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ARTICLES

The Age of Supersystems and the New Ignorance

B. J. SCOTT NORWOOD

Those who have handled sciences have been either men of experiment or men of dogmas. The men of experiment are like the ant: they only collect and use. The reasoners resemble spiders who make cobwebs out of their own substance. But the bee takes a middle course, it gathers material but transforms and digests it by a power of its own.

Sir Francis Bacon, Novum Organum, 1620

FOR at least 30 years, civilization's line of advance has been winding its way into a new age. The central distinction of this Age lies in the way humankind has come to organize its affairs. Immense numbers of people have now arranged themselves in complete dependency on each other and on their technologies – especially in the Northern Hemisphere. For lack of a better rubric, I shall call this new epoch the AGE OF SUPER-SYSTEMS.[1] All highly developed societies are shaped by its impact, and it rivals in importance for humankind all Ages which have gone before. This Age holds both great promise and great danger. There are those who believe that it may be the shortest Age in history, and perhaps the last. Personally, I am an optimist; but I also believe the pessimists have a good case.

This lecture was presented by Professor Scott Norwood on the occasion of receiving the San Jose State University Outstanding Professor Award, November 11, 1976.

THE NATURE OF SUPERSYSTEMS

Supersystems are aggregations of large human/technological systems. They are infinitely rich in detail, and subject to limitless perspectives. Major components of these aggregations – which combine in various ways – include industrial, transportation, communication, trade, governmental, political, and cultural systems. Regional industrial/trade networks serve as examples of supersystems, as do economic networks of international scale. Supersystems are contained within supersystems; and they continually interact in kaleidoscopic variety. International commerce is a case in point. Economic supersystems of international aggregation generate a variety of goods and services by means of trade which exceeds the possibilities of national supersystems acting alone.

In general, supersystems organically link multiple networks of human beings and their technologies on a vast scale in complex, probabilistic, synergistic, and dynamic patterns. Moreover, they are purposeful, self-organizing, and "open" to environmental influences. Supersystems are amenable to general description, but not to precise definition – in the same sense that "Los Angeles," for example, is describable, but not definable. The main clue to the existence of supersystems is pervasive specialization. With rare exceptions, human beings in supersystems are completely interdependent. Individuals are unable to produce or acquire for themselves the goods and services used as a matter of course. Time was when human beings were directly dependent on the land for sustenance. Now, human beings by the millions, unseen and unknown, depend on each other. Not only are the amenities of life based on interdependence, but survival as well.

THE NEW IGNORANCE

Looking backward, it now appears that we have entered the Age of Supersystems without much appreciation of what has actually happened to us. We continue to apply the models and methods of a prior Age, the Age of Machines, to the Age of Supersystems. Also, we persist in doing so despite our growing inability to comprehend or cope with our immense institutional creations. The fact is, we are making one mistake after another.

There seems to be a NEW IGNORANCE abroad in the land: IGNORANCE OF SUPERSYSTEMS. The flaws in our thinking about the ways and workings of supersystems explain much of the nameless disorientation and discontent among Americans in recent years. It seems to me that, even after factoring out the perturbations of the Vietnam War and Washington scandals, much of this disorientation and discontent remains. It is akin to what Alvin Toffler has called "future shock," but it is more than that. An apt, if less catching term, would be "supersystems shock." That is to say, the shock produced by the combined effects of the immense scale, complexity, uncertainty, synergy, and the purposeful self-organization of supersystems – as well as by rapid change, which was Toffler's emphasis.[2]

When confronted with supersystems, the untutored and unaided human mind is simply overwhelmed. It is unable to grasp detail; and, moreover, it cannot even conceptualize that by which it is confronted. A common outcome of this experience is the well-known identity crisis. Faced with supersystems, it is difficult to see where one individual fits in the larger scheme. Confusion about personal identity has an adverse effect on personal dignity. The human mind finds this unacceptable and, in response, attempts to simplify – to create models which organize and compress detail, so as to make sense out of supersystems. And that is the way it should be. All models of the "real world" are simplifications, and we cannot do without them. Nonetheless, when faced with supersystems, the untutored and unaided human mind almost always simplifies to the point of serious error. To coin a word, its response is SUPERSIMPLISTIC. This usually produces a chain reaction of psychological and intellectual consequences. And, in the very process of trying to avoid mistakes, the conditions are created which cause mistakes. This puts one in mind of the man who rode his ox in search of his ox.

The most serious result of the New Ignorance is unwarranted assumptions and commitment to isolated truth – arbitrarily selected for personal reasons from an immense network of interrelated truths. The result is dogma. In the context of supersystems, a single truth, taken alone, turns to error because one truth depends on another. An example would be a commitment to industry versus ecology, or the converse. In such a conflict, one side righteously tells the other side, "Our truth is better than your truth." The fact is, both sides have problems.

With unwarranted assumptions and commitment to isolated truth, values are strangely reworked – with curious effects on ideas such as freedom, equality, ethics, and the common good. Perceptions of human nature and the human condition are altered; rhetoric is confused with reality; and logic is confused with validity. Consequently, people develop amazing expectations about what the behavior of supersystems should be. According to the New Ignorance, for example, political and economic supersystems are often seen as "fairy-tale cows to be fed in heaven and milked on earth." When faulty expectations meet supersystems head on, the almost inevitable result is disappointment, frustration, disaffection, and sometimes even bomb throwing. If one lives and works in supersystems, such systems must be faced realistically. We can't remove the wolf from our door by calling it a dog. If we don't deal with the reality of supersystems, it will surely deal with us.

With increasing frequency, disappointment, frustration, and disaffection are followed with a commitment to a Great Law Giver, a Great Master, or a Great Planner – take your choice. A continuing risk is that the New Ignorance can be formulated into bizarre ideology, spark a mass movement under a Great Leader of some kind, and destabilize society. Western civilization has given us many grim examples of such potentials in our own time. Former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Daniel Moynihan, has noted that only 24 democracies remain among the 142 members of the U.N.[3]

Beyond that, there is still another kind of problem. Sooner or later, commitment to isolated truth leads to disaffection with that particular truth, as the discrepancies between expectations and actualities increase. In turn, that typically leads to a new commitment to still another isolated truth, with subsequent disaffection, and so on until frustration is complete. Then people are heard to ask, "Who or what can one believe?" Without a satisfactory answer, the result is cynicism.

KNOWLEDGEABLE IGNORANCE

People now living in highly developed societies are, collectively, the most informed people who ever lived. For that matter, the vast majority of all skilled workers, engineers, scientists, and managers who have ever lived are alive today. Viewed from a different vantage point, however, we are probably the most uninformed generation that ever lived – uninformed in terms of what we need to know to solve our problems. The plain fact is that our supersystems now continually verge on instability – threatening to go beyond dangerous threshholds. What we know about supersystems is a fraction of what we need to know, especially to insure world peace. This, once again, is a manifestation of the New Ignorance – which, by the way, knows no national boundaries.

The first thing we have to do in dealing with the New Ignorance is to achieve what I shall call knowledgeable ignorance – knowing what we don't know. For years, social scientists have been at a disadvantage compared to physical scientists. Physical scientists have been able to experiment in laboratories under controlled conditions – the *sine qua non* of "hard science." Social scientists have been unable to follow this lead because comparable experimentation with real-world social systems is impractical and far too risky. Now, however, in the Age of Supersystems, social scientists have found partial relief through modeling and simulation – using the power of high-speed, stored-program, digital computers. Now we have, as it were, a "laboratory in a box." Dramatic experiments can be run and nobody gets hurt; and the main risk is in misunderstanding the results.

With computer simulation, the properties of supersystems cause formal investigation to go beyond analysis into synthesis. Simulation models are, of course, simple models compared to the richness of reality. But, to the human mind, they are exceedingly complex and synergistic – often requiring hundreds of millions of calculations to get results. Faculty members of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have been experimenting with complex models of supersystems for many years, using computer-based simulation. And, although the art and science of simulation are still in the formative stages, at least one thing has been demonstrated: human beings are profoundly ignorant of supersystems.

The most significant results of the MIT studies, in my opinion, are pedagogical. They have demonstrated what the untutored and unaided

human mind is up against in dealing with supersystems. These findings are instructive, and I would like to give you some of the highlights, with a few embellishments of my own:[4]

* Supersystems generally behave in counterintuitive ways;
* Few policy or decision points in a supersystem network, when acted upon, will significantly alter supersystem behavior;
* Intuition is a poor guide for locating policy or decision points;
* Policy and decision makers often use pseudo-policy and pseudo-decision points without results;
* When policy and decision makers do, in fact, come upon valid decision points, as often as not they will act in the wrong direction.

In terms of control, all of this reminds one of the Wizard of Oz, standing behind the curtain at his panel, throwing levers and twisting dials which generate nothing but puffs of smoke, flashes of light, simulated thunder, and an amplified voice.

My own studies, moreoever, have convinced me that supersystems create their own policies, which are independent of the policies of policy makers to an astonishing degree. These policies are formed through the synergistic interaction of human beings and technologies which comprise supersystems. Such policies are frequently stronger than the policies of policy makers, and override them with considerable regularity.

About three years ago, I took a turn at teaching a course at San Jose State University in the School of Business entitled "Future Studies for Business." As a test case, an MIT computer-based simultation model called "World Dynamics" was loaded into our time-share computer. Students were taught how to work the model and then formed into teams. They deliberately were not taught anything about systems science – the science of systems which admits the study of purposes and environmental influences. The students were on their own, and they began with great confidence. Starting with key world parameters for the early 1970s, e.g. "population," "capital investment," "food factors," and the like – students were instructed to design and generate through simulation their own "world," for the time frame 2020–2050 A.D. – a "world" which was desirable by their own standards. In effect, these students became omnipotent – the "gods" of their own systems, as it were. They could alter key parameters any way they saw fit, and the computer would trace out the consequences of their actions over time – both in tabular and graphic form.

The end results were extremely interesting. Not a single team could achieve its own objectives. To the students' puzzlement, they discovered that virtually every result traced out by the computer was unexpected. This experiment proved to be highly valuable to the participants because they learned the importance of knowing what they don't know; and they learned that commitment is no substitute for knowledge.

The problems my students experienced are typical. Two common misconceptions lead to trouble when the untutored and unaided human mind tries to fathom supersystems: (a) misconceptions about innerworkings, and (b) misconceptions about behavior.

INNERWORKINGS OF SUPERSYSTEMS

First, we will examine briefly the problem of supersystem innerworkings. Supersystems are open (environment-influenced), purposeful, self-organizing, organic complexes, comprised of countless human and technological elements – with multi-channel feedback loops (where inputs and outputs modify each other in circular processes), vast interconnectedness, probabilistic interdependencies, synergism, and dynamism.

Systems with such properties have little in common with heat engines, the basic subject matter of the Machine Age. Nonetheless, models of supersystems are still drawn primarily from the Machine Age – the epoch of the Industrial Revolution. Such models are essentially Newtonian, i.e., clockwork mechanisms, operating by deterministic laws of cause and effect in closed (environment-free) contexts. Furthermore, our principal tool for studying such machine-like phenomena is analysis. In analytical thought, the whole is disaggregated into elements, the elements are studied separately, conclusions are drawn about the individual elements; and then reaggregated to explain the whole. Such a process is indispensable in science and engineering. But analysis is now part of a larger intellectual framework and can be a prime source of error when applied to supersystems. Often analysis leads to what may be called Type-III errors: solving the wrong problem – like trying to make the perfect square wheel.

Models of supersystems must be relevant to the purposes at hand. Heat-engine models have limited potentials for the study of supersystems because they are lacking in relevance. Organic models, drawn from disciplines such as biology and physiology, are more relevant: supersystems are living systems and the key components are human. The brain serves as a useful model in studying control and regulatory processes in supersystems because such systems – in their ultimate manifestations – are aggregations of brains and brain power. Organic models, however, must not only be relevant, but adequate as well. Even a perfect model of a pussy cat, for example, will not tell you the one thing you need to know about a tiger. Nor will the constitution of a sovereign state (a model in itself) tell you everything you need to know about civil rights.

Now, we must face an even more difficult problem. Beyond a certain point, the inner essence and "logic" of supersystems cannot be modeled at all. Complexity, of course, is one reason – but beyond that, it is the purposeful and self-organizing nature of supersystems. Supersystems, by way of biological analogy, have their own "genetic codes," i.e., internal programs for development. The strange thing is that they are capable of revising their

own genetics. Therefore, supersystems have no final forms nor boundaries. Key genetic features include (a) formal and informal organizational arrangements (lines of authority, affinity, and conflict), (b) organizational cultures (ideas and customs peculiar to specific organizations), (c) particular people in particular jobs, and (d) capital assets in all their forms, physical and monetary. So, not only are supersystems continuously changing their behavior, they are continuously changing the way they change. The very process of solving genetic problems seems to alter the genetic problems to be solved, in a dynamic linkage between changing potentials and purposes. And, at this point, we simply do not know enough to model such interdependencies. Engineering has given us the concept of the "black box" to describe our ignorance of complex innerworkings. For supersystems, however, the concept of the "black blob" may be more useful – to stress their organic nature and biological analogies and to emphasize their higher order of complexity.

BEHAVIOR OF SUPERSYSTEMS

The behavior of supersystems is generally counterintuitive, i.e., they do not do what people expect. There are many reasons for this, and I shall touch on four.

First, the behavior of supersystems is probabilistic. That does not mean haphazard. Probabilism is patterned uncertainty. Uncertainty is built into supersystems and there is no way to get it out. One can deal with uncertainty – manage it – but there is no way to eliminate it. In all policy- and decision-making situations, all one can do is to place well-considered bets – and to recognize that failure is not necessarily a mistake, and success is not always planned. The determinism that theoretically guarantees success in the world of machines simply does not exist in systems with organic components. Supersystems, therefore, operate on a trial-and-error basis. No amount of genius can make it otherwise. Consequently, if supersystems make "progress," they do so along a jagged forward path. No supersystem can hold a smooth course. Like an ant walking to dinner – it may get there, but not directly.

Second, powerful inputs or changes in the genetic codes of supersystems have reverberatory effects – like throwing rocks in a pond. There may not only be first-order effects, but second-, third-, and so on to the nth-order effect. An unfortunate legacy of the Machine Age is the bad habit of concentrating on direct effects, to the exclusion of others. There is ample and expressive evidence available as to how faulty this approach can be. Witness the never-ending sociological/political surprises produced by the internal combustion engine, television, and modern weapons. The danger is that, as effects work their way around, supersystems may take self-defeating turns. Nuclear war would be an example.

Third, supersystems operate according to their own time scales and clocks; and these are not human ones. Supersystems of all kinds are slower to respond or adapt than individuals think they should be. What is "fast" to a supersystem will be "slow" to an individual. The so-called "Now Generation" of the late 1960s was greatly frustrated by this feature of supersystem behavior, as they sought ways to change the "establishment" overnight.

Fourth, the ultimate significance of supersystems lies in their synergistic behavior. They are holistic and must be studied in holistic ways. In other words, the whole has a reality independent of the sum of the parts. So, elements of supersystems must be understood in terms of the wholes, and not the other way around. And, as indicated, analysis cannot detect synergy, but synthesis can. To give a basic example, a completely assembled aircraft – with a pilot at the controls ready to fly – takes on a reality far beyond that of a disassembled aircraft in a warehouse in the charge of a security guard.

Whereas the ultimate significance of supersystems lies in their synergy, the ultimate significance of the New Ignorance lies in unrealistic expectations – expectations far beyond the combined constraints of supersystems. People will continue to have unwarranted expectations about supersystems, as long as they do not understand supersystem fundamentals.

SUPERSYSTEMS AND THE COMMON WISDOM

Supersystems are here to stay because there is no safe way to reverse their development. The only way to eliminate them is by cataclysm. Otherwise, supersystems will become even more extensive and elaborate as world population expands and technology spreads. So, we must learn to deal with supersystems, like it or not.

The nature of the innerworkings and behavior of supersystems raises a number of basic questions to which we must find answers. What shall supersystems be shaped to do? How shall control be formulated? How shall regulation be exercised? We all want supersystems that are effective, efficient, and humane. But how do we get them? Which ones are best, or least bad? These are key questions, and I think the future depends on the answers.

In looking for answers, however, we are caught between a modern Scylla and Charybdis. Proceeding from the New Ignorance, it is impossible to reason one's way to the answers; or, for that matter, even to reason one's way to answers that serve one's own purposes. The faulty expectations of the New Ignorance are reminiscent of what I believe was Schopenhauer's observation – that there are two problems: (a) not getting what you want, and (b) getting what you want. Such a dilemma is a central feature of the New Ignorance. Proceeding from the New Ignorance, you're damned if you do and damned if you don't. It is extremely difficult for the New Ignorance to detect itself, to

about the same degree that it is difficult for a fish to detect water. This is not a matter of intelligence and/or education. One can have both and still be a complete victim of the New Ignorance. Everyone needs help in recognizing the New Ignorance; and everyone needs help in dealing with it.

The main burden of dealing with the New Ignorance falls on educators, who bear formal responsibility for dispelling ignorance of all kinds, old and new. And, in various ways, the challenge is being recognized. In my opinion, John Bunzel, President of San Jose State University, attacked many of the problems of the New Ignorance in a 1971 address to the faculty. Forecasting a response by higher education, he said, ". . . those of us whose life's work is in the university will deepen our commitment to the values of a liberal, pluralistic society, and . . . transmit to our students such threatened values as openness, flexibility, tolerance, a respect for the power of knowledge and the life of the mind, a feeling for the complexity of moral and social experience, and, finally, freedom from destructive pride and arrogance."[5] President Bunzel's forecast of academic commitments offers good guidance, but posits at least three questions for the educational community at large. To what extent is education now prepared to meet such commitments? To what extent has education itself become a victim of the New Ignorance? To what extent has the New Ignorance been formalized and codified into curricula? These are questions educators must face squarely and answer satisfactorily.

Robert Clark, former President of San Jose State University, once said that the purposes of a university are "to study the works of the mind and apply them to our life and times."[6] Well, the works of the mind are still expanding and times are still changing; and we have our work cut out for us, if we are to fulfill President's Bunzel's forecast. If colleges and universities will take the initiative and go out to meet the problem of the New Ignorance, we will be pioneers in opening up a new frontier in education. We can provide New Knowledge to deal with the New Ignorance.

The New Ignorance has now become so pervasive that what is required is mass education in systems science, applied to large-scale human and technological complexes. We need to make fundamental knowledge of supersystems part of the common wisdom. The university's task is to insure that education in systems science takes place in some form at virtually all levels – from kindergarden to graduate school. And, I should add, the fundamentals of systems science can be taught without the lumber of formal mathematics – dialogue and diagrams will do. If, as educators, we neglect the New Ignorance, society shortly will be guided by the New Ignorance itself. We shall find ourselves in a world where ignorance calls itself genius and makes it stick. As we labor with the pains of the New Ignorance, we should try to understand what is about to be born. And we should try to realize that, as the saying goes, "if we don't break eggs, we shall have to slay dragons."

The author would like to acknowledge intellectual indebtedness to Russell L. Ackoff, W. Ross Ashby, Stafford Beer, Jay W. Forrester, Werner Heisenberg, Claude Shannon, Alvin Toffler, Geoffrey Vickers, and Norbert Wiener.

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1 See Russell L. Ackoff, *Redesigning the Future* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974).

2 See Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock* (New York: Random House, 1970).

3 *Palo Alto Times*, October 4, 1975.

4 See Jay W. Forrester, *World Dynamics* (Cambridge: Wright-Allen Press, 1971).

5 John H. Bunzel, *Address to the Faculty*, San Jose State University, September 13, 1971.

6 Robert D. Clark, Faculty Meeting, School of Business, San Jose State University, circa 1967.

The Grapes of Wrath and Old Testament Skepticism

James D. Brasch

JOHN Steinbeck's Salinas Valley has always rested in the shade of the mountains of the Old Testament, and the legends of the people of Israel have frequently charted and illuminated the vicissitudes of his characters. Humble gestures and heroic achievements in Steinbeck's novels recount the history of "God's chosen people" as they struggled from the Garden of Eden to the Promised Land. Frequently, the speech rhythms of Steinbeck's chosen people echo the stately rhythms of the King James Version of the Old Testament. Even when he used quotations from the Vedas *(To a God Unknown)* or *Paradise Lost (In Dubious Battle)* as epigraphs for his novels, the tone, diction, syntax, and characterization were reminiscent of the language patterns of the Old Testament writers. This debt to the old chronicles of grief and pain has never been more obvious and influential than in *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939).[1]

The religious, political, philosophical and economic context of *The Grapes of Wrath* has concerned readers and critics of Steinbeck's work ever since the novel was published.[2] Jim Casy has usually been accepted as the articulator of Steinbeck's concern. Recalling the religious mentors in great nineteenth-century novels by Melville and Dostoievski, for example, critics have de-

scribed the presence of Casy as the fulcrum around which the characters and events revolve. Generally speaking, this has involved the somewhat contradictory assumptions that Casy is a Christ-figure and the Joads (read Judah) represent the Children of Israel returning from exile in Egypt. On occasion the paradox has been resolved by suggesting that in the face of economic calamity, philosophical issues generally remain unresolved. Rather sentimentally, much of the philosophical speculation has assumed that the lack of resolution could be explained by noting the conflicting echoes of American transcendentalism. Steinbeck, however, was not such a casual writer, and the easy assumption that Casy represents the voice of salvation, even though his initials are "J.C.," fails to recognize and acknowledge the precise nature of Steinbeck's inspiration and focus as he expanded his journalistic reports on the Okies into one of the most powerful social novels ever written.

I am convinced that a careful reading of the text of ***The Grapes of Wrath*** demonstrates that John Steinbeck was not the great celebrant of American values and assumptions articulated by Emerson and Whitman. When Casy emerged from forty days in the wilderness, it was not for the purpose of reaffirming the Over-soul which presumably guided the actions and thoughts of nineteenth century Americans. Nor was Casy the end of a long line of prophets predicting the ultimate triumph of the afflicted on the basis of salvation and hope articulated by Jesus Christ. Casy returned to question the authenticity and, indeed, the very existence of the God who had apparently abandoned his chosen people. In short, his voice was not one of affirmation and consolation; he was a skeptic. He was not Joshua leading the chosen people to victory or Job affirming his God after "the dark night of the soul" or Jeremiah preaching truth to the dispossessed in exile. And he most certainly was not Jesus Christ. Casy was the despairing man of God who found a little comfort in the pleasures and actions and humour of men. He was not *a* preacher; he was *the* preacher. Casy exemplifies the writer of Ecclesiastes who in Melville's tribute was "the truest of all men," because he wrote "the truest of all books": Ecclesiastes, "the fine hammered steel of woe."[3]

Casy has traditionally and rightly been considered the philosophical centre of the novel. Recognition of his Ecclesiastical origins, however, places a different complexion on the novel. Casy's origins were presented by Tom Joad. Just before Tom leaves his mother because of his impending arrest, the two of them examine their general plight, and Tom tells her about Casy's influence. He recalls a sermon by Casy:

> Says one time he went out in the wilderness to find his own soul, an' he foun' he didn' have no soul that was his'n. Says he foun' he jus' got a little piece of a great big soul. Says a wilderness ain't no good, 'cause his little piece of soul wasn't no good 'less it was with the rest, an' was whole. Funny how I remember. Didn' think I was even listenin'. But I know nowa fella ain't no good alone."[4]

Casy's reference to a "little piece of a great big soul" is generally considered as a folk rendering of Emerson's Over-Soul, "within which everyman's particular being is contained and made one with all other; that common heart. . . ." Tom's passage, however, did not end there. Steinbeck carefully emphasized Casy's relationship to the writer of Ecclesiastes in the passage that followed. Tom went on:

> "He spouted out some Scripture once, an' it didn' soun' like no hell-fire Scripture. He tol' it twicet, an' I remember it. Says it's from the Preacher."
>
> "How's it go, Tom?"
>
> "Goes, *'Two are better than one, because they have good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lif' up his fellow, but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up.'* That's part of her."
>
> "Go on," Ma said. "Go on, Tom."
>
> "Jus' a little bit more. *'Again, if two lie together then they have heat; but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him, and a three-fold cord is not quickly broken.'"*
>
> "An' that's Scripture?"
>
> "Casy said it was. Called it the Preacher."
>
> ". . . An' I got to thinkin', Ma – most of the preachin' is about the poor we shall have always with us, an' if you got nothin', why, jus' fol' your hands an' to hell with it, you gonna git ice cream on gol' plates when you're dead. An' then this hear Preacher says two get a better reward for their work." (p. 570; my italics).

"The Preacher", of course, is the author of Ecclesiastes. The italicised passages are verses 9-12 of chapter 4, where the Old Testament preacher reflects on the obstacles to happiness especially as they are related to labour and wealth. Tom realizes that Casy's quotation of the preacher represented a departure from the opiates provided by complacent Southern preachers whose platitudinous efforts amounted to duplicitous *apologia* for the exploitive economic system. "Ice cream on gol' plates when you're dead" is no solution for Tom, Casy, or John Steinbeck in the face of the abuse of the workers and their families. Casy, like the Preacher in Ecclesiastes, teaches Tom that there is more consolation in the warmth and comfort of another human being than in all the consolations of religion and transcendental philosophy. Actually, the introduction of Casy in Chapter 4 is, broadly speaking, a summary of the events and attitudes described in Ecclesiastes.

Casy's earthy diction was sometimes upsetting to conventional critics who were reluctant to consider Casy's religious and philosophical orientation, but Casy merely reflects his Old Testament origins. Both the Old Testament sage and Casy realized that one of their chief problems was to seek out "acceptable words" (12:10) in order to explain their disillusionment to their

followers and still remain their leaders. The old words of Israel's greatness and, evidently, nineteenth century America were insufficient. The language of Emerson was of little concern to the Okies trapped in the dust bowls of Oklahoma.

Casy's involvement with the Okies has always given rise to some skepticism just as the Old Testament Preacher's indulgences (See Eccl. 2:10. "I withheld not my heart from any joy.") led to God's displeasure. Whether he was participating in militant actions or being oversolicitous of one of the attractive women on the journey, Casy had a way of rationalizing his involvement. Casy's human concerns which refuse to be intimidated by theological orthodoxy or "puritanical" tradition are not unlike Koheleth's reminiscences about his earlier life. He writes, for example:

> I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labour and the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.[5]

Casy also ponders his sexual interests in the light of his emphasis on proletarian concerns, as did the Old Testament writer (7:20, for example). Casy analyzes himself:

> I use to think it was jus' me. Finally it give me such a pain I quit an' went off by myself an' give her a damn good thinkin' about . . . I says to myself, 'What's gnawin' you? Is it the screwin'?' An' I says, 'No, it's the sin.' . . . I says, 'Maybe it ain't a sin. Maybe it's just the way folks is. Maybe we been whippin' the hell out of ourselves for nothin' . . . There ain't no sin and there ain't no virtue. There's just stuff people do. It's all part of the same thing. And some of the things folks do is nice, and some ain't nice, but that's as far as any man got a right to say. (pp. 31-32).

The diction is unbiblical, but the tone and substance recall the result of Koheleth's introspection: "For there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not." (7:20). As Koheleth considered the distinctions between good and evil in his own life and in the history of the Israelites, the only conclusion he recorded was the one which Casy and the migrant workers ultimately adopt: ". . . God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." (7:29).

Steinbeck, however, not only patterned his itinerant preacher on the Old Testament preacher but was influenced by the general philosophical disposition of the Old Testament skeptic[6] in at least three areas. In the first place, Steinbeck's proletarian emphasis closely parallels the Old Testament lament for the exploited workers in Israel. Secondly, the titular emphasis promising that the "grapes of wrath" are ready for the harvest – that oppression leads

inevitably to violent conflict – stems from Koheleth's warnings. Finally, and perhaps most revealing, Steinbeck's attempts to find a solution to the conflict clearly reflect the admonitions of the Old Testament sage: the most practical solution to economic and political tyranny is to be found in compassion and sympathy and human understanding. An examination of these three aspects of the novel in addition to consideration of the theological origins and pronouncements of the unorthodox preacher, Jim Casy, reveals Steinbeck as a writer profoundly influenced by the wisdom of Old Testament skepticism especially as it is recorded in Ecclesiastes.

Proletarian concern as recorded in Ecclesiastes was the result of the problems of the United Kingdom of Israel which led to its division into the kingdoms of Judah and Israel in about 1000 to 900 B.C. Earlier historians (Samuel and the writers of Kings and Chronicles, for example) had extolled the victories and triumphs of the former heroes of Israel such as Moses, Joshua, and David which led to great wealth and prosperity for the faithful. Hard times had come to the children of Israel, however, and Koheleth set his task to speculate on the true worth of man in the light of Israel's former glory. Somewhat reluctantly he recognized that he had to provide consolation for the dispossessed, because the Israeli dream, like its American counterpart, was not always apparent or symbolized in the natural landscape and its rulers. Ecclesiastes was not, therefore, a book of Psalms or a chronicle of the successful kings of Israel. Koheleth philosophized that ". . . in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." (1:18). Moreover, love and concern for his people and their labours led Koheleth to recognize that his source of power as a leader or convener in the assembly *(i.e.*: a preacher), lay in his own dependency on the labour of the people: ". . . the profit of the earth is for all: the king *himself* is served by the field." (5:9). All riches, therefore, are derived from the labour of the people of Israel.

Accordingly, there are many references to the proletarian point of view in Ecclesiastes. Koheleth recorded that "All things are full of labour" (1:8) and that since there is "no new thing under the sun" (1:9) labour becomes the means whereby progress and quality may be evaluated. As a result, Koheleth argues that man should "rejoice in his own works; for that *is* his portion . . ." (3:22). If man is temporarily disheartened because he is dispossessed, he should be gratified in the knowledge that "the profit of the earth is for all." (5:9). Moreover, the quiet humor of the labourer will serve to preserve his sense of dignity and self-respect: "The sleep of a labouring man *is* sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich [man] will not suffer him to sleep." (5:12). Finally, because man has "no preeminence above a beast" and returns to dust like the beasts, there can be "nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his works." (3:19-22).

Just as the Old Testament preacher realized that the common labourers' real remuneration lay in the satisfactions which they received from honest toil, so Steinbeck's characters consoled themselves with thoughts of their

ultimate survival and at least partial triumph. Just as Koheleth recognized that "There is no end of all the people" (4:16), Ma cautions Tom in one of the focal passages of the novel:

> "Easy," she said. "You got to have patience. Why, Tom – us people will go on livin' when all them people is gone. Why, Tom, we're the people that live. They ain't gonna wipe us out. Why, we're the people – we go on." (p. 383)

When Tom asks her how she knows this, her faith triumphs over his skepticism as she answers, "I don't know how" (p. 383), and this intuitive assertion leaves the Joads in a mystical relation to their surroundings from which they gain strength even in moments of intense despair. Considered in the light of Ecclesiastes, the passage reflects a proletarian recognition of the importance of labour to the kingdom of Israel and not some vague echo of Ralph Waldo Emerson or Carl Sandburg. The Biblical tone is emphasized in several intercalations as faith in proletarian progress, and triumph is prophesized in Biblical syntax:

> This you may say of man – when theories change and crash, when schools, philosophies, when narrow dark alleys of thought, national religions, economics, grow and disintegrate, man reaches, stumbles forward, painfully, mistakenly sometimes. Having stepped forward, he may slip back, but only half a step, never the full step back. *This you may say and know it and know it.* (pp. 204-5, my italics).

The passage continues in a Biblical tone and rhythm revealing Steinbeck's insistence on the Biblical precedent, as he warns of oppression. There is strength for the poor in this knowledge.

Steinbeck's attitude toward justice was significantly established, moreover, by the Old Testament skeptic who pleaded for justice in the tradition of the great prophets of Israel. Virtually alone, he recognized the futility of expecting justice on this earth.[7] Koheleth had attempted to console his poor with the knowledge that their labour rendered them the basic fabric of the nation, but he was quite aware that "oppression maketh a wise man mad" (7:7). It was this inevitable result of excessive persecution and eternal frustration that Steinbeck also wanted to avoid in California. The ominous predictions in ***The Grapes of Wrath*** are legion. The titular passage of the novel warns of impending disaster in Biblical diction and tone and with imagery from Ecclesiastes:

> . . . in the eyes of the people there is the failure; and in the eyes of the hungry there is a growing wrath. In the soul of the people the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy, growing heavy for the vintage. (p. 477).

The problem with injustice, both Koheleth and Steinbeck argue, is that it is futile. In the final analysis Steinbeck feels with the Old Testament radical that ". . . that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts. . . as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast; for all is vanity." (3:19). Both commentators on the lot of the dispossessed recognized that in the sense of community and the warmth of fellow sufferers, some meaning or rationale would emerge. According to Koheleth, Yahweh's power was apparently as far from the people as the abstract consolation of American capitalism and transcendentalism were removed from the Okies for Steinbeck. Significantly, Steinbeck had Casy resort to direct quotation from Ecclesiastes in order to underline the point of closest contact between the Old Testament writer and the history of the dispossessed Okies:

> Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall the one will lif' up his fellow, but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up. (*Grapes*, p. 570; Eccl. 4:9, 10).

Those desperate consolations parallel proletarian awareness in the fourth chapter of the long Old Testament lament. This lament and the tradition of skepticism with its ultimate humanistic dependence is most obviously summarized by the final incident of the novel as Rose O'Sharon gives her dead baby's milk to a starving migrant. Rose O'Sharon, of course, takes her name from the country maiden in The Song of Solomon who refuses the seductive entreaties of her wise and powerful king by choosing fidelity to her rustic lover. She resists the entreaties, not with the grapes of wrath, but with the plea that the "foxes" be taken away since ". . . our vines have tender grapes." (The Song of Solomon, 2:15). Whether the reader accepts the literal interpretation of the song or the allegorical overtones detected after the birth of Christ, the incident reveals Steinbeck's insistence on the circular nature of history and the Old Testament parallels to the lives of the Okies.

It is, therefore, in the recognition of "tender grapes" and in Rose O'Sharon's human gesture that the grapes of wrath may be overcome. Both The Song of Solomon and the author of ***The Grapes of Wrath*** agree that such human gestures are the most significant means of survival in the face of oppression and exploitation. Steinbeck's positive solution to the exploitation of the helpless farmers is not to be found in the abstruse consolation of Emerson and Whitman, but in the existential compassion symbolized and summarized by Rose O'Sharon's gesture.

The incident is no isolated event in the novel. Early in the record of the westward trek of the Okies, Steinbeck had commented on the movement to solidarity in the crucial Chapter 14. The passage deserves quotation in full, not only for its depiction of proletarian solidarity, but for the Biblical tone and rhythm which characterize the passage.

> One man, one family driven from the land; this rusty car creaking along the highway to the west. I lost my land, a single tractor took my land. I am alone and I am bewildered. And in the night one family camps in a ditch and another family pulls in and the tents come out. The two men squat on their hams and the women and children listen. Here is the node, you who hate change and fear revolution. Keep these two squatting men apart; make them hate, fear, suspect each other. Here is the anlage of the thing you fear. This is the zygote. For here "I lost my land" is changed; a cell is split and from its splitting grows the thing you hate – "We lost *our* land." The danger is here, for two men are not as lonely and perplexed as one. And from this first "we" there grows a still more dangerous thing: "I have a little food" plus "I have none." If from this problem the sum is "We have a little food," the thing is on its way, the movement has direction. Only a little multiplication now, and this land, this tractor are ours. The two men squatting in a ditch, the little fire, the side-meat stewing in a single pot, the silent, stone-eyed women; behind, the children listening with their souls to words their minds do not understand. The night draws down. The baby has a cold. Here, take this blanket. It's wool. It was my mother's blanket – take it for the baby. This is the thing to bomb. This is the beginning – from "I" to "we". (p. 206).

Later in the novel, Steinbeck repeated this theme of consolation in human solidarity as he described the attempts of the farmers to console each other after the long day's trek:

> In the evening a strange thing happened: the twenty families became one family, the children were the children of all. The loss of home became one loss, and the golden time in the West was one dream. And it might be that a sick child threw despair into the hearts of twenty families, of a hundred people; that a birth there in a tent kept a hundred people quiet and awestruck through the night and filled a hundred people with the birth-joy in the morning. A family which the night before had been lost and fearful might search its goods to find a present for a new baby. In the evening, sitting about the fires, *the twenty were one. They grew to be units of the camps, units of the evenings and the nights.* (pp. 264-65; my italics).

It is important to note that in the midst of Steinbeck's most intense criticism of the corruptions of the American system, the strongest note of hope and proletarian solidarity stems not from Marx, Emerson, Whitman or Jesus Christ, but from the Old Testament skeptic. "For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion." (9:4).

Jim Casy's exaggerated, perhaps evangelical plea for a unified mankind is, therefore, a positive celebration of mankind's communion in the face of an

economically demeaning isolation and exploitation. The Oklahoma preacher tells his fellow sinners that once in the wilderness he was forced to reconsider his religious assumptions. The result is a gentle sermon, perhaps the key to the entire novel. Casy summarizes the Ecclesiastical emphasis on proletarian insights, predicts inevitable economic conflict, and prescribes the compassionate human solutions and understandings which constitute Steinbeck's attitude toward the oppressed Okies. Like Jesus, Casy found himself in the wilderness, but he makes some nice distinctions which critics have formerly ignored:

> *I ain't sayin' I'm like Jesus*, the preacher went on. But I got tired like Him, an' I got mixed up like Him, an' I went into the wilderness like Him, without no campin' stuff. Nighttime I'd lay on my back an' look up at the stars; morning I'd set an' watch the sun come up; midday I'd look out from a hill at the rollin' dry country; evenin' I'd foller the sun down. Sometimes I'd pray like I always done. On'y I couldn' figure what I was prayin' to and for. There was the hills, an' there was me, an' we wasn't separate no more. We was one thing. An' that one thing was holy . . . I got thinkin' how we was holy when we was one thing, an' mankin' was holy when it was one thing. An' it thinkin' how we was holy when we was one thing, an' on'y got unholy when one mis'able little fella got the bit in his teeth an' run off his own way, kickin' an' draggin' an' fightin'. Fella like that bust the holiness. But when they're *all workin' together*, not one fella for another fella, but one fella kind of harnessed to the whole shebang – that's right, that's holy. (p. 110, my italics).

Here is no triumph of American transcendental self-reliance but rather a wise and gentle teacher reminiscing on the sources of strength and consolation for these latter day Israelites. He even goes on to apologize for the abstractness of the word "holy." Its meaning is closer to home. He concludes his prayer: "I can't say no grace like I use' ta say. I'm glad for the holiness of breakfast." (p. 110). This conclusion to the prayer is preceded by a gentle reminder of Koheleth's disdain for the meaningless repetitions which characterize the participation of many people at divine services. Steinbeck notes that the Joads "had been trained like dogs to rise at the 'amen' signal (p. 110) and as a result kept their heads bowed no matter what their preacher/guest suggested.[8] Whatever else the passage suggests, it must qualify many of the heroic attributes which critics have assumed from the Joad's Biblical origins. For the dispossessed Okies, there was nothing more holy than a comfortable breakfast. The tangible experience is holy; the abstract consolation is meaningless. Casy's intense humanity is reminiscent of Melville's sympathies which he too portrayed as a "wanderer" from the Old Testament searching for peace. This is the element of Steinbeck's identification with the Old Testament skeptics which has been most consistently ignored by Steinbeck critics in spite of Casy's definitive disclaimer and directive:

> No, I don't know nobody name' Jesus. I know a bunch of stories, but I only love people . . . Why do we got to hang it on God or Jesus? Maybe . . . it's all men an' all women we love; maybe that's the Holy Sperit – the human sperit – the whole shebang. (pp. 32-33).

There are, perhaps, some superficial similarities between Emerson, Whitman and the American pragmatists on the one hand and the writer of Ecclesiastes on the other. These similarities – the self-reliant common man, the mass democracy of Whitman and man's natural progress towards success – must be replaced by a more skeptical demeanor when the plight of the Joads is considered in the light of the Old Testament writer. One detects, perhaps, in the parallel to Ecclesiastes an attitude suggestive of Fitzgerald's ***Omar Khyyam*** or Nietzsche's ***Thus Spake Zarathustra***, and certainly Steinbeck's interpretation of the Joad's experience must take its place with the skeptical tradition of Hawthorne, Melville, Mark Twain, Hemingway and Faulkner rather than with the apologists for American transcendentalism. Progress for both the Joads and the children of Israel was virtually impossible within the eternal cycles of nature and human fallibility, catalogued by Koheleth and Steinbeck as they pondered economic and social disaster in an inscrutable universe.

Primarily Steinbeck was interested in questioning the arrogance of the American economic system with its emphasis on the triumph of the individual. His warnings understood in the light of Ecclesiastes urge a suspicious attitude toward any system which produces victims by the thousands. Probably the most important result of this adjusted reading of Casy's mission is to realize that like Koheleth, Steinbeck's intent is philosophic rather than religious. Casy as a Christ-Figure leads to an interpretation of ***The Grapes of Wrath*** as a recognition of the ultimate American victory which Steinbeck, by his emphasis on Ecclesiastes, clearly did not intend. Rose O'Sharon's final gesture is not, therefore, symbolic of any ultimate triumph or of better times to come. But as a gesture it is important in itself. It has profound meaning when considered in the light of:

> The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun . . . There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after. (1:9, 11).

Unlike Jesus, Casy knows that there is no new thing under the sun, there is no good news for the morrow and there are only the humours and labours of the people on which to base a structure for survival.

Notes

[1] See, for example Peter Lisca, *"The Grapes of Wrath* as Fiction," *PMLA*, 72 (Mar, 1957), pp. 296-309. Lisca writes ". . . the grand design is there: the plagues (erosion), the Egyptian (banks), the exodus (journey), and the hostile tribes of Canaan (Californians), p. 302. He goes on to cite four Biblical sources for the "grapes" of the title and Psalms (95:7) as the source of Ma Joad's "We are the people . . ." speech. As I will show later, the correct source for this much-quoted speech is Eccl. 4:16.

[2] The first attempt to provide this context was Harry T. Moore's pioneer study, *The Novels of John Steinbeck* (Chicago: Normandie House, 1939). Moore briefly noted the similarity between Casy and Christ, the "Old Testament grimness" (p. 67), and a number of other literary parallels and reflections. It was not until Frederick Lewis Carpenter published "The Philosophical Joads" *College English*, 2 (Jan., 1941), pp. 315-325, that Steinbeck's sources were given detailed consideration. Carpenter detected a triumphant twentieth-century culmination of Emerson's transcendentalism, Whitman's mass democracy, and realistic pragmatism. Most significant, Carpenter announced, was the itinerant preacher, Jim Casy, whose unorthodox clerical habits and sermons portrayed American radical protestant militancy. Carpenter assumed rather comfortably that Casy underlined Steinbeck's belief in the ultimate victory of the indomitable forces protecting the common man as celebrated by Emerson and Whitman. Carpenter's interpretation generally influenced later critics. Warren French (*John Steinbeck*, New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1961) for example, discusses *The Grapes of Wrath* in the context of the Old and New Testament, but his general treatment does not recognize Steinbeck's precise source and attitude. Assuming that both the Old and the New Testaments represent Steinbeck's courses, French concludes that a "relativistic view of sin leads Steinbeck into a philosophical mire from which he fails to emerge satisfactorily" (p. 109). Peter Lisca (*The Wide World of John Steinbeck*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1958) generally supports Carpenter's thesis but extends it to emphasize Casy as a Christ figure after noting the parallels between the Joad's flight and the children of Israel's return to the land of milk and honey. Joseph Fontenrose (*John Steinbeck: An Introduction and Interpretation*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963) extends Lisca's interpretation of Casy as a Christ figure and some of the Old Testament parallels. Tom becomes "the new Moses" (p. 78) as well as a Christ-figure (p. 80), but Fontenrose's heroic conception of the Joads (Judah) leads him to admit their similarity to the children of Israel. Perhaps the most important insistence on Casy's presentation as a Christ figure is Martin Staples Shockley's "Christian Symbolism in *The Grapes of Wrath," College English*, 18 (Nov. 1956), pp. 87-90. Shockley's outspoken position ("I would avoid theological subtleties. I see Jim Casy as a simple and direct copy of Jesus Christ." p. 88) developed Alan Paton and Liston Pope's "The Novelist and Christ" (*Saturday Review*, Dec. 4, 1954, pp. 15-16, 56-59) which casually assumed that Casy was one of many Christ-figures in fiction. Shockley provoked a number of challenges, the most important of which were: Eric W. Carlson, "Symbolism in *The Grapes of Wrath," College English*, 19 (Jan., 1958), pp. 172-175; Charles T. Dougherty, "The Christ-Figure in *The Grapes of Wrath," College English*, 24 (Dec., 1962), pp. 193-199. Briefly, Carlson objects to Shockley's "essentially and thoroughly Christian" interpretation and supports Carpenter. Dougherty also supports Carpenter, but wonders if Tom may not be a better Christ-figure than Casy. Crockett reiterates the Christ-figure interpretation but recognizes a few over-tones from the Old Testament. More recently, Theodore Ziolkowski (*Fictional Transfigurations of Jesus*, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1972) glosses over the Old Testament parallels noted by Lisca to promote Casy, once again, as a Christ-figure, now secularized into "Comrade Jesus." He admits, moreover, Casy's rebuke: "I ain't sayin' I'm like Jesus,' the preacher went on."

[3] Although a longstanding tradition including this reference in Melville ascribes Ecclesiastes to Solomon (about 1000 B.C.), a more accurate dating places the composition considerably later, probably about 200 B.C. The author remains unknown. He is generally referred to as *Koheleth* (or *Qoheleth*) which is the Hebrew rendering of the Greek *ekklesiastikos* (the leader of an open assembly, or an assembly which embraces what is under the sun). *The Abingdon Bible Commentary*, ed. Frederick Carl Eiselen, Edwin Lewis, David G. Downey, New York: Abingdon Cokesbury Press, 1929, p. 614. The popular rendering of *Koheleth* is "preacher," the word usually used by the Okies when referring to Casy. For the sake of convenience, I will follow the modern custom of referring to the writer of Ecclesiastes as Koheleth.

[4] John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*, New York: The Viking Press, 1939, p. 570. Further references to the novel are for this edition and are included in the text.

[5] Eccl. 8:15. See also 2:24 and 3:13;22. R.B.Y. Scott, *The Anchor Bible: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes*, Garden City: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1965 renders the original translation of vanity as "vapors" pp. 201-2. Moreover, Scott describes Koheleth's attitude as tempered by things inexplicable so that "the only satisfaction open to man . . . is the enjoyment of being alive." p. 191.

[6] Scott, *Ibid.*, p. 192 notes that unlike the other Hebrew prophets whose testimonies make up the bulk of the Old Testament, the author of Ecclesiastes is a "rationalist, an agnostic, a skeptic, a pessimist, and a fatalist." Scott emphasizes that these designations are not pejorative.

[7] Scott, *Ibid.*, p. 191, comments on the divergence of Ecclesiastes from the other Old Testament writers: "In Ecclesiastes God is not only unknown to man through revelation; he is unknowable through reason, the only means by which the author believes knowledge is attainable. . . . He is rather the mysterious, inscrutable Being whose existence must be presupposed as that which determines the life and fate of man, in a world man cannot change, and where all his effort and values are rendered meaningless."

[8] See Eccl. 5: 3-7; 5:1; 9:2 and Scott, *Ibid.*, p. 199.

Permian Geologic and Geographic Provinces,

Western USA

Calvin H. Stevens

ROCKS of the Permian Period – a time spanning the interval of about 270 to 225 million years ago – are exposed widely in the western United States. The various rock types represented and their contained fossil faunas enable us to recognize ancient depositional environments and to outline the major paleogeographic features of that period with reasonable accuracy. A comparison of the distribution of Permian rock types and paleogeographic features with that of sediment and volcanic rock forming in modern depositional provinces, however, suggests that the present position

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of some Permian terranes may differ by hundreds or even thousands of kilometers from that at the time of deposition. Certainly, the possibility of identification of parts of the North American continent that may have originated such great distances from their present positions provides exciting insights into the geologic history of the United States.

The purpose of this study is the reassembly of the various Permian terranes and reconstruction of the paleogeography of the western United States for the Permian Period. The process of reassembly is analogous with that of working an old jigsaw puzzle from which many pieces have been lost and of which many of the remaining pieces have broken edges so that they no longer fit together properly. Thus, it is possible that the original position of certain pieces of the geologic puzzle never can be ascertained with complete confidence. Such a reconstruction, however, is interesting in itself and it should set the stage for the study of older terranes for which there are not now enough data to permit accurate and complete reconstructions. This is important for gaining an understanding of the nature of the Earth's continental crust during ages long past, and it enables us to understand processes that have changed and are still changing the surface of this planet.

Geologists concluded several decades ago that during the late Paleozoic, an era which includes the Permian Period, much of western North America from Alaska to Mexico and central Nevada to eastern Utah was covered by an inland sea. During this time the eastern shore of the sea generally lay in eastern Utah, whereas the western shoreline was along a string of non-volcanic islands in central Nevada. Westward, beyond these islands in western Nevada and part of California, a marginal sea was separated from the open ocean by a string of volcanic islands, the remnants of which compose part of the modern Klamath Mountains in northwestern California.

Reconstructions of western North America have been made previously, but this analysis of Permian terranes of the western USA is the first to use detailed up-to-date knowledge of environments of deposition and fossil faunas to reconstruct the region. Here, interpretations of the eastern part of the area (eastern and central Utah, Montana, and Arizona) are based upon the work of various geologists, especially McKee and others[1]; reconstruction of the central part of the region derives primarily from my own studies; and positions of Permian terranes in the western region are based largely upon the work of Schweickert[2].

On the basis of distinctive rock types and fossil faunas, eight Permian depositional provinces are recognized: others can be inferred. Geographically, several provinces form belts, whereas others occur in isolated patches (Fig. 1). These Permian depositional provinces, arranged in bands parallel to the edge of the North American continental nucleus, are the: (A) eastern inner shelf, (B) eastern outer shelf, (C) eastern shelf margin, (D) axial portion of the interior sea, (E) uplifted marginal belt, (F) back-arc basin, (G) volcanic arc, and (H) trench. The lithologic and faunal constituents given in the following paragraphs characterize these provinces.

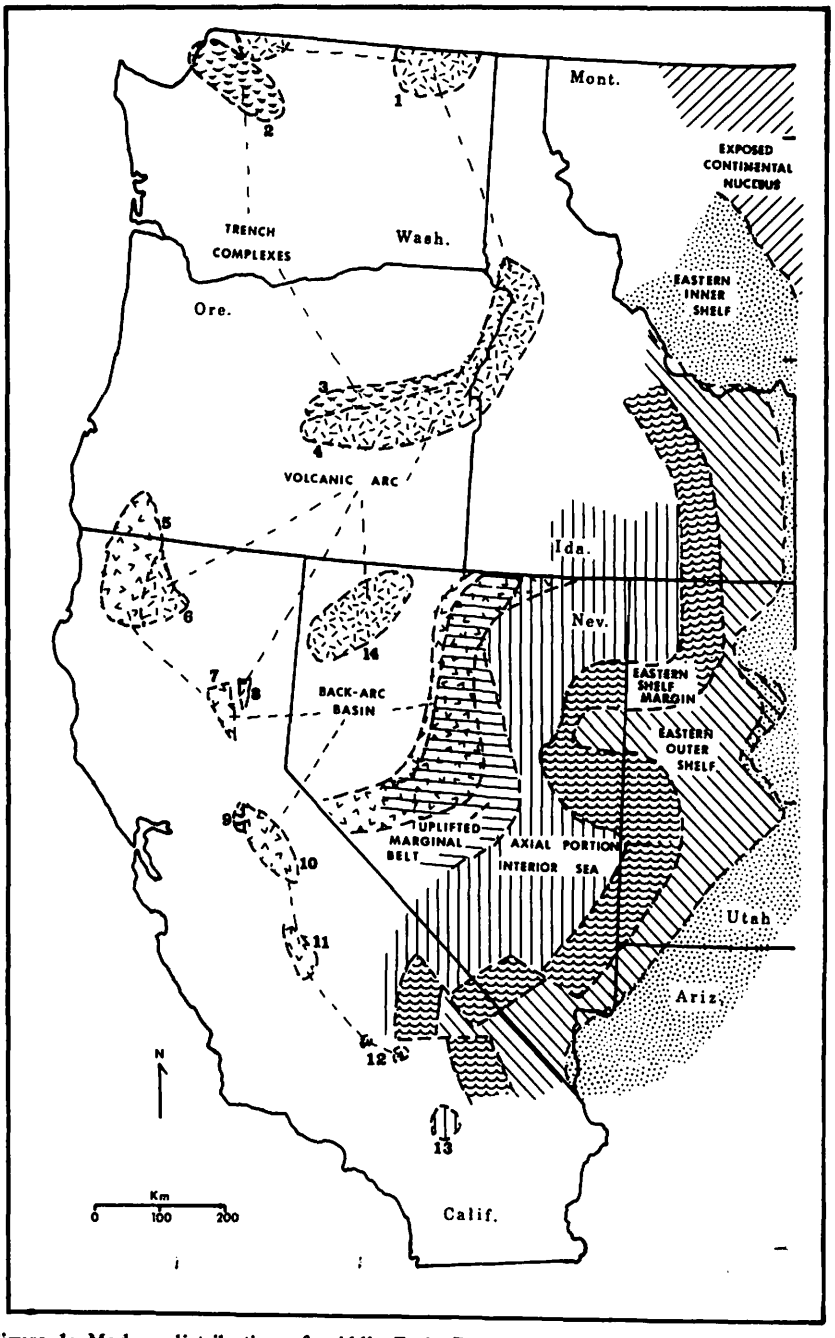

Figure 1: Modern distribution of middle Early Permian depositional provinces in the western USA. The numbers compare positions of the terranes shown in different positions in Figure 2. Overlapping of patterns indicates areas where rocks of one province have been thrust upon those of another.

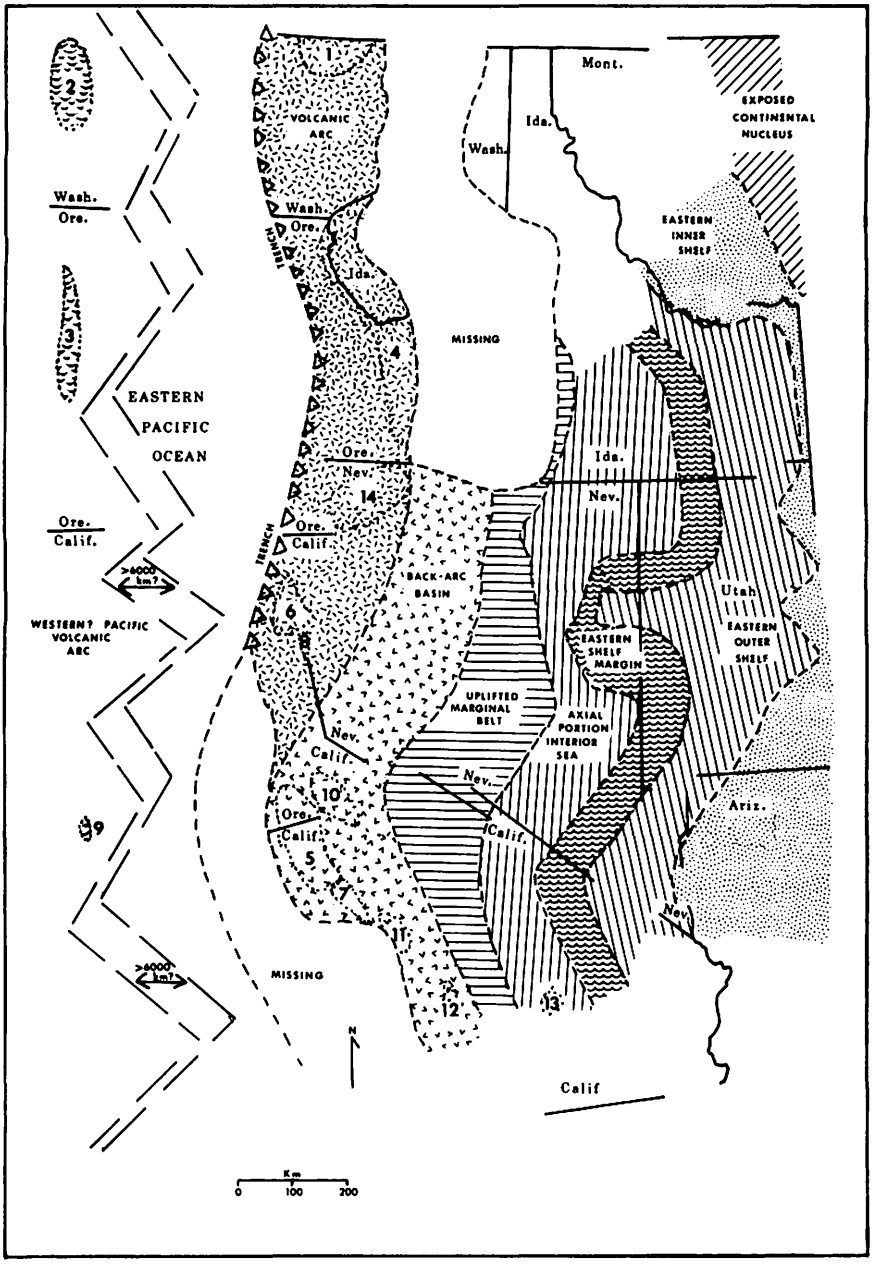

Figure 2: Reconstruction of middle Early Permian depositional provinces in the western USA. The numbers and patterns correspond to those in Figure 1.

(A) A thin rock sequence composed primarily of sandstone, dolomite, and redbeds characterizes the eastern inner shelf. Shifting of shorelines back and forth over the area has resulted in deposition of interlayered non-marine, marginal marine, and open marine deposits. Mostly non-marine rocks were deposited in northern Arizona, marginal marine dolomite and shale in Montana, and littoral sandstone in eastern Utah. These rocks grade westward into eastern outer shelf units bearing open marine faunas.

(B) Eastern outer shelf rocks were deposited in eastern Idaho, part of central Utah, and southeastern Nevada. These rocks generally are moderately thick and consist primarily of well-sorted sandstone and limestone that bear shallow water, marine fossils. The Oquirrh Basin region of Utah, where extremely thick sequences of deep-water sediment accumulated in two local basins in very early Permian time, became, in part, the site of outer shelf sedimentation during the time for which this map (Fig. 1) was drawn (middle Early Permian time).

(C) Deposits of the eastern shelf margin are similar to those of other parts of the outer shelf, but they are coarser grained and better sorted. This indicates generally higher energy conditions, presumably due to the drag of waves and currents on the eastward-shallowing seafloor. Several times during the Early Permian, extensive banks of corals developed in the shallow marine waters that once covered these areas.

(D) Rocks representing the deeper waters of the axial portion of the interior sea have been traced north-south for a distance of about 150 km in northeastern Nevada. This depositional province may extend into central Idaho as indicated by rocks there which are similar to those in Nevada, and into a Permian trough in southeastern California which parallels the shelf margin coral belt. In northeastern Nevada, rocks of the axial portion of the interior sea are finer grained and thicker than those to either the east or west. Fossils of bottom-dwelling organisms are uncommon in these rocks, and the strong-swimming ammonoids (shelled, squid-like creatures) are virtually restricted to this province; both of these faunal characteristics suggest relatively deep water. In southeastern California, this depositional province was the site of accumulation of coarse-grained, submarine debris (or mud) flows, but the fauna and fine-grained rocks are similar to those in northeastern Nevada.

(E) The uplifted marginal belt is well delineated in Nevada from the Idaho border almost to California. This belt probably extends northward into central Idaho[3] and southward into the Inyo Mountains in east-central California as indicated by shallow-water, coarse-grained rocks (conglomerates) bearing chert pebbles. These pebbles presumably originated from the erosion of chert-bearing strata in the uplifted marginal belt to the west. Thin, incomplete Permian sequences of sandstone and conglomerate with abundant chert grains or pebbles characterize this province.

(F) A back-arc basin created by rifting near the continental margin[4] presumably lay west of the uplifted marginal belt. Rocks representing this province in central Nevada, however, have been displaced eastward at least 65

km and now rest upon the uplifted marginal belt.[5] These rocks consist of a tectonically mixed complex of shale, sandstone, bedded chert, and volcanic rock[6] called the Havallah sequence. Schweickert[2] considers that Havallah-like rocks in the northwestern Sierra Nevada, the Calaveras Formation in the central Sierra Nevada, and the western Paleozoic and Triassic belt in the Klamath Mountains belong to this province. In addition, the Permian part of the Garlock series in southern California and some rocks in the southwestern Sierra Nevada may have been deposited in this setting.[7,8]. I believe that Permian rocks in central Idaho considered by Roberts and Thomasson[3] to belong to the back-arc basin were deposited in the axial portion of the inland sea instead, because of the apparent better match with rocks deposited in that setting in Nevada.

(G) Permian volcanic and fine to coarse-grained sedimentary rocks with some pods or beds of limestone indicate a probable Permian volcanic island arc in the eastern Klamath Mountains, northeastern Sierra Nevada, northeastern Washington, extreme western Idaho, and part of central Oregon.

(H) Trench accumulations of exotic Permian rocks lie generally north and west of the volcanic arc and back-arc basin assemblages in northwestern Washington, part of central Oregon, and part of the western Sierra Nevada. Volcanic rock and shale containing pods of limestone bearing typical Asiatic fusulinids (shelled, spindle-shaped, single cell animals), fragments of probable oceanic crust, and metamorphic rock suggestive of a trench where one crustal plate underthrusts another, represent this province.

RECONSTRUCTION OF PERMIAN TERRANES

The relatively narrow eastern shelf margin, distinguished by Early Permian colonial corals and stretching from southern California into southern or perhaps central Idaho (Fig. 1), is the most distinctive, continuous Permian province recognized in the western USA. The overall geographic distribution of different rock types suggests that the several large bends in this province shown in Figure 1 are due to original irregularities in the margin of the shallow marine shelf. The southern part of the belt, however, evidently has been displaced along several well known faults. Stewart[9] has postulated movement in a right-lateral sense of 45 km on the Las Vegas fault zone in southern Nevada and 80 km on the Death Valley-Furnace Creek fault zone in eastern California; Davis and Burchfiel[7] have shown 60 km of left-lateral movement on part of the Garlock Fault in eastern California. Removal of these displacements brings the coral belt into line (Fig. 2) and reveals that exposures of some similar, distinctive limestones of the axial portion of the inland sea in southwestern Nevada and southeastern California were once close together. Northwestward, the right-lateral faults show progressively less offset; most of the movement may be taken up by 125-190 km of crustal bending.[10] My reconstruction involves removal of 125 km of displacement which brings the Calaveras Formation in the central Sierra Nevada in line with

the Havallah sequence of Nevada (Fig. 1,2). This is appropriate if both sequences represent deposition in a back-arc basin as suggested by Schweickert.[2]

Thrust-faulting east of the eastern shelf margin has shortened the Permian shelf somewhat and has resulted in emplacement of some very thick, westerly sequences of rock upon thin units of eastern inner shelf rock in central Utah.[1] Stewart and Poole[11] have assumed a minimum of 65 km of eastward displacement in Idaho and northern Utah, and as much as 120 km in southern Nevada and adjacent California. In Figure 2, these amounts of displacement have been removed along the Paris-Willard-Nebo-Blue Mountain-Muddy Mountains fault zone.

The Havallah sequence, which now rests tectonically upon the uplifted marginal belt in central Nevada, must have been thrust eastward at least 65 km, the distance between the easternmost position of thrust Havallah rocks and the westernmost outcrops of rocks deposited on the uplifted marginal belt. Here, I am assuming 100 km of eastward movement on thrust faults.

Reassembly of the back-arc basin involves several steps. The Calaveras Formation of the central Sierra Nevada lines up with the Havallah belt of Nevada when the 125 km of bending in western Nevada and eastern California is removed. The western Paleozoic and Triassic belt of the Klamath Mountains may be placed against similar rocks in the northwesternmost Sierra Nevada by removal of 100 km of left-lateral displacement indicated by offset of an approximately 100 million-year-old shoreline from the Klamath Mountains to the northern Sierra Nevada.[12] The relationship between these two reconstructed terranes of back-arc basin rocks, however, is less certain. Schweickert[2] suggested that the western Paleozoic and Triassic belt rocks in the Klamath Mountains and similar rocks in the northwesternmost Sierra Nevada originally lay adjacent to the Calaveras rocks in the central Sierra Nevada. If this is true, more than 500 km of right-lateral movement has occurred in this region. Although this idea is highly speculative, it solves the problem posed by the apparent reversed positions of the back-arc basin rocks and the volcanic arc in the Klamath Mountains.

Figure 2 shows the volcanic arc and trench complexes as linear belts in positions considerably west of their present outcrops. Although the position of the volcanic arc may be reasonably close to that during the Permian, the original position of rocks in the trench complexes is unknown. The presence of typical Asiatic fusulinids only in exotic limestone blocks in trench complexes along the western Northern American continental margin, however, suggests that some of the rocks originated thousands of kilometers to the west, probably in the western Pacific.

In Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, Permian rocks representing several of the major depositional provinces apparently are missing (Fig. 2). Hamilton[13] postulated that this terrane was lost during a late Paleozoic (possibly Permian) rifting event which was followed in the Late Permian or succeeding Triassic Period by the collision of the volcanic arc with the continental

margin in western Idaho. If so, the present distribution of rocks of both the volcanic arc and trench complexes in the Pacific Northwest probably reflects the shape of the continental margin at the time these rocks were swept against it by the underthrusting of oceanic crust.

Some Permian terranes apparently are missing also from southwestern California. Depositional trends shown in my reconstruction suggest that the continent has been truncated obliquely as postulated by Stewart and Poole.[11] The missing fragments may have been swept northward, along with the back-arc basin rocks of the western Klamath Mountains, and now may compose part of western Canada and southeastern Alaska.[2,14]

MODERN ANALOGS

The reconstruction of Permian depositional provinces in the western USA (Fig. 2) is similar geologically and geographically to modern Southeast Asia (Fig. 3). Southeast Asian depositional provinces, which correspond to the Permian provinces in western North America, are the: (A) Southeast Asian inner shelf along coastal Vietnam, (B) and (C) outer shelf, (D) axial portion of the partly interior South China Sea, (E) marginal uplifted belt composed of the Malay Peninsula and Borneo, (G) back-arc basin, (H) volcanic island arc including Java and Sumatra, and (I) Sunda Trench (into which ocean floor presumably is flowing and where complexes of exotic rocks probably are accumulating). In modern Southeast Asia, these belts are linear and continuous, and similar in scale to that reconstructed for the Permian of western USA. Southeast Asia, therefore, appears to be a close modern analog for the Permian of the western USA.

SUMMARY

Distribution of rock types and fossil faunas indicates that eight, distinct depositional provinces were developed in the western USA during Early Permian time. Reconstruction of Permian terranes by removal of known or interpreted displacements on various faults and folds lines up the preserved fragments of the various depositional provinces into continuous belts.

Originally, the western USA apparently resembled modern Southeast Asia both geologically and geographically – suggesting that geological processes active today occurred also in the past. Later, disruptive forces, similar to current movements (as on the San Andreas fault), must have altered the western margin of the North American continent considerably. Some Permian terranes appear to have been lost or carried far away, and other large tracts of younger rock have been added to the continent. Thus, although the geologic record is quite incomplete, the pieces of the Permian puzzle can be put back together when the significance of the distinctive rocks and fossil faunas representative of the various depositional environments is understood.

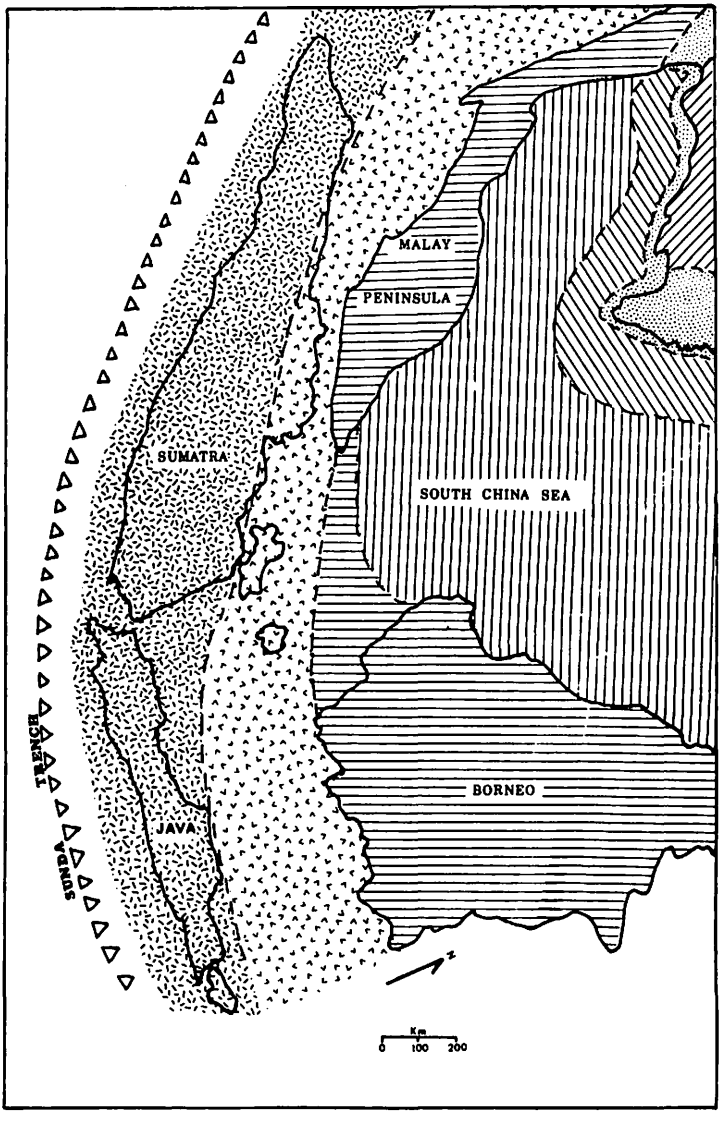

Figure 3: Modern depositional provinces in Southeast Asia. Patterns correspond to comparable Permian provinces shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Notes

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The Chambers of Rhetoric in the History of Dutch Theater

Henry A. Bruinsma

A powerful influence for cultural unity in the Netherlands during the centuries before independence was a closely-knit brotherhood of citizens whose love for poetry, drama, and pageantry led them to associate as the Rhetoricians, members of the *Rederijkers* or Chambers of Rhetoric. Unlike the medieval Guilds which required competency in their respective professions, the Chambers of Rhetoric were organized as a democracy, with members from all levels of society eligible to contribute and participate in what was loosely called the "art of rhetoric." Living in the small city-states and provinces which were the pawns of ambitious rulers in Germany, France, Burgundy, Spain, and England, the desire of the Dutch to develop their own culture found expression in the formation not only of professional guilds but also in other societies based upon common interest. Among these societies, for example, was the association of Archers, a "national" organization of musketeers, crossbowmen, archers, and swordsmen who served as the town guard. Once a year these clubs held an annual festival, with a king selected for his prowess, amidst scenes of great solemnity mixed with appropriate merrymaking. The ancient Dutch right to bear arms and to associate freely with others of like mind represented a privilege which time proved they would not give up lightly.

The author expresses his appreciation to Dr. Leendert Van Dis for the gift of his 1937 publication, Reformatorische Rederijkersspelen uit de Eerste Helft van de Zestiende Eeuw, from which the translations in this paper were made and to Professor A. Van Elslander for making available the resources of the Seminarie voor Nederlandse Literatuurstudie at the University of Ghent.

The Chambers of Rhetoric were organized in much the same manner. Although their origins are unclear, there is some evidence that they may have begun as amateur players assisting the medieval clergy in the presentation of Biblical stories. A less likely origin may be in "Rhetoric," the second subject area of the Trivium in the medieval Universities. As recognized "Chambers" or civic societies, they appear in church and city records early in the fifteenth century. The Cathedral at Utrecht, for instance, benefited from a performance of "King Herod and his Deeds" by a theatrical group in 1418. Shortly thereafter, Philip the Good of Burgundy found the songs and satires of the rhetoricians so offensive that he sought to ban their performances. They flourished again under the reign of Maxmilian of Austria and entered their "golden age" with the accession to the throne of Philip the Fair. It was through Philip's marriage to Joanna, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, that the Netherlands fell to the Spanish rule of Philip's son, Charles V.

Since Philip the Fair, himself, was enrolled as a member of the Rhetoricians, their importance to society and to the security of the crown may easily be inferred. In 1493 Philip called representatives of all the officially recognized Chambers of Rhetoric to Mechlin for the purpose of incorporating them into a national organization. Under this plan all the Chambers were placed under the supervision of a "mother" chapter, or "sovereign chamber" to which Philip's personal chaplain was appointed as the chief rhetorician.[1] Following the custom of naming the Chambers after favorite flowers which had some symbolic religious overtone, the sovereign chamber at Mechlin was called by the title of "Jesus with the balsam flower."

John Motley, in his ***Rise of the Dutch Republic***, noted that sovereigns in the Low Countries were eager to conciliate these influential guilds or Chambers by becoming members of them in person. Motley indicated that it was Philip's intention to convert the Chambers of Rhetoric into instruments for the arbitrary purposes of his regime. The careful delineation of lines of authority from the Chief Rhetorician representing the crown, to the local chief rhetorician, and to the lesser officers and members, represents a clear documented effort of the secular State to dominate and direct the cultural activity of an entire people. His plan failed, however, since many unchartered organizations devoted to theatrical performance arose, either under the direct sponsorship of a Cathedral, a village Church, a Town Council, or under the spontaneous leadership of a local political or religious leader. In the latter cases these unofficial organizations developed most frequently during the sixteenth century when religious and political strife led to the ultimate independence of the Dutch from Spain and their alignment with the Reformation movement against the Roman Catholic Church.

The administration of each Chamber was in the hands of a "Prince" or "Emperor," sharing responsibility with the "Factor" or "Chief Rhetorician," who was the writer and director of the plays. Other officers included the "Ensign," or keeper of the official flag and seal of the Chamber, the "Fool," and the "Messenger," or "Knave." In addition to these officers were the

ordinary members called "Brothers." The Factor served as the leading poet of his Chamber and was also responsible for instructing the members in the art of rhetoric.

With increasing freedom from ecclesiastical control and with financial support from the town councils which they represented, the Chambers spread rapidly until almost every community in the Low Countries had at least one Chamber. In Antwerp every major street had its theatre devoted to the performance of plays.[2] While many English writers refer to their religious plays as "morality plays" (if presented as an allegory) or as "mystery" or "miracle" plays (if they re-enacted Biblical or religious tradition), the Dutch rhetoricians used the generic term "Play of Sense" (*Spelen van Sinne*).[3] These plays were generally serious and were either religious in a partisan sense or were at least moralistic. Whereas in England the Morality Plays eventually evolved into a form which allowed the introduction of satire and comedy, the Dutch retained the distinctiveness of the *Spelen van Sinne*, while also developing the satirical play or comedy. These were usually called *kluchten*, but were often referred to by the elite as *esbattementen* (from the French *ebattement*).[4] It was not uncommon for a serious drama festival to be preceded by several days of comedy, presented by companies who chose to develop that form as their special endeavor rather than the serious *Spelen van Sinne*.

The increasing popularity of the Chambers and the proliferation of dramatic societies in even the smallest cities inevitably caused problems of civic financing as well as jealousy between the Chambers. For example, the conflict between two Chambers in the city of Brugge became so severe that the city fathers had to take action. The Older Chamber, the "Chamber of the Holy Ghost," was founded in 1428 on the feast of the "Thirteenth Day," or "Epiphany."[5] The thirteen founding members, representing Christ and his twelve disciples, customarily held their annual election for a new leader on Maunday Thursday, when they enthroned their leader as a symbolic Christ and elected a new member of the twelve from among the many candidates who served as "apostles." A competing Chamber, known as "The Three Saints," named for Mary Magdalena, Katharina, and Barbara, was established in 1474.[6] Since the older Chamber of the Holy Ghost had already become involved with secular activities, including processions of a civic nature, and was presenting political as well as religious plays, the younger Chamber of the Three Saints carried the heavy responsibility for supporting the Cathedral program. The bitter feeling between these two Chambers became a concern of the Town Council, and the City Archives of Brugge for December 28, 1494, carry a lengthy entry which decreed friendship between the Chambers. Since the Chamber of the Holy Ghost was the older organization, it was to be given the place of honor in all processions, and it was to be allowed to perform first in any competition held in Brugge or elsewhere. If a play was to be performed on a wagon stage, the Holy Ghost players were to be given first opportunity. The operation of the School of Rhetoric, with its instruction in poetry,

playwriting, acting, and music, was also the responsibility of the Chamber of the Holy Ghost, although members of the Three Saints Chamber were to have equal opportunity to attend the School. If, however, the Three Saints Chamber were to win the prize in a competition, the members of the Holy Ghost Chamber were obligated to provide the wine in celebration of that victory. Playwriters for each Chamber were to make the plays available to both Chambers, and members could act in the plays of either Chamber if they were needed.[7]

The *Rederijkers*, in imitation of the Archers Guild, periodically held national competitions in the arts of speaking, acting, playwriting, and in the associated skills of music composition, scene design, and costuming. Those chambers which had won district contests formed a remarkable procession as they moved to the host city, the brothers clad in brilliant costumes and riding in their richly ornamented wagons. There is record of sixty such national competitions, called "Land Jewels" or *Landjuweelen*, in the Low Countries, from the first in 1431 to the last in 1620.[8]

In addition to prizes in the activities relating to dramatic performance, special prizes were also awarded to the Guild or Chamber making the most brilliant entrance into the City or the most effective entrance into the Cathedral. One of the greatest of these Land Jewels was held at Ghent in 1539. The Chamber of the Holy Ghost from Brugge won the prize for the most brilliant entry into the city, led by their thirteen chief members, and followed by many other brothers. In the Brugge City Archives for 1538-39 is the notation that "the Society of the Holy Ghost and the Three Saints from this city is given the sum of 150 Guilders, since the two groups consented to assist each other and thereby incurred great costs in the festival of rhetoric held in the city of Ghent."[9]

The Land Jewel of Ghent in 1539 was particularly significant because the morality plays presented that year ignited the spirit of revolt which turned the Dutch literary world in favor of the Protestant Reform and finally resulted in the political and religious independence of the Netherlands from Spain. Nineteen Chambers appeared in this Festival, each presenting in dramatic form its answer to the officially approved question, "What is the greatest consolation of the Dying Man?" Participating Chambers represented the towns of Leffynge, Brugghe, Meesene, Ipre, Nieukercke, Nieuport, Thielt, Antwerp, Axcele, Thienen, Meenene, Brussel, Caprijke, Audenarde, Loo in Vuerne Ambacht, Cortrijke, Edijnge, Wynocxberghe, and Deynze.[10] Perhaps the most significant feature of this festival was the fact that in spite of the strict control procedures established by the Church and the State, a question so directly related to the controversy between Roman Catholics and Protestants should have been approved for competitive purposes.[11] The goal of life, the life hereafter, the role of confession, of prayer, of faith, of the priesthood, of saints in the churchly hierarchy of approaches to God, of purgatory, of grace, of absolution, of penitence – in sum, the answer to the desires for freedom of belief and of worship could be expected to find voice

in the dramatic answers to the question, "What is the greatest consolation of the Dying Man?"

The Leffynge Chamber of Jesus skirted the issue with a bland, brief play using three characters: Mankind, Scriptural Comfort, and the Hope of Grace. The message of the play could be accepted by adherents of the Catholic Church as well as by heretics, and is summarized by the urging of the primary figure, Hope of Grace, in his statement: "Beware you lost ones, you questioning ones, Jesus Christ, our bones, our flesh, our brother, He is our comfort."[12]

The Brugge Chamber of the Holy Ghost used four primary characters, supported by a large cast including other members of the Chamber of the Holy Ghost and also the members from the Chamber of the Three Saints. These Chambers from Brugge had already won the prize for the grand entry into Ghent. As the four primary figures of Reasonable Feeling, Doubting Spirit, Scriptural Comfort, and Spiritual Knowledge presented their viewpoints, the supporting cast members presented tableaux of Biblical and historical significance. The presentation could not have been produced on a simple stage, but would have required either an elaborately-designed two-level stage presentation in front of a major house or a public building with second floor balconies suitable for the tableaux. As Scriptural Comfort and Spiritual Knowledge carried on their dialogue, above them appeared Adam and Eve as they broke the commandment of God in the Garden of Eden, chanting *"Per hominem peccatum et per peccatum mors."* Following this, in an adjacent balcony, Cain is seen slaying Abel, with the accompanying chant, *"Peccatum, cum consumatum, fuerit, generate morten."* A third scene, describing the sins of mankind, portrayed a man of "scandal," next to a man asleep lying on his distended stomach, with a woman of ill-repute and with large eyes and an equally distended waistline – facing them – all of these reflecting the sins of gluttony and other unmentionable acts. Later, as the drama reached its climax, a balcony scene revealed the risen Christ, while under his feet lay representations of hell, the devil, sin, and death, as the chorus chanted *"Christus mortuus est, pro peccatis nostris, resurrexit propter justificationes nostras."* A concluding colorful balcony pageant supported the actors' references to conquering heroes of scripture who through faith achieved victory: Susanna and Daniel, the Three Men in the Fiery Furnace, the Children of Israel at the Red Sea, and Moses defying Pharaoh. Each of these scenes was accompanied by such triumphant chanting as *"Benedicite, omnia opera Domini, Domino; laudate et superexaltate eum in secula."*

Since the entire presentation of the Chambers from Brugge avoided reference to the Church, and its answer to the contest question was simply that man's greatest consolation is his trust in God, this play must be considered heretical in the sense that it gave no recognition to the role that the Church, the Priests, or the Saints play in the salvation of mankind.

The first prize for the best play at the Ghent Land Jewel went to the Antwerp Chamber of the Violieren (Violieren may be translated as a flower

commonly called "stock" or the "gillyflower"). Presented as a "tafel-spel" or stage-play, it used one of the largest casts of principal characters, including: Scriptural Search, Mistaken Sense, Dying Man, Bystander, Reason, The Law, Selfreliance, and the Preacher of Peace. Striking a point between orthodoxy and heresy, this play is Christian but is neutral concerning the Church. By answering the contest question with the statement that man's greatest consolation is the resurrection of the body, it avoided precisely the great points of doctrinal difference between Catholicism and Protestantism. In awarding the prize of four large silver cups to the Chamber, the judges apparently sought to please both sides of the issue, and thereby pleased few.[13]

In comparison with several of the other plays which were blatantly heretical, with opposition to fasting, scoffing at prayers to saints, derision of burning holy candles, and impudent treatment of the observance of holy days, the Antwerp prize play must have seemed ineffectual to those who desired a strong theological stand. The spirit of revolt had already grasped the imagination of the people who were tired of foreign rule and of heavy taxation by the Church. They sought a clear-cut defiance of both the Spanish Crown and of the Church. The unpopular decision led to strife among the factions at the Land Jewel, beginning with a riot between individual Chambers and their supporters and ending in a full-scale battle. With the arrival of Spanish troops to quell the rioting, the citizens joined forces against the Spanish, and the first open warfare of the Dutch revolution took place, continuing at first sporadically, then with greater intensity, until the Dutch achieved their independence from Spain almost eighty years later.

A first-hand account of the Ghent competition and its aftermath was given by Richard Clough, an English businessman in the employ of Sir Thomas Gresham. Writing to his employer on August 4, 1561, he recalled:

> So that ytt was conclewded that that [the Antwerp play] was the best answere, and worthy the pryse. But ther was at thatt tyme syche plays played, that hath cost many a thowsantt man's lyves; for in those plays was the worde of God fyrst openyd in thys countrey. Weche plays were, and ar forbeden, moche more strettly than any of the books of Martyn Luter; as allso those plays was one of the prynsypall occasyons of the dystrouccyon of the towne of Gantt.[14]

The Ghent plays were published shortly after the conclusion of the Festival, but the official displeasure with their heretical opinions resulted in repeated edicts against their reading or performance. Their continuing popularity, however, resulted in their being placed on the Index of forbidden books numerous times. These Indices include the proscriptions of the Emperor on September 22, 1540, the theological faculty of the University of Louvain in 1546, the great royal edict of Philip of Spain in 1550, the Index

of Pope Paul IV in 1559, the Inquisition Index of 1559, the Index of Trente under Pope Pius IV in 1564, and the Portuguese Index of 1581.[15]

One of the longest and most logically developed of all the heretical *Rederijker* plays originated at approximately the same period as the Ghent Festival. This morality play carries an exceptional title which immediately sets the tone. Although it was designed to be a stage play rather than a "wagon play" (referring to the platform commonly used by actors moving quickly from a fair or other celebration of brief duration), it is called a "schoon" play. Difficult to translate, the word "schoon" at this period in the development of the Dutch language could mean "beautiful" or "serious" or "exceptionally significant." Since the play used only three actors plus one who might be called the "evangelist" reading the Prologhe, it obviously was designed for performance on a table or flat stage, hence the name *Een Schoon Tafelspel.* Its three characters include a Priest, a Sexton (who, in a less serious play would play the role of the knave or fool), and a Weaver. This play is one of the few examples in which the writer describes the form and content he plans to follow, thereby giving the literary historian an insight into the techniques of playwriting used by the *Rederijkers.*

The earliest known copy of *Een Schoon Tafelspel* is a 1565 edition at the Royal Library in The Hague. A 1578 publication is in the Library of the Netherlands Association for Letters at Leiden. Leendert M. Van Dis, in his authoritative study of Reformation-period Morality Plays, arrived at an approximate date for the origin of the play by relating it to current events. Included in his evaluation were its references to persecution, edicts, and theological disputes. The significance of the Weaver in this play can be best understood in terms of his economic status in the early sixteenth century. Since many members of the Guild of Weavers had moved out of the cities into rural areas, the weavers who remained in the cities lost their ties with the incorporated Guilds and, therefore, no longer operated under the close scrutiny of civil government.[16] These "new" weavers became strong supporters of the Protestant movement and by association were viewed as antagonists of the Spanish throne. During the first thirty years of the sixteenth century (coinciding with the early reign of Charles V), inflation struck The Netherlands, and purchasing power decreased by about thirty per cent. The weavers particularly felt the pain of this inflation, since their industry was seriously affected by the economic transformation. The relationship of religious and civil strife to economic conditions is apparent in this play. Early in the development of the argument, the Sexton complains about the heretics:

> Oh, we haven't had good times
> Since the folk began this deviltry,
> For everything now costs more than its value
> Causing many people to lose heart[17]

To which the Priest replies:

He who goes to market knows that best,
How dear everything is, and who is to blame.

And the Sexton responds with a plea to solve the problem by giving it to the weavers "in the neck," implying the wish to execute them all and have done with it.

The Prologhe, though not so indicated, was probably read by the chief poet of the Chamber. Its first sentences refer to both religious freedom and the artistic freedom of the poet:

Since the holy art of rhetoric,
In Liberty, is full freely eloquent,
May write and speak without fear
From rulers for their children;
And here each Personage may freely defend
All that for which he has reverence.
Rhetorica may here her children absolve
From all that which others would condemn.

The second stanza of the Prologhe clarifies the manner in which the sentiments are to be expressed:

It is in beautiful rhetoric, as of old,
In plays of sense and in joyful scene,
In refrains, ballads, substantially gold,
In rondels, in songs, and in drama clean
Here plays each his personality, not to be excelled,
As artful, as honest, as his art is spelled.
Three persons in the following play will speak:
A Priest, responsible to the Roman Church;
A sexton, perfect helper to the Priest,
Who isn't lazy but goes happily to work;
A Weaver also, smart and strong,
Who knows his Scripture so well
Responding to Luther's spirit without wrong,
Breaking the Priest's Bulls and Bans,
Saying: it's hard to fish with quiet hands!

In bringing the Prologhe to a close, the writer calls upon the memory of the great Erasmus of Rotterdam, the philosopher who was often suspected of heresy but who apparently remained a Roman Catholic "in good standing" throughout his life. It is noteworthy that this contemporary play (Erasmus died in 1536) should include Erasmus as apparently being sympathetic to

such open theological discussion in which the Roman Church was, in effect, to be tried and judged in a public street performance. At the close of the short Prologhe, the Priest immediately sets the tone for the play by declaring that the acts of heretics are more to be condemned than those of Nero against the early Christians, or of the Pharaohs against the ancient Hebrews.

The Priest's assistant plays the role of devil's advocate, thereby spurring the Priest to stronger accusations, until the Weaver finally interrupts and asks the Priest for his definition of a heretic. At this point the Priest defines heresy by enumerating the fifteen characteristics of heretics:

1st, To confession they will not go;
2nd, They're against the authorities' status quo;
3rd, They place their faith not in good works;
4th, They never or seldom go to church;
5th, To saints they will not bend the knee;
6th, They say a Priest is a Scribe and Pharisee;
7th, No respect have they for edicts of the Pope;
8th, And with fast days they will not cope;
9th, And never lose sight of it yet
That the holy days they would rather forget;
10th, They keep us all in constant strife
By saying a priest may marry a wife;
11th, Their own opinions they present;
12th, And religious statues they resent;
13th, At the stake they have no fear of burning;
14th, And for the Mass they have no yearning;
15th, And alas! the worst of the story
Is that they have no fear of purgatory.

In response, the Weaver asks the question, "Yes, but brother, do you think all these things are heresy? And do you say that all such people err?" And, in spite of the roar of the crowd in support of the Weaver, the priest strongly affirms that he speaks the truth. Most of the statements by the Weaver in this play are in the form of rhymed couplets as above, whereas the Priest and the Sexton more often speak either in free verse or in alternating rhyme lines. The transference of the Weaver's rhyme pattern to the Priest in this strophe subtly emphasizes the significance of the statement.

The remainder of this lengthy play of almost 2600 lines presents arguments pro-and-con covering each of the fifteen hallmarks of heresy, with the Priest using the Church Fathers as his frame of reference and the Weaver effectively quoting the Bible in opposition. The early influence of John Calvin appears in a comment of the Weaver in which he accuses the Priest of blaspheming the doctrine of predestination. John Calvin's ***Institutes of the Christian Religion*** were first published in 1536, and his doctrine of predestination became one of the early points of issue between the Reformers

and the Roman Catholic Church.

The continuing popularity of this play and of the nineteen plays from the Ghent Land Jewel reveals the leadership of the *Rederijkers* in keeping the spirit of religious reform alive and the willingness of the supporting citizens to accept it. Unfortunately, the Chambers of Rhetoric were so closely identified with the Reformation movement that when the Netherlands achieved its independence and religious liberty, much of their fire was extinguished. The last of the spectacular Land Jewels was held in Antwerp in 1561, when the official question for the plays was "What can keep the country tranquil?" By this time, the *Rederijkers* had lost their freedom of expression and had become once more a tool of the governing powers. Fearing the emotional power of the Chambers, many of the chief nobles as well as the civil governments began to withdraw their support of the Festivals and their prizes to the poets. There were still two hundred Chambers of Rhetoric listed in the Low Countries in 1600, and Land Jewels were still occasionally held, but their emphasis reflected less of the *Spelen van Sinne* and more of the influence of the comedies and satires which in earlier days had been appendages of the *Rederijker* activity. The tide of the theater in the Netherlands, as in England and on the continent, began to move indoors. The Amsterdam Chamber of Rhetoric had for many years owned its own theater, and in 1638 the city of Amsterdam provided municipal funds to remodel the *Schouwburg* or Show Place, a roofed playhouse occupied by the last of the city's Chambers of Rhetoric. With this move the Amsterdam Schouwburg became the first of the European municipal theaters, and a new era in Dutch theater came into existence.[18] After two centuries of thriving under persecution and foreign domination, the Chambers of Rhetoric seemed unable to survive and prosper under the national and religious freedom which they had preached for so long.

Notes

1. Jean Jacques Altmeyer, *Les Precurseurs de la Reforme aux Pays Bas* (La Haye: Van Stockum, 1886), II, 153.

2 Petrus Johannes Blok, *Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsch Volk* (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1912), I, 641.

3 J. A. Worp, *Geschiedenis van het Drama en van het Tooneel in Nederland* (Groningen: Wolters, 1904), I, 110.

4 *Ibid*, p. 145.

5 *Resolutie ende Memoriebouck van de redenrycke Camer des H. Gheest binnen Brugghe, beghinnende derthien dagh xvi^c veertigh.* (Archives of the City of Brugge).

6 *Registre van alle de fondatien ende brieven der Gilde van de 3 Santinnen.* Archives of the City of Brugge, 1474.

[7] J. W. Muller and L. Scharpé, editors, *Spelen van Cornelis Everaert* (Leiden: Brill, 1920) pp. v-xix.

[8] Blok, *op. cit.* p. 641.

[9] Muller-Scharpé, *op. cit.* p. xv.

[10] Leendert Meeuwis Van Dis, *Reformatorische Rederijkersspelen uit de Eerste Helft van de Zestiende Eeuw* (Haarlem: Vijlbrief, 1937), p. 52.

[11] Peter Geyl, *The Revolt of the Netherlands* (London: Ernest Benn, Ltd., 1966), pp. 55-59.

[12] Van Dis, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-54.

[13] Van Dis, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55; 118-134.

[14] John William Burgon, *The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Gresham* (London: Jennings, 1839), p. 379.

[15] Van Dis, *op. cit.* pp. 31-32.

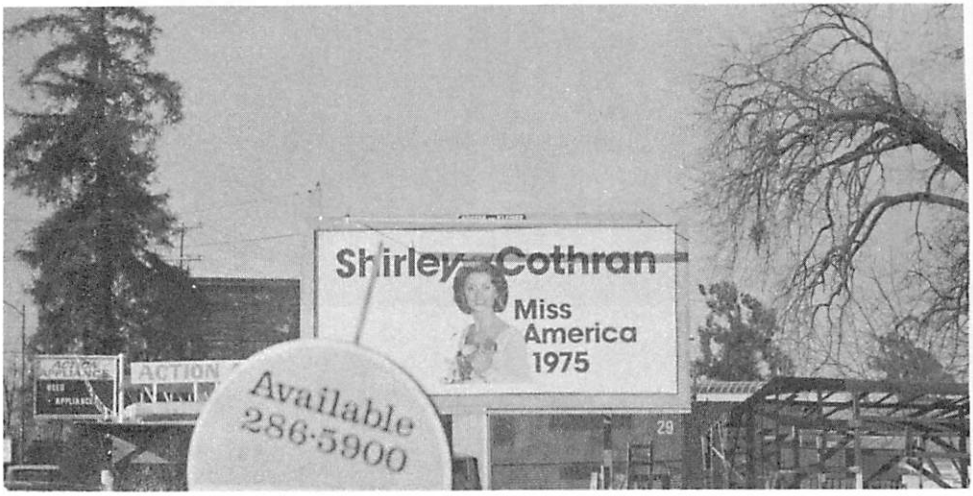
[16] H. Pierenne, "Une Crise Industrielle au XVIe Siècle. La Draperie Urbaine et la Nouvelle Draperie en Flandre." *Bulletin de l'Academic Royale de Belgique*, Classe des lettres, 1905, no. 5, pp. 489-521.

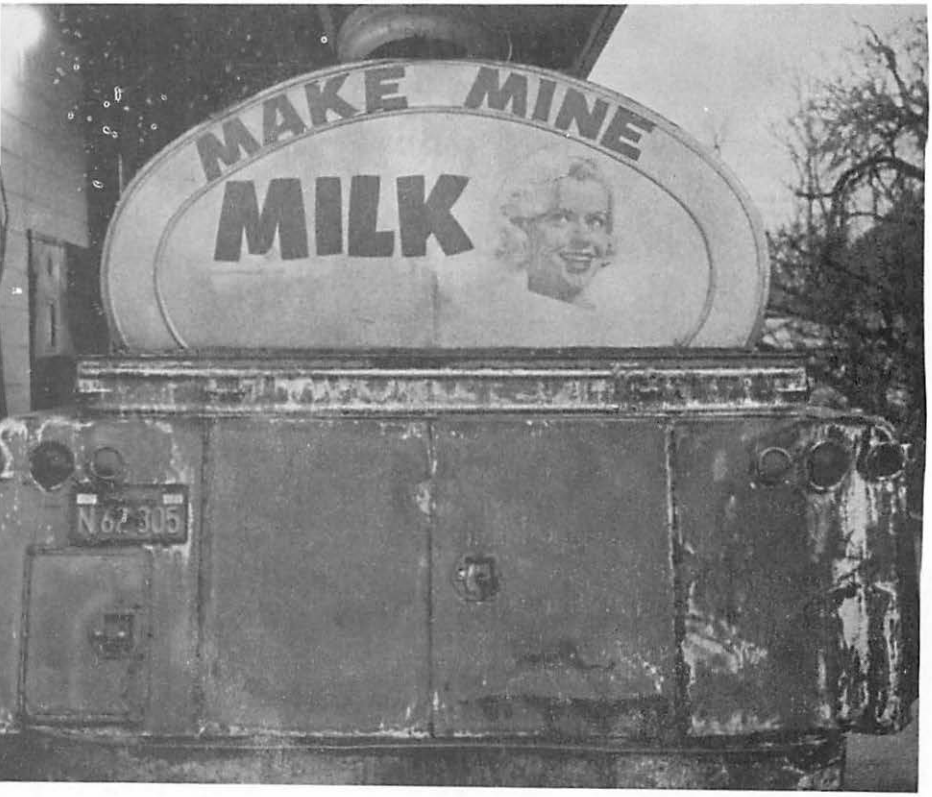
[17] All translations are by H. Bruinsma, based upon the Van Dis edition of *"Een Schoon Tafelspel,"* pp. 150-220.

[18] George Altman, Ralph Freud, Kenneth Macgowan, William Melnitz, *Theater Pictorial* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953), plate 103.

Signs of America

CHERI BROWNTON

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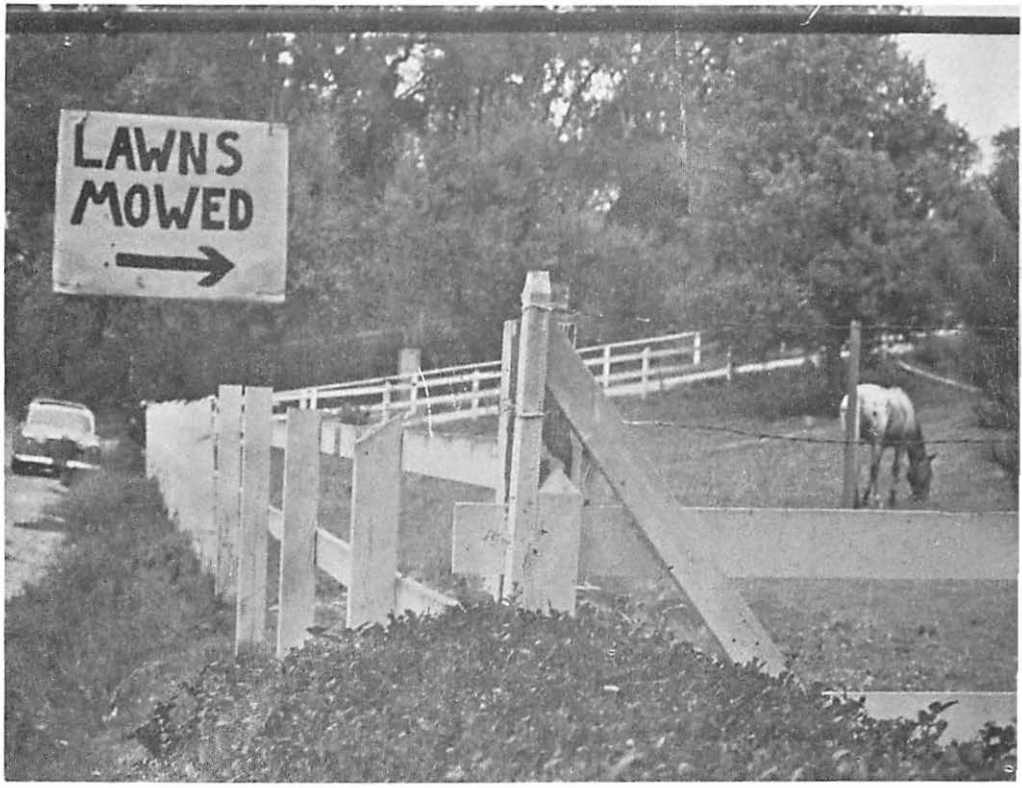
LAWNS
MOWED

POETRY

Brown Miller

PRISON IS A MASK

Only a man of straw –
Yet straw can feed a fire to melt down stone.
–Theodore Roethke

I.
Prison is a mask.
It wears us, hides us
for your safety and comfort.
It buries our heads, arms, scars, screams.
Our voices fall into its rigid beard
and do not return.

We stare straight into concrete
or evasively, or not at all.
Our eyes get lost
so we stare with our bodies.

Prison flattens us, closes us, seals us.
Womb-savage, we pray into tin.

We become our plates, cups,
aluminum that tastes like tin.
We obey forks and spoons.
Our knives we make, a kind of birth.
They are not meant to cut food.

The food is too soft to need cutting
but we are not soft enough
and the blade loves us.
Our knives know the nirvana of raping,
barely moist with sensation.

The guards approve but pretend not to.
We stare in darkening steel
as though air means nothing.
We stare because
it's a kinder master than Mother Suicide.

II.
You arrive here uninvaded by fists.
Your rectum is still your own.
It stays up inside you the way it was meant to.

The word gets around that
you're small-boned, passing for pretty,
unable to resist threats against your life.
Soon you've shaved your legs all the way up
to save arms and ribs from
multiple fractures.

At night, in stale corners,
cigarette smoke solidifies, compresses
like the breathing of hot stone.
You swallow someone's pain
and someone else's fear
and another's boredom.
Your mouth, full of tongue & cock,
expands by movement and night.

Your colon stretches near breaking,
taking five fingers, taken by knuckles.
Someone is up to his wrist in you.
Rooted in you, the fist forms, pounds
your bowels, and twists.

Morning is a welcome coffin.
You slip into it,
loosened from perceptions you
mistook for skin.

III.
Shoe won't talk to me.
Taste me, shoe, the way I taste you.
String me along.
Tongue me.

Shoe is sleeping after a hard meal
of thick dead sole skin.
Shoe snores and turns me leather.

I swallow my shoes whole, like religion.
I swallow these red ant blankets
that cost the taxpayers more than
they're worth, costing me nothing
but dream time. I swallow night.

The nights are the only seeds I have.
I don't want to swallow anymore guards.
I don't want to swallow my numbers anymore.
Stomach wants to learn
the discipline
of zero.

IV.
Day comes over us like a smell.
Smell covers us like day.
Every odor is bad.
It's a natural phenomenon: in the joint
your nose can't sense the beautiful.
Your nose goes down the drain
and rots.
Your nose gets caught in shoes, in socks.

Your nose is stuffed with everyone's
dirty underwear and dirty deals.
Your nose is the first organ to know
it's locked up, the first to rebel
against its own capacity for pleasure.
Other organs will follow
before long, but none will match
the bitter wisdom of
the nose.

V.
Each guard is the mask.
The mask looks in at us and out
at the world. The world looks in
through the guards and bars
and we look out through the mask.

We wear guards around our minds.
We keep them behind our eyes with guns
even when we are let out to walk in air,
even when we sleep or love or die.

We are naked to our blood without
the guards.
They've been sewn to our bones.

And without us
the guards are autopsies looking for
a report to fill out and file.
Without us they have only themselves
to guard, which is not enough, and only
themselves to spread against asphalt.

If they woke up and we had vanished,
they would wander themselves blank,
stumble out of their skulls, tumble
down official cliffs, sink
into the dark side of the light,
and end being gulped down by evil tides.

VI.
Iron and bone plow our characters into us.
We are sculpted by
the hours of bone and iron, polished
smooth by the slow tide of weeks
that weakens us, rubs us
until we dissolve in
fluid months.

We learn to speak a metal language.
We become experts.
The simple ways of phrasing warm flesh
ignore us
while we become asphalt landscapes.

Our characters frighten.
You shiver in our touch or thought.
Our eyes trap you: in cities, in offices.
The home disappears from you.
You are trapped in cars, in conventions
at the finest hotels.
We are outside.
We are here.
Call us by any theory or statistic.
We are crime
and completely surround you.

VII.

Winter Haiku

In the exercise
yard, Billy's bloodstains mix with
sun rain stars moon time.

VIII.

I know now that I was doing time
long before they put me in here.
My father did time his whole life
though the law never had him.

All of us do time; the leaves
remind us.
Snow covers memory, or
snow is memory
and melts when you make something of it.

Music fills a few silences, a few
cracks in the time we're doing.
Food will fill a space for a time.
Pushing our bodies together
fills, fills,
but must rapidly empty.

I do my time because I am here now
crouched inside what I am.
My time stands over me with a whip,
with a cattle prod.
Sweet sadism fits tight over its head.

I'm the only one who can do my time.
You'll have to do yours.

IX.
It's a century here
before you have a friend or at least
someone who knows you and will
smile. Then they find him, his legs
spread too far apart, farther than human.
They discover thin wire around the neck,
the throat sliced like cheese.
Blood in the pants causes them to look
further. They conclude
there are fragments of glass in the rectum.
The threat has been redeemed.
A lightbulb up the ass.
The joke made literal.
He was your friend or at least
someone you smiled at.
But you are protected from his ending
because you know how
to stare.
Your stare
goes to the center of stone.
You can freeze your stare
in the center of stone,
the exact center,
suspended so it sleeps curled curled tight,
and you with it.

X.

This dream mask knows what it's doing.
I crumble like stale crackers inside.
I am its embryo, going backwards in time.
I scrub floors while the dream mask laughs.
I engineer the garbage can crew in detail
so the authority of my mask doesn't dry
and flake off. Dream me strong, dear mask.
No! Go crazy without me, melt and fall and
puddle on the floor, evaporate into distant
indifferent clouds. When I first got here
I was told I would learn to sleep away
huge chunks of the day to speed the hours.
It's true: sleep slugged me and felt good
driving its blunt funeral between my eyes.
But now I know the mask is there always
and sleeping fails. The prison mask
encrusts every dream you think is yours.

XI.
We are the mentally disordered
sex offenders. We keep our
secret well so those with the
prestige of hard normal crimes
don't beat us and make us lick dirt
and make us sweat the worst jobs.
The judges cringe to look on us.
We are coded MDSO in the paperwork.
The judges sentence us almost
without inhaling, almost able
to clean our glances from their
gowns, wanting not to say our
names or know our postures.
They cannot acknowledge
the shapes of our mouths,
of our emergencies.
We have offended sex.
Our mentalities are out of order.
More specifically, we have
molested infants and
mated with dogs then
ripped them open or
forced our fetishes
on the innocent or
made love to disemboweled women.
We are sexually disordered mind offenders.
Take us in your arms.
Ease us down gently from these nails.
Take care that our blood doesn't stain you.

XII.
I pull myself out of cement.
An inch at a time.
Hand over hand, I pull myself
on a rope thinner than invisibility.

The rope is my one remaining nerve.
My last real thread that feels.
The one they somehow missed, the one
that lived through my war.

This nerve, taut as crisis, leads me
out of my corpse cage,
a cement torso I died into.
I emerge, burning from my pores like joy.

I am the reverse Phoenix, a life
that was ashes on ashes on ashes.
Now I return to fire, heartened by heat
and a fresh fertile void.

FICTION

Letters for July

Marilyn M. Mantay

July 2

Dear Marianne,

Yes, I am still here, but the moss you always claim I gather dries out quickly in July, and I stand here naked: sponge where I hoped that there was stone. You can see that I must turn to other occupations.

I envy you the green damp of summer on the north coast. We should all be teachers attending such a lovely summer school!

Here, the heat weighs on each body cell; flesh swells and presses against brassiere straps and shoe leather and even against the plastic nosepiece of my eyeglass frames. Heat collects inside the cars that we must, somehow, drive. We are a valleyful of swollen, sweating people with our brains frying in our brainpans.

Do ask the charming professor who knows so much about animals if he can tell the temperature optimal for the functioning of the brain. I am sure we far exceed it here.

Your letter chides but reassures me that I am a person. I've told you that my mother leads a rather misty life. It's no wonder you see these tendencies in me. When you and I first met in college and were all wrapped up in issues and politics, I'd never have thought either of us might come to prefer camouflage to definition, but now I do. Give me heavy curtains and cloudy streams!

Last week, you know, I flew to Los Angeles to sit with my mother in her dining room at home. There was the old rust-brown paint swirled on the walls in a sort of paisley pattern we are sure that we invented; there lay the Persian rug, all geometry and flowers; above us was the wrought-iron chandelier, its

light bulbs rising out of lily petals. And there were the lace curtains, heavy, almost like crochet, breaking sunlight into tiny patterns.

Mother sat there, peeling an orange after breakfast, and making a little list to telephone to the grocer. She was dappled by the light, as though she were sitting under a leafed-out tree.

I had not seen Mother since April, when Laura died. I do not want to think about Laura; I so often envied her. But Laura weighs on me, and I had to see her through our mother's eyes.

Her daily tasks completed, Mother began the special work with the snapshots. Pictures of me lie piled in boxes, but pictures of Laura were going in an album. A life completed would be quite personally enclosed. I was asked to help.

"Mother, why don't you put this darling picture next?"

"She was just a baby there."

"Put it with the other baby pictures, then, on this page."

"I want to think about it."

"It would go so well right here."

"Emily, I want to think about it." You see, when I persisted, I forced Mother to a stop. "Emily, why don't you get that fluid from the second cupboard on your left in the kitchen? The cleaning tissues are right beside it. I'll do better with clean glasses."

"We can stop if your eyes are tired."

"No."

She turned away, and I went to the kitchen, where windows opened wide upon the day. I knew then that I wanted Laura's album finished, and my mother did not. I went back into the dining room.

"There were times," my mother said, "when I had so many children I didn't know what to do."

"But there were only two of us."

She looked at me and turned away.

I left Mother in her quiet house when I flew home on Thursday. Marianne, you have taught me one advantage of moving: memories don't lie all around you, but only in yourself. But even here, today, Laura is a burden. She should not be dead.

But we must change the subject. Tell me about your stalwart son. I am not surprised he has a job clearing trails in the woods. He is enterprising and rugged. Our Shell is becoming kind and responsible but says she'll faint if anyone ever pays her for her services. She is helping little ones at the Easter Seal pool, and she will spend some weeks at music camp.

In spite of the pleasures Jack and Shell bring, this has been a difficult year for me. Laura's sudden illness and her death; Shell's decision to leave home in September; unbidden thoughts about the value of my life; the awesome fogs and the summer heat. One thing aggravates another, and I find it very hard to believe Jack when he says, "You know, every change does not *have* to be for the worse."

You cope with everything better than I, perhaps because you became an economic person. Jack supports us very well by teaching and even sells a picture now and then. You earn your way; I see you strong and confident.

Thank you for the time you take to write.

Affectionately,
Emily

July 9

Dear Marianne,

The heat here persists. Yesterday I waited in the car for Jack to come from his summer school classes. I imagined him inside complaining of the air conditioning; in front of me, dust shimmered blindingly in an area razed of plantings and eventually to be paved. I closed my eyes to dream, in my circumstances, a possible dream: a van to park beside me and give me shade.

I fell into a sudden, heavy sleep and wakened to drops of rain plopping on the roof, as though some Trickster were pelting me with melon balls.

The rain stopped almost at once. As we drove home, I saw old women in summer prints and white gloves to the wrist waiting for buses in the sun. On our street, Mrs. Weaver was carefully watering her camellias. My own energy drains out like sweat. Will I cope better if ever I am old?

Things have improved this morning. The back door glass is removable and I have removed it. The morning rushes in on waves of lukewarm air, and I make myself the mistress of machines. I set a dial, and the dishes from three meals begin to wash. I set another, and dirty clothes are put to soak. I like to stand on the porch to iron, but today I didn't because I knew I should begin to think. For me, ironing and thinking go together. I once tried listening to Berlitz records when I ironed: Russian, Lesson One. I couldn't be attentive. Thinking cannot be easier than Russian, but for me it is more natural.

I went outside to change the water. We are urged to watch our water this summer and I watch; I lurk behind the curtains watching.

Mrs. Weaver was outside sweeping her driveway. She still limps a little, and I worry about her going down her basement steps to do her laundry, so I asked if I could do any for her. "Oh, no, no!" She was shocked. Age may wither, but it surely makes her strong. She would have me tell you there are buds on her hibiscus. You remember I wrote you that Jack did a watercolor of a gigantic flowering hibiscus we saw one year in Mazatlan. Mrs. Weaver took it as a challenge, and she is trying to bring her little plant to some magnificent maturity. *She* will do what our climate alone cannot. I do not have her determination or her faith.

I suppose to avoid thinking about Laura, I think, these days, too much about myself. I wonder if I do an important thing when something carefully nurtured is ready to be born, or only when something, someone, in my world demands it?

There ought to be harmony. What I demand of life and what life demands of me ought, somehow, to be in accord. I wonder if you should *let* things

happen or try to *make* them happen. Well, no matter how things get initiated, my real problem these days is that I have no confidence in any outcome.

I used to believe a person had to think, and to structure, and sometimes, to demand. (Is anyone demanding more than Mrs. Weaver?) Well, I think, and I structure, but I suffer terribly when it comes time to demand, as though I were contending with, practically, God.

For you, do things come together, or do you put them together? Marianne, while you are studying fauna and flora in the forest and have a really cold, wet afternoon, do huddle in your hut and think of this and write to me. I fear I am too much a creature of the seasons, and this one is making a mush of me!

Love,
Em

July 14

Dear Marianne,

Every birth requires a struggle. I *do* see what you mean. And yes, a person who is madly responsive to everybody's needs has hardly time, herself, to change and grow.

I love your faith in creativity. You simply *know* that patterns will emerge, given thought and time. Yet I believe your conviction would be less strong had you not, once, made a deliberate, wrenching choice.

I remember how you suffered before you decided to divorce Edward. I remember how you struggled in your first year back at school. I remember the patience in your face when you finally went off, little Eddie at your side, to seek a teaching job. Brilliant and valuable teacher that you are now, I see youth as mere transport to your distinctive mature life. But of course I should not forget the pain.

In contrast, if I am destined or ordained, I do not know it. I live each day too close to Jack and Shell. I make arrangements. I complement their lives. I make little choices that sometimes lead to little separations: Don't bother me while I'm cleaning, Shell; Mother's concentrating on this fleck of dust!

But never have I made one grand, dramatic choice.

When I think about myself, I think, as well, of you, and of course I end up losing. For instance, I am sure you often say of me, "Poor Emily, she married and was swallowed up ever after." And I keep having to assure you that I cling to my own mind, and I do have my own books and many special things around me, but I sound so bourgeois saying that, and even the word is out of style.

Sometimes I try to take my life all by itself and tease the meaning out. I find I hold two lives in trust: Jack's and Shell's. I hold our house in trust as well: even the house needs love and a new roof and a neat garden.

I cannot be serious too long. Our neighbor, the mother of little Jennifer Love, reminds me that we hold all our possessions in trust and must protect

them. We much check out from the public library an engraver, and mark each object with a driver's license number, says Mrs. Love. "The policeman at our crime class said so."

It rained more here, and it is sultry, but a bit cooler today. Write again and tell me what excitement you've created in the woods. And think of me, your fine-fettered friend.

Love,
Emily.

July 21

Dear Marianne,

You want me to agree that we all have inner battles to fight. Here I thought you were so occupied with external affairs that internal affairs would solve themselves serendipitously. At least I always think I'd do better myself if I were precipitated into the outside world.

Of course I realize you were not precipitated but made the move yourself. Were you born again?

You see, I still keep making comparisons. You create a means of life, whereas I create settings: aesthetic atmospheres. I try to make them comfortable and natural, but I know they are contrived. I had an English ancestor, some two hundred years ago, who designed landscapes. I do the same. Of course I have my roles to play: Conscience, sometimes, and Memory. But I get lost.

I was reading Malcolm Lowry. He took writer and hero and even S. T. Coleridge "Through the Panama" and almost managed to keep separate who was who. You live what you create. (He took me with him too, and that is even more remarkable).

Anyway, unborn people can be, don't you see, quite endlessly reincarnated. I am afraid of that possibility. Shell, with her hope to enter seminary, is serious about these matters, but for once she failed.

"What do you hope to be, Mother, next time around?"

"A slot machine," I said. I couldn't help it.

"I don't think you'd want to give money away all the time," she said.

"They don't," said Jack. "Don't worry, Shell, they don't." He overheard the conversation, and he has now set about a whole new series of pictures, set in future time. How can I, practically from the kitchen sink, precipitate *him* into an era when bionic persons not only copulate but are able to select their form of offspring?

For me, July has been a month of waiting, and I don't know if I shall ever emerge. Laura was so beautiful and her death so tragic; I don't think of her. I wait for our weeks at Santa Cruz, and I can taste the cool salt air. I am afraid it will not be change enough for me.

I have retreated to bed after lunch. Not out of pure malaise. We had lunch together; Shell brought food from Taco Bell, and Jack played mariachi records. No, I did not retreat even from that. In childhood I used to idealize

the life of a writer writing in bed. One day I recalled the fantasy, and here I am, writing my letter to you.

Carrying out the dream of childhood: is that what adult life is all about? Were you Little Red Riding Hood?

Comparison-time again. You deal in substantial things: in rocks and redwood trees. I deal in atmospheres. You raised a son. You teach science and even have a textbook coming out, with a solid cast of fossils set firmly in geologic time. I see you a solid rock upon center stage. I could dust you, and Mrs. Weaver rake and sweep around you – we are tidiers and tenders – but you are *there.*

In you, I feel Will and Act are one, and a product of that unity is a product that endures. And you, job finished, can move on.

I produce and fuss and don't let go. In halls and doorways, nooks and bowers, beneath an arbor, in tall grass beside a stream: I hide and hover, making sure that all goes well. But where do you go when one big job is done?

At college we both dreamed of doing worthwhile things. Well, some months ago it seemed that was too ambitious, so I thought I would try to do something merely pleasant. I asked my mother what she really likes to do. She likes to write checks for her grandchildren. Mother sits in shadows and I sit in bed.

I wait. For consciousness? Reconciliation? Do sit upon a bank of cooling moss and think of me.

Love,
Emily

July 25

Dear Marianne,

Yes, I do understand. You are not really the stone I think you are. In your forests, fleeting spirits also walk. I hope they are not wanderers from my mother's dining room; if they are, I sent them, and I'm sorry.

Last night I had the most remarkable experience. Lying in bed, wakeful in the darkest hour, I heard a train moving on the track some blocks away. The sound of it, the vibration, made each cell in my body resonate, until my flesh was melted. I woke at dawn exhilarated. I could feel my solid bones.

But Laura, I still don't want to think of her. At Mother's house, I did go to the bedroom we used to share. There we'd quarrel or study, play records, sew on the old machine. There we'd start the morning race for the bathroom. Long ago. It is so quiet now. No hurrying feet, no quarrels. It must seem to Mother that her children were just there briefly, passing through.

Shell is now at music camp and will be singing with the choir on Saturday. I hope that everyone will soar.

Love,
Emily

July 31

Dear Marianne,

Thank you for your note of triumph. I am glad your paper is actually written, but I'm very sorry it took a twisted ankle and three days in your cabin to force you to complete it.

For me, things have changed, and I have had no part in it that I can see. I believe the music was the beginning. Shell adores music camp and sings a tremulous soprano that catches at the heart. The choir sang with beauty and with love; we were absorbed in harmony.

On Sunday, we drove to the Tuolumne to visit our friends there who raise horses. At dusk, they walked us out to see the mares and foals. At that hour, leaves at the rim of oak trees glowed in the sun's refracted light. Bats flew from the barn and made an arc against the high purple of the sky. An owl hooted. Manzanita trunks were black.

Then Lancelot, red myrl with amber eyes, bounded out to bring the horses in. The mares came: Pentock, Miss Snow. After them, the foals. The horses swung around me in a circle. I had never met them, and I could not believe the love in their approach. Soft noses near my face, they seemed waiting to kiss me or be kissed. I petted them, going round three times, and then they moved away, but Pentock stayed to go beside us on our walk. I had not dreamed that gentle ring of trust; Pentock's presence told me we had all been there.

Now I know I shall begin to think of Laura.

When we saw Shell on Saturday, she began to talk about Laura and about death. She said she had not felt sad for her grandfather when he died, for the cemetery was peaceful, and God was there. Grandmother, though, would be so lonely.

"But Aunt Laura, Mother, Aunt Laura's not lying in some everlasting grave that we must tend. She refused all that. Sick as she was, she refused it. And Mother, she is with me all the time, my only Aunt, who's died. Mother, she is light and air!"

So, Marianne, I have been ironing this morning, the breeze is cool, and I love music, and horses love me, and whatever guilt I shall always carry, I know that Laura is free.

As for our achievers: *you* have finished your paper and invited me to hear you read it; liberated Shell has her acceptance from the seminary; and Mrs. Weaver's hibiscus is at last in bloom!

July was a month of waiting, but there was a sudden change, and now, dear Marianne, there is a wonder on my soul.

With love,
Emily

Urban Shadows

John Lowry

It was late and I was in a hurry, but not enough of a hurry, it seems. The street was quite dark, the street-lamps arched by leafy trees. The guy came out of nowhere. He was standing in front of me and I knew what it meant; before I could say "O.K." he had swung and knocked me to the ground. He bent over me. His voice was hoarse.

"The wallet."

Still lying on the ground, I reached into my jacket and handed it to him. He took out the money and folding it, stuck it into his pocket. He tossed the wallet at me.

"Be here every Monday, same time," he commanded.

"Yes. . .Yes, sir."

With that, he turned and walked briskly away. I got up, wiped my mouth and went home. The hell with you, I thought.

But, when next Monday rolled around, I was scared not to show. Maybe he had seen my name in the wallet. I don't know. So, at the same time, on the same deserted, tree-lined street, the man confronted me. This time he smashed me in the stomach and doubled me over. I sunk to my knees.

"Did you have to do that?" I said, after a while.

Hoarsely, "The wallet."

I pulled it out and dropped it on the sidewalk.

He signaled, hand it to me.

I did. He removed the money, again folded it and flung the wallet at me.

"See you next week."

Next Monday, he no longer hurt me. Instead, jumping out from behind a bush, his hand extended, he merely greeted me with: the wallet. Money, folded over, wallet returned. The command to appear same time, same place. I can't remember how long it went on. Four, five, possibly six times. Finally, one evening, a change in the routine. He folded his arms and looked at me. I took out my wallet and mechanically offered it. He shook his head.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

He shook his head and walked away.

Next Monday, though I was precisely on time, my worst fears were realized. Though I waited three-quarters of an hour, the thief did not appear.

* * *

Timothy Flood told me this story about his youth in Pottsville, Pennsylvania. He was in love, like many of his pals, with a fourteen year old girl named Joany. Joany was lovely as only a fourteen year old can be lovely, full of the future. Brown, curly hair, even teeth. Soft, full breasts. A knockout in a bathing suit. Not the least conceited. Oh hell, why go on? He would have been a fool not to love her.

But, one day, incredibly, Joany was in a car accident. There were all kinds of rumors that she had been scarred, disfigured, but no one knew for certain. But when she returned to school, she was without a hand. A black leather glove hung limply to the stump. Timothy was thunderstruck. How could it be? Someone so lovely, someone he loved, made ugly? He dwelled on it. He never spoke to her again. He avoided the very sight of her. But, he thought of her constantly as she used to be. It drove him wild.

One day, with all the horrible logic of a fourteen year old, he decided that he couldn't stand it anymore. He got his father's shotgun, jumped in his car and waited across the street from Joany's home. She would be better off, he kept saying, better off. He could remember her the way she used to be. Finally, a car pulled up filled with teenagers. Joany got out. To his surprise, she was laughing. When the car drove off and she was about to enter the house, Timmy called to her. She turned and came walking towards the familiar voice. Timmy's ears pounded; his arms, cradling the shotgun, shook. Joany screamed, but it was too late. The flash blinded Timmy. She fell. He threw the car into gear and drove off furiously. No where in particular. He had never thought about that.

He was caught in three days and served two and a half years in a reformatory. He had succeeded in blowing Joany's other hand off.

* * *

Burl Denton, the famous Professor of Linguistics, told me this story when he was old and blind.

His wife, a talkative Master of Arts, had begun to bore him. She taught Speech and had the habit of talking with her mouth full. She was fat and drank beer. He hated her. He began to plot her murder.

Denton was proud of his brain. He was going to kill his wife without being caught. He wasn't one of these kitchen knife hackers. Nor did he underestimate the police. When a wife was murdered, they knew all too well how to catch a husband.

But, all the while, he was careful to hide his intentions. Not a hint would escape him. He became an ideal husband. Would she like some sherry? He listened to her prattle while pondering her fall down the cellar stairs. Could the police tell the difference between a head smashed in a fall, and one broken with a hammer? Probably. He was aware of her moods. She was often lazy, letting the house become a shambles. He never complained. In fact, he pitched in cheerfully, delighting her, and finding more time for his plots. Poison. Poison attracted him but was out of the question: the police knew all about them. And, what if the poor, dumb thing suffered? He didn't want that. He only wanted to get rid of her.

It went on like that for a year. He published, he taught. His wife was happy. They dined out two nights a week; he bought her clothes and saw to it that she had her beer. The poor thing loved him more than ever. And yet, he had decided to drug her, slit her wrists and throw her in the tub. But, on the very day of his decision, he read of an identical murder in the paper. The man had been caught because the police had discovered his purchase of ether.

Burl Denton gave up his plan to murder his wife. Weren't they getting old? It was madness. He relaxed and found life enjoyable. He cut back on the dinners (he hated going out), and had a talk with his wife about her housekeeping. After all, a Professor of Linguistics scrubbing the bathroom every week.... He read, sipped Bristol cream and, when she became intolerable, silenced her with a firm, shh!

One morning, he found her in the bathroom. She had slit her wrists and bled to death. God, it was ugly. And, praise be, she had left a note which satisfied the police. She asked his forgiveness, but, she sensed that his love was dying. She couldn't live without his love. She knew he would understand.

* * *

I used to like Jack Kibbs. I envied him, too. He was handsome, in a blue-eyed, square-jawed way. He was an editor of a boating magazine, made money, had girls and wrote on the side.

But, Jack "had a cloud over him," as he used to say. Nothing big worked out. He had no luck. He found that out quite early. If he planned to go to the beach, it rained. If he loved a girl, she loved another. If he wrote a poem, someone famous had written it better.

One time, Jack ran a test, and made plans for a big European vacation. How would it go wrong? At first, it looked good. But, Jack's plane was delayed for hours; then, an engine fire forced it to turn back and make a hairy landing in fog. Jack felt satisfaction. The hell with it, he told me, I'm going to get rid of it.

The idea was, get the monkey off his back and onto someone else's. So, Jack found a pretty girl named Cathy, got her to fall in love with him and set a wedding date. The big day, Jack ran away. He flew to the Virgin Islands. He knew his luck had changed. The weather was beautiful, the girls lovely, and riding a motor bike, Jack saw the guy in front of him blow a tire and fracture his skull. In the old days, it would have been Jack.

He did o.k. Nothing great, but his promotions came along, he published some poetry, and made friends. Cathy got the monkey. After Jack deserted her, she had a nervous collapse. She got to look old. And she got fat. Later, she was engaged, but that fell through, and then she had an operation which left her in debt and wearing a brace on her leg.

One night, I was in Stout's on Tenth Street, with Jack and his new girl, Joan. We were drunk and pretty silly and having a good time when, wham! A big explosion. Jack fell over the table like he had snapped in two. Cathy was behind him holding the gun.

Jack was paralyzed from the waist down. The cops brought Cathy to the hospital. She looked terrible. She kept shaking her head.

"Jack," she said, "I'm sorry. Forgive me. I'm just bad news."

ARTICLES

Emily Dickinson and the Deerslayer: The Dilemma of the Woman Poet in America

Albert Gelpi

IN nineteenth-century America there were many women poets – or, I should better say, lady poets – who achieved popular success and quite lucrative publishing careers by filling newspaper columns, gift-books, and volumes of verse with the conventional pieties concerning mortality and immortality; most especially they enshrined the domestic role of wife and mother in tending her mortal charges and conveying them to immortality. Mrs. Lydia Sigourney, known as "the Sweet Singer of Hartford," is the type, and Mark Twain's Emmeline Grangeford is the parodic, but barely parodic recreation. Emily Dickinson is not a lady poet; her poetry stands apart from that of Mrs. Sigourney and her sisters not only in its depth and originality but in the quality and range of experience which it takes as its subject. In fact, Emily Dickinson is the only nineteenth century American woman poet of any consequence. However, she is a poet of great consequence, and any account of women's experience in America must see her as a boldly pioneering and prophetic figure.

In the Dickinson canon of almost 1800 short and often difficult lyrics, only a handful of which appeared in print during her lifetime, the poem which has caused commentators the most consternation over the years is the one which begins "My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun –." It figures prominently and frequently in *After Great Pain*, John Cody's Freudian biography of Dickinson, and more recently Robert Weisbuch prefaces his explication in *Emily Dickinson's Poetry* with the remark that it is "the single most difficult poem Dickinson wrote," "a riddle to be solved."[1] The poem requires our close attention and, if possible, our unriddling because it is a

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powerful symbolic enactment of the psychological dilemma facing the intelligent and aware woman, and particularly the woman artist, in patriarchal America. Here is the full text of the poem without, for the moment, the variants in the manuscript:

My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun –
In Corners – till a Day
The Owner passed – identified –
And carried Me away –

And now We roam in Sovreign Woods –
And now We hunt the Doe –
And every time I speak for Him –
The Mountains straight reply –

And do I smile, such cordial light
Upon the Valley glow –
It is as a Vesuvian face
Had let it's pleasure through –

And when at Night – Our good Day done –
I guard My Master's Head –
'Tis better than the Eider-Duck's
Deep Pillow – to have shared –

To foe of His – I'm deadly foe –
None stir the second time –
On whom I lay a Yellow Eye –
Or an emphatic Thumb –

Though I than He – may longer live
He longer must – than I –
For I have but the power to kill,
Without – the power to die – [2]

Though there are a few variants in the manuscript, we are not dealing with a worksheet or a draft; the text had been copied into one of the little packets which Dickinson bound with thread to contain completed or virtually completed poems.

Despite the narrative manner, it is no more peopled than the rest of Dickinson's poems, which almost never have more than two figures: the speaker and another, often an anonymous male figure suggestive of a lover or of God or of both. So here: I and "My Master," the "Owner" of my life. Since the often conflicted relationship between Dickinson and that "man" is

the center of the drama in the poetry, biographers have tried to sift the evidence to identify him. The existence of three draft-"letters" from the late 1850's and early 1860's, confessing in overwrought language her passionate love for the "Master" and her pain at his rejection, might seem to corroborate the factual basis for the relationship examined in this poem, probably written in 1863. However, as I have argued elsewhere,[3] the fact that biographers have been led to different postulations, with the fragmentary evidence pointing in several directions inconclusively, has deepened my conviction that "he" is not a real man at all, not a human being whom Dickinson knew and loved and lost or renounced, but a psychological presence or factor in her inner life. Nor does the identification of "him" with Jesus or with God satisfactorily explain many of the poems, including the poem under discussion here. I have come, therefore, to see "him" as an image symbolic of certain aspects of her own personality, qualities and needs and potentialities which have been identified culturally and psychologically with the masculine, and which she consequently perceived and experienced as masculine.

Through decades as a clinical psychologist, Carl Jung described his perceptions about the painful process through which an individual might strive to forge the polarities of his or her experience and personality into an identity. Jung saw the conflicts imaged and acknowledged in terms of the traditional sexual roles. So there is the masculine aspect of the woman's psyche, her "animus," as he called it, and there is the "anima" in the man's psyche, expressive of the qualities and potentialities in his personality which have been associated with the feminine archetype. The man's anima and the woman's animus, first felt as the disturbing presence of the "other" in one's self, thus hold the key to fulfillment and enable the man or the woman to suffer through the initial sense of alienation and conflict to assimilate the "other" into an integrated identity. Thus in the struggle toward wholeness, the anima and the animus come to mediate the whole range of experience for the man or the woman: his and her connection with nature and sexuality on the one hand and with spirit on the other. Through "him" or "her," the individual can come to know and reconcile both the mysteries of darkness and the mysteries of light. Or so it ought to be. No wonder that the animus and the anima appear in dreams, myths, fantasies, works of art as figures at once human and divine, as lover and god.

Such a presence is Emily Dickinson's Master and Owner in the poem. However, over and above any individual difficulties in arriving at personhood, a society whose values and institutions have enforced the subordination of women in certain limited and assigned roles makes the process for women especially fraught with dangers and traps and ambivalences. Nevertheless, here, as in many poems, Dickinson sees the challenging chance for fulfillment in her relationship to the animus figure, indeed in her identification with him. Till he came, her life had known only passive inertia, standing neglected in tight places, caught as the right angles of walls: not just *a* corner, the first lines of the poem tell us, but corners, as though wherever she stood was

thereby a constricted place. But all the time she knew that she was something other and more. Paradoxically, perhaps perversely, she attained her prerogatives through submission to the internalized masculine principle. In the words of the poem, the release of her power depended on her being "carried away" – rapt, raped – by her Owner and Master. But such a surrender of womanhood transformed her into a phallic weapon, and in return his recognition and adoption "identified" her.

Now we can see better why the serious fantasy of this poem makes her animus a hunter and woodsman. With instinctive rightness Dickinson's imagination grasps her situation in terms of the major myth of the American experience. The pioneer on the frontier is the version of the universal hero myth indigenous to our specific historical circumstances, and it remains today, even in our industrial society, the mythic mainstay of American individualism. The pioneer proves himself a hero and claims his manhood by measuring himself against the unfathomed, unfathomable immensity of his elemental world, whose "otherness" he experiences at times as the inhuman, at times as the feminine, at times as the divine – most often as all three at once. His link with landscape, therefore, is a passage into the unknown in his own psyche, the mystery of his unconscious. For the man the anima is the point of connection with woman and with deity, with sexuality and spirit, and unless he makes that connection he will not achieve identity as a man but will remain paralyzed in his own incompletion.

But all too easily, sometimes all unwittingly, connection – which should move to union – can gradually fall into competition, and then contention and conflict. The man who reaches out to Nature to engage his basic physical and spiritual needs finds himself reaching out with the hands of the predator to possess and subdue, to make Nature serve his own ends. Now it is not the complementarity of the powers of light and the powers of darkness, but a contest between them. From the perspective of Nature, then, or of woman, or of the values of the feminine principle, the pioneer myth can take on a devastating and ominous significance. The political and ecological actualities of the westward movement reveal the aggressive psychological attitudes underlying the myth. Forsaking the settled institutional structures of patriarchal culture, the woodsman goes out alone, or almost alone, to test whether his mind and will are capable of outwitting the lures and wiles of Nature, her dark children and wild creatures. If he can vanquish her – Mother Nature, Virgin Land – then he can assume or resume his place in society and as boon, exact his share of the spoils of Nature and the service of those, including women and the dark-skinned peoples, beneath him in the social order.

In psycho-sexual terms, therefore, the pioneer's struggle against the wilderness can be seen, especially from the feminine viewpoint, to enact the subjugation of feminine principle, whose dark mysteries, irrational and prerational, are essential to the realization of personal and social identity but for that reason threaten masculine prerogatives in a patriarchal ordering of individual and social life. In the most vicious expression of the myth, the hero

fights to establish his ego-identity and assure the linear transmission of the culture which sustains his ego-identity, and he does so by maintaining himself against the encroachment of the Great Mother, whose rhythm is the round of Nature and whose sovereignty is destructive to the independent individual because the continuity of the round requires that she devour her children and absorb their lives and consciousness back into her teeming womb, season after season, generation after generation. So the pioneer who may first have ventured into the woods to discover the otherness which is the clue to identity may in the end find himself maneuvering against the feminine powers, weapon in hand, with mind and will as his ultimate weapons for self-preservation. No longer seeker or lover, he advances as the aggressor, murderer, rapist.

As we have seen, in this poem Emily Dickinson accedes to the "rape," because she longs for the inversion of sexual roles which from another point of view, allows a hunter or a soldier to call his phallic weapon by a girl's name and speak of it, even to it, as a woman. By the beginning of the second stanza "I" and "he" have become "We": "And now We roam in Sovreign Woods –/And now We hunt the Doe –," the rhythm and repetition underscoring the momentous change of identity. However, since roaming "in Sovreign Woods –," or, as the variant has it, roaming "the – Sovreign Woods –" is a contest of survival, it issues in bloodshed. "To foe of His – I'm deadly foe," she boasts later, and here their first venture involves hunting the doe. It is important that the female of the deer is specified, for Dickinson's identification of herself with the archetype of the hero in the figure of the woodsman necessitates a sacrifice of her womanhood, explicitly the range of personality and experience as sexual and maternal woman. In just a few lines she has converted her "rape" by the man into a hunting down of one of Mother Nature's creatures by manly comrades – Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook in ***The Last of the Mohicans***, Natty Bumppo and Hurry Harry in ***The Deerslayer***.

But is such a connection fair to the characters of Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook? Aren't we playing an intellectual game by imposing such a modern interpretation back on Cooper's conception of the pioneer myth? To be sure, Natty and Chingachgook represent the ideal of the white man and the red man in the wilderness, but their very ideality dooms them as the woodsmen and settlers move against the Indians and the woods and fell them both with inexorable efficiency. Moreover, no matter how explicit my statement of the case, the implications are all there – and recognized – in Cooper. Here is the first appearance of Natty and Hurry Harry in Chapter 1 of ***The Deerslayer***. They hack their way out of "the tangled labyrinth" of the Great Mother's maw or belly. The description acknowledges the awesome solemnity of the "eternal round" of the Great Mother's economy but acknowledges as well the threat to the individual snared in her dark and faceless recesses and unable to cut his way free. Initially there is no sign of human life; then from her timeless and undifferentiated "depths" emerge first two separate voices "calling to each other" and at last two men, "liberated"

and "escaped" into lighted space where they can breathe. The passage reads:

> Whatever may be the changes produced by man, the eternal round of the seasons is unbroken. Summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, return in their stated order, with a sublime precision, affording to man one of the noblest of all the occasions he enjoys of proving the high powers of his far-reaching mind, in compassing the laws that control their exact uniformity, and in calculating their never-ending revolutions. Centuries of summer suns had warmed the tops of the same noble oaks and pines, sending their heats even to the tenacious roots, when voices were heard calling to each other in the depths of a forest, of which the leafy surface lay bathed in the brilliant light of a cloudless day in June, while the trunks of the trees rose in gloomy grandeur in the shades beneath. The calls were in different tones, evidently proceeding from two men who had lost their way, and were searching in different directions for their path. At length a shout proclaimed success, and presently a man of gigantic mould broke out of the tangled labyrinth of a small swamp, emerging into an opening that appeared to have been formed partly by the ravages of the wind, and partly by those of fire. This little area, which afforded a good view of the sky, although it was pretty well filled with dead trees, lay on the side of one of the high hills, or few mountains, into which nearly the whole of the adjacent country was broken.
>
> "Here is room to breathe in!" exclaimed the liberated forester, as soon as he found himself under a clear sky, shaking his huge frame like a mastiff that had just escaped from a snow-bank. "Hurray, Deerslayer, here is daylight at last, and yonder is the lake."[4]

Man "proves" "the high powers of his far-reaching mind" by "compassing" and "calculating" (that is, by comprehending and thus holding within bounds in the mind) the cycle of generation. From an elevated perspective above the woods "the brilliant light of a cloudless day in June" may grace "the leafy surface," but "in the shades beneath," where the men "had lost their way," was the oppressive gloom of the tree-trunks and "the tenacious roots." The two "gigantic" men emerge into an area cleared by wind and fire, the lighter and more spiritual elements, from the "small swamp," compounded of mud and water, the heavier elements associated with the feminine.

True to the archetypal meaning of the situation, the first conversation between Hurry Harry and Natty turns on the question of proving one's manhood. The immediate victim is the doe, slain by Natty's rifle Killdeer, but soon the real subject of contention becomes clear. As the moral and sensitive woodsman, Natty finds himself defending his brother Delawares, arguing with the coarse Hurry Harry that they are not "women," as Hurry charges, but "heroes," despite the fact that they are the dark children of the Great Mother. The conversation begins as follows:

"Come, Deerslayer, fall to, and prove that you have a Delaware stomach, as you say you have had a Delaware edication," cried Hurry, setting the example by opening his mouth to receive a slice of cold venison steak that would have made an entire meal for a European peasant; "fall to, lad, and prove your manhood on this poor devil of a doe, with your teeth, as you've already done with your rifle."

"Nay, nay, Hurry, there's little manhood in killing a doe, and that too out of season; though there might be some in bringing down a painter or a catamount," returned the other, disposing himself to comply. "the Delawares have given me my name, not so much on account of a bold heart, as on account of a quick eye and an active foot. There may not be any cowardyce in overcoming a deer, but, sartin it is, there's no great valor."

"The Delawares themselves are no heroes," muttered Hurry through his teeth, the mouth being too full to permit it to be fairly opened, "or they never would have allowed them loping vagabonds, the Mingoes, to make them women."

"That matter is not rightly understood – has never been rightly explained," said Deerslayer, earnestly, for he was as zealous a friend as his companion was dangerous as an enemy; "the Mengwe fill the woods with their lies, and misconstruct words and treaties. I have now lived ten years with the Delawares, and know them to be as manful as any other nation, when the proper time to strike comes."

"Harkee, Master Deerslayer, since we are on the subject, we may as well open our minds to each other in a man-to-man way; answer me one question: you have had so much luck among the game as to have gotten a title, it would seem; but did you ever hit anything human or intelligible? Did you ever pull trigger on an inimy that was capable of pulling one upon you?"[5]

Not yet; but the sub-title of the book is ***The First War-Path***, and as the plot unfolds, Natty spills human blood for the first time, all of it Indian. Natty may be a doeslayer with a difference, but even his unique combination of the best qualities of civilization and nature does not exempt him from the conflicts and contradictions of the pioneer myth. Though a man of the woods, roaming the realm of the Great Mother, he must remain unspotted from complicity with her dark and terrible aspect, just as his manhood has to be kept inviolate from the advances of Judith Hutter, the dark but sullied beauty in ***The Deerslayer*** and from his own attraction to Mabel Dunham in ***The Pathfinder***.

It is in the psychological context of this archetypal struggle that Emily Dickinson joins in the killing of the doe without a murmur of pity or regret; she wants the independence of will and the power of mind which her alliance with the woodsman makes possible. Specifically, engagement with the animus

unlocks her artistic creativity; through his inspiration and mastery she becomes a poet. The variant for "power" in the last line is "art," and the irresistible force of the rifle's muzzle-flash and of the bullet are rendered metaphorically in terms of the artist's physiognomy: her blazing countenance ("Vesuvian face"), her vision ("Yellow Eye"), her shaping hand ("emphatic Thumb"), her responsive heart ("cordial light"). So it is that when the hunter fires the rifle, "I speak for him –." Without his initiating pressure on the trigger, there would be no incandescence; but without her as medium and voice, as seer and craftsman there would be no art. From their conjunction comes the poem, reverberant enough to make silent nature echo with her words.

In Hebrew the word "prophet" means to "speak for." The prophet translates the wordless meanings of the god into human language. Whitman defined the prophetic function of the poet in precisely these terms: "it means one whose mind bubbles up and pours forth as a fountain from inner, divine spontaneities revealing God . . . The great matter is to reveal and outpour the God-like suggestions pressing for birth in the soul."[6] Just as in the male poetic tradition such divine inspiration is characteristically experienced as mediated through the anima and imaged as the poet's muse, so in this poem the animus-figure functions as Dickinson's masculine muse. Where Whitman experiences inspiration as the gushing flux of the Great Mother, Dickinson experiences it as the Olympian fire: the gun-blast and Vesuvius. In several poems Dickinson depicts herself as a smouldering volcano, the god's fire flaring in the bosom of the female landscape. In her first conversation with the critic Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Dickinson remarked: "If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know ***that*** is poetry . . . Is there any other way."[7]

But why is the creative faculty also destructive, Eros inseparable from Thanatos? To begin with, for a woman like Dickinson, because choosing to be an artist seems to entail, in a real sense, refusing to be a woman: denying essential aspects of herself and relinquishing experience as lover, wife, and mother. From other poems we know Dickinson's painfully, sometimes excruciatingly divided attitude toward her womanhood, but here under the spell of the animus-muse she does not waver in the sacrifice. Having spilled the doe's blood during the day's hunt, she stations herself for the night ("Our good Day done –") at stiff, soldierly guard at "My Master's Head," scorning to enter the Master's bed and sink into the softness of "the Eider-Duck's/Deep Pillow." Her rejection of the conventional sexual and domestic role expected of women is further underscored by the fact that the variant for "Deep" is "low" ("the Eider-Duck's/Low Pillow") and by the fact that the eider-duck is known not merely for the quality of her down but for lining her nest by plucking the feathers from her own breast. No such "female masochism" for this doeslayer; she is "foe" to "foe of His," the rhyme with "doe" effecting the grim inversion.

However, compounding the woman's alternatives, which exact denial of

part of herself no matter how she chooses, stands the essential paradox of art: that the artist kills experience into art, for temporal experience can only escape death by dying into the "immortality" of artistic form. The fixity of "life" in art and the fluidity of "life" in nature are incompatible. So no matter what the sex of the deer, doe or buck, it must be made anew in the materials of the artist's craft; the words of the poem preserve the doe and the buck in an image of their mortality. The ironies of this paradox have always fascinated and chilled artists. Is the vital passion of the youthful lovers on Keats' "Grecian Urn" death or immortality? In Eudora Welty's "A Still Moment," Audubon shoots the exquisite white bird so that he can paint it. In John Crowe Ransom's "Painted Head" the artist betrays the young man he has painted by shrinking him into a mere image. In one sense it seems a death's head now, yet this painted head of a dead man radiates health and happiness beyond change. No wonder Audubon is willing to shoot the bird. No wonder a poet like Emily Dickinson will surrender to painful self-sacrifice. The loss of a certain range of experience might allow her to preserve what remained; that sacrifice might well be her apotheosis, her only salvation.

Both the poet's relation to her muse and the living death of the art-work lead into the runic riddle of the last quatrain. It is actually a double riddle, each two lines long and connected by the conjunction "for":

> Though I than He – may longer live
> He longer must – than I –
> For I have but the power to kill,
> Without – the power to die –

In the first rune, why is it that she *may* live longer than he but he *must* live longer than she? The poet lives on past the moment in which she is a vessel or instrument in the hands of the creative animus for two reasons – first because her temporal life resumes when she is returned to one of life's corners, a waiting but loaded gun again, but also because on another level she surpasses momentary possession by the animus in the poem she has created under his inspiration. At the same time but from another perspective he *must* transcend her temporal life and even its artifacts because as the archetypal source of inspiration the animus is, relative to the individual, transpersonal and so in a sense "immortal."[8]

The second rune extends the paradox of the poet's mortality and survival. The lines begin to unravel and reveal themselves if we read the phrase "Without – the power to die –" not as "lacking the power to die" but rather as "except for the power to die" or "unless I had the power to die." The lines would then read: unless she were mortal, if she did not have the power to die, she would have only the power to kill. And when we straighten out the grammatical construction of a condition-contrary-to-fact to conform with fact, we come closer to the meaning: with mortality, if she does have the power to die – as indeed she does – she would not have only the power to

kill. What else or what more would she then have? There are two clues. First, the variant of "art" for "power" in the last line links "the power to die," mortality, all the more closely with "the power to kill," the artistic process. In addition, the causal conjunction "for" relates the capacity for death in the second rune back to the capacity for life in the first rune. Thus for her the power to die is resolved in the power to kill – that is, the art to die, whereby she dies into art. Then she does not have only the power to kill; for the power to kill is the art to die and hypostasize herself in the work of art. The animus-muse enables her to fix the dying moment, but it is only her human capabilities, working in time with language, which are able to translate that fixed moment into the changeless words of the poem. The artistic act is, therefore, not just destructive ("the power to kill") but in the end creative. In a mysterious way, the doomed artist, through her human craftsmanship, can rescue herself and her inspired moments from oblivion and extend destiny beyond the negations of dying and killing.

Now we can grasp the two runes together. The poet's living and dying permit her, impelled by the animus, to be an artist; and, rapt by the animus, she is empowered to kill experience and slay herself into art. Having suffered mortality, she dies into life, to adapt the phrase from Keats' ***Hyperion***; virgin as the Grecian urn and the figures on it, she outlasts temporal process and those climactic instants of animus-possession, even though in the process of experience she knows him as a free spirit independent of her and transcendent to her own poems. Therefore, in different ways each survives the other: she mortal in her person but timeless in her poems, he transpersonal as an archetype but dependent on her transitory experience of him to manifest himself. The interdependence through which she "speaks for" him and is his human voice makes both for her dependence and limitations and also for her triumph over dependence and limitations.

Nevertheless, "My Life has stood – a Loaded Gun –" leaves no doubt that a woman in a patriarchal society achieves that triumph only through a blood-sacrifice. The poem presents the alternatives unsparingly: be the hunter or the victim. She can refuse to be a victim by casting her lot with the hunter, but thereby she sacrifices her womanhood as victim. Emily Dickinson's sense of conflict within herself and about herself could lead her to such a desperate and ghastly fantasy as the following lines:[9]

> Rearrange a "Wife's" affection!
> When they dislocate my Brain!
> Amputate my freckled Bosom!
> Make me bearded like a man!

The exclamatory and violent self-mutilation of the stanza indicates how far we have come from the pieties of Mrs. Sigourney and her sisters.

Fortunately for Dickinson the alternatives did not always seem so dire and

categorical. Some of her most energetic and ecstatic poems – those supreme moments in which the travail and anguish were redeemed – celebrate her experience of her womanhood. The vigor of these concentrated lyrics match in depth and conviction Whitman's sprawling, public celebration of his manhood. At such times she saw her identity not as a denial of her feminine nature in the name of the animus but as an assimilation of the animus into an integrated self. In that way "he" is not a threat but an impelling force; as part of herself, "he" initiates her into the mysteries of experience which would otherwise remain "other"; "he" summons her to fullness – not the fullness of manhood but the completion of her womanhood. There, in the privacy of her psyche, withdrawn from the world of men and even of family, she would live out all the extremes of feeling and response, all the states of mind which fall under the usual rubrics of love, death and immortality.

A poem, probably written a year or so before "My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun –," describes her psychological metamorphosis in terms of two baptisms which conferred name and identity: the first the sacramental baptism in the patriarchal church when she was an unknowing and helpless baby; the second a self-baptism into areas of personality conventionally associated with the masculine, an act of choice and will undertaken in full consciousness, or, perhaps more accurately, into full consciousness. Since Emily Dickinson was not a member of the church and had never been baptized as child or adult, the baptism is a metaphor for marking stages and transitions in self-awareness and identity. The poem is not a love poem or a religious poem, as its first editors thought in 1890, but a poem of sexual or psychological politics enacted in the convolutions of the psyche:[10]

I'm ceded – I've stopped being Their's –
The name They dropped upon my face
With water, in the country church
Is finished using, now,
And They can put it with my Dolls,
My childhood, and the string of spools,
I've finished threading – too –

Baptized, before, without the choice,
But this time, consciously, of Grace –
Unto supremest name –
Called to my Full – The Crescent dropped –
Existence's whole Arc, filled up,
With one small Diadem.

My second Rank – too small the first –
Crowned – Crowing – on my Father's breast –
A half unconscious Queen –
But this time – Adequate – Erect,
With Will to choose, or to reject,
And I choose, just a Crown –

Some of the manuscript variants emphasize the difference between the two states of being. The variants for "Crowing" in "Crowned – Crowing – on my Father's breast –" are "whimpering" and "dangling," as contrasted with "Adequate" and "Erect" later. The variants in the phrase "A half unconscious Queen –" are "too unconscious" and "insufficient." As the poet comes to full consciousness in the second and third stanzas, she assumes, as in the previous poem, something of the phallicism and privileges of the masculine. "Power" is the variant for "Will" in the second to last line, but now the power of will is the Queen's. She has displaced the Father, the crown he conferred replaced by her round diadem; she calls herself by her "supremest name."

Dickinson wrote several "Wife" poems on the same theme. This one, written a little earlier than the poem above, probably in 1860, sums up the situation:[11]

I'm "wife" – I've finished that –
That other state –
I'm Czar – I'm "Woman" now –
It's safer so –

How odd the Girl's life looks
Behind this soft Eclipse –
I think that Earth feels so
To folks in Heaven – now –

This being comfort – then
That other kind – was pain –
But why compare?
I'm "Wife"! Stop there!

The passage from virgin girlhood to "wife" and "Woman" is again accomplished through the powerful agency of the animus, in this poem the "Czar." The "wife" and "Czar" couple into the androgynous completion of her woman's Self. However, for Dickinson it is a womanhood reached at heavy cost, a wifehood consummated on peculiarly private terms withdrawn from the risks and dangers of contact with actual men in a man-dominated culture. Only alone and in secret could this royal pair wed and be joined in the hierogamy, or mystic marriage, of identity. As the poem warns us, "It's safer so –."

Writing in 1964, a hundred years after the poems we have been reading, Adrienne Rich saw in Emily Dickinson's situation her own and that of any woman-poet in the patriarchy. The poem is called "I am in Danger – Sir –";[12] in the letter from which the sentence is excerpted Dickinson is responding to the negative criticisms of her poems by Thomas Wentworth Higginson, but Rich invokes the phrase to epitomize Dickinson's all-round

vulnerability to the world of men and institutions, to the critics of her time and the twentieth-century editors who turned her maze of manuscripts into print. But in the poem Dickinson's enigmatic personality finds the way to assure her invulnerability. Attending to the chores expected of the unmarried daughter in her father's house, she contrives to write honestly of her androgynous experience in poems which stand impervious to anything the literary establishment might say.

"Half-cracked" to Higginson, living,
afterward famous in garbled versions,
your hoard of dazzling scraps a battlefield,
now your old snood

mothballed at Harvard
and you in your variorum monument
equivocal to the end –
who are you?

Gardening the day-lily,
wiping the wine-glass stems,
your thought pulsed on behind
a forehead battered paper-thin,

you, woman, masculine
in single-mindedness,
for whom the word was more
than a symptom –

a condition of being.
Till the air buzzing with spoiled language
sang in your ears
of Perjury

and in your half-cracked way you chose
silence for entertainment,
chose to have it out at last
on your own premises.

The marvelous pun in the last line of Rich's poem links Emily Dickinson's reclusiveness with the urgent needs of her personality. It would be another hundred years before the political and psychological situation had changed sufficiently so that women poets could speak out and sing out on their own premises – but now publicly, not in the isolation of the upstairs bedchamber. Women poets of the intervening generations were for the most part caught in the quandary and found themselves choosing to negate in their poetry one

part of themselves or the other. Some, such as Marianne Moore and Elizabeth Bishop, settled for denying or deflecting or overlooking their emotions and sexuality in favor of the fine discriminations of their perceptions and ideas. Others, such as Edna St. Vincent Millay and Elinor Wylie, took as their woman's strain the thrill of emotion and the tremor of sensibility, susceptible though that course left them to the depredations of the masculine "other." In the first half of the century perhaps only in the work of H.D., especially during the great poems of her old age, were head and heart, sexuality and spirit called to the exploration of the poet's womanhood: a venture conducted by H.D. and perhaps made possible through an expatriation from American society more complete and final than Gertrude Stein's or Eliot's or Pound's. Now, however, in the work of poets as different as Sylvia Plath and Denise Levertov, Robin Morgan and Jean Valentine, and most importantly, I think, in the work of Adrienne Rich, women are exploring that mystery, their own mystery, sometimes ecstatically, sometimes angrily, sometimes in great agony of body and spirit, but always now with the sustaining and challenging knowledge that they are not alone, that more and more women and a growing number of men are hearing what they say, listening to them and with them. Such a realization makes a transforming and clarifying difference in the contemporary scene. But it is an important aspect of Emily Dickinson's enormous achievement that she pursued the process so far and so long on her own.

Notes

[1] Robert Weisbuch, *Emily Dickinson's Poetry* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1975), pp. 25, 26. His explication of the poem appears on pp. 25-39. See also John Cody, *After Great Pain: The Inner Life of Emily Dickinson* (Cambridge, Mass.,: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 399-415.

[2] Poem 754 in the Johnson variorum edition: *The Poems of Emily Dickinson,* ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955), II, 574.

[3] Albert Gelpi, *The Tenth Muse: The Psyche of the American Poet* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 247 ff; see also Gelpi, *Emily Dickinson: The Mind of the Poet* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 109-115.

[4] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Deerslayer* (New York: W. A. Townsend, 1861), p. 15.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 18-19.

[6] Walt Whitman, *Prose Works 1892*, ed. Floyd Stovall (New York: New York University Press, 1963), I, 250.

[7] *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson & Theodora Ward (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), II, 474. For volcano poems, see *Poems*, III, 1141, 1153, 1174.

[8] My wife, Barbara Charlesworth Gelpi, has called my attention in this connection to a poem by Emily Brontë written in 1840 and entitled "The Night-Wind." It is a poem about the power of the animus, imaged as the night-wind or spirit, who woos and wins her despite her ambivalent fascination and resistance and who concludes by anticipating her death and his "immortality":

> "And when thy heart is laid to rest
> Beneath the church-yard stone
> I shall have time enough to mourn
> And thou to be alone."

[9] *Poems*, III, 1168.

[10] *Poems*, II, 389-390.

[11] *Poems*, I, 142-143.

[12] *Necessities of Life* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966), p. 33.

The Case of the Diminished Hero:

Fremont Meets Devoto

Anthony Arthur

It used to be known as Hawks' Peak, this austere pile of limestone and granite in the Gavilan Range; and while I sat there one warm summer day a few years ago, first one, then two, then half a dozen hawks obligingly wheeled and soared below me over the green and golden Salinas Valley of California.

Now it is called Frémont's Peak, and a metal plaque affixed to a boulder by the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West celebrates that day in March, 1846, when the young explorer raised his home-made flag – crossed peace pipes were the insignia – and invited General José Castro, defender of this Mexican territory, to evict him if he dared.

John Charles Frémont was safe enough. Even today the eleven-mile drive up the mountain from San Juan Batista, where I could see the red tile roof of General Castro's headquarters, is formidable, and though Castro's dignity had been tested, his sanity was intact. So while Frémont and his sixty surveyors, mule-skinners, and mountain-men watched the surf crash silently against the beach at Monterey Bay, Castro bided his time and marched his scarlet troops up and down the valley below. After three days had passed, the loblolly snag Frémont had used as a flag pole toppled in the wind, and he left the mountain to the hawks. A "growling" retreat, he later called it; a heroic rebuff of foreign intruders, Castro claimed; a non-event, historians now agree, at most a curtain-raiser for the curious affair that would come to be known in a few months as the Bear Flag Revolt.

I followed Frémont's footsteps that summer as well as I could, from the Salinas Valley where Castro ordered him to leave for wandering too far afield, to San Juan Batista (now admirably restored to its early charm); from there to Hawks' Peak, and thence to Klamath Lake, several hundred miles to the north, where Frémont received the controversial message from Lt. Gillespie and where one of his men died with an Indian axe in his skull; south to Sonoma, where the Bear Flag was raised, its distinguishing feature a bear that looked like a pig; east to Sutter's Fort in Sacramento, where Frémont threatened Sutter with jail for his luke-warm cooperation; and finally to Monterey for the triumphant entry that occasioned one of the nineteenth century's most famous illustrations.

Initially, idle curiosity about California history rather than scholarly interest prompted my travels. That, and a casual reading of Bernard DeVoto's *Year of Decision: 1846*, in which Frémont plays a major part. Frémont's reputation, at its zenith a century ago, is now almost totally eclipsed, recalled only by a few place names: a south San Francisco Bay city, a street in San Francisco, a county in Nebraska, a town in Ohio, a mountain in the Rockies and, of course, one in California. Or, for some with an interest in American history, as the husband of Irving Stone's *Immortal Wife*, Jessie Benton Frémont, as the Republican party's first nominee for President in 1856, as the general cashiered by Lincoln for issuing his own emancipation proclamation in Missouri, or even as Governor of the Territory of Arizona. But he is little more than a footnote in most of the standard histories now, this man who not long ago was known to everyone as "the Pathfinder," and praised as one who "brought enthusiasm, large ambition, imagination and scientific knowledge to his task,[whose] hold on the popular mind is permanent and his place in California and western history thoroughly secure."

The appraisal was written in 1929 by the eminent western historian Robert Glass Cleland. Only fourteen years later Bernard DeVoto would capture the imagination of the nation with his vivid account of the westward movement in *Year of Decision: 1846* and fix in the minds of his many readers a very different Frémont: a conniving, treacherous charlatan who was probably guilty of treason.

How, I wondered, could Cleland and DeVoto be talking about the same man? Did I hear the grinding of ideological gears in the background?

Perhaps. The more I read about Frémont the more I was struck by the resourcefulness of both his attackers and his advocates. For the prosecution there were Hubert Howe Bancroft, the fountainhead of all California history; the philosopher Josiah Royce; and Bernard DeVoto, popular historian and polemicist. For the defense, in addition to at least a dozen lesser lights, there were R. V. Dellenbaugh and, in particular, Allen Nevins, one of the major American historians of this century. Heavyweights on both sides. To what extent might it help me in appraising Frémont to know the literal lay of the land he traveled?

It would be gratifying to say that knowing the lay of the land provided me

with more than a pleasant excuse to travel through California, but it didn't. Not much. It did help a little to learn that Hawks' Peak is not, as DeVoto implied, a mere hill but a bona fide mountain of 3,000 feet, a brooding, desolate heap even on a warm summer day, and it did not require too strenuous an effort to imagine oneself as a thirty-four-year-old Army captain watching the winter fog roll in from the sea, wondering if some of those thousand scarlet soldiers who have lived here all their lives must not know a back way up the mountain. It helped, too, to drive north towards Klamath through those quietly rolling hills, brown now in summer, like loaves of bread on a sloping table. And it is worthwhile to spend a night at Pinnacles National Monument (which Frémont might have seen), a crazy, earthquake-tumbled spot near Hollister, because even now the almost parodic size and scale of everything in California dwarfs the human capacity for measurement and judgment.

Returning home, I read through the Frémont passages in ***Year of Decision*** and was impressed by the irrelevance of such considerations as these for DeVoto; the reason, I concluded after reading about DeVoto's own life in Stegner's ***The Uneasy Chair***, was that he had had no first-hand experience of California when he wrote his book. A gifted reader of maps and documents and a creative extrapolator there-from, DeVoto had never seen Hawks' Peak or San Juan Batista or Monterey.

While this lack hardly invalidated DeVoto's history, it did lead me to view ***Year of Decision*** – in its own way, as important a book for its time as Frémont was a man for his – in a different light. It occurred to me that DeVoto was not so much attacking Frémont as he was a concept of the American hero – a concept which struck him as misleading and harmful, not to say anachronistic.

What made all of my musing about Frémont and DeVoto more than merely academic, for me at least, was the coincidence of my trip with the Watergate hearings. Watching those dour, comic goings-on in various saloons and restaurants around the state, I was impressed by the obvious shared longing for an honest man, a fearless leader with integrity; a man on horseback. Enter one day Archibald Cox as Gary Cooper: a clear light shines through the murk .... Here was a hero, I thought, more to DeVoto's liking, and an appropriately modern one at that. For the modern hero has to be an outsider, fighting the system – not, like Frémont, an insider fighting to extend it. And the modern hero, moreover, has to fail – honorably, like Cox, through no fault of his own. Frémont, having had the bad grace to be successful, was doubly disqualified.

The question of Frémont was not, then, a pointless quibble among historians and moralists; it involved a definition of heroism of considerable importance for a nation in the middle of World War II, when DeVoto's book appeared; and, as I have suggested, it is still a matter of concern for most Americans today that there are no "heroes" – the word itself has come to sound vaguely quaint. What, then, were Frémont's sins as a false hero, in the eyes of DeVoto, and what are we supposed to put in their place?

DeVoto has two complaints, one general and one particular. The general complaint derives from his acceptance of the argument put forth nearly a century ago by Hubert Howe Bancroft, the businessman-turned-historian who scoured the state with his minions, gathering first-hand accounts of the recent events, including the Bear Flag Revolt. Bancroft's reading of that affair was simple enough: the "department" of California had been miserably mismanaged by the Mexican government for years, and was probably more than willing to join the United States whenever it was properly asked. It was a ripe peach about to fall into our outstretched hands, and the tree did not need to be shaken. Unfortunately, a few hot-headed settlers (there were less than a thousand North Americans in all of California in 1845), led by the idealist William Ide and an assortment of scoundrels, captured the fort at Sonoma and declared the independence of California as a separate nation, the so-called Bear Flag Republic. The whole affair was *opera bouffe*, Bancroft said, the Bear Flag Republic existing less than a month before American sovereignty rendered it obsolete in July of 1846. Frémont erred in aiding the rebels when they requested his help; by so doing, be helped to poison the relations between the races in California for years to come, and to introduce a note of illegitimacy into what had promised to be a noble coupling of mutual interests.

The specific complaint against Frémont is derived from Josiah Royce, the philosopher who grew up in the Central Valley of California and who interviewed him in 1884 when the old general was in his seventies and Royce was an aspiring young philosophy instructor at Harvard. The controversy in this case is personal, centering around the veracity of Frémont's account of the message from President Polk delivered to him at Klamath Lake by Marine Lieutenant Archibald Gillespie.

The entire episode reeks of romance. Lt. Gillespie, a young Marine of good family stationed in Baltimore, was summoned to the White House and given a message to deliver to Consul Larkin in Monterey and to Captain Frémont, wherever he might be. He was also given a letter that same night by Senator Thomas Hart Benton from him and Jessie, a personal letter which they would appreciate Gillespie's taking along with him. While waiting for the boat in Mazatlán, Gillespie grew fearful that Polk's message might be taken from him; he spent a day memorizing it, then destroyed it. Arriving in Monterey in April, he delivered his message to Thomas Larkin, the crusty, semi-literate but shrewd merchant who had represented American interests in California for the last six years. Frémont, Larkin said, would be found somewhere in northern California or southern Oregon. Gillespie should find him immediately.

On May 9, having gone without sleep for two nights, Gillespie caught up with Frémont at Klamath Lake. The two men sat by the campfire for a while, when the exhausted Gillespie retired for the night. Frémont stayed up alone until very late, thinking about the messages that Gillespie had brought, watching the firelight flicker against the black pines. "How Fate pursues a

man!" he would write later. That night, for perhaps the only time in his career, he did not post a guard.

Shortly before dawn, the camp was attacked by a group of Modoc Indians – the same group, it turned out later, that had so helpfully given Gillespie's party directions just the day before. Three of Frémont's men were killed, including the burly and dependable French-Canadian Basil LaJeunesse, who had been along on the previous two expeditions. Frémont and Kit Carson rallied their men, fought off the Indians, and pursued them all that day, killing at least a dozen. Finally they quit: bigger things were afoot.

The message from Polk which Gillespie had carried with him so long was never really the issue in the controversy which Royce stirred up. It was the other message that caused the trouble. As Frémont later told the story, his father-in-law, Senator Benton, the apostle of Manifest Destiny and a keen student of Mexican-American affairs, knew full well in November of 1845 that war between the two countries was only a matter of time – time measured perhaps in weeks rather than months. Accordingly, he decided to strengthen Frémont's resolve, writing what appeared to be a chatty letter about Jessie and the children. In fact, Frémont said, it was a coded communication – a pre-arranged family cipher – from Benton as a powerful Senator to Frémont as a strategically located Army officer, directing him to do "anything in his power" to keep California from falling into the hands of the British – an on-going fear at this time.

That famous letter has never been seen. Royce says that any communication from Benton to Frémont of the kind described would have been patently illegal, especially if its advice exceeded Polk's cautious orders. Royce, therefore, is convinced that Frémont had deliberately exceeded his authority, relying on his father-in-law's prestige, the confusion of the times, and the probability that success would defuse any objections that might later arise to his illegal means. For his part, Frémont remained adamant to his death in his insistence that Polk's letter and Benton's informal message gave him the authority to proceed southward and to aid the Bear Flaggers in their revolt.

On May 13, four days after the messages were delivered at Klamath Lake, Polk signed a resolution declaring that a state of war existed between the United States and Mexico. Frémont's exploits in the months that followed made him even more of a national figure than he had been already as the result of his explorations. DeVoto, however, presumably following Royce, pelts the Pathfinder with derision. When first introduced in *Year of Decision*, Frémont is "Childe Harold," out of Byron by way of Rousseau; subsequently, he is Galahad, Destiny's Courtier, the Conqueror, and Major Jinks of the Horse Marines. His men are, variously, the Army of Hollywood, Caesar's Tenth Legion, the Tallapoosy Vollantares, and the Rover Boys in the Halls of Montezuma.

Even more directly, Frémont is for DeVoto a barnstormer, a free-booter, and a filibuster; an opportunist, an adventurer, and a blunderer on "a truly dangerous scale" with an "instinct for self-aggrandizing treachery." By the

end of the book, Frémont is a wretch who though "technically" not a traitor did not lack for "the raw stuff of which treason is made."

DeVoto is too skilled a rhetorician to rely solely on invective. He presses his indictment of Frémont by opposing him to General Stephen Kearny, whom he admires as a bluff, competent soldier, and, in similar fashion, by associating him with Zachary Taylor, whom he detests as a politician angling for the presidency – sucessfully, as it turns out.

The opposition to Kearny begins quite early, as both he and Frémont are introduced in consecutive paragraphs – Frémont the "son-in-law of Senator Benton" wandering around aimlessly in California, Kearny our "ablest frontier officer" setting forth with his "crack regiment, the First Dragoons," for the Southwest. As will become clear in the course of DeVoto's narrative, he credits Benton with most of Frémont's success; thus the operative words in these initial descriptions are "son-in-law" for Frémont and "able" for Kearny, and the potential for conflict between influence and ability which will be DeVoto's chief concern in the latter part of his book is established. In the meantime, no opportunity is lost to oppose Kearny's competence with Frémont's posturing. When Kearny takes Santa Fe in an efficient and humane manner, for example, "without firing a shot," DeVoto praises him for having followed "Mr. Polk's instructions." This noble feat, and the implicit rebuke of Frémont for having failed to do the same in California, is followed immediately by an account of "the Conqueror" swaggering into Monterey to meet "D'Artagnan" Stockton, another man who "knew his Hollywood" (a recurring satiric thrust).

Later, when Kearny is engaged in the only real battle of the Mexican-American War in California (December 6 at San Pascual), he is in trouble because Frémont's mentor, Stockton, has assured Kearny that his soldiers would not be needed in California. Everything was under control, Stockton said, so Kearny sent two-thirds of his force back to New Mexico and was nearly slaughtered. And where was the heroic Frémont, DeVoto asks, supposedly heading up a relief Column? Two days late, moving southward "with a most strategic deliberation," carefully maintaining his unblemished record of having not once met "armed opposition in California."

If Kearny is admirable, Zachary Taylor is contemptible, and Frémont is also associated with him. Taylor only became President, DeVoto says in one of his most entertaining passages, because he "wrote prose" to newspapers while better men kept him from destroying his army in Mexico. Taylor is ambitious, incompetent, and unintelligent, but can write well after a fashion and is blessed with a sympathetic press. DeVoto strongly implies a direct parallel with Frémont in a number of places, but nowhere more vividly than in this paragraph: "And on May 9, at Klamath Lake in Oregon, Lieutenant Gillespie of the United States Marines caught up with Captain Frémont and Zachary Taylor fought the engagement known as the Battle of Reseca de la Palma." The battle won, Taylor "opened his campaign for the Presidency," while at Klamath Lake Frémont sees that "his cue had been spoken," that it

was time to "seize California and wrap Old Glory around him," to become a hero "from that moment until he died. . . ."

* * * * *

DeVoto's book was accurately characterized by Wallace Stegner as "romantic history in literary terms." Inasmuch as Frémont was, in DeVoto's own words, "a popular image of our western wayfaring . . . , a hero of popular drama," – in other words, an archetypal romantic hero – why does the author of a romantic history despise him so? Not even Royce or Bancroft were so harsh.

The answer, at least in part, is that DeVoto had another, very different kind of hero-model in mind, one which he believed derived from fact, not fantasy. His studies of the West convinced him that cooperation was the key to survival on the Oregon Trail, not flashy showboating, and his heroes are invariably identified as part of a group, a context larger than themselves. They are competent men, like General Kearny, who can not only give but take orders; stoic, humorous and stubborn men like the ancient Jim Clyman, still tottering at the age of ninety through South Pass with westering homesteaders; brave and selfless like William Eddy, whose heroism in the Donner tragedy is the most moving part of *Year of Decision*; and men with visions of a new and just society in the west, like John Wesley Powell, which would "correct folly and restore social health." The principle of community which Royce later developed, after writing his *California*, is implicitly the same as DeVoto's ideal, emphasizing cooperation and interdependence based on shared goals that had merit. It constitutes a rebuke to the familiar American archetype, the Shane who is celibate and, using Melville's word, an "isolato." Or, to place the matter in a larger context, DeVoto's true hero is more like Tennyson's patient, dependable Telemachus who stays with his people and does his job than he is like the wandering Odysseus.

The literary allusion would not, it should be noted, have been lost on Frémont. Like some other controversial military figures, Frémont was a gifted writer – aided, admittedly, by his gifted wife, Jessie. Tutored in Greek and Latin as a boy and an avid reader of narratives of exploration, his accounts of his expeditions were credited with inspiring thousands of restless Americans to follow his own path westward.

In fact, modern readers dismayed at the tin ears and leaden tongues of current public figures may feel a certain nostalgia for Frémont's obvious appreciation for the language. It might be expected that DeVoto would find this literary competence a mitigating virtue in his portrait of Frémont. But no! "We are to follow [Frémont] through knotty and hardly soluble controversies," DeVoto says early in his book. "They will be less obscure if it is kept in mind that Frémont was primarily a literary man . . . with a literary wife." Far from mitigating his culpability, then, Frémont's skill with language augments it. There appear to be two reasons for this interpretation: for one

thing, it characterizes Frémont as an amateur among professionals; secondly, and even more important, it ties in with what DeVoto regards as the creation of Frémont as a hero by the popular press and the perpetuation of his spurious image.

The first objection derives from DeVoto's almost obsessive admiration for professionalism of any kind and his equally pronounced aversion for amateurs. "I dislike amateurs, esthetes, dilettantes," he once wrote. "I dislike literary attitudes and those who take them." In *Year of Decision* DeVoto never misses a chance to discredit Frémont as an explorer, soldier, and politician, to give the impression that the Pathfinder was a comparative incompetent in everything except writing about himself. He sees Frémont as being overly careful from the beginning of his career to appear always in a favorable light, and quotes with relish Emerson's reservations – the "stout Frémont," Emerson says, "is continually remarking on 'the group' or 'the picture,' etc. 'which we make.'" Despite the excitement of Frémont's narratives, Emerson continues, there is always present "this eternal vanity of *how we must look*."

Frémont is, DeVoto implies, a romantic hero and a literary man only in the debased Byronic sense, a foppish, posturing, adolescent dandy, a Childe Harold. It is this kind of hero that an immature public has been brought to admire at the expense of better men – men like Stephen Kearny, who sent Frémont back to Washington under guard after their dispute over jurisdiction in California and whose own reputation was severely damaged in the notorious trial which concluded this phase of Frémont's eventful life. DeVoto's lengthy analysis of that trial occupies the final portion of *Year of Decision* and provides the final piece in the puzzle of his enmity for Frémont.

The objective observer of the controversy which resulted in Frémont's trial may feel that it is a classic case of fouled communications. There were two centers of American command in California at that confused time: one with Commodore Stockton in Monterey and the other with General Kearny in Los Angeles; one with the Navy in the north, and one with the Army in the south, four hundred miles away. Stockton thought – wrongly – that he had overall jurisdiction, and Frémont agreed, refusing accordingly to take orders from his Army superior. The court-martial found Frémont guilty of mutiny, but President Polk, citing extenuating circumstances, offered to pardon him. Frémont, convinced that he had done nothing to justify a conviction in the first place, indignantly refused the pardon and resigned his commission. Popular opinion, led by the press, supported him, and he went on in a few years to become the Presidential nominee in 1856. Obviously his career was not harmed.

For DeVoto the trial provided proof positive that Frémont was ultimately not merely a literary man: he was a literary creation. Sounding a little like Cicero attacking Catiline, he concludes his attack on Frémont:

> Neither misuse of Senatorial power in the pursuit of advertising nor the creation in newsprint of a great public hero is an invention of our age, which has not seen any betterment of the technique that erected Frémont into a martyr and a man designed by providential forethought to save the American people from their governors. Here, at a trial designed to assess his actions on the fringe of empire, was created a figure of pure advertising that cost the nation heavily from then on, a creature of oratory and newsprint. That creation was almost enough to wreck the republic. It was enough to convince innumerable people born since the advertising stopped and its proprietors died, so that you will still find it in the instruction given our children. The report of that trial is a case study in the dynamics of reputation.

Shortly after he finished *Year of Decision*, DeVoto wrote a letter to Catherine Drinker Bowen in which he defined the true romance of American history. It "began in myth and has developed through three centuries of fairy stories. Whatever the time is in America, it is always, at every moment, the mad and wayward hour when the prince is finding the little foot that alone fits into the slipper of glass." Frémont, one gathers, is a false prince, unworthy of the American Cinderella.

The image of innocence and wonder that DeVoto's use of the fairy tale summons up is instructive. On the one hand, it is consistent with the naive hero-worship that Americans often lavish on attractive public figures, such as the Kennedy brothers. On the other hand, this same innocence when betrayed elicits immense popular cynicism of the kind indicated by a recent children's book – *A Hero Ain't Nothing But a Sandwich*. The modern reader who comes upon DeVoto's assault on the Pathfinder is accustomed to revelations of moral lapses on the part of national leaders; nodding in agreement with DeVoto, he may say, "it was ever so. Our troubles began with that rascal Frémont."

Of course, fresher controversies occupy our attention today. Both Frémont and *Year of Decision* are part of history. But the necessity for both action and judgment remain. I found myself ultimately of two minds about both Frémont and DeVoto's attack – what might be called an exercise in "dis-reputation." Greatly admired in his time, condemned by some in ours, Frémont nevertheless *acted*. He climbed his mountains. That we disapprove what our great-grandfathers approved says more about us than it does about him. And what does it tell us about ourselves? It tells us that we think the man who acts on his own initiative and benefits therefrom is automatically suspect, that the true hero is a selfless man of the people, and that popular opinion is easily and commonly deluded. And that pleasant tangle of paradoxes tells us, I think, that we are beholden to a view of life no less romantic, though considerably more complicated, than the simpler nineteenth-century view it has replaced.

Brief Chronology

Nov. 3, 1845	Marine Lt. Archibald Gillespie leaves Washington with messages from President Polk and Senator Thomas Hart Benton for Frémont in the west.
March 5-9, 1846	Frémont's redoubt on Gabilan (Hawks') Peak, near Monterey.
May 9	Lt. Gillespie and Frémont meet at Klamath Lake in southern Oregon.
May 13	President Polk signs resolution that a state of war exists between the United States and Mexico.
June 14	William Ide and his men take the Mexican fort at Sonoma without bloodshed and declare the Bear Flag Republic; Frémont remains at Sutter's Fort.
July 9	The American Flag is raised at Sonoma, ending the Bear Flag Republic.
July 19	Frémont marches into Monterey.
Dec. 6	General Kearney is defeated in the battle of San Pascual.
Jan. 16, 1847	Frémont is appointed Civil Governor of California. Quarrel with Kearny results, and Frémont is sent to Washington to stand trial for mutiny.
Feb. 1848	Frémont is found guilty, rejects Presidential pardon, and resigns commission.
July, 1856	Frémont nominated for President by Republican Party.
Dec., 1884	Josiah Royce interviews General and Mrs. Frémont in Los Angeles.
July 13, 1890	Frémont dies in New York.

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