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a publication of san jose state university volume x number 3 fall 1984

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SAN JOSE

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ARTICLES

TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF FREE GOVERNMENT: THE CONSTITUTION AND THE HIGHER LAW

"Two Hundred Years of Free Government: the Constitution and the Higher Law," a conference for the informed citizen, was held in May, 1984 at San Jose State University. The conference was part of a five-year series of events funded by the Office of the Bicentennial of the Constitution of the National Endowment for for the Humanities. Dr. John A. Wettergreen, Professor of Political Science at SJSU, was conference coordinator. *San Jose Studies* gained permission to publish excerpts from speeches and panel discussions of some of the scholars who addressed the question of whether, or to what extent, the authors of the Constitution were inspired by a knowledge of "the laws of Nature and Nature's God." The following articles are representative of the diversity of opinion sounded at the conference.*

*The four immediately following articles were originally presented at the conference. They were recorded at the sessions; then they were transcribed by Ms. Donna Ellis and edited by Dr. Fauneil J. Rinn, Professor of Political Science at SJSU.

The Declaration and the Constitution

Harry V. Jaffa

America's hatred of tyranny and our faith in God are two things which are not generally regarded by sophisticated people these days as altogether respectable. Of course, nobody says tyranny is a good thing, but the prevailing attitude in the Academy today is that represented by Thomas Hobbes when he said, "Tyranny is simply kingship misliked."

In 1976, we celebrated the Bicentennial of the United States. When the signing of the Declaration and therefore the birthday of the Nation were celebrated in 1976 the great event in July was the sailing of the tall ships into New York Harbor, a very spectacular event, very beautiful and, in its own way, perhaps very appropriate. However, it seemed to me that in the celebrations that went on across the country, the Declaration of Independence, itself, was looked upon as if it were a tall ship—beautiful, but archaic and obsolete.

Last fall, I was in England and gave a lecture at the University of East Anglia. A young historian there, hearing me talk about the Declaration of Independence, said, "But you are talking about it as if it were not an 18th century document."

I said, "Well, I think the first duty of the historian is to understand the past as it understood itself. And I am sure that the one thing that Thomas Jefferson never for a moment dreamed or imagined he was doing was composing an 18th century document." Jefferson was, of course, a great adherent of the doctrine of progress and believed very much in the necessity of change. In fact, one of his, if I might say so, less wise political ideas was that the Constitution should be revised every twenty years because no generation should impose its dead hand upon a living generation. But Jefferson once said that, "Everything in human affairs is changeable except the eternal and unalienable rights of man." Which means everything is changeable except the important things, which don't change.

When Jefferson wrote that most famous of all political sentences—and perhaps even moral, at least in the secular order of things—"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed," he enunciated a set of theoretical propositions which, in their logical relations, amount to a consistent and permanent teaching regarding the nature of non-tyrannical, legitimate, republican government.

The proposition that all men are created equal was not subject to a great amount of discussion among the founding Fathers because its meaning was, I think, pretty well understood. Something that was regarded as self-evident, so self-evident that it needed very little discussion is, today, also not discussed but also not understood. I remarked recently that Lincoln at Gettysburg said, "The world will little note nor long remember what we say here." That I regard as certainly a modest but wholly inaccurate statement. We all remember very well what Lincoln said at Gettysburg; what we have forgotten is what he meant.

What he meant, of course, was what Jefferson and the Continental Congress also meant in speaking of the equality of mankind. What they meant was, first of all, that there is a natural order in the universe which is immediately accessible to every human being. It is accessible, as a matter of fact, to dogs and to trees as well, but they respond to it in a different way. Speaking of the dimension of self-evident truths, of course, calls to mind geometry and the rational processes by which geometricians proceed from axioms and definitions to propositions. And the wish to remind us of axiomatic truths is one reason why Lincoln spoke of a proposition to which the nation had been dedicated.

Saying that all men are created equal means that all men are to be distinguished from the lower order of creation, such as dogs, cats, horses, trees. The relationship between a dog or a horse and a man is determined by nature. There is a difference between them which arises from nature,

which they, of themselves, are not responsible for but to which they must, in the nature of things, adjust themselves. There is also a difference between man and God. The Americans believed that God is a Being possessed of infinite wisdom and justice and power and that a Being possessed of such attributes might properly govern those who lacked those attributes without their consent. Divine government of the universe does not depend on man's consenting to it. But the government of man by man, as distinct from the government of man by God, depends upon something else, and that is consent.

This difference in natures is self-evident because there is no process of argument by which one could persuade somebody either that he is not a dog, or that a dog is not a man. Every argument that proves such things would presuppose what it proves, or it couldn't prove it. So, consent is the basis of legitimate rule among men; and in the concept of consent, as it arises from this judgment, we have contained the elements of everything that we mean by "the rule of law."

In a famous passage in the first great speech that Lincoln gave in opposition to Douglas in 1854, after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Douglas spoke about his doctrine of popular sovereignty, the doctrine of self-government as he understood it, and as many Americans understood it then. The heart of that doctrine was that the people by free vote should decide what should be done by the community. Douglas wanted to extend this right to the people in the territories, he wanted them to decide the issue of whether they would have slavery or not. Lincoln, of course, wanted a Congressional exclusion of slavery from the territories; Douglas said, "Let the people rule, let the people decide for themselves."

Douglas once characterized his own position by saying "the good people of Nebraska are good enough to govern a few miserable negroes." Lincoln replied: "Well, I doubt not that the people of Nebraska are, and will continue to be, as good as the average of people elsewhere. I do not say otherwise, but I do say no man is good enough to govern another without his consent."

In slavery, not only did the master govern the slave without his consent, but he governed the slave by a different set of rules from those by which he governed himself. Here we have a reversal of the concept of the rule of law, which is virtually contained in that great sentence and statement of self-evident principle in the Declaration with which I began. The rule of law: first, government by the consent of the governed; those who live under the law share in making the law under which they live. It also means that those who make the law live under the law that they make.

Now, you must remember that when the Declaration was propounded originally, it was in a world governed mainly by what we call the *ancien regime.* Of course, this was before the French Revolution. All of Europe

was governed by regimes in which there were nobles and gentry and those who were called "base born." But the Declaration of Independence insists that there is only one title conferred by birth, and that is the title of one's humanity. Thus, the United States of America was the first nation in the history of the world to claim freedom for itself in virtue of rights which were not uniquely its own, but which it shared with all men everywhere. So, from that point of view, the American Revolution is indeed, and was intended to be, a world revolution. Not a world revolution by force of arms, but by the desirability of the principles which it represents, which desirability presumably would be recognized, as it has been, very widely among mankind.

I was reading the other day a series of articles which has been appearing periodically in *The Los Angeles Times* by a reporter who has had a long-time relationship with Fidel Castro. The reporter, commenting on the intensity of the ideological effort that the regime is constantly making, said that Castro insists that the revolution is something that must be made a daily part of the lives of the people. This Cuban doctrine is, of course, a revolution of tyranny, although it was copied originally from the idea of the American revolution, which was a revolution of freedom. But among the handicaps America has in the world today is that the revolutions of tyranny in many parts of the world—Cuba is just one example—have a fervor and intensity that we lack. And that is a pity, because the truth should carry at least as much conviction as the lies which are spread by Marxists.

The Declaration of Independence does not merely proclaim ideals or principles as it is often thought; true, these ideals and principles are aims toward which we strive, but they also represent means with which we strive toward those ends. The idea of Constitutional government, government by the consent of the governed, with one rule for the governors and the same rule for those who are governed, is from the Declaration, as is the idea of a regime in which there is no permanent ruling class. The Constitution, as I trust you all know, in the days—hours, day, years, months ahead—remember that the Constitution itself does not have any statements of principles as to the grounds by which our institutions are organized or what are the principles guiding them.

The Constitution, as we know, is in several different respects, a bundle of compromises. Of course, the greatest of all was the series of compromises with slavery. Because the Constitution in and of itself has no statement of principles, it was possible to maintain, as the Southern leaders did in the period before and during the Civil War, that, since slavery was one of the institutions that the Constitution sanctioned, therefore, there was nothing in the Constitution that was, in principle, opposed to slavery. The Constitution does guarantee to each state, as you know, a republican form of government. But what a republican form of government is, is nowhere stated in the Constitution, nor has the

Supreme Court ever given a systematic exposition of its meaning. These matters become clearer when the link between the Declaration and the Constitution is seen.

The Constitution begins by saying, "We the people of the United States" and goes on to say, "ordain this Constitution." If you ask, "Who are 'We the People'? Who are the people who ordained it? When did they become a people? Under what circumstances, and in what sense did they become a people?" I believe you will be led to the Declaration of Independence as the first statute of the United States, the first law adopted through a representative body of the people of the United States as a whole. Madison and Jefferson agreed with documents that referred to the Declaration of Independence as "the act of union of these states." So the Declaration was not only an act of separation from Great Britain, but also an act of union.

It was that act of union of the States in, and through, the Declaration of Independence, with its statement of principles, that made the United States an independent nation as implied in the words, "We the People," with which the Constitution's Preamble begins. A "people" is not any chance assemblage of human beings that happen to associate for any purpose. But it is the assemblage of human beings who incorporated themselves into one people. As the Declaration says in its first sentence, "When, in the course of human events," one people become independent, they become one people by virtue of incorporating into their association—as the ground of that association and the purpose of that association—those principles which are set forth in that important document.

A Moral and a Religious People

Robert N. Bellah

I take my title from a statement by John Adams made during his first year as our first vice-president under the new Constitution. He spoke of the nature of the people for whom our Constitution was intended: "We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Our constitution was made only for a moral and a religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

To understand that comment we must consider what the founders thought about civic virtue and its relation to republican government. Despite agreement that they were establishing a republic, the leaders of the revolutionary generation differed in important ways about the kind of republic best suited to the conditions they confronted. John Adams, for example, argued that government should represent in its institutions the major groups in the society. From the beginning of the Revolution, Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine had pressed vigorously for widespread democratic participation, both as a check on the ambitions of leaders and as vital education in the spirit of republicanism. By contrast,

Alexander Hamilton and James Madison feared that, without strong leadership and central direction, a territorially extended and commercially oriented republic such as they contemplated would dissipate into endless factional battles. Yet all were agreed that a republic needed a government which was more than an arena within which various interests could compete, protected by a set of procedural rules. Republican government, they stated with one voice, could survive only if animated by a spirit of virtue and a concern for the public good.

It is perhaps most instructive to listen closely to James Madison on this topic. Madison, the Constitution's chief architect and joint author with Alexander Hamilton and John Jay of *The Federalist Papers,* has often been pitted, as the hard-headed advocate of the political machinery of checks and balances, against the republican idealism of Jefferson and Paine. Yet it was Madison who warned in *The Federalist Papers* that "the public good, the real welfare of the great body of the people, is the supreme object to be pursued; and that no form of government whatever has any other value than as it may be fitted for the attainment of this object." (*Federalist* 45) Madison was here drawing on the tradition of civic republicanism as he had come to understand it through twenty years of struggle with Great Britain and through the painful emergence of a new nation moving in an irresistibly democratic and commercial direction.

Mobilized through the revolutionary experience, the "great body of the people"—that is, white, male freeholders and not just men of Madison's own gentry class—were the actual as well as the legal source of sovereignty. And despite misgivings about the dangers of easily-persuaded masses which had been the commonplaces of aristocratic arguments against democracy, Madison agreed with Hamilton that "it is a just observation that the people commonly intend the PUBLIC GOOD." (*Federalist* 71—emphasis in original). Madison confided in another, less public writing, "I go on this great republican principle, that the people will have virtue and intelligence to select men of virtue and wisdom." The basis of this "great republican principle" was the proposition that the citizens of a republic are capable of recognizing and acting on what the 18th century called virtue. "Is there no virtue among us?" asked Madison. "If there be not, no form of government can render us secure. To suppose that any form of goverment will secure liberty or happiness without any virtue in the people is a chimerical idea."

The notion of pubic virtue, as Gary Wills has recently reminded us, bulked large for the revolutionary generation, with "a heft and weightiness unknown to us." Virtue was to them not an abstraction but a visible quality exemplified by contemporary men of virtue, by George Washington, the modern Cincinnatus, forming the new nation, ruling without excess, and returning to ordinary life, or by Nathan Hale becoming the American Cato in his last moments. The notion of virtue described an ideal of character that was made concrete not just in the works of the

ancient writers but in the stories of the revolutionaries themselves. The notion depended upon the belief that, besides the grimly self-focused passions, there was in human beings a capacity to apprehend and pursue the qualities of a character admirable for its integrity and attractive for its grace and excellence. Madison and his contemporaries thought of the pursuit of virtue as the way to reconcile men's desire to be esteemed by their peers with the most admirable and publicly beneficial ends of action.

Yet as Madison, Hamilton, Jefferson, Adams, and the others knew, aristocratic republics had been both more numerous historically and more enduring than democracies. They also knew, as students of the Enlightenment philosopher Montesquieu, an explanation for this discomfiting fact which set the problem the new democratic republic had to solve. Montesquieu had defined a republic as a self-regulating political society whose mainspring is identity of one's own good with the common good. He called this identity civic virtue. For Montesquieu, virtue defined the citizen as one who understands that personal welfare is dependent on the general welfare and, therefore, as one who can be expected to act accordingly. Forming such character requires the context of practices in which the coincidence of personal concern and the common welfare can be experienced. Among the specialized ruling group known as the aristocracy, this conjunction of private and public identity is, other things being equal, more likely to occur than it is in a democracy whose citizens spend most of their time in private affairs, taking part in government only part-time. Thus, according to Montesquieu, aristocratic republics will have greater stability and endurance than will democratic republics.

However, both conviction and political necessity committed Madison and the other framers to a regime that was ultimately democratic in spirit. The special challenge facing the founding generation was thus historically unique. They were attempting to establish republican institutions of democratic cast in an expansive commercial society. They needed to develop public virtues in democratic citizens. To achieve this end, the Constitution of 1787 organized a machinery of national government consciously adapted to the social reality of expanding capitalism and the attendant culture of philosophic liberalism. However, the instrumentality of checks and balances had as its positive aim to so offset the centrifugal and anarchic tendency of competitive individual and local self-interest as to foster what Madison called the "permanent and aggregate interests of the community." (*Federalist* 10). The founders were not expecting the common good to result mechanically, as though by the automatic workings of interests, or at least they did not expect it to happen unaided. Madison designed the elaborate constitutional mechanism in order to filter and refine popular passions, hoping that in the main men of vision and virtue would reach office at the national level.

The premise of the system was that the virtue of "the people" was such that they would choose for their officials and representatives men who would be great-spirited enough to place the public good above their individual or their local region's special advantage. Such men would constitute a genuine sort of aristocracy of merit. Ruled by leaders whose public stewardship was subject to frequent popular review through election, it was hoped that the United States could secure within a democratic Constitution the advantages Montesquieu had ascribed to aristocratic republics. The revolutionary leaders trusted that their claims to political and intellectual leadership would continue to receive popular recognition because they had proved themselves guardians and stewards of the public good. Thus they saw little need to further shape the political culture of the populace which had already been shaped by religious, personal, and political ties in local communities. Yet ironically, the Revolution, which had brought the notions of public virtue and proven wisdom to the fore, also unleashed the egalitarian spirit and drive for individual success that soon swamped this first, fragile pattern in a torrent of territorial and economic expansion, ending dreams of secure leadership by a national civic-minded elite in close touch with popular feeling.

Yet the Jacksonian era, which saw the dissolution of the older hope of rule by "the wise and the good" and the emergence of a new, less edifying politics of interest at the national level, was also a time of revival and reform among the people at large. Tocqueville was the great observer and chronicler of this moment in our history, when our mores, though threatened, were still healthy enough to give him some modest hope for our political future. We may remember particularly Tocqueville's emphasis on religion as a cause of our political happiness. "Religion," he said, "is the first of their political institutions." He meant this not in any sense of establishment, but rather to note the influence of religion in moderating inordinate desires and keeping within moderate bounds the self-interest that was so characteristically American. In this regard Tocqueville echoed Washington's view in the Farewell Address: "Of all the suppositions and habits which lead to political prosperity Religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labour to subvert these great Pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of Men and citizens. The mere Politician, equally with the pious man ought to respect and cherish them."

It is hard for many of our university intellectuals today to realize that we Americans have always been a religious people; it is harder still for them to understand that it is still to a considerable extent true. And when they do recognize it they often attribute to it only a negative or "reactionary" meaning, or they misunderstand its significance. One such misunderstanding is to assume that Puritanism and its influence on the

founders were compatible with a nineteenth or twentieth century liberalism and then to read modern liberalism back into the founding generation. There is the idea, for example, that Madison, trained as he was at Presbyterian Princeton, had a darkly Puritan view of human nature and thought free institutions could survive only if mechanisms could be worked out through which interest could counter interest. This idea is fair neither to eighteenth-century American Christianity nor to Madison. Believers in the Bible know that man was created in the image and likeness of God *and* that he is but dust and ashes. Madison is reflecting the tradition more adequately than his misinterpreters when he wrote:

> As there is a degree of depravity in mankind which requires a certain degree of circumspection and distrust: So there are other qualities in human nature, which justify a certain portion of esteem and confidence. Republican government presupposes the existence of these qualities in higher degree than any other form. Were the pictures which have been drawn by the political jealousy of some among us, faithful likenesses of the human character, the inference would be that there is not sufficient virtue among men for self-government; and that nothing less than the chains of despotism can restrain them from destroying and devouring one another. (*Federalist,* 55)

Nor did Hamilton differ: "The supposition of universal venality in human nature is little less an error in political reasoning than the supposition of universal rectitude. The institution of delegated power implies that there is a portion of virtue and honor among mankind, which may be reasonable foundation of confidence." (*Federalist,* 76)

Not only did Madison and Hamilton recognize a balance between depravity and virtue in all human beings, they saw that the balance varies from one people to another and that only a relative abundance of virtue among our people would make it possible for our constitution and our free institutions to survive. When we look at the history of nations since 1789, we can see how accurate their observation was. How many constitutions, how many regimes have come and gone, not only in the remoter republics of Latin America, but in France, the heart and soul of Europe. It is not that Americans have been without moral squalor, nor even that we have not committed grave national and international crimes. Yet the common decency of our everyday life has been rare among nations, and it is to this in large measure that we must attribute our political prosperity.

We may indeed ask whether the ethic of capitalism, which glorifies private success and the accumulation of consumption goods, on the one hand, and the cynical debunking of religion and morality by our intellectuals on the other, do not endanger that common decency and so our political future. It was not only Tocqueville but also the founders of our republic who linked the survival of our freedom to the survival of our virtue.

Note: The argument of this paper is closely related to that developed in *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* by Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler and Steven M. Tipton (University of California Press, 1985). Some paragraphs are drawn directly from chapter 10 of this book.

The Constitution and Civic Education

William J. Bennett

I want to aim my remarks at the teachers among you. You who matter so much to the common enterprise of citizenship were principally in mind at the conception of this project on the Bicentennial of the Constitution. My thesis is straightforward: Our Constitution and the learning and the spirit and the struggle of mind and of heart that lie behind it, need to be better known; need to be more widely known; need to be more deeply known.

What are we talking about when we talk about the Constitution? What is this document? First, some things that the document is not: It is not, despite what is sometimes thought, primarily an enumeration of rights. The main questions of rights in 1787 were already settled for our Founding Fathers. Rather than being an enumeration of rights, the Constitution is a statement of a blueprint for putting rights into effect; this is a different enterprise. The Constitution is a practical blueprint about rights, about power, and about powers. Gathered in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787, therefore, was not a group of theologians or of metaphysicians but a group of remarkably practical young men who were well read, who had given much thought and reflection to their task which was to establish a government—by thought and by reflection. So, we should see what went on then not so much as Church Fathers sitting and debating fundamental doctrine; that had been done earlier and that would be done again later. Rather they were like bishops establishing a worthy functioning church according to doctrine. So, the Constitution is not, as it is often talked about in our times—it is not primarily a lawyer's document. For our purpose it is fair to think of it primarily as a teacher's document.

Every generation of lawyers it seems wants to give a posthumous award and elect James Madison to the bar in their state. But, remarkable as it may seem to many of us who think of the Constitution as something that lawyers fiddle with and argue about, Madison—the main framer, the main writer of the Constitution—was not a lawyer. He prepared for the writing of the Constitution by a course of study at the College of New Jersey—later Princeton—study which included and emphasized history—particularly ancient history—religion, philosophy—especially moral philosophy—and languages. James Madison studied the humanities and then he wrote the Constitution. This is my first of several plugs for the humanities. It is a very important point to remember. For all those who wonder about the public significance of the humanities, it seems to me that many such arguments are settled simply to referring to the example of Madison. If the study of the humanities mattered in Madison's case, it certainly mattered and matters to all of us, because of what we became—one people—significantly through his efforts.

Related to the fact that the Constitution is not an enumeration of rights for lawyers to figure out, it is not a particularly esoteric document; but in its broadest outlines and in its basic thrust, it is clear, solid prose. And it turns out that our Constitution is the most imitated political document in the world. It is no surprise that it has been imitated by free countries. But it is perhaps more significant that it has been imitated in form, in word, if not in application, by tyrannies. Here is tribute to the power of the principles of the Constitution. It is a tribute through hypocrisy, but remember that La Rochefoucauld said, "Hypocrisy is the tribute that vice pays to virtue."

The Constitution and the ideas that underlie it set the terms of international political legitimacy. Interestingly enough, even current attacks on United States policy from other countries often use the very language of the Constitution. It sets the standard internationally.

A last feature to note about this Constitution is that, though it is young as the world goes, it is already venerable as the charters of nations go. We have lived longer continuously under a single document than any other people in history. To get some sense of comparison here, you may recall the story of the man who goes to the British Museum and asks the clerk for a copy of the French Constitution. The clerk looks at him quizzically and says, "I'm sorry, sir, we don't keep periodicals here." In its longevity lies proof that the Constitution works. What has enabled it to work so that, in Djilas' words, it has not betrayed the hopes of its children? The answer is that it has set bounds to, as it has encouraged, the bursting energies of a free people.

As I turn to civic education and its connection with the Constitution, I would like to say that although it is *our* Constitution, simply to inherit it is not enough. It is not good enough to view it simply as old parchment, as an antique document of somewhat faded prestige, which still governs us.

It would be best if we and our students can see our own faces in it, could in looking at it see ourselves. That, it seems to me, would be a good definition of a worthy educational task on the Constitution: for students to be able to see their own faces in it.

In turning to the subject of civic education about the Constitution, I move from the good news to the not-so-good news. Whether it will become bad news depends on us, on education and the Constitution. I would like you to consider the following thoughts.

> During the past forty or fifty years, those who are responsible for education have removed from the curriculum of studies the Western culture which produced the modern democratic state. The schools and colleges have, therefore, been sending out into the world men and women who no longer understand the creative principles of the society in which they must live. They no longer possess in the form and substance of their own minds and spirits the ideas, the premises, the rationale, the logic, the method, the values, or the deposit of wisdom that is the genius of the development of Western civilization. This prevailing education is destined, if it continues, to destroy our civilization, which cannot be maintained where it still flourishes or be restored where it has been crushed without the revival of the central continuous and perennial culture of the Western world. What we mean when we speak about Western culture is a century of culture of Greece, then inherited from the Greeks by the Romans, transfused with the religious teachings of the Old and New Testaments, and enlarged by countless artists, writers, scientists, and philosophers from the beginning of the Middle Ages up to the first third of this last century.

These thoughts, which I have quoted, were first stated not last year but thirty-three years ago, in 1941. They were written by Walter Lippmann. From what we see at the National Endowment, from what others tell us, and from what we read, things are no better today—and probably worse—than they were in 1941. There is less knowledge of our institutions, their growth, their rise, their legacy, and their animating principles.

Now, here we are in 1984, George Orwell's year if you will. Not in that book, *1984*, but elsewhere Orwell has written: "There are occasions when the first duty of intelligent people is the restatement of the obvious." The obvious concept that I would like to re-state, and I hope that it is intelligent too, is this: Our students need to learn the ideas, read the

books, and familiarize themselves with something of the landscape of the two thousand years that the makers of this Constitution surveyed in fashioning it.

Let me end with a few practical suggestions. In teaching about these matters, I include for my students a reading of the first two books of Plato's *Republic;* parts of Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War, particularly the Melian Conference and Pericles' funeral oration; excerpts from Hobbes' *Leviathan;* and Catherine Bowen's *The Lion and the Throne.* From there, I move to America and a reading of the Declaration of Independence and then to sustained thoughtful forays at the substance of the Constitution itself, accompanied by the appropriate companion papers of *The Federalist,* especially Numbers One, Six, Ten, Thirty-seven, Fifty-one, Fifty-five—each teacher has his favorites.

Then I go to Tocqueville. And I never know what I'll select from Tocqueville until I look at it again and remember something that I have forgotten that I like better than the thing I did before. Then to 1846 and to a book of the same name, which is not well-known enough—a book called *1846, the Year of Decision* by Bernard DeVoto. Then to the Lincoln-Douglas debates and to one of my favorite books which can be read in whole comfortably but in part if that is all you can manage: *The Crisis of the House Divided* by Harry Jaffa. Here students will see how the deepest Constitutional principles still have to be thought out, still have to be ground out. Finally, take students into the Twentieth Century, for there is still much to say about this Constitution and its legacy. I have asked my students to read Martin Luther King's *Letter From a Birmingham Jail* and Reinhold Neibuhr's *The Irony of American History.*

Let me say that, in joining with you to celebrate the Bicentennial of the Constitution, I hope that I have not been unduly sober: I certainly hope that I have not been solemn. I mean to be serious but not solemn. I do not, and I pledge to you the National Endowment for the Humanities does not wish to spoil the festivities and celebration of the Bicentennial by coming to a party and not staying, except to drop off a reading list. Along with the books, there is room for joy, for celebration, for cake and for firecrackers. But the need for the mind and the imagination to appreciate these matters must be up front. It will be hard work for some of our students, perhaps harder than they have ever done before, but I am convinced that it is worth it and with Lippmann that it is essential work for our time.

Conversation: The Higher Law

T. M. Norton, and Edward J. Erler

Norton: What is your empirical evidence for human equality?

Erler: Let me put it this way: I think that all species except the human species, has its form of—I'll use the word "government" here....

Norton: Not normative evidence, empirical evidence.

Erler: You just look around—every species has its form of government or social organization imposed upon it: queen bees, soldier bees, worker bees. The worker bees never get together and say, "Hey, we're tired of this matriarchal rule, let's have a little democracy." Male dominant lions rule the lion pride; as far as we know there has never been a congress of lions that have gotten together and said, "Hey, how about a little female-dominant rule here, how about an aristocracy, how about a democracy?"

Scientists think that dolphins are intelligent beings and that they have a sophisticated system of communication but we know that whatever the dolphins may or may not talk about, they do not talk about justice and the appropriate form of rule. Or, if they do, they don't disagree. The dolphins that live in the North Atlantic have the same social structure as those who live in the South Atlantic. Now, all I am saying here is that human beings don't have a form of government imposed upon them by instinct or nature. We are free, we have the potential to choose, even though we may rarely exercise that potential.

Norton: But most people with their empirical eyes would look around and see one human being dominating another human being. Your argument is not the argument from the empirical evidence, it is the normative argument; I think you should stick to that. It won't work for you otherwise. It's not an argument of rationality either.

Erler: Let me just put it this way: It is true that there are differences between human beings and a host of inequalities—some people are smart, some are not so smart, some people are physically powerful, some are not. You look around and you are confronted with the differences and the inequalities of human beings. So your most immediate empirical impression of the human species is the differences, not the sameness. I'm not denying that. But the point is that I don't think that there are any differences, for example, between the lowest representative of the human species and the highest representative of the human species that are equivalent to the differences between a queen bee and a worker bee. That is to say, there are no differences that are sufficient to establish one human being as the natural ruler of another in the way, for example, that every human being is naturally the ruler of every dog.

When the lions and dolphins get together, there is no dispute about social organization. What about us? We don't know. Some people say it should be oligarchy, some say the dictatorship of the proletariat, some say divine right of kings. The human species is unique in this respect. That's an empirical fact.

Norton: I don't deny your point that bees and other animal forms are prepolitical or nonpolitical, I am just saying that your argument for human equality I think would be more successful if you see it as it is really a normative argument. You seem to ignore the iron law of oligarchy. What about all of the empirical evidence that human beings do form together in associations that are hierarchical, that have a leader at the top?

Erler: There is no doubt, as I mentioned in my remarks this morning, that when you come to form a government it is going to involve the rule of some people over some other people. Even if we live in the most thoroughgoing democracy, and we elect our officials every day, still, for that day they will be the rulers and we will be the ruled. But that is an unnatural relationship because by nature, human beings are equal.

Norton: Right there is precisely where you do fall into that circularity.

Erler: If you can find somebody in this room, right now, somebody who is so naturally superior that we should obey his iron will this moment, I would be glad to hear the argument.

Norton: How about a surgeon?

Erler: Politics is not surgery. If we could array the human species before us here, in all of its representatives: the big people, the smart people, the dumb people and all the rest, have it here before us in all of its vast array and all of its differences, I still don't think that you could say that there was any human being who was so superior by dint of any natural distinction that we should all become that person's slaves. Now, that is my empirical evidence.

Norton: This may be a little naive, but what is the difference between a right and a privilege?

Erler: A right and a privilege? Well, let me just see if I can expound it this way: I think if you begin with a notion that equality means that there are no natural rulers, then you say that human beings, as a necessary fact of that equality, have certain rights. They are formulated, say, in the Declaration of Independence: Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We say that those rights adhere to the natural human condition. If there are no natural rulers, then every individual is his own natural ruler and has proprietorship over his life. We call that the right to life. Then, if that individual has the proprietorship over his life, he must be accorded the means to do what is necessary to protect life. We call that the right to liberty. And, of course, he must have amenities which we call the pursuit of happiness. These are considerations drawn from what we call the natural human condition. Now, what you have to do is to say, "What is necessary to secure the right to liberty?" When we talk about human beings, if they have a natural right to liberty, what is the best way to go about securing those things?

Well, take our First Amendment. The Framers believed that an absolutely necessary ingredient of the right to liberty was freedom of religion, of speech, and freedom of assembly, because the idea here is that freedom of speech is somehow intimately connected with the maintenance of a constitutional or a democratic government. But now, here, you see that the right to liberty as a natural right is the end of government. Freedom of speech as a civil right is a means calculated to secure a natural right to liberty so that we can say, freedom of speech in itself, the civil right, is not an end in itself; it is a means to the perpetuation of constitutional government, or democratic government. As a means to an end, it occupies something of an inferior position. Therefore privileges are established by positive law—constitutions or positive enactments—whereas natural rights, I would argue, adhere to the natural human condition.

Norton: You used to hear the phrase, "It's not a right, it's a privilege."

Erler: Yes. That's the idea that whatever government can create, it can take away. But a natural right is something that is not created by govern-

ment, and therefore can't be taken away by government. That's an important distinction.

Norton: I wondered if you would address, briefly, how the Fourteenth Amendment applies to gender at this particular time. It is an issue that comes up in the classroom frequently.

Erler: I think that is a good question and an important question. A week ago last Monday I appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee and argued against the Committee's approval of the Equal Rights Amendment. I argued that gender discrimination is adequately dealt with in the Fourteenth Amendment. I think the principle that is established by the Fourteenth Amendment—the principle that class shall not be the primary determinant of one's rights—makes it easy to extend the idea of gender classification to equal protection analysis. All laws must pass, or must be scrutinized by what the Court calls the "reasonableness test". We hold out a special group of classifications, however, those based upon race, religion, or national origin. We say that those are in a special category and that, whenever a law classifies on the basis of race, for example, we treat it very harshly. The Court will apply what it calls "strict scrutiny" and presume that that law is unconstitutional. If it is to survive this strict scrutiny or what the Court calls from time to time, "heightened judicial solicitude," then it must evidence some compelling, absolutely necessary reason for classifying according to race, religion, and national origin.

Now, what about gender classifications? No majority of the Court has ever said that gender classifications should be tested by strict scrutiny. But what the Court did was to create a third classification that rests somewhere between the reasonableness test—which is the minimum test—and strict scrutiny which is the most stringent of all of the tests. A law that classifies on the basis of gender, to use the Court's terms, "must serve an important governmental interest and be substantially related to the effectuation of that governmental interest."

Now, my argument against the Equal Rights Amendment is not that women don't have rights—far from it—but I think that we should retain the traditional notion of equal protection.

Norton: Let me add a word. The actual text, as I remember, of the Equal Rights Amendment, is simply that "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied on account of sex." I suspect that the fact that the ERA was pending was what kept the Court from taking the next step of including gender discrimination under straight equal protection. They thought the constitution would be amended, when it turned out that the constitution wasn't amended and at the moment appears may not be, they may go forward with the analysis and to judge that equal protection of the law does cover gender discrimination.

Erler: A word about what led up to the 19th, or Woman's Suffrage Amendment, might clarify things. It's clear, because Congress did decide to pass the Fifteenth Amendment, that the Fourteenth Amendment was not considered adequate for the protection of voting rights. But the Fifteenth Amendment says the right to vote shall not be abridged on account of race or color. What about gender? Not mentioned. It is still left to the states, so that any state could have allowed women to vote if it wanted to. But, the same progression that led to the adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment led eventually to the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment. We might say to ourselves in hindsight, "you know, that was a little slow." But, it is a little hard for us to see the strength of the states' rights arguments that existed in 1868, 1875, and so on. 1919 is a lot later. Is the right to vote . . .

Norton: The right to vote was an example in those days of a privilege rather than a right.

Erler: I was just going to say that. The right to vote is an example, not of a natural right in the sense of which you have life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, but it is one of those rights which are created by constitutions in order to secure other rights. Because it is a right used in the preservation of other rights it is a means to an end, so that any government, any society, has a certain degree of discretion in whether to extend the privilege or withold it. For example: We do it on the basis of age. People under the age of 18, formerly people under 21, do not vote. Felons cannot vote, you know, mentally handicapped could not vote. Now, I am not putting women in that class, but that was the view of the time. We could go back briefly to the *Plessy* case and the "separate but equal" doctrine on race relations. Almost immediately the idea of separate but equal slowly—too slowly for our taste, too slowly for our notions—begins to break down. A lot of things interfere with the progress of the breaking down of the separate but equal doctrine. You know, World War I, the Depression, World War II, and things like that. But the Court steadily developed this notion of strict scrutiny—that race can play no role, no matter what. And the dissent in the *Plessy* case served as our ideal of what the Fourteenth Amendment really meant, so that some day we could really have a color blind Constitution.

Prior to the *Brown* case, there were a whole series of cases involving segregation in law schools, segregation in graduate schools, and so on. The Court never confronted the separate but equal question head-on, but by 1954 the doctrine had been substantially eroded. So, the big surprise is, when we come to the *Brown* case, we don't see anything of these ringing phrases about a color blind Constitution. The analysis was in place and it had worked for a number of years. In 1954, I would have thought, had I been old enough at the time, "Isn't it amazing that Justice

Warren did not cite the Harlan dissent in *Plessy?*" He seemed to go out of his way not to use the analysis that had been developed up to the time, that is to say, the strict scrutiny analysis. Instead, he said a violation of equal protection rights is not a law that merely distinguishes between races, but is a law that distinguishes between races which, in addition, produces the feeling of inferiority, or the notion of stigma. So that the Court began to look at Fourteenth Amendment rights not, indeed, in terms of rights which belong to the individual—the old color blind notion—but in terms of rights deriving from a racial class status.

Brown held that what determines whether the Fourteenth Amendment has been violated or not is the specific relationship that exists between one race or another race and whether the relationship itself stigmatizes one race. They had all the psychological evidence from Kenneth Clark which said that, in the context of grammar school education, separation itself has this stigmatizing effect.

What I am saying is that the *Brown* case established the notion that equal protection of rights depends upon racial relationships and not upon the individual standing before the Fourteenth Amendment and saying, "My rights have been violated." Here, in other words, the Court established the notion of racial class as the primary touchstone of equal protection. So far from overruling the separate but equal doctrine, the *Brown* case really gave new impetus to it because it looked at equal protection of rights in terms of racial class relationships.

Norton: Let me suggest this briefly in defense of the Court's opinion: I was in graduate school at the time and we speculated as to how the Court was going to decide this case. On the whole, it was generally believed that they would find some way of striking down segregated schools but the question was, what formula would they use? How would they get a majority? How would they get it possibly unanimous with all of the politics of the situation? Would it be accepted? Why was a unanimous opinion extremely important? Well, the whole picture that you see in this series of Amendments, to try to cope with the problem of the freed slaves, the same problem existed for nearly 100 years. To put it bluntly, there is a question of the difference between what the law says and what people do. And, for 100 years, there was rigid, massive, social discrimination against blacks and some of you are old enough to remember it. It is gratifying that I can say now that not all of you remember it. The depth and strength of this discrimination was such that the Court had to consider the political aspects and write what it thought, apparently, was the most persuasive opinion. Maybe it would have been better if they had raised a standard to which the wise and honest could repair, but they chose to take the evidence of social science which, in hindsight, was a mistake.

Erler: The Warren Court in years after 1954 used the suspect classification test to strike down a host of laws classifying on the basis of race, by

saying "We say that a law classifying on the basis of race is inherently suspect and will be presumed to be unconstitutional absent a showing of compelling interest." Tremendous progress was made over the years between *Plessy* in 1896 and, let us say, the 1960's or 1970's. What progress! And just as we are about to arrive at the situation where we can begin to say that Constitutional practice now substantially comports with the principles of the Declaration, we are told, "Hey, wait a minute. That old notion that we cannot have racial classifications under the law really isn't good after all. We need to do something more dramatic, more radical. We need to reintroduce racial classifications under the law in order to promote the demise of racism."

And so I think that the *Brown* case, in so far as it established racial criteria for the protection of rights, was a tremendous mistake. Let me just read you what, to me, is a shocking statement from Justice Blackmun in the *Bakke* case.

"I suspect that it would be impossible to arrange an affirmative action program in a racially neutral way and have it successful. To ask that this be so is to demand the impossible. In order to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race. There is no other way. In order to treat some persons equally, we must treat them differently." He could, of course, have said "separately" because this is a perfect statement of the separate but equal doctrine.

We spent all those years trying to put the genie of race back into the bottle and it required a long struggle. Now, without too much thought, we want to release it again. I think that is a mistake.

Now, let's get back to the Declaration of Independence and its understanding of equality. I believe that the argument went like this: Because human beings were equal, they were possessed of rights. That is to say that there is a cause and effect relationship. Now, I think that unless you can talk of rights in terms of a necessary consequence or a necessary conclusion or deduction from the idea of equality, there is really no ground for asserting the existence of rights.

Norton: They become all privileges in the old fashioned sense. Something to be given and something to be taken away.

Erler: Exactly. My point exactly. Let me just pose the most radical example, the one that has been the most troubling. Not only at the American founding, and during the Civil War, but today, the issue for America has really been the same, that is to say, the issue of slavery. How can you say that slavery is wrong? All of us here in this room believe without reservation that slavery is morally wrong. Why do we believe it is wrong? After all, slavery was at one time, the way of the world. Slavery has been practiced by all races. It has been in existence from the very dawn of human self-consciousness. It is a fact of the world. How can we say it is wrong? I suggest this to you, unless you have some idea which is

derived from the principle of equality, you cannot say slavery is wrong. Why is it wrong for some people who are stronger to come along and dominate those who are weaker?

The Framers said people *are* equal but they are not being treated as equal. Don't forget, Jefferson, when he wrote that ringing phrase, "All men are created equal," was a slave owner. And we can say, and many people have said, "What a hypocrite!" But all I can say is, if it was hypocritical, let's celebrate his hypocrisy because without the idea of equality, there can be no notion of rights at all.

Now, if we say that the idea of equality is empty, all of our rights are merely privileges and are empty as well. And you know what privileges are, they are conceded to us by government and whatever is conceded by government can be taken away. We don't want to find ourselves in that situation. I don't think that you can make an argument for group rights or class rights which is an argument drawn from the notion of equality. Class claims are not egalitarian, they are inegalitarian claims. Now, what the Framers believed was that the idea of equality was simply an expression of the natural human condition. And here we could have a standard. Here we could have some kind of an anchor. What Abraham Lincoln called the "sheet anchor of American Republicanism." Some point of orientation, some beginning point which was not open to dispute, which was not an arbitrary beginning point. That nature, in other words, could provide the standard for human institutions. Now, what that means is that all individual human beings are possessed of natural rights. A regime premised on the idea of natural rights and the rule of law sweeps away all preordained class barriers to the expression of individual talent. This is what we know by the expression, "equality of opportunity."

Now, along comes John Rawls, in 1971, who writes *A Theory of Justice*, a very influential book, and he says, "Wait a minute. How can you ground this notion of rights in nature? Nature itself is arbitrary." Just look around. It makes you smart, it makes me not so smart. It makes you beautiful. It makes me not so beautiful. It makes you strong, it makes me weak. Do I deserve to be unintelligent and weak and not so beautiful? It's not fair. So, Rawls says that nature is simply a lottery and that no one deserves his greater natural talent, that a regime set up to give equal opportunity for people to express their natural talents is not really a just regime because it is only perpetuating an arbitrariness derived from nature.

And, indeed, at first glance, it looks like nature is somehow arbitrary, but the point of view of the Framers is that whatever the arbitrariness in nature's apportionment of talent, it is not dependent upon human caprice and will. And the rule of law means that law serves no individual interest and is not allowed to express human caprice. The constitutional regime has an obligation to clear away all conventional or arbitrary barriers to the expression of natural talent. What that means, of course, is that results will be unequal but they will not be based upon arbitrary impositions—caste

or class—but they will be inequalities that are based upon natural differences with respect to an individual's ability to exercise rights. It washes out human caprice and will which is, at bottom, the foundation of despotic government, for the difference between despotism and democracy is that the despot rules for his own interest, not being impeded by law. And constitutional government means that the rule of law is superior because law cannot express individual interest.

Norton: What would be your recommendations to improve our venerable Constitution?

Erler: I think that the Constitution is fine as it stands, as an expression of the principles of Constitutional government. I would say that the great progress that we have made, particularly in race relations in this country since the Civil War, is due to the fact that we always had those principles to guide our actions. Lincoln once remarked that those who wrote the Declaration of Independence did not think that they were extending the exercise of rights to all human beings in one fell swoop; they didn't have the power to do that! They knew that would be worked out over a number of years. What Lincoln said was important about the Declaration was that it established a "standard maxim" by which political conduct could be judged. Even though it may not be perfectly attained, it could be constantly approximated.

I am not impugning the motives of anybody who makes the argument for affirmative action and for racial classifications, but I think that it is a great mistake even though the motives might be good, because it is bringing back into the law things that will undermine the principles that have gotten us this far. We have gotten this far because we have said that race plays no role in a constitutional government. Now, we are told that race can play not only some role but a major role in determination of what one's equal protection rights are. I think we will come to regret this decision before long.

Everyone Loves Money in *The Merchant of Venice*

Norman Nathan

ANY production of *The Merchant of Venice* reawakens the charge of anti-Semitism, a position attacked by those who see Shylock as a sympathetic character who has been much wronged. The director and the actors can, and of course do, lend support to one side or the other, depending upon how they portray the action and the nuances they give to individual lines.

There is, however, another approach to the play that may be more illuminating. It could begin with the simple question, "Who in the play is greatly interested in money?" Careful investigation shows that everyone in the play who has any significant dialogue is interested in money. Shylock's avarice, it seems, often hides the great greed of all the Venetians.

This pervasive greed has been noted by but a few, and then briefly. John Russell Brown, in his Arden Edition of *The Merchant of Venice*, points out, referring to sonnets 4 and 6:

> Love was often spoken of in commercial terms, and in these sonnets, Shakespeare sees it as a usury, where those who give and those who receive are happy and free agents, and where the multiplication of happiness is a natural interest.[1]

Brown makes this more specific to *The Merchant of Venice,* especially for Act III, scene ii:

> The commercial terms are found throughout Portia's speech: "the full sum of me" (1. 157), "to term in gross" (1. 158) and finally,
>
> Myself, and what is mine, to you and yours
> Is now *converted* (11. 166-7)
>
> Her possessions and herself are "converted" to her lord's possession, and the "bargain of [their] faith" is ratified with the pledge of a ring.[2]

In these and other examples, Brown generally considers the references to commerce on the part of the Venetians primarily as metaphor, frequently love metaphor. But in *The Merchant of Venice* more than a lover's metaphor is involved. Wealth as such and its perquisites permeate the play and are in the minds of all major and some minor characters. From Antonio to the Gobbos, father and son, all are looking for the life of luxury. Even if we exclude those passages where Shylock's usury and his interest in money are expressed, there is no shortage of references to money. Many of these references singly, and certainly all of them cumulatively, indicate that greed is a part of the personality of many more characters than merely Shylock.

The first forty-five lines of the play deal mainly with Antonio's financial problems of the moment and how these may be saddening him.[3] His denial that his melancholy is caused by monetary matters in no way ignores the value of wealth:

> My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
> Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
> Upon the fortune of this present year:
> Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad. (I,i,42-45)[4]

Antonio appears to be agreeing that financial difficulties could make him sad.

Since Antonio is a merchant, even a merchant adventurer, it is not surprising that he is interested in money—what is surprising is that many critics pay little attention to this interest, despite the fact that one who invested in merchandise brought in by sea was playing for high stakes. Even in the last scene of the play Antonio says, asking Portia to forgive Bassanio's giving away of her ring, "I once did lend my body for his wealth." (V,i,249) It is hardly flattering to Portia to be told that Antonio lent money to Bassanio so that he could marry a rich woman. For the

moment at least, Bassanio is made out to be a fortune hunter. But apparently no one in the play would be disturbed by Antonio's remark.

And just a bit later Antonio speaks his last lines in the play, after being informed by Portia that "three of your argosies / Are richly come to harbor,"

> Sweet lady, you have given me life and living,
> For here I read for certain that my ships
> Are safely come to road. (V,i,286-288)

Antonio sounds just a little like Shylock when he describes the return of his argosies as giving him "life and living."

At Bassanio's initial entrance the talk about money abates only until he is alone with Antonio. Then Bassanio mentions his present poverty, his indebtedness to Antonio, and his need to borrow more money from him. He defends his request largely in terms of suggesting that the new loan will be profitably employed so that he may be able to repay the first borrowing, which he squandered. This money will be used to court a rich woman, Portia. While Bassanio points out that she is "nothing undervalu'd / To Cato's daughter" (I,1,165-166)—the word *undervalu'd* has appropriate overtones for a financial setting—Bassanio adds in fitting ambiguity, "Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth." Though he talks about her "sunny locks," the comparison to "golden fleece" again includes monetary considerations, particularly when this is followed by "Colchis' strond, / And many Jasons come in quest of her."

That one of the meanings of *golden fleece* is money becomes more obvious later in the play when Gratiano exhibits that he too is interested in finances. After Bassanio chooses the right casket, Gratiano exclaims, "We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece." (III,ii,241) Clearly, Gratiano's point is that now Bassanio and he, an impoverished lord and his gentleman friend, will be well off living in Belmont.

Salerio accentuates the question of money in the very next line when he says, "I would you had won the fleece that he hath lost."[5] It is difficult to paraphrase this metaphor precisely, but the sense is that Antonio is in financial distress because of Bassanio; and Salerio's phrasing leaves no doubt that fleece refers to money.

Gratiano further shows his monetary interest right after he announces that he and Nerissa will wed, their marriage having depended upon the "fortune" of Bassanio's choice of casket. Gratiano says, "We'll play with them the first boy for a thousand ducats." (III,ii,213-214) Nerissa's response, "What, and stake down?" is no doubt intended as risque humor, but it may also indicate surprise at Gratiano's wagering, for where has he money of his own?

Portia, too, is given dialogue pertaining to money. She tells Bassanio, "Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear." (III,ii,313) Clearly the

dear bought refers to the money that she expects to pay to save Antonio. But she might well have been willing to save him without mentioning how much Bassanio is costing her. Of course, this line is a witty word play. Still, the diction here, and in so many other places, revolves around the financial.

Apparently Portia is willing to help others either by spending her own money or, at least, by bringing them news of their financial prospects. When Lorenzo says of her kindness to Antonio, "I know you would be prouder of the work / Than customary bounty can enforce you," she replies, "I never did repent for doing good / Nor shall not now. . . ." (III,iv,8-11) She herself brings good news to Antonio,

> Unseal this letter soon;
> There you shall find three of your argosies
> Are richly come to harbor suddenly.
> You shall not know by what strange accident
> I chanced on this letter. (V,i,275-279)

Her cryptic conclusion suggests that in some way she has been of value to Antonio in this matter.

Right after the choice of the caskets, Portia's wish for Bassanio is arithmetically interesting, and the careful listener in the audience might well wonder at the order and the numbers used. She says,

> You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
> Such as I am. Though for myself alone
> I would not be ambitious in my wish
> To wish myself much better, yet for you,
> I would be trebled twenty times myself,
> A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times
> More rich, that only to stand high in your account,
> I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
> Exceed account. (III,ii,149-157)[6]

Immediately after Bassanio saw through her father's wisdom and chose the lead casket, Portia might well have reversed the order of her speech and wished her husband that she was sixty times richer, a thousand times fairer, and ten thousand times herself. In the lines as she speaks them, it seems that gold is glistering.

Even lowly characters in the play have their eyes on value. Launcelot Gobbo tells Jessica, "This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs. If we grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money." (III,v,23-26) Granted that this is a joke, but it is a joke on a subject much discussed in the play. Even the messenger announcing Bassanio's coming to Belmont says, in what we would consider bad taste,

that tangibles will be brought, "Gifts of rich value." (II,ix,91) Apparently it takes a display of wealth to win wealth.

In this play where a major theme is friendship, whether it be Antonio befriending Bassanio, Bassanio befriending Gratiano, Gratiano befriending Lorenzo, some significant amount of money is involved even beyond the loan by Antonio. For all these friendships help to achieve marriages in which the financial well-being of the participants is assured. Bassanio, of course, receives with Portia a magnificent dowry, Belmont. Gratiano receives the equivalent of a dowry, or at least a good living, for now that he has married Portia's waiting woman the two of them will live on at Belmont.

The remaining set of lovers, Jessica and Lorenzo, likewise cannot think of love and marriage without money. Jessica in effect is stealing a dowry from her father when she elopes with Lorenzo and throws him a casket containing money and perhaps jewels. Even the word *casket* is significant. Shakespeare has used some form of it but nineteen times in his writings. Thirteen of these uses are in this play, and all of them have some relationship to making or marrying a fortune.[7]

And at the end of the trial, when Shylock's life has been mercifully spared, the Duke, Antonio, and Portia are concerned with giving the income of half of Shylock's money to Jessica and Lorenzo and making sure that all of it will go to the young lovers at Shylock's death. A fine imposed upon the usurer is understandable; but the size of the fine and the interest taken by the Christians to insure the wealth of Jessica and Lorenzo indicate where some of the heart and treasure is. Certainly, this is a strange, ultra-legal disposition of the matter for which Antonio and Shylock are in court.

Did Shakespeare know that dowries were common in Venice and that benevolence often provided dowries for poor maidens? Perhaps not, but

> . . . the Monte di Pieta lent on pledges at the rate of 5 per cent, which proved to be more than enough to cover administrative costs. The officials of the Monte therefore dispensed the surplus annually, partly in providing dowries to poor maids (a favorite form of charity in Venice and the Venetian republic). . . .[8]

In a real sense, the Duke is taking the money got from usury and providing a dowry with it much in the Venetian manner, although in this case all of it is given to one "poor" maid whose husband says, hearing the news from Portia, ". . . you drop manna in the way / Of poor starved people." (V,i,294-295)

The Monte di Pieta is interesting to us in more ways than one. It was an important institution during the sixteenth century:

During this period, the feeling against Jews was increasing in Italy.... An agitation had therefore been begun for the replacement of the Jewish usurers by public pawnbroking establishments, conducted on a charitable basis—Monte di Pieta, or mounds of piety, as they were called.... In some places the rates charged had to be so high that they increased rather than lessened the burden upon the common people.... The Jews... sometimes lent money to support the new foundations.[9]

The origin of the name is in the word "mountain." "The *monte*, or mount, originally indicated the pile of coins which the banker or money changer had before him on his table. Hence, it ultimately came to signify a bank."[10]

Lady Portia's estate is Belmont. In the play, this is the one place name for which there is no geographical place—at least, not in the vicinity of Venice. The word could mean "beautiful mountain," and it probably does as a metaphor. But in view of Portia's wealth and generosity, Shakespeare is telling us that she and her estate are a "beautiful bank"![11] Portia, as Balthazar, provides for a dowry for Jessica; she provides for Nerissa and, later, Gratiano; she renews Lord Bassanio's position in life; and she frees Antonio from a Jewish money lender. She is indeed a Monte di Pieta, a Belmont, all by herself!

Finally, it is not only the characters in the play who time and again stress wealth. Even the punishments for conspiring against a life or doing something that might well take a life stress monetary penalties. Portia says

> Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh,
> But in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
> One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
> Are by the laws of Venice confiscate
> Unto the state of Venice. (IV,i,308-312)

Some lines later Portia mentions the penalty for seeking the "life of any citizen,"

> The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
> Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
> Comes to the privy coffer of the state,
> And the offender's life lies in the mercy
> Of the Duke only.... (IV, i, 352-356)

The Duke can spare the conspirator's life, but not even that powerful personage under law can spare half the offender's money!

Actually, in Venice trade and the money it represents are more important than real justice. Antonio says,

> The Duke cannot deny the course of law;
> For the commodity that strangers have
> With us in Venice, if it be denied,
> Will much impeach the justice of the state,
> Since that the trade and profit of the city
> Consisteth of all nations. (III,iii,26-31)

It is apparently *the trade and profit of the city* that is predominant. The quality of mercy may drop from heaven, but it must never be allowed to affect trade and profit. Shylock, too, would buy this concept. Fortunately for Antonio, Portia or her uncle Bellario knew about another Venetian law that could be resurrected for the occasion.

Venice was, of course, a maritime city. It depended upon trade and money for its very existence. Commerce does not question the source—*non olet pecuniam,* "money has no smell." On many occasions the Senate received funds from Jews. Whatever phrasing Antonio may use ("I'll break a custom," I,ii,64), he does take ducats that were, as he maintains, accumulated against Divine law prohibiting usury.

It is not surprising that money assumes such an important part in an Elizabethan play set in Venice. While in the next century Venice was to lose much of her wealth and power, during the late 1500's, "Venice, the city of 300 churches, was approaching its millenium."[12] Felix Gilbert, in pointing out the elaborateness of engagements, provides an example of the great need for wealth:

> Under the decree of 1512 marriage celebrations were sharply regulated; what the law permitted gives us some idea of the immense luxury which was in vogue on such occasions in times when conspicuous waste provoked no criticism. . . . The family of the bride was still expected to give six small parties to not more than twenty people and two big parties for fifty people in the interval between the engagement and the wedding. The bridegroom was permitted to give two parties, one for eighty and the other for fifty people.[13]

Large doweries and single heirs (note that no one in *The Merchant of Venice* has a sibling!) again show the normal Venetian desire to accumulate money:

> Noble families with some wealth fought hard to keep it,

> sending daughters into nunneries to save on doweries... leaving fortunes to a single heir and preventing the alienation of estates by their descendants.[14]

The desire for wealth was apparently so nearly universal in the Venetian community that Philip Longworth cautions, "Nevertheless, there were Venetians, even noble Venetians, who turned away from wealth and disdained politics."[15]

Reading the play in the spotlight of the background just presented should surely soften a bit the character of Shylock and make the Venetians something less than saints who give their all for friendship. Shakespeare apparently caught Venice as she is now perceived to be by modern historians.

None of the above is meant to cast great disparagement on the Venetian nobles whose natures share the worldliness surrounding them. Part of the point of the play is that all characters, from Antonio to Shylock, partake of Venetian mores and regard wealth as of prime importance. But the indenture to the contract is that money must be used only in approved ways according to practice. While the choice of caskets tells us that all that glisters is not gold, nevertheless one should remove false appearance to find true gold both metaphorically and literally. This could be Shakespeare's overall joke. All of the characters in the play share one major interest, a desire for wealth; and the "good" characters, though they use their greed often for noble ends, are truly greedy.

Notes

[1] London: Methuen, 1959. P. lv.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. lvi.

[3] He is discussing these matters with Salerio and Solanio whose names, as Christopher P. Baker points out convincingly, are related to the Italian word *salario*, meaning wages or salary. ("Salerio, Solanio, Salarino, and *Salario*," *Names*, XXIII, 1 (March, 1975), 56-57).

[4] *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974). All quotations from the play are taken from this edition.

[5] Baker points out that throughout the play Salerio, Solanio, and/or Solarino speak mainly of money matters.

[6] The *Riverside* text has been emended to agree with the Q1, Q2, and F1 reading of the lines 154-155. *More rich* should be in 1. 155 if only to stress the ambiguity in the word *account*.

[7] See Marvin Spevack, *The Harvard Concordance to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973).

[8] Brian Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 605. See also my note: "Belmont and the Monte di Pieta in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Cahiers Elisabethains*, Oct., 1980, pp. 69-70.

[9] Cecil Roth, *Venice* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1930), p. 21.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] "Belmont and the Monte di Pieta in the *Merchant of Venice, Cahiers Elisabethains*."

[12] Philip Longworth, *The Rise and Fall of Venice* (London: Constable, 1974), p. 233.

[13] J. D. Hale, ed., *Renaissance Venice* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), p. 279.

[14] Longworth, p. 214.

[15] Longworth, p. 193.

Victoria Woodhull: A Radical for Free Love

Bernice Redfern

Victoria Woodhull (1838-1927) has been variously described as a spiritualist, an anarchist, and an advocate of free love. She was involved in all of these causes, but most of all she was a radical feminist. She opened for discussion a whole range of feminist issues which would eventually be developed and implemented by future generations of feminists. Woodhull spoke openly about her convictions on the public lecture stage and in the pages of her crusading tabloid, *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*. She advocated the complete emancipation of women in all spheres of life—political, economic, and social. However, she was most outspoken in her advocacy of sexual emancipation for women. Indeed, she spoke in favor of a sexual revolution a hundred years before it became acceptable to do so. More importantly, she applied her beliefs to her own life.

Victoria Woodhull remained on the fringes of the established women's suffrage organizations. She acted as an independent spokesperson for women's rights. Her outspoken belief in free love was far too radical a concept for the majority of the middle class members of these organizations. They favored raising men's moral standards to the level of women's, not the reverse.[1] Woodhull wanted to eliminate the traditional economic and legal institution of marriage, do away with the moral double standard, legalize prostitution, and provide birth control information to women. She failed in her cause because she attempted to accom-

plish so many sweeping social reforms on her own in an age which was not prepared to accept them. It is true that she was active on behalf of women's issues for only a short time, 1870-1876, after which she became disillusioned with the cause of women's rights. For this reason, she has not always been given the recognition she deserves by serious scholars of women's history. Nevertheless, Woodhull was an intelligent and articulate spokesperson for women's rights. She deserves serious attention because she was instrumental in formulating the theoretical foundation upon which the women's movement in the United States is based.

Victoria Woodhull and her sister Tennessee Claflin first achieved widespread public notice in 1870 when they started their own business as the first female stockbrokers on Wall Street.[2] About this time, Woodhull met Stephen Pearl Andrews, who was an advocate of free love and held the anarchist view that "marriage was a vestige of an earlier civilization best left behind."[3] Woodhull was heavily influenced by his doctrines and her views on sexual freedom, no doubt, are based largely on his teachings.[4] In May 1870 the Claflin sisters, along with Victoria's companion, James Blood, began publishing *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly* to publicize their views. In addition, Woodhull embarked on a career as an orator on the public lecture stage. Her speeches were probably even more effective than the articles in her newspaper in publicizing her views. They were certainly colorful! She impressed her listeners with the power and eloquence of her rhetoric, even though they did not agree with her views. Consider the following contemporary newspaper description.

> As an eloquent speaker she is peerless among the women of the world. We have heard Mrs. Stanton, Mrs. Livermore, Miss Anthony and Miss Anna Dickinson, but none can approach Mrs. Woodhull in the eloquence and the power of her oratory.[5]

Woodhull was not mindlessly reading speeches prepared for her by others, because she was too convincing for that. Also, she was able to extemporize brilliantly upon the topics of her lectures. This fact impressed audiences so much that it was recorded in newspaper accounts of the time. For instance, one article expressed the following opinion: ". . . it is when speaking without notes that she is most brillant [*sic*], and is best appreciated by the audience. . . ."[6] Another newspaper story attests to her intelligence.

> The impression that all her ideas are concentrated in a lecture or two is entirely erroneous. She is not only ready at all

> times to defend herself against attack, but continually acts on the aggressive, ill-concealing the innate force that longs for expression. The intense activity of her brain is remarkable.[7]

Woodhull's program for the emancipation of women centered around the elimination of the legal and economic institution of marriage. She used graphic language to express her hatred of this institution, calling it a fraud and stating that she intended to "stab it to the heart, so that its decaying carcase [*sic*] may be buried . . . ."[8]

Woodhull believed that women had been socialized by a male-dominated society to believe that they could not take control of their own lives. As long as women were economically dependent on men for their livelihood they would never be able to control their own lives. She wanted to educate women to assume the power she believed they possessed. She readily admitted that she was attempting to revolutionize the institution of marriage. She even hinted that women might become the dominant partner in the relationship between the sexes.

> I make the claim boldly, that from the very moment woman is emancipated from the necessity of yielding the control of her sexual organs to man to secure a home, food, and clothing, the doom of sexual demoralization will be sealed. From that moment there will be no sexual intercourse except as is desired by women. It will be a complete revolution in sexual matters, in which men will have to take a back seat and be content to be servants where they have been masters so long.[9]

Woodhull, not unlike other reformers of the period, considered marriage a form of prostitution. She declared that "the woman who sells her body promiscuously is no more a prostitute than she is who sells herself in marriage without love. She is only a different kind of prostitute."[10] As far as Victoria Woodhull was concerned the only difference between a prostitute and a wife was "a slip of paper costing twenty-five cents and upward, good during life, that a man carries with him to save the expense of purchasing . . . elsewhere."[11]

Woodhull's attitudes toward marriage may be linked with her unfortunate early match, at age 14, to Canning Woodhull, an alcoholic. She divorced Woodhull, yet surely this traumatic experience made a lasting impression upon her. She even made several references to it as a motivating factor in her adherence to free love.[12]

Victoria Woodhull proposed a rather drastic, if not highly unrealistic, tactic that women might use in order to secure emancipation from marriage.

> The women of this country have the power in their own hands, in spite of the law and the government being altogether of the male order. Let the women issue a declaration of independence sexually, and absolutely refuse to cohabit with men until they are acknowledged as equals in everything, and the victory would be won in a single week. I have got my freedom in spite of the laws, and I defy any men . . . to wrest it from me. And any woman can have her liberty at the same or less price.[13]

As a more practical alternative to the above tactic, she suggested that instead of traditional marriage, relationships between the sexes might be handled like a business contract between partners. She stated that people who wish to live together should:

> only be obliged to file marriage articles, containing whatever personal rights, rights of property, of children, or whatever else they may deem proper for them to agree upon. And whatever these articles might be, they should in all cases be equally entitled to public respect and protection. Should separation afterward come, nothing more should be required than the simple filing of counter articles.[14]

With this proposal, Woodhull anticipated the modern prenuptial contract by more than one hundred years.

She also suggested that women could become more independent by practicing birth control. She believed that women should not be forced to have unwanted children. She wrote that she had learned the "secret" of birth control, and that she would be glad to inform women about it in private.

> In brief, then, I propose to show woman how she best may redeem herself, and next the race; show her the secret by which she shall be emancipated from slavery of thousands of years, which shall install her sovereign in the domain of sex, and which will save her in the future from undesired pregnancy and unwilling child-bearing.[15]

In addition to condemning marriage and advocating sexual emancipation for women, Woodhull was vehemently opposed to the double moral standard which allowed men sexual freedom, but which held women to a strict standard of purity. She believed that men and women should live by the same moral standard. Specifically, she focused her concern on prostitutes, whom she knew were unfairly treated by society. She

regarded prostitutes as victims, and the men who were their customers as the real criminals. She thought that prostitution could be regulated by licensing and taxing it. She also felt that prostitution could be reduced by giving women access to all types of honest employment and by paying women fairly.[16] She argued that the men who patronized the houses of prostitution should be ostracized by society to the same extent as were the women who worked in them. She suggested that publishing the names of the customers along with those of the prostitutes would "do more to suppress the social evil than anything else."[17] Furthermore, she said that it was the customers who should be checked and registered in order to prevent the spread of venereal disease, because it was the men who infected the women and not the reverse.[18]

Woodhull adhered to the anarchist view that when men and women were free of all legal restrictions and regarded each other as sexual equals, there would no longer be a need to resort to coercion of any kind or to a theory of mutual ownership in sexual relationships. She believed that government had no right to make laws that interfered with an individual's social freedom. In the new society she envisioned, men would be nobler and women would be purer, and social freedom would lead to a higher morality.[19] Woodhull stated on numerous occasions that she did not believe that free love equaled promiscuity. She was not trying to lower standards of morality for women, nor was she endeavoring to raise men's behavior to the lofty level expected of Victorian women. She advocated that men and women should live by a single standard of morality to which both sexes would be accountable. She believed that human behavior was perfectable, and that the more noble, spiritual instincts of humanity could be developed. Thus, she stated, "Promiscuity in sexuality is simply the *anarchical stage of development* wherein the passions rule supreme. When spirituality comes in and rescues the real man or woman from the purely material, promiscuity is simply impossible."[20] Until this change should occur, Woodhull said that promiscuous sexual intercourse would have to be endured. Anyway, she argued: "Promiscuousness signifies without selection or choice; it means indiscriminately. Harmonious and reciprocal variety is not, in any proper sense, promiscuousness . . . ."[21] To Woodhull social freedom meant: "mutual consent based upon mutual desire, which may be temporary, or may continue during life."[22]

Woodhull did more than simply expound the principles of social freedom; she lived her life by those principles. In 1866 after her divorce from Dr. Woodhull, Victoria and James Blood applied for a marriage license in Ohio. However, there is no record that they were ever legally married, and she continued to use her first husband's name.[23] Victoria openly admitted this fact to her audiences, and it was reported in the press. Her own newspaper reported it as follows:

> Mrs. Woodhull believes that the present laws relating to the marriage relation are outrageously unjust toward women. Although she and Col. Blood have lived together as husband and wife for ten years, and always expect to so live, they will not show these unjust laws sufficient respect to go through the marriage ceremony they proscribe. She would have no objection to laws controlling the marriage relation if woman was allowed an equal voice in making them.[24]

Her most famous affirmation that she indeed lived her life according to the principles she advocated was made in 1871, while giving the *Speech on the Principles of Social Freedom.* When asked by a member of the audience if she was a free lover, she replied:

> Yes, I am a Free Lover. I have an *inalienable, constitutional* and *natural* right to love whom I may, to love as *long* or as *short* a period as I can; to *change* that love *every day* if I please, and with that right neither *you* nor any *law* you can frame have any right to interfere.[25]

This admission was the beginning of the end of Victoria Woodhull's career as a social reformer. It lost her the support of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who did not favor such unorthodox social views.[26] Then in the February 17, 1872 issue of *Harper's Weekly,* Thomas Nast caricatured Woodhull as "Mrs. Satan", who would save the poor wife and children of the drunkard through free love.[27] This severely damaged Victoria's credibility as a feminist and a reformer. Although she continued her public lectures, it is evident that she was growing tired of her role as a social agitator. During one of her speeches in 1873 she admitted that she was tired of fighting.[28] By the winter of 1875-76 she had become exhausted, ill, and hounded by financial difficulties. As a consequence, she began to cancel her speaking engagements.[29] With the June 10, 1876 issue, *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly* ceased publication and in 1877 Woodhull left the United States. She lived the rest of her life in quiet respectability in England.[30]

Victoria Woodhull's radical belief in sexual emancipation for women places her in the forefront of the American feminist movement. She thought of herself as a prophet of a new age. She once said, "My whole nature is prophetic. I do not and cannot live merely in the present."[31] Perhaps this was the motivating factor in her determination to speak publicly for such a controversial cause as free love in a time when it was not likely to be widely accepted. Yet, some of her views such as those concerning the legalization of prostitution and elimination of traditional marriage would still be considered quite radical today. She is deserving

Thomas Nast, "Mrs. Satan," *Harper's Weekly* (1872).

of recognition from scholars of women's history for helping to lay the theoretical groundwork upon which the present women's movement is based. She is worthy of a more prominent place in the history of the nineteenth century women's rights movement than she has so far been accorded.

Notes

[1] Aileen S. Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 115.

[2] *Notable American Women,* 1971 ed., S. V. "Woodhull, Victoria Claflin," by Geoffry Blodgett, p. 653.

[3] Margaret S. Marsh, *Anarchist Women 1870-1920* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981), p. 70.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Monroe County *Republican* (Sparta, Wisconsin), excerpted in *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly,* 7 March 1874, p. 11.

[6] *Lynn Record* (Lynn, Mass.), 8 November 1873, excerpted in *Woodhill and Claflin's Weekly,* 19 December 1873, p. 7.

[7] *The Gazette* (St. Joseph, Mo.), 10 January 1973, excerpted in *The Human Body the Temple of God* by Victoria Woodhull Martin (London: n. p., 1890), p. 374.

[8] Victoria C. Woodhull, *Tried as by Fire* (New York: Woodhull, Claflin and Co., 1874), reprinted in *The Victoria Woodhull Reader* (Weston, Mass.: M and S Press, 1974), p. 5.

[9] Ibid., p. 39.

[10] Ibid., p. 19.

[11] Ibid.

[12] *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly,* 18 October 1873, p. 12.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Victoria C. Woodhull, *A Speech on the Principles of Social Freedom* (New York: Woodhull, Claflin and Co., 1871) reprinted in *The Victoria Woodhull Reader*, pp. 19-20.

[15] "To Women Who Have an Interest in Humanity, Present and Future," *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*, 31 October 1874, p. 9.

[16] *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*, 20 August 1870, p. 9., 16 August 1870, p. 9.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Woodhull, *Tried as by Fire*, p. 22.

[19] Woodhull, *A Speech on the Principles of Social Freedom*, p. 42.

[20] Ibid., p. 39.

[21] Victoria C. Woodhull, *The Elixir of Life* (New York: Woodhull and Claflin, 1873), pp. 10-11.

[22] Ibid.

[23] *Notable American Women*, p. 653.

[24] *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*, 10 January 1874, p. 13.

[25] Woodhull, *A Speech on the Principles of Social Freedom*, p. 23.

[26] Kraditor, p. 114.

[27] *Harper's Weekly* 17 February 1872.

[28] Victoria C. Woodhull, *Reformation or Revolution, Which?* (New York: Woodhull and Claflin, 1873), p. 40.

[29] Emanie Sach, *The Terrible Siren*. (New York: Harpers, 1928), pp. 267-268.

[30] Ibid., p. 288.

[31] Woodhull, *A Speech on the Principles of Social Freedom*, p. 42.

Goneril and Regan: "So Horrid as in Woman"

Claudette Hoover

The consensus of modern critical opinion appears to be that Goneril and Regan of *King Lear* are the most elusive of Shakespeare's tragic women. Unwilling to follow nineteenth-century Shakespeareans in dismissing them as "diabolical," "subhuman," and "bestial,"[1] influential critics of this century have agreed that since their motivations defy understanding, they must be regarded as representations, personifications, or symbols rather than individualized characters or even dramatic types.[2] This point of view is argued, for example, by Lyons who contrasts Goneril and Regan's incomprehensible motivations with Edmund's conventionally explicable ones in his role as villainous bastard, and concludes that because they cannot be classified, "the two daughters, who have been given 'all,' must remain the subject of unanswered questions about what in nature breeds such 'hard hearts.' "[3] Although I am equally convinced that the play's central question, "Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?"[4] remains disturbingly rhetorical, my purpose is to show that Shakespeare did draw from various sources and dramatic traditions in his creation of the elder daughters and that these significantly affect our experience of the nature of evil in the *Lear* world. In making this argument I assume agreement with Adelman's definition of sources as "all those images and patterns in the minds of the audience which Shakespeare can tap to make his meaning" and with her conviction that "the meaning of any play is partly defined by the traditions in which it asks to be seen."[5]

In Shakespeare's major source, the anonymous *The True Chronicle Historie Of King Leir,* the characterization of both Gonorill and Ragan is based entirely on familiar antifeminist stereotypes. Since stereotypes are inherently self-explanatory, the figures available to Shakespeare are neither mysterious nor horrifying, and it is probable that he rejected them for this reason. It would, however, be a mistake of the most elementary kind to ignore the antecedents that he set aside. As I shall argue, his decision not to exploit the evil daughters of *The Chronicle* proves just as significant as his exploitation of other sources. One such source was the tradition of the masculine woman popularized by Seneca. That Shakespeare's conception of *Lear* may have been influenced by classical drama has been noted *en passant,*[6] but that it substantially informs the characterization, actions, and deaths of Goneril and Regan has not been sufficiently discussed. Not only does the image of the masculine woman replace the feminine characterization of *The Chronicle's* daughters, but it also is used with consistent and telling dramatic irony. Another and far more universal source was the ancient myth (long sanctioned in Christian theology) of woman's sexual insatiability which Shakespeare introduced into his play so surprisingly and so late. In this case also he complicated a potentially simple explanation of the elder daughters' actions by connecting the myth with their ruthless ambitions and by placing the dual motivations of lust and political power at the center of the catastrophe.

It is a commonplace of *Lear* criticism that a structural principle of the play is to raise our hopes for Lear's safety only to destroy them and by doing so to make us close, if unwilling, participants in the hero's experience. It remains to be observed, however, that a similar pattern of alternating hope and despair structures Lear's efforts to understand the cruelty of Goneril and Regan and that, despite our higher awareness, our experience in this regard mirrors that of the king. Like Lear whose imagination is shackled by myths about the nature of women, we succumb (however periodically and briefly) to the myths, dramatic traditions, and stereotypes that the playwright evokes, and we share Lear's dismay when we discover that the seductively familiar proves inadequate to our questions.

II

The True Chronicle Historie of King Leir is the only direct source in which the motives and actions of the evil daughters are given in any detail and, as I have implied, their characterization is based on several of the most persistent medieval and Renaissance strictures against women. Because they are so thoroughly familiar and so *naturally* feminine,[7] metaphysical questions of the kind inspired by Shakespeare's Goneril and Regan are

altogether precluded. The reason for Gonorill and Ragan's intense hatred of Cordella, for instance, is simply that she is far too attractive. Although, as Gonorill admits, Cordella's virtue threatens them, what really galls and spurs their revenge, is her renowned physical beauty. In several passages the elder daughters manifest the antifeminist assertion that all women are by nature competitive and jealous.[8] When they are told beforehand that Leir will require them to profess their love and that the ones who love him most "shall have most unto their marriages,"[9] they decide to use the occasion "To be reveng'd upon [Cordella] unperceyv'd" (1. 170). Knowing that Cordella will refuse Leir's command to marry the Gallian King, they plot to aggravate the situation in "such bitter termes, / That he will soone convert his love to hate" (193-94). In this they succeed. After Cordella's insistence that although she cannot express herself in words, she loves her father as a child ought, they interject:

> Gon. Here is an answere answerlesse indeed:
> Were you my daughter, I should scarcely brooke it.
> Rag. Dost thou not blush, proud Peacock as thou art,
> To make our father such a slight reply?
> (11. 281-84)

Spurred on by their rancor, Leir casts Cordella out with: "Shift as thou wilt, and trust unto thy selfe" (2. 317). That the motive for this revenge is jealousy of Cordella's beauty is emphasized by the wicked daughters' parting remarks:

> Gon. I ever thought that pride would have a fall.
> Rag. Plaine dealing, sister: your beauty is so sheene,
> You need no dowry, to make you be a Queene.
> (11. 325-27)

Shakespeare, it seems, was so determined to reject this particular cliché that references to Cordella's beauty, such as those which occur in most versions of the legend, are entirely absent.[10] Nor are Goneril and Regan out for revenge. They are not, apparently, aware of Lear's ritual beforehand, and they remain entirely silent during the intense confrontation between Cordelia and their father.

Despite the frequent critical assumption that Goneril and Regan actively hate Cordelia, it is not at all clear that this is the case. In context Goneril's statement that their father always loved Cordelia most (I. i. 290) is merely a warning of how his age is "full of changes" (1. 287) and of how she and Regan must look to receive "the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them" (11. 298-90). Her accusation that Cordelia has scanted obedience is prompted by the latter's blatant insult ("And like a sister am most loth to call / Your faults as they are named"

[11. 270-71]), and is also, given the presence of France, politically astute. Furthermore, it is surely important that after Cordelia's departure from court neither sister mentions her again. In *The Chronicle* Gonorill and Ragan's jealousy continues far beyond the accomplishment of their revenge:

> Gon. Sister, when did you see *Cordella* last,
> That prety piece, that thinks none good ynough
> To speake to her, because (sir-reverence)
> She hath a little beauty extraordinary?
> . . . .
> Rag. God give her joy of her surpassing beauty;
> I thinke her dowry will be small ynough.
> (11. 468-76)

Since Shakespeare knew well that jealousy does not disappear with distance, we should probably take Goneril and Regan's disinterest in Cordelia as yet a further indication of their general dearth of fellow-feeling. Having no sense of human relatedness, they notice only those who contest their wills, and once such threats are quashed, they simply move on. By rejecting the traditional and petty feelings of Gonorill and Ragan for their younger sister, Shakespeare left us with the far more disturbing possibility that Lear's elder daughters have no feelings for her whatsoever.

Shakespeare rejected two other feminine characteristics depicted in *The Chronicle*—desire for marriage and avarice. The older play portrays the courtships and shows both couples as giddy about the forthcoming weddings. The spectacle of Leir's daughters breathlessly awaiting the arrival of their future husbands affects our impression of them as decidedly feminine:

> Rag. Well, I thinke long untill I see my *Morgan*,
> The gallant Prince of Cambria, here arrive.
> Gon. And so do I, untill the Cornwall King
> Present himselfe, to consummate my joyes.
> (11. 499-502)

Not only are Gonorill and Ragan shown as eager for husbands in a conventionally feminine way, but one of their fears is that Cordella will marry before they do. Gonorill vows that before she will stand for that, she will "marry one or other in his shirt" (1. 123). Having easily fulfilled their desire for marriage (which is portrayed somewhat comically), the daughters immediately exhibit a far more sinister attribute of which women were frequently accused, rapacious avarice.

Accusations in anti-feminist literature about greed of women range

from the mildly amused to the profoundly serious. The authors of *Malleus Maleficarum* (1484), for instance, take the latter tone, claiming that female greed is the basis of all their sins: "The many lusts of men lead them into one sin, but the one lust of women leads them into all sins; for the root of all woman's vices is avarice."[11] Gonorill is an excellent illustration of this assertion. If her motives for wanting to sabotage Cordella are singularly feminine, so are her objections to her father's living arrangements: he is an intolerable expense that prevents her from living lavishly. By scene 8 she has already cut his pension in half, and ultimately decides to restrain all of his allowance so that he will "go seeke elsewhere for better helpe" (1. 810). Not only does she take umbrage at having to support her father, but she also cannot tolerate his concern about her extravagant self-indulgence:

> I cannot make me a few fashioned gowne,
> And set it forth with more then common cost;
> But his old doting doltish withered wit,
> Is sure to give a sencelesse check for it.
>
> (11. 782-85)

It is this combination of avarice and vanity that leads her to plot her father's death.

Shakespeare's women, of course, are not depicted as longing to trap their husbands (as the curtain rises Cornwall and Albany are willingly trapped), nor are they obsessed with the kind of material greed that motivates their precursors. In her confrontation with Lear over the hundred knights, Regan does mention that "both charge and danger / Speak 'gainst so great a number" (II. iv. 241), but it is obvious that her reasons for the reduction have nothing to do with feminine greed. In fact, both of these women show a surprising lack of interest in the frippery which was thought to occupy the minds of women. Here, too, Shakespeare rejected a motivation that would have been easily grasped by his audience.

An equally prevalent feminine characteristic was available to him in Ragan's desire to rule her husband. In *The Troublesome Helpmate* Rogers shows that "the favorite attack on women in the Middle Ages was for insubordination—disobedience, scolding, verbal or physical resistance, struggling for the mastery. . . ."[12] In *The Chronicle* Ragan perfectly demonstrates the type. Immediately after her marriage, she confesses in a self-congratulatory soliloquy that she will rule the King of Cambria as she pleases and will brook none of Leir's criticism about it:

> Doth he give out, that he doth heare report,
> That I do rule my husband as I list,

> And therefore meanes to alter so the case,
> That I shall know my Lord to be my head?
> Well, it were best for him to take good heed,
> Or I will make him hop without a head,
> For this presumption, dottard that he is.
>
> (11. 1182-88)

Typically, women such as Ragan scorn the weak resolutions of men and envy their physical strength. When she is worried that the messenger has disobeyed her command to kill Leir and his counselor Perillus, she exclaims:

> O God, that I had bin but made a man;
> Or that my strength were equall with my will!
> These foolish men are nothing but meere pity,
> And melt as butter doth against the Sun.
> Why should they have preeminence over us,
> Since we are creatures of more brave resolve?
>
> (11. 2371-76)

Although the speech foreshadows Goneril's condescending attitude toward her "mild husband," it is significant that she never refers to the superior physical strength of men or to the fact of male supremacy. On the contrary, when Albany accuses her of treason, she retorts "the laws are mine, not thine: / Who can arraign me for't?" (V. ii. 158-59). Shakespeare's insubordinate wife scorns Albany partly because his "milky gentleness" interferes with her own political ambitions (he will not punish villains before "they have done their mischief" [V. ii. 54-55] and partly because his very existence interferes with her desire for Edmund. Unlike Ragan of *The Chronicle*, Goneril does not envy male preëminence or lament female subjection since she herself instinctively assumes the masculine role. Her sex does not prevent her from proceeding directly to action, and she never sees her dominance over Albany as a struggle that must continually be maintained: to her it is merely a given of the situation. The casualness of her comment to Edmund, "I must change arms at home, and give the distaff / Into my husband's hands" (IV. ii. 17-18) implies that she foresees no difficulty in doing so. In this instance Shakespeare's technique is first to proffer a recognizable stereotype and then to radically qualify it. The effect of creating a self-confident and defiant wife who is totally oblivious to the limitations of women, and of having her desire power for sexual and political reasons rather than for domestic ones, is to deprive his audience once again of a straightforward stereotype that averts disturbing reflection.

Since sixteenth-century comedy and tragedy abound with jealous, mercenary, and insubordinate women, Gonorill and Ragan's behavior toward Cordella and Leir is explicable in terms of dramatic stereotypes. Not only is their violence explained outwardly by tradition, but they also indulge in soliloquies that make their inner motives and self-justifications explicit. As a result their cruel behavior raises few vexing questions. In *King Lear,* on the other hand, Shakespeare rules out the possibility of such simple explanations almost entirely. By having Goneril and Regan married before the play begins, he precludes jealousy of Cordelia's beauty and marriage prospects; by ignoring their desire for wealth to "grace" themselves and spread their names abroad (11. 787), he eliminates feminine vanity and greed; and by transferring Ragan's ambition for domestic dominance to Goneril's lust for male political power, he evades a familiar (and often comic) struggle. By the time of Lear's exit from Gloucester's house all we know about his evil daughters with certainty is that they lied in scene one, that they fear losing their new authorities, that they are manipulative and identical in their unkindness, and that they have laid a plot against their father's life. Despite the fact that our later understanding is foreshadowed by characters whom we trust (Cordelia, Kent, and especially the Fool), it remains disturbingly true that their cruelty cannot be explained outwardly and that in the absence of Edmund-like soliloquies, their inner motives are obscure. As Mack has observed, their violence is thrust upon us "with the shock that comes from evil that has nowhere been inwardly accounted for."[13] By relying upon centuries of preconditioned assumptions about the nature of evil women such as those at the basis of the *Chronicle,* Shakespeare could intensify the horror of the *Lear* world both by denying such expectations entirely or by offering them, like Tantalus' fruit, as explanations that ultimately prove elusive or insufficient.

Two such moments occur in crucial "discovery" scenes in Act IV: Albany's comment when he at last hears of Goneril's treatment of her father ("Proper deformity shows not in the fiend / So horrid as in woman" [IV. ii. 60-61] and Edgar's response when he discovers Goneril's lust for Edmund ("O indistinguish'd space of woman's will!" [I. vi. 275]. Both remarks point to dramatic types that appeared frequently on the stage. The first, hinted at by Albany, is that of the masculine woman, a figure familiar to Shakespeare from Seneca and elsewhere; and the second, decried by Edgar, is that of the "insatiable strumpet," a favorite target of theologians and antifeminists throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

The type of the masculine woman is unmistakable in the characteristics that Goneril and Regan display because of their inflexible resolve to retain control over their new positions: directness, rationality, aggressiveness, and indomitable will. These qualities, almost exclusively accredited to men, are evinced in the daughters' bald insistence that Lear

acknowledge his old age, in the painful literalness of their responses to his pleas for gratitude and justice, and in the cold rationality of their arguments against the continued presence of his hundred knights. Even in her condemnation of Albany's "milky gentleness," Goneril expresses the traditional male scorn of the emotional weakness of women, and the unnaturalness of Regan's indulgence in physical violence emphasizes her resemblance to the aggressive and unscrupulous Cornwall. When Albany, sickened and outraged at Goneril's treatment of her father, tells her that "Proper deformity shows not in the fiend / So horrid as in woman," he recalls the servant's response to Regan's delight in torturing Goucester ("If she live long, / And in the end meet the old course of death, / Women will all turn monsters" [III. vii. 99-101]), and reënacts Lear's bewildered astonishment at Goneril's betrayal which culminates in a direct attack on her womanhood when he begs Nature to dry up her "organs of increase" (I. iv. 288). For Albany as for Lear the reality of "Tigers, not daughters" (IV. ii. 40) destroys a cherished myth about the nature of women, and for both the shock of that discovery is compounded by the knowledge that the outwardly fair and gentle is so inwardly foul and harsh.

The prototype which eludes them is found, of course, in classical drama in which women such as Hecuba, Clytemnestra, and Antigone assume masculine characteristics to accomplish their goals.[14] Although they are frequently condemned (especially by the chorus) for their masculine strength of character which is deemed monstrous and unnatural,[15] it is precisely through this attribute (whatever the quality of their passion or the justice of their cause) that such women find their heroism. Like Medea and Clytemnestra who pursue their goals through violence, Lear's daughters are shamelessly ruthless. After their plot (in tandem) to commit the dual crime of regicide and parricide is thwarted by Gloucester, they proceed individually to acts of violence that are equally savage. Regan joyfully takes part in the blinding of Gloucester and kills the interfering servant with her own hands. Goneril sends Oswald to dispatch Gloucester, bribes Edmund to murder Albany, poisons her sister, and (like Phaedra and other classical heroines) commits suicide when her desire for her lover is frustrated.

It should be mentioned immediately that although these similarities to the masculine women of classical tragedy are hardly superficial, Shakespeare uses them with such sustained and effective irony that the possibility of heroism is negated from the first scene onward. Unlike the Greek and Roman heroines, Goneril and Regan are not forced to *assume* unnatural masculine characteristics to defend a cause that they consider just. That such attributes are innate is evident in their initial dialogue. And since from that scene onward they define "wrong" as whatever thwarts their will and "right" as whatever accomplishes it, they are not compelled to make conscious moral choices as are their classical

ancestors. They have no self-revealing soliloquies which make their private selves comprehensible and no gods or Furies to support or justify their actions. In short, unlike even a Medea, they remain disconcertingly unknowable.

The irony of the playwright's false analogy becomes especially clear in the report of Goneril's suicide in V. iii. There he sets up a situation so blatantly similar to classical drama that the association is inevitable and then, as if to show its inadequacy, quickly demolishes it. The report of her death begins with the stage direction, "*Enter a Gentleman, with a bloody knife*" and with the Gentleman's tormented cry "Help, help! O, help!" which is followed by the traditional series of choric demands—"What kind of help?" "Speak, man," "What means this bloody knife?"—and the Gentleman's explanation, " 'Tis hot, it smokes; / It came even from the heart of—O! she's dead." When Albany makes the predictable inquiry, the Gentleman's Sophoclean answer "Your lady, sir, your lady: and her sister / By her is poison'd; she confesses it," requires that Albany share his shock and grief and demand a lengthier description of the off-stage action.[16] Significantly, any further explanation is prevented by Edmund's boastful lament, by the entrance of Kent, and by Albany's insistence that Goneril and Regan be left unmourned:

> Produce the bodies, be they alive or dead;
> This judgment of the heavens that makes us tremble,
> Touches us not with pity.
>
> (11. 231-32)

Shakespeare's abrupt suspension of the classical pattern serves to emphasize that, although in her assumption of male prerogatives, modes of behavior, and self-inflicted death, Goneril may resemble the antique heroines, her suicide is not a statement of values in the manner, say, of Antigone. On the contrary, it is a fitting end to a series of unpardonable and inexplicable crimes. If, then, *King Lear* glances, however obliquely, at the classics, the effect is neither to elevate nor to explain his own masculine women. On the contrary, the fact that Goneril and Regan parade as heroines but lack both grandeur and cause simply magnifies their inhumanity and compounds our confusion.

Since the action of the first half of *King Lear* is motivated by the efforts of the evil daughters to strip their father of the remnants of power and identity that remain to him, and since they succeed by usurping masculine roles, it is surprising that their downfalls are not the result of this unnatural behavior. This, however, is far from the case. Goneril and Regan fall because their sudden lust for the bastard Edmund (who has no parallel in *The Chronicle*) overwhelms their reason. Just as they are about to engage in a battle for their kingdom and their lives, they direct all of their energies toward his seduction.

In introducing this unanticipated trait into their characterization Shakespeare took care to have the sexual appetites of Goneril and Regan associated with the school of thought (running from Juvenal to the Church Fathers and well beyond the Renaissance) which held that the lust of women is so ravenous that they will stop at nothing to gratify it. Goneril's willingness to imperil her ambitions for her desire for Edmund ("I had rather lose the battle than that sister / Should loosen him and me" [V. i. 18-19]) recalls St. Jerome's widely quoted assertion that women's lust "engrosses all thought except for the passion which it feeds."[17] Interestingly, it is Edgar who responds to this new development with the formulaic generalization about female carnality. After reading Goneril's treasonous letter to Edmund in which she begs him to deliver her from the *"loathed warmth"* of Albany's bed, he exclaims:

> O indistinguish'd space of *woman's* will!
>
> (IV. vi. 273; emphasis added)

The effect of Edmund's generalization from Goneril's lust to the sexual nature of all women is to place her (and by extension Regan) in a recognizable theological framework which should account for their sexual aggression. The fact that Edgar's assertion does not prove an adequate rationalization of the lust of either daughter is merely one more instance (and in this case a brilliant one) of Shakespeare's determination that the old myths and stereotypes will not account for evil in the *Lear* universe. Their "woman's will" is not shown as "indistinguish'd"; on the contrary, it is focused exclusively on Edmund for reasons that they themselves articulate. After her unsubtle attempt to bribe Edmund ("this kiss, if it durst speak, / Would stretch thy spirits up into the air"), Goneril confesses in an ecstatic aside that her attraction is prompted by his moral indifference and his steadfast determination to climb, qualities which she possesses in abundance and which Albany totally lacks:

> Oh! the difference of man and man.
> To thee a woman's services are due:
> My Fool usurps my body.
>
> (IV. ii. 26-28)

The connection in Goneril's mind between ambition, power, and sexual attraction is as blatant as her association of male potency with ruthlessness. Similarly the "love" dialogue between Regan and Edmund combines the political and the sexual. It also opens with an unsavory bribe of political advancement ("Now, sweet Lord, / You know the goodness I intend upon you: / Tell me, but truly, but then speak the truth, / Do you not love my sister?" [V. 1. 6-9]), and only then proceeds to an interrogation about exclusively carnal matters. In bloodless language

Regan pleads for assurance that Edmund has not found his way "To the forfended place" and that he and Goneril have never been "cojunct / And bosom'd" (11. 11-14).

Since Goneril and Regan's desire for Edmund is inseparable from their admiration of his heartless ambition, Edgar's ascription of it to simple lust is, at best, reductive. And since in their internecine struggle for possession of Edward the daughters merely reënact the violent means they used to attain political power over Lear, the "interlude" (to parrot Regan) suggests as much about the nature of evil in this play as it does about "woman's will." Speaight's observation that "as *King Lear* becomes more and more a play about power, it becomes more and more a play about lust; for lust is seen as just another variant of power" is relevant to this point.[18] But that primitive ferocity will not be confined to political ends is no more unsettling than the fact that Lear's children are not explicable by aphoristic articulation of an ancient myth. To an audience such as Shakespeare's, predisposed as they were toward Edgar's view of female sexuality, the realization of its limited applicability to Goneril and Regan must have been especially puzzling.

III

H. S. Wilson agrees with Maynard Mack that Goneril and Regan are never accounted for; rather, he adds, "they are imposed upon us as symbols, the more monstrous for being inexplicable. . . . We forget them as people, while we contemplate the power of evil which they embody, while we feel the horror of it."[19] However appealing such symbolic readings of *King Lear* may be, they do have the unfortunate effect of simplifying a play that is notoriously complex on every level. In the case of Goneril and Regan (whatever their symbolic value), the text consistently reminds us that they are female characters who reflect traditional, various, and even conflicting attitudes about women as people. That Goneril and Regan are first of all *women* (a fact strangely ignored in much *Lear* criticism) is both a major determinant of our responses to them as characters and a primary motivation of the tragedy.

One has only to imagine Lear challenging three sons with the question, "Which of you shall we say doth love us most?" to see that the gender of his children is all-important in determining the question, the responses of the elder daughters, and the king's reaction to Cordelia's silence. Her refusal to participate in a ritual based on the myth of the "eternal feminine," the nurturing female who is surrendering, selfless, changeless and mothering,[20] prompts Lear's revelation that he had hoped to set his rest on her "kind nursery." When that plan is destroyed by Cordelia's reticence, he rapidly transfers his expectation to Goneril and Regan; and when Goneril proves herself a "Degenerate bastard," he

again transfers the myth, this time to Regan who (he is certain) will be "kind and comfortable" (I. iv. 315). Even when confronted with their united resistance in II. iv. (so effectively symbolized in their seizing of hands), he continues to rely on Regan's "tender-hefted" (womanly) nature and on the illusion that her eyes "Do comfort and not burn." When it becomes painfully evident that they are indeed as like as "a crab is like an apple," Lear adds to his earlier curse of sterility by calling for the "fen-suck'd fogs" to "infect" Goneril's beauty and includes Regan in his vow of revenge on such "unnatural hags." That his curses are directed at their femininity (including the epithet of "hags"[21]) emphasizes his astonishment at their unnatural behavior as women and daughters. With his departure to the heath (the cacophony of "Shut up your doors" ringing in his ears), Lear leaves the myth of the "eternal feminine" far behind. By the time he asks Tom O' Bedlam, "Didst thou give all to thy daughters? / And art thou come to this?" (III. iv. 487), he has lapsed into a self-sustaining irony that will endure until his awakening to Cordelia.

A comparison of Gloucester's easy belief in his son's supposed betrayal to Lear's painfully slow recognition that Goneril and Regan had merely pretended to play their prescribed roles of loving daughters, underlines the importance of gender. Gloucester can readily assume that Edgar is an "Unnatural, detested, brutish villain!" (I. ii. 76-77) because there are many precedents in history, legend, and myth of sons violently rebelling against fathers. By contrast, Lear's comprehension of his parricidal daughters is laborious and protracted precisely because there are so few.[22] As early as II. iv, Gloucester confides to Lear that their "flesh and blood" has "grown so vile, / That it doth hate what gets it" (1. 149-50), but it is only much later that Lear can acknowledge that his daughters are "not men o' their words" (IV. vi. 106). It is notable, furthermore, that the recognition is made after madness has come and that the generic "men" is used with acidulous irony.

In contrast to moralistic critics who implicitly fault Lear for not being aware of his own legend, Shakespeare made no such assumptions about his audience's knowledge of Goneril and Regan. After having the daughters present themselves as the ultimate of selfless womanhood in their extravagant responses to the king, they immediately undermine the myth in private dialogue. Thus our awareness here, as elsewhere, is far higher than Lear's. Despite this awareness, any audience, preconditioned by Renaissance drama, expects an explanation of female characters in terms of myths and dramatic types such as those in *The Chronicle* which portray the reverse side of the "eternal feminine"—evil women who are motivated by any combination of vanity, jealousy, rivalry, avarice, desire for mastery, or lust. As I have pointed out, however, the scenes following Lear's abdication rapidly extinguish such expectations. On the other hand, if woman's natural inclinations will not enlighten, neither will her unnatural ones, specifically, her appropria-

tion of masculine roles. When, for instance, in response to Regan's thoroughly rational answer to Lear's plea for knights, "What need one?" Lear says, "Oh, reason not the need!" the characteristic attributes of man (rational) and woman (irrational and emotional) are not only inverted but elicit our sympathy for Lear's feminine demand. Far from being ennobling, the daughters' assumption of masculine rationality seems barbarous in contrast with Lear's intuitive assumptions about the nature of humane relationships. As Hawkes has shown in his brilliant chapter on this play, the king "will reject reason for its 'natural' and 'foolish' counterpart manifested in a kind of sagacious madness; in effect for a way of thinking which is non-rational, and intuitive,"[23] Finally, unlike the clearly motivated and thoroughly articulated decisions of their female predecessors, Goneril and Regan's violence is sometimes arbitrary and sadistic (as in the blinding of Gloucester) and always self-serving. Since it is directed principally against the old, the revered, and the powerless, we react to it with horror rather than awe. Thus Albany's curt "Produce the bodies, be they live or dead" appropriately dismisses the dramatic tradition of the masculine, rational, and violent woman which the playwright had tauntingly proffered as a prototype legitimized in the ancients.

The insatiable strumpet stereotype which is imposed upon the characterization of Goneril and Regan in IV. ii. is treated with equal complexity. Not only is it so inextricably tied to their lust for power that it seems only another variant of violent ambition, but it explains nothing about their treatment of Lear. By IV, ii, Lear's expectations of them have long been demolished for reasons that have nothing to do with their desire for Edmund. Ironically, however, their lust does intrude into the family relationship in a wholly unanticipated turn of events. Once Goneril understands that her passion for Edmund is past remedy, she kills herself and Regan, and the report of their deaths diverts attention from the safety of Lear and Cordelia. That female lust is the basis of the catastrophe is surely the most brutal of the play's many surprising ironies, for as a result, the very real and profound love between the king and his virtuous daughter is destroyed by the ambitious and self-serving desires of his evil ones.

At Dover Lear concludes his anti-sexual railings with an image that suggests his desperate need to understand his daughters in mythical terms. Surprisingly, the image he creates is *prima facie* entirely inappropriate:

> Down from the waist they are Centaurs,
> Though women all above:
> But to the girdle do the Gods inherit,
> Beneath is all the fiends; there's hell, there's darkness,

> There is the sulphurous pit—burning, scalding,
> Stench, consumption; fie, fie, fie! pah, pah!
>
> (IV. vi. 126-31)

The centaur is, of course, half man and half stallion. Lear, however, substitutes women for the male upper half, and then, instead of suggesting the violent rapist tendencies of centaurs "down from the waist," depicts female genitals as possessed by the devil.[24] Thus, with reference to women, the first part of the image is revolutionary, and with reference to centaurs, the second part is, to say the least, bizarre. Lear's application of the myth to women, then, is fundamentally wrong. Yet, in stark contrast to the first scene, the image suggests that Lear now sees his daughters with at least partial clarity. Having expected that they would be intuitively nurturing, he has experienced their masculine rationality; and having assumed that they were virtuous, their betrayal unleashes the age-old condemnation of woman's sexuality along with the additional belief that the diabolical sexuality of woman entails the damnation of man. Lear's connection of female carnality with the medieval view that "for the sake of fulfilling their lusts [women] consort even with devils"[25] shows, furthermore, that, on some level, he needs to see their defection as satanically inspired.

It should be obvious that the confusion inherent in Lear's synthesis of the pagan and Christian myths in the centaur image parallels our own experience of Goneril and Regan as females and thus serves as a kind of "umbrella speech," to use Mack's term, which shelters the consciousnesses of both the protagonist and the reader.[26] It is not, however, that the daughters are complex characters who grow and change. On the contrary, on those rare occasions when they do explain themselves, as in Goneril's confrontation with Albany, it registers with shock that she truly believes her own moral distortions and has perversely "turn'd the wrong side out." But if it is true that their evil remains unexplained, it is also true that the text teases us with explanations that consistently prove inadequate to our questions and that each of these hints involves traditions and myths about the nature of women. The irony is that with the introduction of each cliché, we share Lear's hope that the familiar will obviate the necessity of further thought. But in III, vi, especially, our experience fuses with the king's. Like Lear, we want to "anatomize Regan," to "see what breeds about her heart" (11. 77-78), but are given only the prosecutor's evidence that "she kick'd the poor King her father" (1. 49). In this sense, the mock trial mirrors the play as a whole. Each time we are about to arraign the wicked, the daughters vanish, and we are left with the unsatisfying cry of "Corruption in the place!" The fact is that Goneril and Regan have outwitted all participants in the drama, including the audience. And so, of course, has the playwright.

Notes

[1] See, for instance, Louis Lewes, *The Women of Shakespeare,* trans. Helen Zimmern (London: Hodder Brothers, 1894), p. 295; H. N. Hudson, *Lectures on Shakespeare* (1848; rpt, New York: AMS press, 1971), II, 227; and Marie Foucaux, *Les Héroines de Kalidasa et les Héroines de Shakespeare,* pseud. Mary Summer (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1879), p. 73.

[2] Paul A. Jorgensen thinks that "the two evil daughters represent the adamant quality of the *King Lear* world." *Lear's Self-Discovery* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 84-85. Robert B. Heilman insists that they are "agents, servants of destiny, incarnations of an evil which their actions specifically define." *This Great Stage* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947), p. 302. On yet another level they are thought to embody Renaissance concepts such as the rationalism of Hobbes. John F. Danby, *Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature: A Study of King Lear* (London: Faber and Faber, 1949), p. 43.

[3] Bridget Gellert Lyons, "The Subplot as Simplification in *King Lear,*" in *Some Facets of Kinq Lear: Essays in Prismatic Criticism,* ed. Rosalie L. Colie and F. T. Flahiff (London: Heinemann), p. 26.

[4] *King Lear,* ed. Kenneth Muir (1952; rpt. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), III. vi. 78-79. All further references to this work appear in the text.

[5] Janet Adelman, *The Common Liar: An Essay on "Antony and Cleopatra"* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 54.

[6] See, for example, Richard B. Sewall's suggestion that in the end the plot of Lear is "caught up in a Greek-like fate that carries the action to a swift and terrible conclusion." *The Vision of Tragedy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 69; and John Reibetanz's remark that "the emphasis on family relations works on us in a manner more suggestive of Greek than of Jacobean tragedy. . . ." *The Lear World: A study of King Lear in its dramatic context* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 30. Juliet Dusinberre argues that although Goneril is a more "archaic being" than the Greek heroines, her character mirrors their strength of will and ability to deceive. *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women* (London: Macmillan, 1975), p. 300.

[7] Since throughout this paper the words "natural," "unnatural," "masculine," and "feminine" will be used consistently to refer to medieval and Renaissance definitions and concepts, they will not be placed in quotation marks.

[8] This allegation is surely too well known to need documentation, but it is worth noting that Andreas Capellanus refers to it near the end of *The Art of Courtly Love* in a passage which neatly summarizes nearly all of

woman's alleged negative qualities: "Furthermore, not only is every woman by nature a miser, but she is also envious and a slanderer of other women. . . ." Trans. John Jay Parry (New York: Norton, 1931), p. 201.

[9] *The True Chronicle Historie of King Leir,* 1605, in *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare,* VIII, ed. Geoffrey Bullough (London: Routledge, 1973), 1. 155.

[10] In *Historia Anglicana* Geoffrey of Monmouth writes that the King of the Franks "having heard of the Fame of *Cordeilla*'s Beauty" wanted to marry her. Bullough, p. 312. Holinshed records that "Aganippus, hearing of the beautie, womanhood, and good conditions of the said Cordeilla, desired to have hir in mariage. . . ." Bullough, p. 317. Only one source, *The Mirror for Magistrates* (1. 52) mentions that the elder sisters are envious of Cordelia's beauty as in *The Chronicle.* Bullough, p. 324.

[11] Henry Kramer and Jacobus Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum* (1484), trans. Montague Summers (1928; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1970), p. 43.

[12] Katharine Rogers, *The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966), p. 93.

[13] Maynard Mack, *King Lear in Our Time* (1965; rpt. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 92.

[14] For an excellent discussion of this issue, see Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), p. 98 ff. Pomeroy notes that "while most women submit to the demands of the patriarchal culture, some heroines—like Clytemnestra, Antigone, and Hecuba—adopt the characteristics of the dominant sex to achieve their goals" (p. 98).

[15] In Aeschylus's *Agamemnon,* for instance, the Watchman of the Prologue explains that he has been assigned his task "by a woman of sanguine heart but a man's mind" (1. 16), and the chorus of old men periodically chastizes Clytemnestra's unfeminine conduct. Trans. Louis MacNeice in *Masterpieces of the Drama,* ed. Alexander W. Allison et al., 4th ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1979).

[16] In discussing the Sophoclean nature of this scene, Reibetanz remarks only that "the deaths of Regan and Goneril and Edmund are announced, and each report breaks upon us with the force of Sophocles' messenger in *Oedipus Rex*" (p. 112).

[17] St. Jerome "Against Jovinianus" in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1892), Bk. I, VI, 367.

[18] Robert Speaight, *Nature in Shakespearian Tragedy* (London: Hollis and Carter, 1955), p. 109. For an impressive argument that Shakespeare's choice of lust to motivate the destruction of the natural order follows both Platonic and Christian traditions, see Virgil K. Whitaker, *Shakespeare's Use of Learning* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1953), pp. 310-12.

[19] H. S. Wilson, *On the Design of Shakespearean Tragedy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), p. 183.

[20] For an informative discussion of the theological and social history of this myth, see Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex* (Rev. ed., New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1975), pp. 147-65. Daly's argument that the myth is "invariably flattering to the male" (p. 152) and that it is opposed to the idea of woman as "a developing, authentic *person,* who will be unique, self-critical, self-creating, active and searching" (p. 149) could explain much about Lear's angry denunciation of Cordelia and about her insistence on her own autonomy.

[21] In discussing the witches in *Macbeth,* Willard Farnham shows that "the most common name in Shakespeare's age for the worst sort of female demon to be found in fairy mythology was 'hag' " and that "by the sixteenth century it became an inclusive term for female fiend. . . ." *Shakespeare's Tragic Frontier: The World of the Final Tragedies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), p. 96. His documented point gives force to Marilyn French's argument that the evil women in Shakespeare's plays, including Goneril, are judged mythically because they represent the nonhuman. By contrast, male characters are always judged ethically. See *Shakespeare's Division of Experience* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1981), pp. 18-19 and pp. 233-35.

[22] Mrs. Anna Jameson points interestingly to the unique history of Tullia as an example of a daughter who commits parricide in order to assume her father's role, *Shakespeare's Heroines* (1879; rpt. London: G. Bell, 1911), p. 109.

[23] Terence Hawkes, *Shakespeare and the Reason: A Study of the Tragedies and the Problem Plays* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 175.

[24] Kenneth Muir notes that much of Lear's language here may have been suggested by Harsnett's *A Declaration of Egregious Popishe Impostures* in which there is an "account of the way the exorcists pretended that Sara Williams, at a time of menstruation, was possessed with a devil 'in a peculiar part of the body,' and of the 'Canon for lodging the deuil, that you be sure to lodge him not in the head, nor stomack, but in the inferiour parts.' " *Review of English Studies,* NS, Vol. II (1951), 21.

[25] *Malleus Maleficarum,* p. 43.

[26] Maynard Mack, "The Jacobean Shakespeare: Some Observations on the Construction of the Tragedies," reprinted in the Signet *Othello,* ed. Alvin Kernan (New York: New American Library, 1963), p. 26.

FICTION

The Horned Beast

Robert Burdette Sweet

When Mike turned thirteen and there was the war, he had a victory garden with potatoes the size of peas and peas shriveled as burnt popcorn.

On a bus one day, some mothers accused him of being a draft dodger, of not battling for his country like their sons. The women's mistake was almost understandable because Mike stood tall, six feet, had a rumbling voice and curly red hair that nestled glistening among squadrons of pimples on his forehead.

"If you didn't play with your member," his mother attacked, arching eyebrows and blowing smoke from her cigarette into his stinging eyes, "you wouldn't look like that." But then, in an attempt to camouflage her alarm, she added, "There must be beautiful skin underneath somewhere. You could be a handsome boy and I would be proud of you."

Mike grew to imagine that if he didn't look at people they couldn't see him. Until his mother, seizing on his downcast eyes to further her advantage, warned how she'd hang a sign on his back telling everyone what it is he did to himself except that they all knew by just looking into his eyes, if they could find them.

Well, there you had it. No place to hide.

When his father, home from the golf club, flushed and happy with his pars and birdies and locker room comradery, felt spirited enough to confess how he'd only done it once and that by accident while sliding down a rope in a gym and never dreamed of doing it again, Mike suspicioned they were not formed of the same clay. That his father's first love seemed to have been a rope finalized the notion.

Mike's neighborhood playmates also seemed alien. Their skin shone unblemished and tanned, their secret parts brief harmless tassels. They tossed baseballs and footballs with dismaying accuracy. When they threw the ball at Mike, it hit him in the chest or head. When he threw the ball, it didn't go where it should, curving wildly out of the reach of their flailing arms. There would be hisses and moans and the slapping of fists into gloved hands. Mike became the dishonored and awkward giant, and he'd return from these terrible athletic entanglements, flop down on his bed and lie rigid with clenched fists.

The day Roosevelt died and everyone ran around repeating what will we do, what will we do, and there were many planes flying in the sky, his father pointed them out to Mike saying, "Look, the planes are a salute." Mike strained up to see where the sounds came from and wondered why he could not see what he heard. The day was solemn and filled with fear. He wanted to be a part of it more than he wanted to be part of a baseball game. His father glared at him and barked, "Dummy!" Very loud and abrupt, before pacing back into the house to lean his elbows on the blaring radio, head bowed in grief.

When you can't see, you don't know you can't see. Did the trees have tops? Mike heard that they did, but from wherever the birds sang hung a dim canopy to him, as fabulous in its own way as the young heroes who could make the ball hit you before you heard the whir.

When Mike's father took his son and wife practice golfing and Mike swung hard with his driver as he'd been instructed and hit his mother on the head with a cracking wallop, his father, before even bothering to pick her up, howled in disappointment, "You're no son of mine. No son of mine would do that with a club."

Mike could not help agreeing. They were not related. And though Mike had his mother's perfect nose, she seemed to have endowed him with no further characteristics.

"You're an ape," his mother proceeded to berate him. "Only monkeys and sailors do what you do to yourself. You'll go insane."

Mike wondered how you could go where you already were. Because he'd learned to do it in the shower while singing. 'Yes, I Have No Bananas' proved manageable as a vocal cover for his physical obsession. "You'll drive *us* insane if you sing that banana song once again," his father bellowed through the locked bathroom door beyond which Mike ecstasied himself in shrouds of steam. "The water bill," his mother complained, though she continued to hope without cause that cleanliness meant purity.

Across from the house Mike slept in stretched a prairie miles in length. The family had moved from the city to that new extension of the suburb not many years before and buildings lined only one side of the street. The prairie ended in a solid line of forest, oaks and elms, cut through the

middle by a wide river. Each day of summer, and on as many days as possible in fall and winter, Mike retreated into the overwhelming vagaries of this, his territory. Since he could not see separate blades of grass, and ragweed formed impenetrable walls of green high as his head, and trees faded into clouds, the prairie and forest could be whatever he wanted to make of them.

In the literal world of parents, school and playmates, he concealed his body in heavy clothes, thin arms sheathed in linen on the hottest summer days. But under the protection of the prairie and forest Mike shed all his disguises whenever possible. The goal of his day was to lie naked in the sun on the always cool grass and press the most excitable nerves of his being down through the grass to the warmth of the earth, goading his thighs until he merged with what he took to be the cosmos. His purported insanity had no meaning there. His pimples not noticed. His monkey appurtenance merely a sensitive arm to reach through the window of another world.

But the realization that his actual father, his true progenitor, must be nonhuman came to Mike after much reflection, finally culminating one late afternoon in August. He lay under an oak fondling himself, letting already yellow leaves drift over his body, a warm wind stroking the new hairs on his thighs, eyes closed, when he sensed, not heard, the suddenly acceptable presence. Since his vision carried only to the low branches of the oak, the nearby trees and bushes appearing as leaps of formless green, the stag must have decided to manifest itself by first standing directly over him. When Mike half opened his eyes the animal's narrow legs seemed to tower into a broad chest flecked with grey. And antlers he thought must be like the thorns of God bled out and away from enormous eyes. Neither animal nor boy moved. Mike did not take his hand away from where it was. The stag did not indicate he should. As their eyes closed in on each other's, a light flashed from the stag's into Mike's. Then the animal turned its head and glared sidelong before abruptly dissolving from Mike's awareness by backing into the waves of rolling green.

Since the stag's forest was not extensive, Mike rediscovered him often after that. Mike came to know where he drank at the river, where he cropped grass in the evening, and that his were the largest hoofprints the boy followed in the winter, coming upon him mantled and silvery through falling snow. They always stopped, regarded each other with long, careful stares until the light leapt from the stag to the boy, and Mike would feel linked with something more than himself before the animal moved quietly away, as though the stag knew how Mike could not bear too much acceptance. When it was more discomfort Mike needed, he would run home to his foster parents and make-believe friends.

It was in the basement of the house where Mike tried to unfetter himself from the man who pretended to be his father. The man had begun to bloat into middle age, reminding Mike of a hirsute beach ball. It was a

winter evening and Mike had just stomped down the basement stairs fresh from the forest, jacket flecked with snow, exuberant from a confrontation with the stag. It had been a particularly intense meeting, their heads nodding in unison through the blue-grey air, eyelashes ridging white, the stag's antlers reaching black toward the breaking sky. So, who really was this, waiting in the basement where Mike would change from wet clothes to dry, who nervously picked his big nose, necktie wrapped around his middle, his hasty substitute for a belt he never seemed able to find.

"Where have you been?" The thrust was instant.

Dare Mike inform this pretender that Mike had been with his real father? "Walking," Mike said removing his hat and shaking the now grey slush into the washtub.

"You never talk to me. You don't pay any attention to me." The man leaned his back against the tub, arms folded across where his chest must one time have been. "You could at least help out more around the house. There's a war going on. And what do you do to make things easier? Nothing!"

An irrelevant charge indeed. Mike had concluded long ago there was little he could do about the war except tend his victory garden and trade war cards picturing Japanese shot or beheaded by American Joes. The cards came as a bonus for buying bubble gum, and the more gruesome the enemy's dismemberment the more valuable in trade the card became. A disembowelment, for instance, might be worth two or even three simple bayonettings.

"Well, talk," the father said shifting awkwardly on his feet. "You don't know how it affects me . . . when you won't talk."

A bare light bulb hung over his balding head. He was sweating despite the chilliness of the basement.

Mike gazed at the oblong window over the washtub. The rising wind sprayed snow against the frosted glass. "Talk about what?"

"Anything!" The word burst from the thin lips. Then, poking his head forward, eyes shiny as metal, "You've got two hickies on your nose you'd better squeeze."

Mike hung his head, lowered his eyes trying to disappear. He stood a foot taller than his father, so his attempt at invisibility was difficult for either of them to imagine. Mike kicked off his galoshes and turned to climb the stairs.

"Wait!"

He paused, one foot on the first step.

"I love you, son. You're a wonderful boy. I'm proud of you."

Mike often fell for this change in tactic. "Why are you proud?" Mike squeaked out.

"Because you're my son." The man smiled, happy to have hit on that explanation.

Mike laughed. It was a sudden convulsion neither of them expected.

"Is that funny?" The father advanced toward Mike until he breathed up into his face. "Some day you'll understand."

And, yes, Mike assumed that one day he would, since he'd been assured revelations were at hand.

"We'll win this war. Like we did the other one. Until then these are hard times . . . for all of us. You know I don't like working in the air plant. But we've all got to do what we can. Pull our own weight."

Mike couldn't grasp what the man meant. He seemed to be apologizing, the sweat glittering above his eyes. But how could he apologize for the way the world went?

"I'll go upstairs now."

"I'm not through speaking to you!" His voice quavered, his hands reaching out as if to clasp Mike's shoulders, but they hesitated midair and fell back to hang flaccidly by his sides. "You're still doing that to yourself, aren't you? I *know* it!" This last came as a shout instantly subsiding into the litany: "That's why you're doing badly in school. Why you have no friends. Why you're alone all the time. And those pimples . . . ."

"Leave me be!" And Mike realized he stalked toward him, arms straight out, fingers straining toward that man. Mike never recalled having touched his father before. If the man had ever touched him, he couldn't remember. So now it was like trying to force his hands through dry ice, the air between them surged that cold yet steamy. "I don't care any more. About you. Or anyone."

The father scuttled backwards on his short legs, arms waving around his head. But his eyes glittered hard and sharp. He came to rest against the washtub, one of his circling arms hitting the light bulb that swung wildly, making shadows crawl and leap across the basement floor. Out of the corner of Mike's eye the shadows heaved like lizards striking, snapping. The snow hissed against the window.

"Next you'll say I caused the war. Won't you. Won't you." Mike's fingers felt at his father's throat. For a second. Only that long. It was the first and last time they were ever to touch. And it was fire, his skin against Mike's. Mike wondered if that wasn't what he'd always desired: to touch him.

"Stop it. I'm not accusing you of anything. I just want to be your friend." The man pushed against Mike's chest but found it impossible to move his son from where he stood bending over him, glowering. Mike was amazed the man couldn't physically shake him from his balance. He strained against Mike, eyes popping, as though Mike had not removed his hands from around his neck.

Mike leered down upon him. "I can do to you whatever I want." Mike announced this to himself as well as to his father.

The light bulb moved only slightly now over the father's head. The

black fringe of hair lay in wet curls around his ears. Mike felt so filled with power that he could afford to offer him pity.

He looked at the man intensely, as the stag had taught him to. "I love you, Dad." That is what he wanted to hear, wasn't it, why he'd waited for Mike there in the basement?

The father began a weak grin through trembling lips. "I'm glad you said that Mike. Now we can be together more. Do things . . . together. I'll save up gas coupons." Mike didn't know why, but the man turned to bend over the wash tub and turned the hot water on. "We'll go to the lake." Steam rose past his ears to cloud the window.

"For fishing?" Mike's laugh was again explosive.

"Yes. Next summer." The sudden heat made the cold pipes shake and rattle.

"Sure," Mike tried to catch his breath. "Whenever you say."

But that next summer the father returned to his golfing and war efforts and Mike to the prairie and forest.

"That man has deserted us," his mother said. "Widowed me and orphaned you." They lingered over breakfast, she with her coffee and Mike with his burnt toast.

"I'm going on a picnic in the woods today," he told her. "With the kids in the neighborhood."

She stared at him. "Why?"

"Why not?"

"Are the girls going too?"

There were three on his block. Fat, big breasted, dumpy things guffawing incessantly through hard braces. "It was their idea."

"A-ha!" Her cup clattered down into the saucer. "I forbid it."

With no further motivation, she apparently decided on the spot to beguile him with her theory that girls were built surprisingly like boys. "Almost the same," she insisted, "except that the tubing is stuffed way up inside. Yet they're more delicate," she amplified. "Fragile. Something awful will happen to them if you go on a picnic together."

"They'll break?" Adults seldom failed to flabbergast Mike.

"Something like that."

"The twigs will break them?" Mike nibbled on his toast, eyeing her. The girls ran around the neighborhood screaming like banshees, and one of them even played ball with the boys when allowed and could catch and hit as Mike could not. Frail they did not seem.

Mike wondered aloud what part of them would break, when his mother covered her mouth with her hand and mumbled, "They bleed." He agreed that must be pretty awful, when she added, "And they have terrible pains." Mike wanted to know how they survived at all, when she responded indirectly: "Girls are to be treated very gently." She paused, took her hand from her mouth and stretched her lips wide for emphasis:

"A woman is a special thing." Her voice rose, her cheeks reddened. "You open doors for them. Pull out their chairs to seat them at a table. Help them off and on with their coats. Buy them presents. All this," she gestured with her coffee spoon, "while never ever touching them. Do you hear me?" This last came out as a kind of shriek.

"Or they'll break and bleed?"

"Yes. Yes. Yes!"

For Mike the human world kept proving itself to be a place of extravagant whimsy and danger. When they heard on the radio that Japanese cities were blown up and that the Japs' bodies melted into the cement, that their eyeballs ran and skin slid off their bones until they died screaming, Mike could not be in the least surprised. It was simply the culmination of ordinary events . . . on a par, somehow, with the origin of his pimples, and how the boys had taken to chasing him away from their ball games because no side could win with him on their team, and the crystalline purity of girls who hemorrhaged if grazed.

But the more isolated from people you become, the less you are alone. He understood that then in a way he would never know it again. Because if Mike's father was the stag, his mother had to be the river that ran deep and slow through the center of the forest.

The river in all seasons flowed rich with life. Frogs, toads, salamanders and snakes seemed to leap full grown from the warm mud of its shore. Dragonflies with blue wings emerged to bloom spontaneous and shimmering from water reeds. And Mike, naked in the warm water of summer, lazed in the mild current, feeling minnows pick at his legs and groin, shuddering with pleasure as the fins of carp fanned his thighs.

On hot late afternoons he often immersed himself in a special pool where he knew the stag drank. Where, in fact, he assumed the stag had come to expect him to be. Mike's head would be ringed in a cloud of gnats, ears filled with the soaring whir of the cicadas resonating their one chord.

The stag usually approached in silence until he signaled Mike with an abrupt expulsion of breath. Then, antlers leading, he'd breach the willow bushes and tread across the mud to dip his face into the water, the long shadow of his horned head slanting cool across the boy's chest. The stag always appeared alone, though there were other deer about.

One afternoon Mike lay quietly in the warm pool, the river's slow current laving his body, watching the stag. The animal's legs were slightly splayed out, hooves sunk into the mud. He had just drunk his fill. Water dripped from his muzzle and gnats danced across his eyes as he regarded the boy gently through the whirling halo. Suddenly, his head jerked to the right, tipping back so that his antlers pressed close to the reddish brown hairs along his spine. Mike glanced around but at first sensed nothing unusual, though the cicadas stopped vibrating and crows cawed

flapping across the river. Then the stag with a snort turned, stirring the mud with his feet, and hurled himself without a sound through the bushes. Mike stood dripping in the knee-deep water and began, like an animal himself, to stalk toward shore, trying to see what the matter might be, flanks quivering, eyes wary.

"Hey. You there, Mike." The voice came at him deeper than his own, commanding and yet half whispered, several yards up the bank. He tried to penetrate the jumble of green to see who it was. He saw no person, so began to push cautiously again through the water to the shore and his clothes.

"Who's there?" Mike finally thought to call when he reached the warm mud of the bank. His feet sunk heavily in over the marks the stag had made. He wondered if he couldn't still smell where the animal's body had so recently been, rich and rank.

"It's me. Jim."

"Oh." Mike heard twigs snapping as feet paced in his direction. Jim was a few years older than Mike, maybe he was fifteen, with black hair, black eyes, swarthy skin and a body that moved with energy and grace through the ball games Mike had been expelled from.

"I've never seen anybody out here before." Mike began to draw his pants up over shaky legs.

Jim climbed onto a fallen trunk whose bare branches waved with Mike's blue shirt and white socks. He stood mounted above Mike, legs apart, squinting down at him through heavy lashes. "That why you're parading around in the buff. Because nobody's ever here?"

"Guess so. Yes, that's it." Mike buckled his belt and watched his toes sink into the mud.

"Nobody around here." Jim's voice fell to a strained whisper. "People don't come out here. The bushes, they're too thick. The river stinks this time of year."

"No," Mike said. "The river just looks muddy. Whatever," he tried to sound casual, since Jim's overemphasis on their being alone struck him as curious, "this is a nice place to be. For me."

"Yep. Nobody else around."

As Mike reached for his shirt, Jim's eyes searched down the river and then switched to take in the bank opposite them deep in shadow from box elder trees and willows growing almost to the water. Jim was a gross intruder upon Mike's world and he wanted him out of there. But he heard himself say, as though someone else spoke, because the truthfulness and bluntness were not what he would choose to confess, "You don't like me. Do you."

"Suppose not."

The swiftness of Jim's retort assured Mike that all he suspected about his ouster from ball games was true. For years Jim had functioned as the prime mover in all gang decisions. And though it was difficult to accept

the concept, Jim might be considered his enemy. A kind of Jap to Mike's American blindness . . . and his duplicity, as it would turn out.

Buttoning his shirt, Mike started away from Jim, slipping his way up the mud bank to sit on a patch of grass, a small plateau from which he often observed the river. Jim squatted on the tree trunk gracefully swaying, arms hugging his thighs, fingers clasped together near his feet. His black hair ruffled in the slight wind, his smooth, tawny, unblemished forehead glowed in the sun. Neither spoke for so long that Mike adjusted to his presence. The cicadas began to sing again, and a redwinged blackbird preened on a branch near Jim's head. If they were enemies, why didn't one of them do something about it? He sensed the warm air to flow not between them or around but directly from one to the other, as though funneled through a hose wafting heavy earth smells.

Mike stared at the long grass between his legs and tried to swat a sweat fly that buzzed his neck and ears. Something seemed about to happen, but he couldn't guess what. "Nobody does like me." Why had he announced that again? He lay back on the grass, its thickness keeping the fly from his ears. The sun fell hot on his face.

"Aw," Jim said. "Poor Mikey." Jim slid off the trunk and slipped through the mud up the bank until his shadow fell across Mike's body. Jim's lips hung away from where his tongue lolled across crooked teeth. "You can play ball with us when the game doesn't count for much."

"I don't even like playing ball." Mike lay motionless under the press of Jim's shadow. He could hardly breathe. That was how he felt with the stag sometimes, when the animal's eyes bored into his. An insufferable closeness.

Jim crouched in the grass near Mike. "Maybe I knew you came out here. Maybe I've watched you before."

Mike propped himself up by his elbows. He didn't look at Jim. He merely blinked up at clouds that appeared to his near-sighted eyes like frail fingers pushing apart the sky. Mike felt Jim tugging at his belt, unbuckling it. He did not stop him. He didn't want to know what Jim was doing. Mike's eyes tried to focus on the green flow of the river. A fish jumped. Two mallards paddled slowly by near the shore, the drake's blue tipped wings like fallen shards of sky. Jim pulled Mike's belt out from around his waist. Mike fixed his eyes upstream where the water curved and disappeared behind a wall of tossing green.

"Roll over on your side," Jim said, his voice low and tense. And Mike did what Jim demanded. Because the world seemed so beautiful. Mike had never imagined the river, the trees, the sky that intensely. They all appeared to shake and flame, and when the wind pushed through leaves he breathed and his blood was the river's flow. When Jim tied Mike's hands behind his back with the belt there was no more self for Mike to be. He had never been so not alone.

"You lied," Mike's voice whirred out, that same shrill timbre as the cicada's, not his real voice at all.

"About what?"

"That you've seen me here before."

What kind of response did Mike expect, and what kind did he want? He wondered if he didn't hope his enemy pursued him, because only then could Mike ultimately possess him.

Jim pulled Mike over again on his back. "What difference does it make, whether I've been watching you or not?" He undid the buttons of Mike's shirt.

"You're not going to tell me?"

"No!" He broke off a strand of tickle grass and ran the furry end along Mike's ribs, his jaw and lips. Mike flinched. "That doesn't make you laugh?" Jim's lips pressed tight to his teeth.

Mike felt the touch of the grass like a brush painting him onto a canvas of afternoon and sky and trees. He shivered. How could a human being you didn't especially know, didn't like what you did know, and who tromped up and down your life as an adversary, evoke in you such yearning? "Please, don't do that," Mike pleaded, sensing that only through his protest might he enthuse Jim to proceed.

"Oh, you don't like it." Jim smiled with satisfaction. "You're lucky I don't hit you like my father hits me." He plucked the front of Mike's pants away from his stomach and probed the grass inside. "You don't like that? Straight down into your forest."

"No, I don't like it." Mike clung hard to that falsehood, knowing Jim needed the stimulus. "Stop, Jim. For God's sake." Mike struggled ineffectively letting his head twist from side to side. Jim sucked in on his lower lip and breathed deeply. He hoisted his butt to balance on Mike's thighs as he forced Mike's head back down in the grass with the cold palm of his hand. "There's a reason why the guys look up to me. There's a reason why I get them to do what I want. It's because *I* know what *they* want. Get it? Christ, but you're ugly. Mikey, Mikey bastard."

He began undoing Mike's fly, slowly, premeditatively, one button at a time. Mike forgot Jim was there. Mike forgot even he, himself, was there. That he might be ugly had no meaning. Toads have bumps on their skin. Frogs shine with slime. The river carried clouds of mud. Death came from the sky out of planes unleashing bombs. It was all the same.

"You hate my pulling your pants off. Don't you." Jim's voice had gotten dry.

But Mike didn't hate it. He shook his head trying to remember what he should say. Beyond Jim's black, curly hair the clouds flashed white and yellow.

"Don't you hate it!" Jim's voice this time sounded hostile, insistent.

It brought Mike back, but only for a moment, during which he managed: "I do hate it." With his clothed groin, Jim moved up against the

embarrassment of Mike's nakedness. And then, though he rubbed against Mike as his teeth gritted, Jim disappeared once more from Mike's awareness, and the river came back, and Mike was no longer there to be naked and bewildered, and he ran in his mind like a stag, antlered, silent and inseparable from the flickering trees, no cell of his body his own, uniting with even the ganglia of the sweat fly that nipped his straining neck.

"Your gun went off. Didn't it. Ugly. Shooting. Shooting!" Jim rocked back on his haunches. "I'm going to leave you here to rot."

Through half open eyes, Mike glared at him. "Untie me." The game was over. Now he meant what he said. "We've finished with each other."

Jim laughed and stood. Swayed over Mike a moment. "I'll always be watching you. When you can't see me. When you don't even suspect I'm around. Don't you forget that."

He stepped away from Mike's body, looked carefully around, and then started toward the trees away from the river.

"I can't move. I can't get free."

"Yep." Jim's drawl slurred through a rising wind. "I can see that." And he was gone. Mike lay there hearing the crashing of Jim's feet through fallen limbs and leaves for a long time.

When Mike finally tried to work out from his own belt where it wrapped around his wrists, he discovered Jim had not tied him carefully at all. He wrenched his hands out of the belt, pulled up his pants and thought about Jim's threat to keep watching him. The river crawled black with shadows. A white heron, its back still catching sun, stood stark and mirrored in the grainy water. Had what happened with Mike's enemy been love?

He fed his belt through the loops of his pants and buckled it. Mike wondered where the stag had gone. He started walking through the evening forest to look for him. He needed the stag's eyes; he needed to feed on them. He went far as the swamp where the stag often cropped long weeds and then up the knoll of scattered asters to the oak where he'd first appeared to Mike. But the boy caught no glimpse of the horned beast nor even a sign: pressed grass where he might have lain or the mark of his splayed hooves in marshy soil.

And Mike did not come upon the stag the next day. Or any day or night that followed. Jim and Mike proceeded with their outward enmity and secret meetings, but Mike never saw the stag again.

Wars Dim and Chimerical

Richard Flanagan

When I was young, I thought of my father as a large man. Perhaps all boys do. He was an inch under six feet tall, taller than the average and seemed, in the double-breasted suits and heavy topcoats of the time, bulky. My clearest memory of his body comes from the time when he was seventy years old. I had come to my parents' home for a visit from the college, fifty miles away, where I lived with my wife and daughter. My father was ill with a great variety of problems. He'd had a half dozen heart attacks beginning when he was in his mid-fifties. He had angina and emphysema and bursitis in his shoulder. Something strange and terrible had happened to his left arm, his dominant arm, and for ten years the little finger and the next one to it were progressively drawn down toward the heel of his hand until they came to touch it and rub upon it. If he let you see it, you saw that it was, the heel of his hand, unnaturally pink. He knew there was an operation possible to correct it. He chose not to have the operation.

Except when company might come over, real company and not just his son down from college for a visit, my father wore a long white nightgown all of the time. He slept downstairs on a couch in the room that also served as a dining room when there was anyone there to dine besides the two of them. That's where my mother would find him, "cold as a stone," when he died in April of the year after John Kennedy was shot.

One day when he was seventy, I came for a visit and he was in his long white nightgown. He asked me to help him take it off and I did. The only thing he had on underneath it was a bandage strip, a circular bandage strip, down on the bottom of his spine just where the crack in his ass began. He wanted me to remove that bandage strip and I did it. He said, "Thank you, Skipper," and I helped him put his white nightgown back on. I had never seen my father naked before and never would again, and I have only a faint recollection of his body in a two-piece swimming suit from a time when he was already fifty years old and I was eight or nine. Flesh of his flesh, I was, and his flesh was as distant and mysterious to me as the flesh of Franklin Delano Roosevelt so far away.

I was born the day after Franklin Roosevelt was inaugurated for his first term as President. My mother said—often—that the banks all over the country were shut down in honor of my birthday. I had more than the usual sense of Franklin Roosevelt as a father figure. He and my father looked a good deal alike. Really, they did. Large head, long in the jowl, prominent chin. And for the first dozen years of my life, up until he died, I saw somewhat more of Roosevelt than I did of my father, who was a traveling salesman and came home, it seems to me now, about one weekend a month to pick up clean shirts and leave me with an envelope full of pennies he said he had been saving for me while he was away although it occurred to me somewhat later that he might simply have exchanged a bill for them in a bar at the end of town on his way home.

My father and bars. Well . . .

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, meanwhile, was always with me, on the radio in place of Amos 'n Andy or Easy Aces, and every Saturday afternoon he was a leading player in the Movietone News through which my friend and I sat more or less patiently until the serial came on and then the movie with Johnny Mack Brown or Hopalong Cassidy or on a bad day Roy Rogers or Gene Autry whom we simply couldn't abide and would only tolerate for one showing. When Roosevelt shook his large head and thrust his prominent chin upward and denounced the infamy of distant peoples, my father took a job as a machine gun inspector in a defense plant fifty miles away. He worked nights and would take a bus home for disoriented weekends, bringing me now instead of pennies, ball bearings and brass shell casings.

Two or three times, I went to stay overnight with him in his hotel room in Utica. What was I like then, I wonder. Nobody knows. . . .

We were out of phase and he would sleep quite a lot while I was there and then take me to dinner in the hotel dining room and introduce me to the shoeshine man and read the paper and then put me to bed and go to work inspecting machine guns. Mornings, I wandered around the hotel and outside on Bleecker Street. One day in the lobby, a man with a German shepherd dog gathered several people about him and had the dog perform a trick. The man took three pictures from his pocket, one of

Hitler, one of Mussolini, one of Tojo and showed them to the dog. In a conversational tone, the man then asked, "What would you do to these fellows if you ever got near them, Rex?" The dog studied the pictures for a moment and then lifted his rear leg and pretended to pee on the facsimiles of the Axis leaders. The man and his dog hung about the lobby all morning and went through their little act a dozen times, to the delight of many. I did not think to wonder then why the dog did not actually pee on the pictures, or whether in mastering this charade the dog might hazard some psychic disturbance in the matter of fire hydrants and telephone poles. Were this creature's most fundamental inclinations warped by ideology? Many things of this magnitude never occurred to me in those days.

I rode the elevator a great deal in order to fend off boredom. The elevator operator was (I would have said then) a colored girl perhaps sixteen years old. We had, I think, nothing to say to each other in our many vertical journeys together. On one trip, she opened the door to a large elderly lady who wore a matching ensemble, hat and dress, of large blue and white splotches and resembled a hydrangea bush. The woman exuded a hurtful aroma of cologne and hydrogen sulfide. She was in no other way offensive to me and she said nothing in our descent to the lobby. The operator worked the handle to engage the elevator's gears and then, as she usually did, stared straight ahead of her at the panel of floor numbers on the wall. Just another trip. But when the elevator reached the lobby and the elderly lady debarked, the girl closed the door again. She and I were alone. An instant passed as she continued to stare at the panel of numbers. Then she uttered a single word that, in her tone, contained so much of rage and disgust that I remember to this day its exact modulation.

"Fartblossom!" she said. And she opened the door again and stepped outside. I have never heard anyone use that word since and I am happy to think I was present at a moment of inspired creativity. The education I received under my father's supervision was usually of this kind but seldom of this quality.

The flesh on my father's lower back was like papier-maché decorations, slack, wrinkled, elastic. I had trouble getting a finger nail under the bandage strip, which was exactly the same color, beige, as his flesh and seemed a part of it. My father may have been a thoughtful man at some time in his life. He read the *New York Daily News* and the *Daily Mirror* and the *Syracuse Herald-Journal.* I heard him express admiration for Jimmy Cannon, who wrote a sports column and for Bob Considine, who wrote an all-purpose column designed to make intelligent the gaucheries and prejudices of William Randolph Hearst. He read the Syracuse paper because Grantland Rice's column was available there. My father followed the destinies of athletes and sports teams chiefly out of habit and perhaps because he discerned in one athlete or another and in one columnist or

another a special signature, a sense of style, a graceful gesture of body or language that reminded him in some way of boyish aspirations. He had been a pitcher until his arm went bad. He became a salesman. From pitcher to pitchman, all gesture and style.

What he thought about, if anything, I don't know or remember and whether he thought to embarrass me by showing me his nakedness and asking me to peel a bandage off his ass, I don't know. Would it have occurred to him to think, here's your future, kid? What do you think of that, you arrogant punk college boy? His attitude toward me had seemed more indifferent than that, less energetic, but perhaps he picked some of that up from me, from my retreat into adolescent silence, during which time I inclined, like the flexible element in a thermostat, toward contact with someone else but couldn't find the right temperature to make the leap. My father did not provide the atmosphere, never mind my complicity.

When FDR closed the banks and I was born, my father was already forty-one years old. In my father's story, it is not life that begins at forty, but rather decline. Although no one could have foreseen it, my father's destinies and those of the nation were to describe a similar trajectory. He had risen to become a District Sales Manager when the Crash of '29 wiped out the company. He and the nation fell into depression, to rise again only with the artificial adrenalin of World War II. He used to say that he regretted being too young for the first world war and too old for the next one, but, his bravado to one side, the fact is the best economic days our family enjoyed depended, like the performances of Rex the Wonder Dog, upon the well-being of Hitler and Tojo, and as their fortunes deteriorated so did ours. When the war ended, I was 12, my father was 53, and FDR was dead. Whatever the nation then did, my father's descent continued. He could no longer get good sales jobs because, like Willy Loman, his age worked against him, and salesmen could no longer make it on a smile and a shoeshine. He sold automobiles and about everything else that wasn't nailed down, and he celebrated his ebb and drift with intense drinking bouts, which made everything worse, and he ended up driving around the countryside taking orders for a beer distributor until the pain of getting in and out of the car became too much for him and he put on his long white nightgown and commenced to die.

In 1950, when he was selling something, TV's, hardware, something, and still moving around all right, my father decided he and I ought to go hunting, an event without precedent of any kind in our lives. It may be I'm recalling this episode because I've read Walker Percy's novel *The Second Coming,* in which a father and son go hunting and the experience is mysterious and traumatic and indelible. The atmosphere is haunting, Faulknerian. Something happened on our hunting trip, too, but it was not Faulknerian. Not by a long stroke. No confrontation with the Big Bear. No

initiation into the Rites of Nature, no revelations about the Meaning of It All. No attempt by the father, as in the Percy novel, to spare his son the hurtfulness of life by blowing his brains away. None of that, and therefore what?

He borrowed everything we might need. As it turned out, he borrowed only for himself: black and red plaid jacket and hat to match, a shotgun, shells. I wore whatever it was I always wore in those days. And I carried no gun.

We were out to slaughter a deer and so the time of year was early December. Someone had decreed that deer might be slaughtered over a period of seven days as winter loomed in upstate New York. I believe I had no feelings one way or another about killing a deer. I was old enough to be cynical about "Bambi" as Disney gave him to us; I had killed small animals with a .22 rifle a couple of years earlier until the day I shot myself in the leg, convicted myself of gross stupidity and threw my rifle away. I probably would have accepted the argument that one was merciful to spare a deer the hunger and cold of an upstate winter, as the father in Percy's novel rationalized the killing of his son, any thoughtful killing a mercy; step right up. The deer were not consulted, their proxy held by the hunter.

The day was mild enough, considering what it might have been at that time of year. My father had told me the day before that we were to do this wholly extraordinary thing tomorrow, Saturday, the last day of the season. I responded by saying, "OK," for I was hep, as much as an acne-sprinkled 17-year old in a very small town might be. I thought it strange and I was wary on the affirmative side. Other times I would be wary but on the negative side. No design dictated my responses. Hep, like its successors hip and cool, did not know design.

We drove into the hills west of town, sky low and unbroken gray. We didn't have to drive far because all the country around our little town was, in hunters' parlance, great deer country. People came two hundred miles from New York City to kill deer, an occasional cow and each other in what was figuratively our back yard. Some parts of the county, particularly favored by hunters and uninformed deer, could not be entered during deer season. Anything that stirred was a target, and as the week drew to a close hunters desperate for a kill rolled into the hills in numbers exceeding by far the deer population itself. The roadside taverns emptied during the daylight hours and filled up again in the evening for the exchange of lies about how the day's hunt had gone. Such-and-such a buck, "twelve-pointer, tremendous rack," had disappeared down into a hollow without a trace. "Had him right in my sights when a partridge flew out of a bush at my feet and scared the shit outta me." "Saw nothing but doe all day." "Saw nothing but heard some action in the underbrush. They're out there all right; get 'em tomorrow." "Jew hear about the guy

over in Greene got shot cuz he let his handkerchief dangle out of his back pocket some guy thought it was a deer's tail, huh?"

Now and then, in front of the tavern, there would be a car with a deer slung over its fender, utterly quiet, looking I might say now cubist, posture queer, supple musculature all heaved about, head, antlers pointing down toward the bumper and the road, undeerlike, a rumor of a deer, a mythical deer heading for Yonkers, Fort Lee, Flushing. . . .

After five miles and a turn or two onto less-used road, my father pulled into the driveway of an abandoned farmhouse and stopped. We got out of the car and he put on his jacket and cap, both of which might have fit him at one time but were slack now in no obvious way. Slack, though, around the shoulders, the jacket, and too low on his head, the hat—to me he looked odd, comical, but I said nothing. FDR had never worn ill-fitting clothing. Not when I was around.

We walked down the road a ways, my father with shotgun, broken in the middle, over his arm, shells in one of the commodious pockets of his jacket. He looked a little like a hunter, while I looked to be what I irreducibly was, a gawky adolescent walking down a country road, aimless except for the moderate tug of the parental magnet beside me and the imperceptible attraction of a land war in Asia now some six months old. The times fold into one another. Two years later I would be in Asia. Four years later I would return aboard an American aircraft that had just dropped off French troops heading for Dienbienphu. The plane stank of vomit and cologne. In a decade, I would pull a bandage off my father's papier-maché skin and worry about American troops in Indochina.

My father's choice of location was indicted by the silence that surrounded us. Almost anywhere else in the country, the sound of guns exploding and the whiz of deer slugs on this last weekend of the season foretold the assault on Hamburger Hill. Serene our stalking-ground, preternaturally quiet, bereft of wildlife. No birdsong, no petulant squirrels, no woodchuck running down its hole—and no deer. No deer had ever been there, not in the history of the world. The acreage was not anti-deer; it was much the same as the rest of the county. But my father, drawing on an account of lore that had never seen a deposit, had brought us through purity of instinct to a site that deer shunned as though by legislation among themselves.

We walked along the fall of a drumlin for a while until an opening appeared in the band of sumac and bracken and we pushed upward into the beeches and juniper bushes and outcroppings. In a low voice, conspiratorial, my father said, "You go that way around the hill and I'll go this. When you see a deer" (o! fabulous 'when'), "you just clap and whistle and push him toward me."

"OK," and I put my hands in my pockets and strolled off to the left. In a minute, I turned to see my father disappearing in the other direction, his black and red plaid jacket blending in perfectly with the tree bark and the

sumac fruit. At the same moment, he too turned to look back, and seeing that I was seeing, he held the shotgun above his head in a gesture of what I couldn't possibly say. As we continued to regard each other across fifty yards of scrub and erratics, he dipped into his pocket, pulled out two shells and held them up for me to see. Then he slipped them into the gun and closed it with a snap I could hear easily over the subtle hiss of late autumn in scrub oaks, and held it above his head again. Then, the gun brought down into cradle position once more, my father turned without further gesture and with another step away from me became invisible.

An aerial shot of our journey after deer would show my father and me making roughly similar progress around the drumlin, but an aerial shot, lacking depth, would not tell what went wrong. Our paths had been destined to meet at about the halfway point, but I had ascended the hill a few yards and my father dropped down the hill by a few yards and we did not meet. We were past each other before we knew it, and a good thing, too, because my father, out of his vast experience, might have sprayed my quadrant with deer slugs if he had seen my motion there and I, having lost by now the superb gunfighter instincts learned at the Saturday matinees and practiced for hours and hours with my little killer friends, I would doubtless have stood tall and taken as many of the slugs as a skinny six-footer could take at thirty yards distance. It is true that my father's marksmanship throws the speculation into a mix, but one can't count forever on bad luck: he might have hit me as easily as missed me through the unpredictable influence of his aimlessness. And I, solidly athwart the sawhorse of my adolescence, immobilized and indecisive, could not have made a move to help myself. A high school friend of mine was killed in Korea. Our football coach said to me, "Frank could never get those big feet of his going," words I now understand to have been allegorical.

We missed each other, then, in the good and bad ways, and continued around the drumlin in the company of an increasing puzzlement about where the other was. The entire circumnavigation required less than half an hour, and when I returned to the spot where we had penetrated the brush, I pushed through and took a seat on a large rock beside the road. Soon enough I saw through breaks in the woods my father finishing his counterclockwise stroll. "Hey, Dad," I said conversationally when he was only a few yards away.

"God *damn!*" he replied, recoiling from the sound of my voice as though I had shied a handful of pebbles at him. He settled quickly and came on down the road. "Where in hell were you?" he demanded. His voice was full of an irritation I was familiar with. Angry or not because of something in the moment, he customarily spoke in tones that rumbled up out of the bowels of self-doubt and easy hostility. He turned away from me, broke the gun and removed the two shells. With his back still turned, he said, "Did you walk around the hill or did you just sit here all this time?"

"I walked *around*." I said, hating the whine in my voice, the inability to muster a rage equal to the injustice.

"How come I didn't see you?"

"*I* don't know."

We moved along the road toward the old farmhouse where we had left the car. An echo, tremulous, of what may have been a gunshot came to us on the breeze below the deepening clouds. Another, more certain, floated up from the same direction, south of us. Somewhere deer were being pursued, the kill proceeding apace. A father and son conspired, perhaps, south of us, to complete the ancient ritual, and I wonder now what difference it would have made if my father and I had slain a deer together that day. The ride home from the great hunt was accomplished in a palpable silence. Snow flakes hurried over the hood and windshield. My father turned on the heater, but where we were cold no heat could reach. I was blameless and guilty and thought his anger was, of course and as usual, directed toward me. Survivor deer out there where we had not been shivered and buried their noses under their flanks, not knowing the season for their slaughter was nearly over but aware that winter loomed. From the corner of my eye, I regarded my father, shrunken in his borrowed hunter's clothes. What vain hope had he harbored: would this adventure make a man of me? across the distance of the silent years, would we hunters now be chums? could a gesture still make a sale?

Several years later, when I was home on furlough, I drove the beer route with him, one direction on a Monday, another on Wednesday, off to the tiny crossroads general stores and taverns wherever they might be over the breadth of two counties. While I was away, he had had the first heart attack in a series that would stretch over more than a decade. He was much older than when I left, and he was scared. We talked easily during these rides together through the Unadilla Valley or out along the Nine Mile Swamp south of Utica. The talk was of nothing significant, but it was easy, and the silences comfortable now, the lovely green bottom land moving by out the window. I had come to think of myself as someone who had a future, and my father had come to know himself as one who didn't. The days of the forlorn hunt were all behind him and the long white nightgown lay waiting.

POETRY

David Citino

The History of Mental Health

It all began in rain, a buoyancy that took us
from sea to rooted earth. We learn from Diodorus
of Sicily about the African lake whose waters

bubbled through souls of those who drank there,
making them babble madly every sin they'd hid,
and Pliny's spring in Asia Minor loved by Apollo,

its gurgling chill driving priests crazy enough
to know but drowning them before their time.
Water's our confusion, most of the mind. Our time.

Reason means our rites. The man who disrupted
Mass by biding his time until the elevation
of the Host, then lifting skirts of devout maidens

was no lunatic, though Thomas More had him flogged.
By this he learned what passion costs, how it
flares from frictions of the divine match struck

on rough-hewn human stone, penetration, spasms,
way of every cross. Even a timid mystic's
aberrant in this literal world. When we too narrowly

conceive, nothing connects. And even in the air.
Orson Welles taught modern woman and man what
the ancients knew too well, to hope and see,

that looking fearfully, tearfully to heaven
on an uncloudy night can teach the soul to find
what's beautiful and true, to distinguish all else

from love. And movement. In Germany during
the Dancing Mania perjurers held right hands
raised, fingers of the left crossed for days

as they danced from church to church. Adulterers
lay writhing on their backs and bellies, against
stone walls like snakes in pain, gluttons

whirled, eating their way through field and sty,
up and down rutted country lanes. On June 26, 1428
a monk driven mad by loneliness began to dance,

and when he'd used up every inch of his cell's
space, he died. Faith's the essence, Paul writes,
all that's hoped for, everything unseen. David

moaned and drooled at Gath to prove the salvation
of all the world calls crazy. If we ache only
for what we need, love only far as we can reach,

believe just what we see, we're nothing but
the one-winged bird fluttering near jaws
of time's fierce cat. Love's a dance, a dream.

Those who never dream go mad.

Doctrines of Water

He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends
of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain;
he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries.

Every drop ever made remains, squalls,
mists, simmers, gathers and flows, ever since
before Eden's four rivers, when earth
was swaddled in cloud and set to spinning
and it rained for 60,000 years, enough to fill
each puddle and great lake, pond and sea.

The cup, tumblerful, tubful drawn
from well or reservoir has been drunk
and passed on by amoeba, trilobite, pterosaur,
lemur, auroch, stone man and king, rains
that buoyed Noah and his laboring doves
christening our own skins, poured

from glistening dippers of evening sky.
Water cools each fire of the fervent heart,
mists away in turn each killing chill,
blood of weather, weather of blood. It
gorges the uterus, fills each perfect breast,
sings sweet on the tongue to weep our suns,

this ceaseless falling, these drops of time.

Doctrines of Heat

. . . and at once a gentle fire has caught
throughout my flesh.—Sappho

The old ones felt it as a part
of every matter, *caloric,* to be
freed by alchemy or other fire, but

we've grown cold enough to see
the dance of electron on electron,
gaseous fire riling metal of the pot

to madden water just enough
to draw out from reticent leaves
tea's utter wisdom, so real it hurts

lips and tongue to love, to speak,
so full of light our words are made
steam. Metal's the best conductor,

with electrons enough to spare.
The worst friend of heat? Nothingness.
Ask any martyr, hater, lover, corpse.

Flesh and bone conduct all too well.

Doctrines of the Orgasm

Documented case histories of spontaneous combustion
in humans: flesh igniting bright as dawn forsythia.

Alarm of our mortality; also, dousing of the flames.
The way we enter the world, flood-rush bubbling

thick and sweet as blood over delta plain, avalanche,
gush of lava love-hot obliterating snowy, brushy slope.

Lightning spear struck deep in oak's dark grain. Even
disbelievers shout *O God, O Hell,* the liveliest swear

I'm dying. At the last moment, if we've played our parts
selflessly and true, we both lose our minds, perfect,

until we're moved again by love's precious clockwork,
friction of souls and glands, art of hands, cadence

of the future. This divine epilepsy. This holiest dance.

Leonard Nathan

No More Candles

No more candles, they said, no more
of the old eloquent lying. If this
is the end of civilization, it's not
the end of truth, of eyes that witness
what cowardly hands could have forestalled,
of ears that detect what Mozart has muted,
of mouths that, spitting out the champagne,
soberly say what otherwise won't
be said. No more candles.
                                        And I
agreed, but kept to myself one
illicit exception, one candle
held back from them, really a stub,
in case (I told myself) the fuses
blow, so this was not to light
before a smoky icon, or mark
a lost occasion in secret defiance,
or to light at all.
                        In this
I'm a mystery to myself and also,
if only they knew, to them,
my teachers, my innocent adversaries.

The Darkling Thrush II

Finally everything was what it was,
held hard in place by cold. Thomas
leant on the coppice gate and saw, O, clear
and without hope or doubt, the least outline
of all objects, standing, as he stood now,
only for themselves, himself opaque
in the solitude of gray and the chill shadow
of gray on gray for frozen miles around.

It was just then the thrush sang out, miserable
little bird thrilling the winter dusk
with foolish music, and Thomas heard a hope
in it and doubted, and doubting, began to fade,
and with him began to fade a whole heath,
a whole century going under night.
Only the bird's impertinence remains,
sustained by doubt, by doubt softly sustained.

Names

Names are sometimes all that's left
of things once known. People will stand
in front of mirrors reciting "truth"
over and over or mouth "hope,"
"hope," but it doesn't signify.

Or something tender infects the air
of a May morning and that night,
moist in the dark, couples whisper
"love," "love," but don't know what
they mean although it barely matters.

Colloquium

The souls of seven old men were conversing
over the drowsy heads of their owners
after supper in the rest home.

They argued over women, money, children,
over truth and purpose, but found
at last an area of perfect agreement.

This was the one wisdom of all their slowly
lived-through years, futile, but something
to take into the dark as sure.

This—no soul there was over eleven,
no soul had aged with the rest of the man.
All were hopeful, terrified, virgin.

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Compiled by Robert H. Woodward and O. C. Williams

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Acknowledgments

The publication of *San Jose Studies* is possible only through the support of its guarantor, benefactor, and patron subscribers. The Trustees and Staff of *SJS* would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following supporters.

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