding bad marriages, children,
cities and all those not listening
to slow even breath, hearing the steady
knock of the heart.

Who sits all day from dawn drifting in his boat
on the soft blue waves casting.

Sits, sits back, his body
a patient curve over the perfect waters.

Disciplined, again,
again arcing the long rod smoothly over his head
singing out the line for his bobber to float
just in the right places.

Elbows on knees,
he has woven his fingers into one another,
quiet even as the sky fades
behind the pines and his lucky stars
glimmering from the dark.

Rawdon Tomlinson

Amend

At noon we stroll among the fish
in the dark aquarium.
Ancient sturgeon; pirhanna:
survivors and cannibals of the river,

but there's also a kissing species,
and delicate seahorses
which bend, fanning gracefully
as high-charged eels roll over

lumbersome and phallic with beads
for eyes—into which we stare
from our dark, touching briefly,
sending the old shivers all over.

Outside, wasps and dragonflies
hover the still lake.
I tell you I made mistakes
in the world back then in fog.

You listen politely, bitter-sweet.
Then, we get up to go and look
at art: Corot's March weather
stays in the heart with one Durer,

a man promenading a maiden
with Death in the background
twisted like an eel around a tree.
We make an accident of touching,

laughing at painted breasts and thighs
the way children go wild in candy shops,
eat too much and are sick.
But it doesn't happen that way now.

I escaped from that fog-death changed.
"A daily reprieve," I said—
going my way by grace and work—free,
learning the hard and lovely facts

of the planet—so, an hour before the jet,
over icetea and shrimp,
the pain of memory
sets in with its ghosts of flesh.

Sangre de Cristo, July 4

Lightning strikes talus, rips
breath-quick, clapping dryly off cliffs
steel-thick, and rumbles down
the valley out of sound.

Fat, syncopated drops now
hop from dust and spatter bough,
ricochet off tent and skillet,
hit the lake like cold bullets

of hail, crescendoing
to silk-thin sheets gusting
ghostlike, its taut surface drummed
to effervescence—

soothing, releasing daydream
from fear as the Svea hisses steaming
rice, our tin cups ready; gifts
like rain and the risk

of love which brought us to these rocks
and sky—spread-eagle peak whose cirque
returns our voices to nothing,
was uplifted from molten

waves fused like passion heart-deep,
compressed feldspar and quartz
glassy as the light shimmering in
your eyes, whose cavedark I enter

afraid as the man inside my dream
of collapsing floor and endless falling.
Waking is slow as a flower
opening—crisp-scented weather

of the wet meadow grass; and clouds
burning off the granite-proud
eagle, its perfectly clear shape
reflected on the breathless lake—

then, a splash—and another splash,
until the wings are shattered glass
and the whole surface ringing pools
of silver-flamed cutthroats leaping.

SHORT STORY

Hinges

Robert Moulthrop

IN just five months Anne's father became a sickly, fearful stranger. Of course she believed the doctors, but she also believed he had one day decided to begin forgetting, then simply lost himself in the vast white linen of his bed. Some outward change in him would have made it easier for her. But from across the room he looked almost the same, and she hated him for that: the iron gray hair untidy still, the pink skin stretched as tight. Closer, she could see that the pale blue eyes no longer leapt into hers; they stabbed the air beside her, searching. His sudden inward change had left her too spent for friends. But now, Anne thought, if her brother came, then everything might at least be different.

"Well," she wrote, then stopped. She looked down at the small square of blue stationery with her name—Anne Putney Madrona—in dark blue italics at the top. The paper and her few words swam in and out of focus. She looked again.

"Dear Phil," she had written below today's date. "Well," she had continued, and had meant to put a comma after the word, separated only a little from it, but she had stopped before the comma because she began to look at the word. The loops of the two "l's" were large ovals, the way she always formed them, and she wanted to lose herself in the space inside the circles of the "Well." But she was here.

"Well," she had been going to write, trying to start by being chatty, "Well, it certainly has been one of those weeks." But she had only written "Dear Phil, Well" and the date. She blinked across the tears and looked again out the window, up the hill of pine trees and dark green oaks to the meadow where Lisa and Francie were still trying to get the kite into the air. Anne watched her children in the tall yellow grass and tried to send them messages. "Stand still," she willed them. "Stand still and hold the kite just at your fingers tips." She closed her eyes. "Stand tiptoe with the kite light on your fingers; reach up to the sky." But when she looked they were, as before, just bumping and laughing the kite across the meadow. She put up a hand to shade her eyes from the afternoon glare. Even if they

hear, she thought, they never listen; or never let you know they've heard.

One of the cats was rubbing against her; it felt like the orange one. She reached down to dig her fingers into the back of his substantial neck, playing her fingers back and forth along the tendons under the fur, while he purred. "Oh, Marmalade," she said aloud, still not looking down, "just make it all seem simple." The cat stayed only a moment longer, and then abruptly left for something else. Anne picked up the pen again, and tried to confront the page. *Well.* Mom had always said Phil was never a great one for the hard times. She wondered why she had tried before, why she was trying now. The engulfing feeling of wanting her mother left her weak.

She pulled out a new sheet, dated it, and began to write before she thought. "Dear Phil, I really think you owe me—after Mom and all. So please come now. Alone is too much. The money is fine, and appreciated. But Pop" She stopped. The thought of her permanent blue tracks on the paper with her name imprinted made her throat go dry.

She heard the kitchen door slam and looked up. The sudden rush of outside air brought screams and running footsteps. A gray cat streaked through the kitchen past the door. In the living room the sound of his claws picking at the sofa seemed louder than the noises of the girls.

"You broke it, you fix it."

"No, you."

"No, you. I'm bored of kites. Anyway, there isn't any wind."

"Well, Grady's going to play with me. Aren't you, Grady?"

"No, with me. Here, Grady dear, here's that piece of string."

From the study Anne listened to them pass back through the kitchen and up the stairs. She wondered if they knew or cared that she was there. Some part of her wanted to pour them some milk or cut an apple. But when she heard them upstairs playing a cat game, she stood up and shut the door, putting them momentarily away.

She sat down and looked at the paper, surprised to discover she had filled a page. She turned it over; the paper felt cool as she smoothed the blank side, pressing the words away. She caught her place, then continued "has been put, placed, tied . . ." Oh, the chair had been bad enough, but the new form, under the blanket, with the sound drifting from parched lips—songs of words in yesterday's dusty sunlight—was worse. Where was the man who patiently baited the fish hooks of little girls, placing salmon eggs and worms just so, untangling the sinkers? "If only, somehow, *I* could be the one to not remember," Anne named the feeling for the first time, and suddenly she was at a stream of her youth, standing in dappled shade beside her father, skipping little flat rocks right to the middle of a shallow pool.

The hurt had made her stop writing again, and she was staring at the

window sash, at the edge she never cleaned, caked with dust. I'll clean it first thing this spring, she thought. But with a start she realized it was the end of a chilly April. I can call, she thought, then the words will be impermanent and over. But words, she remembered, are always permanent.

*

"Phil, it's Mom. You said you'd come." She remembered putting off her tears.

"I know. But that was then; now I got this deal and if I'm not there for it, then I lose."

"But, listen to me, you have to come. I need you. Pop's gone fishing like he always does, and now Mom just has all these tubes and doctors and I've got Francie and Lisa and I can't, I just can't."

"Annie, baby. . . ."

"Don't. Don't try to charm me as if I were one of your girlfriends."

"Anne, I'm not coming."

"Phil, this is Mom we're talking about. This isn't some, some aunt or uncle." She remembered an ache, quick and deep, for the large family they never had.

"Don't tell me what is and what isn't," he said. "You and Mom were always the deal. Now you deal with Mom."

Anne still wondered which of them had hung up first.

*

But people change, she thought; I've changed. Martin left all those years ago, with a suitcase full of shirts I starched and ironed, pushing the point around the buttons, folding the white cuffs to the back, so everything would be correct when he delivered his paper. And then he met Evelyn at the conference. He said. Well, it doesn't matter now, and it didn't matter for the girls, she thought fiercely: they had me, and they had their Pop. And it *was* better for me, she thought. I've done things I never would have thought I could do. But not, she thought, this.

*

"Hi, Phil, it's Anne."

"Hi, Snookie, what's up?"

The old nickname sounded harsh, an unused toy off a dusty shelf. She took a sip of tea, letting the china mug scrape against her bottom teeth.

Finally she said, "Phil, it's Pop. He's going and I need your help."

There was no answer, and she tried to catch a meaning in his silence. "What happened?" he asked. "Did it turn into cancer or something?" She

tried to hear the real question, but there seemed to be a wall behind the purposefully blank voice.

"No," she said, then let go. "He's old, dammit, and things got worse all of a sudden.

"Yeah," said Phil. "I can see where that'd be tough. How much do you need?"

"I'll tell you, Phil," she was twisting the cord now, wrapping it around her fingers, "what I'd really like is for, this time, you to come up. Then we could talk. And you could come with me, so we could see him together." I don't care if he hears me begging, she thought. Just be here, just be my brother, just stop my pain.

And she was nine and Phil was seven on the front porch in the twilight smell of honeysuckle, and he had showed her the markings on the wings of a brown moth, a pattern of circles and dots that looked like two staring eyes. The moth was batting against the screen of the living room window, and Phil said, "Pop says moths like that are Fortune's eyes. And that moth wants to get in our house and bring us good luck. So let's." She never knew whether her father had said it, or Phil had made it up. But at that moment she knew they had a chance to change their future. They had spent the evening chasing the moth toward the open front door, trying to trap the good fortune inside the house that always seemed too big. She had never loved her brother more.

The silence drew out slowly like a fine thin thread. "All right," he said finally. "I'll fly up Tuesday. I'll rent a car and meet you at the hospital."

"No," she said. "Come out to the house. It'll give us more time together." The past won't matter, she thought. He's coming; we're family.

*

After the morning mist burned off, Tuesday was another fine day. Spring break, she thought. For shall I break in spring when I can willow bend? She wondered whether she had made up the line or heard it somewhere, then decided that—like the half corrected stack of papers and the unfinished article on ellipses in the sonnets—it didn't matter.

*

By noon she was, finally, only waiting. She had moved all the toys from the living room, put the tea things on the side table, put on a dress, and sat quietly in the living room with a back issue of *American Scholar*. She had tried to read, but mostly she had looked out the window with the magazine unopened in her lap. Bettina had come for the girls, who had willingly flung themselves inside her slick red van. Finally, tired of waiting, Anne had changed into a pair of jeans and her soft blue shirt.

When she heard the car drive up she walked to the window and watched Phil turn off the engine and sit, staring straight ahead through the tinted windshield. She waited, too.

Finally she gave in and walked out the door, across the porch, down the steps, and across the hard packed dirt to where the car sat in the sun. When she was almost there he pressed the switch to lower the window.

"Hi," he said. Anne looked into his eyes, trying to find something behind the smile.

"Hi, Phil," she said, leaning down toward the window. Her hand touched the car, then recoiled from the too hot metal. So she bent awkwardly toward him, squinting into the cool interior. "Come on in," she said.

"No," said Phil. "That's all right." Anne could see herself reflected in the chrome around the window.

"I've got tea ready," she said. She wanted him inside her house, seated across from her in the tweed chair, with a mug of hot tea in his hand and fresh cookies on the yellow plate between them. But he just looked back at her, and against her will she nodded quietly. She went back into the house to get her purse and check the stove and the cats. Out on the porch she took the time to shut the front door and lock it.

He was still sitting in the car, but now the window was up, and he had turned on the air conditioning and the radio. He was looking straight ahead, up the hill to the meadow behind the house. She sat beside him while a gravel voice from the radio slid a slow blues over them and they each watched a hawk circle slowly, a quiet moving speck against the sky, now dark-green through the windshield. Anne let the song end before she shifted in her seat and turned off the radio.

"Well," she said finally.

"Right," said Phil. They sat listening to the sounds of the engine and the air conditioner. "I guess it isn't easy, huh?"

She turned to look at him. No one had the right to be that handsome; no one should have charm so ready. Across a chasm of inches she thought she could feel the warmth of his body. She replayed his phrase, scanning the syntax as she might first read a poem, searching for an emotional spine behind the words. He was very right; it wasn't easy. Anne reached out and adjusted the vent so the cool air would cross her face.

"So," he said. "Now that I'm here, what am I supposed to do? Was there something?"

"Not really," she said blankly. She wondered how much to tell; how much to risk. "You, we're family, we're what's left, and I needed, I hoped Pop, that you and I and Pop. . . ."

"It won't make any difference," he said. "We'll just finish up today like with Mom." He turned and looked at her. "We were never what any of us wanted us to be," he said quietly. "You know," he said, "nothing ever changes."

She thought of all the changes: Phil into a handsome, strange adult; Martin into someone else's husband; Lisa and Francie into little girls; her mother into withered death; her father into a stranger. "Then why did you come?" she asked. She was suddenly too tired to be angry; she really wanted to know.

"I don't know," he said.

She looked at his knuckles, bursting white on the edge of the steering wheel. I don't know either, she thought; go away and leave me alone. "Thank you for coming," she said, as she might to a graduate student who had dropped off a paper and stayed to chat about Marlowe's view of death.

*

They didn't speak across the mountains, rode silent beside each other through the pines, catching here the river or there a hawk against the sky, now in its afternoon of sharp and cloudless blue. In the asphalt parking lot, between the white lines, they sat again inside the car, and waited, each for the other to move. They were parked facing the mountains, now, in the distance, dark angles against the sky.

"Well," said Anne, "I guess we might as well." And she opened the door into the hot afternoon before he could reply.

*

After the young doctor left, they sat on low vinyl chairs, their awkward knees on either side of a plastic coffee table.

"Episode," said Phil. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"Last week" said Anne, "it meant that he got worse and they had to put him to bed with tubes. Then he got better and they let him sit in a chair. With a strap." The word had no effect on Phil. "Now he's worse," she finished.

Phil sat hunched forward, forearms across his knees. His head was angled to the side, as if he were listening for something. Anne looked at her brother, and wondered how long it would be before he left.

*

Then they stood looking down into the old gray face, laced across with plastic tubes. The arms had been laid on top of the cotton blanket stamped with the hospital name. Anne tried to remember the last time the arms had swept her up. Abruptly, she stopped trying. Once or twice the old eyes stopped their fearful wild roaming around the room and focussed on Phil's face.

"Does he know us?" asked Phil.

"Sometimes," Anne said. She was rubbing her fingers back and forth across the knotted towel that secured her father's wrists. "Sometimes he even says something like before."

"Like what?" asked Phil. He had moved back down to the end of the bed and picked up the chart. She wondered why he thought the march of numbers would make a difference.

"Like last week he looked at me and said, 'The catches on those kitchen cabinets still holding up?' and I said, 'Yes, Pop, they're fine.' But he was already somewhere else."

"What cabinets?" Phil let the chart fall back against the bed.

She looked at her brother standing obliquely by the window where a shaft of sunlight reached the floor, like the one in last November's kitchen that pierced the dust of pink sawdust while the air held the sound of an aimless whistle over the regular saw stroke rhythm.

"Last Thanksgiving, just before, anyway, some time in early November . . ." It must have been a Thursday, in the morning, because Bettina had picked up the girls, then it had stopped raining, she remembered thinking, now that the sun was out, they would forget their raincoats, and she had been going to call Bettina, but then ". . . Pop just drove up." Anne looked at Phil, but he hadn't moved.

"He had a load of lumber in the back of his pickup and, you know the way he walked when he was going to do something whether you wanted him to or not? sort of like a crab? Well, he came that way up the steps, sidled up to the front door. . . ." He had worn his overalls faded now so they almost matched the light blue of his eyes and he had even (she could smell as he came closer) put on the Old Spice she had helped Lisa buy him for his birthday. ". . . and then he asked me, told me he was going to make me all new kitchen cabinets, with all new doors, new hardware, and hang them himself. I told him I couldn't pay for it right away, and he said he didn't want a penny, it was his present. And he looked so sweet and, well, who wants their kitchen all apart, but I said, 'Oh, Pop, sure.' I mean, he had never." She stopped abruptly.

Why am I telling him this, she thought. He doesn't care. But even as she thought it, she could feel the old hope hook into her, pulling her along against what she knew for truth.

"And, you know something?" she said directly at him. "Pop never lost his touch." Phil came back to the side of the bed.

"So what do we do now?" he asked.

Anne looked away. "Just be here," she said. "Maybe he'll be here, maybe he won't."

She looked at the the calloused hands on the blanket, somehow attached to skinny, wasted arms. The old eyes, still someplace fearful, just kept moving; then one hand, the skin translucent over blue strings of

veins, began to pluck at the blanket.

"Hi," she said. "It's Anne and Phil, Pop." He looked at her for a moment but she could tell they were strangers in the currents of his life. She willed herself to keep on.

"I was telling Phil about the cabinets, Pop," she continued. "How you fixed them up last Thanksgiving, so all my friends wanted you to fix up their kitchens, too?"

Over at the window Phil was looking down at his car. Anne looked back down at the fingers on the blanket and closed her eyes. "Ellen said especially that she'd never seen cabinet doors like that." Anne found it pleasant in the black, with the small exploding lights and pinwheels. "Ellen said she'd never seen a hinge so true," she said, in the quiet of her dark.

*

Later, during dinner, Anne looked across the table. Lisa and Francie were eating and singing television commercials, waiting for their mother to speak.

"I saw Pop today," Anne said. The girls stopped singing and looked at her. "He reminded me about the last time he took you fishing. Remember?"

"I remember," said Lisa, nodding her head.

"And he helped you put the worms and salmon eggs on the hooks," continued Anne.

"Those worms were yucky," said Francie.

"Pop said you two were the best fishermen he ever saw," said Anne.

"But it was boring," said Lisa. "I don't like going fishing."

"Grady doesn't like worms," said Francie.

"He said, 'Be sure to tell them to sit real still on the bank,' " said Anne, " 'when they go fishing.' "

"Can Grady come, too?" asked Francie. "Grady dear can fish with *me*."

"Do we have to go?" said Lisa.

*

Later, after midnight, the fabric of the tweed chair pressed into her bare legs and arms. Anne shifted in the dark and waited, almost patiently, for the house to stop settling. When it stopped, finally, she knew there would be silence, and she could go upstairs to lay her fingers on the feather cheeks of sleeping girls, and listen to their breath.

ARTICLES

Art Appropriation and the Work of Sherrie Levine

Catherine Moschou Abrams

ART appropriation, the incorporation of existing art works in the work of an artist other than the original creator, has been practiced through the centuries. These hand-duplicated or mechanically reproduced copies, while often confused with imitation, influence, assimilation, or even forgery because all denote taking from existing sources, should be sharply distinguished for differences in both intent and execution. After a discussion of related terms and a quick tour of issues concerning art appropriation in general, this essay will focus on the work of Sherrie Levine, as a foremost practitioner of this mode that has, as it will be shown, a special place in 20th century art.

The imitation of another's style or technique has long been an accepted practice among artists. Compared to art appropriation, it is a freer interpretation of all or part of an original, whereby the artist adapts the duplicated material to fit the needs of the new piece. For example, in John Trumbull's *Portrait of General Washington* (1790), the General's horse was an imitation of the horse Antony Van Dyck included in his *Portrait of King Charles I* (c. 1635).[1]

Influence on an artist by the work of other artists is acceptable to artists and critics alike, as long as it is combined with original elements. The influences may take the form of borrowing themes, ideas, or technical methods. In contrast to appropriated pieces, influences are more general in nature, and only certain closely replicated elements from the original echo the primary source. For instance, the technique of Georges Seurat's pointillism was imitated by Paul Signac. In the portrait of his wife, now titled *Woman with a Parasol* (1893),[2] Signac used the technique but in no other way duplicated any of Seurat's pictures.

In cases of assimilation, the borrowed material is extensively reworked, altered, or further developed. It loses its original character, and only faint reminders identify the source. Michelangelo's work is an example of assimilation of classical and Hellenistic sources, while Pablo Picasso's assimilation of African art is evident in *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1906–7).

In a way, forgeries relate to art appropriation as plagiarism relates to quotations, except that forgers pass off their work as somebody else's, while plagiarists claim somebody else's work as their own. A forgery lacks the historical context of the primary source. It misrepresents the actual date of production and the name of the artist that produced the work. In the 20th century, one of the most infamous cases of forgery was Han van Meegeren's fake Vermeer painting *Christ and the Disciples at Emmaus* (1937), which was exposed in a trial in Amsterdam in 1945.[3]

By contrast, in appropriated works there is full disclosure of the source. The artists either mention the original work in the title of the copy, e.g., Audrey Flack's *Leonardo's Lady* (1974), or assume that the work is well known to the public, as in the case of Andy Warhol's silkscreening the Mona Lisa in *30 Are Better Than One* (1963). The duplicate stays close to the original, and any changes are interpreted as intentional cultural comments. In fact, the appropriated work becomes meaningful only in comparison to the original "targeted" source and acts as critical commentary on the source.

Through the centuries, a variety of reasons for and methods of appropriation persisted. Religious control over the arts often resulted in duplications of those works that most successfully represented the dogma of the church. Under the Catholic Counter Reformation, the church forced duplication of existing religious works. The powerful Council of Trent employed theologians to advise painters on what themes to use and how to execute visual works so as to avoid heresy.

Education has been another persistent reason for replication. The instructional and educational nature of the visual arts was apparent in mural paintings, in the interiors of Byzantine churches, and in illuminations of manuscripts in the Middle Ages. Religious depictions of the life of Jesus and biblical scenes were intended, among other elements of state and religious propaganda, for the education and religious instruction of the majority of the population that was illiterate.

During the Renaissance, artists learned to draw and paint in long years of apprenticeship. Such practice resulted in imitations of style and often in exact duplication by apprentices of the most popular works of the master. Copying continued to be a standard method for teaching art students until the end of the 19th century. Eugene Delacroix, Theodore Rousseau, Camille Corot, Edgar Degas, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Henri Matisse are among those to have formed their style by copying

masterpieces at the Louvre.[4] Titian seems to have been an all-time favorite. *His Entombment of Christ* (c. 1525) was replicated by both Theodore Gericault (c. 1815) and Eugene Delacroix (c. 1845–50).[5]

Art appropriations were often considered signs of assimilation of a foreign culture after an invasion. After the Roman conquest of the classical Greek and Hellenistic world, copies of Greek art objects became luxury items associated with wealth, social prestige, and cultural refinement. The Roman artists duplicated wall paintings, sculptures, and smaller pottery pieces for domestic use, trying to stay as close to the original as their abilities permitted them. *The Cnidian Aphrodite* (340 B.C.) by Praxiteles; the *Apoxyomenus* (320 B.C.) by Lysippus; the *Laocoon* (c. 150 B.C.) by Agesander, Athenodorus, and Polydorus; portraits of philosophers such as *Epicurus* (c. 250 B.C.) and of statesmen such as *Demosthenes* (280 B.C.) were copied over and over again. Beside statues and pottery, paintings on wall or panel were transferred to marble or mosaics. The paintings of Roman Pompeii and the Herculaneum that were copied from Greek originals affirm the widespread nature of such practice.

Migration of artists was another main reason for art duplications. Prince Vladimir of Russia invited Byzantine master masons to direct the building of the Dessiatinaya Church in Kiev (989–996).[6] The Byzantine influence was felt not only in Slavic countries but in Italy and Sicily as well. In the 12th century, the Norman kings brought Greek workmen to decorate the palaces of Ziza and Torre Pisana. The mosaics that decorated several chambers of these palaces were copied from the Great Palace of the Emperor at Constantinople. The work of the Greek artists was soon duplicated by local artisans in miniature mosaic icons, such as the *Crucifixion* (c. 1170), and in panel paintings, such as *Enthroned Virgin and Child* (c. 1180).[7]

Fashion Trends

Art appropriations as a response to and creation of fashion trends can be traced throughout the history of art. In the 17th century in Holland and Germany, the work of Albrecht Durer became fashionable, and artists reproduced many of his works. The market was saturated with cheap imitations, but among the better quality duplications was Hendrik Terbrugghen's copy after Durer's *The Beheading of St. John the Baptist* (1510). Terbrugghen transferred Durer's engraving into a panel painting.[8]

By the end of the 19th century, artists were influenced by Japanese art and artifacts. Copies of prints, screens, geisha dolls, even designs from Japanese wrapping paper were incorporated in the paintings of French and English painters. Edouard Manet included part of a Japanese screen and a copy of a woodprint in his *Portrait of Emile Zola* (1868), and Vincent

Van Gogh duplicated Hiroshige's woodcut *The Plum Tree* (1857) in an oil painting dated 1886.[9]

Artists often copy the work of artists they admire. Rembrandt used an angel from Maerten van Heemskerck's woodcut print *The Angel Leaving Tobias* (1563) in his oil painting *The Angel Leaving Tobias* (1637).[10] Johannes Vermeer, in *A Lady Seated at the Virginals* (c. 1670), painted Baburen's *The Procuress* in the background.[11] Francisco Goya transferred into etchings a series of paintings by Velazquez. *The Count-Duke of Olivares on Horseback* (c. 1778) was one of them.[12] Engravers often used paintings for commercial publications, as for instance the cover of von Muralt's *Kinder Buchlein* obstetrical handbook published in Zurich in 1689, which Johannes Meyer illustrated with Michelangelo's *Booz* and *Azor* from the Sistine Chapel.[13]

The desire of collectors and other art lovers to possess well known pieces resulted in replications of the original. The Roman emperor Hadrian's villa contained one of the most valuable and extensive collections of the ancient world.[14] A common practice during the 16th century was for engravers to copy Italian Renaissance paintings, in an effort to transfer information about existing art works. Such engravings were eagerly absorbed and reproduced in oil paintings by Northern Europeans and Spanish artists. Jan van Scorel, a Netherlandish, and Marcantonio Raimondi, an Italian, were among the most conscientious "Italianizers."[15]

Artists overseeing the replication of their own work due to patrons's demand was a customary practice in court painting. Velazquez, during the last eight years of his life while in the service of Philip IV of Spain, painted about 20 royal portraits. Because of the high demand, the time limitations, and the low compensation for such portraits, Velazquez employed assistants for their completion.[16] Other European courts followed similar practices. At the time of Louis XIV, a painting workshop existed at Versailles for finishing royal portraits and duplicating them. The replicas were disseminated throughout Europe.[17]

In the 20th century, three distinct motives characterized the replication of art works: parodying, paying homage, and placing the original image in a new context. When, in 1919, Marcel Duchamp pencilled in a mustache and a goatee on a reproduction of Mona Lisa and entitled it *L.H.O.O.Q.*, his intention was clearly to parody the original.[18] In the same mood, Salvador Dali placed a Michelin automobile tire around a replica of Michelangelo's *Slave* and called the work *Michelin Slave* (1966).[19]

In the 1960s and 1970s, among the American artists to celebrate the genius of the Old and the Not-So-Old Masters by duplicating their work was Roy Lichtenstein who paid tribute to major 20th century artists by translating in his personal style, Cezanne (*Man with Folded Arms*, 1962), Picasso (*Woman with Flowering Hat*, 1963), Matisse (*Goldfish Bowl*, 1978),

and others.[20]

Artists placed copies of well known art works, charged with cultural and aesthetic connotations, into a new context, by juxtaposing them with heterogeneous visual elements from different historical periods and cultures. In 1913, Juan Gris used this type of appropriation in several of his pictures. In *Violin and Engraving* (1913), he collaged an engraving depicting a Renaissance landscape on the background of a still-life composition painted in the cubistic style.[21] In this way, he created a dramatic contrast between how objects in space are depicted under traditional perspective and under the fragmented, multilevel space depiction characteristic of cubism.

New technologies widely used in the 20th century allowed artists to use new ways of duplicating and of incorporating the copies in their work. Hand-duplications were replaced by mechanically reproduced photographic replicas which were collaged (Kurt Schwitters's *Like an Old Master,* 1942) or silkscreened on the canvas (Robert Rauschenberg's *Rebus,* 1955).

Conceptual art gave intellectual backing to methods of art appropriation that would have been unacceptable in earlier times. Confiscation and exhibition of the original painting under the appropriating artist's name were practices of Louise Lawler. Lawler borrowed Henri Stullman's painting of a horse and re-exhibitied it, under her name, at an installation at Artists Space in New York, in 1978.[22] Her intention was to shift the interest from the painting itself to the idea of "a-painting-in-a show."

Images from the mass media, such as photographs from newspapers and magazines, product labels, and comic strips, were recycled in the work of pop artists. Peter Blake used newspaper photographs of the British royal family in *The Balcony* (1960), Andy Warhol glamorized Brillo boxes, and Kenny Scharf used Felix the Cat in *Felix on a Pedestal* (1982).[23]

Levine As Extreme Appropriator

But of all the contemporary artists, Sherrie Levine has taken art appropriation to the greatest extremes. Her early appropriations were collages of picture advertisements, cut out from popular magazines. In 1981, she exhibited her re-photographed series at Metro Pictures Gallery in New York City. All the works in the series shared the same production process and had the same size and framing. Levine selected and photographed a number of photographs she found in art books and other printed sources. The works were by the famous photographers Edward Weston, Eliot Porter, Walker Evans, and Alexander Rodchenko. (See illustrations 1, 2, and 3.) She had negatives and prints made at a commercial photo laboratory. The prints were in a benday half tone dot system that differs from the traditional continuous tone system which the original

1. **Sherrie Levine,** *Untitled (After Eliot Porter),* 1981. The original was used by Eliot Porter to illustrate a poem, in the 1962 edition of Henri Thoreau's book *In Wildness Is the Preservation of the World.*

photographers used. All the re-photographed pieces were enlarged to 10 by 8 inches, the standard size of the book illustrations which she used in her re-photographing. After they were matted in wide white border mats and framed in dark wooden frames, Levine's photographs reached the dimensions of 20 by 16 inches.

After the re-photographed series, Levine worked on hand duplications. She started with drawings and moved on to paintings of watercolor on paper and casein on mahogany. She duplicated works done by European and American male artists who had lived a generation before her. Henri Matisse, Piet Mondrian, Egon Schiele, Kasimir Malevitch, William de Kooning, Stuart Davis, and Arthur Dove were some of the many contemporary masters whose work she duplicated. (See illustrations 4, 5, and 6.)

Levine used art books as her source of reference. She calls the images "ghosts of ghosts"[24] because she traced bookplates that reproduced slides or photographs of the original painting; therefore the relation of her work to the original is three or four times removed from the source.

All drawings and watercolors are 11 by 14 inches, and the paintings are 20 by 24 inches regardless of the actual dimensions of the original. These sizes, although larger than the 8 by 10 inches format which she had used

2. **Sherrie Levine,** *Untitled (After Walker Evans)*, 1981. The original photograph was taken by Evans and was published in James Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men.* It depicted a family of sharecroppers in front of their home in Alabama, in 1936.

3. **Sherrie Levine,** *Untitled (After Alexander Rodchenko),* 1985. A 1924 photograph of Rodchenko's mother, now known as *The Artist's Mother,* was rephotographed by Levine for this 1985 work of hers.

for the re-photographed pieces, were still small for paintings. In an interview with Jeanne Siegel, Levine said that she intentionally used a uniform format for all the pieces, because it had a democratizing effect on the images, avoiding preferential treatment toward any of them.[25]

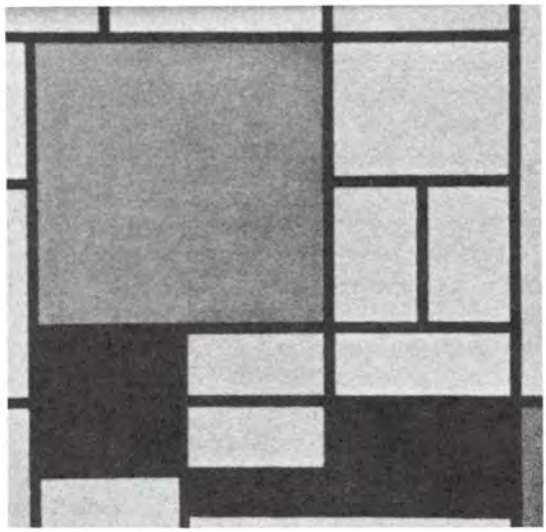
Both the re-photographed series and the hand-duplications put forth Levine's positions on the traditional way of viewing a picture, on the possibility of creating original images, on the mimetic/representational function of art, and on the position of women artists in a patriarchal society.

Traditionally, during the process of active viewership, after spectators had registered the literal, perceptual image and interpreted its symbolic, cultural, and ideological connotations, they would turn to the linguistic message of the title of the work, for the final anchorage of what the artist meant to represent. To Roland Barthes,

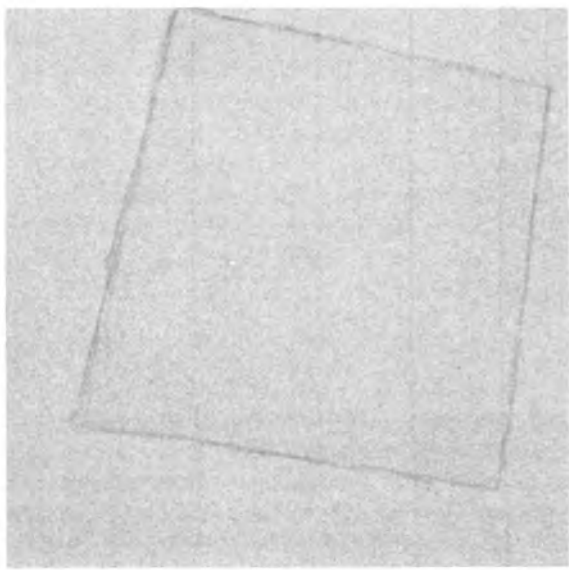
> The caption helps me to choose the correct level of perception, helps me to focus not simply my gaze but also my understanding. The linguistic message no longer guides identification but interpretation, constituting a kind of vise which holds the connoted meanings from proliferating, whether towards excessively individual regions (it limits, that is to say, the projective power of the image) or towards dysphonic values.[26]

Traditionally an artist was considered the creator, who fathered and owned the work. Society validated such notions by legalizing the artist's copyright. Viewers were accustomed to looking for the artist in the work, interpreting the work in connection to the artist's character, passions, defects. The art critics encouraged this notion by indicating, for instance, that in Caravaggio's work there were implications of his homosexuality even in such religious pieces as *The Supper at Emmaus* (1612). Van Gogh's blackbirds in one of his last paintings, *Crows over the Wheatfield* (1890), were taken as "a gloomy warning of impending doom,"[27] and Picasso's blue period was associated with the artist's harsh financial situation at the time.

In her appropriations, Sherrie Levine departs from the traditional process of viewership in three ways. First, she denies the existence of an optimum reading as specified by the original artist's title, caption, accompanying text, and historical circumstances at the time the original work was created. All her works are named "Untitled," accepting the polysemy of the image and the viewer's freedom to interpret the picture according to anthropological, cultural, political, ideological, aesthetic, or psychological codes. Spectators are invited into the creative act by being allowed to connect the objects and scenes of the picture to any allegorical interpretation of their choice and to reject the restraining power of the



4. **Sherrie Levine,** *Untitled (After Piet Modrian),* 1983. The original is an oil painting titled *Yellow, Red, Blue, and Black,* dated 1921, while Levine's copy is a watercolor.



5. **Sherrie Levine,** *Untitled (After Kasimir Malevich),* 1984. This is Levine's casein on mahogany version of Malevich's oil on canvas painting titled *Suprematist Composition: White on White,* completed in 1919.

artist's linguistic message as the only valid interpretation.

Second, Levine's appropriated photographs make the distinction between the denoted literal image of the picture and its connoted symbolic or cultural meaning, thus separating the art work from the artist. Levine denies the artist's exclusive right to authorship and argues that this right is shared between two poles: the artist-as-creator of the physical art object and the spectator-as-interpreter of the work. She endorses Duchamp's ideas about the creative act:

> All in all, the creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act.[28]

Third, Levine's belief is that the visual repertory available to artists has been fully explored and that contemporary artists cannot create original images but can only rearrange the existing ones. Her comments, as they appear in Brian Wallis's anthology of contemporary artists's writings (*Blasted Allegories*, 1987), are a pastiche of slightly modified sentences from Barthes's essay "The Death of the Author":

> The world is filled to suffocating. Man has placed his token on every stone. Every word, every image, is leashed and mortgaged. We know that a picture is but a space in which a variety of images, none of them original, blend and clash. A picture is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture. Similar to those eternal copyists Bouvard and Pecuchet, we indicate the profound ridiculousness that is precisely the truth of painting. We can only imitate a gesture that is always interior, never original. Succeeding the painter, the plagiarist no longer bears within him passions, humors, feelings, impressions, but rather this immense encyclopedia from which he draws. (1981)[29]

Levine's appropriations affirm her belief that the only creative act left for artists is the recycling of images inherited from the vast visual archives. For her, the act of copying removes the duplicate from a direct pictorial space of visual representation to an indirect parapictorial inquiry. Any visual image belongs to a direct pictorial space, when the art object represents or refers to objects of the real world. In the case of painting the painter selects objects from the real world,—e.g. a live model, a still life, a landscape—and tries to represent them. In all such instances, the artist refers to nature directly and aims at mirroring the real world in his or her pictures.

6. **Sherrie Levine,** *Untitled (After Henri Matisse),* 1983. Levine pasted more than 50 pieces of blue paper imitating Henri Matisse's college *Blue Nude #1* that was done in 1952, two years before his death.

On the other hand, when the art object reproduces an existing depiction of the real world, as in the case of duplication, the visual image moves to a parapictorial space. There the picture does not mirror nature but a representation of nature. The creative act in duplication is the acclimatization of the copy in such as way as to function as a commentary on the original and on the cultural values it represents. The copy becomes a form of metapainting, where, in a manner analogous to metafiction, the artists self-consciously and systematically draw attention to the artificiality of the image, in order to pose questions about the relationship between art and reality.

The acclimatization of the copy is achieved either by juxtaposing it with heterogeneous, contrasting visual elements or by altering parts of it, as if creating an updated version of the original. In the first case, artists use the technique of collage. Robert Rauschenberg in *Charlene* (1954) juxtaposes images from the mass media to images of art works, contrasting the immediacy of everyday reality depicted in newspapers and in pictures of product advertisements with masterpieces by Edgar Degas, Edouard Manet, and Katsushika Hokusai, emphasizing the illusive and utopian nature of the painterly image.

In using alteration, the second method of acclimatization, painters updated famous paintings of nudes by such painters as Velazquez, Ingres, Matisse, and Boucher. For example, in *Manet's Olympia* (1974), Mel Ramos replaced the faces of Olympia and her maid with contemporary-looking young women's faces and painted a small monkey at Olympia's feet instead of including the original black cat.[30]

Both methods attach connotation to the copy and relate the copy to the original by means of critical assessment. Such metapainterly works presuppose that the viewer is not only aware of the existence of the original, but also knows what the original stands for in the cultural environment in which the copy is embedded.

The genre of metapainting is evident in Levine's appropriations. The original images, although faithfully duplicated, have "shrunk" in size and, in a metaphorical way, lost importance in the process of duplication, as may be judged from the illustrations accompanying this essay. Their uniqueness, their aura is gone. The replicas alter both the historical moment and the ownership of the pictures.

In interviews, Levine has said that in creating her work she was thinking a lot in psychological terms, about the authority of the father and the authority of the father's desire. Since the art world in the late 1970s and early 1980s seemed to her to want only images of male desire, she decided to produce them, but as a "woman's work."[31] Of crucial significance is that in Levine's work, a woman has claimed as her own art, works done by male European or American artists from the generation of her father, already accepted and evaluated as of high quality by a patriarchal

social system.

Until recently, the visual arts overwhelmingly bore the marks of a social structure that was mainly patriarchal. Women artists tended to assimilate both a male point of view and male iconography. For example, Judith Leyster in *Proposition* (1631) painted male desire when she used Frans Hals's style to depict a prudish girl bent over her embroidery, while a man leaned against her and offered money as procurement of her sexual availability. Berthe Morisot (*Julie Manet and Her Greyhound Laerte*, 1893) and Mary Cassatt (*The Boating Party*, 1893) mixed and matched male influence that then shaped the image of a well-rounded mother-mistress-social-satellite model woman to satisfy unfulfilled male dreams.

Levine's duplications are intended as the work of a female artist fully aware of the problem, in Freudian and Lacanian thought, of retaining her female identity, thus making the father, not the mother, the object of her desire.[32] She uses parody to resolve the problem that the representation of male desire causes a woman working in the visual arts. Levine disguises her desire by appropriating art objects that have fetishized male desire and by recreating them as art objects of female desire.

Levine is a prototypical example of how the reasons for and methods of art appropriation in the 20th century differ fundamentally from those in previous ages. As photography took over the mimetic, representational function of art, Levine is one who has refused to become a visual recorder, competing with the camera eye. Instead, she focuses her interest on what has been recorded and how it has been "read" by the public. While traditionally, pictures had the function of interpreting reality, in her work they seemed to usurp reality. Levine is among the contemporary artists to use art appropriation to comment both on traditional notions about art and art history and on contemporary cultural issues.

Notes

[1]Jean Lipman and Richard Marshall, *Art about Art* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1973), pp. 8–9.

[2]Yann Le Pichon, *The Real World of the Impressionists* (New York: Harrison, 1983), p. 117.

[3]Denis Dutton, *The Forger's Art* (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), pp. 8–53.

[4]Germain Bazin, *French Impressionists in the Louvre* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1958), p. 10.

[5]Kenneth Maison, *Art Themes and Variations: Five Centuries of Interpretations and Re-Creations* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1960), p. 122.

[6]Victor Lasareff, *Russian Icons* (New York: Mentor-Unesco, 1962), pp. 8–9.

[7]David Talbot Rice, *Art of the Byzantine Era*, (New York: F. A. Praeger, 1963), p 174.

[8]Maison, *Art Themes and Variations*, pp. 62–63.

[9]Le Pichon, *The Real World of the Impressionists*, p. 142.

[10] Lipman and Marshall, *Art about Art*, pp. 27–28.

[11]Herbert Read, *Vermeer* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1978), p. 15.

[12]Antonio Dominquez Ortiz, et al., *Valezquez* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1989), pp. 152–153.

[13]Lipman and Marshall, *Art about Art*, pp. 13, 19.

[14]Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, vol. II, (New York: Vintage, 1951), p. 104.

[15]Alastair Smart, *The Renaissance and Mannerism in Northern Europe and Spain* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972), pp. 9–10.

[16]Dominquez Ortiz, et al., *Velazquez*, pp. 240–243.

[17]Philip Conisbee, *Painting in Eighteenth Century France* (New York: Cornell University, 1981), p. 94

[18]Calvin Tomkins, *The Bride and the Bachelors* (New York: Macmillan, 1975), p. 14.

[19]Dawn Ades, *Dali* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982), p. 171.

[20]Lawrence Alloway, *Lichtenstein* (New York: Macmillan, 1975), p. 159.

[21]Eddie Wolfram, *History of Collage* (New York: Macmillan, 1975), pp. 20–21.

[22]B. H. D. Buchloh, "Allegorical Procedures," *Artforum*, September, 1982, pp. 43–46.

[23]Andreas Papadakis, *British and American Art* (London: Art and Design, 1987), pp. 67, 70, 72, 73.

[24]Jeanne Siegel, "After Sherrie Levine," *Arts Magazine*, June, 1985, p. 141.

[25]*Ibid.*, p. 141.

[26]Roland Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," in *Image Music Text* (New York: Hill and Wand, 1977), pp. 39–40.

[27]Albert J. Lubin, *Stranger on the Earth; A Psychological Biography of Vincent Van Gogh* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1972), p. 240.

[28]Marcel Duchamp, "The Creative Act," in *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (New York: Oxford University, 1973), pp. 139–140.

[29]Brian Wallis, ed., *Blasted Allegories* (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1987), p. 146.

[30]Lipman and Marshall, *Art about Art*, p. 69.

[31]Paul Taylor, "Sherrie Levine," *Flash Art*, June, 1987, p. 55.

[32]See Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1961), pp. 304, 348, 349, and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1961), pp. 8–11; Marshall Bush, "The Problem of Form in the Psychoanalytic Theory of Art," *Psychoanalytic Review*, vol. 54, 1967, p. 6; Jacques Lacan, *Feminine Sexuality* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), p. 31; and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Displacement and the Discourse of the Woman," in *Displacement: Derrida and After*, ed. Mark Krupnick (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University, 1987), p. 173.

Little Boys Lost

Charles F. Grosel

Little boy lost
he takes himself so seriously
he brags of his misery
he likes to live dangerously
* * *
Inside the museums
infinity goes up on trial
voices echo this is what
salvation must be like after a while
But even Mona Lisa musta had the highway blues
you can tell by the way she smiles.

—Bob Dylan, "Visions of Johanna"

HAUNTED visionaries bordering on madness, romantic wanderers of ambiguous orientation to the law, ecstatic pilgrims in search of kicks and salvation, "mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time,"[1] Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty emerge from Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* as updated archetypes of the American seeker-savant, types recalling such early seekers and madmen as Emerson and Thoreau, Ishmael and Ahab, Huck and Jim, Jay Gatsby and Nick Carraway, Walt Whitman, Mary Austin, Eugene Gant, Jake Barnes—in fact, almost any, primarily male, character in American literature. Despite the initial shock at what early readers saw as a novel outside of a known American tradition, *On the Road* is now seen as one in a long line of American novels devoted to the romantic exploration of self as symbolic of America's search for cultural self-definition. Regina Weinreich, a recent Kerouac scholar, observes that "A national character is projected in Kerouac's singular voice: in the broader context of American literary history Kerouac conjures the Huck Finn image, the raft supplanted by the automobile, the Mississippi replaced by the open highway."[2] *Adventures of*

Huckleberry Finn and the other works alluded to above are the quintessential myth-makers of American literature, works that express the American soul, or, more precisely, the way Americans wish their soul to be seen. There is an element of nostalgia in these works, a glorification of the heroes and villains who represent the collective fantasies about the efficacy of the individual in an America forever forging its own idea about itself. Not the least of these are the myths of the chroniclers, the Ishmaels, the Huck Finns, the Nick Carraways, the Holden Caulfields. In a culture as bent on self-definition as America is, the chroniclers themselves often become the heroes.

If Dean, in his "American folk hero rebelliousness,"[3] his "colossal restlessness,"[4] and his "taste for the limitless,"[5] is "a new kind of American saint," (p. 39) as Sal calls him, then Sal himself is his disciple and chronicler, both emulating and inventing the Gospel according to Saint Dean. "If Dean is driven by the immediate gratification of kicks, of fast cars, women, and drugs, Sal—Kerouac's surrogate—is the observer who views Dean as the catalyst for the only action he knows: writing."[6] As adept and observer, the one who, by writing it down, makes the experience last beyond the moment, Sal Paradise embodies the paradox of the Road, the opposition of extreme self-consciousness on the one hand and Dionysian forgetfulness on the other, the paradox of America itself.

Sal is a soldier returned from war, an estranged husband living with his maiden aunt, an aspiring writer who presents himself as the passive receptor of the experience of the "beat generation" he describes. He is in the world he depicts, but not of it. He romanticizes it but shows his ambivalence to it in the mutually exclusive principles that guide his life: the search for romantic love and the call of the road. Unlike Dean, for whom a woman represents a conquest made, another notch on the belt of his masculine phallic identity, Sal dreams of true love, of settling down to have a family. When he meets the Mexican woman Terry, they are no sooner holding hands than talking about going to New York together. Once he abandons Terry, Sal looks for a woman to comfort him in every new town; each time he returns East, he seeks out another prospective fiancée. The book ends with Sal's falling in love and establishing a kind of domestic life that causes him to reject Dean.

In its frantic intensity, however, Sal's search for love becomes as absurd as Dean's promiscuity; more absurd, perhaps, since Dean, at least, has few illusions about the efficacy of romantic love. Dean marries women as easily as he beds them. He doesn't have Sal's need for the cozy nest to comfort him, a fantasy that keeps Sal from wholly immersing himself in the road. Yet the road has its pull for Sal, too. Whenever Sal gets some money together, he goes on the road. And once there, he never stays in one place for long. He's restless. He thinks he knows what he wants, but whenever he gets close to it—to a steady job, to a woman who wants to

stay with him, to the end of the trip for which he went on the road to begin with—he veers off for another job, another woman, another city. Whatever Sal is looking for, it isn't where he is that he'll find it but always out there, somewhere else, on the road, in the west of his future.

Although Sal doesn't always go with Dean, he goes on the road because of Dean. From the first chapter, Dean virtually is the road for Sal. "Dean is a perfect guy for the road because he actually was born on the road." (p. 3) If Dean means the freedom of the road to Sal, in America freedom means cars. Not only does Dean drive cars and drive them well, he steals them—not for money, but for the joy of it, Sal tells us—hundreds of cars. The excess of it alone inspires romantic dreams of escape. A Jungian analyst might call Dean the *puer aeturnus*, the eternal child, a figure appearing throughout history as the youth, the fool, the jester, the clown, the actor, the minstrel, the lord of misrule. A *puer* is a figure of flight, dedicated to ecstasy, refusing to let the earth bind him with its rules. Falstaff is a *puer;* so are Don Juan and the Pied Piper. Another incarnation is the holy man, the Saint. Dean is all of these: a con-man, a madman, a seducer of boys and girls, the Holy Goof. Women and men alike want to attach themselves to his unfettered spirit and fly. It's no coincidence that when they are on the road together, Dean is Sal's driver. Sal calls him "that mad Ahab at the wheel." (p. 234) As is the case with Ahab and Ishmael, Dean's peculiar madness pushes Sal to extremes of experience and insight that he would not have had on his own. Without Dean to transport him, both physically and spiritually, Sal would not be able to move beyond the New Jersey of his mind.

Dean as Saint

Sal calls Dean a new kind of American saint. Why saint? Saint, because America is the land of inviolable individualism. If taken to the extreme, the con-man, in his pure self-absorption, is the ultimate individualist. As a culture, Americans exalt those who can bend—or seduce—another to their will, envying their license and freedom, their power; for theirs is the highest freedom—freedom from law, freedom from conscience, freedom from anything that might check the fulfillment of their appetites. Their freedom is their power, the monomania of Ahab taking the *Pequod* down, the extravagance of Gatsby building his shady empire to woo Daisy, the ecstasy of drugs and cars and sex for Sal and Dean. Dean is a saint because he embodies the inevitably doomed attempt of a single self to inhabit the vast space of America, an attempt that, in the sheer magnitude of its futility, vaults Dean beyond the bounds of this world. Spiritual attainment becomes a feat of athletic virtuosity and endurance. Not only does Dean have the lean, hard, athletic body of the cowboy, he can throw a football 70 yards. "[Kerouac] saw in Neal Cassady [the model for Dean

Moriarty] a man undertaking the vision quest . . . and he interpreted what Neal sought as the body of America. . . . Through the spiritualization of their own lives, Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarity respiritualize America."[7] Paradoxically, Dean's supreme devotion to fulfilling the desires of the "American body," his consecration of physical ecstasy, "respiritualizes" that body, opening Sal to a glimpse of Dean's soul, his own and the soul of America.

By equating the road with a personal freedom snatched from the conformity of post-war America, Kerouac creates an American landscape much different from the landscape of someone like Mary Austin, the Southwestern writer, naturalist, and mystic of the early 20th century. For Austin, landscape means land, nature, place. It means roots, however tentative these roots may be in the California desert where she sets her most widely known work. Indeed, in Austin's conception, the tenuousness of these ties to the land makes the experience of place all the more spiritually nurturing. The landscape dictates its inhabitants's response, a response that can only be earned by living with the land as one might live with a mate: by rituals of love, nurturance, and endurance. By achieving an intimate communion with the land, the merely personal is transformed into the spiritual. "In its limits the desert offers limitless understanding,"[8] writes Austin's editor, Marjorie Pryse. The external limits of the desert force the mind inward to achieve an ultimate stillness, a kind of spiritual critical mass that implodes in a majestic union with the infinite.

Sal and Dean go in the opposite direction, dispersing themselves outward into the chaos of the world to find the soul, seeking stillness not so much in the midst of movement but in the act of movement itself, the stillness of a beam of light shot out into the universe, the perfection of that same beam of light as it circles back on itself. Austin embraces a kind of self-effacement (an effacement perhaps ultimately belied by her art—this is where Austin comes closer to Kerouac), but Kerouac performs a highly self-conscious merging of life and art. Despite overtures to a kind of Zen mysticism represented by Carlo Marx, the goal of Sal and Dean's quest is not Austin's quiet attention to place but more of a self-consciously literary search, the quest of those who have read all the books and now set out to live their own before writing it. For Sal and Dean, landscape becomes Landscape, capital "L," landscape as found art, as both the medium through which they make their spiritual journey and the instrument they play for kicks. Sal and Dean play the road the way the jazz musicians in the novel play their music. Ed Fournier says, "I got to sing. Man, I *live* to sing." (p. 198) Sal and Dean live to get on the road. After George Shearing plays a particularly impassioned set later in the novel, this exchange occurs:

> "There ain't nothing left after that."

> But the slender leader frowned. "Let's blow anyway." Something would come of it yet. There's always more, a little further—it never ends. (p. 241)

A compelling description of the anguish and affirmation of art (and life): they can never do more than what has been done, but driven by whatever is in their blood, they've got to. "Let's blow anyway." With each foray onto the road, Sal and Dean live a little more, die a little more. At each moment, they play the music of their lives as it will be heard once and never again. But they are wrong about one thing. It will end, at least for the self; it will end in death. "The poignancy of *On the Road* lies in its sense of accelerated doom as every joy terminates almost immediately in desperation."[9] Each time they come down from their momentary highs, Sal and Dean enact their looming deaths. "Nobody knows what's going to happen to anybody besides the forlorn rags of growing old," (p. 310) Sal writes at the end of the novel. Perhaps it is this intimation of death at the heart of every kick that gives *On the Road* what many critics have called its elegiac quality.

The metaphor of the road is a typically American construct, a symbol of the self-defining quest of America's literature, of how Americans see themselves as moving constantly forward. On the road the past is gone, the future ahead, experience is channeled into the moment, things exist in the eternal process of becoming. But there is a paradox here. If everything is in the process of becoming, if the moment isn't good for what it is now but for what it will become, where is the moment? The road embraces life, but rejects it, too. That Sal and Dean can constantly renew their lives by going on the road is as much a fiction as that of the good citizens who think they can forestall death by making their house payments on time. "If we can get back on the road. . . ." "If we can get to retirement. . . ." These statements partake of the same illusion, the illusion of the happy future. Tim Hunt argues that "Sal and Dean are running from the superficial banalities of modern America but are equipped only with a superficial idealism and a complete faith in self that perhaps has led to what they would escape."[10] When Sal says to Dean after the ecstatic transcendence of the party in the Mexican brothel, "So much ahead of us man, it won't make any difference," (p. 290) he rejects the efficacy of the moment, puts life off somewhere into the future or back in the past, contradicts his own best intentions. Robert Hipkiss suggests that "Time is always Kerouac's enemy, and it is to freeze that enemy in its track that he writes, that he makes of his memories a concrete realization that will not change."[11] What becomes more important than the moment for Sal the writer is how he will remember it.

There is also in Wolfe, as in Kerouac, a sense of the precious-

> ness of the things perceived but once, never to be recaptured in the same configuration. Timelessness is evoked by both writers through their awareness, even as the moment passes, that they will later remember it. Everything is seen with a double vision, for as they observe their present life, they simultaneously regard it from the perspective of the future.[12]

Redeeming Empty Despair

Only the double vision Nicosia notes redeems the otherwise empty despair of the road, for only in art of remembrance can the road experience be drawn out from the stream of time and held forever. Only in words can the experience be made holy; only the words can given birth to the saint, because sainthood means nothing to the saint himself—no matter what his struggles, the saint is self-contained, oblivious. It is only the people whom the saint touches with his grace that have need of the words to translate his deeds into something they can understand. It is the effect of the saint on others that provides the drama of novels like *On the Road,* transforming them into what Weinreich calls "elegiac romance."

> In old romance, the knight undergoes the pain of change brought on by the rigors of his quest; in the second stage of romance, the knight and squire together undergo development during the course of the quest. In elegiac romance, the knight does not change at all; like Dean, he does not mellow, he experiences no enlightenment, his character remains constant. Instead, the squire, like Sal, is the center of attention. It is his character that develops and his enlightenment we must try to understand.[13]

The point of the road then, at least for Sal, is in what Sal comes to understand about the experience as he writes about it and in what he can communicate to the reader. In this way, books like *Moby-Dick* and *The Great Gatsby* prefigure *On the Road.* In *Moby-Dick,* Ishmael is saved because he has avoided the inhumanity of Ahab's obsession, anchoring his own life in the human community of ship and shore, an anchor all the more solid for its sometime ambivalence. In *Gatsby,* it is Nick Carraway not Jay Gatz who learns of the illusions beneath Gatsby's callow dreams of possessing wealth, position, and the perfection of early love and who enters, however reluctantly, into the mature resignation of adulthood. Likewise, the Sal who is ostensibly writing the text of *On the Road* is not the Sal who experienced the events he depicts. The first one is just as naive as Gatsby; he's the one who, on his first attempt at hitch-hiking, makes it only forty miles north of New York before he has to turn back and start again by bus.

The second Sal is Ishmael after the shipwreck, the Sal who can write about the bungled hitch-hiking with the detachment of someone who might have learned something: "It was my dream that screwed up, the stupid hearthside idea that it would be wonderful to follow one great red line across America." There's the irony of the double perception here, a post-modern sensibility: naive and knowing, celebratory and ironic, hopeful and self-mocking, creating a new vision and deflating it at the same time. Sal shows the ruefulness of a young man who is afraid that he has left his best years behind him and the writer's realization that these years have become the best only in retrospect. He can finally see the folly of his early illusions—indeed, his job is to warn us of our own—but he also sees that the end of the illusions means the end of "paradise," the gradual but inevitable corruption of Sal himself.

Hunt remarks that

> The activity of the imagination does not offer escape from the sorrowful, but it allows a certain acceptance through the recognition of an absolute and the recognition that human experience itself is always falling away from this absolute. In this sense, *On the Road* ends up being not so much a "lyrical yea-saying outburst" as an elegy for the inevitable failure that follows that "outburst."[14]

Warren French describes the phenomenon this way:

> Certainly an attempt to duplicate the ironically named Sal Paradise's life on the road would prove equally depressing. Far from inciting the reader to hit the road, *On the Road* proves a traditional cautionary tale, warning readers about the sorry nature of the world. It promises the reader nothing but disappointment and disillusionment.[15]

In the double vision of the novel, the disillusionment and loss caused by the experience of the road become the point of the quest. If readers do not acknowledge the loss engendered by the road, the loss of the image of the ideal self, the novel becomes what French calls, "the promotional tract it has been taken for,"[16] instead of one in a line of modern American novels bent on probing the assumptions behind the ideal.

If the readers take the novel at face value, without considering the double perception Nicosia writes about, what are they left with? There's a dangerous naïvté at the heart of the road, a sense of played-out male adolescent fantasy: no ties, no rules, no responsibilities. Women become another source of kicks, figures to hunt down or escape from but never to stay with. "[Kerouac] offered . . . a vision of freedom, a return to the

solipsistic world of childhood, to an irresponsibility so complete that no other world could ever intrude for long."[17] "Dean embodies the conflict between the autonomous, visionary isolation of the adolescent and the constricting but sustaining social world of the adult."[18] This conflict between imagination and responsibility, between the world of the child and the world of the adult, provides the dramatic tension that drives the novel, a tension that is never fully resolved. When the social world of the adult lays claim to Sal and Dean in the form of wife and family, they give in for only a short time before they head for the safety of the road. As soon as Dean divorces each of his first two wives to marry the next, he rejects the new wife and goes back to the old.

> When he arrived in New York with the divorce papers in hand, he and Inez immediately went to Newark and got married; and that night, telling her everything was all right and not to worry, and making logics where there was nothing but inestimable sorrowful sweats, he jumped on a bus and roared off again across the awful continent to San Francisco to rejoin Camille and the two baby girls. So now he was three times married, twice divorced, and living with his second wife. (p. 305)

A funny/sad portrait of the stereotypical male who can't commit, this passage reveals the dark side of the *puer*—the destruction he wreaks on those who love him.

To the *puer,* love becomes the greatest trap of all.

> Woman, however, is also a biological trap. Her overall purpose is procreation, and in order to fulfill her function she must get a male not only to copulate with her but to provide for her and her offspring while the young require maternal care. The woman asks the man, then, to be responsible for her and the children at the expense of his own freedom and desire for self-glory.[19]

This very American compulsion for freedom at all costs fuels Dean's high speed dashes from coast to coast. Today he might be called a sociopath, one who, to satisfy his own appetites, disregards convention, uses people, has no sense of boundaries between himself and others. A sociopath may be charming, likable, seductive, persuasive. He may also be selfish, cruel, or ruthless, as may be seen by the pain Dean causes, not only for his wives and children (not to mention the high school girls) but also for Sal himself, whom Dean takes up and abandons at will. Dean may be a saint, but he is not a good friend. What friend would leave someone

in Mexico City sick with dysentery?

So Sal finally sees through Dean in the end, right? Grows up, falls in love, takes up with Laura, rejects Dean to forge ahead into a new life of love and responsibility? Kerouac seems to offer a happy romance that occurs on page 306 of a 310-page book. But the recursive pattern of the book's structure works against the idea that Kerouac wished readers to take that ending as final. Dean is down, but not forever. He'll steal a car or pawn the furniture of one of his wives to buy one, and he'll come driving back into town. Sal will need material for another book, Laura will be off at work or visiting her parents, and Sal will let Dean seduce him back into the Sad American Night, away from the East of the past and into the West of the future with its promise of salvation, its threat of damnation, in search of the Old Dean Moriarty, the father they will never find, their dream of an America that never was and never will be.

Sal will return to write that next book, and Dean—what of Dean? "After all that driving was finished, [Dean] was the one who didn't have a place to go. The only place for him was his car."[20] Dean has only his car to turn to and his colossal recklessness, that trait that makes him the likely symbol of America, the new kind of American saint Sal wants him to be. But America is rough on its saints, who, after all, often become saints by virtue of their martyrdom. Sal martyrs Dean to America's voracious appetite for its own mythology. If Dean represents America, Sal represents American literature, as self-absorbed in creating a mythology of Dean's exploits as Dean was in performing them.

Notes

[1]Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1976), p. 8. All subsequent page references are to this edition.

[2]Regina Weinreich, *The Spontaneous Poetics of Jack Kerouac: A Study of the Fiction* (New York: Paragon House, 1990), p. 149.

[3]Ann Charters, *Kerouac: A Biography* (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1973), p. 286.

[4]Charters, p. 286.

[5]Charters, p. 287.

[6]Weinreich, p. 37.

[7]Gerald Nicosia, *Memory Babe: A Critical Biography of Jack Kerouac* (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1983), p. 346.

[8]Marjorie Pryse, Foreword to *Stories from the Country of the Lost Borders* by Mary Austin (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1987), p. xxi.

[9]Nicosia, p. 348.

[10]Tim Hunt, *Kerouac's Crooked Road: Development of a Fiction* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1981), p. 30.

[11]Robert A. Hipkiss, *Jack Kerouac: Prophet of the New Romanticism* (Lawrence, Kansas: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1976), pp. 1–2.

[12]Nicosia, p. 345.
[13]Weinreich, pp. 36–37.
[14]Hunt, p. 1.
[15]Warren French, *Jack Kerouac* (Boston: G. K. Hall and Company, 1986), p. 43.
[16]French, p. 128.
[17]Charters, p. 288.
[18]Hunt, p. 51–52.
[19]Hipkiss, p. 23.
[20]Charters, p. 109.

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Steinbeck: the Search for Identity

Leo Schneiderman

TO a surprising degree, John Steinbeck's fictional heroes are marginal men who appear not to have assumed the full burden of adult responsibilities. These portraits, I believe, resulted from Steinbeck's search for a stable identity. I will argue that his difficulties in establishing a firm sense of identity were traceable to his earliest years and to a difficult adolescence and young manhood, which were characterized by a series of severe developmental crises. Steinbeck's search for identity was lifelong and led, to his close identification, first, with his friend Ed Ricketts and, later, with such public figures as Lyndon B. Johnson. Steinbeck's use of Ricketts as a model for his heroes in several novels is also related to the problem of identity formation, insofar as it raises questions about the role of idealization in the development of fantasy.

Steinbeck's periodic alternation between serious, impassioned writing and the production of relatively light, almost frivolous works, suggests identity confusion of a type discussed by Erik Erikson in his essay, "Identity and Uprootedness in Our Time." (1964)[1] Erikson refers to the adolescent's search for "wholeness," which he defines as a sense of inner identity or a synthesis of "sexual, ethnic, occupational, and typological alternatives." (p. 92) Such integration appears to have been lacking in Steinbeck's development and may have contributed to the uneven quality of his work, as well as to his restless search for new subject matter.

Steinbeck was the third of four children and the only son of a middle class family. The mother was a socially ambitious woman who had been a schoolteacher before her marriage and had high expectations of her son. The father employed his accounting skills as manager of a flour mill and, later, as the treasurer of Monterey County in California. Steinbeck's formative years, though lacking in outward drama, were nevertheless

filled with great tension. As a boy and youth, Steinbeck had a strong need for acceptance by his peers and was fearful of rejection. From an early age, he endured long periods of self-imposed isolation, immersing himself in escapist fiction and attempting to write in an imaginative vein, influenced particularly by tales of King Arthur and his knights. These periods were interrupted by episodes when Steinbeck aggressively gathered small groups of schoolmates and persuaded them to listen to him reading his short stories, poems, and sketches. This curious alternation of withdrawal and self-dramatization reflected a basic conflict between the need for independence and for emotional dependency.

Steinbeck's conflict grew out of his relationships to his widely different parents. His father, silent and withdrawn, was a frustrated outdoorsman and lover of nature; the mother thought of herself as a champion of culture and leader of polite society. She had a commanding presence and great determination, and appears to have overshadowed the taciturn father.

The two sides of Steinbeck's personality corresponded to the contrasting tendencies of his parents. Although Steinbeck was a rebellious, willful child and a self-centered youth, he appears to have empathized with his father's reserve. His identification with the mother was ambivalent, although he acquired his interest in literature from her. From an early age, writing became an obsession with Steinbeck. Writing served a dual purpose for the seclusive, outwardly arrogant, and generally shy youth. By providing him with a channel for compensatory fantasies, writing served to legitimize his isolation. Also, writing became a vehicle to impress his peers into thinking that the adolescent Steinbeck was somebody "special." No less important, writing provided him with the means to try to resolve his conflict between rebellion against his dominant mother and identification with the authority and respectability that she represented. His choice of a rebellious and irresponsible life style, particularly during his 20s, may have also served as an angry protest against his mother's neglect of him, as he perceived it. (Steinbeck spent much time at the home of a friend, whose mother was like a "second mother" to him during his childhood, while his mother was preoccupied with her activities as a prominent clubwoman.) He came to feel, however, that his selfish, dilettante mode of living particularly during his aimless six years at Stanford (he never graduated, avoiding required courses in favor of writing courses) had earned him his father's permanent disapproval. In this sense, Steinbeck thought of himself as a "bad" son, even though his rebelliousness may have represented a symbolic acting out of his father's frustrated ambitions to escape from his cares and his office-bound existence.

Attracted to Mother Figures

Steinbeck's youthful relationship with Elizabeth Smith, a divorced woman in her late 30s, was typical of his attraction to a series of mother figures who indulged him in his boorishness and general eccentricity. Elizabeth, the mother of a teenage daughter not much younger than Steinbeck, was a highly unconventional woman who had achieved some success as a newspaper columnist and writer of short stories, and saw herself as a patroness of young writers. Whether Smith's relationship with Steinbeck was sexual is not clear, but it is certain that she encouraged his writing while presiding over a kind of bohemian salon that provided him with a valuable forum.

Curiously, during this phase of his life, Steinbeck often wore his grandmother's fringed shawl, another indication of his ambivalent mother identification. On the Stanford campus, he could be seen wearing riding britches, presumably because he was a member of the polo team, although no one had ever seen him play polo. These costume changes suggest his vacillation between accepting his mother's cultural persona and his need to adopt a pose of exaggerated masculinity. His mother, with her Irish background, came to represent the world of fantasy, King Arthur and his knights, ghosts, fairies, and leprechauns. In addition, she stood for the primacy of lyrical words and romantic images, the stuff of *Cup of Gold,* an early work that Steinbeck later ridiculed. To make up for his father's bland, reticent personality and to differentiate himself from his mother and sisters, Steinbeck, like Hemingway, cultivated the role of street tough and tried to identify himself with blue-collar workers, Mexican-Americans, and other men who, he assumed, led down-to-earth lives.

Steinbeck's choice of the pirate Henry Morgan as the protagonist of *Cup of Gold* reveals his attraction to the outlaw role. At the same time, *Cup of Gold,* which reads at times like James Stephens's *Crock of Gold,*[2] contains much that is lyrical and mythical and points to Steinbeck's love of escapist fantasy. The transition which led him to become a writer noted for social realism and a relatively unadorned style reflected his efforts to resolve the conflict between feminine-identified aestheticism and masculine ideals. His ambivalence toward women rested on a fundamental paradox, however, and was irrational, attributing to women cultural pretensions together with a deeply-ingrained hostility to self-expression. This attitude is illustrated by a letter Steinbeck sent to a friend's fiancée, upon receiving a wedding notice. In this angry letter, written when Steinbeck was 24, he states: "I love this person so much that I would cut your charming throat should you interfere seriously with his happiness or his manifest future." (Steinbeck and Wallsten, 1975, p. 13) Steinbeck went on to urge the prospective bride to "sacrifice" herself to further her husband's literary career and to remind her of the strength of

male bonding between himself and his friend. This letter is consistent with his portrayal of Henry Morgan's mother in *Cup of Gold,* in which he depicts this woman as totally unsympathetic to her son's yearning for adventure. Henry's father, Robert, by contrast, argues eloquently on behalf of his son, even though Robert is normally a submissive man in relation to his fierce, strong-willed wife. Similarly, in "Flight," a mother is portrayed as sarcastic and overbearing toward her 19-year old son, whom she treats like a child, until he kills a man during a quarrel and has to be sent into hiding.[4] Nothing less than the deed of homicide is required for the son to earn his mother's acknowledgment of his manhood.

Critics have long been aware of the importance of rebellion and male-bonding in Steinbeck's work, as well as the paucity of romantic heterosexual relationships. He has provided a number of memorable portraits of strong, altruistic women, such as Ma Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath* and Dora, the madame in *Cannery Row,* but his fictional women exist on the margins of male consciousness. Father figures are present in his fiction—the wise old man Merlin in *Cup of Gold* or Doc, the marine biologist in *Cannery Row*—but they are weaker than the mother figures. There is, in fact, a reciprocal relationship between male bonding in Steinbeck's fiction and the secondary role assigned to mother and father figures. This relationship assumes that security and belongingness are to be found in the relationship neither with father nor mother but in peer acceptance. The episode in *Cannery Row,* in which William, the erstwhile bouncer at Dora's brothel, commits suicide after being rejected by Mack and his little band of vagrants, illustrates the importance of the peer group in Steinbeck's fiction. Paradoxically, it is a peer group that is ultimately rejecting in this instance; and the incident brings to mind the author's painful adolescence, in which he sat at his attic window day after day, daydreaming and trying to write lyrical pieces while his high school acquaintances drove by, calling out to him mockingly.[5] Jackson Benson, Steinbeck's biographer, makes much of Steinbeck's role as an outsider, both in high school and college, and his rejection by his age-mates, particularly girls, because of his attempts to compensate for shyness by the assumption of a coarse, overbearing manner.

Even after Steinbeck left Stanford, he continued to exhibit a pattern of attention-seeking behavior with violent overtones, especially when he had been drinking heavily, a habit that was to become lifelong. On one occasion, for example, he lowered a young woman out of a window and held her suspended by her ankles, threatening to drop her because she had resisted his sexual advances. He also carried a loaded revolver for several years in his 20s and drew it in anger in public settings on more than one occasion. It was as if he expected to be rejected by others and was ready to respond with anger and violence. His failures as an athlete as a youth and his reputation as an eccentric literary genius, even as a

schoolboy, alienated him from his peers and confirmed his lifelong belief that he was "different" in a negative sense.

Even Steinbeck's later success in winning the love of attractive and intelligent women did not change his conception of himself as a man condemned to loneliness and isolation. As a child, he did not feel that he fit into his female-dominated household and yearned for the companionship of other boys. This need was a contributing factor to his uncritical acceptance of his friend Ricketts's philosophy, blending mystical and biological concepts and picturing the world as a vast organism, in which all creatures are linked in symbiotic relationships. This ecological conception had a very personal meaning for Steinbeck, in whose fiction the peer group is the prototype for all ideal associations. He apparently never belonged to any group or organization, and stormed out angrily from a "socialist" discussion group in San Francisco on one occasion when he attended such a gathering. It was only in fantasy that he could participate in a group, and it was only as wish-fulfillment that he could imagine people living and working together on the basis of reciprocity. His family had been dominated by his assertive, talkative mother; and it was to get away from her domination that he developed his early habits of encapsulation, either through solitary reading and writing or by wandering for hours in the countryside, where he had all kinds of secret hideouts and landmarks. Nor did he find harmony in the context of family living in his first marriage to Carol Henning, an intelligent, strong-willed woman with whom he often quarreled bitterly even before they were married in 1930. This is not to say that she was anything but a source of emotional support and high spirits during the early impoverished years of their marriage. But her husband was a moody, irritable person who could abide the company of others only for short periods of time.

Two Motifs

Two closely related motifs can be identified in Steinbeck's portrayal of parent figures. The mother figure is sometimes harsh and derisive in relation to her adolescent son or son-substitute; the father figure is generally supportive. Sometimes it is the actual father who stands by his son and counsels him in the ways of the world, but more often a strong, seasoned father-surrogate plays a decisive role in relation to a dependent youth. Even *Of Mice and Men,* which does not have a father and son, depicts a relationship between a protective, although ultimately destructive, father figure and his childlike dependent, the retarded Lennie.

The gallery of father substitutes begins with Steinbeck's first novel, *Cup of Gold,* in which the adolescent protagonist, the future pirate chief Henry Morgan, consults the local wizard Merlin, rather than his father, concerning the future course of his life. *In Dubious Battle* contains a much

more central relationship between a seasoned labor leader and his young apprentice, who, like Lennie in *Of Mice and Men,* ultimately dies a violent death. Although the apprentice does not die at the hands of the father figure, his death is nevertheless the result of trying to live up to the latter's expectations. Twenty years after the composition of *Cup of Gold,* Steinbeck's *The Wayward Bus* continued to provide a female protagonist, Alice, who is a rejecting mother figure in relation to Pimples, her husband's adolescent garage assistant. By contrast, the husband, Juan, is a wise, tough father figure who is sensitive to the feelings of his pimply assistant. Like Juan, Steinbeck's fictional father-substitutes are men of reason and empathy. The female protagonists, like Alice, can only "love, like, dislike, and hate."[6] As sometime creatures of instinct, Steinbeck's women respond positively to acts of passion, including being beaten. Alice, for example, had once been beaten by Juan and "far from hating it had taken excitement and exuberance from it."

Not only are Steinbeck's father figures at times more rational than his females, they can also be semi-mystical initiators who guide their inexperienced son figures and imbue them with a philosophy of life. Steinbeck's long-term friendship with Ricketts appears to have provided the prototype for such master-novice relationships. Ricketts, five years older than Steinbeck and in possession of a distinct philosophical frame of reference—an ecological perspective, served as a mentor to Steinbeck, who lacked a systematic education and a point of view before he met Ricketts. As the model for a number of Steinbeck's fictional wise men, Ricketts emerges as an idealized father image who is usually benevolent but sometimes demands great sacrifices of his son.

Although Steinbeck's fictional heroes do not transcend the weaknesses of the flesh, they are not subject to the usual human frailties. Like the charismatic bus driver Juan Chicoy in *The Wayward Bus,* Steinbeck's father figures are true master mechanics of the universe, who keep the weary world in motion by tinkering with its faltering machinery. As is the case with Doctor Burton in *In Dubious Battle,* the wise man usually holds himself aloof from the activities of other men, knowing that their struggles are motivated by egotism and have little to do with true conviction. Thus, Steinbeck's idealism does not point to commitment to political or economic aspirations but rather to identification with the impartial justice of wise men and gods and to the blameless neutrality of nature. The author of *The Grapes of Wrath,* which depicts suffering humanity with compassion, was a man of detachment.

Despite Steinbeck's restless search for a viable identity, he came to see his adult personality as the fixed result of antecedent events that had irresistibly shaped his behavior. It is understandable, then, that in resolving conflicts between his fictional protagonists and their environment, he assigns his heroes fates that are entirely consistent with their

early conditioning. There are few magical, happy endings in his fiction because it was his belief that fiction ought to be true to life and that life itself was governed by mechanistic forces. His determinism was connected, as well, with his view of society as a kind of unstable equilibrium in which stasis is the norm and rebellion or the "sudden running amok of groups," as he put it, is the exception.[7] I regard this conservative view of society as paralleling Steinbeck's view of himself as a man pursuing a particular trajectory through life, deviating from a more-or-less fixed pattern only in extreme situations. Steinbeck's outlook crystallized during his mother's terminal illness in 1933, during which he came to interpret her paralyzing stroke as a "schism of a number of her cells," corresponding to the breakdown of a social group due to some disruptive force.

Steinbeck's need to unify his experience and to arrive at an all-embracing world view reinforced his more basic wish to find a way of relating himself to the group. For him, the impending death of his mother represented not only the dissolution of his family but also a reminder of the fragility of all human associations. Such a reminder was all the more threatening because he had raised the human aggregation to the level of an ideal and saw every weakening of the group as an obstacle to his cherished goal of being incorporated into a group. In a letter to a friend, written during his mother's illness, he expressed his ambivalence toward the group, which he saw as capable of creating a harmonious whole, as well as generating wars and persecutions: "We only feel the emotions of the group beast in times of religious exaltation, in being moved by some piece of art which intoxicates us while we do not know what it is that does it."[8] His ambivalence is shown also by his conviction that the group submerges the individuality of its members. This conception explains the largely futile struggles and sufferings of his fictional characters.

In all fairness, however, it should be pointed out that Steinbeck tried, in *East of Eden,* to develop the thesis that the heroic individual can triumph over evil. Adam Trask, a good man who has given into despair and hopelessness after being abandoned by his immoral, destructive wife, is restored to life when his mentor, Samuel Hamilton, summons up the courage to tell Adam the truth about her. In a similar vein, Lee, the scholarly Chinese houseman who inspires Hamilton to help Adam out of his depression, concludes that each generation has an opportunity to struggle against evil. Although all outcomes are doubtful in Steinbeck's world, the possibility of conscious choice exists and, with it, hope.

Starting with *Tortilla Flat,* Steinbeck tried to explore the relationship between the individual's search for identity and the influence of the group, particularly its capacity for limiting self-realization. *In Dubious Battle,* the story of a group of demoralized strikers and the effort of their leaders to hold them together, is another early example of how Steinbeck tried to translate his gestalt thesis into fiction. The paradox was that

he thought of himself as a rugged individualist who could never lend himself to any group.

Another early example of Steinbeck's concern with the group is seen in "The Vigilante." In his preliminary notes for this story, he wrote: "John Ramsey—hated the war & misses it . . . wanders lost on his farm looking for a phalanx to join & finds none. . . . Finally finds the movement in a lynching. . . . Hunger for the group. Change of drive. What does it matter. The mob is not a wasteful thing but an efficient thing."[9] These notes emphasize the point that without a group, even a mob, to supply a sense of movement and purpose, the individual lacks a clear identity.

In *The Grapes of Wrath,* Steinbeck portrays striking workers as an enraged mob, rather than as a disciplined group. His depiction of the workers as a mob is consistent with his intention of describing the group as an organism, but also reflects his ambivalence toward the group. This ambivalence is expressed indirectly in the portrait of the simple-minded giant Lennie in *Of Mice and Men.* Lennie was intended by Steinbeck to symbolize inarticulate man or the anonymous man in the crowd. Like the members of a mob, Lennie is subject to mindless eruptions of violence. Steinbeck, with his smoldering anger, was similarly afflicted and described himself as a morose, ill-tempered man.

The group, then, came to serve as a metaphor for dangerous impulse-release, as well as a symbol of belongingness for a man who felt that, at bottom, he did not deserve acceptance from others. Fame made it more difficult for Steinbeck to hold himself aloof from others and to pretend that their recognition of him meant nothing. Success also robbed him of the conviction that his work possessed integrity and was not mere pandering to popular taste. The puritanical side of Steinbeck, based on his identification with his self-denying father, was compromised by good fortune, as if the writer had gained acceptance from the group by dishonest means. The even greater success of *The Grapes of Wrath* brought on a major crisis in his life and may have contributed to the destruction of his first marriage. If so, it was an odd outcome because the novel epitomized his compassion for the oppressed; yet, by suddenly placing him in the ranks of the wealthy and famous, it undermined the solidarity that had permitted Steinbeck and Carol to endure their own poverty and obscurity.

Steinbeck's ambivalence toward the group and his doubts about himself resulted in a literature that alternated between affirmation and skepticism and between compassion and detachment. Steinbeck stands outside the circle of modernists such as Joyce or Proust because his quest for identity led him away from the center of his being and away from introspection. Despite his narcissism, Steinbeck could not lose himself in the examination of his sensibilities because he had not elaborated the self and was a stranger to his deeper needs. Neither his great restlessness and

hunger for experience nor his deep resentments brought him any closer to insight or catharsis. His rage, in fact, reinforced his bitter vision of his fellowmen without alleviating his self-hatred.

Steinbeck's fictional characters inhabit a world that they perceive objectively as imperfect, but they are not dismayed; Steinbeck perceived the world as a place without compassion and was driven to anger and depression, partly out of self-pity and partly out of empathy for his fellow-sufferers. His naturalism is the outcome of his diffuse anger, which made it difficult for him to withhold his moral judgment upon a universe which he regarded as governed by the laws of determinism and therefore inherently unfair. For the same reason he believed in the necessity of heroism in his characters. It is the heroism of Sisyphus. Steinbeck's protagonists do not allow themselves to be deterred by the knowledge that the odds against them are overwhelming. They court defeat, like the strike leaders in *In Dubious Battle,* because they believe they are fighting the good fight. Like the vagabonds of *Tortilla Flat,* they dare to thumb their noses at the respectable people, knowing all the while that the objects of their scorn have the power to crush them. Searching for a secure identity, Steinbeck sought to find it by identifying himself with the insulted and the injured, celebrating their defiance and drawing strength from their independence. At their best, his fictional characters are their own men; and if they are powerless to control their destiny, they are not afraid to try, knowing in their hearts that they have to contend with their own frailty as well as the resistance of dark, unknown gods.

Notes

[1]Erikson, Erik, *Insight and Responsibility,* N.Y.: Norton, 1964, p. 92.

[2]Stephens, James, *The Crock of Gold,* N.Y.: Macmillan, 1979.

[3]Steinbeck, Elaine and Robert Wallsten, *Steinbeck: A Life in Letters,,* N.Y.: Viking Press, 1975, p. 13.

[4]Steinbeck, John, (1938) "The Flight," in *The Long Valley,* N.Y.: Viking Press, 1938.

[5]Benson, Jackson, *The True Adventures of John Steinbeck, Writer,* N.Y.: Viking Press, 1984, p. 28. The next reference to Benson may be found on p. 52.

[6]Steinbeck, John, *The Wayward Bus,* N.Y.: Viking Press, 1947, p. 35. The next quotation may be found on the same page.

[7]Benson, p. 266.

[8]Steinbeck and Wallsten, p. 77.

[9]Benson, p. 289.

Offending Phrases

Susan Schulter

WEDNESDAY, March 7, 1990, at 7:30 a.m., I'm standing in my oak and tile kitchen drinking my customary home-ground French roast coffee and listening to National Public Radio's "Morning Edition." My pre-commute and pre-work rituals are purring along smoothly. Then it happens. Congressional correspondent Cokie Roberts says, "It now appears that after conferring with White House Chief of Staff John Sununu, President Bush may withdraw his support from the Americans with Disabilities Act, a pending piece of legislation currently before Congress. By next week, Washington may witness the arrival of hundreds of wheelchair bound citizens, all storming the capital, and all demanding a hearing with the president."

I choke down my sip of coffee, which has suddenly turned bitter.

Later that same day, I sit in my office at Santa Clara University, holding individual student conferences. Amber, a diligent freshman, has been researching the special physical, social, and educational issues confronted by disabled women and girls in contemporary America. Writing of a blind girl's regaining of independence through two dog guides, Shilo and Flicka, Amber asserts, "Shilo clung to life until Flicka's training was complete, almost as though she knew she must not die until the new dog could assume complete care of their mistress."

I squirm at these words but am unable at that moment to articulate my discomfort.

A day later, I'm socializing at a friend's house for an hour or so after work. Kelsey, my own dog guide companion, frolics unharnessed at my feet. The conversation evolves toward disability as metaphor, and my spirit soars. Like me, my friend is an educator. Surely her thinking will be enlightened where disabilities are concerned. I start to share the differences I have found between cane travel and dog guide travel. I tell her that cane travel is more immediate, more microscopic in its feedback, whereas dog travel is more telescopic, more streamlined.

"So," she inquires exuberantly, "are you losing your skills now that you

no longer travel with your cane?"

That night I have trouble sleeping. Offending and offensive phrases whittle away at my self-confidence: "wheelchair bound," "assume complete care of," "lost skills." I get out of bed, pour myself a glass of water, and sit at the kitchen table taking each phrase, one at a time.

Like anyone else exposing her internal, vulnerable archaeology, I'll begin with what threatens me least and proceed from there. Let's examiue this notion of being "wheelchair bound." My husband Marty uses a wheelchair. With his chair in tow, he holds a full-time job as a university administrator. He serves on a city commission. When conferencing, he travels via jet from coast to coast. He is computer literate. He is an environmentalist. He is a home-owner and home carpenter. He is a mower of lawns, as well as our number one gadget fix-it man. He is a writer. He is loving provider for our domestic and wild pets. He has the perfect bedside manner for me when I am ill, and he is the perfect lover of me when I am well. He is all of these things with the essential but simultaneously incidental help of his chair. Tell me if you can, how a wheelchair binds this man? When a chair enables one to move fluidly through life, how can it be said to "bind" or "confine"?

Why do so many newspaper reporters see "a man in a wheelchair," instead of just "a man"? Why does an article celebrating disability activist Ed Roberts contain this sentence? "From his wheelchair, and aided by his iron lung, Mr. Roberts coaches a group of young lobbyists who visit him in his office." Why does the coverage stress his chair rather than his dynamism, his charisma? Why does another article, this one published in *The San Jose Mercury News* as recently as Spring, 1989, celebrate "a wheelchair bound" woman's "first, and long-struggled-for walk to the altar on her wedding day"? Don't misunderstand me. I think it's wonderful that the woman "walked" to the altar, especially since "walking" was something that she wanted to do. What I resent is the article's implication that walking is somehow better than wheeling and that the less apparently disabled you are, the better you are; that is, the more worthy of praise.

I say nonsense to all of that. I say that the woman or man who turns a chair into a Jaguar of speed and service has acquired skills a walking person will never fathom. And yes, she or he has acquired these skills, has worked hard for them! Too often, I hear able-bodied people praising the technology and the machinery that improve disabled lives, rather than praising the disabled themselves, who have mastered the technology. "Isn't it wonderful," the saying goes, "all they're doing for the handicapped these days."

Yes, it is wonderful. To Kuschall, one of the finest manufacturers of both aesthetic and utilitarian chairs, thank you. To Raymond Kurzweil, creator of the machine that brings nearly all print to those of us who cannot read it with our eyes, thank you. To every technological pioneer

who helps the disabled, we appreciate and thank you. But we deserve some credit too, credit for what often amounts to years of our lives that we spend adapting to technology, to ourselves, and, most of all, to an able-bodied society. We undertake these adaptations eagerly, with the same dedication and thoroughness one might apply to a Master's or Doctoral degree. Our adaptations become our cultivated, specialized talents. They are not miracles; we have earned them, and we take pride in them—which is why it is so hard to hear that someone's talent for wheelchair use is considered a "confinement" or a "binding" experience.

As to my "lost skills," why do these words unsettle me? They were innocently framed as a question, by an acquintance who knows me professionally, not personally. She presumes, correctly enough, that certain skills are involved when a blind person navigates, but she presumes too much when she suggests that taking on one set of skills necessitates surrendering another. Well, what of cane travel? canine travel?

On an April morning, 1989, the sounds of the Santa Clara Valley are no longer the ones I woke to as a child. False alarm roosters of a fidgety four in the morning have given way to not so false alarm sirens. Morning doves still wake me in late summer, but their cooing and the tangy fragrance of garlic farms are often as not replaced by tire squeal and exhaust fumes. Nevertheless, it is still my valley, and I still nourish the private illusion of being the first person awake in it. I like rising before the bustle of cars, although these days that seems possible only on Sundays. I pad barefoot to the kitchen and, cradling the electric coffee grinder in a dishtowel so that its rattlesnake buzz doesn't wake Marty, I sift together a concoction of French and Vienna roast, vanilla and Costa Rican. While the coffee drips, I bundle a jacket over my night-dress and slip onto the patio to see who takes breakfast at our five bird feeders.

Here in this private hour, I wonder at my metaphors and my maps. Would Marty, Brooklyn-born, find odd my comparison of the coffee grinder's "zzzzzt" to a rattlesnake? Would my father, with his compass-calibrated sense of distance and direction—his hobby is sailing—find haphazard my travel system of so many walking steps per minute and so many minutes per car mile? Or would he find it to be the ultimate precision? What would he say if he knew that I often coordinate my walking routes with particular jazz tunes? I begin humming Sarah Vaughan's rendition of "In The Mellow Tones" as I leave my driveway. Its tempo helps me count my steps, so that by the time I finish it, I have arrived at the corner bus stop. Do I make sense to sight people as a group, when I say that the front entrance to Melis Market is two aggregate driveways and one fire hydrant past Rotten Robby's Service Station? Do they know how deeply I fear, yet also yearn for, the viability of physical cane travel?

Today I will travel. Today I will ride three busses, from the West Valley

College campus in Saratoga where I teach on Tuesdays and Thursdays, to my home in East San Jose. This is the first time that I will attempt this journey without my orientation-mobility instructor's assistance. An orientation instructor teaches travel routes and cane techniques to blind people. It can take anywhere from one to five or six "lessons" to master a particular route. I am always frightened the first time I attempt any route alone, without Laura's reassuring voice at occasional check points. If I accidentally turn down the wrong street or board the wrong bus, Laura will not be there to help me unravel the mistake.

Today's route involves a memorized quarter mile jaunt from the college's Admissions Office to the bus stop. There are some landmarks along the way to contact with my cane: two stone garbage canisters, four wheelchair curb cuts, a stretch of leaf-strewn road and comforting oak trees, the steps of an abandoned adobe, and, finally, three bus sheds whose presence is generally confirmed by purring engines. I must then catch the 57 or 58 bus, which will head east along Saratoga Avenue. Saratoga will eventually become Keiley and will cross Stevens Creek, Prospect, and Homestead. Of course I will not see these crossings, but I must remember the street names, so that I will know when I am nearing my transfer point at Kaiser Hospital. This leg of my journey takes approximately 25 minutes, so I will need to check my watch when the bus first pulls out.

Upon reaching Kaiser, I wait for an 81 bus, which will not travel conveniently as the crow flies but will instead make a square along Benton Avenue, down through Santa Clara University, then weave and wind its way through downtown San Jose and finally head in my desired direction: east. Since many busses leave from the Kaiser Hospital stop, I will need to ask each driver for his/her route number. This 81 bus stint takes 59 minutes if there is not too much traffic. Again I must remember to check my watch.

My final transfer takes place at McKee road and Capital Expressway, where I will catch number 74. Following a ten-minute ride, I confront my ultimate test: crossing Capital Expressway on foot. By this time it is 5 p.m., and the traffic is a non-stop surf that drowns the tapping of my cane. I listen instead to the gears in my mind, clicking directions like the printout from an automatic teller machine: Bus stops near Reed Hillview Airport gate. Dismount on mud. Follow curb to right until cane contacts storm drain. Align toes with drain. Listen for safety, then cross first yield lane. Contact island curb on right. Follow curve of curb to the right and locate signal box. Press signal button. Listen. Identify cycle: Capital north-south; Capital turning lane; Ocala east west; Ocala turning lane. Cross with Ocala east west. Walk fast! Take large steps! Don't drift into traffic! Attend with toes to slope of asphalt. Final downslope indicates crossing completion. Home free now. Two noisy Ocala blocks to home.

If today is a good travel day, I will leave West Valley College at 3:30 in the afternoon and arrive home two hours later. Although the actual distance between these two locations is only about 15 miles, the bus route will make it more like 40. Since the route is still new to me, I will not yet be running into friends. Good bus conversation will concern the weather, school, or a child's questions about "what that stick is for," or I may help a woman in her middle 50s by recommending braille book sources for her aging aunt who is just now going blind due to diabetes melitis.

If today is a bad travel day, a bus driver will forget to call out one of my stops, and I will have to dismount a block or two further on in some unfamiliar setting, cross the street, and wait for a bus that is heading in the opposite direction. This will cost me anywhere from a half hour to an hour depending upon what additional connections I miss as a result of the driver's forgetfulness. If today is a bad travel day, I will encounter the patronizing Sighted Innocent, who will ride beside me during the hour-long portion of my route and gush about how perfectly marvelous it is that I can dress myself and weren't my mother and father and brother and sister absolute saints to bear with me. I call this particular conversation tape 37, and it is not the worst of all possible tapes. There's also tape 19: "Since you can't see what other people look like, you must be totally free of prejudice. You aren't misled by appearances; you judge others for what they truly are." Doesn't the espouser of this tape realize that voice tones and body odors also lead one toward prejudices? Tape 62 usually comes from a guy who has difficulty in his relationships with women: "I had a girlfriend who was blind once." (She probably went blind out of self-defense when she met him.) "She could tell what color everything was by touching it, and she knew when earth quakes were coming." Tape 83 rambles on about Helen Keller, and tape 70 wants to know if I happen to know Frank Rappaport, this blind guy from Dayton. If today is the worst travel day possible, all of the bad tapes will run, and I'll end my route stranded on the wrong side of Capital Expressway for 20 minutes with no break in traffic.

Private ruminations are one thing, but the idea of someone reading and knowing these thoughts of mine is another matter entirely. I might be cast as the bitter handicapped person. To which I respond, after all my matter of fact talk about how the fears of my day are different from those of the "sighted," that everyone has something in her morning which she both yearns for and dreads, and my yearn-dread just happens to be cane travel.

Connecting

To those who pester at bus stops
To my self-conscious selves who blind me
Let me explain about geometry.
The straightest distance between two points is a line.

Walk it.
The braille of landscapes
makes walking an act of writing.
Cane traveler:
tapping grounded bat
pacing out the map
in four-foot increments ahead and on each side,
verifying grass-line
geranium seawall, hyacinth bluff
opening suddenly to the four-shored, traffic-fllled avenue ocean.

Shod toes take asphalt compass reading
Quick needle contacts planter box at right
News stand at left
Then centers at body's center: sure north, and straight ahead.

I step out
Hoping you have, and have not seen me cross without loss or fear
but brought up short by a hand on my shoulder:
your body blocking my thoughts.
"I saw you groping."

Suddenly the cars roar louder
North may lurk where I've already walked.
I've paced it out so many times inside my head!
But there you never watched
never called my exploration "groping."

October, 1990, San Jose State University. Since Marty and I now work on the same campus, I no longer commute via bus. We drive together, observing all the rituals of people who know each other well: juggling cups of coffee in the front seat, listening to our favorite music or to Books On Tape, planning our week-end. Unlike haphazard, luck-of-the-draw bus conversation, our routine always calms me for the day ahead. With no stops to keep track of and no drivers to remind, I find my mornings are more peaceful.

Marty drops Kelsey and me in front of Sweeney Hall where I teach my first classes. The topography of the driveway to this four-story building is constantly changing. On some days, bicycles and food vendor carts are parked there. On other days, supply trucks use the driveway as an unloading zone. The only permanent sidewalk fixtures are a traffic signal box and a newspaper stand. Negotiating this route with a cane can sound like the warm-up exercises of a percussionist as I "ping" a bicycle and "clang" a truck wheel. With Kelsey, the same walk is silent and smooth;

she simply guides us around whatever obstacles are in our way.

With my right hand, I pull open one of the double doors to Sweeney Hall. I hold Kelsey's harness handle in my left hand. I say, "Kelsey, forward inside." Keeping just two paces ahead of me, Kelsey guides us into the lobby.

"Kelsey," I say, "find the elevator." This she does with dispatch.

Instructors at Guide Dogs for the Blind, the school where Kelsey was trained, teach all their dogs to respond to several convenient phrases like "find the elevator," "find the door," "find the bus," "find the car," "find the stairs," "left inside," "left outside." Additionally, dogs memorize routines, and Kelsey has learned that virtually every time we enter Sweeney Hall, we head for the elevator.

Our destination today is room 434. Getting there entails exiting through one set of double doors, traversing an outdoor cat-walk, re-entering the building via a second set of doors, turning right, and following a corridor for nearly its entire length, to the second to the last classroom on the righthand side. As a cane traveler, I would find this room by "trailing" the wall with my right hand and tacitly counting doors, while simultaneously protecting my body by holding my left hand and cane across it. As a canine traveler, I hold my harness handle, and Kelsey leads us swiftly down the hallway, staying to the right if foot traffic is flowing right and to the left if it is flowing that way. She guides us around chairs, desks, sprawled students, and their back-packs. I fumble less often and seldom find myself murmuring the apology, "excuse me." Almost inevitably, she will stop directly at, or very near, our room door. Although Kelsey does not, of course, read room numbers, she knows by habit, about how far down the hallway we go each day before stopping. When she does incorrectly calculate the location of a room, it's simple enough to backtrack and explore a bit till we find it.

Simple yes, yet some who see us backtrack distort our situation needlessly by pronouncing humiliating and unsubstantiated declarations: "Your dog seems confused" or "You two are having trouble." Haven't these sighted people ever backtracked to find a door before?

I teach my two morning classes and then head back to my office for lunch and afternoon meetings with students. Kelsey and I enter the Sweeney Hall elevator accompanied by two strangers: a woman and her child.

"What a beautiful dog," the woman says to me. "What breed is she?"

"A yellow lab," I reply.

"Is it OK for my son to pet her?"

"Yes," I say, "And thank you so much for asking first."

When a guide dog wears its harness, it is working, but many dog lovers are unaware of this fact. Their impulse at once is to speak to the dog, or to reach out and pet it. This can distract the dog from guidework and conse-

quently cause injury to the blind mistress or master who is walked into a pole, an opening door, or an oncoming pedestrian. Even if the guide dog and its companion are not working—if, for instance, the dog is resting near its owner's feet—unsolicited petting interferes with the one-to-one bonding process that must exist between dog guide and owner. But I can think of an even more essential reason why strangers should not pet my dog without first asking permission. Kelsey is an extension of me. Over the past year and a half, we have developed an intuitive, sensate link—a chemistry if you will—not unlike the kind that exists between professional jazz musicians who have played together for years and who respect all nuances of one another's music. Or perhaps our link is more basic, more like the telepathy that can exist between identical twins or between close sisters. On days when our teamwork is excellent, I feel as though the harness handle which connects our two bodies is as alive as a blood vessel or an artery. So when strangers handle my dog, they are handling me, my person. They would not presume to stroke the arm of a sighted person they did not know; they should not, therefore, presume to stroke me. Their doing so violates my body territory.

But this mother has asked my permission. I tell Kelsey to sit and then invite the child to approach her. This communicates to Kelsey that I am sanctioning the petting. I hope that it conveys to the child that blind people and their dogs are friendly, approachable, viable members of his community whose integrity he should respect.

Reaching my office from Sweeney Hall entails crossing San Carlos Street at the San Carlos–Seventh Street intersection. This is a busy and not altogether safe crossing, but fortunately the City of San Jose has allowed the installation of an audible traffic signal. This device emits a "tweet, tweet" sound to indicate the flow of east-west traffic and a "kookoo" to indicate that traffice is flowing north and south. A blind person crossing this intersection must know directionally on which of the four street corners she stands, as well as which street she is attempting to cross. It is helpful, though not absolutely essential, that she know how to interpret the audible traffic signal sounds. What she must know, whether traveling with a cane or with a dog, is how to "read" the traffic with her ears. She must distinguish between the sounds of parallel and facing traffic and between cars turning right on a red light and cars moving in a yield lane. She cannot trust her fate only to an audible traffic signal; drivers, after all, disobey traffic lights. Nor can she entrust herself to other pedestrians, a disquieting fact of which I am again reminded this morning.

Kelsey and I approach the curb cut ramp for the San Carlos crosswalk. It is the second of two sidewalk ramps as we exit Sweeney Hall. Directly beside it stands a metal street light box which I touch with my hand to be certain that we are at the correct ramp.

Today, both the intersection and the sidewalk are teeming with people, bicycles, and cars. Kelsey weaves a course for us and I know that we are safe, but still I concentrate with all my will. I pray that nothing distracts either of us, since the slightest break in our attention could result in a crossing error, an error which at worst might jeopardize our safety, and at best might result in several minutes of debilitating confusion.

I reach for the light box, and my hand inadvertently bumps another pedestrian.

"Excuse me," I say.

"Oh," he says, "You want to cross! Move a little more to your right. Here, this way." He seizes Kelsey's harness and begins pulling us both toward him.

"No, please," I blurt, a little more forcefully than I intend. "Let the dog guide me!"

The man drops Kelsey's harness but continues to stand in front of her. "Come on, doggie, this way."

"Please, sir. My dog can't move unless you do."

"Oh. I guess you're right!" He steps aside.

Now I find that I can't move. Where exactly are we? Not on the ramp any more. I reach (yes, grope) for my light box, but I can't feel it. I listen for traffic clues, but just now the intersection is stagnant. The most fail-safe thing to do now is backtrack to Sweeney Hall and start over. This Kelsey and I begin to do.

"Where are you trying to go?" someone else calls to us.

"Back in this building," I reply. "I forgot something there."

This is a white lie that I would rather not be telling, but right now fibbing is easier than explaining to this complete stranger what has just happened to Kelsey and me, what we are endeavoring to unravel.

We wait inside the Sweeney lobby until I am fairly certain that both strangers have gone. We then reapproach our crosswalk, this time with no snags.

As we wait for our green light and walk signal, a woman standing beside us remarks, "It's just wonderful how these dogs can tell the difference between green lights and reds. How long have you had yours?"

Suddenly, my brain is a video recorder running in fast forward. This is obviously a nice woman making conversation. She has just asked a perfectly appropriate question, and she has also revealed her ignorance as to exactly how dog guides negotiate automobile traffic. Her ignorance on this point is entirely understandable. Most of the public shares it. I shared it before I trained with Kelsey. Should I explain to her that all dogs are, in fact, color blind, and that I, not Kelsey, read the traffic and decide when we will cross? Shall I tell her that Kelsey's role is to guide us, in as straight a line as possible, across that intersection? Given that we are waiting through a traffic cycle which will change at any second now, do I have the

necessary time to explain all of this to her in a manner which will seem friendly, not abrasive, and not preachy? I want to share with this woman. I want her encounter with a blind person and dog to be as positive as possible. I also want to cross this street. Maybe I'll just answer her question.

"I've had Kelsey for a year and a half."

"We can go now," the woman announces, and her heels click briskly in the crosswalk.

She is gone. Probably she did not hear my reply to her question. She has also jay-walked, for now, three or four seconds after her departure, I hear the audible "koo-koo" confirming our right to walk, and I hear parallel traffic flowing as it should.

Kelsey and I cross safely. Despite feeling flustered and substantially less confident than I was just ten minutes ago, I find myself already analyzing this sequence of events. Why was this decent woman willing to risk my safety by telling me that it was all right to cross the street, when it was not? Why had she engaged me and then vanished before I could engage her? What I gained from our encounter was puzzlement. What had she gained? She had learned nothing about guide dogs or how they worked. If ever we met again, I thought, we would still fail to connect. Conversely, I would welcome a second encounter with the woman and her small son in the elevator.

And what of that well-meaning man who caused all this ruffling in my day? Tonight over dinner, will he be telling his friends how a blind woman refused his help? Will he declare that she spoke rudely to him? Will he pronounce her and her dog inept? Will he ever try to help blind people again? Or will he avoid and ignore us, thereby sentencing us to at least partial invisibility? I am truly distressed if these turn out to be the consequences of our interaction. Under any other circumstances than a street crossing, I would have treated the man with greater courtesy. But crossing busy streets with either dog or cane just happens to be the most nerve-wracking part of my day-to-day existence. A comparable experience for the man in terms of stress might be his attempt to change lanes on a freeway while driving at 60 miles per hour. At that particular juncture, would he want the distraction of trying to explain to his three-year-old daughter riding in the passenger seat beside him, just why God had made her?

There was more than stress at work in my curt reactions, however. The man handled my dog. He did more than that; he tried to control her, to take power away from her and me. He tried to master our situation, rather than allowing us to master it for ourselves. I am convinced that in doing this his intentions toward us were benevolent. He perceived us as having difficulty. He genuinely felt concern for us. Our apparent discomfort made him uncomfortable, and he wanted to "fix things," to feel comfortable again as soon as possible. So, with every good motivation, he

rushed in to help. He is not the only person Kelsey and I have encountered who rushed to our aid so as to alleviate their own discomfort. Just the other day, a bank teller, overhearing me address my dog by name, endeavored to direct us to her work counter by calling out, "Kelsey! Hello girl! This way, Kelsey!" Both Kelsey and I were made nervous by the incident, and we fumbled through several publicly witnessed minutes of awkward guidework before regaining our balance and our autonomy.

Balance and automony are what I am always seeking as a blind person, whether traveling with my cane or with Kelsey. If along the way to achieving these goals, I can involve sighted people in the complex and enriching experience of blindness, I am delighted. I know that I "represent" the blind. I cannot avoid this role; there are simply not that many totally blind people living visibly within my community. I also represent myself: a woman in her middle 30s who lives a full life, at times a bit differently than other people live theirs, for the rather incidental reason that she does not see with her eyes. I have days when I feel like representing only myself. Then again, I have days when I am as proud of my blindness as I am proud of the fact that I sing and play the flute. Since life is invariably unpredictable, I never know in what situations I will find myself, nor do I know whether the situations will require me to represent the blind or allow me to represent me.

As to the question of whether cane travel or canine travel allows more autonomy or requires more skills, I say they are equal. Technically, practically speaking, they are both efficient. Both will get a blind person where she needs to go; and whether she goes via dog or via cane, her greatest barriers along the way will be human. Personally, I find canine travel more liberating. I move more rapidly than ever I did with a cane, and I have grown to trust this new speed, so much so that I have transferred it to my cane skills. Because, on the whole, sighted people interact more readily with a dog-person team than with a cane-person team, I am more likely to confront those human barriers, the barriers which make me choose between representing myself and representing the blind, the barriers that allow me to grapple with and embrace that blindness. I believe also that I have found someone who makes me want this embrace, and that someone is Kelsey. Kelsey brings a dignity to the guiding process that no human guide and no cane can ever impart. Guiding is her work, which she enjoys, and for which I need never feel beholden. It is her purpose, and it completes my purpose, and the currency exchanged is love and mutual respect. I thrive on our dual accomplishments.

Guide Dog School: Night Route Exercise

Airial, blinded last year by tainted eye drops
Still dreams in "living color" this map of lettered streets
Still knows by mind sight, the entrance to Grafaeo's coffee.
Her feet don't fear dark steps; San Rafael's her home town.

A bullet took Michael's eyes
This YUPPY Marin's a far cry from Texas rodeos.
A night route for him, is a horse for the breaking:
He drives his dog Seeker like a bull.

I'm what they call a total; I've never seen.
The insect-echo night world I mastered as an unguarded child
The fright-night world I learned as woman
So that every crossing is an urban canyon;
Every silent block, a premonition of loss.
Kelsey and I prove fastest by fear, not efficiency.

What terrible riches we bring to night travel!
Airial is no less Nurse now;
Her nurse-soul, nurse-knowledge, still intact,
And Michael is still Michael though he thinks he's not a man.
Robin has an older daughter missing since age 16
Lynn has a husband, and diabetes.

I've never before traveled a night route with the blind
Never known till now, the pull of dogs in harness leather
Their touch so night accustomed
So full of company.

Our deep and abiding friendship not withstanding, Kelsey does not "assume complete care" of me. I am Kelsey's care-giver. At the end of a ten-hour work day, it is I who brush and comb her, who feed her, who clean her ears and teeth, who help her relieve herself, who pick up her feces, who earn the money that pays for her food, her veterinary care, and her warm home in which she sleeps. I am the care-giver, a privilege I am honored to assume as Kelsey's blind friend.

It occurs to me just now that of the three phrases keeping me from sleep tonight, "assume complete care of" is the most rankling. It declares explicitly what the other two phrases only imply: that disability is always synonymous with loss and restriction and that it is up to the non-disabled to both physically and attitudinally care for the disabled. In turn, it is left to the disabled person to be grateful, to reassure her sighted, or hearing,

or able-bodied counterpart that she appreciates all the efforts being made on her behalf and that the able helper need not feel uncomfortable around the disability. These thoughts clarify for me the interactions between myself and the man and woman who tried to help me at the street corner. They explain my bank teller's behavior and the behavior of fellow bus passengers. They even explain the behavior of people who are uncomfortable watching me locate a room in a building. Psychically, the end result of such contacts between helpers and helpees is to disable everyone concerned.

One can begin removing such psychic handicaps by adopting a more positive language, and, by consequence, attitude, toward disabilities. Why, culturally, are disability attitudes and language so negative? Why is difference so readily perceived as deficit? Is this view a perversion of spiritual principle, a twisted notion of disability as punishment, as a wage for sin, as the price paid for a superior asset? (You can't see, but God gave you superior hearing.) Or is it a part of the able-bodied mind set to regard as unhealthy any deviation from the standard physical body? I am inclined toward this latter view. I have lived too long both hearing and speaking this language of the "healthy." It is the language that speaks of "blind ignorance," "blind love," "blind faith." It is the language that equates sight with insight—understanding—and blindness with blundering. It is the language that conveys the dearness of an item or an achievement by declaring, "It will cost you an arm and a leg." It is the language that chastises people for making "lame excuses" and which summarizes their insufficiency as "lame duck." This language speaks of "deaf as post" Congressmen, "handicapped" Americans who "suffer" from cerebral palsy, who "spend their lives in wheelchairs or on crutches" and who, "overcome their handicaps" despite all else.

There are those, especially those who share my passion for language, who will argue that I am too sensitive, too much the censor, and that I take these expressions too literally, thereby sapping them of their metaphoric depth. Perhaps this is partly so. But I must ask: why are disability metaphors perpetually negative? The answer, I think, is obvious. By and large, it has been able-bodied people with their fear of disability who coin these metaphors. Isn't it time to accord disability a more positive set of images? Isn't it time to allow the disabled themselves to define their language?

Happily, many disabled are doing just that, as becomes apparent in an examination of the titles of disability literature anthologies: *With Wings; With the Power of Each Breath; Ordinary Lives; Close to the Truth.*

At this juncture, I will speak only for myself. I have not overcome my blindness. Rather, I wish to embrace it. It is my disability, my asset, and my talent. Because of my blindness, I have learned two written languages: English and Braille. I have learned two kinds of sight: the tactile sight of

cane travel and the insight of another species, that of the dog guide. I am, therefore, less trapped in the narrow, urban cage of man-world only. Because much of my life has been devoted to waiting—for books, for escorts, for the knowledge of another's presence in a room—I have studied the arts of solitude, of mind theater, of composing and writing, of patience. I have memorized bird calls. I have learned to sing and to play the flute. Maybe I should still have learned these things had I been sighted. But maybe not. Maybe I would have been complacent, lazy. Taken in the wrong vein, I now sound arrogant. I wish that were not so, for I feel humble. I feel grateful for this ably-blind life, replete with love and struggle. I want to share it with everybody. I want for somebody to say to me someday, "I wish I could be blind."

January, 1991

Blind
I was blind as an early morning's swaddling cloth of sleep,
Or a warm muff about the ears,
Ears funneling bacon sizzle
And murmured conversations softer than owls's down.

I used to be
Blinder than a dog's nose: reader of pine maps and memory,
Revered tracer of paths.
I was that blind, yes.
Blind as trees seeing down with their roots
Blind as lichens, rocks,

I used to be
Blind as the dark men seek for solace
Blind as the fugitive warmth of sex,
Blind as seed, as spark,
Yes, blind as mind spark.
Once, yes, I was as blind as stars,
As blind as music.

Yesterday and Today: Galileo in Italy

Robert L. Spaeth

I. Florence

IF monuments to the memory of Galileo Galilei were as prominent in Florence as those of his employers the Medici or those of Michelangelo, there would be no need for this essay. But even there—in *his* city, so to speak—one needs to look for Galileo: no postcards of his portrait or his telescopes or his compass will greet you at the corner kiosks. Yet his stature in history compares with Michelangelo's, and he certainly was a credit to the Medici.

Often called the Father of Modern Science, Galileo deserves the honor in part for breaking people loose from the cosmology favored by Aristotle and opening up the great vistas of the universe beyond our earth. Without Galileo, modern science would have lagged behind the development it achieved with his assistance; thus he is the invisible presence in much of the physics people have learned since his day.

In the course of acquiring his great reputation, Galileo was an inventor, a creative mathematician, a brilliant experimenter, a marvelous writer—the last of the great Renaissance writers, it is said—and a gregarious, aggressive, brave man. He is as accessible, as revolutionary, as consequential for humankind as Michelangelo. Visitors to Florence ought to know him better. To scholars of course he is visible—in libraries, journals, archives. But Galileo wanted to communicate with a much wider audience than the scholars. This is why he wrote mostly in Italian rather than Latin.

Galileo—his surname was Galilei, but he is universally known by his first—lived most of his life in Florence. From 1610 on, he was Chief Mathematician and Philosopher to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, a lofty title to be sure and one that represented an enviable position. Near the

end of his life—he died in 1642 at the age of 78—the Tuscan court's official artist, Giustus Sustermans, or perhaps one of his pupils, painted at least two portraits of Galileo. One of them hangs in the Sala di Giove of the Pitti Palace, the same room that has Raphael's famous "Portrait of a Woman, La Velata," and another can be found in Room 35 of the Uffizi Gallery.

On the Pitti Palace side of the River Arno, there is a steep—and, of course, narrow—street called Costa di San Giorgio; a few hundred yards up is #19, a house Galileo once lived in. A small plaque above the door identifies the house, and higher up on the wall is a faded portrait of the man himself.

It is well known that Galileo's fame depends in large part on his achievements in physics and astronomy. His discovery of the satellites of Jupiter in 1610—with a telescope he had built—was a great piece of evidence strengthening the Copernican theory of the solar system. (Copernicus, a Pole, had published *Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres* in 1543, challenging the traditional geocentric understanding of the universe.) If Jupiter, a mere planet, could have satellites revolving about itself, then not all heavenly bodies need revolve about the earth, as the Ptolemaic theory had it. (Ptolemy, a Greek astronomer, had written a definitive work on the geocentric system around the year 150 A.D.—so definitive that the system became known by his name.)

Near the Uffizi Gallery, on the opposite side of the Arno from the Pitti Palace, is the Museo di Storia della Scienza (History of Science Museum), easily approached by a short walk between the wings of the Uffizi, from the Piazza della Signoria toward the Arno. Here are life-sized statues of some great Florentines, including Michelangelo, Cellini, Giotto, Boccaccio, and Dante. At the Arno end of the right-hand row of statues is one of Galileo.

A left turn at the river and another left lead to the door to the History of Science Museum, #1 Piazza dei Giudici. This museum is full of fascinating scientific artifacts, among them the lens, mounted in a fancy case, with which Galileo discovered the moons of Jupiter. Two of Galileo's original telescopes are also there, as well as one of his calculating devices, the "geometrical and military compass." (The museum has also preserved one of Galileo's fingers, cut off when his body was disinterred and moved in 1737.)

Several 16th and 17th century "armillary spheres" are preserved in this museum. There is a huge one in room 4, constructed for the Grand Duke Ferdinand in 1593, when Galileo was 29 and teaching in Padua. These armillary spheres, models of the Ptolemaic universe, show the earth in the center, stable and immovable. The moon, sun, and five planets travel around the earth in circles, along with a band called the zodiac, whose name should not be taken as an indication that Galileo was much dis-

tracted by astrology. The outer sphere is the "sphere of the fixed stars," which also revolves around the earth. This large and elaborate model of the Ptolemaic universe illustrates that as late as 1593 the Ptolemaic system was well accepted and "official," even though 50 years earlier, Copernicus had written the *Revolutions* to argue in detail that the center of the world is more likely to be the sun than the earth.

The History of Science Museum also features various paintings and busts of Galileo, as well as of other scientists, some of them friends and pupils of Galileo. This is one place in Florence where Galileo *is* visible. Particularly charming are the 19th century paintings of Galileo instructing his famous student Vincenzio Viviani, who wrote the first biography of his master. In this small book—never translated into English—Viviani claimed that Galileo had performed early experiments with falling bodies by dropping objects of varying weights from the Leaning Tower of Pisa, in order to demonstrate that objects falling under the influence of the earth's gravitational pull fall to earth together, independent of their differing weights. This was a idea that contradicted Aristotle's opinion that the heavier an object the faster it falls. To contradict Aristotle would have been brave, maybe even rash. But no one, in the intervening four centuries, has been able to verify that Galileo actually performed such experiments.

In his later years, Galileo bought a villa in Arcetri, a suburb of Florence. After his conviction by the Inquisition, he was allowed to live there under house arrest from late 1633 until he died January 9, 1642. The villa is located in Pian de Giullari, #42, at the top of a hill not far from the Piazzale Michelangelo, near a convent where one of Galileo's daughters lived. Above the entrance door is a large plaque commemorating Galileo, put there in 1942, the 300th anniversary of his death. Just inside the entrance is a room with a vaulted ceiling that may be the room depicted in a painting in the History of Science Museum. It can be speculated, then, that in this room, Galileo discussed the contents of his last and greatest book, *Discourses on Two New Sciences,* with his students and friends, including Viviani.

John Milton and Thomas Hobbes visited him in this villa in the closing years of his life. In *Areopagitica,* Milton wrote, "There it was that I found and visited the famous Galileo, grown old, a prisoner of the Inquisition." In many ways it was not a good time for Galileo, for besides going blind and frequently falling ill, he lived under guard of officers of the Inquisition. He had been tried and convicted of "vehement suspicion of heresy" for publishing *Dialogue on the Two Chief World Systems,* which was alleged to support the forbidden Copernican theory—a charge Galileo denied, though unsuccessfully.

Galileo's tomb is located in the center of Florence, in the Church of Santa Croce, where Michelangelo, Machiavelli, and Leonardo Bruni are

also buried. Galileo's remains were moved there in 1737. After his death, Pope Urban VIII would not allow a tomb to be erected in Galileo's honor. In the church, the memory of Galileo was not allowed to be celebrated for nearly a century after his death.

Galileo's life began in Pisa, west of Florence. A modest house near the Palazzo della Giustizia is marked as his birthplace. His family moved from Pisa to Florence when he was eight, but he returned to Pisa as a university student in 1581 and again as a professor of mathematics in 1589, at age 23. If he in fact did the Leaning Tower experiments, they probably occurred during his three years on the University of Pisa faculty. Experiments or no experiments, Galileo's ideas on the motion of falling objects were as important for progress beyond Aristotle as were his later discoveries in astronomy. Thus the Leaning Tower has enormous symbolic significance for the birth of modern science. (Although monuments to Galileo are rare in Pisa, the airport is named Galileo Galilei International Airport.)

Galileo had no problems with his church until he returned to Florence as a famous scientist in 1610. The first ominous sign occurred in 1614 in the church of Santa Maria Novella, located near the Florence railroad station. In this church's historic pulpit (designated by Brunelleschi, the architect of Florence's Duomo), on December 21, 1614, a Dominican priest named Tommaso Cacini publicly denounced "the Galileists" as enemies of religion. Galileo's troubles began then and there.

II. Padua

Upon leaving Pisa in 1592, Galileo lived for 18 years near Venice in Padua, where he held the chair of mathematics at the University of Padua, an ancient institution at which Copernicus had once been a student. (Copernicus was not studying astronomy at Padua but rather canon law; he wrote his *magnum opus* much later in life.) In Padua, Galileo made some of his more startling discoveries and spent some of his happiest times. He more or less "settled down" there, becoming the father of two daughters and a son, though he never married their mother.

During Galileo's Paduan years, he did much preliminary work in mechanics, work that finally saw fruition in *Two New Sciences* in 1638. While in the Venetian Republic, Galileo met Fra Paolo Sarpi and Cardinal Robert Bellarmine; the latter later played a major part in Galileo's conflict with the church.

The old university building where Galileo lectured remains standing in Padua, on Via VIII Febbraio. Called *Il Bo* (The Ox), today it preserves Galileo's actual lectern, in addition to a large number of Galileo paintings, reliefs, busts, and memorabilia. It seems to be one of the few places in Italy, second only to the History of Science Museum in Florence, where

his importance is properly recognized. In 1892, the university celebrated the tricentennial of Galileo's arrival in Padua, and many documents from that celebration can be seen there. Within walking distance of *Il Bo* is the Prato della Valla, a large traffic circle with 78 larger-than-life statues of Italian heroes, Galileo's among them.

In 1597 in Padua, Galileo read Johannes Kepler's first book and wrote the discoverer of elliptical planetary orbits a letter of appreciation. In this letter, Galileo said that he had accepted Copernicus's theory for some time, in preference to Ptolemy's. But Galileo, then and later, was cautious as well as aggressive, so he did not teach Copernicanism publicly. No doubt this decision was a wise one, but it certainly was unfortunate that a book as persuasive as Copernicus's *Revolutions* had to be treated virtually as a subversive document.

Although most of Galileo's work in Padua concerned mechanical problems—such as the motion of objects rolling down inclined planes—he made an historic breakthrough in astronomy in 1609. It seems that in that year Galileo heard about the invention in Holland of a device that would make distant objects appear near. He then tried his hand at reinventing it, so to speak. Not only was he successful but he immediately began to understand that the new instrument had some important uses.

In nearby Venice, at the top of the campanile of the Basilica of St. Mark, on August 21, 1609, Galileo demonstrated his "spyglass" (the word "telescope" was not coined until the next year) to members of the Senate of the Republic of Venice. Able to see ships approaching the harbor long before they became visible to the unaided eye, the politicians could readily predict the commercial and military potential of the new instrument. Later, when Galileo gave one of his telescopes to the Doge of Venice, the Doge offered to increase Galileo's salary substantially and grant him tenure at the university.

Galileo soon saw a possibility for the telescope that changed his life and changed the scientific world. He aimed it at the stars. He not only looked at the stars through the telescope—finding them much more numerous than anyone had thought—but also began to look systematically, night after night, at selected celestial objects, including the moon and some of the planets.

Aided by the telescope's magnification, Galileo saw that the moon appeared to have imperfections on its surface—but imperfections in heavenly bodies, according to the prevailing Aristotelian philosophy, were not possible. Galileo went further: he decided that the dark and light spots on the moon were in fact evidence of lunar mountains. Measuring the size of the shadows cast by the mountains, Galileo was able to compute their elevation above the moon's surface.

A truly spectacular discovery with the telescope came in January, 1610,

when Galileo trained it on the planet Jupiter. Near Jupiter he saw several stars not otherwise visible. There seemed to be three or four of them, arranged in a straight line, but they did not always appear in the same positions relative to the planet. Possibly some of the stars were coming into view and others going out of view, or possibly the stars near Jupiter were moving. Galileo tried out the latter hypothesis, speculating that these stars might be revolving around Jupiter. This theory could explain why sometimes only three of the four stars were visible—the other could be obscured by the planet itself. Pressing on, Galileo was able to calculate the time that it took for each of the stars to complete a revolution around Jupiter.

Galileo soon concluded that his discovery gave added credibility to the Copernican theory. If Jupiter had its own little planets revolving about itself, then the universe was not completely governed by the general rule—a Ptolemaic rule—that all celestial bodies must revolve about the earth. Galileo found himself poised on the edge of revolutionary evidence. As it turned out, he was treading on dangerous ground as well.

In the spring of 1610, Galileo boldly published the discoveries he had made with the telescope. His essay, *The Starry Messenger,* made him famous and led to an invitation to him to become Chief Mathematician and Philosopher to Cosimo I, the appointment assisted by his having named Jupiter's satellites "the Medicean stars." Leaving Padua for Florence would mean going home to a well-paid research position without time-consuming teaching duties. But it would also mean leaving the safety of the Republic of Venice, which had a history of independence from papal interference in its affairs. Galileo's friend Paolo Sarpi, who had experienced the wrath of Rome during the Venetian interdict crisis of 1606, evidently urged him to stay. But the opportunities in Florence were too attractive for Galileo to refuse the offer.

III. Rome

Galileo never lived in Rome, but he visited the Holy City a number of times, once against his will. Hence there are few Galilean artifacts there, despite the great part that Rome played in his life. Those parts of Rome—its impressive churches, palaces, statuary, and monuments of all kinds—that testify to the power of the church in the 17th century, however, are manifold. That power touched Galileo, the power of two Popes in particular.

The first was Paul V, Pope when Galileo was denounced to the Inquisition in 1615. The church's subsequent investigation of Galileo turned up nothing incriminating, but during the same period concern was mounting in high church circles about whether the Copernican theory contradicted passages of the Bible. Galileo was known to believe in

Copernicanism, but he did not defend it publicly. A Carmelite priest from Naples, Paolo Foscarini, was not as cautious, however, and in 1615 published a pamphlet explicitly arguing that Copernicanism and the Bible were compatible. Pope Paul's top theological adviser, Cardinal Robert Bellarmine, seized the opportunity to warn both Foscarini and Galileo.

Bellarmine's "Letter to Foscarini" has become notorious. In it, the Cardinal wrote that a heliocentric theory of the universe might be acceptable if it were understood "suppositionally," that is, as a scheme to calculate planetary positions, etc., but to assert that such a view was true "in reality" would be a "very dangerous thing, likely not only to irritate all scholastic philosophers and theologians, but also to harm the Holy Faith by rendering Holy Scripture false." Bellarmine went much further than this, claiming that everything in the Bible was a matter of faith even though doctrines concerned with salvation might not be involved. Galileo rightly saw a threat in this opinion, for if passages in the Bible ostensibly favored geocentrism—such as the story in the Book of Joshua about the sun temporarily ceasing its motion—then anyone who contradicted geocentrism could be suspected of heresy.

Urged on by the views expressed by Bellarmine, Pope Paul was ready in early 1616 to move officially against Copernicanism. He appointed a special commission of theologians, which recommended that the Copernican theory be condemned as formally heretical. Such a condemnation was promptly issued, and the Pope assigned Bellarmine the task of informing Galileo, who happened to be in Rome at the time. Bellarmine's house, where this historic confrontation took place, can still be found, on the Piazza di San Macuto, #56, near the Church of St. Ignazio, where Bellarmine himself was later buried.

Other persons besides Bellarmine and Galileo were present that fateful day, February 24, 1616. One of them may have written a memorandum summarizing the proceedings, to the effect that Bellarmine instructed Galileo not to "hold, defend or *teach in any way*" the Copernican theory. But his memorandum was not signed and may even have been a forgery, and in any case Galileo knew nothing of it. Galileo recalled later, and had his recollection confirmed by Bellarmine, that he had been told only that to "hold or defend" Copernicanism was henceforth forbidden. Obeying the prohibition not to "hold or defend" Copernicanism would have allowed Galileo a modicum of freedom. Not to "teach" Copernicanism "in any way" was tantamount to silence. The distinction between the two instructions became extremely important in years to come.

Galileo returned to Florence, knowing that Copernicanism was for the time being a subject to be leery of. Heresy was a crime punishable by death; just 16 years earlier Giordano Bruno had been burned at the stake in Rome for that offense. (Today the Campo dei Fiori in Rome, where the

execution occurred, has a large commemorative statue of Bruno.) Until 1632, Galileo published little more on astronomy.

In the 1620s, the leading personnel of the church changed: Pope Paul V and Cardinal Bellarmine both died in 1621. In 1623, Maffeo Barberini, a Florentine and friend of Galileo's, became Pope Urban VIII. Returning for another visit to Rome the next year, Galileo enjoyed several conversations with the new Pope and came away convinced that the intellectual atmosphere in Italy had greatly improved. So he began to write a major new astronomical work, which finally appeared in 1632, entitled *Dialogue on the Two Chief World Systems—Ptolemaic and Copernican.* The church censor in Florence gave Galileo official permission to publish the *Dialogue.*

Then, to Galileo's dismay, the Pope reacted to the book with fury. Why? The *Dialogue* comprised a series of conversations among three characters, Salviati, Simplicio, and Sagredo, who discussed the arguments for and against the Ptolemaic and Copernican systems. Salviati, a defender of Copernicus, frequently got the upper hand in the discussions; Simplicio, a committed Aristotelian, often lost. At the end of the book, Simplicio offered the proposition that whatever the physical evidence offered by astronomical observation seemed to suggest, one had to believe that God could have arranged the universe so that the evidence might be misleading. In short, God could have created a geocentric universe that appeared to human observation as heliocentric. Pope Urban had once told Galileo of this clever idea, but now that he saw it placed in the mouth of Simplicio, the loser of arguments, he became so angry that he ordered Galileo brought to Rome for trial.

The decree of 1616 had condemned Copernicanism as heretical; because Galileo's new book could be understood as defending the indefensible, he was accountable, if not for heresy itself, at least for the second most serious offense, "vehement suspicion of heresy." But Galileo was by now in his 70th year, in poor health, slowly losing his eyesight. He asked not to be required to make the arduous trip from Florence to Rome. But the Pope would not relent.

Arriving in Rome in February, 1633, Galileo first stayed at the Tuscan embassy, the Villa Medici. That building, near the top of the Spanish Steps, is now the French Academy. Near it is the only monument to Galileo in Rome, a stone column about eight feet tall, bearing a metal plaque commemorating the fact that Galileo was confined to the Villa Medici before his trial. The column, like the statue of Bruno, was put up after the Popes lost control of Rome in the late 19th century.

Galileo was convicted by the Inquisition. His conviction and punishment made him a martyr to the cause of science and freedom of thought. At the time, this case turned on the question of whether he had disobeyed the injunction of 1616 not to "hold, defend or teach [Copernicanism] in

any way." The specific contents of the *Dialogue* were largely ignored. At one critical moment in the trial, Galileo accepted a plea bargain, agreeing to trade a confession of minor guilt for a light sentence. Pope Urban, however, still enraged, overturned the agreement. Thus Galileo was sentenced to life imprisonment, all his published writings were to be suppressed, and he was forbidden ever to publish again.

Galileo's final humiliation took place in the Church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, located next to the convent of Santa Maria, where the trial had been held. Galileo knelt before the Cardinals of the Inquisition and formally abjured his belief in Copernicanism. Santa Maria sopra Minerva, on the Piazza della Minerva, today has no plaque or statue in remembrance of this sad but historic occasion. The church is usually visited by tourists who want to see a statue of Christ by Michelangelo.

Had Galileo been locked in the Inquisition prison, he probably would not have survived long. Fortunately his friend Archbishop Ascanio Piccolomino of Siena had some influence with Pope Urban and requested that Galileo be released in his custody. This plea was granted—perhaps the first act of mercy by Urban VIII in the whole grim affair. So Galileo went to Siena to recover his equanimity, and later, following another request by Piccolomino, went to his own villa near Florence. There he lived under constant guard, required to ask permission to leave the house, even for medical attention in Florence. Despite these conditions and despite his worsening health, Galileo wrote *Discourses on Two New Sciences,* published in Holland in 1638, destined to become his most valuable book.

The church won the battle against Galileo, but Galileo won the war. In contemporary Italy, the church still appears powerful, but in fact it was severely damaged by its action against Galileo. And the scarcity of physical reminders in Italy of the scientist's life stands in contrast both to the worldwide knowledge of the science Galileo initiated and to his luminous reputation.

ART

Dan Harris

"I DREAMED I HAD TO SHARE AN OFFICE..."

Contributors

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Paul Petrie's poetry collection, *The Runners,* in 1988 won the Capricorn Award, Writer's Voice, West Side YMCA. He retired in 1990 as professor of English of the University of Rhode Island after 31 years. His evaluation: "Retirement is Nirvana. I recommend it to everyone."

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To Prospective Contributors

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