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Christianity and the Aztecs

J. Jorge Klor de Alva

*This essay, made possible by Fulbright and Ford Foundation research grants,
is part of an ongoing study on the subject.*

MOST scholars have accepted the belief that, for the most part, the natives of Mexico were successfully Christianized by the early missionaries shortly after their first contact with the Europeans.¹

However, the research of some modern historians and anthropologists is conspiring to discredit this "spiritual conquest" thesis which has dominated the study of religious transculturation in Mexico since the sixteenth century. New documents brought to light in recent years (especially from archival sources such as Inquisition materials, land deeds, and private diaries), the critical re-examination of known texts (and texts known but not previously studied, like the confessionals and sermons of the early friars), and scientifically gathered ethnographical data are all contributing to the creation of a new image of ancient Mexican religiosity to replace the distorted picture inherited from pious chroniclers steeped in a medieval world view, and from the apologetic historians who have uncritically accepted their accounts. A new picture is slowly emerging, the product of close attention paid to the coping strategies of the conquered Indians, previously too readily dismissed, which reveal that conflict and resistance, along with accommodation, were indeed significant reactions to the superimposition of Christianity upon their own "teoyoism." These reactions are the central topics of this study, which will conclude with a typology of Aztec (henceforth, Nahua) responses to the new faith.

Since the language of the Nāhuatl speakers, which includes the Aztecs, has no specific word for religion, I have recently introduced the expression "teoyoism" as a generic term for the complex theological belief systems, the ritual practices, and the mystical responses that constituted Nahua religiosity before and after the conquest.² *Teotl*, from which "teoyoism" is derived, implies something more than the idea of the divine as manifested in the form of a god or gods; instead, it signifies the sacred in more general terms. The teoyoistic stress on the sacred, then, is to be contrasted in this essay with the primarily theocentric nature of Christianity. The historical implications of this distinction are substantial: the destruction of the superstars in the Nahua pantheon did not necessarily spell the end of Nahua religiosity, nor, conversely, did the acceptance of a new god imply conversion.

In 1524, three years after the conquest of central Mexico, the first mission of friars arrived in the New World. Armed with ample ecclesiastical powers granted by the pope, these famous twelve Franciscans began the systematic evangelization of the natives shortly after being greeted by Hernán Cortés. The initial focus of their attention was the education of the children of the elite, who were subsequently recruited to help destroy the temples and images of the ancient religion. In their role as amateur preachers, these children broke up teoyoist celebrations and helped in the conversion of both their parents and neighbors. The use of mass baptisms in the first decades swelled the ranks of the supposed faithful so quickly that a dizzying optimism overcame the pioneer missionaries and the other priests who followed on their heels. Though some skepticism regarding the sincerity of native conversions began to set in during the second half of the century, most of the chroniclers remained convinced that the natives had been adequately Christianized. The dissenting voices usually failed to make themselves heard.

The debate regarding the success or failure of the early proselytization efforts has gone unabated since the sixteenth century. Biases of all kinds have crept into both sides of the question, but until very recently little serious critical research free of gross ideological prejudices has been done to support one side or the other. This essay is an attempt to step in the direction of clarification by drawing attention to some of the central issues in the debate.

A Christianized native populace represented great military, social, political, and economic advantages for the conquerors of the Americas. The Nahuas themselves soon recognized the temporal gains to be realized by an overt acceptance of the god of the Spaniards. Both secular and religious leaders from the onset turned their attention to the task of Christianization, even if at times it was only to pay it lip service. The proselytizing methods employed, regardless of the ideological squabbles that ensued from their determination, were ultimately defined by two factors: the Spaniards' views of the Nahuas and the degree of resistance encountered, or thought to be encountered.

The image of the Nahua in Spanish thought was relative; it was determined by a number of factors including geographical area, historical period, the social positions of Spaniards and natives, and proximity to the Indian culture. (Nevertheless, some ideas congealed early in the post-Contact period which have survived with depressing tenacity to the present.) Most Spanish perceptions of the Nahua character contributed to the opinion that compulsion and outright force were necessary to Christianize the natives and to keep them from apostasy. Foremost among these perceptions was the conviction that the indigenes were like children in need of paternal guidance and benign coercion. Their alleged pusillanimity in all things sacred and profane made them ideal targets of Spanish resoluteness, which exploited their apparent docility, their respect for authority, and their supposed ignorance and frailty. Some Spaniards, mainly ecclesiastics, held very favorable opinions of the Christianlike virtues of the natives and their inclination toward the things

necessary for their salvation. A few attributed to them extraordinary technical skills and intellectual acumen. These latter, unfortunately, were no match for those who considered the Nahuas to be insincere, naturally evil, stubborn, litigious, difficult to control, illogical, and shallow. The commonly held belief that they were lazy and prone to drunkenness left most Spaniards convinced that an absence of coercion on their part was an invitation for the Indians to wallow in moral depravity, spiritual laxness, and unabashed indolence, which would surely ruin the economy of New Spain.

Mariano Cuevas in his monumental *Historia de la iglesia en México* advances various arguments against the position that Spanish coercion was behind the baptisms of the indigenes. He affirms that the treatment of the Indians at the hands of the Spaniards was not improved by their conversion. He points out that baptisms were also not merely a consequence of the conquest, since the Nahuas were allowed to remain pagan for four years after the destruction of their capital. He adds, furthermore, that most conversions took place precisely when the conquerors were at odds with the friars and presumably less likely to throw their weight behind the proselytizers. Lastly, Cuevas denies that the Indians went to be baptized without knowledge of what they were doing, suggesting that this view implies a lower opinion of the indigenes than the facts merit and imputes a lack of seriousness on the part of the missionaries. On the contrary, Father Cuevas argues that the good example of the Spaniards, the conversion of the native lords, and the contrast between their cruel religion and the gentleness of Christianity attracted them to the Catholic faith.³ Like his religious predecessors in the sixteenth century, the Jesuit historian reminds us that the force and grace of the Holy Spirit was the principal cause of the conversions.⁴

There is some truth in most of these assertions. However, abundant documentation from throughout the colonial period attests to the prevalence of the use of coercion and the need for compulsion in proselytizing and in keeping the recalcitrant natives Christian. The destruction of the plastic expressions of teoyoism, whether as images or temples, is discussed at length by all the important historians of the missionary activities. The secular chroniclers and eye witnesses also left many accounts of the various forms of violence employed to compel the submission of the Indians to some modicum of respect for Christianity. Among the more telling expressions on the subject is a self-serving letter (1560) from the native council of Huexotzinco (southeast of Mexico City) to Phillip II:

When [the twelve Franciscan priests] entered the city of Huejotzingo, of our own free will we honored them and showed them esteem. . . . they did us the good deed [of telling us] to destroy and burn the stones and wood that we worshipped as gods, and we did it; . . . the holy Catholic faith, with very good will and desire we received and grasped it; no one frightened us into it, no one forced us . . . no one, neither nobleman nor commoner, was ever tortured or burned for this, as was done on every hand here in New Spain. [The people of] many towns were forced and

tortured, were hanged or burned because they did not want to leave idolatry, and unwillingly they received the gospel and faith. Especially those Tlaxcalans pushed out and rejected the fathers, and would not receive the faith, for many of the high nobles were burned, and some hanged, for combating the advocacy and service of our Lord God.⁵ [Italics mine.]

Admittedly, the tales of seas of natives tearfully coming, wave after wave, to be baptized, described in the *Memoriales* of the Franciscan chronicler Toribio Motolinía, suggest that compulsion was not always necessary.⁶ However, there is a logical flaw in these accounts. The masses of Indians approached the friars *before* they had been taught the message of the new faith. Therefore, something other than the gospel must have compelled them to draw near the somber missionaries. The historical context of these mass baptisms points to two possible causes: the curiosity generated by the presence and behavior of the mendicants themselves—though this would certainly not account for the zealotry with which the natives sought out the friars—and, more importantly, the predisposition on the part of the terror-stricken indigenes to behave as directed by the Spanish friars, a predisposition born out of the cataclysmic events and the horrible rumors which followed in the wake of the Spanish military and political conquest.

The widespread opinion, common since the early post-Contact period, that the natives were only virtuous by force maintained its vitality during the whole colonial era. The first bishop and archbishop of Mexico, Fray Juan de Zumárraga, made clear, in 1531, what many then believed, that the Indian acts more out of fear than virtue. In 1769 Archbishop Lorenzana likewise affirmed that fear of punishment was a prime cause of virtuous behavior. Many Spaniards who lived in the intervening time concurred with this sentiment. Because of the popularity of this opinion, compulsion by threat or by force was systematically employed not only to coerce the Nahuas to accept baptism, but to compel them to hear the doctrine, attend mass, and participate in the religious activities of the Christians. During the early decades even legislation was implemented in an attempt to impose the Catholic faith and “*policía cristiana*” (Christian polity) upon the perplexed natives.

The monastic and episcopal inquisitions, which functioned in New Spain until 1571, when the Tribunal of the Holy Office was established, played an important role in the process of imposing Christianity upon refractory natives. Few Indians actually came before the Inquisition; but more important than the number of natives punished by the Holy Office was the constant threat it represented, especially to noble or influential indigenes who were the principal victims of inquisitorial zeal. As could be expected, most of the deviant Indians were punished by the local ecclesiastical authorities. The use of punishment, prevalent in the sixteenth century, continued unabated throughout the seventeenth when it was either being administered or was being suggested as a remedy for the widespread belief in teoyoism that persisted among the Nahuas.

The inquisitorial powers assumed by each priest led to the infliction of great harm upon the Indians. The abuses, primarily on the part of the Franciscan friars, seem to have reached alarming proportions in the second half of the sixteenth century, calling for royal intervention on behalf of the natives. Some opposition to the use of punishments existed, even within the Franciscan ranks, but it failed to have a serious effect on the Indianist policies of the priests, which were determined more by pragmatic considerations than by theological arguments.⁷

Beyond the Spanish views of the natives, the degree of resistance the Nahuas offered the Spaniards was also an important determinant of the Indianist policies of both Church and state. The opposition of the indigenes to the imposition of Christianity has been discussed by a number of authors in this century. No one has outlined the central issues better than Robert Ricard.⁸ Unfortunately, Ricard's text, for the most part, fails to develop the very complex problem of the relation between the obstinacy of the Indians and their religious beliefs. Since my concern in this essay is more with these causal connections than with resistance *per se*, it will be necessary to venture a few preliminary remarks concerning a comparison of teoyoism and the Catholic faith.

The Nahuas were an extremely religious people, totally immersed in a sacred cosmos, even though there was an apparent lack of uniformity in the liturgy or standardization of beliefs. Theological orthodoxy seems to have been a low priority and, in any event, probably the province of the clergy alone. As is usually the case, doctrinal lore must have filtered down the social classes in a progressively more diffused form. Local custom and existential exigencies must have been the primary determinants of the form the ceremonies took, limited, of course, by the underlying presuppositions which formed the woof and warp of teoyoism. Foremost among these presuppositions, and the very essence of teoyoism, was the belief that the fundamental function of most of the ceremonies, public and domestic, was to avert evil. In spite of a general belief that the world was a vale of tears, there was a positive sentiment that most ills in the world could be overcome by communal and individual self-assertion centering, as is well known, on self-sacrifice to induce fortunate events to take place and to prevent evil from triumphing.

The awe and the terror that separate the sacred from the profane is delimited differently from culture to culture, thus giving each coherent social group its distinct brand of religiosity which is primarily organized in the light of its own social structure. For the Nahuas, unlike the Christians, the boundaries between the sacred and the human were very thin. As a consequence, many animate objects were necessarily sacred, particularly those whose propitiatory utility inspired the reverence and respect of the community. In effect, a sacred relation existed between humans and the rest of the empirical world. The inclusion of the material world in the sphere of the sacred transformed the temporal world into the center stage for all the important religious dramas, personal or cosmic.

The theological speculations within the upper classes showed a marked tendency toward a synthesis of the various gods into their common functions. This movement toward the amalgamation of the gods did not affect the lower classes which, for the most part, limited their involvement in the worship of the gods of the "great tradition" to public ceremonialism. The "little tradition" of the populace, *which alone survived the conquest*, was more concerned with the sacred nature of the immediate material world and the vaguely understood spirits that inhabited it than with the monumental images and the esoteric lore of the mighty. When put in close contact to the Nahuas, whether by peaceful means or through warfare, foreign gods easily blended into the Nahua pantheon. Once their functions were diagnosed, they would be identified with the Nahua gods that shared their salient attributes. Therefore, it was highly improbable, though possible, that there was an idea of "gentiles" (in the sense of non-believers) as opposed to "teoyists" for the Nahuas. The universally sacred was always more important than its particular embodiment in the form of a god. There was, then, little reason to defend the gods, *qua* gods, from foreign invaders. And new gods could never be anything other than a continuation of the ancient manifestations of the sacred. Christianity was the antithesis of all this, being neither polytheistic nor tolerant of other gods.

It is well known that the Nahuas had many ceremonies which could be compared, however superficially, to Christian rites or customs. The danger of syncretism posed by these supposed similarities was recognized by many of the friars and secular priests, who saw the work of Satan in these diabolical imitations. However, not all the coincidences were considered evil; indeed, some Spaniards lavished great praise on the ancient ways for their rigor and order as well as the intensity of devotion they inspired. Whether the superficial resemblances between the teoyoist practices and the Christian rites promoted or stymied the evangelization process is not clear. However, the documentary sources imply what makes theoretical sense, that is, that these analogous rituals and superficial similarities were a catalyst for syncretism, however much of a clean start the missionaries attempted by disregarding the indigenous elements. The reason for the assumption that syncretism developed necessarily is the following: the presuppositions and motivations behind teoyism, which focused on the prevention of evil through appropriate observances, while in sharp contrast to the idea of salvation through Christ, were nevertheless not so contrary *in their outward expression*, in the context of the rituals of the new faith, as to warrant categorical censure. Therefore, while the beliefs and motivations of the Nahuas were fundamentally different, the ritual manifestations which gave external expression to them had some acceptable affinity to Christian ceremonial practices. This is especially true of Nahua "confessions," "baptisms," "priestly asceticism," "penance," and a type of "communion."

It is difficult to distinguish the Nahua perceptions of what Christianity meant from their various reactions to the imposition of the new doctrine the conquerors bore. Taking this into consideration, the following remarks on the

Nahua view of Christianity are meant more as an introduction to the typology of responses I wish to present than as a study of Nahua perceptions of Christianity distinct from the responses to Christianity themselves.

In the only article written to date specifically concerned with the Nahua view of Christianity, Dr. Miguel León-Portilla advances a number of conclusions which I summarize as follows:

1. Some of the friars, as early as the second half of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth, perceived that much of the ancient paganism survived under the guise of Christian rituals.
2. However, they could also appreciate the authentic conversions of some of the young students of the College of Tlatelolco (a Franciscan institution for children of the native elite), though some of their unorthodox expressions may have caused some raised brows.
3. A number of natives were apparently openly hostile to the imposition of the new faith, showing both surprise and disgust at the idea of abandoning what they considered to be the very essence of their culture.
4. A frequent practice was to adopt only externally the beliefs and practices of Christianity.
5. A few natives carried on arguments in which they compared the doctrines of their forefathers to the incomprehensible teachings of the missionaries, which were sometimes ridiculed. These contentious indigenes often recalled the words of past sages, thus threatening their hearers with the predictions of the end of this age and the descent of the *tzitzinime* (monsters who would eat everyone at the end of the world).
6. Since the past had been lost and the new had not yet been assimilated, the possibility of remaining *nepantla*, "in the middle," was considered a reasonable alternative by many who found themselves "sin rumbo" (without direction).
7. Others claimed that the friars were people whose religion opposed everything that gave joy on earth. And in reference to this complaint, several of them believed the moralizing of the priests was aimed only at the Indians, since the behavior of the Spaniards failed to meet the ideals preached.
8. Lastly, the existence of various religious orders was considered by a few to mean the existence of diverse faiths. It was argued by them that the pre-Hispanic religion should also be worthy of being considered and accepted.⁹

These points, which Dr. León-Portilla admits are far from complete, put into perspective the complexity and variety of sentiments explicitly expressed in the documents. A number of the important issues raised by León-Portilla can be supplemented by additional evidence culled from sources not discussed in his article—sources which, furthermore, reveal some of the other Nahua attitudes

toward the new faith. Many of the documents cited in this essay are suggestive of these additional sources.

The question of the authenticity of conversions is ticklish. Even the most inveterate skeptic would be convinced that the conversions of the native historian Chimalpahin Cuauhtlehuāniztzin or the Indian priest Pedro Ponce de León were, indeed, genuine. But, excepting those who, like the native scholars, had lengthy treatises which betrayed the sincerity of their expressed convictions, how are we to judge the countless multitudes whose behavior is known to us only through the friars' judgements shaped by their mediaeval standards?

The key to understanding what baptism could have meant to the Indians lies in the analysis of the undeniable desire of many of them to be baptized. Two possibilities were mentioned above: curiosity and fear. I now propose a third. Fray Toribio Motolinía observed that *after* being baptized the natives were overcome by joy. It would take faith in divine grace, like that which guided Father Cuevas, to believe that the natives should rejoice after a summary lecture and a speedy ceremony. I am more inclined to believe that many of the natives—accustomed to great ceremonialism—comprehended, however rudimentarily, the value of the rite as a procedure by which the agents of the conquerors indicated their acceptance of the individual and social integrity of the natives. That is, it is not difficult to imagine that the natives could sense the importance of this bizarre ritual as an invitation, however forced, to social reintegration in a significantly changed world order. The most naïve among them could appreciate the officious but peaceful hand of the missionaries as a tolerable alternative to the swords of the triumphant allied forces. To serve new masters seems to have been better, after all, than the social chaos then existing. *Baptism opened the door to civil life.* A people like the Nahuas who had lived in a quasi-theocratic state would not have to suppose too much to make theirs the idea that a sacred ceremony marked fealty to a new (temporal) lord. Another motivation pressing the Indians toward the baptismal waters may have been the notion that to share in the benefits (rain, crops, children) of the new era one had to participate in this surprisingly painless ritual, which was all the more sacred for being inscrutable. The mystical bent of the natives, which I will discuss below, was also behind the baptism of many individuals.

The question of the genuineness of Christian devotion on the part of the Indians is not exhausted by a discussion of baptism alone. Other sacraments beside baptism also inspired devotion among the natives. The sacrament of penitence, for instance, seems to have enjoyed a widespread popularity, though there is sufficient documentation to question the propriety of the motivations behind its acceptance.¹⁰ The lack of enthusiasm for the Christian ideal of marriage with its emphasis on monogamy is understandable among a people used to having a number of wives, all of whom played a significant role in the domestic economy as weavers and caretakers. Beyond the sacraments, other aspects of the new faith evoked the enthusiasm of the Nahuas: the images, the cross, the friars themselves and their works, the giving of alms, and assisting in the service of the mass, to name but a few. However, many observers suggest

that Christian piety was not always behind these ostensibly Christian acts.¹¹

Dr. León-Portilla, in the conclusions I have summarized above, claims that many natives only adopted Christianity overtly. That is, without changing their religious convictions they simply borrowed from Christianity whatever elements were necessary to *appear* Christian. Most of the documents I have studied intimate that this was indeed commonly the case among Nahuas who did not belong to a privileged class. Whether embraced out of force or fear of punishment, political expediency, love of pomp and ceremony, or fear of the plagues, this religious stand helped to make possible the survival of teoyoism among the majority of urban and rural natives.¹² What made this position such an attractive and viable alternative? One reason suggested by another of the conclusions listed above is “nepantlism,” defined by Professor León-Portilla as that situation in which a person remains suspended in the middle between a lost or disfigured past and a present that has not been assimilated or understood. This state is vividly described and abundantly documented in sources from the third decade in the sixteenth century to the second half of the seventeenth. It should not be confused with syncretism, which is, in both a historical and a psychological sense, the logical consequence of nepantlism when it is resolved under conditions that make a full conversion impossible. Nepantlism meant that the premises of Christianity were not understood, and as a consequence only the superficial manifestations of the rites could be accepted as one’s own (since the Nahuas were not free to reject Christianity outright). This was truly a problematic situation: the structural base of teoyoism had been dismantled by the conquest, yet one could neither convert nor keep from appearing Christian. Other circumstances contributed to the persistence of some form of teoyoism under a veneer of Christianity, including the ubiquitous disregard for adequate indoctrination, the lack of properly prepared or interested personnel, and the language gap, which only a minimal number of priests were able to bridge. And those who could speak well often spoke in such an elevated style that they remained unintelligible to the masses.

The propitiatory nature of teoyoism was fundamental for the Nahuas though it failed to articulate an orthodox theology to match the punctiliousness of the ancient priests. This situation opened the way to other modes of Nahua Christian religiosity in the post-Contact world. One perspective may be called magical. The works of Jacinto de la Serna¹³ and Hernando Ruiz de Alarcon¹⁴ are replete with examples, as are those of the great mendicant historians.¹⁵ This magical view of Christianity, which was not very distant from that held by many Spaniards, downplayed or ignored the role of will or intentionality by focusing on the material aspects of sin, ritual paraphernalia, or related sacred objects. The precise performance of rituals and the accurate repetition of prayers and formulas were understood as the very source of favorable or ill fortune in health, love, and wealth. This teoyoist concern with the practical, while not excluding altogether the existence of spiritual beings, grounded morality on temporal rewards or punishments, disregarding as otiose the Christian notion of eternal rewards in a supernatural realm.

The unwillingness of the Nahuas to accept the infinite dimensions of Christian metaphysics along with their aversion to orthodoxy, both of these the product of their teoyoist legacy, made them appear in the eyes of the Spaniards as a group of unbelievers whose trust, if it existed, was placed on the priests alone, not on the Christian god. As a consequence, most natives were considered to be willing to accept *any* doctrine, "good or bad,"¹⁴ and therefore incapable of grasping one faith firmly, forgetting what they had learned in catechism as soon as the priest was out of sight.

As for the mystical bent of the natives, it should be clearly understood that, quite understandably, the Catholic Church has always been uncomfortable with mystics. Mysticism is a wide avenue to heterodoxy since the divine may be interpreted by the mystic as having manifested itself in ways which could be considered by the religious authorities as outside the established traditions of the Church. Mystics, therefore, have fared both well and ill. In pre-Hispanic Mexico the complex ecclesiastical hierarchy stood as a formidable barrier between the lowly penitent and the seemingly inexorable gods of the "great tradition." But when removed to the privacy of their accustomed surroundings, before the domestic altar or hearth, or in the isolation of the fields, mountains, ravines, and creeks, the Nahuas shared in the intensely human experience of feeling within them the essence of the divine. In countless places Fray Bernardino de Sahagún and others tell us of the natives' visions and dreams that teemed with manifestations of the sacred. After the conquest many of them continued to have visions of the ancient gods who would tell them that the Spaniards and Christianity would soon leave, or who would exhort them to take arms and kill the foreigners, all the while reminding them of the consequences they would incur for neglecting their teoyoist duties which meant, in accordance with their propitiatory beliefs, that evil would descend upon them if the appropriate observances were not immediately resumed. Other natives, more open to innovation, imagined apparitions with a marked Christian accent. On the one hand, some experienced the terrifying presence of their former gods, transformed into devils by the missionaries. Others, more fortunate, heard angels, visited hell and returned, were favored by Christian miracles, were blessed by sensing the presence of saints, or merely delighted in the all-engulfing proximity of the sacred. Nahua mysticism had no bounds, enjoying as it did the fertile imagination of the deeply devout who disdain dogmas of all kinds. However, in the colonial era not all mysticism received the seal of approval. The Inquisition, formally and at the local level, made some of these natives pay dearly for their lack of discrimination in the mystical experiences they indiscreetly shared with others more orthodox than themselves.

Unfortunately most modern authors have failed to pay much attention to the evidence of marked—though not violent—resistance; and when they raise this subject it is usually to dismiss it, somewhat ingenuously, as a phenomenon of the first decade after the conquest and, after that, of isolated areas little touched by Christianity. Most repeat uncritically the ancient myth that "idolatry" enjoyed periodic resurgences preceded by periods of *total* aban-

donment! The collection of extant Inquisition cases coming primarily from the middle and late 1530's, coupled with the euphoric accounts of the activities of the first decade after the Conquest in 1519, written by too optimistic missionaries, is partly to blame for this popular but false myth of recurring bouts of idolatry appearing *ex nihilo*. In most places and among the overwhelming majority of natives the "spiritual conquest" was never more than spiritual warfare; the material evidence of teoyoism was, indeed, demolished, mostly at the hands of the natives themselves, but the new faith triumphed unquestionably *only* in the establishment of a visible Church. Never did the natives make up the majority of the faithful nor the backbone of what was to remain, until the rise of the mestizo (Indian-Spanish hybrid), a Spanish colonial Church.

Typologies of responses given by the Nahuas to Christianity have been presented, more or less explicitly, by a number of authors. Some have pointed out the importance of identifying them in the light of specific groups, geographical regions, and historical periods. While I could not agree more with this position, I have put these latter categories aside for now in favor of more general considerations. The reason for this is critical to the thesis of this essay. I believe most of the published materials on the religious history of early colonial Mexico have downplayed the enormous evidence found throughout the vast documentary sources (both published and archival) that attest to the *lack* of success in the conversion of the Indians. Therefore, a thorough reanalysis of the documents is necessary in order to reassess the nature of Nahuatl religiosity; and this, I suspect, will lead us to modify a number of earlier conclusions regarding the geography and chronology of conversions. Therefore, the schema below is necessarily arbitrary, but founded on evidence which I believe supports the contention that the spiritual conquest failed in that a variety of perspectives toward Christianity developed, most of which could not properly be termed Christian.

Nahuatl Responses to the Christianization Process

Accommodation

- A. Complete conversion (Christianity believed and understood)
- B. Incomplete conversion (Christianity believed but misunderstood)
- C. Overt conversion only (indifference or belief in teoyoism with casual participation in Christian rites)

Conflict

- D. Complete resistance (never baptized)
- E. Overt conversion only (passive and active resistance)
- F. Apostasy

The typology could, of course, be refined further. One modification which would add to its utility is the addition of geographical and chronological categories. Though too much reliance on these distinctions can be misleading,

as I suggested earlier, it is *generally* true that the greater the isolation of the natives from the Spanish influence the higher the probability that teoyoism continued in that area. And it is practically a truism to say that those raised to believe in teoyoism before the arrival of the Spaniards were more recalcitrant than the post-Contact generations. Indeed, by the second post-Contact generation (that is, the grandchildren of those raised before the conquest) the names of the gods and the nature of the ceremonies of the “great tradition” had been almost completely forgotten. The native religion that survived the Spanish intrusion was principally composed of aspects of the “little tradition” of teoyoism, described by Professor Pedro Carrasco as “the part of the aboriginal religion associated with family life: the cycle of life rites, cures, and rites which accompanied the technical activities like agriculture, hunting, etc.”¹⁷ These were in turn mixed with the grossly simplified, greatly diversified, and easily mutable traces of the “great tradition” rites and beliefs which the native priests of the ancient religion and their successors continued to practice and preach throughout the colonial period, progressively augmented with stray elements from Christianity, Spanish heterodoxy, and the culture of the black slaves.¹⁸ Post-Contact teoyoist ceremonies persisted unabated deep into the seventeenth century.¹⁹ (Recent ethnographic accounts imply that these native rites continued throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.) Not only was teoyoism to be found in most isolated areas, but it also enjoyed great popularity in the heart of New Spain. During the colonial period Nahua children were taught the native beliefs and practices both at home and by self-appointed native priests.²⁰ The extent of the diffusion of teoyoism led many to suspect that there was little Christianity among the Nahuas and that with the exception of children few of them were being saved.²¹ Some who despaired of eradicating the indigenous religious practices by human effort placed their faith in God as the only force who could bring this disappointing state to an end.

Political and social expediency along with the general good will of the missionaries made baptism attractive for the central Mexican natives. However, conversion required conviction. The beauty and coherence of Christianity were of no avail when confronted by an undogmatic teoyoism whose benefits had been proven over many centuries. The conspiracy of silence on the part of the Indians and the friars kept many from seeing or recounting the failure of the spiritual conquest.²² The things of this world and the newness to Spanish culture of the command to go out and be fishers of men caused most Spaniards to be indifferent to the religious beliefs of the indigenes—so long as these did not interfere with their pursuits. With the reduction of the native population through epidemics and overwork in the sixteenth century, the problem of teoyoism was reduced to insignificance even for the priests. The mestizo (person of mixed white and Indian ancestry), on the other hand, began to multiply, and his close proximity to the Spanish resulted in a sincere belief in the new faith. The demographic changes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries forced the teoyoist Indians to the wings, and the Christian mestizo

took his place in the center of the stage. The uncritical and pious nature of the works of the early chroniclers, the changing demographic landscape, and our own ethnocentrism have misled many of us into thinking of the Nahuas as somehow primitive Spaniards patiently awaiting Christianity for two millennia. And this was certainly not the case.

Notes

¹ Mariano Cuevas, *Historia de la iglesia en México*, 4th ed., 5 vols. (Mexico: Ediciones Cervantes, 1942). Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*, trans. by Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966). Dionisio Victoria Moreno, *Los carmelitas descalzos y la conquista espiritual de México, 1585-1612* (Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1966). Lino Gómez Canedo, *Evangelización y conquista: Experiencia franciscana en Hispanoamérica* (Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1977). Daniel Ulloa, *Los predicadores divididos: Los dominicos en Nueva España, siglo XVI* (Mexico: Colegio de Mexico, 1977). Nicolás P. Navarrete, *Historia de la provincia agustiniana de San Nicolás de Tolentino de Michoacán*, 2 vols. (Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1978).

² J. Jorge Klor de Alva, *Spiritual Warfare in Mexico: Christianity and the Aztecs* (forthcoming).

³ Cuevas, *Historia de la iglesia en México*, I, 192.

⁴ Cuevas, p. 193.

⁵ Arthur J. O. Anderson, Frances Berdan, and James Lockhart, eds., *Beyond the Codices*, UCLA Latin American Studies Series, 27 (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1976), p. 185.

⁶ Toribio de Benavente or Motolinía, *Memoriales o libro de las cosas de la Nueva España y de los naturales de ella*, preliminary study, paleography, and notes by Edmundo O'Gorman (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1971), pp. 120-22.

⁷ In general see *Procesos de indios idólatras y hechiceros*, Publicaciones del Archivo General de la Nación, 3, preliminary study by Luis González Obregón (Mexico: Archivo General de la Nación, 1912). *Proceso inquisitorial del cacique de Tetzoco*, Publicaciones del Archivo General de la Nación, 1, preliminary study by Luis González Obregón (Mexico: Archivo General de la Nación, 1910). For the seventeenth century see Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón, *Tratado de las idolatrías, supersticiones, dioses, ritos, hechicerías y otras costumbres gentílicas de las razas aborígenes de México*, 2 vols., preliminary study, notes, and comments by Francisco del Paso y Troncoso (Mexico: Ediciones Fuente Cultural, 1953), p. 42. Jacinto de la Serna, *Tratado de las idolatrías*, pp. 351-52 and 412-14. Diego Jaymes Ricardo Villavicencio, *Luz, y methodo, de confesar idolatras, y destierro de idolatrías* (Puebla: Diego Fernández de León, 1692), p. 125. Also see *Epistolario de Nueva España 1505-1818*, 16 vols. Francisco del Paso

y Troncoso, ed. (Mexico: Antigua Librería Robredo, 1939-42), III, 84-85; VIII, 73; IX, 172; XI, 149. *Cartas de Indias*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Ministerio de Fomento, 1877; facsimile ed. in Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, vol. 264, Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1974), I, 391-96. Gómez Canedo, *Evangelización y conquista*, pp. 178-80.

⁸ See Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*.

⁹ Miguel León-Portilla, "Testimonios nahuas sobre la conquista espiritual." *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl*, 11 (1974), 32-33.

¹⁰ Juan de Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana*, 3 vols. (Madrid: Nicolás Rodríguez Franco, 1723; facsimile ed. with a preliminary study by Miguel León-Portilla [Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1975], III, 45, 169-70. Motolinía, *Memoriales*, pp. 90-92. Luis García Pimentel, *Descripción del arzobispado de México hecha en 1570 y otros documentos* (Mexico: José Joaquín Terrazas e Hijos, 1897), p. 226.

¹¹ *Descripción del arzobispado*, pp. 424-25. *Epistolario de Nueva España*, VIII, 76. Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana*, III, 43. Martín de León, *Camino del cielo en lengua mexicana* (Mexico: Diego Lopez Davalos, 1611), fol. 97v.

¹² Motolinía, *Memoriales*, p. 129. *Codice Mendieta*, Nueva Colección de Documentos Para la Historia de México, vols. 4 and 5, preliminary study by Joaquín García Icazbalceta, ed. (Mexico: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1892; facsimile ed. 2 vols., Guadalajara: Edmundo Aviña Levy, 1971), I, 8. Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, 3rd ed., preliminary study and notes by Ángel Ma. Garibay K. (Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1975), p. 38. León, *Camino del cielo*, fol. 105v. Juan Bautista, *Advertencias para los confesores de los naturales* (Mexico, 1600), p. 9. *Descripción del arzobispado*, p. 425.

¹³ Serna, *Tratado de las idolatrías*.

¹⁴ Alarcon, *Tratado de las idolatrías*.

¹⁵ Motolinía, *Memoriales*. Motolinía, *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España*, preliminary study and notes by Edmundo O'Gorman (Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1973). Diego Durán, *Historia de los indios de Nueva España e islas de la tierra firme*, preliminary study by Ángel Ma. Garibay K., ed., 2 vols. (Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1967). Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, preliminary study by Joaquín García Icazbalceta, ed. (Mexico: Antigua Librería, 1870; facsimile ed., Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1971). Sahagún, *Historia General*. Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana*.

¹⁶ *Codice franciscano*, Nueva Colección de Documentos Para la Historia de Mexico, vol. 2, preliminary study by Joaquín García Icazbalceta, ed. (Mexico: Salvador Chavez Hayhoe, 1941), p. 72.

¹⁷ Pedro Carrasco, "La transformación de la cultura indígena durante la colonia," *Historia Mexicana*, 25 (Octubre-Diciembre, 1975), 200.

¹⁸ Durán, *Historia de los indios*, I, 218. *Procesos de indios idólatras*, passim. Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica*, pp. 223-24. *Códice franciscano*, p. 71. Alonso de Molina, *Confessionario mayor, en la lengua mexicana y castellana* (Mexico: Casa de Antonio Espinosa, 1569; facsimile ed. with an introduction by Roberto Moreno, Suplementos al Boletín del Instituto de Investigaciones Bibliográficas 7 [1972], fol. 102r. *Descripción del arzobispado*, p. 70. Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana*, III, 38. Juan Bautista, *Confessionario en lengua mexicana y castellana* (Mexico: Melchior Ocharte, 1599), fol. 43r. Juan de la Anunciación, *Sermonario en lengua mexicana* (Mexico: Antonio Ricardo, 1577), fol. 2r. León, *Camino del cielo*, fol. 98v. Bartholome de Alva, *Confessionario mayor, y menor en lengua mexicana* (Mexico: Francisco Salbago, impresor del Secreto del Santo Officio, 1634), fols. 16v-17r. Villavicencio, *Luz y methodo*, beginning and p. 125. Alarcon, *Tratado de las idolatrías*, passim (esp. p. 24). Serna, *Tratado de las idolatrías*, passim (esp. p. 49). Also note, in general, Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *Medicina y magia* (Mexico: Instituto Nacional Indigenista/Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1973). Colin A. Palmer, *Slaves of the White God: Blacks in Mexico, 1570-1650* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1976).

¹⁹ In general see the works of Durán; Sahagún; Villavicencio; Alarcon; Serna; Molina, *Confessionario*; and Georges Baudot, "Apariciones diabolicas en un texto nahuatl de fray Andrés de Olmos," *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl*, 10 (1972), 350. Luis Reyes García, "Ordenanzas para el gobierno de Cuauhtinchan, año 1559," *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl*, 10 (1972), 267. Anunciación, *Sermonario*, fol. 2r. Bautista, *Advertencias*, pp. 106-11. León, *Camino del cielo*, letter of dedication and fols. 95r, 100r,v-112r, 138v, 154r. Alva, *Confessionario*, fols. 8v-16r.

²⁰ Durán, *Historia de los indios*, I, 58, 78. Serna, *Tratado de las idolatrías*, p. 62. Villavicencio, *Luz y methodo*, p. 7.

²¹ *Códice Franciscano*, p. 279. *Epistolario de Nueva España*, IV, 210; VIII, 76. *Descripción del arzobispado*, pp. 89-222, 425-26. Alarcon, *Tratado de las idolatrías*, p. 351. Serna, *Tratado de las idolatrías*, p. 48. Alva, *Confessionario*, fols. 1v-2r. Villavicencio, *Luz y methodo*, beginning.

²² See Sahagún's comments on the conspiracy by the Indians to feign their conversion and of that of the friars to keep others from knowing about the failure of many of these conversions in Joaquín García Icazbalceta, *Bibliografía mexicana del siglo XVI*, Biblioteca Americana, prologue by Agustín Millares Carlo (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1954), pp. 381-83. See also Sahagún, *Historia General*, p. 582. Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica*, p. 638. Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana*, III, 2, 456. León, *Camino del cielo*, fol. 95v. Villavicencio, *Luz y methodo*, beginning and p. 106. Alarcon, *Tratado de las idolatrías*, pp. 19, 37, 151.

Nietzsche's Christian Ultimatum

Hawley C. Taylor

WHEN Nietzsche's madman, in the *Gaya Scienza*, announced in the marketplace that the new Pharisees had killed God, the horrors of the two world wars and their sequelae were still to come. But today, in the last quarter of the twentieth century, Nietzsche's madman might take his lantern betimes and propound another riddle, for Christianity seems alive and well in this post-war age of revivalism. In nearly every marketplace we see signs of spiritual regeneration. Penitents by the tens of thousands are born again every year in televised camp meetings. The attention of the world is riveted on the succession of two popes following the death of Paul VI. Biblical prose is laundered to fulfill some hypothetical subliterate need of the masses, women are sanctified in the priesthood, homosexuals are welcomed into the fold, and masses are performed in concert with rock music.

This is far from being a clear picture, and it is not sketched here cynically. It is simply that phenomena of this complexity do not shape themselves into a coherent design. What is happening to—or within—Christianity is neither uniform nor ephemeral, but it would seem to belie Nietzsche's famous proclamation that God is dead.

However, it is not as unhistorical as it might at first seem to raise again the spectre (has it ever slept quietly?) of Nietzsche's madman, for the path that Christianity appears to be taking leads it ever closer to the spiritual wasteland described by the superman in *Also sprach Zarathustra*. Nietzsche's prolonged quarrel with Christianity was based upon his analysis of the influence of Christian thinking upon the European mind. In brief, the German philosopher concluded that Christianity would—or indeed already had—destroyed itself precisely by means of its unique ethical achievement. This was, in its origins, the extraordinary union forged by St. Thomas Aquinas between Christian morality and Greek philosophy, one of the greatest cultural achievements of the world. It triumphed in an ethical refinement and an intellectual precision that must ultimately, Nietzsche felt, yield to nihilism.

On the face of it, it is not easy to see why this should be so. In what way could a sophisticated ethics become, in any sense, destructive? The medieval church manifested an unshrinking zeal in tendering comfort to all who were in need. It sought out the afflicted and the downcast and extended them a new hope by promising what was already become an old legacy. The misery of the world was attacked both by the ministrations of the clergy and by the vision of an other-worldly bliss attainable by the worthy.

This sensitivity to suffering is a sharpening of Christian ethical thought, and it is fundamental on two counts. First, by definition it is the condition of fallen humanity to be miserable, and all mankind is fallen—*nemo bonus*. Second, the intellectual assimilation from Greek philosophy made it clear to the early commentators that, like stealing fire from heaven, the spiritual wretchedness of humanity furnishes the steps to the temple, and the temple is not of this world. It follows that the City of Man must be held in contempt because ultimate values—that is, those values that relate to the salvation of mankind—exist outside of history. Hence the only knowledge worthy of pursuit is otherworldly knowledge, that which addresses the problem of redemption, and here too the medieval church proved equal to the challenge. Scholasticism was the intellectual triumph of that pursuit, but its apparent disregard of the urgent problems of day to day existence brought it into eventual disrepute. Humanists like Erasmus ridiculed the hairsplitting and logic-chopping (as they saw it) of the scholastic thinkers. Nietzsche was correct in his understanding of its self-destructive destiny. With the dawn of the Renaissance scholasticism was scornfully rejected.

On the other hand the narrower study of nature, spawned by the same Christian zeal for truth—the study of the here and the now, increased without restraint. As a philosophy it sanctioned investigations into the problems of this world. But, Nietzsche argued, it henceforth held no intrinsic value except insofar as it served the interests of the ruling class, and this became possible only through a calculated disinterest in serving ethics. The investigation of nature thus became a morally neutral study. It mattered little whither it went because, after all, it did not essay the ultimate problems, the questions of man's purpose and God's design. Da Vinci signalled the ethical collapse of the new science by

developing its precocious capacity to destroy life through techniques that were previously undreamed of. It was not with this kind of learning that the *homo dei* was concerned. Secular learning went its way and theological learning went God's way, each politely (in time) assuming the other to be of no especial value.

But the shift in thinking, as Nietzsche understood it, was decisive. Secular knowledge, honed by the spirit of ancient philosophy, was no longer bound by the assumptions of a theology that was considered, at best, wholly gratuitous. What mattered was unconstrained inquiry, inquiry necessarily bereft of any moral valence because it could succeed only when its *method* was considered primary to its *results*. Later, when art similarly shrugged off its moral coil, *l'art pour l'art* emerged as an expression of its new-found license, the artistic analogue to neutral science. (Nietzsche said that art for art's sake means "the devil take morality.") In education, or at least in research (the two are not identical), research for the sake of research triumphed as a new description of genuine knowledge.

But, as Nietzsche perceived, the intellect's quest for "pure" knowledge, although Christian in origin, is not pure. Once the intellect had delivered itself from its moral incubus it set about destroying its liberator. As it waxed in strength it waned in purity until it became the very instrument of self-destruction that Nietzsche had foreseen. In the sixteenth century it turned against the medieval church and shook it to its foundations. By the nineteenth century it had turned against life itself. In the white heat of its searching gaze it destroyed everything significant of human purpose. Then, like a laser-eyed sphynx it slouched towards the twentieth century. The bloodbaths of the two great wars made it clear that the modern preoccupation with truth was fully emancipated from morality; it had shed all vestiges of compassion for the human condition. It was transformed into an obsession; it was now a secular paroxysm of knowing all—and at any price.

As humanity with its new learning looked deeper within itself it would discover everything there, Nietzsche insisted, that is trivial and repugnant. In history, psychology, and sociology, mankind's absolute faith in discovering the knowable would culminate in finding that what is absolutely knowable destroys absolute faith. This is the shattering paradox enunciated by Zarathustra, the suicidal result of the Christian quest for truth.

The church was never blind to this tragic insight. Christianity has nearly always been pessimistic with respect to mankind, but it has been optimistic about the *destiny* of mankind, or at least a portion of it, since the Atonement. But that destiny transcends history; its vector takes us beyond knowing. Meanwhile, as we await destiny, our amoral frenzy to know all reduces the world to the sum of its ultimate knowable units. Accordingly the poets who reflect the times can no longer give us Hectors and Hamlets, only Meursaults and Lomans. Nor can they give us Beatrices and Juliets—only Emma Bovarys. Where is the *homo dei*, or the *femina dei*, among our latter-day writers? In what has become the typical tone of chaos Rimbaud wrote:

Un soir, j'ai assis la Beauté sur mes genoux.—Et je l'ai trouvée amère.—
Et je l'ai injuriée.

And he was by no means the last writer to find Beauty bitter, and to curse her.

The contemporary resurgence in popular Christianity is disturbingly related to the urge for unrestrained inquiry and the disquieting vision discovered by it. The late twentieth century has inherited not merely the uneasy bourgeoisdom of the post-war years, but also the vacuum created by the displacement of its culture—that is, its spiritual barrenness. Even our most outstanding technical achievements—moon landings and Venus probes—at least in their inception wore the decent if seedy garb of scientific liberalism. But like any ethically disinterested research, their moral significance has been reduced to the status of a mere anecdote.

Now there is nothing obligatory about making science the scapegoat for spiritual and cultural malaise. But when culture has become the tail to the scientific kite, the results—if not enlightening—are at least highly indicative. They are indicative of the degree to which society is committed to the amoral ambience of methodology, of research at any price; of inquiry that is disinterested and undistributed, except with respect to political requirements. The success of science is spectacular precisely because nothing else in society is even remotely so successful. And the apparent failure of other culturally related processes to provide similar achievements emphasizes the disinherited mood in which so much modern revivalism operates. Self-enlightenment and social amelioration have now become the agencies not of religion or philosophy but of science. The invitation to significant living finds its address in an accumulated quantitation deriving from the Baconian mystique. Hence science has become for us the only institution to speak with authority on the essential nature of human existence. The instrumental success of quantitation is as much a mainstay of our civilization as it is a symbol of its inability to heal the ills of a culture dispossessed of purpose, even down to the purpose of daily living.

In crude terms, this is what Nietzsche was getting at, and his analysis of the destroying human intellect unleashed by Christianity clarifies certain popular misconceptions. It was once thought that original sin corrupted reason. Strangely it was reason, according to Nietzsche, that corrupted original sin. At one time men and women could relate their inner doubts and malaise to sin; thereby they at least recognized a basis for their anxieties. But what Nietzsche called the destructive power of reason came to eliminate the meaning and the very existence of sin. It is not simply a matter of some persons feeling better, *being* better, according to Reinhold Niebuhr, if they have a sense of sin, although that may be true. What is significant is that sin does not—as we say—compute. One need not be a thorough-going Augustinian to argue that without an awareness of sin there is no confessional imperative, no necessary acknowledgement of the provenience of morality. T. S. Eliot said “the world is

trying the experiment of attempting to form a civilized but non-Christian mentality. The experiment will fail.”

It will fail partly because sin has been legislated out of existence by politicians, by social engineers, progressive educators, mental health clinics, and other agencies of the Baconian mystique. These are, paradoxically, the fruits of the ethical refinement predicted by Nietzsche, and they bear witness to his charge that the unprecedented union of Christian morality and Greek philosophy would inevitably lead to a compelling disillusionment. We may use whatever labels we wish—behaviorism, relativism, positivism, mechanism, determinism, fatalism. They have all been studied at length and need not detain us here except as a catalogue of the modern Excaliburs forged by reason to battle the radical imperfectibility of mankind.

Nietzsche’s insights also help correct another popular misconception. It is frequently argued that it was science and technology—logical analysis—that originally challenged and finally eclipsed widespread religious conviction. But Nietzsche seems to turn this around. He believed that scientific rationalism and its associated technology are the *product*, the inescapable consequences, of Christianity. There is thus a causal, not an accidental, relationship between them. What has been called in the arts and philosophy the crisis of modern life is the direct result of the Christian endeavor, informed originally by the loftiest motives, to shed the light of truth wherever it might shine. It has now, through refined scientific analysis, been shed on our innermost selves and on our societies, and what we see there betrays our finest urges and our most humanitarian programs. What we perceive in the innermost truth about ourselves and our institutions is hateful, and with loathing we turn from the humbug of our humanity. Whatever seems to be ultimately knowable, truth for truth’s sake, reveals only what is meaningless. This is what the arts have been showing us also, and not the arts alone. The mass annihilation led by Jim Jones in Guyana is additional testimony. Did his followers hear the voice of Nietzsche’s madman?

What is sometimes described as a revival of the religious spirit in contemporary society is undoubtedly a response to this crisis, the intractability of a universe devoid of demonstrable purpose. Wistful, periodic yearnings for spiritual certainty are to be expected. In Balzac’s words, “although we do not in life know where we are going, we experience beyond a doubt the fatigues of the journey.” New religions, new cults, old cults in new uniforms, appear in increasing numbers. They represent an attempt to rediscover the Divine in nature by turning away from and criticizing the desperate human condition. But these maneuvers do not necessarily retrace the steps to the temple.

In the late twentieth century perhaps what we need to do most urgently is face Nietzsche’s ultimatum, for to suffer from the truth is at least to be a part of the truth. The born-again Christian, the *recens natus*, is by a historical sleight-of-hand attempting to ignore what cannot be ignored, for *if* there is any truth at all, God is the truth. The fatigues of the journey are inescapable. In the *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche wrote:

Christianity presupposes that man does not know, *cannot* know, what is good for him, what is evil; he believes in God, who alone knows it. Christian morality is a command; its origin is transcendent; it is beyond all criticism, all right to criticism; it has truth only if God is the truth.

As rational creatures we wish to believe, but we find little to believe. We all want proof, yet we all doubt. But again, if Nietzsche's analysis has validity, it is in the recognition that it is Christianity that has brought us to this pass. Many of the most deeply religious figures discovered long ago that proof is not possible for the very things we cherish most profoundly. St. Augustine, Donne, Pascal, Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky come to mind. In brief, they knew what we know.

However, they also knew something else, something that is crucial to any appraisal of the spiritual condition, and crucial to any attempt to rediscover the Divine in nature: they knew that the impasse exists not outside of Christianity, but *within it*.

Nietzsche saw this too, but he believed that it was his historical mission to discover a way out of the impasse. To do this he invented a superman. Not a God—why create, he asked, merely another illusion?—but a man who would take the place vacated by the God whom man's intellect had killed. But the superman is only, in the last analysis, another metaphor for the tragic consequences of demanding certainty about what is essentially transcendent. Or perhaps more precisely, the superman demonstrates that man, who most demands reason, is the most irrational of all creatures. It is reason, Christian reason, that teaches us this truth. Thus spake—not Zarathustra. At best man is not a creator of truth, nor a creature of truth; he is only, in his finest moments, a lover of truth.

If there is a window for the soul, it may be in the truth of this perception. The window cannot be shuttered either by a blind retreat into research, or by a hysterical denial of reality. But Nietzsche, before he might have shared this perception, had succumbed to the malady of his madman: he was hopelessly insane.

Redevelopment, Preservation, and Protection:

The Renewal of Urban Neighborhoods

Terry Christensen

*Some of the material in this article appears in different form in my book **Neighbourhood Survival**, published by Prism Press, Dorset, 1979, and is used with permission of Prism Press. T.C.*

FOR almost fifteen years, residents, developers, planners, and politicians have been battling over the fate of ninety-six acres in the center of London. Surrounded by London's financial, tourist, and government centers, the territory in question is some of the most valuable central city property in the world. But, somehow, residents managed to defeat a massive redevelopment plan that would have demolished over sixty percent of the area.

It all began in 1964 when the Covent Garden Market Authority decided to move the three-hundred-year-old produce market to new quarters. The gaping hole left by the move gave the planners and developers their opportunity.

Covent Garden was originally developed in the seventeenth century. The Piazza, designed by Inigo Jones for the Earl of Bedford, was laid out in 1630 as London's first residential square. The burgeoning fruit and vegetable market soon pushed the gentry out, however, and for three centuries the principal economic function of the area was produce wholesaling.

For almost as long, the area has also been an artistic and cultural center, with many publishers and theatres. Almost everybody who was anybody in English cultural and political history lived or worked or debauched in Covent Garden: Nell Gwynne, David Garrick, Voltaire, Johnson and Boswell, Pepys, Dickens, Thackeray, the Prince of Wales and Lillie Langtry, Eliot . . . The list is endless and the people on it are an essential part of the character of Covent Garden.

The combination of the market, theatres, printers, and coffee houses gave the area an around-the-clock vitality, but Covent Garden has always been a residential area as well. Beginning with the gentry living on the Piazza, the neighborhood gradually changed to a predominantly working-class population, mixed with artisans and theatre people. Covent Garden's population declined steadily in this century, from 8,917 in 1901 to 3,000 in 1971.

Most of the remaining residents are working class. Thirty percent are older than sixty-five. Most live in single member households and ninety-nine percent are renters, mostly in local authority and housing trust facilities. Most of the people have lived in Covent Garden for a long time and most of them want to stay. This stable residential population is what makes Covent Garden a community. There is a strong feeling of neighborliness and a high degree of social contact on the streets and in the pubs. The strength of community identity might have been an early clue to the planners that resistance would be forthcoming, but the political passivity of the area, typical of working-class neighborhoods, gave few explicit clues.

When the decision to move the market was made, the planners and developers saw a classic example of an area ready for renewal: a declining population of workers, elderly and renters; buildings one hundred to two hundred years old; a seventeenth century maze of streets; and one of the most lucrative locations in London. In the boom years of the 1960s, new developments were rising all around Covent Garden. Not surprisingly, developers and speculators had been casting their eyes on Covent Garden even before the Market Authority determined to relocate.

GLC to the Rescue

Covent Garden is governed by the boroughs of Camden and Westminster and by the regional Greater London Council (GLC). The GLC, which is responsible for large-scale redevelopment and projects straddling borough lines, thus took charge of planning for Covent Garden.

In 1965, the GLC announced grandiose plans for "a new pattern of development." Ninety-six acres were to be designated a Comprehensive Development Area (CDA), including twelve acres owned by the GLC (passed on to it by the Covent Garden market Authority).

During 1966 and 1967, the GLC planners gathered data. Aside from a sample survey of public attitudes, there was no attempt to gain public input. There was, however, substantial consultation with major landowners and potential developers.

In 1968, the planning team published its proposals. The team stressed the need for GLC intervention to manage inevitable redevelopment, arguing that public control was preferable to private exploitation. Government intervention was also said to be necessary to assemble sites for developers, thus overcoming the pattern of fragmented land ownership and providing "maximum incentives for private developers."

Reflecting the pattern of urban renewal in the 1960s, government would act as a non-profit speculator, planning and assembling land packages for the primary benefit of developers and the secondary benefit of the community at large, which purportedly enjoys employment and tax gains.

The planners recommended the demolition of sixty percent of the area (including eighty-two percent of the housing) to be replaced by carefully differentiated "bands" of commercial, entertainment, and residential developments connected by pedestrian walkways. Major new roadways, hotels, office buildings, a conference center and parking facilities would also be included. The old Central Market Building and some other structures in the center of the area were to be preserved as a "line of character."

Though massively destructive, the plan was relatively innovative for its time in that it attempted to retain a mixture of uses and some of the older buildings. GLC Planner Geoffrey Holland says they "got a lot of flack in 1968 for retaining old buildings. We were considered very backward." In order to carry out their plan, the GLC submitted a proposal for a Comprehensive Development Area (CDA) for the approval of the Secretary of State for the Environment in 1970.

Reaction

Meanwhile, community resistance was growing. Residents, assisted by a renegade planner and some radical young architecture students, began organizing. Their first public meeting was held in April 1971, and attracted over five hundred people. They formed the Covent Garden Community Association (CGCA) and began systematic organizing against the plan. The CGCA initiated what was to become a long series of press conferences and protest rallies which were lavishly covered by national media suddenly interested in conservation and the colorful neighborhood of Covent Garden.

A formal confrontation between the GLC redevelopers and the neighborhood conservationists took place in the late summer of 1971, when the Department of the Environment held a public inquiry on the new roadways and on the GLC proposal to form a Comprehensive Development Area. An "inspector" designated by the Department of the Environment presides over such inquiries and makes recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Though the quasi-judicial format of the public inquiry is not conducive to public participation, the GLC plan was subject to a barrage of criticism. There were 128 registered objectors to the plan. Among them were the Town and Country Planning Association, the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, the Georgian Group, the Victorian Society, the Civic Trust, and the CGCA.

In January 1973, Secretary of State for the Environment Geoffrey Rippon announced his ruling on the plan. Rippon approved the CDA but rejected the road proposals essential to massive redevelopment and recommended more emphasis on conservation and public participation. To ensure more conservation, the Secretary added 250 buildings to the protected list.

Shortly after Rippon's ruling, the relatively pro-neighborhood Labor Party won the GLC elections and took charge of the planning of Covent Garden. In December, the Labor Covent Garden Committee set forth its new guidelines for the area, rejecting skyscrapers, new roads, and additional offices and emphasizing conservation and housing.

A Conservation Plan

To comply with Rippon's request for more public participation in the next round of planning, the GLC held a series of public meetings which resulted in the creation of the Covent Garden Forum of Representatives. The Forum is comprised of nine residents, nine business people, nine service workers, and three property owners elected by people who live, work, or own property in Covent Garden. In 1974, 4,374 persons registered for the Forum election and about one third of them voted, choosing from among seventy-eight candidates.

Since 1974, the Forum has met on a regular basis, reviewing planning policy as well as specific planning applications. The power of the Forum is strictly

advisory. Two representatives of the Forum attend meetings of the GLC Covent Garden Committee and may voice the Forum's views there.

Though it has been said that the Forum was created because the GLC was afraid to deal with CGCA, in fact the CGCA participated in the shaping of the Forum and successfully ran a slate of candidates in the first Forum election. Of course, the GLC could have simply recognized the CGCA and let it play a Forum-like role. But the CGCA was threateningly radical and did not represent the full spectrum of interests in Covent Garden, being almost exclusively residential in its orientation.

In 1974, when the Market finally moved, there were vacant buildings all over Covent Garden, giving new impetus to the planning process. The planners adjusted to the new mandate imposed on them by Secretary Rippon and their new Labor masters at County Hall and began a new series of studies.

In 1976, the planners presented a new draft plan, including alternatives. They proposed a substantial reduction in the scale of redevelopment, though twenty-five percent of the area was still to be demolished. The new plan emphasized retention of the existing community, with residential use a top priority but with a continuation of mixed uses in the area. There was to be no new office space, and the grandiose road scheme and plans for hotels and conference centre had disappeared.

An exhaustive series of public meetings was held through 1976. The Forum and the more radical CGCA hammered away at the plan, criticizing it for too grand a scale, for too much demolition and too little rehabilitation. The Forum, in its moderate way, criticized and debated the planners' proposals. The CGCA took more initiative, developing and publishing a plan of its own and making alternative site recommendations to those of the planners. The essential conflict was over the degree of redevelopment versus the degree of rehabilitation. The CGCA opted for maximum rehabilitation. The Forum was willing to accept slightly more redevelopment. The planners advocated relatively more redevelopment.

The CGCA and to a lesser extent the Forum challenged the planners on their own grounds. For a change, the planners found themselves confronted with an expertise rivaling their own. By virtue of greater familiarity with the area, more fervor of belief, better consultation with residents and cheaper end products, the community proposals were often superior to those of the planners.

In October 1976, the GLC Covent Garden Committee approved a revised plan which GLC Planner Geoffrey Holland conceded represented a substantial victory for the CGCA and the Forum. After another public inquiry, the plan was given final approval by the full GLC in June 1977—despite a Conservative victory in the May GLC elections.

The thrust of the plan as a whole was one of sensitive renewal, emphasizing rehabilitation and maximizing housing, maintenance of the existing community, mixed uses and small scale. Office development was to be restrained and there were to be no new roads or hotels. As to the specific site proposals, the emphasis was on rehabilitation with only very selective in-fill redevelopment.

The plan was the diametric opposite of the 1968/1971 plan and a substantial scaling down of June 1976 proposals. It can only be viewed as a triumph for the defenders of the community, a major reversal for property speculators and developers, and a major concession by the planners and the GLC.

A very rare event in the international history of urban renewal had occurred: a neighborhood had survived. The residents will be able to stay; their community will be protected.

Community resistance—especially that of the CGCA—was crucial to this victory. But no single force changed the plan. The community activists were a necessary element, but not sufficient in and of themselves. The politicians and the planners had been reluctantly responsive to the community, partly because the neighborhood received strong support from public opinion, the media, and prominent national conservation groups. The collapse of the British property boom was also crucial to the defeat of the plan. By the 1970s, the developers had—at least temporarily—lost interest in massive redevelopment.

In retrospect, the case of Covent Garden provides an opportunity to examine three different approaches to urban renewal: redevelopment, preservation and protection. Each had its moment in the politics of planning Covent Garden. Each had its supporters, merits, costs and difficulties.

Redevelopment

The decline of the central city is a chronic twentieth century urban problem. The inner parts of cities deteriorated rapidly in the 1950s and 1960s with little hope of salvation. The centers of many American cities simply died as residents who could afford to move turned to single-family homes in the suburbs. Commerce followed consumers, and shopping centers drained the inner city of department stores and retail trade. Industries followed workers and motorways to the cheap land of the city fringe, where they could build modern facilities at lower construction costs and lower tax rates than in the central city. Left behind were the poor, the aged and the racial minorities in aging houses and tenements.

The pattern in Europe and Britain has been similar. London has lost almost two million in population since 1939. Growth has occurred on its edges, out to and beyond the green belt, established after World War II to contain London's sprawl. Suburbanization has arrived as people search for a house, a garden, a bit of space and peace. The automobile and motorways assisted. So did the Greater London Council and national urban policy in their efforts to "decant" London's crowded population and redistribute people, industry and offices throughout Britain, particularly to the new towns. These policies worked, though they coincided with a period of economic well-being which enabled people to indulge their desires to move to the suburbs.

Still, the decline of inner London and of central cities in Europe has been less precipitous and less disastrous than in American cities. Europeans are more experienced and more committed city dwellers than Americans and have been

less eager to flee the city. Europeans were less affluent than Americans, so the family automobile and the single family dwelling unit were less readily accessible. European cities are more liveable than American cities, with better public transit, lower crime rates and more amenities. Planning controls have been more rigorous: motorways have not been allowed to take over, shopping centers have not been allowed to drain away central area retail trade, and efforts such as the green belt have been made to contain sprawl.

Nevertheless, the decline of central areas of London was a serious problem by the 1950s and 1960s. There were still huge areas that had been destroyed by bombing in World War II. There were areas like Soho, Covent Garden, Southwark, the Docklands and Elephant and Castle that were simply old. Street patterns dated from the reign of the Tudors. Buildings dated from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many had fallen out of use because they were old or outmoded or because the industries and businesses they had housed had moved or died. Housing was old and deteriorating after decades of heavy use. The decline in housing and employment meant a declining property tax base for the inner city boroughs exactly as their dependent aged and lower-class population was growing and the need for more social services put a greater burden on their revenues.

Declining areas are dangerous, depressing and uneconomic—for people, for local government, for landowners and for developers. Until recently, such areas usually stabilized at some point as working-class or lower-class communities or revived themselves gradually and on a small scale through the working of the private economy. But in the 1950s there was a fear that this private renewal would not occur. The process of suburbanization had drained away too much too fast.

Meanwhile, the scale of private redevelopment had changed. Instead of a house here and a building there, contemporary corporate developers operate on a grand scale, making huge investments in huge projects for great profit. Would they make the effort to redevelop on their own, without government encouragement? The government was persuaded that they would not. In both the United States and Great Britain, urban renewal programs were established to facilitate large scale redevelopment. Government had powers the developers needed. In many older areas, major redevelopment is hindered by fragmented ownership of small parcels of land. Resistance from just one owner of one small shop can bring an entire project to a halt. Private developers have no legal power over the recalcitrant small property holder, but the government does. It is called eminent domain in the U.S. and compulsory purchase in Britain. By this means, government can force sale of the land at market value, though the threat of compulsory purchase is usually sufficient. Government then assembles the sites for redevelopment, becoming in effect a land speculator. Once assembled, the sites are cleared and improved as needed. This provides a subsidy to the potential purchasers, the developers, in that much of their work is already done for them and paid for with tax money.

In addition to developers, the government itself may be eager for involvement. "Programs of such stupefying magnitude are only undertaken by politicians in the last instance as a sort of act of faith, a gut intuition that they are what posterity expects of them."³ But more than this, governments like power, and this expands their authority. Governments like money, and redevelopment programs bring them grants. Planners like to plan, and urban renewal enables them to exercise their talents, often on a grand scale. The traffic engineers gain an opportunity to alter out-dated road patterns to facilitate new development and provide more efficient traffic flow. Planning gains are another rationale for government to enter the redevelopment process. In return for permitting a major developer to construct a ten-story office building in Covent Garden, the Greater London Council (GLC) gained the right to build public housing on half of the corporation's land at a nominal rent. This is a planning gain, though it might also be called blackmail: we'll allow you to do such and such if you'll give us so and so. The victims, however, seem not to mind, so great have been the profits in their developments. A final motivation for government involvement is the prospect of long-term increases in property tax revenues as the value of renewed areas rises. The nature of the property tax makes it rational for a local authority to attempt to replace areas of declining value with areas of rising value. Some of the social problems of declining areas may be removed simultaneously.

Support for government involvement may occasionally come from communities that fear what would happen if private developers were unleashed in the areas. The hope is that government involvement can control the excesses of redevelopment. The GLC used this argument for the establishment of the Comprehensive Development Area in Covent Garden and the community reluctantly agreed. Minimally, the community gains relocation assistance from government—something private developers would not provide and perhaps another way that government assists developers.

Unfortunately, the benefits of redevelopment almost always come at the expense of the existing community because redevelopment almost always involves massive demolition and reconstruction. Invariably, the areas targeted for redevelopment are working-class or lower-class neighborhoods.

Such "blighted" areas serve critical social and economic functions. They provide cheap housing and workspace. Marginal businesses are nourished there. People with low incomes, old people with fixed incomes, young people who choose to be underemployed, people who like to live in messy, chaotic neighborhoods near the center of the city live there. They may like it, or they may have no alternative. The people who plan, develop and make decisions about the area, on the other and, usually do not live there. Rather, they live in the posh areas of the central city or in the suburbs. They apply their values to the declining area and find it wanting.

The people who live in the declining area are usually politically disorganized and impotent. Lacking in organization and political skills they may realize what

is happening too late to prevent it. If they realize soon enough to act, they usually lose in the power struggle with the planners and developers.

When the area is destroyed, the social fabric of the city as a whole is weakened. The pool of low-cost housing shrinks and there is added pressure on what remains. The poor and the elderly become more dependent on governmental assistance for survival. The fragile social bonds of a lower-class community are destroyed and the army of the urban alienated grows. Small businesses such as mom-and-pop grocery stores, which perform social as well as economic functions, are unable to survive because they cannot bear the cost of relocation and the necessity of building a new clientele. Crafts, industries and shops that can afford only old, cheap buildings are forced out of business. New businesses that need low rents until they get off the ground may find nowhere to lease.

The community and the functions it serves are destroyed by redevelopment. To their credit, the British do this more sensitively than the U.S. Replacement housing on or near the site is usually provided; alternative housing elsewhere is always available. But these do not replace the community. Individuals may be moved but social networks cannot be.

The old buildings and the old neighborhood are replaced by gleaming towers of glass and steel, filled with middle-class office workers who return to their suburban homes as night falls. The buildings are cold and impersonal. Neighborhood businesses and industry could not afford the rents, even if they were welcome to return. The streets are intimidating and uninteresting and people avoid them. Most of redevelopment projects are abandoned after office hours. Street life consists only of people going to and from work and occasionally taking their lunches in the concrete canyons.

Who benefits? The owners of the new buildings do, when the buildings prove to be viable enterprises. The employees of these enterprises benefit in jobs. But the primary beneficiaries are the developers, who are no longer primarily builders. They are investors. They are not family companies or middle-sized corporations that limit themselves to one or two basic functions. The developers are now major multi-national, multi-functional corporations. They move money where it will make the greatest profits—land ownership and speculation, development of various sorts or completely unrelated industries. The major corporations that were consulted in the early planning of Covent Garden renewal and the major property holders in the area are not local folks. They are enormous conglomerates with varied interests operating on a multi-national basis.

They are interested in profit and do not operate from social motivations. They operate on a grand scale—they are not interested in a few thousand square feet but in acres. Their resources enable them to wait until the time is right:

Most developers can still afford to sit tight and sweat it out with the local authority, leaving their properties blighted, with boarded-up premises, fly-posted shops, empty and decaying buildings and a generally squalid

appearance—which they can use as an additional argument for the development for which they want permission. This planning blight is probably the biggest single cause of urban decay in modern London.⁴

They see property as a long range investment, not something that has to produce immediate profits. They can wait until the political and economic moment is right, until a conservationist public loses interest or a community association exhausts itself or until there is a reversal in party fortunes and a more sympathetic government comes along.

The new developers do not necessarily make their money from renting the buildings they construct. They profit from manipulation of the tax structure. It may be advantageous to leave a building vacant for years. Harry Hyams' Centre Point in Central London is a famous example of this. While buildings like Centre Point sit unoccupied, reduced property taxes are paid, the "loss" of rental income provides a tax benefit and the value of the property inexorably rises to the point where greater profits can be reaped, unlimited by earlier leases. There is also a tax break on the interest paid on the money borrowed to finance the building.⁵ For the corporate developers, loss in one area of investment can be offset by tax breaks that protect profits from other investments.

The enormous resources and expertise of the corporate developers can be thrown into negotiations with local authorities. Oliver Marriot says recent increases in planning constraints merely encourage such developers: "restriction from the state will increase the attraction of operating in commercial property for the bigger, better organized companies which can cope with the complexities of an unabating flood of legislation"⁶ They can also afford to make tempting concessions to local authorities in the form of planning gains.

An additional asset to the developers in dealing with local government is the acceptance of their values by the planners and elected officials who make the decisions. These values include the legitimacy of private profit, the right of private property and the goodness of progress through development.

Such values have dominated urban renewal in both Britain and the United States, as local government seeks to revitalize central areas and enhance property tax revenues. The hope is that a revenue-draining area will be replaced by a revenue-producing area, to the general benefit of the city and its taxpayers. In fact, such increases in rateable values do seem to occur—a study of Birmingham indicated a five hundred percent increase in rateable values in the urban renewal area over twenty years, as contrasted to a five percent increase for the rest of the city.⁶ Urban renewal projects in the United States produce an increase value averaging over three hundred percent. Such increases should provide a substantial net tax benefit to the city, but they do not necessarily do so. This is because it takes decades before the increased taxes repay the investments government has made in redevelopment—capital improvements, increased government services to new users and taxes lost while the government owned the land.

Over the decades, these problems with large scale redevelopment have become increasingly apparent in both Britain and the U.S. They have led to substantial opposition to many redevelopment schemes, though the results of this opposition are usually delay or modified plans. Covent Garden, however, was a turning point in redevelopment in Britain. For economic and political reasons, the developers were defeated—or more accurately, they withdrew from the battle. The opponents of redevelopment were victorious, and in gaining their victory they educated the planners and the public on the negative aspects of redevelopment. Since then, British planners have begun considering not only the economic but also the social impact of redevelopment.

Preservation

Victory over the forces of redevelopment by demolition is not always a victory for the residents of the neighborhood. Massive redevelopment is not the only form of urban renewal that can be destructive to a community.

Preservation is an alternative means of renewal. It involves conservation of as many existing buildings as possible, renovating them and maintaining the scale of the district. The shift from massive redevelopment to conservation constitutes a major victory for older urban areas. Over the past hundred years in Britain and the United States, conservation has slowly gained momentum as a political movement. Initially, the focus was on architecturally or historically significant buildings. In Britain, organizations like the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, founded in 1877, the National Trust, the Ancient Monuments Society, the Georgian Group and the Victorian Society have led the way in the preservation of such buildings.

In the 1960s these elite groups were joined by a new set of conservationists—community groups concerned with the survival of their neighborhoods. Planner Geoffrey Holland says, “We had the most reactionary groups of people, the Victorian Society, the Georgian Group—high establishment on the one hand—linked up with people saying smash the system.” Historical preservation was extended from individual buildings to whole districts. In Britain, local authorities gained the power not only to “list” buildings for preservation, but also to create conservation areas where whole street frontages were preserved. Neighborhoods began to be recognized as significant and worthy of preservation. Though the initial focus had been on architecture and history, the social fabric and functions of neighborhoods came to be considered as well. It was recognized that there was more to preserve than monuments.

This change swept Britain in the early 1970s with Covent Garden in the forefront. The approval of the 1976 plan was a victory for the supporters of conservation. The neighborhood will be physically preserved—the streets, the buildings, the scale will be retained and renovated. The greater issue is whether the neighborhood can also be socially preserved.

Conservationist renewal brings with it the danger of gentrification. As buildings are renovated, their value rises along with rental costs and taxes. If

renewal is successful, the area becomes fashionable and demand and costs accelerate. The area is “gentrified” when the original inhabitants can no longer live there—when they are replaced by more affluent residents, workers and shoppers.

Covent Garden is ideally situated for such gentrification. Being near the financial district, the theatre district, and some of London’s major tourist attractions, it is a perfect location for restaurants and shops catering to tourists, the business community, and theatre-goers. Its central location makes it attractive for the businessperson who wants a pied-à-terre or for the theatre person who needs a flat. Housing for the working class and the elderly will be available only through the government because private landlords will be tempted by the higher rents other tenants can pay. Homely shops that cater to the current residents will also be forced out by higher rents and taxes.

“It would be truly ironic,” writes Simon Jenkins, “if [Covent Garden] were to come full circle and end as it began, as a residential neighborhood for wealthy West-Enders.”⁷ The Covent Garden Community Association is sufficiently sophisticated to have recognized this threat: “Has Covent Garden been saved from the planners and property developers only to become another King’s Road? With 100 pound hand made toys and 120 pound dresses . . . wine bars . . . posh restaurants . . . tarted up flats with residents harassed and squeezed out . . . a trendy place to be . . . an ‘in’ place to live for a year or two before people move to the suburbs . . . a trendy shopping area?”⁸ Other Central London neighborhoods have joined Covent Garden “to defend, improve and strengthen the residential and working local communities of central London” against the threat that “development will swamp what remains of genuine community life.”⁹

They have learned from experience. The Notting Hill People’s Association did a study of two residential wards in North Kensington in 1972 and found that renovation had “driven out 40% of the original residents in five years.” Forty percent of the neighborhood had changed from low- to high-rent housing. The average rental had increased two hundred percent in five years. More flats had been provided through conversion of single family houses, but they were smaller and more expensive so that fewer families and working class people could live in them.¹⁰ The same process has been documented in Islington.¹¹

Gentrification also affects shops. “Throughout Inner London the number of neighborhood shops is on the decline, but the rate is most severe where redevelopment is taking place and where rents are going up.”¹² There may, in fact, be more shops in a gentrified area, but they are different shops. In Covent Garden, foodshop floorspace has dropped by half since 1966.¹³ New shops are clothing or craft stores rather than butcher shops or ironmongers (hardware stores). They tend to be chain stores rather than locally owned shops. Offices may also replace shops and housing because the high rents they will bring are a strong temptation to both private and public renovators.

Analyzing planning applications between 1974 and 1976, the CGCA found that the GLC had approved:

- 25 shops (none of which the CGCA judged “useful to locals”)
- 18 restaurants
- 16 film or photographic studios
- 15 flats
- 14 offices
- 7 workshops
- 5 storage units
- 5 showrooms
- 3 design studios
- 2 language schools

and an antique market, a citizens’s advice bureau, a model school, an accountancy school, an auction room, Jubilee Recreation Hall and housing at two sites.¹⁴

Except for the housing, these were not for Covent Gardeners, in the judgment of the CGCA, but for tourists and wealthy Londoners. Such renovated flats, houses, shops and offices are sought after. They are elegant or quaint, they are centrally located, and they are trendy. Fashion meets economics and the result is gentrification—and the purging of the indigenous neighborhood population.

As with demolition and massive redevelopment, the economics of renovation dictate these results. It costs money to renovate and whoever does it will want to recover that money and make a profit. The old arguments, still frequently heard in the U.S., that renovation is more costly than redevelopment have been disproved by companies like the Haslemere Estates, which “have made a small fortune out of this type of conservation.”¹⁵ GLC Surveyor Tim Wachter points out that there is now “more demand for refurbishment than for new buildings” and renovation has become economical:

It costs roughly 20 pounds per square foot to renovate and rents will be about 7 pounds per square foot per annum. A new building will go 50 pounds per square foot to build and the rent will only be 8 pounds per square foot per annum. This fits nicely with the [Covent Garden] plan. Economic forces are now pulling in the same direction as the plan. Big companies can’t afford redevelopment any longer. It takes five to ten years to assemble sites and interest costs are too high. The Haslemere Property Company led the way with basic repairs, good interior decoration and aesthetic appreciation.

Some companies, such as the Stirling Land Company, originally bought land in Covent Garden for redevelopment, but have since found it profitable to renovate. They can always change their minds later when the time is right for grander schemes and greater profits.

Not everybody is worried about gentrification. Former GLC Covent Garden

Committee Chairman Merriton says “just because the sort of activity that’s moved in is expensive” does not make it a problem. The problem is the “absence of neighborhood shops” which “will come only when there is a big enough working and living population to support them.” Merriton’s Tory successor, Alan Greengross, agrees, explaining with an example:

A few years ago in a small hamlet there was an absolute outcry over the need for a needle and thread shop. The shop that produced button and yarn was closing down. The reason the shop was disappearing was simple—it wouldn’t disappear if people were buying needle and thread but they weren’t. It’s very simple—when people tore their trousers, everyone could afford to go out and buy a new pair. Now I personally can’t get upset with this. I don’t really wish to see people sitting outside their council dwellings on their three-legged stools darning their socks, which would have kept the needle and thread shop going.

If gentrification is the fact that people who are prepared to do something, okay. That is acceptable. If, however, gentrification is some people using their purse to exert power over people who haven’t got that sort of facility, then, of course, it’s undesirable. That’s where the Council comes in and holds the ropes.

As Greengross points out, gentrification can be good if it means the economic revival of the area. Like other elected officials and planners, he holds out the hope that government can control the excesses of the phenomenon. Local authorities have the power to retain a balanced social composition in a neighborhood through the provision of public housing and the sorts of private development they permit. They can limit certain types of uses—such as offices or restaurants—through use permits and review of planning applications. Under certain circumstances, they can even subsidize uneconomic functions in order to retain needed services, such as a butcher shop that cannot afford market rental costs.

Though the local authorities have these powers, they will not necessarily use them. Most planners and public officials have a fundamental respect for the rights of private property, and they tend to let owners do with it what they want, within reason. This has diminished over the years, but it remains a factor. Perhaps more importantly, local government, like private industry, operates under economic restraints. Theoretically, it could do anything it wanted as long as it was willing to subsidize it. But that means losing money—both by loss of tax revenues and by not getting enough rent out of a property to cover costs. Given such constraints, it becomes natural for local government to look for ways to maximize its revenue—by approving private development that will increase property value and thus taxes or by trying to maximize the rental value of publicly owned buildings. Barrister John Taylor, a leading authority on

British planning law, says there is “no hope of avoiding” gentrification: “The GLC Treasurer won’t allow the GLC to lose money as a landlord.”

In Covent Garden, the costs of renovation are very high. When the GLC purchases a building it pays a value defined by its current uses. If it is a warehouse or if it is out of use, the cost is minimal. If it is in office or retail trade uses, the cost can be substantial. To cut the costs of renovation, the GLC must look for low-use, residential or out-of-use buildings. Such buildings are old and run down. The Market traders were exempt from building codes and spent little on maintenance. The cost of renovation then varies by the cost and condition of the property. These costs must be balanced against projected income. GLC Surveyor Tim Wachter says the “rent rolls can never be income producing. Residential income and grants only cover construction, repairs and management, not the cost of property acquisitions when commercial property was originally involved.” He cites one project in which the residential units had an average cost of fifty thousand pounds—about double what public construction usually costs.

These costs are so high because renovation is expensive, but also because government rarely gets a bargain when it purchases land or buildings. The owner knows the government wants the land and drives a hard bargain with legal grounds for demanding the best market value. Further, government constructed housing is notoriously expensive. Private builders can generally construct housing at a lower cost per unit. The Covent Garden Community Association (CGCA) has demonstrated that it is able to do so as well. Recently, the CGCA renovated two GLC owned houses with five flats for eighteen thousand pounds, funded by a grant from the Department of the Environment. The GLC had estimated that sum for roof repairs alone.¹⁶

The high cost of government renovation can be covered by subsidy, such as grants from the national government, or by mixing costly housing with more profitable uses such as offices or other commercial lettings. In another GLC project, a former warehouse was converted to mixed residential and commercial uses and showed a net profit.¹⁷ Naturally, the temptation for local authorities to search for such profitable uses is strong, and housing begins to be replaced by offices and shops. The government may function like the developers and itself become an agent for gentrification.

Thus the successful defense of a neighborhood against massive demolition and redevelopment may sow the seeds of another kind of destruction. Government intervention, intended to control the potential excesses of either redevelopment or preservation, may merely facilitate this destruction. Inevitably, the neighborhood is the victim. Inevitably, too, some benefit and others are hurt by urban renewal. Whether through redevelopment or preservation, as Ambrose and Colenutt point out, “the whole process . . . is regressively redistributive (helps the rich at the expense of the poor) and it is contributing, possibly on a very significant scale, to wealth inequality.”¹⁸

Because Covent Gardeners recognized that renovation posed as much of a

threat to their neighborhood as redevelopment, they have emphasized protection rather than preservation.

Community Protection

Redevelopment is accomplished by demolition and reconstruction. Preservation involves renovation and rehabilitation of existing buildings. Community protection includes both the physical and social preservation of a neighborhood. The people of the community must come first. Other values and decisions emanate from their well being as the highest priority.

Community protection means searching for ways to maintain and enhance the life of a neighborhood. It means ensuring that housing will be available to the people who already live in an area at prices they can afford. It means providing amenities and jobs suited to the particular needs and the peculiar tastes of the people who already live in the neighborhood. It means planning for a current population, not a projected population (though it is possible to combine the two).

The potential for community protection is considerably greater in Britain than in the United States, where the property tax system, lack of protection for renters and limited public housing encourage displacement of existing residents as a neighborhood revitalizes.¹⁹

The British property tax is based on actual rental values rather than on the market value of the property. Property is not assessed annually. Thus the property tax does not inflate as an area gentrifies and is not such a potent force for displacement as it is in America's revitalizing neighborhoods.

Britain has also enacted extensive protections for renters, including rights of tenure and rent control. With property taxes tied to rental values, rent control is less burdensome on British landlords than on their American counterparts.

But the most significant difference between America and Britain is in public housing. Housing is extensively socialized in Britain. That means a local government can balance or alter neighborhoods almost at will through the construction of housing. As much as seventy percent of the housing in some of London's inner boroughs is publicly owned and operated. Through Council ownership, the working-class character of a neighborhood can be retained. Housing for the elderly, single people, and families can be supplied. Access to public housing can be controlled so that current residents and others with a connection to a neighborhood (employment, relatives) get first priority. So the social mix of a neighborhood can be maintained and the pre-renewal residents can be protected. Similarly, local authorities act as landlords for shops, usually on the ground floor of council housing. They can recruit shops that serve local residents, can charge minimum rents, and can even rent below market value with approval of the Department of the Environment.

Additionally, local government in Britain as in the U.S. can influence the character of a neighborhood through the normal planning process, if it has the will to use it. It can accept, reject, or modify planning proposals on a site-by-site

basis, and it can enact more general policies that would protect communities through zoning and the general plan process.

Through their planning powers and public ownership, local authorities can influence the mixture of uses in an area and protect neighborhoods. But to do this, they must resist constant temptations to put land and buildings to the "highest and best" use—for maximum rents and profits. This is difficult to do, however. High rents, maximum profits and productive property taxes are highly seductive to public or private owners. Their seductive power may be enhanced by the persuasive efforts of developers and speculators.

It takes courage and determination—and a great deal of pressure from the community—for a local authority to withstand the market forces and the ratings game and be willing to make the sacrifices necessary to attain unmeasurable, non-economic goals such as the survival of a community.

Of all the participants in the planning of Covent Garden, only the Covent Garden Community Association has clearly made community protection its first priority. The well being of the existing residents has taken precedence over business profits, aesthetics, historical or architectural merit, the GLC budget, and even self-preservation. The CGCA's commitment is evident in the plan for the neighborhood that it developed and published, much of which was incorporated in the GLC's final plan. Its commitment is also apparent in the initiatives it has taken in housing and in the provision of neighborhood amenities such as community-built parks and the social center. It has had allies. The Covent Garden Forum of Representatives, created by the GLC as a citizen advisory group, has been sensitive to the protection of the community. It has been particularly concerned about shops for residents and tends to approve only those new uses which do not disrupt residential areas. The planners have been somewhat sympathetic, as was the GLC, particularly when it was controlled by a Labor party majority. The current plan for Covent Garden, developed by the planners, the Labor GLC, the Forum and the CGCA and recently approved by the now Tory GLC, places a strong emphasis on community protection. If the plan is honored in letter and intent, the community would be protected. In order for that to occur, the neighborhood must remain vigilant, and the GLC must resist or at least control the temptations and pressures of the developers and the gentrifiers.

Notes

- ¹ *The Times*, 25 September 1965.
- ² *Covent Garden's Moving* (Greater London Council, 1968), p. 62.
- ³ Simon Jenkins, "The Politics of London Motorways," *Political Quarterly*, 144 (July/September 1973), 263.
- ⁴ Simon Jenkins, *Landlords to London* (London: Constable, 1975), p. 238.
- ⁵ See Oliver Marriot, *The Property Boom* (London: Hamish & Hamilton, 1969), p. 109.
- ⁶ Marriott, *The Property Boom*, p. 259.
- ⁷ Jenkins, *Landlords*, p. 270.
- ⁸ *Covent Garden Community Association Newsletter*, May 1977.
- ⁹ *The Central London Charter*, 1973.
- ¹⁰ *The Times*, 16 May 1972, p. 4.
- ¹¹ James Pitt, *Gentrification in Islington* (London: Barnsbury Peoples Forum, 1977).
- ¹² Peter Ambrose and Bob Colenutt, *The Property Machine* (Penguin, 1975), p. 96.
- ¹³ *Covent Garden Local Plan: Living* (Greater London Council, 1974), p. 20.
- ¹⁴ "The Rationalization of Housing Policies for Covent Garden," CGCA, 1977.
- ¹⁵ "The Rationalization of Housing Policies," p. 92; see also Tony McIntyre, "Covent Garden: Grand Planning to Muddling Along," *Architectural Digest*, 46, No. 3, p. 146.
- ¹⁶ "Can the GLC Be Trusted with Covent Garden?" *Architects' Journal*, 164 (18 August 1976), 287.
- ¹⁷ CG 527. December 1977, Covent Garden Planning Team, GLC.
- ¹⁸ Ambrose and Colenutt, pp. 137, 142.
- ¹⁹ For a discussion of gentrification in the U.S., including policies to prevent it, see Conrad Weiler, *National Association of Neighborhoods Handbook on Reinvestment Displacements* (Philadelphia: National Association of Neighborhoods, 1978).

Canada and National Unity

Richard A. Jones

CANADA'S history as a united Confederation is relatively short. After all, it was only a little more than eleven decades ago that a few colonial politicians from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, and Quebec (the last two at that time forming a single colony called "Canada") were able to agree to found a new state. The "Dominion of Canada," as it was termed until quite recently, came into being on July 1, 1867. If anything, the birth was quite unspectacular. No War of Independence against a foreign power preceded it. There was no heroic crossing of a Canadian Delaware, no calls of "give me liberty or give me death!" Indeed, Great Britain was probably only too glad to rid herself of some of the expenses of maintaining her North American colonies, and Canada's Fathers of Confederation had little difficulty in gaining the Mother Country's assent. Nor did these rather pragmatic politicians spend time producing treatises on philosophy, discussing the principles of liberty, or writing declarations of rights. Indications are that most of them were primarily interested in economic questions and that their ambition was to create a political union that would facilitate solutions to pressing commercial and financial problems. They were undoubtedly far more preoccupied by railroads and canals, by international trade and capital investment, than they were by abstract definitions of a new nationality. The excitement on

that first Dominion Day must scarcely have been overwhelming. One newspaper in Halifax, Nova Scotia, recorded the event in an announcement framed in black: "Died! Last night, at midnight, the free and enlightened province of Nova Scotia. Her death was caused by the ungrateful treatment meted out to her by certain of her ungrateful sons." In the federal and provincial elections held later, the anti-Confederates won decisive victories, and a group of Nova Scotians even sailed off to England to beg the Mother Country to rescue them from Canada. Anti-Confederate sentiment was also strong in New Brunswick. As for Quebec, it is difficult to know how the average person viewed Confederation. The Church urged its acceptance, seeing American Republicanism as a greater danger. Many French-speaking Quebecers saw Confederation as a solution to the political difficulties, a veritable liberation from the short-lived union with Ontario during which a single Parliament legislated for the combined colonies of Lower Canada (largely French) and Upper Canada (English). Other Quebecois Francophones were sure that Quebec's new status as a province was illusory, that the powers with which it was entrusted were of secondary importance, that the central government would dominate the provincial governments. But one might suspect that Jean-Baptiste cared very little one way or the other since these political changes would have little effect on his life. It was in Ontario that support for Confederation was strongest, but Ontario perhaps had most to gain from the new union. Its debt problems would be solved, railway construction would open up new markets, and the vast hinterland to the West, that was soon to be purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company, offered tremendous potential.

Later Dominion Days did not prove more exciting, and July for Canadians has never been what July 4 has been for their southern neighbors. When this writer was growing up in Toronto in the 1950s, the big holiday, the one with the fireworks, the hot dogs and the toasted marshmallows, and the one with the day off from school, was Queen Victoria's birthday, May 24! And in Quebec and in French Canada in general, the major festive occasion has always been June 24, St-Jean-Baptiste Day, in honor of French Canada's patron saint. In recent years the federal government has tried to stimulate interest in Canada Day, the renamed Dominion Day, by setting up shows and encouraging diverse activities, often at considerable cost, but under those circumstances it is easy to get the impression that there is something artificial about the celebration. But maybe initiatives of that sort only symbolize Canada, which numerous writers have considered an artificial and unnatural entity constantly threatening to come apart at the seams.

Canada's major problems, past and present, seem to stem from four basic factors: geographical size and diversity of the country; the small and relatively heterogeneous population; the unequal character of economic development that has meant widely varying standards of living across the country; and finally the presence and influence of the great powers under whose hegemony Canada has constantly been forced to live. These factors have often reinforced tendencies to decentralization, to division, to regionalism, and to separatism.

Obviously countervailing factors have been at work, favoring unity, cohesion, and centralization; for had such not been the case, Canada would undoubtedly not be in existence today. The past does not guarantee the future, however, and just because Canada has survived past challenges to its existence in no way means that her future is assured. In fact, regional challenges to the Canadian entity seem to me to be considerably stronger today than they were twenty years ago.

Let us look in more detail now at the impact on Canada of the four factors listed above. It is difficult to study these elements in isolation, and my thesis will be that the four taken together make Canada a unique case. Other countries are geographically large and diverse. The American West is as far away from Washington as the Canadian Prairies are from Ottawa, and this distance, both geographical and psychological, has often been an election issue on both sides of the border. Electors have been told that the national capital, be it Washington or Ottawa, is too far away to be able to take into account the interests of the "hinterland." In addition, in the Canadian case, voters have also been told that locally based political parties can do a better job and will be more receptive to regional interests.

When the population factor is taken into account, the specificity of the Canadian case becomes more compelling. Twenty-two million people inhabit a thin ribbon of territory stretching across the nation. And the ribbon is a broken one where pockets of population are separated by vast distances. Between Nova Scotia on the one hand and Quebec City and Montreal on the other lie sparsely populated New Brunswick and Eastern Quebec. Between heavily-populated Southern Ontario and the most eastern of the Prairie cities, Winnipeg, are situated hundreds of miles of Canadian shield, filled with lakes and trees, but virtually empty of people. And separating the inhabited areas of British Columbia from the Prairies there are, of course, the Rockies. Modern communications, the automobile, the train, the airplane, radio and television, have undoubtedly reduced the importance of distances, but any way you look at it, the fisherman in Newfoundland is very far away from the General Motors worker in Oshawa, Ontario, and the Quebec city civil servant is far removed from the Prairie farmer or the British Columbia logger.

Complicating the population factor is the heterogeneity of the Canadian population. Canadian nationalists of the last century may have dreamed of founding an Anglo-Saxon and English-speaking nation that would eventually become the center of the British Empire, but even at that time their dreams hardly took into account Canadian reality. Nearly a third of the population was neither Anglo-Saxon nor English-speaking. French-speaking Roman Catholics, they were determined to remain so and to oppose any and every effort to assimilate them and destroy their language and their religion. The majority of French-speaking Canadians lived in Quebec, where numerically they constituted nearly 80 per cent of the population. In addition, there were the French-speaking Acadians in New Brunswick and to a lesser extent in Nova Scotia, there was a growing French-speaking population in Ontario, and even the

relatively empty Prairies had a few thousand French-speakers. A hundred years after Confederation, Quebec is still a Francophone province and determined to remain so. The decennial censuses show that assimilation has greatly weakened the French-speaking communities outside Quebec, and immigration from Europe and elsewhere has contributed to the decline of the proportion of French-speakers in Canada as a whole. Even so, more than a quarter of Canada's population is still French-speaking. Indeed, many demographers feel that Canada in the future will become increasingly polarized into two language blocks, English and French, the latter concentrated increasingly in Quebec. The idea of a bilingual Canada, and of a bilingual Quebec, seems to be becoming increasingly a myth. Such a tendency cannot but have profound political repercussions, as we shall see later in this essay.

The division of Canada's population into two large linguistic groups precludes looking at the so-called ribbon of population as a whole. The pieces become more important than the entirety, and this phenomenon is probably truer more of French Canadians than of English Canadians. Recent polls have shown that a majority of French-speaking Quebecois consider themselves first and foremost to be Quebecois, and afterwards, but only afterwards, Canadians. Whether Quebec someday becomes an independent country or an associate state loosely linked to the rest of Canada, or whether it remains a province as it is at present, cannot alter this fundamental fact that most Quebecers have a profound attachment to Quebec and to French Canada.

French-speaking Canadians generally tend to see Canada's population as divided into two groups, the English and the French. Lumping Canada's nine other provinces together into an English-speaking block may seem attractive to some observers in that it simplifies the analysis. In this reduction, history becomes the story of relations between these two groups. Unfortunately, this interpretation is often not historically valid. On some occasions, over some questions, we have seen English Canada pitted against French Canada, the country divided into two antagonistic linguistic blocks.

But generally divisive economic and social issues in English Canada have prevented union around questions of language or race. Immigration into Canada has been one of the most important factors tending to prevent unity. The growth of Canada's population has depended largely on the immigrants who have come to Canada by the hundreds of thousands. In a certain narrow sense, they have been assimilated, in that the second generation is perhaps bilingual and the third generation generally unilingual Anglophone. But in other ways, the whole of Canada has been assimilated by the immigrants who have settled here. Immigration has not been spread out evenly across the country. The West and Ontario have been the destinations of the great majority of immigrants. Cities like Toronto, largely Anglo-Saxon and Protestant at the end of World War II, have become as cosmopolitan as New York, often not to the satisfaction of the original inhabitants. The existing society has not always been capable of digesting all the immigrants who enter it, and cities like Toronto may well come to know a degree of racial violence that, aside from certain

notorious exceptions, was unheard of in Canada's past. Huge numbers of European immigrants settled on the Prairies, whereas the Maritime provinces remained relatively untouched by the phenomenon. And while Canada has attracted literally millions of immigrants to its shores, it has also at times been a country of spectacular emigration. More than half a million French-speaking Canadians left Quebec for New England between 1850 and 1900, according to one eminent historian. What were they looking for? Principally, jobs. They were willing to leave home and settle in an unfamiliar country in the hope of being able to earn a steady income, albeit small, in the textile towns of the New England states. Fall River, Massachusetts, Manchester, New Hampshire, Woonsocket, Rhode Island, and many other cities in the area are full of their descendants today. Moreover, many immigrants who came to Canada either returned home (in the case of thousands of British arrivals) or left for the United States as soon as the occasion presented itself. Indeed, in some periods of Canadian history, such as the 1920s, emigration actually exceeded immigration. If Canada's total population grew nevertheless, it was only because the total number of births largely exceeded the total number of deaths during these years. In sum, Canadians of older stock may have desired the rapid assimilation of immigrants, may have wished that they become patriotic Canadians and British subjects just like themselves, but this pious hope for a "One Canada" — these very words are the title of former Canadian Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's memoirs — has never been a reality and is certainly not near to becoming one today.

Many writers have blamed Canada's disunity on economic conditions. One respected French-speaking historian, Fernand Ouellet, attempted to demonstrate that the periods during which French-Canadian nationalism reached crisis proportions were moments of grave economic problems. For example, the 1930s, a period of depression, saw the birth of countless nationalist movements in Quebec and a rise in popular interest in these movements. On the other hand, the 1950s, years of general economic prosperity, were also years of tranquillity on the nationalist front. Nationalists were still present, they were still writing, but they were making little headway and provoking little interest.

Ouellet's thesis could be applied to other regions of the country. Severe economic problems at the end of the First World War and in the early 1920s fostered the growth of regional movements among the Prairie farmers, like Canada's Progressive party. Even more so, the 1930s saw the birth and development of other regional protest movements. Some of those were totally outside the traditional parties. For example, the Social Credit movement, championing monetary reform and assorted right-wing themes, took power in Alberta in 1935, whereas the Co-operative Commonwealth Foundation, Canada's socialist party, formed a strong regional base in neighboring Saskatchewan. Other reform movements developed within the conventional parties: in Ontario, Canada's most populous province, Mitchell Hepburn, a Liberal, successfully preached a strange combination of conservatism and radicalism. Finally, a movement such as the Union Nationale, which played a

key role in Quebec's history from 1936 until 1970, grew up partly within and partly without the old-line political formations. Maurice Duplessis, its leader, would present the U.N. as something new, but Duplessis had been the leader of the provincial Conservative party and many of his supporters were to come from the opposition Liberal party.

Economic difficulties that are particularly strong in certain areas of the country may stimulate regionally-based protest movements. But economic prosperity may have the same effect. The have-nots may believe they can gain something by mobilizing to face what they see to be the enemy, such as the central government. But the haves may behave in the same fashion. It is simple human nature to want to hold on to what one has, particularly when one has known a have-not past. Canada's Western provinces, like Alberta and Saskatchewan, are cases in point. These two provinces were in a state of virtual bankruptcy at the time of the Depression. Today, thanks largely to oil but also to certain other resources, prosperity has come and their economies have boomed. Alberta now has the lowest taxes in Canada and is growing as no other region in the country is. That province, "Canada's Texas," is determined to hold on to as much of its newly-found wealth as it can, and this means constant combat with the federal government whose policies are aimed at diminishing regional disparities by taking from the wealthy regions of the country and giving to the poorer provinces.

Just as Western wealth has largely been based on resources, Ontario's wealth has been the fact of industrial development. Today Toronto has outstripped Montreal as Canada's largest city, and the head offices of corporations are increasingly concentrated in Southern Ontario. The East, including Quebec, is a region of chronically high unemployment, high taxes, and per capita incomes well below the national average. These provinces also have low population growth, with the number of emigrants sometimes even exceeding the number of immigrants. Industry existing in these areas is often labor-intensive — like textiles in Quebec — paying low salaries and needing considerable tariff protection if it is to survive at all. These widely-varying economic conditions in Canada have in no small way contributed to fostering regionalism.

Evaluating the federal government's role in the face of this problem is not an easy task. Has Ottawa attenuated economic disparities? Or has it stimulated them? A host of different policies would have to be examined over different periods of time in order to answer the question, and one would probably have to conclude that the federal government is not the principal factor behind either the wealth or the poverty of certain areas of the country. Yet it has often in the past been blamed for favoring certain provinces. Principally, the West and the Maritimes have tended to think that Ottawa has always paid more heed to Ontario and Quebec. Back in 1879, for example, when the Conservative Prime Minister John A. Macdonald returned to power, he established what was known as the National Policy, one facet of which involved the erection of a tariff barrier to protect nascent Canadian industry from foreign competition. Macdonald may have called this a "national" policy, but the Maritimes and the

Prairies were rapidly convinced that the policy was conceived to favor Ontario. After all, where were these industries located? In Southern Ontario and in the Montreal area. Who paid the price of the tariff? Western farmers and inhabitants of the Maritimes who in effect were obliged to purchase the more costly manufactured goods of Central Canada rather than import from the United States. In other words, this initiative of the federal government was for decades seen to be contrary to the interests of the Eastern and Western provinces.

Since the Second World War, the federal government has developed many policies designed, in principle, to palliate economic differences among the regions and the provinces. Unconditional grants of millions of dollars, called equalization grants, have been made to the poorer provinces, naturally paid for by the taxpayers in the wealthier provinces. At the beginning of its mandate, the Trudeau government set up a Ministry of Regional Economic Expansion designed to stimulate industry in low-growth regions of the country. With certain local exceptions, it does not seem to have been particularly successful. The West has become wealthy because of oil, not because of federal policies. And the East is plagued with high unemployment, perhaps due to geography more than to any particular measures adopted by Ottawa.

What is certain is that the wealthy regions of the country will continue to do battle with the federal government in an attempt to retain as much of their wealth for themselves as possible, and the poorer regions will continue to blame their plight on a federal government whose policies appear to them to favor the rich.

What about the fourth factor, the influence of the great powers on Canada's development? It is said that Canada gradually freed itself from one colonial master, Great Britain, only to pass under the hegemony of another Empire, the United States. Because of Canada's origins, her relative weakness and her proximity to the United States, such a history was probably inevitable. Confederation in 1867 did not mean independence. In the field of international affairs, Canada still was totally dependent on Britain. As for trade, Britain was the most important partner. And capital to facilitate Canada's economic growth came largely from the Mother Country until the turn of the century. Two world wars that weakened Britain severely and the tremendous growth of the United States meant that British influence declined and was rapidly replaced by American influence, largely of an economic and cultural nature. Yet this evolution has contributed to Canadian disunity. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, an important fraction of Canada's population, mainly those of British ethnic origin, attempted to sustain and even strengthen links with the Empire. French Canada, on the other hand, was generally in the vanguard of the Canadian autonomist movement, wanting as much independence from Britain as possible. Canadians of other ethnic origins, who did not experience a sentimental attachment to Great Britain, were also inclined to be rather tepid in their support for things imperial. Thus relations with Great Britain tended to divide Canadians, and even today, when the links with Britain are few indeed,

Quebec province would vote largely in favor of a republic, whereas the rest of the country would probably still support, though by only a slim majority, the continuation of the British monarchy in Canada.

Relations with the United States have also on many occasions divided Canadians, though not to the extent that relations with Britain tended to pit English Canada and French Canada against each other. Nationalist sentiment, or perhaps I should say anti-American sentiment, has usually been strongest in Ontario, which long gave its support to the more anti-American of the two major political parties, the Conservatives. The tariff was supposed to prevent us from falling into the hands of the United States, first economically, then, inevitably, politically, or so it was said. And the tariff got its greatest support in Ontario as well as amongst a certain group in Montreal. The West has typically appeared less anti-American. In the 1960s and early 1970s, when Canadian nationalist movements again developed considerable strength, their bastion was once more in Southern Ontario. The nationalists were increasingly worried about American economic control through capital investment here and wanted to curtail it and, in some cases, even "buy back Canada." Yet is it really surprising that economic nationalism has made relatively little headway outside of Ontario? Lesser developed areas of the country and those regions stricken with chronic unemployment have generally been willing to take capital from wherever they can get it; virtually any investment is welcome, a dollar being a dollar and a job a job. Joey Smallwood, Newfoundland's former prime minister and one of this country's most colorful politicians, once said he would not hesitate to do business with the Devil if he would invest in Newfoundland. To some extent, then, relations with the United States have set Ontario, the province with the largest population, against the rest of the country.

The four factors just described—geography, a heterogeneous population, economic diversity, and relation with the great powers in Canada's history—have continually accentuated regionalism in Canada and may one day well result in its dismemberment. Still, at the same time, failure is by no means certain. There do exist factors which up until the present have held regionalism in check, and their importance should not be underestimated. The benefits accruing from an economic association constitute one of these elements. The lack of viable alternatives is certainly another. Some groups of Canadians have toyed with the idea of union with the American Republic—one example was the Montreal merchants at the end of the 1840s who signed a petition demanding annexation to the United States in the hope that the proposed political change would solve the severe economic problems with which they were faced. All things considered, though, the sentiment in favor of political union with the United States has been a very minor affair, and many elections have been won in the country on decidedly anti-American platforms. Even in the hypothesis that somehow, sometime, a majority of Canadians were to support political union with the United States, there is no assurance that the American states would on their part look favorably upon such a project. The years of "54 ° 40' or fight" and Manifest Destiny are now past. Representative Champ Clark's

comment back in 1911 that he wanted to see the Star Spangled Banner floating clear to the North Pole has also receded into the mists of history. Political union with the United States could create terrible new imbalances within the U.S., and the Americans would assuredly weigh these dangers before acceding to a request of this nature. On the other hand, closer economic links are probably inevitable in spite of Cassandra-like warnings of Canadian nationalists.

If political union with the United States cannot be looked upon as a possible alternative, what can be said about the prospects for independence for certain Canadian regions? The present challenge posed by Quebec is not the first occasion upon which secession has been discussed in Canada. In the nineteenth century, the question was dealt with in regard to Nova Scotia, which immediately after Confederation attempted to withdraw from the union. The attempt was unsuccessful because Britain was unwilling to take back the colony and because a shrewd Macdonald, Conservative prime minister at the time, agreed to renegotiate the terms of Nova Scotia's entry into Confederation. There was never any talk of civil war. Again, in the 1880s, secessionist sentiment shook Nova Scotia, but this second episode proved decidedly less serious than the first had been. In more recent years, there has also been talk of secession in the Western provinces, but support for the idea has proved to be minor. Regionalism is strong in the West, as it has been since the beginning of the century—after all, it was this region which gave birth to three of the most important third party political movements in Canadian history, the Progressives, the Social Credit party, and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, a democratic socialist party— and there has been considerable conflict with the federal government over economic issues. Such conflict is likely to continue as provinces like Alberta attempt to affirm their control over their own natural resources, the foundation of their present prosperity.

There is only one region in Canada where one finds strong support for secession to the point that it constitutes by far the most serious threat to the Canadian Confederation. That is Quebec. Other provinces have their economic grievances that have often brought them to challenge the central government and its policies. So has Quebec. But Quebec has more. The importance of the cultural and linguistic differences between Quebec and the rest of the country must not be underestimated. So-called hard-headed realists will deny the significance of these factors and will accord much more weight to economic problems. They will say that we waste too much time bickering over culture and language, that these factors are all too often the cause of disputes and of bloodshed. Cultural and linguistic interests appear in continuous opposition with economic interests, with man's hope for material betterment. They may be right in part, but they perhaps fail to realize that the human being has many needs, that his behavior is not always perfectly rational. Out of a sense of a need for belonging, man has forged all manner of groups and associations throughout his history—families, clans, tribes, religious groups, nations, linguistic communities, and so forth. And he has often shown himself inclined to fight to preserve his distinguishing characteristics from the threats posed by

other groups around him. French Canadians and particularly Quebecois form one such group. Canadian history is replete with examples of French Canadian resistance to assimilation, of their defense of language, religion, and culture. A considerable portion of their energies has been spent in defining an identity and in defending this identity against perceived threats. Of course, that identity has evolved markedly over the past two centuries; the changes over the past twenty years have been drastic enough. But French Canadians still perceive themselves to be a different group, culturally and linguistically, often at odds, by definition, with English Canada. They may be accused by their detractors of entertaining a ghetto complex, of ethnocentrism, of wanting to break up Canadian Confederation and of multitudinous other sins. The French Canadian, however, does not perceive reality through the same set of glasses as other Canadians. His objective is to survive as a French Canadian or a Quebecois. For him, survival may well mean that the province of Quebec has to become considerably more French in character. Or it may mean that Quebec needs considerably more autonomy in order that it may decide its own future. And there you have it. English Canadians talk of ghettos and separatism; French Canadians talk of cultural and linguistic survival, of autonomy and independence. One reality perhaps, but two very different perceptions of it. Neither is right; neither is wrong. Indeed, the question of right or wrong, good or bad, does not seem a valid question that should even be asked. Different observers will entertain different points of view over the same question simply because their priorities, their criteria of judgment, are not the same.

Other areas of Canada may consider themselves just as different from the rest of the country as Quebec does. But at the present moment the threat to Confederation comes from one province, from one group which has struggled for two hundred years to develop and maintain an identity. It is a group which, for cultural and linguistic reasons, has always had considerable difficulty in presenting its point of view to a largely English-speaking North America. The year 1980 will see Quebec vote in a referendum on political sovereignty. The exact question is unclear at the moment, as is the outcome. The Government may win its referendum or it may well lose it. Should it win, it will still be difficult to bring the rest of Canada to accept the kind of association proposed by the Parti Québécois. One thing is certain, however, whatever the result. Quebec will remain different, and Quebec regionalism will continue to be strong. Canada has indeed not seen the end of the challenges to unity.

POETRY

Norman Nathan

important persons

with rigid steel
corday stabbed marat
trapped in his bath
soothing skin pain

better they had staged a playlet
at the guillotine
her collapsible dagger plunging
as he released the string
to let a paper blade fall
on the neck of a kneeling queen
with all actors walking away
having established the principle
that people kill

what made them play at being permanent
portraying each scene as if
cut out of rock
were they so burdened with
satchels of godship
that they couldn't arise from
their private catastrophes
and begin again tomorrow

o marat o corday
if only you could have started
a real revolution
rather than piddled at
changing the executioners

modern architecture

to escape from internal dragons
shredding us as we shiver within ourselves
we avoid day and night;
for lack of light swallows
our distance from disaster;
the sun would bludgeon
our retinas with dark
after-image bandages,
and we can't run the treadmill-earth
at the speed of dawn or dusk;

safe in our thermal bag we savor
the logic of modern buildings
air-conditioned to a degree,
reverse-cycled against cold,
without glare or shadows
fluorescent into crevices;
no windows admit distortions of clouds
or odd views defacing constant heaven
as we breathe prescription air
in this eden of the drawing boards;

programmed from nine to five
we commute by elevator
to our homes on a higher floor,
then descend to a subcellar movie
or a mezzanine smorgasbord;
everywhere lumens are softened
for shapes we want to see;
climatized, we make love;
the electricity never relaxes
except perhaps when we sleep;

we're snug in receptive arms,
barbiturated against the sole trauma
that suddenly
the fuse or circuit breaker
or commissar or profit motive
or simple human error
will crush us into uncirculating
freezing wet or hot humid black
in a dragon's belly

John Ditsky

DIMINISHING

Where is my record of the Vaughan Williams 6th, the old one bearing his voice? Scrapped it for better, years ago. He praised the “absolute pianissimo” of the ending . . . No record’s perfect, but we must have music. I lack a coda to my theme. What’s left’s the suicide of trailing off self-consciously, ellipsis and its magic dots. Oh, but the lure of final chords: temptation to announce the end!

DANISH DA CAPO

her room no sooner gained
when my name’s ghost
walks in. I blush,
caught in circular rape—
short cut to dream’s
finishing. (There I know
her, forget the having
known.) Four times
I slay him: first,
in dream’s distance, I
kill power; the next,
in hiding, wisdom; third,
brash righteous youth;
last, the shell of form
ringing the woman still.
But she is drowned
in dizziness meanwhile,
her poison pricking me
to final waking sleep,
just as my body opens
to take her queenly thrust.
Thus filled, I die:
give birth to wish of self
to lie beside the source.

REQUITAL

He comes home aching from the love
he can't express, & finds the reason

for his reticence is reticent, & not
for burning-with. He can't explain

his can't-express, & knows that fire
withheld in other quarters cuts

no ice. For the fact of virtue's
not made plainer by the depth

of cleft the blade's made keener
in: *endangered* is a species of a twice-

contempt. & so, by starlight
night light, see him love himself . . .

IDEOMETER

Like the geared meter ticking,
each age counts universals
all its own, responds
to special common things
(steam engine whistles,
telephone poles, lonely
private guilts), creates
of them a literature—
until they're taken away
(diesels, buried wires,
everything seen on stage),
until adapting fails & the age,
by tens or hundreds, turns.

I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO GO THERE

My youth circles me
like a moon: hangs out
in negative space, wall-
eyed and pockmarked.
A world of lost time
surrounds me; there,
staring down, a dead
and stationary past.
*(We hope to find there
some record of ourselves.)*

Refractive memory
orbits me, the possible
that never quite came
off. Under its blank
aegis, lovers (who never
do interpret well)
see glow as augury,
read signs in debris,
copulate in graveyards.
Shine on, imperishable—

SECOND-HAND ROSE

As the poised hand raises certain
flesh—reminding, not touching—
making the blood beneath pulse
brief strength, so chance elicits
fits of nostalgia; race memories
of Eden haunting earth as false

standards: norms rounded off
from never-was. Electric sparks
leap gaps between the restless
mind and reveries made orderly
as folk-art. This recollection
ends tranquillity, because pause

(of microseconds, days, or years)
is sluiceway patterned by the brain
where source flows to effect.
I think, *ergo*, am disappointed.
All's felt vicariously, taught
as we are to interpose a wish

between creation and the self. It's
called perception: act of pride
by which nature is rendered *nature*
morte: acquired sense of evil;
perverse pleasure of pain. The real
original sin is literature—

by which we apprehend at arm's
length, twice-removed, as recipes
of madeleins remember Proust.
The people revolt for justice; soon,
they settle for Law. Any order
in a storm!—mind's attic's anarchy.

FICTION

Viscount

Venkatesh Srinivas Kulkarni

for Peg

I REMEMBER the first day I met Viscount. It was on a Prytania Street back alley. He was sitting in an old Louis XIV chair basking in the cruel sun of the Deep South spring. It was April Fool's day. Viscount's father said I could take him. He had no need for him. So I talked with Maggie and we discussed the pros and the cons. We asked one of our dear friends to give us a ride to the Lower Garden District, and we brought Viscount to our little picture-postcard, white-painted, strawfurniture-decked, uncomfortable attic of an apartment, at the corner of Pitt and Pine, not too far from St. Mary's Dominican College. Viscount, Maggie said, was her April Fool's day gift to me.

Actually, Viscount was not his real name. I don't think his original father gave him any name at all. We did not have a name for him for a while. And then, soon after, Maggie and I got married on a beautiful June day in the Blue Ridge mountains of West Virginia. Viscount was not there. And neither was he with us when we went on our honeymoon to Niagara Falls.

In a way, I guess Viscount could be considered our natural child. He did become a part of our life just before we got married. I could not—and did not want to—call him my adopted child, because somehow that made everything seem so distant between us.

When Maggie went off to work, Viscount always kept me company. I named him Viscount, after Maggie's great-great ancestor from England, the great Viscount of Gormonstan.

When we returned from Niagara Falls, the first letter I received was from my brother telling me of father's sudden passing away. He had been hit by lightning in a spring storm in Duluth, Minnesota. I was stunned. When Viscount wanted to talk to me, I told him to shut up. I am sure he was hurt.

The second letter that summer told me I had lost my job. Only weeks before, I had received a letter from the same Provost, telling me that I had been voted the most distinguished teacher of the year. Maggie went out and found herself an eight-to-five job as a cashier. She could not do much about my grief, so she felt she would at least feed me.

I sat home. And there was no one else in the house except Viscount and me. Slowly, and unthinkingly, I began to listen to his stories, at first indifferently, and then obsessively. Viscount was quite a raconteur. He loved to tell me stories of the Wild Wild West: of places full of men without women, as if all those places called Tombstone, and Lonely Lake, and Moose Jaw were all Hemingway locales. Viscount told me of vast canyons, deep valleys, frozen lakes, unsurpassable mountains, vast sunsets, deserts spotted and dotted with lonely trees, horses behind boulders, men gulping water like wine, wagon trains, and lone women riding out into the sunset. Viscount would have been the envy of Louis L'Amour.

Viscount, of course, loved to repeat himself. Sometimes, he said the same thing again and again and again. And he did not seem to have a very good retentive memory. He would chatter endlessly, whether I was listening to him or not. Many times I walked out on him when I thought he was boring. And when I came back after a long walk, Viscount was still talking. I wondered if he talked to himself. He reminded me a little of Maggie's father, the old Southern gentleman, who never seemed to remember that he had told all his stories about the Second World War many times before.

Sometimes Viscount got up early in the morning and, in a clear-throated voice, sang the national anthem. "Da . . . Da . . . Da . . . Da . . . America, America . . . God bless you again." I felt that Viscount could easily become a cheerleader for an airshow of one hundred F-16 hawks. And then, when his mother came home, he would proffer her his advice on how to cook the chicken, what use to make of the different spices that went into the making of a Normandie omelette, and what kind of underwear to buy. I was quite upset. I could not decide whether Viscount was dumb and vulgar or innocent and cute.

And then, one day, Viscount made a demand. He wanted us to get him a pocket fisherman. Maggie said that was a waste of money. There was no pond or lake nearby and all the fish in the lakes near the Capitol in Baton Rouge were dead and floating and polluting because of the deathly summer heat. In the tight situation we were in, it would really be a waste of \$19.95 to indulge a kid's fancy. We had agreed that we were not going to be spoiled parents. We would not become victims of all the American salesmen who hounded us on street cor-

ners, on interstate highway billboards, and in our mail boxes asking us to spend our money on Father's Day, and Mother's Day, and Brother-in-Law's Day.

Viscount went to sleep early that night. He did not get up all day next day.

When my mother came to visit us, Viscount was absolutely excited. He never told her about where she should buy her underwear and what kind it should be, but he got into long dissertations on Bayou crabs and crawfish. We were wondering when Viscount was going to make a demand for his pocket fisherman with his grandmother, but he never did. He told Mother stories about British aristocracy and about the emotional ups and downs of the English lower class. He told her detective stories that kept her away from her grief and that she loved to no end. My mother's only complaint against Viscount was that he loved to talk too much. We all knew he did that. Also, Mother was an early-to-rise and early-to-bed person. And Viscount's stories really began to gather momentum, and suspense, and mystery only as the night lingered on. He was a nocturnal person.

In the middle of his many stories, Mother left the room abruptly to go to sleep. Sometimes, Mother was quite exhausted just by sitting there and listening to Viscount, hour after hour.

Of course, Viscount impressed Mother a great deal. One day, he came out with a smattering of her mother tongue, as he continued to spin a yarn about some exotic robbery of an Indian Buddha and its being held for ransom in Hawaii.

Recently, I had been noticing that Viscount was learning French. I think he had gathered, instinctively, that I was going to study at the Sorbonne in the summer. I think he wanted me to take him with me, so he could learn French too, and tell me all kinds of French stories (even the one about Inspector Clouseau) in genuine *rive gauche* Parisian French. Viscount was great on authenticity.

I told him he was going to have to stay with his mother because I wanted to be—and I had to be—left alone, to do my work. His mother felt sorry for him, and we decided that as a compromise we would take him as far as West Virginia, where she was planning to spend the summer.

We got him into the backseat of the car and tied the seatbelt around him. Viscount was scared of heights and speed. He always closed his eyes when we climbed the mountains, and he shook his head, back and forth, like an Indian bull, in ambling valleys. But he always enjoyed *feeling* the scenery and taking it in. And I knew that very soon Viscount would come up with a story about his trip. He loved to spin yarns.

The night I was to leave for France, Maggie got all excited, and we made hot, passionate love into the early hours of the crisp mountain summer morning. We were already missing each other. I made one of my many last-minute emotional decisions and asked Maggie to come along with me. She packed in a hurry, and we decided to tiptoe out. She looked wistfully at Viscount's bald head. She wanted to kiss him and pat him, but she was afraid Viscount would

not be able to take any goodbye from his mother at first hand. She hoped he would be reconciled to it after the fact.

I worried about Viscount's lack of hair. I didn't know why he would not grow any hair, considering how much hair I had. I was a bushy individual. Viscount remained a regular Kojak, no matter how old he got. I had to remind myself that I was not his natural father. That hurt me always. All my tremendous love for him still offered no consolation for the lack of that umbilical bond.

And Viscount did a few other things peculiarly. I never saw him go to the bathroom. Of course, I was not with him all the time. And he just *drank* his food. Never ate it. Just sipped it with his black straw. As if he was an Alexander Pope of the twentieth century who did not have normal vitals for the consumption of his victuals. I told Maggie Viscount was a bionic man. I hoped Maggie's parents would be able to understand and cope with Viscount and his peculiarities.

They were not able to. When he found out his mother wasn't there, Viscount went into a coma. Even after his recovery, he just played dead. Viscount, the inveterate speaker, said not a word. Not all of their attempts to cajole him by showing him the many children in the neighborhood (many of whose parents had also gone on their vacations) helped Viscount. They gave him many black straws. They patted his bald head. Viscount thought he was dead. And not a sound emanated from him. They were hopping mad that we left such a wayward child with them.

Viscount did not like thunderstorms. And in the South, in the summertime, we always have thunderstorms galore. As soon as any lightning or rain started outside, Viscount's head heaved, and shook, and bobbed, and he blacked out. He told us that he got some tremendous migraine headaches whenever there were heavy thunderstorms. I said Viscount was a cowardly person. He had no guts. He was always so scared of natural forces. How was he ever going to be the first "bionic" President of the United States if he got headaches when confronted with such minor problems? Maggie told me that Viscount and Jimmy Carter were alike in that respect. They loved to be Presidents ("Oh! They wanted to so badly!") and let everybody know what good guys they were. But she thought neither Viscount nor Jimmy ever comprehended fully what was involved in the job. I told her it was every man's dream in America to be President. We should not knock Jimmy or Viscount for an honest, sincere wish. I told her we had already been mean enough to Viscount by not giving him his pocket fisherman, by not letting him stay up late, and by not letting him go with us to France.

One day I was trying to reorganize my life. I wanted to be a man of action. I did not want anything from my past or anything from my future to affect my will to accomplish my goals in life. I remembered how benumbed and paralyzed I was for years after my father died. Grief was not going to get me anymore. I had come to a philosophic conclusion. No one's death was going to upset me anymore. Maggie said, "Not even mine?" I said, "Yes! If I find out you are seriously ill, I will do everything in my damndest capabilities to make you live. But if you do die then I am just going to go on. *C'est la vie!*"

“You feel the same way about Viscount?”

“Yes, of course!”

“I think Viscount is going to be upset that you think this way. I don’t think he will understand. And he will make you pay through the nose for being so cold!”

That night there was a tremendous thunderstorm. It rained heavily and there were hundreds of flash floods in the area. The old trees on Vienna and Trenton streets lay on the road, stretched from end to end, twisted and turned in so many ways it was like witnessing the Lebanese civil war. When I got up in the morning Viscount was dead.

I did not want to believe it. I felt for his heartbeat and his pulse. There was no sign of life. I yelled at Maggie to come to Viscount’s room. She was stunned. Only last night I had given her my long dissertation on death, and she had told me what Viscount’s attitude would be.

I paced up and down helplessly. Maggie said, “Maybe the doctor knows something we don’t. Let us take him to the hospital.”

At the hospital, the doctor said several other children had been struck by the lightning in last night’s thunderstorm. He would have to find out if Viscount could be restored. I left there in depression. I came home and I saw Viscount’s empty high chair, and his little plastic green boat. I knew I was going to cry. I had told the doctor to call me so I could see if I could afford for Viscount to be revived. God, this money was getting to me!

Three days passed and there was no word from the doctor. Viscount’s seat looked like the prayer niche in a Moslem mosque. Empty and haloed. Finally, I could not take it any longer. I went to the hospital. The doctor said: “Luckily, your son is one of the few who survived the thunderstorm. Quite many didn’t make it. Don’t give him any food during the next thunderstorm. But otherwise, I think he is OK.” Then he presented me with the enormous bill.

“I thought you were going to call me before!”

“You did not want him to come back to life?” he asked me quizzically.

“No, no! I didn’t mean that at all!” I did not know what I meant.

I paid up. I lifted my bald son into my two arms. He was heavy. He kept leaning against my tummy as if he wanted to go back to the womb. I knew I had not cloned him. He was only adopted. His ears rubbed against my chest and tickled me.

Maggie jumped up and hugged him and kissed his bald pate. “We missed you, Viscount. You silly Gormonstan, you! The seat was so empty without you. Didn’t I tell you Daddy would spare no expense to get you back if he could?”

“I think Viscount punished me enough for saying that!” I said.

She laughed. And Viscount laughed with her. I wondered if it would be just as easy to revive men and women who were not so special.

Summer raced on outside. It was one minute before six o’clock. Walter Cronkite said: “And that’s the way it is!” His moustached, almost Biblically serene and authoritative face never lost its happy sobriety. Not even when he coughed before saying “Goodnight!”

ARTICLES

Hamlet as Activist

Bernard Burkom

SINCE World War II most major English language productions of *Hamlet* (e.g., Paul Scofield in 1948, Michael Redgrave in 1950, Richard Burton in 1953, Peter O'Toole in 1963, Nicol Williamson in 1968, Albert Finney in 1976) have been animated by the question first posed by Romantic critics, "Why does Hamlet procrastinate?" I suggest that production based on this 200-year-old issue is no longer appropriate for several reasons. Beyond the theatre's constant demand for novelty, good textual reasons exist for approaching Hamlet as an activist, for believing that he does not procrastinate at all. Based on heretofore unexamined material—in particular the passage of time and the England/pirates episode—I suggest that Shakespeare intended Hamlet to be cast, interpreted, and played as a man of action. Within Shakespeare's carefully constructed time frame, Hamlet's behavior rather clearly defines him as an active and resolute prince who in no way can be accused of inordinate delay.

The concept of procrastination depends on the difference between the amount of time one should take to act and the amount of time which actually elapses. To understand Hamlet's character, then, we must first scrutinize the chronology of events in the play.

The action of *Hamlet* takes place in three discrete time phases. During Phase One (I,i–I,v) approximately thirty hours elapse, from just after midnight one evening until dawn a full day later. During Phase Two (II,i–IV, iv) approximately forty hours elapse, from late morning one day until early morning two days later. During Phase Three (IV,v–V,ii) approximately twelve hours elapse, from late one evening until late the following morning. Crucial passage of time occurs in the intervals between these phases. Between Phase One and Phase Two approximately two months pass; between Phase Two and Phase Three approximately half a week passes. To insure that we are dealing with the temporal facts as Shakespeare created them, let me document this chronology.¹

PHASE ONE

I,i occupies about half a dozen hours, from just after midnight (7) until dawn (147-67). In this scene we learn that the ghost habitually appears around 1:00 a.m. (39) and that Marcellus “this morning knows where we shall find [Hamlet]” (174-75).

I,ii occurs later that morning as Marcellus and Horatio report to Hamlet, who declares (242-53) that he “will watch tonight twixt eleven and twelve.”

I,iii occurs sometime later that day, perhaps in the early afternoon if we assume that Laertes, whose “necessaries are embarked” (1), and who dawdles (52-57), might reasonably be expected to set sail before dark.

I,iv occurs between midnight and 1:00 a.m. (3-5). Claudius “takes his rouse” (8) which he had promised (in I,ii,127). The ghost appears at his wonted hour and leads Hamlet on a chase.

I,v occurs around dawn of the same morning (2, 58, 89).

INTERVAL ONE

Between the end of Phase One (I,v) and the beginning of Phase Two (II,i) enough time must pass for

- Laertes to have sufficiently established himself in Paris for Reynaldo to gain information about his habits;
- Hamlet’s “antic disposition” (which he had promised to adopt in I,v,170-72) to have established itself sufficiently for Claudius to have “sent hastily” (II,ii,4) for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern from Wittenberg;
- the ambassadors to Norway to return successfully from their Fortinbras-restraining mission.

Of course the most important clue about the passage of time during Interval One concerns the length of time that Hamlet’s father has been dead. At I,ii,138, Hamlet says that his father died not quite two months ago. After some time passes, Ophelia says at III,ii,121 that Hamlet senior has been dead “twice two months.” Because neither assertion is contradicted, we must take both to be accurate. Thus, we can deduce that two months have passed.

PHASE TWO

- II,i occurs, then, about two months after I,v, perhaps during the late morning when Ophelia might be expected to be "sewing in [her] closet" (77). Sure that Hamlet is "mad for [Ophelia's] love" (84), Polonius decides to inform Claudius "immediately" (101,117-20).
- II,ii occurs immediately after II,i and fills in much of the action which took place during Interval One. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are charged, bribed, and ordered "instantly to visit [Hamlet]" (35-37). The plot to observe Hamlet with Ophelia is hatched (160-64). Hamlet discovers that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are spies and arranges for the "'mousetrap'" to occur on the next night (521-31).²
- III,i occurs on the next day. After being invited to the play "this night" (21), Claudius observes the Hamlet-Ophelia confrontation and "in quick determination thus set[s] it down: he shall with speed to England" (168-69). Polonius receives permission to set up the Hamlet-Gertrude closet encounter.
- III,ii occurs just before, during, and after the evening's abbreviated entertainment. After being twice summoned to go immediately to his mother's closet (317-19 and 359-60), Hamlet reveals that the time is between midnight and 1:00 a.m. (373-75).
- III,iii occurs immediately after III,ii. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern "haste" (26) to remove Hamlet to England.³ While "going to his mother's closet" (27), Hamlet sees Claudius praying and decides not to kill him, to avoid sending the king's soul to heaven.
- III,iv occurs immediately after III,iii. After killing Polonius and reprehending Gertrude, Hamlet reveals that he has discovered and planned to counter the English execution journey.
- IV,i occurs immediately after III,iv. After hearing of Polonius' death, Claudius orders Hamlet to be apprehended immediately and to be sent to England at dawn (29-30).
- IV,ii occurs immediately after IV,i. After toying with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Hamlet excitedly agrees to meet Claudius.
- IV,iii occurs immediately after IV,ii and contains the play's most tense protagonist-antagonist confrontation. Told that he is being sent to England "with fiery quickness" (42), Hamlet taunts Claudius by stating that he knows Claudius' plans. The visibly shaken king orders Hamlet's immediate removal (53-56) and then states directly what he had implied in III,iii—"the present death of Hamlet" (64).
- IV,iv occurs immediately after IV,iii, probably at the waterfront just before dawn. After encountering Fortinbras' army, Hamlet swears to "be bloody" (64). His oath thus parallels Claudius' at the end of the previous scene and builds suspense.

INTERVAL TWO

Between the end of Phase Two (IV, iv) and the beginning of Phase Three (IV, v) enough time must pass for

- Polonius to have been interred “in hugger mugger”; Ophelia to have learned of his death and become “distract”; the people to have become “muddied, thick, and unwholesome”; and Laertes to have “in secret come from France” and have “buzzers to infect his ear” (IV, v, 2-90);
- Hamlet to have been at sea for something less than two days, then to have returned.

Between the end of Phase Two and the end of Phase Three, enough time must pass for

- Fortinbras to have defeated the Polish and returned to Elsinore;
- the English ambassadors to have received Hamlet’s order and sailed to Elsinore.

Hamlet states point blank how long he has been away; for the rest of the action one must deduce the time frame. Given the various distances involved (Elsinore to Paris, Elsinore to England, Elsinore to Poland), the normal Renaissance modes of travel (horse, sail, foot), and the motives which the playwright has given the characters (e.g., Laertes as a loving and impatient son), one is led to the conclusion that only about half a week passes during Interval Two.

PHASE THREE

IV, v occurs, then, on an evening approximately three or four days after IV, iv.

Confronted by a mad Ophelia and a vengeance-seeking Laertes, Claudius persuades the latter to “go but apart” (120) in order to hear him out.

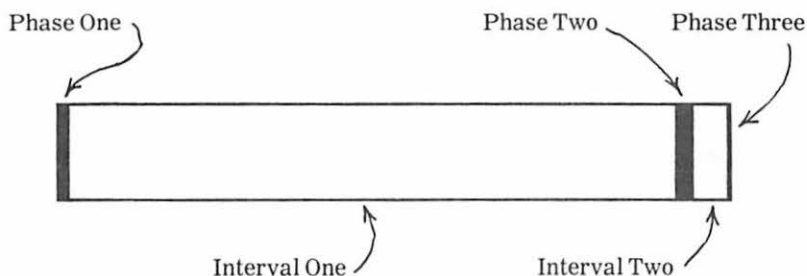
IV, vi occurs immediately after IV, v and covers the break during which Claudius relates off-stage the events surrounding Polonius’ death. Horatio reads Hamlet’s letter which reveals that he has been away less than four days, that certain other letters are to be given to Claudius, and that Horatio is to meet Hamlet as soon as possible.

IV, vii occurs immediately after IV, vi, as Claudius completes his promised explanation. Hamlet’s letter, mentioned in IV, vi above, is delivered, revealing that he intends to be in the palace tomorrow (43-47). The plot to kill Hamlet is hatched and Ophelia’s death is reported.

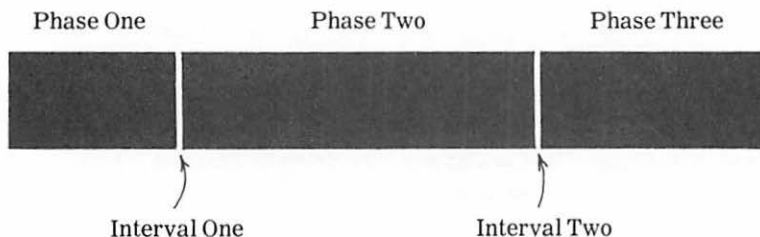
V, i occurs early the next morning, probably around dawn. After the fight in the grave, Claudius tells Laertes that the plot they hatched “last night” will be instigated within an hour (281-85).

V, ii occurs then about an hour after V, i. Hamlet accepts Osric’s challenge to duel Laertes “immediately” (162-68). The duel occurs; Gertrude, Laertes, Claudius, and Hamlet die. The Norwegian prince takes control of Denmark.

The purpose of this summary of the passage of time is to provide the temporal facts upon which assessment of Hamlet's behavior must rest. In a temporally limited art form like theatre, passage of time is of utmost significance in controlling the ideas and feelings of the audience. As lived by the characters, the passage of time in *Hamlet* can be depicted thus (.67mm = 12 hours):



For the audience at the performance of a play, however, the passage of time is continuous and contiguous, except as broken by intermissions. In multi-scene plays, intermissions normally are taken when intervals occur in the narrative. In my experience as both spectator and director of the play, this pattern has been followed in *Hamlet*. Hence, for the audience the passage of time in *Hamlet* can be depicted thus (.67mm = 1 page of text):



Such division creates the standard modern playing time of about four hours, in a 1-2-1 pattern. It also adapts *Hamlet* to the standard modern three-act structure. The first act sets out necessary exposition and ends with the protagonist accepting his battle with the antagonist. The second depicts this battle and ends with each vowing to destroy the other. The third depicts the resolution of the battle and ends with both destroyed. To the audience *Hamlet* always acts; no delay exists.

The notion that Hamlet procrastinates can derive only from the producer's sense of how long Hamlet should take to act in comparison to how long he actually takes. Upon what criteria can Hamlet possibly be charged with delay? Against what expectations can the producer suggest Hamlet procrastinates? In the two months prior to the moment that we first see Hamlet, his father has died, his mother has remarried his uncle, and he, the crown prince, has not been crowned king. In the ensuing seventy odd days, all of the following things happen to Hamlet:

- he sees the ghost of his father;
- he fears that he will be killed;
- he pretends to be crazy;
- he discovers that two of his closest friends and the young woman he loves are agents of his enemy;
- he tests his uncle and verifies the guilt;
- he kills (presumably for the first time in his life) an innocent but involved bystander, the king's first minister;
- he learns that he is to be banished and murdered;
- he is banished, but arranges to kill his old friends and return;
- he discovers that the young woman he loved is dead;
- he sees his mother die, kills a courtier, kills the king, and himself is killed.

Any one of these events is quite sufficient to make a less resolute person pause to digest the emotional shock. Bombarded by them all in slightly less than two months, Hamlet nonetheless responds to each with the utmost alacrity and determination. No one reasonably can be expected to act faster.

On the most basic level the play revolves around murder. Will Hamlet kill Claudius before Claudius kills Hamlet? Assessment of the procrastination issue depends upon how long the audience feels it should take to plan and execute the assassination of an intelligent, suspicious, and well-guarded king. Had Hamlet taken two decades to kill Claudius, one would have to admit that he procrastinated. By the same token his taking just over two months forces one to admit that he does not procrastinate at all. Like it or not, he functions rather expeditiously and effectively as killer of the king.⁴

Producers who believe that Hamlet procrastinates might argue that I misrepresent their case and wrongly approach the play by asking how long Hamlet takes to kill, rather than by asking how Hamlet goes about killing. They might contend that he can kill only rashly, impetuously, on the moment. They would have us believe that Hamlet is incapable of committing premeditated murder with malice aforethought. For two reasons I disagree with this essentially Romantic view which makes Hamlet what the producers want him to be rather than what Shakespeare has written. First, procrastination is a quantitative, temporal matter. Second, concerning the methodology of murder, that Hamlet does act with considerable premeditation is best demonstrated by his handling of the England/pirates episode.

I contend that Hamlet hires the pirates and plans his entire escape before he

ever leaves Denmark. Indisputably, Hamlet knows that he is to be sent to England before Claudius tells him so. The audience first learns of Claudius' decision to send Hamlet to England in III,i. Hamlet is informed of this fact a number of hours later in IV,iii. Yet in the intervening closet scene (III,iv), Hamlet reveals that he is aware of Claudius' plan and that he has laid his own counter plan.

Hamlet. I must to England; you know that?
Queen. Alack,
I had forgot. 'Tis so concluded on.
Hamlet. There's letters sealed, and my two schoolfellows,
Whom I will trust as I will adders fanged,
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way
And marshal me to knavery. Let it work.
For 'tis the sport to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petar, and 't shall go hard
But I will delve one yard below their mines
And blow them at the moon. O, 'tis most sweet
When in one line two crafts directly meet.

(201-11)

How has Hamlet gathered this information, and how are we to respond to the revelation? A number of possibilities exist. Shakespeare simply may have made a mistake, neglecting to develop this scene adequately. I reject this possibility because it lacks useful ramifications for theme or staging. A second possibility is inaccurate transmission of the text—a scene may have been lost. I reject this possibility because no editor has ever suggested it. A third possibility is that we are intended not to ask the question; we are intended to ignore the fact that Hamlet has gained crucial, secret information without our learning where. In a play whose plot revolves around the life and death struggle of “mighty opposites” who continually strive to gain information about the other, such a possibility is clearly untenable.

The text offers two other possible explanations of the source of Hamlet's knowledge, both having enormous implications for staging and for understanding character and theme. Either Hamlet himself overhears Claudius mention England in III,i or Hamlet has a spy who reports to him offstage.

As Dover Wilson argued four decades ago,⁵ in the nunnery scene producers must decide if and when Hamlet comes to suspect that he is being spied upon and if he suspects that Claudius and Polonius themselves are behind the arras. Generally suspicious of both by this point in the play, he surely is on his guard. If he does suspect that they are behind the arras, he might well take a false exit at line 149 and remain hidden onstage in order to spy on the spies. Such a possibility not only enables Hamlet to learn of the English plan, which Claudius enunciates at line 169 (“he shall with speed to England”), but it also helps explain his subsequent behavior to Ophelia.

While textually plausible and theatrically intriguing, this possibility does not explain the extent of Hamlet's knowledge. Hamlet accurately states things in III,iv which Claudius does not state in III,i. For example, Hamlet knows that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are to escort him, carrying already sealed letters.

Hence the most logical explanation of the source of Hamlet's knowledge about the English trip is through an informer of his own, an informer whose existence Hamlet hints at—"I see a cherub that sees [Claudius' plans]" (IV,iii,47). I favor this possibility for several reasons. Dramatically, it allows Hamlet to receive this crucial information in time to respond to it. It is in keeping with the mood of high suspense, adhering to this section of the play. It suggests a growing parity between protagonist and antagonist. The existence of spies and counterspies is in keeping with the "wheel of fortune," "special providence," and "accidental judgments" themes—despite a maximum of intelligence, things do not occur as the characters plan. Given the amount of intrigue thought to exist at the courts of Elizabeth I and James I, the premiere audience may well have expected any important courtier, much less a prince, to have his own intelligence network. To this original audience a Hamlet with spies may well have been a more heroic figure rather than a less heroic one. Hamlet certainly has every reason in the world to try to discover what Claudius is planning.

Having done so, he proceeds to make counter plans. In the above cited closet passage, Hamlet does not stop at telling his mother that he is aware of what Claudius is planning. He goes on to intimate that he has already initiated an underhanded counterplot of his own—"they . . . marshal me to knavery." He swears, as directly as one would dare, to kill his would-be assassins—"I will . . . blow them at the moon." Then he concludes his revelation with this intriguing conundrum—"O 'tis most sweet when in one line two crafts directly meet." What "line," what "two crafts," how "directly," why "most sweet"? Given the nautical imagery which recurs in the play and which the audience in a port city like London would have well understood, I suggest that as a secondary meaning

- the "line" is the course which a boat would take, traveling from Elsinore to England;
- the "two crafts" are the two boats, one carrying Hamlet, the other, the pirates;
- "directly" refers to the specific place at which the pre-arranged boarding is to occur;
- "most sweet" refers to Hamlet's boundless pleasure both at being able to outwit Claudius and to say so covertly in advance.

Why, one might ask, does Hamlet divulge, even surreptitiously, his counterplans to the consort of his arch enemy? There are two reasons. Gertrude certainly appears to be truly remorseful (89-92, 95-97, 102), and she has promised to breathe not a word of what Hamlet says (198-200). Second, and much more important for understanding character, Hamlet is an inveterate

punmaker. Sparring with Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and Polonius in II,ii and with Claudius in IV,iii, Hamlet takes great pleasure in loading words with double meaning. At moments of high tension (e.g., after the “mousetrap” or the murder of Polonius), Hamlet is full of equally high wit. His emotional energy finds a safe outlet in punning. Thus, remembering the words he spoke not a minute ago (“I essentially am not in madness, but mad in craft”), Hamlet may well be expected to reveal covertly precisely what he intends.

Further proof of the spy’s existence is provided in Hamlet’s battle of wit and nerve with Claudius in IV,iii. Believing each knows something which the other does not, Hamlet and Claudius taunt each other. After some preliminary but lethal skirmishing, Claudius informs Hamlet about the English journey. Hamlet first feigns surprise (45), then pointedly states that he knows Claudius’ intentions—“I see a cherub that sees them” (47). Cherubim were of the second order of angels, possessed of distinctive knowledge. I contend that in referring to this cherub Hamlet is covertly referring to his own spy. The flow of the action onstage suggests that Claudius certainly takes it this way. Immediately after mentioning the cherub, Hamlet abruptly changes the topic and introduces his exit line, “But come, for England” (47-48). Why? The “cherub” has made Claudius suspicious—does Hamlet really see my purpose?—and so he raises an eyebrow. Hamlet abruptly changes the topic and, following a final insult, exits.

The handling of this English episode affords the audience the pleasure of seeing occur events which it has come to suspect would occur. By the end of Phase Two (the second modern act), we are intended to suspect that through secret intelligence Hamlet has learned that Claudius has ordered his execution and has planned a counter maneuver. The letter which Horatio reads on stage (IV,vi) verifies our suspicion. It provides the particulars which prove that we were right in thinking that Hamlet had planned a means of escape:

Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valor, and in the grapple I boarded them. On the instant they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy, but they knew what they did: I am to do a good turn for them. (15-22)

Most conveniently the pirates attack on the second day out to sea—far enough away from Elsinore to be undetected by a passing or “back up” boat but close enough for a rapid return. After a short race and battle, Hamlet jumped onto the pirate ship, whereupon it immediately sailed away, taking him alone as prisoner. What do pirates “of very warlike appointment” normally want? Treasure. After outrunning and attacking a vessel, would such pirates normally leave their prey without taking the sought for treasure? Of course not. Would they normally break off battle as soon as one of the enemy boarded them? Again, of course not. Would they normally not seek a huge ransom for a prince? Of course they would. The only logical conclusion is obvious. Hamlet is the

treasure which the pirates sought. Shakespeare verifies this conclusion just after setting out the facts. The pirates treated Hamlet well, because “they knew what they did.”

As I see it, then, this entire England/pirates episode points in one inescapable direction. Hamlet is a man who acts with considerable premeditation, decisiveness, and alacrity. Successful resolution of this episode enables him to face the final battle with fresh resolve and confidence, not because he has miraculously matured and changed, but rather because he has just neatly averted the first direct assassination attempt which he has confronted. His maturity is well earned. Hamlet has very good reason to be proud and confident in Act V. The summation of this English episode (the reported fate of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern) is placed in V, ii precisely to build the suspicion that Hamlet will overcome the second assassination attempt as effectively as he did the first. His oft-quoted steely reply to the suggestion that the duel may be “rigged”—

Not a whit, we defy augury. There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all. Since no man of aught he leaves knows, what is't to leave betimes? Let be. (208-11)

—expresses quite clearly and eloquently the attitude which has underlain his actions throughout, but of which he has only in the past half week become fully conscious. Hamlet's metaphysical musing is motivated by hard physical fact. Recognizing that neither his own nor his uncle's plans have yet to produce their desired effect (the death of the other), Hamlet accepts the fact that he will most likely have to pay the highest price of all to succeed in killing Claudius. This acceptance defines that most extreme of all political activists—the man who is willing to kill and be killed for what he believes is right.

Even in face of the temporal evidence and the England/pirates episode, both of which rather clearly characterize Hamlet as a man who acts in a speedy and determined manner, some producers still may be reluctant to abandon the notion that Hamlet procrastinates. After all, they might contend, Hamlet himself says that he is procrastinating in his soliloquies. While it is well beyond the scope of this essay to explicate each of the soliloquies, I can very briefly lay out my approach to interpreting these speeches, an approach which owes much to Elmer Stoll's excellent study published half a century ago.⁶

First, while Hamlet does curse himself for inactivity at the beginnings of the soliloquies, he generally ends with specific plans for action which he executes immediately and successfully. Second, the play was not written merely for the soliloquies to be spoken; to the contrary, they comprise only one small part of the total performance. In fact, Hamlet's soliloquies comprise only about three per cent of the total text. Because audiences are moved by the quantity as well as the quality of what is performed, no pragmatic producer could ever base an entire interpretation on such scanty evidence, especially when the rest and the

bulk of the evidence points in an opposite direction. Third, all of the objective indicators of character (what others say about Hamlet, what others do in response to him, and what Hamlet himself does) clearly belie Hamlet's subjective vision of himself as a procrastinator. No other character ever says or even suspects that Hamlet is procrastinating. Quite to the contrary, all the other characters rightly respect Hamlet's ability to act; Horatio, Ophelia, Laertes, Polonius, and Fortinbras all comment on this fact. Above all, the antagonist treats Hamlet from beginning to end as a man of action; whatever his moral flaws may be, Claudius is a shrewd judge of character.

Stated most simply, then, Hamlet procrastinates only in his own imagination. Alone on a few short-lived occasions, he second guesses himself in a fashion which the rest of the play flatly contradicts. I believe that Stoll rightly suggests the dramatic purpose of this contradiction. Following Swinburne's lead and looking at performance history prior to the Romantic Revolution, Stoll sees Hamlet as a proper, unflawed hero.⁷ By taking Hamlet's soliloquies at face value (as revelations of the character's thoughts at the moment he speaks them), we can correctly interpret them as the private and momentary hesitation of and spurs to a man of action. The soliloquies function both to isolate Hamlet from his world and to provide thematically crucial way stations on Hamlet's tragic journey. The plot of the play forces the audience to wonder what a totally admirable man (a hero) who is involved in the most extreme of all human actions—taking life—thinks about himself and his action. Hamlet's soliloquies (and Claudius' too) speak directly to this central issue.

Read most straightforwardly, then, the soliloquies affirm, rather than negate, the force of my thesis. Together with the passage of time and the England/pirates episode, they lead to an inescapable conclusion, a conclusion with enormous staging ramifications. Hamlet is intended to be cast, interpreted, and played as a man of action. A meditative and also a premeditative man, he can be accused in no justifiable way of procrastination. He lives up to his title. He is a true Renaissance prince whose tragedy may well reside in the route which he consciously chooses and resolutely follows—the route of activism.

NOTES

¹ I am using Willard Farnham's 1957 Penguin edition.

² If we take Rosencrantz's revelation that the players have arrived (310-13) as part of the dual-leveled punning which marks the entire scene, we have an indication that Phase Two occurs during Lent. The play's entire action, then, might be reasonably placed between Christmas and Easter, a decision with obvious staging as well as symbolic overtones.

³ This haste is important for the overall time frame. I believe that the audience, to build tension for ensuing events, is intended to suspect in this scene what it learns in IV,iii—in slightly veiled terms Claudius is ordering Hamlet's death when he orders the English journey. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern certainly infer this meaning from Claudius; otherwise their only long and general speeches in the play (7-23) make no sense. When Claudius first mentions England, Polonius appears to read something underneath the extradition order (III,i,186-87). Most important, the placement of Claudius' attempted penance soliloquy immediately after this extradition order hardly can be mere coincidence. I suggest that Claudius is spurred to remember the killing of Hamlet Senior because he has just covertly ordered the killing of Hamlet Junior.

⁴ The audience's expectations about murder control an important part of the play's perceived meaning. How long, if at all, should Hamlet delay before taking justice into his own hands and killing Claudius, a king who himself killed a king, Hamlet's father? Although Renaissance norms of justice, revenge, and morality may have been quite different from our own, certain theatrical norms have remained constant. The rhythm, texture, and meaning of *Hamlet* all seem to be predicated upon the assumption that the audience will be both repulsed and fascinated by premeditated murder—and, in particular, premeditated political murder. I believe that Shakespeare plays on the audience's ambivalent attitude toward regicide. I believe that we are intended to want Claudius removed and punished, probably executed, at the same time that we want Hamlet to remain alive and not to become a murderer. The tragedy seems to turn on the fact that these wants are mutually exclusive. Hamlet (and Claudius too) is placed in a position where, to him, murder seems mandatory.

⁵ J. Dover Wilson, *What Happens in Hamlet* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935).

⁶ Elmer Edgar Stoll, *Hamlet: An Historical and Comparative Study*, University of Minnesota Studies in Language and Literature, Number 7 (Minneapolis, 1919).

⁷ The original casting of Burbage, Shakespeare's heroic lead, supports this theory.

A Conversation with Josephine Miles

Sanford Pinsker

PROFESSOR Josephine Miles may have been born in Chicago, but she has been associated with California most of her life. A California student (B.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles, with graduate work at Berkeley) and a California professor (she taught courses in verse writing and poetics as a member of the English Department at the University of California, Berkeley, for many years and is now University Professor, a distinction which allows her to do visiting stints throughout the University of California system), Josephine Miles is that rarest combination—a poet and a friend of poetry.

I first met her in 1973, when circumstances and good fortune deemed us both “visiting professors” at the University of California, Riverside. The interview was taped when we were reunited, once again at the Riverside campus, in 1975.

It may be true (as the New Critics insisted) that a great poem is not always written by a good person, but I think there is a connection between a life of writing poetry and a growing understanding of one’s own life. Josephine Miles is an excellent argument for the latter case. She has taught us much about poetry (in books like *The Continuity of Poetic Language*, 1951, and *Poetry and Change*, 1975), but she has taught us even more about what it is like to be a deeply human and humane being.

Pinsker: I was struck by a remark James T. Farrell made recently. What he said was this: "I went to a party in which there were eighty poets in one room. How the hell can there be eighty poets in one city, in one room?" Perhaps we can begin by asking you to comment on what Mr. Farrell takes to be the sad state of our current poetic affairs.

Miles: James T. Farrell said *that*? I thought he was a democrat among democrats.

Pinsker: Evidently not where other writers are concerned.

Miles: Well, it's a little overimpressive sometimes to have all that power around, but I really think it's there. I guess my own feeling is that if you've got enough air for eighty poets to breathe, you're o.k. I don't think there's any diminishment in power or variety as you get more and more poets. As a matter of fact, I think it's marvelous that so much is going on and so many people around are so able.

Pinsker: I take it, then, that you wouldn't agree with the *Playboy* cartoon which shows two guys with beards fighting on the grass of what is obviously a college campus. Two more conservatively dressed men are passing by, observing the thrashing going on and the caption reads: "I *told* you we made a mistake, having two poets in-residence."

Miles: Well, I couldn't very well agree, coming from the Bay area. Do you know that phrase in German, "kimmelt und wimmelt"? I think it's *good*. For example, in the Bay area we have a bi-weekly thing called *Poetry Flash*, which lists who's reading where. There's this bar and that bar, this person's house and that person's house, and all the campuses and the visitors from other parts of the world As I say, it does sort of take your breath away, but I guess I'm an economist of abundance—a Henry Wallaceite. And while language is supposed to have been corrupted by advertising, all sorts of sloganeering, governmental interference, etc., I think the language, in counterbalance, has grown richer. And not just from the *poets*, but from the general language of conversation.

Pinsker: I *suspected* you might respond in roughly this way. After all, you have invested so much of your life in the training of young poets that it would be curious indeed if a roomful of aspiring poets depressed you.

Miles: I suppose that's true, although I would not use the word "training." I don't know how it's done, but I don't think it's *training* exactly

Pinsker: How about "encouragement" then?

Miles: Yes, that's better, or "practice."

Pinsker: My point is that if you encourage people to write poems and to read them publicly, when they do, in fact, produce a decent poem, you really can't wring your hands and say: "Gosh, I'm sorry about that."

Miles: Right. There's a charming thing I remember in this connection. It happened when we had the Second World Black Mountain Poetry Conference at Berkeley in 1965. It followed the first Conference held in Vancouver and all the same people were there: Olsen, Duncan, Creeley, Spicer, etc. The Conference

was run by Dick Baker for our extension division. He risked his life-and-limb to invite all these people to give a two-week summer course. Well, the turnout was fantastic. I mean, the town was just flooded with guys on motorbikes, with their wives and papooses strapped behind. And even the papooses would get into the act. They would run around in the halls outside the seminar rooms and when their parents would adjourn for a brief respite, they'd run into the room and come up to the microphones. By that time they had picked up the intonations and they'd do their own readings in gibberish. They were just beautiful. And since I didn't usually get up and walk around, I was treated to all these little two- and three- and four-year-old recitations. There was something in the air they had picked up. Anyway, one day during the Conference I got a phone call from Gary Snyder asking me if some people could drop over. Now I should mention that I was a definite bystander at this Conference. I simply didn't do their kind of thing. But they all came streaming into my house—the leaders of the Conference—looking behind them and saying: "We've got to have a place to hide out! They're on our trail! There are thousands of young poets out there trying to grab us and get us to give them a hearing and read their work." That is the most dramatic picture I've ever had of the current explosion in poetry.

Pinsker: Perhaps we ought to turn our attention to your own poetry. For one thing, I don't think there is much profit in asking a contemporary writer to survey the field, rank the competitors, etc.

Miles: No, there really isn't much point to that.

Pinsker: I'm thinking particularly about the title of your newest book— *To All Appearances*. It's a good title.

Miles: Yes, I like that title very much.

Pinsker: I wonder if it suggests, among other things, the multifaceted way in which you approach experiences and also something of what I see as the wonderment to experience which seems to characterize your work. For example, in poems like "Tract" and "New Tract," you see the experience from two very different perspectives. And that difference is reflected in the very structures of the respective poems.

Miles: Well, if you feel that, that's great. I would have said that the danger with a title like *To All Appearances* was that it is too overweening . . . because I don't see that many different "appearances." By that I mean, my life does not include that many appearances. So if you feel a variety here

Pinsker: That's funny because I got a very different impression from reading the book. I suppose it's dumb to argue with somebody about what the title of their book suggests, but I do see a lot of variety.

Miles: Well, that's good, of course. It's a *big* title after all. I kind of like the idea of "titles" and particularly the notion of *plurals* in titles. For example, I was very fond of the title "Prefabrications" which has a little more "modesty" in it. With each of my titles there is probably as much negative implication as there is positive. There is a sense of skepticism in a title like *To All Appearances*, I think.

Pinsker: You mean, in the sense that *To All Appearances* is a “fact,” but, in fact, it’s *not* a fact

Miles: Right. Also this title seems somewhat less protective than some of my others.

Pinsker: Granted, what I’ve been suggesting about *To All Appearances* is hindsight on my part. I suppose one chooses a title on more instinctual grounds. It *felt* right or *sounded* right—something like that. But, still, this is a book which includes poems selected from the body of your work, so that the “bigness” of the title is appropriate to the bulk that’s there.

Miles: Well, that’s a good theory. But, actually, *To All Appearances* was a title for a book I just couldn’t get published. I had tried to get this book published for over seven years.

Pinsker: So goeth another good theory down the drain of truth

Miles: Don’t feel too badly Anyway, there were about 150 poems I had written in the last seven years, but nobody would publish them. The letters I got back all said the same thing: “We know your work and like it, but with our limited funds, we have to give opportunities to new, younger poets.” Which, of course, I believe is true, but it is still a little discouraging.

Pinsker: I gather, then, that the rule in business about one’s second million being easier to make does not apply to the world of publishing poetry. By that I mean, your fifth book is likely to be much *harder* to publish than your fourth.

Miles: Well, each one has been hard But, yes, now that I think about it, you’re right. Each one was easier toward the beginning. The *New Directions* one was easy and lots of fun.

Pinsker: Do you think that’s because, at a certain point, either you establish a reputation—get in the big, prestigious anthologies, get a certain amount of critical attention, etc.—or you don’t have the wide marketability necessary for a publisher to get excited about doing yet another collection.

Miles: That’s very true. They sort of heave a sigh: “Oh, *her* again.” Finally poets at Illinois University Press who had been at Louisiana State when I first began publishing in *Southern Review*, and at Berkeley, in a sense “invented” the whole business about new and selected poems as an idea for *To All Appearances*. That’s really how the book happened; it was a suggestion to me from them, which I welcomed. By the way, it’s a strange thing that you should mention anthologies They always puzzled me. I’m not in any of the big standard American anthologies. I never thought of myself in that world. That is, until the recent *Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry*. Being in that one really surprised me—and some of the reviewers as well.

Pinsker: But isn’t it true that once you got into that “world,” it usually follows as the night the day that you’ll get into most of the others? By that I mean, anthologies are usually made from *other* anthologies. Getting into the first couple is really the trick. You mentioned the *Norton*, of course, but you’re also in Hayden Carruth’s *The Voice That Is Great Within Us* and G.P. Elliott’s *Fifteen Modern American Poets*.

Miles: Well, that's true. But in my own experience, I wasn't. That is, when I would assign poetry anthologies for my classes, my own poems were seldom in them. You know, those big posh ones with pictures But one day I opened a closet door of a room I don't use very often and I noticed that there were all these books in there. And I thought "What were they?" And it turns out that there were some fifty anthologies in there that included my poetry. But they weren't the sort of anthologies we have been talking about. They were textbooks about poetry. You know, the introduction to poetry sort of thing. So, evidently, there is another world of anthologizing—the "let's talk about *this* poem and see what we can say about it," etc.—and I am very much in that one. In fact, I used to wonder why I got so many letters from students asking me to say more about this poem or that one—especially since most of my books are out of print now. Well, this was the reason. There are two different kinds of anthologies and I had been circulating pretty well in the second sort.

Pinsker: You've edited a number of poetry anthologies yourself, so that you have had the experience of choosing a representative selection from somebody else's work, but are you generally satisfied with the poems of your own that have been anthologized by others?

Miles: Yes. They tend, as you say, to repeat the same ones over and over again.

Pinsker: Am I right in assuming that people constructing an anthology don't ask the poet to pick, say, three poems you are particularly proud of? Rather, the editor makes the decisions and then asks you for the permission necessary to reprint them.

Miles: That's right. And I just really wasn't noticing how much of this was happening as the years went by.

Pinsker: It must give you a strange sense to realize that at least *part* of your reputation is controlled by other people. The poems they choose to have anthologized will be, in a large measure, the poems that a large stripe of people will know and remember—and these may *not* be the ones you would have chosen to represent your work.

Miles: That brings up an interesting point. There was an anthology done by Paul Engle and Joseph Langland called *Poet's Choice*. In that one they *did* ask poets to choose their "favorite." And I put in one that I did like very much at that time—and that poem went from anthology to anthology. It was called "Reason."

Pinsker: Yes. I was really moved by that poem. In fact, I was wondering if I should ask you about it. It seemed, at least to me, more deeply personal than, say, your more recent poem about visiting the battlefields at Gettysburg. Not that the two poems can—or should—be compared, but I sense that "Reason" is somehow closer to the bone. Generally speaking, your poems are distanced. "Reason" seems somehow closer

Miles: That's interesting you should feel it that way. I don't agree, although the observation is intriguing enough. I would say that one kind of poem I like to write is where I overhear somebody say something that just strikes me as very, very funny and revelatory of their character—or, perhaps, of a possible

character. Well, of course, you can say that means it must be related to *my* character in some way. I mean, in the oblique sense in which you pick out in others what reveals yourself. But, still, there is a distancing And what I *think* I'm interested in is *them*. That is, I am very much interested in what people say or do, especially in circumstances where they are confident and unguarded. I think these things are very beautiful. It brings tears to my eyes this minute. I just think it's a very poetic thing. And I try to capture it.

Pinsker: But, even so, "Reason" is a *tough* poem.

Miles: Yes . . . ?

Pinsker: That's another reason I like it so much. But it's awfully tough. I would agree that you catch the people in an unguarded moment all right, but you strip them absolutely bare. I mean—and I'm sorry about this—I'm not going to let you get away with that teary business about things being "beautiful." "Reason" is a tough, tough poem.

Miles: Poor man, it's not *that* bad But the Gettysburg poem, on the other hand, was very close to me—in the sense that *I* wanted to say something. People didn't like it very much. I kept reading it anyhow, but finally somebody said—I was reading it to some teachers at the time—that their students had seen it in *Kayak* and they said, "Now there's a real women's lib poem!" And that pleased me because that's absolutely right. I don't write very many women's lib poems, but that's one. It's about the exercise of power and the convention of the exercise of power. And that's interesting to me personally—because, in a way, I have been outside the women's lib problem in that I haven't had any power exercised upon me nor have I exercised power. Therefore, the conventions of power in the poem—the grassy slope and the electric map, for example—were very vivid to me. So where I was much less involved in the incident itself, the "map-war" is really close.

Pinsker: Let's talk for just a minute about rhyme scheme. I am thinking particularly of poems like "Herald" or "For Futures." They are evidence of strong rhyming, although you also use a good deal of slant or off-rhymes throughout *To All Appearance*. But in "Herald" and "For Futures," you end-stop the lines with a strong rhyme. A good many contemporary poets would avoid something like that at all costs.

Miles: This is, of course, a big area. I grew up with strong rhyme. It's my world: there are all the ballads and children's verse with a lot of strong rhyme. You know, folk verse of one sort or another. And since all that meant a great deal to me when I was very young—I memorized lots of poems and said them to myself over and over again—strong rhyme is very deep in me. And, too, that's the way people were writing when they worked in the Frost-Eliot-Graves-Elinor Wylie tradition. Whereas the other side of the picture—that is, my friends and my students and William Carlos Williams, the Black Mountain poets, Whitman, Sandburg, etc.—was *not* what I thought of as mine. There were these two ways, these two traditions and I thought one of them was mine and the other wasn't.

Pinsker: And yet your poems do not strike me as "old-fashioned" in quite the

way somebody might assume if he heard an answer like the one above and hadn't read your poetry.

Miles: The reason for that is probably because I *heard* so much of the new poetry. I'm not sure about the dating of this, but sometime in 1959 the world changed at Berkeley very, very vividly. At least that is when I became *conscious* of it. Maybe it was happening earlier. In any event, my consciousness of this came when I assigned my students both the Hall-Pack-Simpson anthology and Donald Allen's *New American Poetry*—and they threw them at me. I mean they literally came up to the desk and said, "What is this stuff you're asking us to buy? We won't read it!" And I said these books represented the two traditions we just talked about and they said, "Two traditions, my foot! We won't look at *either*. We don't want a textbook in the first place!" This was after I had come back from a sabbatical and I didn't even realize how all this related to getting washed down the steps of City Hall. It was just beginning then. I was very unaware of what it was all about. They were very cruel to each other; it made for a tumultuous class. Anyway, I kept telling my colleagues about them and they would just say: "What do you mean? You must have just run into a crazy class or something." But the other people teaching the writing courses knew better. Something strong was happening and we didn't know what it was. Anyway, one day the class applauded a ghastly poem that some kid had written, full of blood and shit and screams. And I asked them, "Why do *screams* become a sign of applause for you? What kind of obscenity is it that you are demanding?" And they said, "Well, it's not *your* kind!" And I said, "What's *my* kind?" And they said, "Those neat little Christmas packages, all tied up in bows." That really got to me. In other words, they had a value system; they knew what they were doing. It wasn't just destructive. So that when they said my last lines come around and fix everything up neat—and that that is "just really dirty"—I meditated about it for a long time.

Pinsker: But the depth of a scream—including the one screamed a few years ago—is not going to be nearly as deep as the verbal resources you bring to a poem. I mean, poems are verbal artifices. You can't ask them . . .

Miles: I would agree. But, nevertheless, there was something that my poetry was doing—or perhaps something that the poetry of the Hall-Pack-Simpson anthology was doing—that really affronted them. And what the tradition of English poetry was doing was giving too many easy solutions. It was bringing things to conclusions.

Pinsker: All right . . . I guess I can buy *that* . . .

Miles: And more particularly, it was bringing things to a conclusion where the conclusions weren't valid or were premature. After 1960 I'm sure I thought an awful lot about a freer form.

Pinsker: But a poem can't, finally, be a bullet or a bomb or even a very effective scream, at least in political terms.

Miles: Yes . . . but tight rhyme or a tight meter *can* create a premature closing off of choices.

Pinsker: Since we seem to be on the subject of students and poetry, let me come

at it another way. In your poem "Preliminary to a Classroom Lecture," the tone strikes me as crucial. That is, isn't the poem really a kind of prolegomenon to the "talk" they will do, rather than the canned lecture they might be expecting? But it's the *tone* of your prodding here that interests me. And I wondered if you feel any differences between this earlier poem and a more recent one like "Witness."

Miles: Oh dear . . . well, for one thing, the language in "Preliminary to a Classroom Lecture" is archaic and irritating to me now. I mean, I'm not *mad* at the person who wrote it, but I'm not happy with it either. I wish it hadn't been said in that artificial sort of way. That was when I was first teaching or, perhaps, attempting to teach. It was kind of a surprise to me and I came upon Yeats's poem "The Triple Fool." In any event, the poem really got to me because it was about the fool's responsibilities to the animals. I felt that kind of desperation because the world of teaching is not the world of telling. And, yet, the posture of the students seemed to be one of the awaiting of the "telling." So I think much of that poem is ironic. I never gave any classroom lecture in my life, until five years ago. Then I invented a course in which I did all of the talking. It was kind of a weirdo course.

Pinsker: What you suggest about language is, I suppose, the difference between "Witness"—where what happens to the students and the trees and you—is not distanced in the same way as the earlier poem. That is, the reserved language of a teacher in "Preliminary . . ." turns the passive students into an occasion for meditation, rather than into a concern *per se*.

Miles: Well, that's true. I felt more distanced both literarily and personally earlier. I felt more distant in that I was less familiar with what I was doing and I felt more wary of the world. And also that was the code of the time, that was the literary tradition—to have distance You know, the objective correlative sort of thing.

Pinsker: A couple of things we have touched on so far remind me of Auden's yardstick about being able to tell, in the work of a good poet, which are his early, middle, and late poems.

Miles: And yet he wrecks his own yardstick

Pinsker: But I wondered what would happen if that yardstick were applied to *your* poems. From what we have been saying, you do seem to see clear distinctions between the early poems and your most recent ones.

Miles: I would hope so In this connection, perhaps, I had an interesting review of *To All Appearances* recently in *TLS* by Denis Donoghue, and he named what he thought were six fine poems. And two were early, two were middle, and two were recent. I think that was nice. I feel that I am a somewhat different person now, but it was good not to have to reject the older one. For example, he mentioned "For Futures"—an early poem—which I have always liked too.

Pinsker: We talked a bit earlier about technique and structure in things like "Tract" and "New Tract" where the difference in content dictates a difference in form. That is, the two poems look—and *feel*—different.

Miles: You mean, the “New Tract” poem was supposed to be a different structure? Right.

Pinsker: I was wondering how conscious you were of creating that effect. One can see the results pretty clearly.

Miles: I didn’t do that consciously. I wrote both poems on the same day. And I *felt* the difference, but I didn’t even realize that they were so different—until I looked back. I was actually looking out the window at an old tract of houses and thinking back on a new tract I had been in—and they certainly did come out differently.

Pinsker: I wonder, do you generally lug around lines of a potential poem in your head . . . or write phrases, bits of stuff on notebook paper? By that I mean, do poems, for you, begin with a line that then generates another line and so on?

Miles: No . . . I just get a restless feeling with a sense of a poem. I’d like to say something about craft, though, while we are on the general subject. It’s a burden of judgment I’ve always disliked in reviews of my poetry. You know, the thing that goes: “These poems are highly crafted, well-written, very skillful” and so on.

Pinsker: But they *are*.

Miles: Yes . . . but I would say that a poem which seems that way is a bad poem, about as badly crafted as you can get. A poem that draws attention to its craft is my idea of a poem caught in the middle of a process, one which hasn’t arrived anywhere yet. My ideal of a poem would be one which is almost transparent—here you hardly know that it’s not everyday conversation.

Pinsker: But that’s hard to do. I mean, you have to know craft pretty well to get a result like that.

Miles: That’s a belief I think I inherit from my past. The ideal in the past was exactly that kind of ease. Today, the ideal of skill is kind of *tour de force*—something like the great stuff Ginsberg does or the tremendous effortfulness of Robert Creeley. This is just so alien to me. I suppose the contemporary poet who comes closest to the kind of ease I have in mind is Gary Snyder, although he does a very different sort of thing.

Pinsker: T.S. Eliot once claimed that in talking about other poets we are really talking about ourselves—by way of justifying work already done or, more often, work-in-progress. Since you do a considerable amount of work as a critic, does that remark seem to apply to you as well?

Miles: Well, I suppose that, *ironically*, it could be true. Actually I started studying poetry the way I did because I was really resentful of that fact. And, of course, it would be a really neat irony that after all the so-called “objective” work I did, I was still doing the same old thing. For example, I just got a bad review of *Poetry and Change*

Pinsker: But that’s the book which just won the Modern Language Association’s very prestigious James Russell Lowell Award I mean, talk about *ironies*, doesn’t it strike you as sort of funny that a book which is awarded a prize like that can then get panned? But do you still *care* about reviews anyway? Do bad ones still sting?

Miles: Oh sure I care. The worst review I ever got happened a while back. It was a two-line affair that went something like this: 'Miss Miles does so and so in this book. Ho-hum.' That was really neat. What I have been interested in my scholarship is *not* to let the critics say that the essence of a poet is what they see to be a valuable essence to *them*, but to give the poet a break by saying more objectively—and I know that's a bad word now—what did this poet think he was doing, what was he stressing, what did he talk about over and over . . . and, from *that*, how to relate to the critic who says that's not the way he is.

Pinsker: That, I take it, is the sort of quantifying method for which you are well known.

Miles: Exactly. And I've defended this sort of quantification to no avail. The winning of this prize is an absurdity—I mean, it's *nice*—but just last year I was invited to a seminar in the East because they had read my work, it was known, it was an honor to be a speaker there—and then they spent two days telling me I couldn't do it, that you can't quantify art. And I kept saying, "Look, fellas, tell me, have I made any sense to you?" And they said: "It's impossible to tell—because you can't do it in the first place." It was the most horrible two days. All I wanted to point out by way of this quantification was something like this: Picasso had what is called his "Blue Period" and what that meant partly was that he used a lot of blues in his painting. That's all I mean by quantification. Nothing more complicated. It's a method which can tell you "something"—not *everything*, but something. I suppose I'm attracted to this approach because I'm a poet who doesn't want to be generalized about in a false way. I think continuities count for a lot beyond singularities. Thumbprints represent identities but a lot of thumbs look a lot alike.

* * * *

Reading this interview, I can remember the hot hot afternoon in Riverside, when we talked more ramblingly than this about many aspects of poetry. It seems that Pinsker and I share many beliefs which mean much to us. So we do not even touch on vast areas of subject-matter. For example, on that very day, what could poetry mean to that town, that atmosphere? What do we need that poetry can give us? I see clues in the *San Jose Studies* poetry anthology of 1976, *Discover America*, of what we want to hold to. I am hoping we work toward that.

J.M.

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Announcements

SPECIAL ROBERTA HOLLOWAY ISSUE

Dr. Roberta Holloway, a member of the San Jose State University English Department faculty who received an Outstanding Professor Award before her retirement several years ago, left when she died last year a distinguished body of poetry. A special issue of *San Jose Studies* containing a selection of Dr. Holloway's poems is tentatively scheduled for December 1, 1979. Each subscriber to *San Jose Studies* will receive one copy, with other copies available for purchase. Editors for this special issue will be Josephine Miles, noted poet and critic and Emeritus Professor of English, University of California; Ariel Slothower, to whom Dr. Holloway left her manuscripts; and Naomi Clark, Lecturer in English at San Jose State University.

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Past issues have included articles on topics as diverse as eugenics techniques and their implications for society, the misuse of intelligence tests to predict incompetence, Melville's "errors" in *Billy Budd*, archetypal themes in R. Crumb's comics, historical disputes about the Battle of Hastings, and the letters of William James (several published for the first time). Special issues have been devoted to John Steinbeck and to the American Bicentennial. Poetry, fiction, and photographic essays are also featured in most issues.

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- "Continuity and Change in the Mayfair Barrios of East San Jose," Armand J. Sanchez and Roland M. Wagner, 5 (May 79), 6-19.
- "A Conversation with Josephine Miles," Sanford Pinsker, 5 (Nov 79), 80-89.
- Corpi, Lucha, "*Labor de Retazos*" ("Patchwork"), "*Romance Negro*" ("Dark Romance"), "Conciliacion" ("Conciliation"), "*Segundo Dos de Noviembre*" ("Day of the Dead II"), (translations by Catherine Rodríguez-Nieto) (P), 4 (May 78), 41-53.
- Cox, Martha Heasley, "The Conclusion of *The Grapes of Wrath*: Steinbeck's Conception and Execution," 1 (Nov 75), 73-81.
- , "In Search of John Steinbeck: His People and His Land," 1 (Nov 75), 41-60.
- , ed., "Remembering John Steinbeck," Webster F. Street, 1 (Nov 75), 109-27.
- , guest ed., Steinbeck Special Issue, 1 (Nov 75).
- Cramer, Richard S., "The Civil War Had Jokes, Too," 1 (May 75), 86-92.
- "Crossing the Delaware" (P), Jonathan Holden, 2 (Dec 76), 88.
- Crumb, R., [Drawings] (G), 3 (Nov 77), 10,12,14-15,17,19-20.
- Dallman, Elaine, "Finding a Home" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 69-73.
- "Danish da Capo" (P), John Ditsky, 5 (Nov 79), 58.
- "Dark So Early, Dark So Long" (P), Dabney Stuart, 2 (Dec 76), 128-29.
- Daugherty, Margaret, "Women in Euripides' Moral Quest," 4 (Feb 78), 72-81.
- "Daughter" (P), David Citino, 5 (May 79), 42.
- Davis, Philip E., "Mark Twain as Moral Philosopher," 2 (May 76), 83-92.
- De Araujo, Virginia, "Servant in Love," "Dowser" (P), 4 (Feb 78), 56-61.
- "Deep Meaning Comix: The Archetypal World of R. Crumb," Harold Schecter, 3 (Nov 77), 6-21.
- DeMott, Robert, "*John Steinbeck: The Errant Knight* by Nelson Valjean" (BR), 1 (Nov 75), 136-39.
- "De-Riddling Tillie Olsen's Writings," Selma Burkom and Margaret Williams, 2 (Feb 76), 65-83.
- DeVries, Carolyn, "Andrew P. Hill and the Big Basin, California's First State Park," 2 (Nov 76), 70-92.
- "Dialog: A Sestina" (P), Aaron Kramer, 2 (Dec 76), 133-34.
- "Dialogue" (P), Robert Greenwood, 3 (Feb 77), 58.
- "Diane Wakoski and the Language of Self," Catherine Gannon and Clayton Lein, 5 (May 79), 84-98.
- Dickey, R. P., "The Bell" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 77-78.
- Diel, Emmanuel, "Mark Twain's Failure: Sexual Women Characters," 5 (Feb 79), 46-59.
- "Diminishing" (P), John Ditsky, 5 (Nov 79), 58.
- Discover America: Poems 1976* (P), ed. Nils Peterson, John Galm, and Naomi Clark, 2 (Dec 76).

- Ditsky, John, "Ideometer," "I've Always Wanted to Go There," "Diminishing," "Danish da Capo," "Requital," "Second-Hand Rose" (P), 5 (Nov 79), 58-61.
- - - -, "The Wayward Bus: Love and Time in America," 1 (Nov 75), 89-101.
- Divine, Jay Dean, "Leaving the Old Dominion" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 90.
- Donahue, Francis, "Anatomy of Chicano Theater," 3 (Feb 77), 37-48.
- "don't invite me to los angeles, my family all died there" (P), Karla Margaret, 2 (Dec 76), 107-11.
- Dorosz, Leon C., Jr., "The Use of Amphetamines in Hyperkinesis: Possible Brain Mechanisms," 1 (Feb 75), 87-96.
- Douglas, Jack, "Beecham, Bufano, and the 50 Cent Symphony," 4 (Feb 78), 7-12.
- "Dowser" (P), Virginia De Araujo, 4 (Feb 78), 60-61.
- Drago, Edmund L., "The Black Press and Populism, 1890-1896," 1 (Feb 75), 97-103.
- "Dreaming the Oregon Trail" (P), John C. Witte, 2 (Dec 76), 116-17.
- "The Dream Realized" (P), Shirley Williams, 2 (Dec 76), 85-87.
- Dunbar, Maurice, [Adrian H. Goldstone] (G), 1 (Nov 75), 129.
- "During the collection at the First Lutheran Church" (P), Nils Peterson, 2 (Nov 76), 67-69.
- Dwyer, Frank, "Salem Ladies" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 20-21.
- "Earth Mother Giving Birth to Faith, Hope, and Charity" (G), Sandra MacDiarmid, 2 (Dec 76), 98.
- "Editorially Speaking: So They Don't Like Steinbeck," Bob Work, 1 (Nov 75), 102.
- Edwards, Bruce, "Pony Prayer Translation from Blind Lazarus to Christobal at Circle of Enemy/Always/Warrior, 1874-1974; 1976" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 44-49.
- Edwards, Rob, "Tillie Olsen" (G), 2 (Feb 76), 64.
- "Emily Dickinson and the Deerslayer: The Dilemma of the Woman Poet in America," Albert Gelpi, 3 (May 77), 80-95.
- "Encore" (P), Allen Planz, 2 (Dec 76), 78-79.
- Ericson, Jessie, "Steinbeck Country" (G), 1 (Nov 75), 40.
- "Ethnicity in Black American Fiction," Shelby Steele, 3 (Nov 77), 22-33.
- "The Ethnic Voice in American Poetry," Arnold Rampersad, 2 (Nov 76), 26-36.
- Everson, William, "The Regional Incentive: Reflections on the Power of Place in Contemporary Literature," 2 (Nov 76), 51-59.
- "Everything I Say about Hiroshima" (P), Brown Miller, 2 (Feb 76), 45-54.
- "Existence and Hamlet," James L. Wheeler, 4 (May 78), 23-31.
- Fatisha, "Jungle Plums" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 73-76.
- "The Feigned Flight at Hastings: Birth, Propagation, and Death of a Myth," John Marshall Carter, 4 (Feb 78), 95-106.
- Field, B. S., Jr., "For Gertrude Stein" (P), 4 (Nov 78), 65.
- "Finding a Home" (P), Elaine Dallman, 2 (Dec 76), 69-73.
- "The Flag Factory" (P), Clifton Merritt, 2 (Dec 76), 60-62.

- Flanders, Jane, "Memorial Day at the Lake" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 55.
- Fontenrose, Joseph, "*The Novels of John Steinbeck*, by Howard Levant" (BR), 1 (Nov 75), 139-41.
- "Forewords," Kathleen Fraser, Robert Hass, Josephine Miles, 2 (Dec 76), 10-11.
- "For Gertrude Stein" (P), B. S. Field, Jr., 4 (Nov 78), 65.
- Fraser, Kathleen, "Foreword," 2 (Dec 76), 10.
- "Fraud as Fact in Herman Melville's *Billy Budd*," Stanton Garner, 4 (May 78), 82-105.
- "Freedom Is Restraint: The Pedagogical Problem of Jane Austen," Edward M. White, 2 (Feb 76), 84-90.
- Freeman, Paul Joel, "Science and Human Affairs," 2 (Feb 76), 9-19.
- Freimark, Robert, "South Dakota" (G), 2 (Dec 76), 54.
- French, Warren, "The 'California Quality' of Steinbeck's Best Fiction," 1 (Nov 75), 9-19.
- "From Colonial to Revolutionary: The Modern American Woman Poet," Barbara Charlesworth Gelpi, 2 (Nov 76), 37-50.
- "A Frontier Agrarian Settlement: San José de Guadalupe, 1777-1850," Daniel J. Garr, 2 (Nov 76), 93-105.
- "Fun and Games" (F), Leslie Woolf Hedley, 2 (Feb 76), 55-63.
- Galm, John, ed., *Discover America: Poems 1976*, 2 (Dec 76).
- Gannon, Catherine, and Clayton Lein, "Diane Wakoski and the Language of Self," 5 (May 79), 84-98.
- Gardner, Tonita S., "Strawberries Romanoff" (F), 4 (May 78), 55-64.
- Garner, Stanton, "Fraud as Fact in Herman Melville's *Billy Budd*," 4 (May 78), 82-105.
- Garr, Daniel J., "A Frontier Agrarian Settlement: San José de Guadalupe, 1777-1850," 2 (Nov 76), 93-105.
- "Garrison" (P), Tom Wayman, 2 (Dec 76), 92-96.
- Gelpi, Albert, "Emily Dickinson and the Deerslayer: The Dilemma of the Woman Poet in America," 3 (May 77), 80-95.
- Gelpi, Barbara Charlesworth, "From Colonial to Revolutionary: The Modern American Woman Poet," 2 (Nov 76), 37-50.
- "The Generic Food Products: A Case Study of a 'Battle of Brands,'" William S. Penn, Jr., 5 (May 79), 99-105.
- "George Washington: Soliloquy, with Footnotes" (P), Adrien Stoutenberg, 2 (Dec 76), 25-27.
- Gerston, Larry N., "Political Reform, California Style," 2 (May 76), 31-45.
- , "Raising the Stakes in the 'Big Casino,'" 4 (Feb 78), 13-18.
- "Gertrude Atherton: The Limits of Feminism in the 1890's," Sybil Weir, 1 (Feb 75), 24-31.
- "The Gift of the Thirteenth Fairy" (P), Janet McCann, 4 (Nov 78), 66.
- Gilbert, Benjamin F., "California State Normal School: The First Years in San Jose," 2 (Nov 76), 106-18.

- Gildner, Gary, "Scraping the Front Porch" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 39-43.
- Gill, Aysha E., "The Misuse of Genetics in the Race-IQ Controversy," 4 (Nov 78), 23-43.
- Goldstone, Adrian F., "Book Collecting and Steinbeck," 1 (Nov 75), 129-35.
- Goodhart, Lynne Howard, "Joan Didion's *Play It as It Lays*: Alienation and Games of Chance" (BR), 3 (Feb 77), 63-68.
- Gordon, Robert C., "Publish or Perish: A Sermon," 3 (Feb 76), 41-44.
- , See Paul, Charles B., and Robert C. Gordon.
- "*The Grapes of Wrath* and Old Testament Skepticism," James D. Brasch, 3 (May 77), 16-27.
- Greb, Gordon, "Seven Million Words Later: An Interview with Bruce Bliven," 2 (May 76), 62-73.
- Greenwood, Robert, "Provenance," "Dialogue" (P), 3 (Feb 77), 58.
- , "Snake Eyes" (F), 4 (Nov 78), 44-63.
- Gustafson, W. F., "Intercollegiate Sports: The Amateur Ideal vs. the Commercial Enterprise," 2 (Feb 76), 20-31.
- Haeger, J. H., "Lord Byron *à la carte*," 1 (May 75), 44-49.
- Hall, Frances, "To Make an Ending" (F), 5 (May 79), 57-65.
- "Hamlet as Activist," Bernard Burkom, 5 (Nov 79), 68-79.
- Harkins, Craig, "Indian Queen" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 22-23.
- Hass, Robert, "Foreword," 2 (Dec 76), 11.
- Hedley, Leslie Woolf, "Around Here No One Cries Anymore" (F), 4 (Feb 78), 63-70.
- , "Fun and Games" (F), 2 (Feb 76), 55-63.
- "Her Bicentennial Salute" (P), Ellen Linscott Lieberman, 2 (Dec 76), 132-33.
- Hicks, Edward, "Peaceable Kingdom" (G), 2 (Dec 76), 12.
- Hinckley, Ted C., "The United States Army's First Flirtation with the Bicycle," 2 (Nov 76), 119-24.
- Hoagland, Everett, "Scrimshaw: All-American Voices" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 63-69.
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- Holden, Jonathan, "Crossing the Delaware" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 88.
- Holloway, Roberta, *Poems* (P), 5 (Dec 79).
- "The Honorary Apache" (F), H. H. Morris, 5 (Feb 79), 70-75.
- "How They Got There" (P), Janet McCann, 4 (Nov 78), 66.
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- "important persons" (P), Norman Nathan, 5 (Nov 79), 56.
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- "Inside Dope" (P), Neil Kaku, 2 (Dec 76), 127.

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- "Ionesco, the Solitary but Enduring Absurdist," Alfred Cismaru, 5 (May 79),
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- "Isolationism vs. Internationalism: Lord Beaverbrook's Press Campaign, 1931-
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- "I've Always Wanted to Go There" (P), John Ditsky, 5 (Nov 79), 60.
- "Jane Lathrop Stanford and the Domestication of Stanford University, 1893-
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- Jensen, Billie, [Photographs] (G), 2 (Feb 76), 32,39.
- "Joan Didion's *Play It as It Lays*: Alienation and Games of Chance" (BR),
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- "John Steinbeck and the American Patchwork Quilt," Jaclyn Caselli, 1 (Nov
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- "John Steinbeck and the Tragic Miracle of Consciousness," Richard Astro, 1
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- "John Steinbeck, Edith McGillcuddy, and *Tortilla Flat*: A Problem in
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- "John Steinbeck, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Edith McGillcuddy," Roy S.
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- "John Steinbeck's 'Mystical Outcrying': *To a God Unknown* and *The Log from
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- Jones, Richard A., "Canada and National Unity," 3 (Nov 79), 46-55.
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- Joyce, William, "The Lacrosse Game" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 130-32.
- , "Nail Driving" (P), 4 (Nov 78), 67.
- Juhasz, Suzanne, "'A Privilege so Awful': Emily Dickinson as Woman Poet," 2
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- , "Reply" (P), 5 (Feb 79), 65-68.
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- Klor de Alva, Jorge, "Christianity and the Aztecs," 5 (Nov 79), 6-21.
- Kramer, Aaron, "Dialog: A Sestina" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 133-34.
- Kremetz, Jill, "Georges Simenon" (G), 1 (May 75), 66.
- Kroll, Ernest, "Appalachia" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 91.
- Kulkarni, Vankatesh Srinivas, "Viscount" (F), 5 (Nov 79), 62-66.

- "*Labor de Retazos (Patchwork)*" (P), Luchi Corpi (trans. Catherine Rodríguez-Nieto), 4 (May 78), 42-45.
- "The Lacrosse Game" (P), William Joyce, 2 (Dec 76), 130-32.
- "Lament of the Chief's Son" (P), David Citino, 5 (May 79), 44.
- Lange, L. H., "A Little Survival Arithmetic," 5 (Feb 79), 98-105.
- "The Last Days of Tamsen Donner" (P), Ruth Whitman, 2 (Dec 76), 32-37.
- "The Last White Man" (P), Wendy Rose, 2 (Dec 76), 52.
- Laurie, Edward, "Muckraking the Educational System," 3 (Nov 77), 41-50.
- Lauter, Ken, "Repatriation" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 80-81.
- Lazard, Naomi, "Ordinance on Enrollment" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 80-81.
- Leach, Elsie, "Lolita and Little Nell," 3 (Feb 77), 70-78.
- "Leaving the Old Dominion" (P), Jay Dean Divine, 2 (Dec 76), 90.
- Lehner, Francis, "Old Man in a Cold Month," "Reprise: To a Mouse" (P), 1 (May 75), 51.
- Lein, Clayton, *See* Gannon, Catherine, and Clayton Lein.
- "Letter from the Colonies" (P), Dick Allen, 2 (Dec 76), 21-22.
- "Letters for January" (F), Marilyn M. Mantay, 3 (Feb 77), 49-53.
- "Letters for July" (F), Marilyn M. Mantay, 3 (May 77), 68-75.
- Levine, Miriam, "Silk" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 30-31.
- Lewandowska, Lou, "At the Writers' Conference," "To a Hurt Husband" (P), 2 (Nov 76), 63-65.
- "Lexington, Massachusetts—1775" (P), Michael Hogan, 2 (Dec 76), 23-25.
- Lieberman, Ellen Linscott, "Her Bicentennial Salute" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 132-33.
- Lifshin, Lyn, "Women in Early Plymouth" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 13-16.
- "Light in Newark" (P), Judith Richardson, 2 (Dec 76), 126-27.
- Lisca, Peter, "*Cannery Row and the Tao Teh Ching*," 1 (Nov 75), 21-27.
- "A Little Survival Arithmetic," L. H. Lange, 5 (Feb 79), 98-105.
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- "Lolita and Little Nell," Elsie Leach, 3 (Feb 77), 70-78.
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- "Love Songs to a Sixty-One Year Old" (P), Marla Burns, 2 (Dec 76), 101-3.
- Lowry, John, "Urban Shadows" (F), 3 (May 77), 76-79.
- MacDiarmid, Sandra, "Earth Mother Giving Birth to Faith, Hope, and Charity" (G), 2 (Dec 76), 98.
- McCann, Clark, "Whale Songs" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 139-42.
- McCann, Janet, "How They Got Here," "The Gift of the Thirteenth Fairy" (P), 4 (Nov 78), 66.
- McKevitt, Gerald, S.J., "The Beginning of Santa Clara University, 1851-1856," 3 (Feb 77), 95-107.
- McNair, Wesley, "Rufus Porter" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 38-39.
- McQuilken, Frank, "Journey: The Interior Landscape" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 112-16.
- "Mandala" (P), Leonard Nathan, 3 (Feb 77), 55.
- "Manifest Destiny" (P), Barbara Ann Clarke Mossberg, 2 (Dec 76), 49-51.

- Mantay, Marilyn M., "Letters for January" (F), 3 (Feb 77), 49-53.
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- Nathan, Norman, "important persons," "modern architecture" (P) 5 (Nov 79), 56-57.
- "A New Challenge" (F), Warren C. Miller, 3 (Feb 77), 59-62.
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- Nichols, James R., "Mateship and Isolation in the Modern Australian Novel," 5 (Feb 79), 86-97.
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- Pastan, Linda, "Bicentennial Winter" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 125.
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- Pearce, Roy Harvey, "Poetry, Revolution, and the Age of Paine," 2 (Nov 76), 6-25.
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- , and J. Edwin Saunders, "Commercial Bank Trading Areas," 3 (Nov 77), 91-105.
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- "Periods of Economic Transition: A Generation's Identity Crisis," Lawrence Brewster, 4 (May 78), 6-22.
- "Permian Geologic and Geographic Provinces, Western USA," Calvin H. Stevens, 3 (May 77), 28-37.
- Peterson, Nils, "But They Don't Eat Roses" (P), 1 (Feb 75), 46-49.
- , "During the collection at the First Lutheran Church" (P), 2 (Nov 76), 67-69.
- , "A Story" (P), 5 (May 79), 46-51.
- , ed., *Discover America: Poems 1976*, 2 (Dec 76).
- "Pidro" (P), Edwin Brush, 2 (Dec 76), 56.
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- Pinsker, Sanford, "A Conversation with Josephine Miles," 5 (Nov 79), 80-89.

- Planz, Allen, "Encore" (P), 2 (Dec 76), 78-79.
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- "Political Campaigns: Who Pays the Costs of Democracy?" Roy E. Young, 2 (Feb 76), 32-39.
- "The Political Odyssey of George D. Herron," Charles Keserich, 3 (Feb 77), 79-94.
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- "Repatriation" (P), Ken Lauter, 2 (Dec 76), 79-80.
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