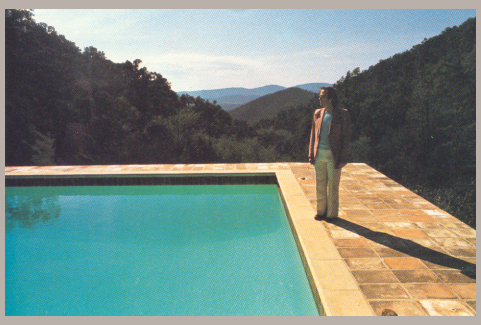
LITERATURE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS



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ON

LITERATURE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

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Experiential understanding – the possibilities and limits of literature in education for the health care professions

AINO-MAIJA LAHTINEN (*)

INTRODUCTION

Through many years' experience as a practicing physiotherapist and as a physiotherapy teacher, I became more and more concerned with how to get students to become interested in the inner life and subjectivity of their patients and in exploring themselves. Although it is easy to teach human bodily functions and causes of disabilities, it is much more difficult to develop an understanding of patient's feelings and to listen properly for the meanings patients give to various life events.

Human interaction in the field of health care is so complex that in educating professionals, the function of abstract theoretical knowledge is limited. In order to understand human beings, students have to learn to understand not only that which is relatively general, but also that which is deviant and ambiguous, to learn to use their impressions, hunches, and feelings (Birgerstam, 2000). However, as the one Finnish psychoanalyst argues, we cannot force ourselves or other persons to understand, but we may try to create the conditions under which it can happen. The only knowledge that helps us to understand ourselves and others we gain through personal experiences (in the form of the first person) Ikonen, 2000a, 99).

I intend to formulate a theoretical basis for literature curricula, which aims at developing human understanding by integrating literature research into theories of learning and teaching. I will explore in detail the circumstances in which we can exploit the potential of literary texts. I will also suggest how to approach literature in teaching in order to give students opportunity to have experiences, which they can explore and thus, better understand human condition and themselves.

Literature for me refers to the aesthetically composed narrative fiction such as short stories and novels. I'm aware that many theorists question the separation of literature and nonliterature,

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but for my purpose we must admit that there are qualitative differences between texts. Including literature in health care and medical education has been justified in many ways. Most often, the literary works included in curricula are texts that deal with patients' illness-experiences or the work of medical professionals. Instead of stressing only the subject, we can argue that the potential for learning is in the literary form, in the narrative structure or discourse. Although the form may attract the reader, it may also have the power to repel, especially if it is alien to the reader (Ahlzen, 2002).

First, I will pay attention to modes of narration and how these modes may contribute to the reader's perceptions and feelings. I will try to answer the question as to what makes certain works valuable in teaching human understanding.

WHAT TO READ AND WHY?

In teaching, it is general to consider issues instrumentally, and we can see this approach in attempts to read works that deal with medical issues. Although professional topics are maybe useful to motivate students, concentrating on medical related texts may also have some disadvantages. Medical issues easily direct students to deal with texts analytically and to strive for "institutional" interpretation. If we want to emphasize students' subjective and experiential understanding, non-professional topics are more suitable.

I recommend good multifaceted literature, which has enough complexity in its structure to give the reader the opportunity to experience many voices and perspectives. In contrast to formula stories that tend to present shallow, stereotyped characters and social situations, good literature illustrates psychic dramas, motivations and consequences of human actions, and conflicts as well as ways of resolving them.

As Dorrit Cohn argues in her *Distinction of Fiction*, in a fictional text, especially in the case of third-person novel, the narrators have an unnatural cognitive power to penetrate the minds of their protagonists and to look at the world that surrounds them through their eyes (Cohn, 1999, 42). Although Cohn intends to create criteria for the definition of fiction, we can use her arguments to illustrate the uniqueness of narrative fiction in getting the reader to take the place of a fictive character. Cohn refers to Tolstoi's *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, which is often recommended to doctors as an extreme example of fiction. She says, «no instant of life highlights more dramatically than death and dying the difference in kind between biography and fiction, between the biographer's constraint and the novelist's freedom. Fiction can represent an experience that cannot be conveyed by "natural" discourse in *any* manner or form» (Cohn, 1999, 22). More importantly, in the case of Ivan Ilych, Tolstoi creates for the reader an effect of presence. The reader participates in the character's experience of the event as the character experiences it (Gustafson, 1986, quoted Hustis, 2000).

On the narrative level, fiction has a vast range of means through which it depicts the fictional world. These narrative means complicate the reader's perception and allow the reader himself to feel various emotions as well as experience intersubjective relations. In fiction, it is possible to show the perceptions of a fictional character on many levels so that one character perceives that another character perceives and so on. In that way, characters make hypotheses about the ways others perceive the fictional world (Tammi, 1992, 30). Fictive characters do not necessarily directly examine themselves, but do so through other characters' points of view, and it follows that the expression which seems to be the most private may always include, as Mikhail Bakhtin says, «a glance at another human being». The novel is able to depict a repetitive event in life – two human minds trying to reach each other and the associated complex patterns of communication (Tammi, 1992, 64-69).

In her book *The Emphatic Reader*, Bouson reports an interesting study of the narcissistic characters in some modern texts by applying Heinz Kohut's theory of self-psychology. Although she

does not mainly focus on narration, she sees the ways characters are depicted as a primary means to manipulate the reader (Bouson, 1989, 166). Her close reading of Kafka's *Metamorphosis* shows how the narrative means Kafka uses force the reader to pay attention both to Gregor's inner life and to act as an objective witness of his anguish. Due to the shifting perspectives, the reader has to access Gregor's inner world and point of view, but also has the opportunity to distance from it (Bouson, 1989, 52). The text also shows that in human interaction, we constantly make suggestions and interpretations about another person's interpretations and attitudes toward us.

Dialogue is another narrative mode in which the perspective of the listeners constantly regulates its formation. The speaker not only anticipates the other character's perspective or potential reaction, but also is able to construct such alternative stories of reality as the other person would present them (Tammi, 1992, 112). According to Bakhtin, the fact that the narrator is able to assume the perspective of another person is a standard feature of modern narration. On the other hand, this seems to be a common feature in ordinary life. When speaking to a child, we instinctively assume a new perspective. And we need the same ability daily in more complex communication situations (Tammi, 1992, 128-129).

My next example is from French literature. The role of the dialogue is prominent in Nathalie Sarraute's novels. Especially her *Enfance* (1983) is written entirely in dialogue form. According to Emer O´Beirne, Sarraute questions the nature of the self, especially in its relation to others, and the kind of narration which can illustrate it. She focuses on the level of lived experience, and instinctive reactions to other individuals. For her, one of the essential features of human behavior is tropism (O'Beirne, 1999, 1-5). Tropism is «undeterminable, very fast movements on the borders of our consciousness, the sources of our gesture, speech, expressions, and emotions, causing the dramas beneath the surface of the mind, disappearing in the most banal conversations and ordinary actions» (Sarraute, 1957/1968, 6).

In her novels, Sarraute gives characters their own voices, not only to express themselves aloud, but also to make perceptible for the reader the emotions and sensations, the "sub-conversation" (sous-conversaation) which underlies what they say to others and others to them. There is a strong sense in Sarraute that human relationships have a great deal in common with the interaction with a work of art, especially perhaps (given its linguistic nature) with a literary work (O'Beirne, 1999, 142).

HOW TO APPROACH NARRATIVE FICTION IN TEACHING?

The ethos of the educational institution strongly shapes students' beliefs about valid knowledge and competency. Students may have learnt to work in an instrumental fashion and to find "right answers". In the beginning of the course, it is important to make students aware of the special way of knowing that literature provides in contrast to theoretical texts, and the conditions in which literature has the potential to broaden one's emotional experiences and increase self-knowledge.

As Suzanne Langer argues in her *Feeling and Form*, «the entire qualification one must have for understanding art is responsiveness. That is primarily a natural gift, related to creative talent, yet not the same thing. Like talent, where it exists in any measure it may be heightened by experience or reduced by adverse agencies. Since it is intuitive, it cannot be taught. But the free exercise of artistic intuition often depends on clearing the mind of intellectual prejudices and false conceptions that inhibit people's natural responsiveness.» (Langer, 1953, 396)

Within the context of teaching, from this idea it follows that we need to help students to assume an aesthetic stance towards reading as Louise Rosenblatt suggested decades ago (Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978). In aesthetic reading, the reader focuses on the experience: the thoughts, feelings, images, and associations evoked. One empirical study, for example, has shown that if the teachers intend to offer unique experiences through which students can live, find pleasure, and reach

understanding about themselves and the world, the aesthetic stance needs to be encouraged (Many, 1994, 664). Thus, students are not asked to find out what they have learnt through reading or to interpret the text through theoretical concepts or within a certain theoretical framework. Instead, students must be encouraged simply to get deeply involved in reading.

Theoretical orientation easily causes externalization. In dealing with our experiences, we have ideas and feelings outside ourselves and keep them distant and objectify them. We may, according to Ikonen, use a theory – psychological or other – as an intellectual tool for controlling or adjusting our state of feeling when something is touching us strongly, whether it is an actual event or literature or film. Through theory things then become set in to a mold, and will become closed (Ikonen, 2000b, 136). As Isca Salzberger-Wittenberg argues, in teaching a body of theory, it would be purely intellectual acquisition likely to convince us that we know something about the mind when all we have is a tool for categorizing people. This attitude is dangerous and a far cry from understanding based on empathy (Salzberger-Wittenberg, 1999, 27).

The literature course aims at the subjective experience, which occurs when we look within ourselves for meanings and understanding, when we bring new experiences and ideas closer to ourselves in ways that let us "see" them from the inside. Here, we gain a participant's perspective on how they look, feel, taste and relate to the ideas and feelings of other participants. We come to understand as we internalize along with the storyteller (Langer, 1995, 6). In dealing with literary experiences, it is extremely important that students have a lot of time for free discussion. They ought to be aware that one may understand literature in many ways and that there is no absolute truth, but rather many individual interpretations. The teacher aims at creating "an experience-near context" for the students, to use the term presented in psychoanalytical literature, in which they may explore their experiences (Cohler & Galazer-Levy, 1992, 43).

To conclude, I refer again to Salzberger-Wittenberg, who argues that «if we are to understand other human beings, we must start from a state of not knowing, an interest in finding out by observing, listening, and being receptive to the communications conveyed by others. We will try to rid ourselves of preconceptions whether they are theories of human behavior or others and attempt to ignore what we have learned about an individual through hearsay. All such preconceptions are likely to make us blind and deaf to what we can actually discover on the basis of our own experience. If we are receptive and open-minded, we might also find ourselves able to be curious about the nature of the feelings evoked in us and what they tell us about what is going on in relationships» (Salzberger-Wittenberg, 1999, 58).

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[1] I have translated the titles of the works only available in Finnish into the English.

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Proceedings of the 20th International Conference on Literature and Psychoanalysis: 9-18

(good) images + (some) psychology (items) = (good) advertising?

ANA VIALE MOUTINHO (*)

I worked in a Communication Department in a private university in Portugal and one of my tasks was to analyze advertisements and plan the advertising campaign. Once, I was looking at some advertisements and the cleaning lady entered my office. I asked her opinion about those advertisements and she said that she liked some of them. I told her that some of the ads that she liked had works of Art. We are talking about a person that hardly knows how to read and does not go to museums. I explained to her that not all works of art are difficult to like or to interpret and ordinary people could enjoy some of them, as she did with the advertisements. After that time, we started to talk about Art and she began to think about going to a museum to see "what it is like". She went to a museum and, as happened with the ads, she liked some of the works. I think that Portuguese museums won another patron.

I told you this story, because I am trying to show you how advertising can help to "educate" people and bring to them some "big C" culture, so they can have access to the formal and original one, and not stay attached to "little c" culture, that is the hearthstone one.

Before I get to where I intend to, I need to give you some concepts and definitions. The first concept is "mass" (Moutinho): mass is an ensemble of people coming from heterogeneous ranks that, in spite of not knowing each other, are considered homogeneous while consumer of a product or service.

KITSCH

These are some things that I am going to focus on when I talk about kitsch: historical approach, definition and my typology on the concepts that I researched. Matei Calinescu (234) argues that the term kitsch has several origins and definitions. It can derive from the English word

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"sketch" when, in the second half of the 19th century, the Anglo-Americans that wanted to buy a painting in Munich for a low price asked for a "sketch" and the German didn't quite understand what they wanted and called it "kitsch". For the same author (234), kitsch can also come from the German verb "kitschen", that means to collect rubbish from the street, or to forge old furniture into new one and the opposite; or it can come from "verkitschen", that means to make something cheap (Calinescu 234).

In spite of its several origins, kitsch always has a negative connotation imputed. In Europe, a kitsch object can be an Art substitute made for a lazy public that want to buy "Art", but doesn't want to understand its cultural values (Calinescu 227). In fact, Gillo Dorfles (140-141) says that kitsch is like a mass culture product. According to Umberto Eco (94), kitsch can also be a work of Art reproduced technically (Eco 94) in posters, bookmarks, embossed works, or junk Art from "trashy" things to trinkets, clothes, shoes, places, "souvenirs", or music (Baudrillard 110). Finally, Bruno Lussato and Gérald Messadié (115) write that kitsch can be the bad taste considered as a value.

After doing research about the various kinds of kitsch, I ended up with a typology that divides the concept in four aspects. The first one is tacky kitsch and is the most common concept that we have of it. We associate and identify kitsch easily this way, and everything that we find that has nothing to do with the "good taste" of a certain period of time, is considered kitsch. The second typology is objective kitsch, which does not need an interpretation. Tomas Kulka (31) says that kitsch should speak a common language that can be understood by everybody, because it cannot afford to be confusing. For the same author, the artist that chooses kitsch should be as objective as possible, originate just one interpretation so there cannot be ambiguities or concealed meanings, because «(...) a kitsch picture of a nude refers to a nude» (110). The third typology is kitsch that sells, those things that are too popular and that sell very well. According to the previous item, kitsch is objective, easily identifiable and preferred by the consumer majority. We just need to observe what is for sale or is in our friends' house to be able to conclude that cheap imitations of the works of Art have several colors such as Rodin's *Thinker*, or *Venus of Milo* that sometimes can be found with both arms and hands, or even Da Vinci's *Last Supper* that can show up in some silver paintings relief, and so on. Kulka (82) asserts that the market for these aberrations or, in other words, for the "assault" to the original works of Art, was created, as I have already explained, by the tourists. They wanted to buy souvenirs, and ended up taking something completely different from the original that was going to lead them into a misconception aesthetic culture. Finally, the fourth typology is kitsch that "camouflages" Art objects like some advertisements that we are going to examine. This way, according to José Maranhão (87), kitsch stimulates the sentimental effects, but also tends to suggest the idea that the reader is improving a privileged aesthetic experience, because Hermann Broch (Moles 10) says that «[t]here is always a drop of Kitsch in every work of Art».

I believe that these four points are interconnected, because they have as their main idea what is common to the majority of people: common taste, some lack of aesthetic sense that end up buying the same kind of things: the "tacky", the minor style, or, in just one word, the kitsch.

ADVERTISING

Advertising is a creative form of emitting commercial information to attract possible buyers, using the available means and supports. Advertising has three ingredients that identify it and differentiates it from the other concepts: a) its informative capacity (it gives people information about certain products or services, its characteristics and the way you can buy them); b) its persuasive force (it is always trying to lead the target public to buy the publicized product); and c) its commercial character. The main objective of advertising is not to inform, but to make you

dream, to give interest in products or brands (that usually they don't have) in order to make people buy them. Other of advertising's goals are to let a product or service be known, its characteristics and ways of using it; to motivate the receptor and call his attention with arguments specially directed towards him; to emphasize the previous aspects in order to obtain a good impression on the advertised product or service.

AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire and Action) is the notion of the classical advertising principles that must be in every advertising campaign. According to it, advertising must call the attention to the product or service, promote its interest, make it known through the information provided provoking desire to lead the action to its acquisition. All this can be achieved by using the surprise effect that will catch the interest of the reader. In order to get this effect, we can use of the work of Art in one of three ways: an original (the complete work of Art or just part of it), a work of Art modified and adapted to what is being advertised, or a picture that remembers the original work of Art.

PSYCHOLOGY

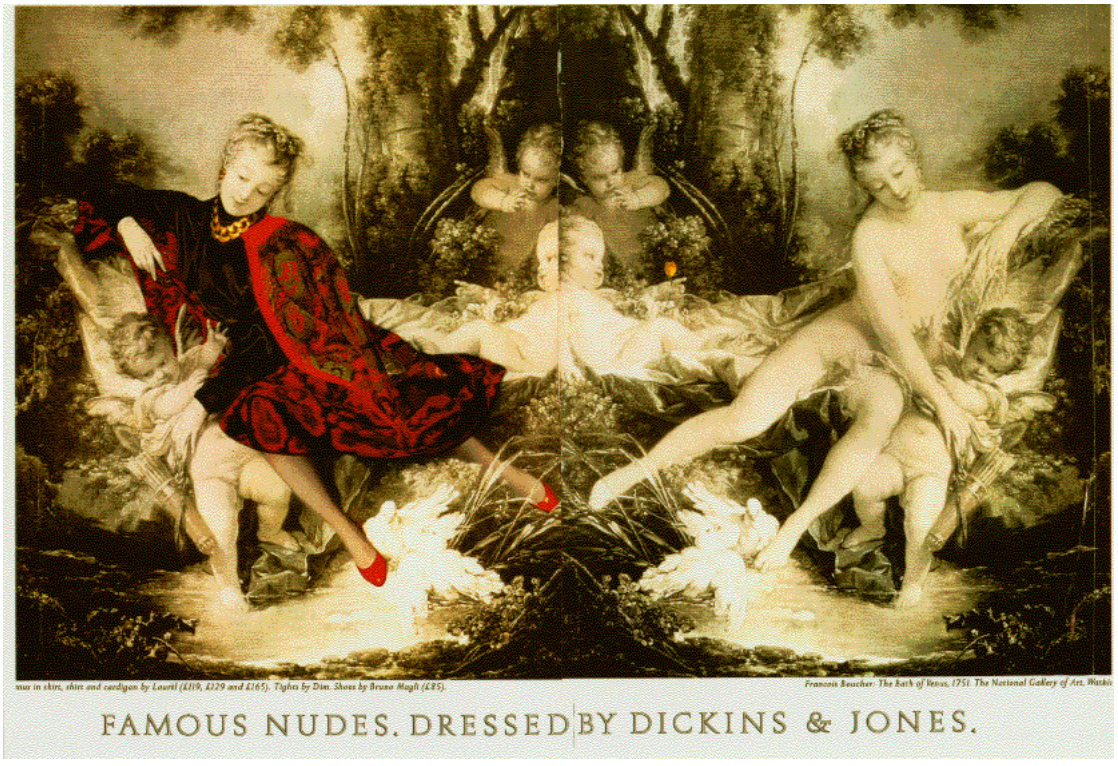
So, everything I said until here must be related to some work mechanisms. These mechanisms may be the dream (the product or service must complete the consumers' dreams after buying it), the motivation (something in the picture motivates the consumer to buy what is being advertised), the acceptance (the advertisement as a whole must be organized in order to be accepted by the majority of the consumers), must be clear and easily understood. If we are talking about works of Art, we must be aware of its choice, because it must create empathy between the advertisement and the future buyer, must seduce him in order buy the product or service. All this can be achieved if the above mechanisms are all brought into concord. Other factors such as age, income, and demography can influence the reader's attention to the advertisement. Probably, if the reader is 35 years old and is a middle class worker from a big city, is more likely that he or she pays attention to an advertisement that uses a work of Art, than a 65-year-old person, retired from working all his/her life as a farm worker.

Maslow's Theory of Motivation tells us that each one of us must climb a hierarchy of needs in order to fulfill his or her self achievement. Maslow defines five needs: physiological needs are the first and the basic ones, such as hunger, thirst and sex; safety needs come in second place and are related to house, employment, religion, science, cars, and clothes; the social needs are in the third place in the pyramid and include the need for love, affection, and acceptance; in fourth place are the esteem needs that are divided into the recognition of our own personal capacities, and the recognition by others of our functions and work; finally, the fifth are the self achievement needs in which the individual tries to be what he wants to be: «What humans can be, they must be: they must be true to their own nature!». After Maslow constructs his pyramid in the middle of the 20th century, society changed in many ways. Nowadays' needs have a different hierarchy, depending on the cultures, and advertisers must be aware of that.

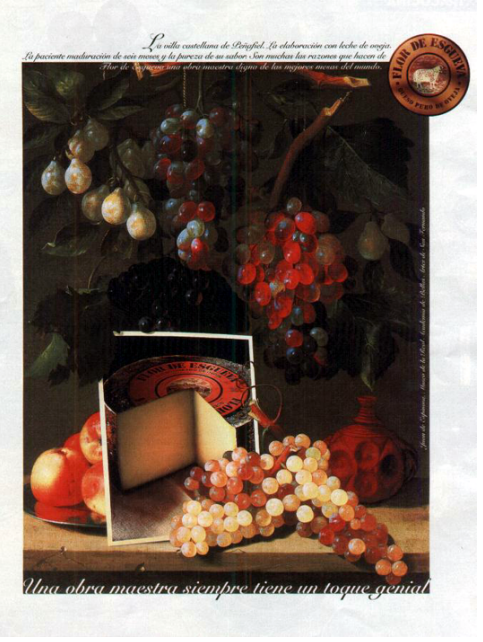
Paul Messaris (229) writes about the use of Art in advertising as a sign of high status that can be related to the fourth level of Maslow's pyramid, when he talks about the personal recognition. According to this author, the association between Art and status leads to the dream of achieving a higher way of living just by buying the product. Walker (58) explains that advertisers use the works of Art «as tokens of high culture, superlative skill, and supreme value». The advertised products get these status of high culture just by having some "big C" elements.

Now I am going to show you some examples to illustrate what I have been saying and to relate these three areas: Kitsch, Advertising and Psychology.

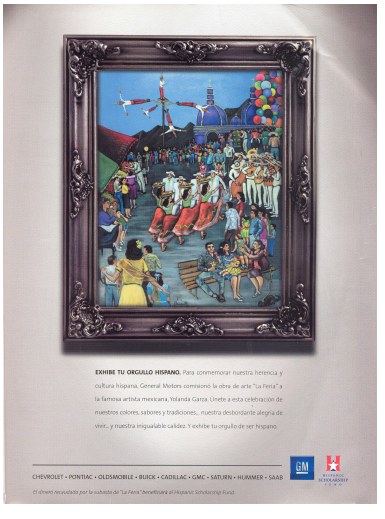
First, we have *Famous nudes dressed by Dickins & Jones*.



This advertisement is inspired in François Boucher's *Bath of Venus* and we can consider it as a tacky kitsch example, because of the way it compares the original work (also modified by a yellow rose) with the one that advertises the clothes from Dickins & Jones. The same picture can also be used to show the way an advertisement can call the reader's interest by the way it was modified and adapted to the company's needs: to promote clothes from Dickins & Jones! Finally, as clothes are something that we need to protect ourselves from the exterior, they can illustrate the second degree of Maslow's pyramid of the human needs. The second picture is an advertisement of the Flor de Esgueva, a sheep's milk cheese.

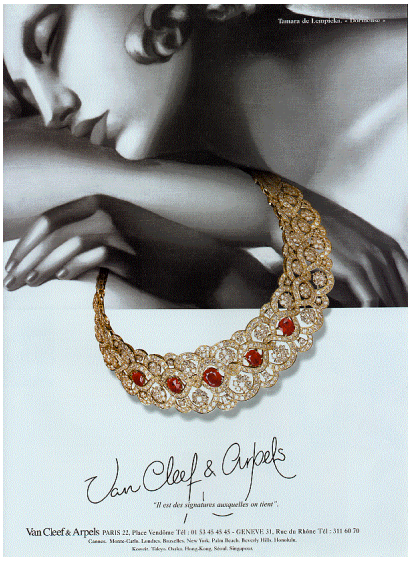


This advertisement can describe the objective kitsch, because you have a table with some grapes and a plate with Flor de Esgueva's cheese peeping out of the painting. You can immediately see that it is publicizing the cheese. The same advertisement also describes one of the three ingredients of the advertising: the capacity to inform the future consumer; and also the first degree of Maslow's pyramid of the physiological needs: food. The third image advertises the auction of a painting – *La Feria*, from the Mexican painter Yolanda Garza – whose proceeding money will benefit the Hispanic Scholarship Fund.



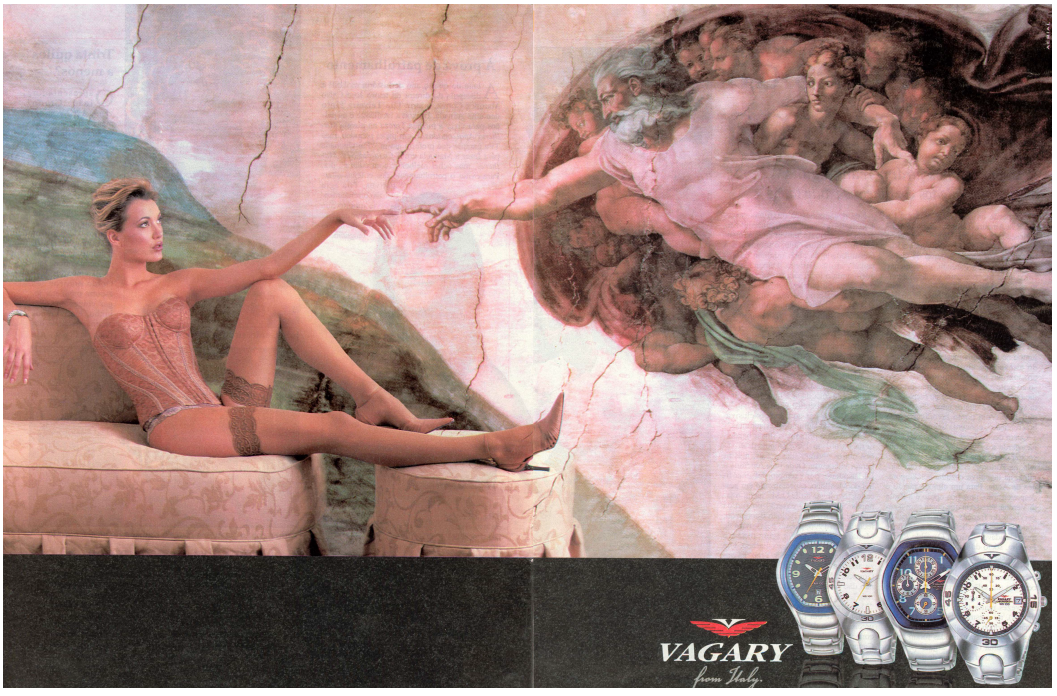
As happened with the previous advertisement, this one can also describe the objective kitsch, because you can see some Mexican cultural aspects in the painting that are designated in the text. Regarding advertising, this image illustrates the way an original painting can interest its reader. If we are talking about psychology it can also illustrate the fourth degree in Maslow's pyramid – the esteem needs of being Mexican and of supporting the community. The fourth advertisement is from *Meio* (medium), a Brazilian newspaper that uses one of the most well-known paintings, a fresco in this case, from Leonardo Da Vinci's *Last Supper*.

This image will shows us the kitsch that sells as well as the commercial character of the advertising, because the change in the painting was in order to show that the copies were very well distributed among some of the most prestigious people in the world! Last, but not the least, this advertisement also illustrates the esteem needs in Maslow's pyramid that is being well informed in order to keep the good work and develop good relationships. The fifth picture is from Van Cleef & Arpels, and is a "camouflaged" kitsch from Tamara de Lempicka's *Dormeuse*.

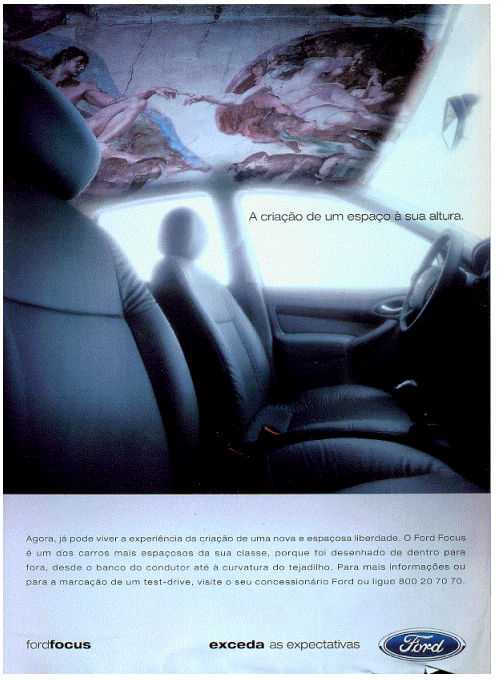


Because we can see the contrast between a black and white painting and a color picture of the advertised product, it calls our attention to the advertisement from the beginning. On the other way, the same image will illustrate the esteem of the third degree of Maslow's pyramid that are the social needs – by showing this piece of jewelry, you might be accepted by your peers or by the ones that belong to a higher class standard (where you wish to belong to). The sixth advertisement remembers a colorful Andy Warhol's serigraphy, so it will catch our interest to look at it; and also because it is so well-known we can consider it as a kitsch advertisement that sells.

We need to communicate with each other, and the Telefonos Publicos ETB will allow that in the first degree in Maslow's pyramid – to communicate is like a basic need nowadays. The seventh advertisement is from the Vagary watches and uses Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*.



Once more, it is a kitsch that "camouflages" Art. Regarding AIDA's interest characteristic, this picture was modified and adapted to the advertiser's needs to sell the watches, although at first sight you might think that they are advertising lingerie. Talking about needs, it also describes the social needs of Maslow's pyramid, as well as the self achievement. This means that if you buy one of Vagary's watches, you will be accepted by those who have a high standard of living. The eighth advertisement, and the last one, is from Ford and has the previous original painting, Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*, and is also a kitsch that "camouflages" Art, but it is more persuasive in the advertising "ingredients". Finally, this advertisement shows the need of safety in Maslow's pyramid.



CONCLUSION

We know that advertising has been getting a bigger importance throughout the years, embracing a universe of readers from various ages, sexes, beliefs, and social classes. Because of that, advertising has responsibilities, because it communicates, and one of them can be the education of the alleged "common man", as we have been seeing until now.

Some authors say that one of the functions of Art is to create new attitudes, habits or beliefs in the mass society, and advertising could be the way of getting that. Advertising works with the aesthetic side, or has to do with visual delight through an advertising aesthetic that values the product using photographs with dream sceneries, with people embellishing the picture, plus the graphic design, etc. Everything is put together, in order to seduce and to lead the consumer to buy the product or service advertised and this can also be an educational way to "teach" and to spread some "big C" culture. So, the more objective and obvious the example or the image is, as sometimes happens with the kitsch, the more interest it arouses and, consequently, more readers it gets. And… why not play with some psychology items to help with that?

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Psychoanalytic outcomes for Holocaust survivors: Two case studies

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Holocaust scholars do not always recognize the effects of both childhood and later life on survivors of wartime traumas. For example, in 1991 Lawrence Langer (1991, p. xi) wrote empathically about «the ruins of memory», arguing «that oral Holocaust testimonies are doomed on one level to remain disrupted narratives». Much of Langer's evidence is based on oral interviews collected at Yale University by the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, a project which began in 1982. These interviews, he notes, have not lead «to further chapters in the autobiography of the witnesses, they exhaust themselves in the telling» (ibid.). The people Langer had personally interviewed, as well as the ones whose videos he reviewed in the Yale archive, bear him out, but as Dominick LaCapra recently commented, Langer was largely «concerned with victims as victims, not as survivors or agents» (LaCapra, 2001, pp. 98-99).

Indeed the focus of most oral interviews and many memoirs has been on capturing information about the war itself. Moreover, for many who appear in the Yale videos, that interview marked a first attempt to recreate the buried and painful past. Not surprisingly after an extensive discussion of one's helplessness in the face of Nazi domination, few interviewees had the energy to say much about their more recent lives. When Langer extensively re-interviewed a couple, Mr. and Mrs. B, during a lunch break he found they could talk about their grandchild «with undisguised joy». Nonetheless, he concludes, «they are "also hostages to a humiliating and painful past that their happier future does little to curtail». «Moral formulas about learning from experience and growing through suffering», he continues, «disintegrate into meaningless fragments of rhetorical consolation» in the face of the rest of the interviews (Langer, 1991, p. xi). LaCapra, who criticizes Langer's emphasis on victimhood, like Langer himself also objects to what he calls «redemptive narratives» (LaCapra, 2001, pp. 98-99).

Still in the years since Langer's *Holocaust Testimonies* appeared, some memoirs have appeared that modify the assumption that most survivors suffer from a lifelong burden of what Langer called

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"anguished" or "humiliated" memory. Thanks partly to Langer's hard work and extensive publications, more Americans have developed some understanding of what survivors had experienced in their youth. As a result, those who in later life publish their life stories or talk to a variety of groups have often found receptive audiences. Of course, Holocaust survivors have not forgotten the pain and confusion of their youthful suffering. Nonetheless, they have learned to take pride in their ability to carve out new lives in a new country. Most married and reared children. In old age some have even found new roles to play. They have taken on the challenge of educating the next generation, as well as those older folk who grew up far from the horrors of World War II. Most appear to have relished their new importance. For some a positive response has had a healing effect.

Of course, not all survivors react the same way. In some instances youthful difficulties have led to repressed or distorted memories regarding events outside the camps themselves. It has taken nearly sixty years for some individuals to understand how their prewar lives have shaped their adult reactions to people and places. Others have still not come to terms with their childhood anger and may never do so. Two cases illustrate this point. Viennese-born Ruth Kluger and Gerda Lerner were both nurtured in prosperous but unhappy families. Both felt trapped by the demands of their immediate family and resentful of parental neglect. Their talented but troubled mothers were unable to see their daughters as anything but an extension of themselves. Despite these similarities the later emotional lives of these talented women have differed in important ways. According to the evidence of their recent memoirs, Kluger (2001) remains emotionally entangled with the memory of her difficult mother, whereas Lerner (2002) has gradually developed new affection and respect for her deceased parents. Age, luck, and psychoanalysis have all played important roles.

Kluger's early life split into four discrete units: Viennese childhood, the camps, postwar Germany, and America. Although her childhood ended when she was deported to Theresienstadt, imprisonment and slave labor, however, did not provide her worst experience. Instead she considers childhood and her early years in America to have been almost more painful than the horrors of war. Kluger's story reveals how damaging early childhood unhappiness can be when later experiences do not bring about psychic change. Born in 1931, she, unlike many female Holocaust memorists, recalls few happy memories of family life before the war. If young Ruth had been of a domestic temperament all might have been well. She was not, preferring books to hours in the kitchen. She was also a noticing and judging child, characteristics that were not calculated to endear her to her elders. For example, she observed that her extended family was not realistic about the Nazis. They worried more about the child's manners than the dangers of incarceration. To make matters worse her mother's treatment of her was mercurial and erratic. Kluger insists that her mother also suffered from paranoid thinking, but in retrospect her mother's irrational feelings were intensified by realistic worries. Moreover, as M. P. Bender (1997) has pointed out, during the stress of World War II, few parents had the psychic energy to meet the needs of their traumatized children. These parents, Bender reminds us, had already lived through the losses of World War I. The second war intensified the earlier misery. As a result, Bender adds, many parents and children who survived World War II continue to suffer from the long term effects of unresolved pain.

Most of Kluger's childhood memories center on herself and her relationships with elders. Growing up in Vienna as an only child, she avers, was not easy. Time has not softened her sense of outrage. Even when writing her memoir in later life, she still feels distressed by her extended family's antiquated belief in hierarchy. Women and children counted for little, especially rebellious little girls who spurned family dicta regarding proper behavior. This preference for boys still embitters her. After the war, she remarks, few family members have been interested in her stories. «Wars», she notes, «and hence the memories of wars, are owned by the male of the species» (Kluger, 2001, p. 18). As she insightfully reports, her intellect and new information have challenged some childhood memories, «but my childish resentments are more deeply ingrained where the mind doesn't reach» (p. 20). In this authoritarian, traditional Viennese family, women and their

stories still do not count for much, but in recent years Kluger has received a warm reception for her wartime narratives. Unfortunately, to some extent Kluger has remained trapped in her childhood emotions. She displays empathy for people of her generation and younger but still finds it hard to alter her recollections of the familial tyrants of her girlhood.

After Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia, Kluger's mother was understandably preoccupied about the fates of her son and second husband. Her first husband had regained custody of their son, Schorschi, and made the boy return to Czechoslovakia, Hitler's first target (Kluger, 2001, p. 28). Early in the war both father and son were deported to Theresienstadt. From there the boy was transported to Riga and shot. Not until many years after the war did Kluger learn of her brother' fate (2001, pp. 58, 79-80, & 83). To compound her mother's worries, in 1940 just after the war broke out in earnest, Kluger's father, a physician, was arrested for performing an illegal abortion – few Jews wanted to have babies in such turbulent times. His wife was forced to promise to pay the government a *Reichsfluchtsteuer*, what amounted to a bribe to allow him to leave Austria (Kluger, 2001, pp. 34-35). Unfortunately he made the mistake of settling in France instead of Italy where he first landed (Kluger, 2001, p. 39). From there he was deported to Lithuania and Estonia where he was killed. Not until publishing the German edition of this memoir, did Kluger learn exactly how her father had died (Kluger, 2001, p. 40). For years, she thought both her father and half-brother had died in Auschwitz, but lacked the definitive report necessary to come to terms with their loss. She laments, «Where there is no grave, we are condemned to go on mourning» (Kluger, 2001, p. 80). The grave does not have to be a plot of earth, she insists; definite information can be enough.

Gradually the Viennese Nazi laws separated Kluger from other children, increasing the young girl's isolation. Jewish children were thrown out of schools, refused entrance to movies, parks, and most public places. Cemeteries became the one place they could play. Kluger's mother, however, tried to confine her daughter, admonishing her not to join other children in their games (Kluger, 2001, p. 54). To make matters worse once in 1940 her mother urged her to violate the law by going to see the movie *Snow White*. The young girl sat next to a baker's daughter, who recognized her. After the film, the girl told her that if she ever came to the movies again, she would tell the police (Kluger, 2001, p. 46). None of her family members regarded this as an important threat. Lacking sympathy the little girl suffered alone. Compounding her insensitivity, her mother turned down the chance to send Ruth to safety on a *Kindertransport*, insisting that mothers and children belonged together (Kluger, 2001, p. 57). Young Ruth was not consulted.

In September 1942, Ruth and her mother were deported to Theresienstadt, the transport camp to hell (Kluger, 2001, p. 58). From its portals most of the prisoners were sent east to death camps. Curiously, Kluger's memories of the ghetto prison are ambivalent rather than completely unhappy. Like other children, she lived in a little house with other German-speaking youths. Proximity to other children taught her to be "a social animal", capable of getting along with age-mates (Kluger, 2001, p. 86). She made close friends with another girl named Hanna, perhaps the first friend in her life. Responsible adults in the community tried to help the children cope with the difficult situation. They attempted to educate the young, and at seventy Kluger still remembers the pleasure of her first lecture. Its subject was creation, the speaker, Rabbi Leo Baeck. Understandably, however, she resents a gentile German woman who years later told her authoritatively that «Theresienstadt wasn't all that bad» (Kluger, 2001, p. 73). Even-handed in her grievances, Kluger complains about the response of most Americans. They seem unable to understand that for her Theresienstadt was less horrible than her final isolated days in Vienna. Both kinds of listeners fall short in her opinion. Neither, she insists, has listened empathically to the tale she has to tell.

Despite the positive side of life in what the Germans called a ghetto, Kluger has other unpleasant memories of being endlessly crowded in what she calls «a mudhole, a cesspool, a sty» (2001, p. 87). As a result whenever she meets someone who was also deported there, she rebuffs any friendly overtures. The good that emerged in Theresienstadt, she concludes, was created by the Jews with no help from the Germans (Kluger, 2001, p. 86). As for the Virgilian notion of knowledge

won through suffering, «Auschwitz was no instructional institution», she declares bitterly on another occasion. «Absolutely nothing good came out of the concentration camps.» The camps, she insists, provided no theatrical catharsis (2001, p. 65).

Like many others, Kluger and her mother were deported to Auschwitz, but their stay was mercifully short. A miraculous intervention saved the young girl's life. At first the deportees from Theresienstadt were kept together in a family camp in Birkenau, just as Gypsy families were. Each group met the same fate: the gypsies and the Theresienstadt family camp members were both gassed in 1944 (Rosenberg, p. 111, Kluger, p. 112). Luckily for Kluger before the annihilation of her group, a selection took place. Most selections in Birkenau determined who were sick and weak enough to be exterminated immediately. This time, however, the SS chose the young and strong to be sent to a work camp. Not too surprisingly, when Kluger told the SS officer she was twelve, he ordered her to stay behind. Normally the selection was final with no appeal to a higher court. But both Kluger and her mother believed that sufficient chaos might allow the girl to sneak back into another line to try her luck again. Her mother reassured her daughter that they would stay together come what may, but urged young Ruth to tell the officer that she was fifteen. Kluger had no intention of lying on such a grand scale, but she joined the other line. When she came toward the desk, a young clerk, another prisoner, came forward to ask her age. She advised Ruth to say she was fifteen, even though no reasonable person would believe such a claim. When the officer commented on the child's small size, the clerk pointed out that she was strong. Feeling in an expansive mood the officer agreed, and Ruth was allowed to join her mother. Considering that the clerk's gesture of solidarity saved the young girl's life, not surprisingly her memories of female guards and authority figures in the camps are more positive than many another survivor.

At this point Kluger tells a positive story about her mother but adds a barb at the end. In Birkenau a young orphan girl named Susi attached herself to her mother, and her mother chose to treat Susi as if she were family (Kluger, 2001, pp. 122-23). Recollections of such informal adoptions occurred occasionally in other memoirs – notably Betty Schimmel, *To See You Again* (1999) – but in that instance Schimmel described her mother's behavior with genuine gratitude. Kluger, however, insists that this newly constituted family was not always happy. At various points in their later lives, Kluger reports, her paranoid mother rejected Susi, although they were eventually reconciled at the end of her mother's life (2001, pp. 123-124). Yet, during the war, she acknowledges, her mother's paranoia and quick actions generally paid off. The Nazis evacuated their work camp on one of their infamous death marches, but on the second night Ruth, her mother, and Susi ran away from the chaotic group. Others sent on similar marches, such as Gerda Weissmann Klein, reported having no opportunity to escape (Klein, 1957, 1995). Most SS guards shot anyone who dropped by the wayside or who attempted to escape.

During the relatively short period before the end of the war, Kluger's mother and Susi both proved to be resourceful in dealing with the prejudiced German population. Susi talked a village mayor into giving them ration cards, but shortly thereafter they had to flee for their lives. Children had quizzed young Ruth about her missing father and guessed correctly that she was Jewish. Fortunately they soon found less unpleasant companions. At one point a policeman arrested them for having no identity papers, but Klüger's mother talked such elegant German that out of respect he let them go. She wrote him a note to give the Allies, asserting that he had released them as a gesture of good will. To avoid more trouble, the mother then requested identification papers from a Protestant minister, who willingly obliged. As a result, most of the time the three lived among gentiles, unmolested. Yet when the war ended Americans turned out not to be particularly welcoming. The first American soldier they met refused even to listen to their story. Unlike Gerda Klein, whose husband-to-be was one of her liberators, no such happy ending occurred.

In many ways Kluger's first encounter with an American was prophetic. America presented more obstacles than postwar Germany. Unlike Gerda Klein (Klein, 2000), who hated living in Germany and expended much energy trying to get a transit visa to leave, Kluger had a relatively

happy two years there once the war was over. She was allowed to return to school and later attended classes in a Roman Catholic seminary for a more advanced education. America was not so accommodating. Her ambitious but insecure German American relatives were critical of Kluger's manners. Moreover the impoverished young girl had become enough of a German that she found making American friends a difficult chore. In many ways her reactions to America mirrored those of Eva Hoffman (1989), who left communist Poland for Canada in the 1950s. Both girls were exceptionally intelligent, observant, and critical. Neither made an easy companion. Three months after arriving in the United States, Kluger entered Hunter College. At sixteen she must have been much younger than other college students. Shortly thereafter she became depressed from a combination of forces, the effort to obtain an education in a foreign language and the misery of acute culture shock.

Recognizing her daughter's misery, Kluger's mother sent her to a psychiatrist, a Viennese friend of her husband. Not too surprisingly, the therapy turned out to be a disaster. Eva Hoffman also went into therapy. Unlike Kluger she chose to do so and was considerably older. Unfortunately sixteen-year-old Kluger assumed that she had the right to complain about her mother, whose intrusive behavior she found oppressive. The doctor, she recalls, sided with the mother. He lectured young Ruth on her sins – her critical nature and her untidiness. He warned the young woman that she would never make friends, thereby undermining her confidence. Feeling betrayed by the doctor, Kluger lost an opportunity to reassess her early life, thereby better understanding her troubled mother and herself. Instead she refused further treatment. She was lucky enough to spend a summer at the University of Vermont, where she met three young women who became her friends for life.

The sad part is that skillful therapy at a later point might well have been helpful. The tone of Kluger's narrative at many points suggests an unacknowledged battle with depression. For example, when discussing her miraculous escape from death at Birkenau, Kluger refuses to rejoice even for a moment. Instead she feels compelled to «warn the reader not to invest in optimism vouchers and not to give credit, much less take credit, for the happy end of my childhood's odyssey – if indeed simple survival can be called a happy end» (2001, p. 91). Understandably a pessimist at heart – she had endured more losses at a young age than most people – Kluger constructed a postwar life in which she has depended upon friends, but only those who can withstand her emotional demands. Unlike Anzia Yezierska the Polish-American novelist, some friends proved staunch allies. Moreover Kluger took advantage of educational opportunities in America. After graduating from Hunter College, she began graduate school in California. Apparently she left without a degree in order to marry an American war hero who had completed his Ph.D. in history. The couple had two sons, but the marriage foundered in a few years. Once again Kluger's mother played an important role. When the first son was born, her mother attempted suicide, hardly the typical reaction of a new grandmother. Ruth's uncle denounced his niece for leaving her mother to his tender mercies. Furious at the refusal of family members to support her maternal role, Kluger began to scream (2001, pp. 201-202). Soon thereafter her husband concluded that his wife was not the person he had taken her for. A divorce followed.

Still Kluger had other resources, and her middle age turned out to be less miserable than her youth. She returned to graduate school in German literature and established a successful career as a professor, thereby supporting her two sons. She continued to assist her mother despite the older woman's sometimes irrational behavior. Luckily, advanced old age brought her mother peace in her late nineties. What struck me as remarkable was the healing role that Kluger's granddaughter played in reconciling the two difficult women. Unlike many sufferers from dementia, returning to childhood erased most of the pain of her mother's adult life. Retreating in her mind to the Czech village of her girlhood, the great-grandmother forgot her four marriages and the Nazis. She believed her daughter Ruth to be the beloved sister of her early days, not the Americanized aunt who years before had given young Ruth and her mother so much grief. Finally in her late nineties, the mother was able to enjoy the child, whose father's birth had precipitated a suicide attempt. The mother-

daughter disputes evaporated, and the four-year-old great-grandchild became a beloved playmate, "*ein Wunderkind!*" (Kluger, 2001, p. 213). As Kluger so movingly put it in the very last paragraph, the two «met in a present that miraculously stood still for them, time frozen in space and space made human. Perhaps redeemed» (2001, p. 214). Few lose their minds in such a benign fashion, but the old woman had suffered enough. Her last days brought her peace of mind and playful moments with her beloved great-grandchild.

Unfortunately even Kluger's recollections of transcendence have turned out to be ephemeral. In January 2003, she came to Gainesville to give a reading from her memoir. After a compelling performance the speaker revealed a less pleasant side. During the question period a woman in the audience happily announced that she had gone to nursing school with Kluger's adopted sister, Susi. Kluger acknowledged the relationship, reporting that Susi had told her that a friend of hers would probably be present at the reading. Then she paused and added with more honesty than tact that she and Susi had never had much in common. Thoroughly chastened the woman subsided. Repeated comments in the memoir and her behavior at the reading reveal an important pattern in Kluger's life. She analyzes her own behavior and relationships with impressive but pitiless honesty, but intellectual acuity has not brought her even a modicum of emotional peace.

Despite the similarities of upbringing, Gerda Lerner's postwar life has been happier than Kluger's. Moreover her analysis of the past differs from Ruth Kluger's interpretations. Of course, Lerner had the benefit of age on her side. She was old enough to escape from Vienna and arrive in the United States as an impoverished refugee. Kluger was eight when the war began and sixteen when she arrived in the United States. Her youth led to an uncomfortable maternal dependence in the camps and afterwards. According to Professor Peter Erspamer (2001), Kluger's hostility to her mother may have stemmed from fear of losing her last remaining parent. «Ruth», he adds, «sees her mother not as a parent figure, but as a peer with whom she is a ruthless competitor.» In contrast, Lerner was nearly nineteen when she left Austria for the United States and much better equipped than the younger woman to establish an independent life. Nonetheless it took nearly sixty years before Lerner began to reexamine and write about her life in a new way.

Born in 1920 eleven years before Kluger, Gerda Lerner masterminded her escape to America in April 1939, shortly before her nineteenth birthday. She followed her fiancé Bobby Jerusalem, a medical student, who had left for America somewhat earlier. Despite poverty and a divorce from her first husband, Lerner remarried happily, reared two children, and managed successfully until her husband died at sixty. That crisis convinced her that she needed psychiatric assistance to make sense of her whole life. The analysis must have been very helpful. One sign of its efficacy is the difference between the truncated and sometimes hostile portrait she painted of her parents in *A Death of One's Own* (1978), her reflections on her husband's early death, and the more nuanced and compassionate portrait she paints twenty-four years later in her recent memoir, *Fireweed* (2002)[1].

In contrast to *Fireweed* (2002), *A Death of One's Own* contains only fragments of Gerda Lerner's early days. After all, the stated purpose of the earlier memoir was to «record the death of a man, a fine and dearly loved man, and its meaning to those near him». Writing about the horror of her husband Carl's eighteen-month battle with a malignant brain tumor taught her that «no one knows the experience of the dying». Instead she writes about her «experience with death, with the

[1] In *Death*, 1978, p. 90, Lerner mentions having «professional help and psychiatric counseling» while her husband was dying in 1973. In *Fireweed*, 2002, p. 292, she mentions «years of work in analysis». Presumably her analysis ended in 1980, when she left New York for a tenured position at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, *ibid*, p. 368. She started a very successful Ph.D. program in Women's History in what was then mostly a department of men.

deaths of those I have loved, with this one very special and overwhelming death». To do the subject justice, she «imposed upon myself a demand for the kind of ruthless honesty in facing myself and my most personal feeling that one accepts in a psychoanalytic relationship, while admitting frankly the limitations of my perceptions of others» (*Death*, 1978, pp. 8-9).

Three extensive passages in *A Death of One's Own* refer briefly to Lerner's early family life. In the earliest one she places the blame directly on her parents, but subsequent recollections reveal an undisguised anguish. She begins by contrasting the largely negative influence of her parents to an uncle and aunt and later to another aunt, all of whom she idolized. Her uncle by marriage was Dr. Alexander Mueller, a psychiatrist trained by Alfred Adler. His wife, Klari, her mother's sister, had been «crippled since birth with an "open hip"» (Lerner, 1978, p. 120). Both had shown fortitude before the war when they were officially stateless, and during it when they managed to engineer escapes from their Nazi captors. Their loyalty and bravery impressed Lerner. As she puts it, «They were after all my chosen parents. My own parents had failed me in so many ways that I had rescued myself only through my work and be remaking myself through my marriage» (1978, p. 127). Later she adds, «Klari and Mueller taught me what my parents should have taught me but did not, about the love of a man and a woman, about the potential of such love, its complexity and its simplicity» (1978, p. 132).

The second passage concerns her mother's other sister, Aunt Manci, a medical doctor, who also shared Klari and Mueller's mythic status. When imprisoned by the Nazis she was a source of strength to others. Upon arrival at Auschwitz she chose to accompany children from the train to the gas chambers even though she would have been selected to work. No doubt Lerner's admiration for the bravery of all her mother's relatives was intensified partly by survivor guilt, the recognition that she and her immediate family had been luckier. They were able to escape the time of trial by becoming refugees, a freedom not available to her mother's two sisters. News of Manci's death left Lerner in a unresolvable quandary. Lacking personal knowledge of her aunt, she found it difficult to mourn her death. «I had not really known her, but I always understood that she had died in my place. In the place I should have occupied» (Lerner, 1978, p. 229), she concludes sadly.

Ultimately in the late 1960s her uncle and aunt faced death bravely, thereby providing their niece with a remarkable example of living, loving, and dying. Yet the stories she tells about Mueller could be interpreted slightly differently. During the prewar years, he had an extended affair with a woman psychiatrist, a fellow refugee in Holland – hardly an exhibition of marital loyalty. Moreover, after Klari's death, he never answered Lerner's letters. When she and her husband traveled to Zurich hoping to see him, Mueller refused to tax his dwindling strength with a visit. After her husband fell ill, she says she understood Mueller's detachment much better. Yet when her husband was fighting his losing battle against a brain tumor, he did not withdraw so completely from family and friends until the very end.

In a third passage Lerner paints a more complex picture of her troubling mother, one which reveals the unhappiness lying behind her sometimes angry recollections. Briefly she mentions her mother's creative response to her childhood fear of the dark, the lessons she gave her daughter about using her imagination «to play with that fear and tame it» (1978, p. 158). Moreover, she contradicts her earlier assertion that her parents had not taught her about marital love. Unfortunately, their love had been full of conflict. They avoided divorce by «pretending to a marriage which did not exist». Yet, her daughter realized, her parents «were deeply attached to each other». Despite extra-marital affairs, «they were each other's most trusted friend» (1978, p. 160). It was a confusing relationship that entangled the children. Even her mother's creativity at times felt like a burden. «Of all the burdens that was perhaps the heaviest: how to become a woman capable of love, a reliable mother and yet a person.» Finally she began to understand – presumably after beginning therapy – «that the guilt for her life is not mine». Lerner was not to blame that something made her mother's «life turn to flare-up and flame and the sputtering out of a great, a real talent». «She

almost destroyed me», Lerner concludes, «but she did show me what is possible. My beautiful, dark Hungarian mother» (1978, p. 164).

When Lerner once again decides to write about her life, years after the crisis of her husband's illness and death, she recognizes the changes time has wrought. In the introduction she states, «*One keeps reordering the past in the light of one's current insights and so what one sets down are not the facts, but a story. An explanatory myth at worst, an entertaining tale at best*» (*Fireweed*, 2002, p. 1). As a result, what she says about her parents and her early life differs in tone from comments in *A Death of One's Own*. As she puts it, «*if the living change, the memory of the dead within them also changes – that is natural and that is good*» (*Fireweed*, p. 2). Most important, however, *Fireweed* is a political autobiography. Lerner's stated intention is to tell the story of her radical past for the first time, rather than remaining «*within a closet of my own making*» (*Fireweed*, p. 3, italics the author's). She and her husband Carl were members of the Communist Party for a number of years. Luckily for her career, her radical activities were directed toward helping children and women. Thus she could discuss her activities without drawing attention to the political basis of her concern. For the purposes of this presentation, however, Lerner's politics are not as important as her view of her parents and extended kin. The new insights into her family that appear in her last memoir are the indirect result of many years of analysis, followed by an unexpectedly successful professional life in her sixties and seventies.

The difference in tone between *A Death of One's Own* and *Fireweed* is striking. In the latter Lerner fills in the gaps about her childhood and her years in America ending the memoir in 1958, the time when she finally returned to complete her education and begin her professional life. This time she provides a nuanced portrait of her parents and her family life. Although she has moments when she finds it difficult to reconstruct the past, the picture that emerges seems much more believable. Her parents had their own troubles. For example, her mother had to do battle with her husband's mother and that tyrannical woman made a worthy enemy. Moreover, her mother was unlucky in her timing. Her sister Nanci was a doctor, but she had no children nor a permanent husband. Lerner's father, *Vati*, wanted his wife to emulate his strong-minded but domesticated mother. To make matters worse, Ili – Lerner's mother – had only a vague notion of how to lead the literary and artistic life she desired. Not until the war when she moved to Nice, did she begin painting in earnest. Then she was struck down in her late forties with multiple sclerosis, a progressive disease which first paralyzed and then killed her at the age of fifty.

One useful way to measure the change is to compare how Lerner describes her final quarrel with her mother before she left Europe for the United States in 1939, shortly before her nineteenth birthday. In *A Death of One's Own*, she tells the story tersely, blaming her mother for the break. Her mother, she complains, knew how desperately she needed to leave home, but refused to give her blessing. As a result Lerner had to precipitate the break. She left «gladly and with a sense of escaping the waters closing over me, and so, for the rest of my life, I had to deal with that last guilt on top of all the others» (1978, pp. 162-163). One gets the impression from this passage that the conflict was largely interpersonal. The coming war is not mentioned, just the desperate need to leave home. Thus the passage to America, she describes, «as six days of weeping, seasickness and fear». As she tells it, «deep inside I was mourning. It was a tearing out, a violent uprooting, a voyage of death» (1978, p. 163). In *Fireweed*, Lerner describes her parting from her mother in a more complex fashion. She gives details about the cause of their quarrel and looks back with sadness upon their unhappiness. If only she had understood her mother's need to stay in France and work, she mourns, «our tragic parting would have had a redemptive effect on both of us. But that did not happen. Our relationship expressed itself falsely, in slanted versions of the truth, in half-truths and in suppressed anger». Parting in anger, her mother's subsequent Multiple Sclerosis, paralysis, and death have left Lerner bedeviled by guilt, «guilt over having misunderstood, over having misjudged, over having been stuck in my absolutes while she set herself free in her own inimitable way». Finally she concludes, «Nothing I have ever written has been as hard to write as

this account. My mother chose to pay for her art with her life. I still can't find the craft to transform this pain into something that can rebuild life. All I can do is state the bare outlines, and that's inadequate. Entirely inadequate» (*Fireweed*, 2002, pp. 206-207).

Inadequate though she felt her statement to be, it reflects a dramatic change in Lerner's understanding of her mother. Moreover, like most guilt, it was largely unearned. Many children in their late teens who leave home for college experience the same painful breaking away. Lerner was just more unfortunate than our college-bound youth. Poverty, combined with small babies, made it impossible for her to travel to Europe during her mother's lifetime. To make matters worse, her father and sister out of love wished to spare her feelings, realizing that she lacked the money necessary to travel. For a long time Lerner had no idea how desperately ill her mother was. Exchanging letters helped but did not heal the breach completely.

These two narratives reveal that during and after the upheaval of World War II, refugees suffered mightily even though they might be physically safe. Telephone and mail services were severed during the conflict. Letters crossed in the mail or were lost. Afterwards trying to locate one's relatives was a daunting task. No wonder those who had lived on the sidelines felt guilty about their good fortune. Luckily, the influence of successful psychotherapy often extends long past the time of treatment. After severe trauma emotional growth takes time, nearly sixty years in some cases. Professional and personal success can help restore shattered self-esteem. Therapy starts the process of self-knowledge. Motivated patients have continued on their own to gain insight into the past.

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Shadow or double. A tale by Hans Christian Andersen

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In an ideal world literary criticism would be unthinkable without psychoanalysis. Since literature treats of the human mind and of human relations, what is needed in order to speak of it in a scientific way, or, at the very least, an intersubjective way, is an anthropology. But, if we turn the question around, as Shoshana Felman points out, psychoanalytic thinking from its very start also spoke by means of a literary vocabulary, Oedipus and Narcissus being literary characters before they became psychoanalytic prototypes (Felman 1977, p. 5 ff).

What she, however, also stresses, is the importance of not letting the one part of the pair *Psychoanalysis and Literature* take hegemony over the other. Literature was never meant to prove the point of psychoanalysis and the other way round. The "and" in the pair must really be a coordination-marker and never express a subordinate relation.

Now literature is made of language and so is psychoanalysis. Both make use of the rhetorical force of language in a similar way. Oedipus and Narcissus are mythological figures, part of classical Greek literature, but in psychoanalysis they act as reincarnations of psychological processes and/or development. Since this fact has been pointed out so often and for so long, these two figures have become prototypes and can now no longer act as literary characters. They have changed into *topoi*, and as such have become part of a both literary and psychoanalytic inventory. From a certain moment in history they can only function as *metaphors*.

Our friend and colleague Henk Hillenaar (Hillenaar, 2001), in a remarkable article on the artist's identity, shows how the retorical devices metonomy and metaphor, as the two main forms of symbolizing in literary texts, are the expression of resp. "sameness" and "otherness", or, in everyday language, of "similarity" and "difference". In metonymy there always is proximity in the original

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idea and its stylistic expression, for example when one speaks of a "class" instead of the "students" in it, the two are closely connected, both in expression and in content. There is *similarity*.

In metaphor, however, there is distance between the two. When in a 17th-century Dutch painting a tulip means "vanity", the connection between the two is much less obvious, it being only the so-called "tertium comparationis". What the two have in common, is beauty, and notably beauty withering, thus implying death. There is *otherness*, or difference, in metaphor.

In the following I will show, how in a Hans Christian Andersen-tale the use of one specific type of metaphorical language is both the indication and the expression of a specific type of human personality, in order to demonstrate how not the expressly formulated psychological characteristics lead to a diagnosis about his or her psychological personality, since in this particular text explicit psychological characteristics are primitive and few, but how the language of a story as a whole can be regarded as a metaphor for a certain type of personality. The story is "The Shadow".

It is a rather gruesome tale of a professor visiting in a warm country, who sends his shadow over to a flowery balcony on the opposite side of the street in order to see who lives behind it. But alas, the shadow never returns and the professor has to live without it. Now, traditionally in literary history, a person without a shadow is doomed, since he lacks a soul.

After a few years the shadow comes to visit its former owner, back in his own country. He seems to be a man living in easy circumstances, well dressed, good-looking, playing with his gold watch. His story is that behind the flowery balcony there lived a beautiful young woman, called *Poetry*, who had so many interesting friends that the shadow decided to stay. The shadow hereafter invites the professor to visit a health resort in his company. The shadow there meets a princess who is being treated for her capacity to see through people. Her gift is the cause of her discovering the shadow's lack of a shadow. As a response the shadow points out the professor to her, pretending to be so special he has a living shadow. That is how he obtains the princess' hand in marriage. Since the shadow is afraid of being found out, he invites his former owner to come and live in his palace in order to act as his shadow, lying at his feet. The professor agrees reluctantly, but after a while being tired of his submissive role, threatens to tell the princess the truth, on the very eve of the wedding, whereupon the shadow has him killed.

This is a sad and a somewhat grotesque story, the traditional interpretation being that where the poetic personality of an author takes over, the "real" person has to disappear, the story thus being the image of Andersen himself. It is also regarded as a metapoetic story, about the act of writing itself and about the impossibility of reaching the ideal (cf. Hans Henrik Möller, 1993). But there is more. Since the professor has grown a new shadow himself, now the original shadow, in adopting the professor as his shadow, must have two. This is not a story about a person missing a soul, but about a person with two souls, which means a story about a double.

Freud, in his analysis of the double in *Der Sandmann*, regards the doubling as a narcissistic projection, used as a defense mechanism. In his book on the psychoanalytic background for doubles in literature Robert Rogers shows that doubles in literary texts rarely are antagonists: they function far more often as projections of fear, or, in psychiatric cases, as direct expression of schizophrenia, for example in the phenomenon of autoscopy, i. e., when a person sees himself. Of course Rogers also discusses Andersen's tale, and he assigns the story no less than three psychological functions, viz. the narcissistic danger of knowing too much, which of course is the case of our professor. The second is the learned man's Faustian desire for the normal world instead of the world of science, the third being the threat to a person's psychic health, when he sees his own double (Rogers 1970, p. 23).

Obviously a double – a doppelgänger – is a popular character in the early Romantic genre that is called Gothic, where all that is *unheimlich* belongs. In Freud' s treatment of the *unheimlich* – particularly in connection with a story of a double, "Der Sandmann" – *unheimlich* stands for that which once has been *heimlich*, i. e., known. *Das unheimliche* is the repressed threatening to

return. That is why uncanny stories frighten us, they show the primary other, the Lacanian *Das Ding*, that which we fear to recognize, although we have really never known it.

But now Andersen's story, though I called it gruesome, doesn't really frighten, since it doesn't confront the reader with unknown threatening dangers from outside, like dark castles, dungeons, dragons and damsels in distress. Its threat comes from within, in the shape of a threatening loss of self. The protagonist, one might say, looses himself to a part of him, which isn't even real. This is a story about a false self.

In his book about the fantastic Todorov distinguishes between the *fantastique*, the uncanny, and the *merveilleux*, the mysterious. And "The Shadow" belongs to the latter. The only mysterious phenomenon is the one place in the text, where the laws of physics are transgressed. The mysterious in a text is always created with the help of illusions that are linguistic and linguistic only, but sometimes so sophisticated that the reader will accept them as possible. In this story the laws of physics are transgressed at a point where the reader is absolutely convinced that this particular shadow does everything a shadow is supposed to do: it shrinks in the southern sunshine, in the evenings it stretches out, and it nods whenever its owner does so. We trust the shadow and that is why we follow it when it enters the house opposite. Up to this point the shadow repeats its owner's movements, while here it only seemingly does so: the owner goes in, the shadow does the same, only into the opposite house. Thus it does not repeat, but mirror its master's actions. Lotz calls it a mirror-symmetry.

All this regards the content-level, necessary to understand what happens in the story. But now we must look at the stylistic level. Doubling of course means repetition and repetition as an element at the content-level, proves to be coming again at the micro-level of the text, as both a stylistic and a linguistic element: f. ex. «A young man, a wise man», or: «when the sun went up and the sun went down» etc.

Besides repetition in the story we find an overwhelming use of a specific kind of literary comparison, which is another species of literary imagery:

> it felt as if he was sitting in a blazing hot oven
> he felt as if he had come back to life.
> It looked just as if everyone were asleep or away from home.
> He fancied that a marvelous radiance came from her too.
> "It's just as if somebody sits there practicing a piece."
> It was like magic.
> Looked like a person of distinction...
> lay at his feet like a poodle dog.
> I lived there for three weeks, and it was as if I had lived there three thousand years.
> Was it like a green forest?
> Was it like a holy temple?
> Were the rooms like the starry skies seen from some high mountains?
> You really look like a shadow.
> He must be treated just as if he were human.

That is a lot of comparisons for a relatively short text, but even more remarkable is that most of them are not real comparisons in the traditional sense of the word, but so-called pseudo-comparisons. A standard comparison compares a phenomenon with another one, but a pseudo-comparison only seemingly does so; in stead it says, that something looked *as if*.

The Shadow is an *as-if-tale*. The shadow behaves as if it obeys the laws of physics, but it breaks the central one for shadows in tearing itself loose from its owner. It acts like its master, while the master is forced to act like a shadow. The shadow behaves as if it is learned and as if its pseudoshadow only seems learned, because it is linked to a learned man.

What in psychoanalysis does this remind of?

Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel has spoken of the false, *le faux*, in Andersen's tales, notably in her brilliant analysis of "The Nightingale". As you might remember, "The Nightingale" is the story of a simple grey bird, whose singing delights the court in China to such a degree that an artificial nightingale is made, which even delights people more, since it is artificial. Meanwhile the real nightingale is forgotten, until at the hour of death it reappears to awaken the emperor from the dead. The two stories are similar; they both treat of a false identity that takes over from the real, only their outcome is different. In the last one, it is the real that wins in the end, while in "The Shadow" the false takes control of the real and ends by killing it.

This is a frequent theme in Andersen's tales. One has only to be reminded of "The Emperor's new clothes", "The Princess on the Pea", "The little Mermaid", to name only a few. Chasseguet-Smirgel connects this theme to the author, who, by the allencompassing love of the mother, has acquired a false fallos, not the one acquired by the normal process of accepting the symbolic castration, but the pre-oedipal one, the one undeserved. The false fallos is dangerous, it can always fall of, as it denies the Father and his Law as a reality in life. It will not stand for confrontation with reality.

Now let us look at another view of a false self, i. e., Winnicotts. For Winnicott the sense of feeling real is at the center of the sense of self. «Only the True Self can be creative and only the True Self feels real, the existence of a False Self results in a feeling unreal or a sense of futility.» (Winnicott, 48 f.)

Obviously in Andersen's tale of "The Shadow" the True Self is the learned man, while the shadow functions as the False Self. But it is the shadow, the False Self, who survives in the end, while the True Self is killed. This is why the story is gruesome, compared to those where the real thing wins in the end, like "The nightingale", where the artificial bird cannot save the emperor from death, whereas the real bird miraculously succeeds in doing so.

Obviously the problem in talking about a True or False Self, not in a literary text, but in an author, is that the origin of the self in Winnicottian terms is placed so early in life, that we could never confirm their existence in long dead artists, whose early beginnings, like it is the case for Hans Christian Andersen, we virtually know nothing about: «The True Self appears as soon as there is any mental organization of the individual at all...» (Winnicott, 49).

What we do know, however, is that the difference between "true" and "false" is an ungoing preoccupation in this author's life and art. As I mentioned before, quite a few of his fairy tales treat of it, while in Andersen's papers, his letters and diaries, his fear of criticism, of reviews, of exposure, could be the expression of a weak sense of self.

In his "Concept of False Self" Winnicott notes the importance of the concept in connection with art:

> Poets, philosophers and seers have always concerned themselves with the idea of a true self, and the betrayal of the self has been a typical example of the unacceptable. (Winnicott, p. 65 f.)

That is why the outcome of this tale is so shocking: it betrays the real.

Assuming that, according to Rank's (1914) and Freud's views (1919b), the double represents a death-threat to the individual, the common understanding of the shadow's role in the tale of the same name must be extended. If the shadow, as I mentioned before, represents the poetic subject, the false self, threatening to take over, to overshadow as it were, the real self, anxiety can be the only consequence of this threat. The shadow representing death, cannot but augment anxiety, and it is this very anxiety that lies as a presence all over the text of the tale.

Andersen's solution to his problem is of course creativity. In creating beautiful stories about the eternal false/true discrepancy, he solves his ambivalence. Whether this creativity can be explained by the Kleinian wish for reparation of the object, thus originating in an early depressive position, or from Freudian sublimation, a conscious process situated years later in the individual's

development, it is clear that Andersen's wish to create was an inseparable part of his being even in rather early childhood, when he created dolls for his puppet-theatre and arranged performances, using texts he even barely understood himself.

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«Dark Raven Days of Sorrow»: Modern southern writers and despair

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In 1945 Allen Tate explained why, in the years between the two great wars, an outpouring of regional fiction and poetry far exceeded the quality of prior literary generations. In a quotation often cited, Tate argued, «With the war of 1914-1918, the South re-entered the world but gave a backward glance as it stepped over the border», a retrospection, he continued, that furnished the nation with a «literature conscious of the past in the present».[1] In that era of political and social upheaval, he contended, the writer's imagination found fertile soil for intellectual growth.[2]

Although he did not realize it, Tate, as well as critics who followed his lead, was describing a psychological phenomenon and not a purely sociological one. How curious it is that so clear a tradition of Southern pessimism and personal gloom should not have received greater critical attention than it has. First, one must begin with Edgar Allan Poe and follow the trail of his influence as other Southern poets and authors in the nineteenth century were emboldened to do, albeit with much subterfuge, their own inner alienation. Among them was Sidney Lanier who provided the words used in the title.

Second, literary creativity and problems of depression have long been associated. In fact, just the other day, the New York *Times Sunday Magazine* published an article about the poet Robert Lowell's entanglements with depressive insanity. Such psychiatric specialists as Arnold Ludwig, Anthony Storr, Robert Rothenberg, Felix Post, Nancy Andreasen, Kay Redfield Jamison, among others, have elaborated, quite brilliantly, on the interconnection of artistic achievement and depression.

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[1] Allen Tate, "The New Provincialism" (1945), in Tate, *The Man of Letters: Selected Essays, 1928-1955* (1955; New York: Meridian Books, 1960), 330-31. See C. Vann Woodward, "Why the Southern Renaissance?" in C. Vann Woodward, *The Future of the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 203-20.

[2] Daniel Singal translated Tate's diagnosis into new terms – the death of Victorianism and the insurgence of a modern sensibility – and reached similar conclusions. Daniel Singal, *The War Within* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

Of course the melancholia under consideration here differs widely from the ordinary ups and downs of existence that all human beings experience. Moreover, it is an unhappy state of mind to which literary artists, both male and female, suffer quite out of proportion to the general population. Arnold Ludwig, for instance, reports that 75 per cent of those attending a recent women writers conference reported clinical affective illness, four times the ratio of control groups. Felix Post finds that among 291 of the most famous figures of our time, writers were by far the most likely to suffer from depression and alcoholism, so much so that he contends that these ailments are «causally linked to some kinds of valuable creativity».[3]

The origins of that connection may lie, at least in part, in a sensitive child's exposure to the trauma of death. Kathleen Woodward reminds us that «our lives are shaped and reshaped by losses which are succeeded by restitution».[4] When such adversities occur early in life, however, the child has no adequate means for dealing with feelings of anger, guilt, and sense of betrayal – nothing against which to compare these shocks to self-possession, no means to build rituals, memories from daily life, and analogies with other deaths that the adult can assemble and internalize.[5] The problem of repression and torment is likely to reappear in later years when similar losses of loved ones occur, as inevitably they will. Anger so often arises with loss because there is nobody to blame for a death – no target except the self or others nearby when logic clearly protests their innocence.

That state of affairs – familial loss – is a major source of adult depression in writers and other imaginative careers. As if generalizing about his own reaction to his mother's death from cancer when he was twelve, William Styron recently observed, «I find it overwhelmingly convincing that the death of a parent at that moment in one's development – especially a mother – can be just absolutely catastrophic. And that if one somehow freezes out the need for mourning, it can get you much later in life». Indeed, as in Styron's case, an incomplete bereavement may make worse any problems that a family heritage of depression had already engendered.[6] Loss of mothers may be highly significant in a child's earliest years, analyst Felix Brown has disclosed. Death or disappearance of fathers may be more serious during the teens. Nearly sixty per cent of the major English writers, whose biographies were extracted from the *Oxford Book of English Verse* and the *National Dictionary of Biography*, before the age of fifteen, lost one or both parents. In fact, the novelist George Meredith proposed that most artists were «deprived of a normal, happy and healthy childhood» with the result that they felt compelled «to compensate themselves for their lack of companionship and outward incident by an early life of dreams and fantasies».[7] The death or abandonment of one parent and a troubled relationship with the other have been common factors in the early lives of writers.

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[3] Arnold M. Ludwig, "Mental Illness and Creative Activity in Female Writers", *American Journal of Psychiatry* 151 (1994): 1650-56; Felix Post, "Creativity and Psychopathology: A Study of 291 World-Famous Men", *British Journal of Psychiatry* 165 (July 1994): 22-34 (quotation 22).

[4] Kathleen Woodward, "Late Theory, Late Style: Loss and Renewal in Freud and Barthes", in Anne Wyatt-Brown and Janice Rossen, eds., *Aging and Gender in Literature: Studies in Creativity* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 82.

[5] See Robert Jay Lifton, *The Broken Connection: On Death and the Continuity of Life* (New York: Simon Schuster, 1979), 187-89.

[6] Felix Brown, "Bereavement and Lack of a Parent in Childhood", in E. Miller, ed. *Foundations of Child Psychiatry* (London: Pergamon, 1967), 435-55; William Styron (January 31, 1994) in Dannye Romine Powell, comp., *Parting the Curtains: Interviews with Southern Writers* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: John Blair, 1994), 306; Arnold M. Ludwig, "Creative Achievement and Psychopathology: Comparison among Professions", *American Journal of Psychotherapy* 46 (July 1992): 330-57.

[7] Felix Brown, "Bereavement and Lack of a Parent in Childhood", in E. Miller, ed., *Foundations of Child Psychiatry* (London: Pergamon, 1968), 437, 443, 445 (quotation).

As mentioned earlier another major component in the development of the emotional disorder is a familial predisposition as geneticists have lately discovered, particularly through studies of twins separated early in their lives.[8] While recognizing early environmental components, Styron called his form of mental depression a "biochemical meltdown" with genetic origins. Lord Byron, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, the American Percys, Tennessee Williams, Truman Capote, James Agee, to name a few, have this feature in common: a record of extraordinary gifts of imagination coupled with various forms of melancholia, from deep psychosis to dysthymia, the mildest type of the malady.[9] The continuity of familial depression through generations, even when only one or two members show remarkable talent, suggests that family and cultural factors are intimately if not always clearly bound together.

The third element is cultural. To return to Allen Tate's point, «that backward glance», was a nostalgia for a period shrouded in a haze of legend. Bearing in mind the complex mingling of anger, guilt, shame, and love that comprise the mourning process, two writers of disparate backgrounds are used to illustrate some of the characteristics of this Southern literary phenomenon of art born of despair and grief: Ellen Glasgow and Richard Wright. The first was a Virginia lady of high birth and established wealth, the second a poor black fatherless Mississippi farm boy who became a brilliant writer. They will be, in effect, stand-ins for such other examples as William Faulkner, Katherine Anne Porter, Evelyn Scott, Conrad Aiken, Thomas Wolfe, and Carson McCullers – to name only a few. By understanding the ways in which art and psychological biography come together, we can better apprehend the ambivalent nature of Southern longing for the old times to which Tate alluded. Those were the happy, antebellum times that surrendered to the «dark Raven Days of sorrow», of which the gloomy poet Sidney Lanier had mourned in the war's aftermath when defeat, poverty, and racial strife plagued the South.[10]

Rather than begin with a male representative such as Wolfe or Faulkner, Ellen Glasgow serves the purpose here. She was once unjustly excluded from the ranks of the great Southern novelists, although her reputation has risen with emergence of the feminist movement. Like her great predecessor Kate Chopin, throughout much of her adult life Glasgow felt alienated not only from her parents' social milieu but from most of the rigid Southern conventions of her time as well. On one occasion she declared that «the Protestant Episcopal Church», to which her mother was devoted, «was charitable toward almost every weakness except the dangerous practice of thinking». Glasgow denounced the Lost Cause as a "sentimental infirmity" which had stifled the Southern creative impulse. Like so many other Southern writers, male and female, she regarded her father as an unloving patriarch. He was, she observed, too "Roman", too Calvinistic. «He never committed a pleasure», she wrote, and from the Bible «never read of love or mercy, for, I imagine, he regarded these virtues as belonging by right to the weaker gender, amid an unassorted collection of feminine graces.» A part of her hated him because he took her pets away without any justification that a child could grasp.[11] Translating that personal experience into a wider generalization, Glasgow protested the "inarticulateness" of Southerners, a withdrawal that she found also in her father. A

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[8] A. Bertelson, B. Harvald, and M. Hauge, "A Danish Twin Study of Manic-Depressive Disorders", *British Journal of Psychiatry* 130 (1977): 330-51; Anita Thapar and Peter McGuffin, "A Twin Study of Depressive Symptoms in Childhood", *British Journal of Psychiatry* 165 (1994): 259-65.

[9] Kay Redfield Jamison, *Touched with Fire: Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament* (New York: Free Press, 1993), 61-62, 153-64, 188, 192, 196-201. On the Percys, see Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *The House of Percy: Honor, Melancholy and Imagination in a Southern Family* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[10] Sidney Lanier, "The Raven Days" (1868) in Charles R. Anderson, *Sidney Lanier: Poems and Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1969), 68-69.

[11] Ellen Glasgow, *The Woman Within* (New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1954), 15, 16, 68-73, 85.

self-imposed reticence grew from fear of saying something that really mattered. To utter forbidden thoughts might demolish the fragile appearance of things.[12]

Glasgow's family may have had severe genetic problems with depression. Her mother, whose life was punctuated by a fearful melancholy, died from typhoid fever when her daughter Ellen was just twenty, a loss that left her feeling, years later, as if «some other self... buried yet alive» still «stands in the center of that desolate room».[13] When Glasgow herself died in 1945, her bedroom was found to be arranged identically to that of her mother's so long before. Walter McCormack, a brother-in-law, who had awakened Ellen Glasgow to some of her intellectual interests, killed himself during a trip to New York, when he was only twenty-six. Two sisters, of whom she was very fond, died young. Her brother Frank, always delicate and intellectual, had been sent to attend the Virginia Military Institute to "harden" him, but the four years there «merely increased his unconquerable remoteness», as his sister reminisced. Unable to rebel against the difficult father, he eventually gave up on life itself and died by his own hand at age thirty-nine.[14]

Thus, death, a frequent visitor in her life, was intermingled with a predisposition to melancholy inherited, most likely, through the genes. More than once Ellen Glasgow spoke of falling into an «icy vacuum, which, if nothingness has a superlative, grows deeper and deeper». Early in her upbringing she found that most people could be fooled by outward appearances. «I was still a child when I learned that an artificial brightness is the safest defense against life.»[15] At the beginning of her autobiography, *The Woman Within Me*, she recalls a moment of horror at the age of two while nestled in her mother's arms. Above the top windowpanes of the nursery in Richmond, she reports, «I see a face without a body staring in at me, a vacant face, round, pallid, grotesque, malevolent... Convulsions seized me, a spasm of dumb agony. One minute I was not; the next minute I was. I felt. I was separate. I could be hurt.»[16] Obviously she was retrieving a screen memory of some kind: before the age of speech the infant cannot invest an incident with the details that only later could be filled out. The important thing is that she thought the terror very real and that the apparition signified something more than a momentary fright. Often enough those with depression personify it in some fashion – as the Churchillian "black dog", Kafka's mice, Henry James's "crouching beast", Sylvia Plath's "demon". Perhaps for Glasgow that mingled sense of paralytic declension, fear and anger took this form. In fact, she also recalled being frightened as a very small child by a mob whose chase of a black dog through the street nearly cuts her down. Physical illnesses helped to account for her sense of apartness, but her unusual emotional sensitivity and intelligence were also factors. «Not until I was eight or nine years old», she recalled, «was I driven to unchildlike brooding over my sense of exile in a hostile world, and back again to that half-forgotten presence of the evil face without a body....» Her mother's plunge into severe melancholia when Ellen Glasgow was ten had a profound effect upon the daughter. When she fell into one of her periodic cycles of despair, Glasgow recalled, «The very bread we ate tasted of hopelessness».

Like her mother, Glasgow was subject to spells of severe depression. The first and perhaps most serious episode followed her mother's death. Although for a brief time happy when her first novel was accepted for publication in 1899, she was overcome by a "wolfish terror" made worse by fears of a growing deafness.[17] She also suffered a terrible loss, she remembered, when Mammy

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[12] Anne Goodwyn Jones, *Tomorrow Is Another Day: The Woman Writer in the South, 1859-1936* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 228-31 (Glasgow quoted, 229).
[13] Glasgow, *Woman Within*, 84.
[14] Glasgow, *Woman Within*, 183.
[15] Jones, *Tomorrow Is Another Day*, 228, 231, 269 (quotation); Glasgow, *Woman Within*, 67, 99-100.
[16] Glasgow, *Woman Within*, 3, 4-5.
[17] Glasgow, *Woman Within*, 9-10, 25, 63, 122.

Rhoda, who was her nursemaid, left for another position when Ellen Glasgow was seven. As she watched the carriage bear her surrogate mother away, she writes: «I knew suddenly that I was alone. I had always been alone. Nobody could shut out the loneliness. Not even my mother.»[18]

Indeed, these experiences from Glasgow's poignant autobiography suggest how different it is from other women writers' self-histories. The work stresses the author's extraordinary sensitivities and sense of isolation and loneliness with a sadness that could be said to complement William Alexander Percy's gloom-laden *Lanterns on the Levee*. Feminist critics have noted how female writers usually place their lives in the context of others, a connectedness not to be found in Glasgow's account. In the words of Pamela Matthews, the «disrupted chronology, use of ellipsis, and lack of smooth transitions» of *The Woman Within* are partially attributable to «Glasgow's persona as an exile». Matthews argues wrongly, I think, that her self-restraint despite her labored efforts to be honest and forthcoming, did not stem solely from a difficulty in writing about selfhood «in other than expected ways».[19] The issue was also cultural as already suggested – the inhibitions of the lady or gentleman in raising issues that belong solely within the inmost circles of a family. Glasgow gives almost no details or even clear indications that Walter McCormack or brother Frank killed themselves.

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In examining the depressive aspects of creativity in some writers, we turn from the feminine to the masculine, from the famous white to the famous black. For reasons tragically obvious, the African-American tradition of letters follows the same pattern but goes beyond that of the whites'. Being works designed to arouse Northern sympathy, slave narratives of the antebellum period had to stress the ultimate triumph of freedom, blessed by an antislavery God. Although signs of personal despair and demoralization can be found in the more thoughtful ones, we can easily conclude that along with the personal rages and disappointments with which most everyone has had to battle, the African American writers have been compelled to confront the corrosive terrors of white contempt, antipathy, and violence. Among those who dealt with both the private and public aspects of black demoralization was Richard Wright. As he put it in 1949, «In the United States the Negroes represent a terrible reservoir of despair and bitterness».[20] But Wright also suffered from what his friend Margaret Walker called «a kind of malaise, a disturbing and disquieting angst, which he felt was deep in his psyche». He only "sensed" that the origin of his dolor lay in his «personal relationships – with his family, his friends, his wives, even with himself, but he could not define it».[21]

Wright's autobiography, *Black Boy*, reveals not only that aspect of African-American resentment but also a more personal pattern of disenchantment. Combining an exploration of the two forms of frustration, Wright's *Black Boy* makes the childhood of James Joyce as depicted in *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* seem almost idyllic, although both are stories of alienation from provinciality and oppression. Wright's father deserted his family for another woman, a departure that relieved his son from further abuse from a violent parent but left an emotional vacuum in his upbringing.

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[18] *Ibid.*, 32.

[19] Pamela R. Matthews, "Introduction", in Ellen Glasgow, *The Woman Within: An Autobiography* Pamela R. Matthews, ed., (1954; Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1994), xviii-xix.

[20] Michel Salomon, "An Interview in Paris with – Richard Wright on U. S. Politics", *Labor Action*, May 30, 1949, in Kenneth Kinnamon and Michel Fabre, eds., *Conversations with Richard Wright* (Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi, 1993), 130.

[21] Margaret Walker, *Richard Wright: Daemonic Genius: A Portrait of the Man A Critical Look at His Work* (New York: Amistad Press, 1988), 165-66.

The absence of a breadwinner, however, soon introduced him as a boy of no more than four to a poverty of empty belly, uncertain shelter, and a life under the dominion of the «old, white, wrinkled, grim face» of his "Granny". «By the time I was fifteen», he once remarked, «I had lived in a dozen or more small southern towns.» On one occasion, he and his mother hastily had to escape from Arkansas where Uncle Hoskins, a prosperous storeowner, was lynched by townspeople jealous of his financial success.[22]

According to Wright's reflections, throughout his early years, his mother, his Aunt Aggie, and grandmother Wilson tried to beat down his spirit with religious demands and furious blows. As Wright recounts in another autobiographical sketch, while imparting «gems of Jim Crow wisdom», his mother beat him unmercifully with a barrel stave for fighting with white kids.[23] That was the black caretakers' way to assure the survival of the young. They had to learn the racial rules or die. In the African-American family in the Jim Crow South, Ralph Ellison commented, «Personal warmth is accompanied by an equally personal coldness, kindliness by cruelty, regard by malice».[24] Adding further to the tensions in his life, his mother's health, never good, drastically deteriorated during Wright's teenage years. She became permanently paralyzed. Wright recorded, «A somberness of spirit that I was never to lose settled over me during the slow years of my mother's unrelieved suffering, a somberness that was to make me stand apart and look upon excessive joy with suspicion. That was to make me keep forever on the move, as though to escape a nameless fate seeking to overtake me.»[25] In his efforts to help her, Wright's jobs under white bosses often resulted in his being humiliated both physically or verbally. The more he observed black subservience the more he felt personally degraded, particularly when he, too, had to don the mask of deference or dissolve into invisibility that Ralph Ellison so sensitively explored.[26]

Compared with Frederick Douglass's brilliant but ultimately hopeful memoir of a slave's life, *Black Boy* is a story of daily anger and frustration, but not simply because of white injustice. Wright portrays a boy and young man in full rebellion against his family and the conservatism and intellectual limits of Southern black aspiration. Yet, like Glasgow, he, too, repressed his convictions even as he exposed his rage and hurt. In 1943 he gave an extemporaneous speech at Fisk University. Half way through he realized that he was voicing issues and ideas that black people were not supposed to utter in public, especially before whites. «What made me realize this», he recalled a year later, «was a hysterical, half-repressed, tense kind of laughter that went up now and then from the white and black faces».[27] But even as he violated part of the racial code, he repressed other matters. Like Frederick Douglass who failed to acknowledge that his slave mistress in Baltimore had essentially taught him to read, Wright refused to acknowledge an intellectual indebtedness to others. Despite the punishments he received, the women around him – Ella, his mother, and grandmother – provided him with a moral structure and a stability that made possible a conversion of conflict, desperation, and turmoil into art. As Janice Thaddeus shrewdly observes, the ending of *Black Boy* ends artificially on a triumphant, hopeful note. That style of closure was required by the

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[22] Richard Wright, *Black Boy: A Record of Childhood and Youth* (1945; New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 9; "Guggenheim Prize to Richard Wright: *New Amsterdam News*/ 1939", in Kenneth Kinnamon and Michel Fabre, eds., *Conversations with Richard Wright* (Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi, 1993), 21.

[23] Richard Wright, "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow: An Autobiographical Sketch", in Richard Wright, *Uncle Tom's Children* (1940: New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 2.

[24] Ralph Ellison, "Richard Wright's Blues", in Ralph Ellison, *Shadow and Act* (New York: Random House, 1964), 89-90.

[25] Wright, *Black Boy*, 111-12.

[26] Wright, *Black Boy*, 184, 204, 284; Sidonie Ann Smith, "Richard Wright's *Black Boy*: The Creative Impulse as Rebellion", *Southern Literary Journal* 4 (Fall 1972): 123-36.

[27] Quoted from New York *Post*, November 30, 1944, p. B6 in Janice Thaddeus, "The Metamorphosis of Richard Wright's *Black Boy*", in *American Literature* 57 (May 1985): 206-07.

publishers, who sensed it would be the bestseller it did become. By having it terminate with Wright's flight to the North, they fit the work into the genre of slave narratives – the escape from the South that had to mean bliss in the new land thereafter. But Wright's sequel, *American Hunger*, closes on a much more tentative note. When both autobiographies are combined, they reveal, she says, «the isolation, and finally the lack of order in Wright's world as he saw it, a sadness and disarray».[28]

This exercise barely covers the range of authors and problems that afflicted so many of the Southern practitioners of the literary craft. A longer analysis would have to include the African-American women writers, including Zora Neale Hurston and Toni Morrison. And also the gay writers – both famous and nearly anonymous – who had to deal with a home culture as hostile toward their sexual orientation as it was to those of dark skin. And then there are the almost ubiquitous alcoholics: Faulkner, Thomas Wolfe, James Agee, W. J. Cash, William Styron, Harry Crews – to name just a handful that spring quickly to mind. Medically, alcoholism is closely connected with affective disorder or depression even though ethanol is itself a depressant.[29]

But what is the ultimate point of dwelling on the pathological? Does it not reduce the value of what these authors created? I contend that it does not. Instead, the study of biography reveals the artist's steadiness of spirit, professional discipline, and determination to overcome the tragedies enveloping them. Moreover, dejection, when not so strong as to be emotionally paralytic, may be the actual source of creativity itself, however mysterious and still unfathomed it is. There is, however, as yet no way to know if that speculation is verifiable. Some artists find that the new antidepressants – lithium among them – «stifle their creativity. Others find regular doses helpful. A psychiatric researcher concludes that the effect of using such compounds may inhibit, promote, or have no effect at all, depending "on the severity of the illness, on individual sensitivity, and on habits of utilizing manic episodes productively"».[30]

The late Walker Percy recognized that depression was instrumental to his art. In an interview some years ago, he told me, «There is something like "creative depression" and if you're lucky you can make use of it. Jung used to tell his patients, at least some of them, not all, "why don't you make use of depression – there's gold in those depths".» He found that his best writing came during a period of the "blues", not the "clinical" kind, he quickly added, because then «you just feel empty and can't do anything», but «a touch of depression» opened the doors of inspiration. How lucky we

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[28] Thaddeus, "Wright's *Black Boy*", 214.

[29] See John E. Helzer and Thomas R. Pryzbeck, "The Co-Occurrence of Alcoholism with Other Psychiatric Disorders in the General Population and Its Impact on Treatment", *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 49 (May 1988): 219-24; Marc A. Schuckit and Maristela G. Monteiro, "Alcoholism, Anxiety and Depression", *British Journal of Addiction* 83 (December 1988): 1373-80; Marc Schuckit, "Alcoholic Patients with Secondary Depression", *American Journal of Psychiatry* 140 (June 1983): 711-14; David C. Clark, Robert D. Gibbons, Mark G. Haviland and Michael S. Hendryx, "Assessing the Severity of Depressive States in Recently Detoxified Alcoholics", *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 54 (January 1993): 107-14; Jack R. Cornelius, Ishan M. Salloum, Juan Mezzich, Marie D. Cornelius, Horatio Fabrega, John G. Ehler, Richard F. Ulrich, Michael E. Thase, and J. John Mann, "Disproportionate Suicidality in Patients with Comorbid Major Depression and Alcoholism", *American Journal of Psychiatry* 1523 (March 1995): 358-64; Felix Post, "Verbal Creativity, Depression and Alcoholism: An Investigation of One Hundred American and British Writers", *British Journal of Psychiatry* 168 (May 1996): 545-555; John W. Cowley, *The White Logic: Alcoholism and Gender in American Modernist Fiction* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994). Also see Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "William Faulkner: Art, Alienation, and Alcohol", in John Lowe, ed., *New Viewpoints in Southern Literature* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), in press.

[30] Mogens Schou, "Artistic Productivity and Lithium Prophylaxis in Manic-Depressive Illness", *British Journal of Psychiatry* 135 (1979): 97-103.

are that his experience was one shared by so many others in the ranks of Southern letters. In an interview as early as 1954 Styron challenged the popular misapprehension of depression as irredeemable moral weakness. «The good writing of any age», Styron declared, «has always been the product of *someone's* neurosis, and we'd have a mighty dull literature if all the writers that came along were a bunch of happy chuckleheads.»[31] On that cheerful note, we can all agree.

[31] Peter Mathiessen and George Plimpton, "The Art of Fiction V: William Styron", (1954), in James L. W. West III, ed., *Conversations with William Styron* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1985), 19.

Proceedings of the 20th International Conference on Literature and Psychoanalysis: 43-45

Introduction to panel session: «Cinematic symptoms of masculinity: Trauma, hysteria and difference»

CAROLINE BAINBRIDGE (*)
CANDIDA YATES (*)

INTRODUCTION: AIMS AND CONTEXT FOR THE TWO PAPERS IN THIS PANEL

In recent years, psychoanalytic feminists in film and cultural studies have turned their gaze upon the riddles of masculinity. This interest reflects the scrutiny of masculinity more generally, where it is now often argued that contemporary European and American societies are witnessing a crisis of masculinity. Whether this crisis represents a shift towards more positive and reflexive masculinities has been the subject of much debate, and this debate provides a context for the two papers in this panel. The focus of our dialogue centres on the popular cultural trope of masculinity in crisis as represented in contemporary cinema.

There are competing views about the representation of masculinities in popular cinema. For example, on the one hand, some argue negatively, that the changes and uncertainties of modernity have elicited a defensive and even paranoid cultural response in the media. Yet on the other hand, it is argued positively, that contemporary post-modern culture has opened up new hegemonic spaces that are able to facilitate alternative less rigid and less defensive masculinities. Our papers have more in common with the latter perspective, as, in some ways, they do seem to point to the ways in which new cultural spaces may be opening up within popular cinema. Such spaces potentially facilitate, the emergence of alternative, more nuanced images of masculinities. We hope, however, to move beyond this binary model of theorising masculinity in crisis as either being necessarily positive or negative. In the papers we offer here, it is more a case of seeking out a kind of transitional space that ultimately may nevertheless be reigned in by the insistence of the hegemonic set of discourses around representation. Despite these dangers, by drawing on psychoanalytic

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explanations of trauma, hysteria and fantasy, we hope to show that these cinematic representations of masculinity are often highly complex, ambiguous and transitional, and as such, may lie somewhere in-between. In the end, we settle on the importance of seeing representations of masculinities as forming a continuum. As we go on to discuss in our papers, this has implications for the kind of identifications and affective responses that are opened up for the spectator and the readings that are created as a result.

Representations of male trauma have been a recurring theme in recent popular cinema and it is this, which necessitates the cultural and psychoanalytic analysis of trauma and its related themes in cinema. We use the psychoanalytic concepts of trauma and hysteria, jealousy and masquerade, to think through the possibilities of masculine subjectivities and their relationship to issues of sexual difference. The ubiquity of films that depict images of male suffering is telling, particularly within the current cultural context where the old fictions of masculinity are unravelling. Trauma theory is useful to think through issues of masculinity in crisis, as it touches on, and addresses the tensions, which underpin the masquerade of masculinity and the fragility of its construction as a provisional and impossible ideal. In addition, trauma theory has recently made in-roads into the discipline of screen studies (Radstone, 2001; Hammond, Humphrey, Randell & Thomas, 2003). As Caroline argues in her paper, from a psychoanalytic perspective, the concept of trauma involves two moments, the first, which refers to the moment of trauma itself (repressed memories of the primal scene) and the second, which involves the memory or rather the perception of that event. How one perceives a past event and then responds to that perception in that second moment of trauma provides a useful paradigm to think through issues of the perceived crisis of masculinity. For example, the current cultural 'undoing' of hegemonic masculinity and the perception of crisis may be precipitating the kind of repetitive psychic fantasies and defence mechanisms analogous to those experienced by the traumatic subject, who is unable to live with the perception of a past event. The unbearability of what lies beneath (or its absence) sets off a desire to deflect and cover up the losses, and in doing so, the subject becomes endlessly and hysterically trapped in that first moment of trauma. The experience of suffering, or its representation in film, is thus arguably analogous to a hysterical defence against the losses of masculinity.

On the one hand, this scenario taps into the scepticism of those who critique the cultural crisis of masculinity in negative terms, and suggests that post modernity engenders empty fetishistic spaces for identification, rather than transitional ones which imply movement and creativity (Butler, 2000; Kirkham & Thumim, 1993, 1995). However, one can argue that the slippage from trauma to hysteria may, on the other hand, have a usefully disturbing effect, as it arguably provides the spectator with a glimpse of something else and the unspeakable losses of masculinity that lie beneath the excesses of the text. As Juliet Mitchell (2000) reminds us, the experience of trauma is not a static one, as the subject may move between the first and second moments. This slippage between the two traumatic registers may provide new insights, enabling the creation of new spaces from which to imagine ontological change and the radical possibilities of something new and different.

How is one to define and name this transitional mode of masculinity, which is always in process and which doesn't lose its nerve, whilst constructing itself? Without wishing to reproduce the old cultural binary oppositions associated with active masculinity and passive femininity, one can define more ambiguous representations of masculinity as 'feminine' because of their textual open-ness and the lack of closure around the meanings of the text. Of course, attempting to 'feminise' masculinity is fraught with difficulty and needs to be understood in the context of a long debate around the gendered constitution of subjectivity in language. In these papers, we feel uneasy about the inflections of such terminologies and try to avoid being trapped in a system of discourse that maintains these hierarchies. Instead, we draw on the metaphorical usefulness of the notion of the feminine and try to highlight the ways in which transitional masculinities seem to colonise a similar space within hegemonic discourses. In contrast to the more rigid narratives and voyeuristic

looks that hitherto characterised much of the dominant Hollywood cinema, these new representations of men also suggest new modes of masculinity that are less narcissistic, more nuanced and complex. We argue that a key aspect of this is the capacity to live with difference without resorting to the old defensive subject positions when faced with and set alongside the complexity of the other. As Candida discusses in her paper, the Other in this context, does not only refer to the feminine. The perception of otherness also refers to the differences between men and the difficulties of maintaining and living with that difference, as opposed to slipping into destructive and rivalrous subject positions.

However, it is often the case that new 'transitional' images of masculinity may also be at the cost of representations of Woman. For example, her presence may be marginalised in relation to the portrayal of the 'new' man, who may enviously colonise the cultural space of sexual difference, formerly occupied by women. Thus, as in the image of the exaggerated suffering of the jealous man, the hysterical defence against the perceived trauma of loss and difference may also extend paradoxically to the mimicry of femininity. As with Sara in *The End of the Affair*, the difference cannot be sustained and she has to die as the result. By contrast, in *Memento*, our certainty about the death of Leonard's wife is gradually undone by the textual play with the spectator, so that, by the end of the film, we no longer know whether she is alive or dead. This seems to parallel our uncertainty about Leonard as a narrator and shows up his apparent trauma as hysterical symptom.

Whilst utilising different methodologies, the aim of this panel is to use our papers create a dialogue with each other, and with you (the audience), about these issues. Before turning to those papers, it would be helpful to provide a context for our discussion by pointing to the areas where our ideas overlap and diverge. Firstly, whilst we both use discourses of cultural and psychoanalytic theory to discuss the construction of masculinities, we nevertheless use different methodologies and to an extent, this reflects our different research backgrounds. Caroline's paper focuses on issues of textuality, narrative and form to explore the fiction of selfhood and the construction of masculinity in Christopher Nolan's film *Memento*. In terms of affect, Caroline is particularly interested in the relationship between trauma and the spectator and the way in which our relationship to cinema is undone in that moment of traumatic identification with the text and its hysterical response to the perceived crisis of masculinity. Candida's paper uses Neil Jordan's film *The End Of The Affair* to explore the relationship between jealousy, masculinity and difference as exemplified through fantasies of Englishness and the literary ownership of Graham Greene. Candida's methodology uses a psychoanalytic cultural studies approach, which combines issues of textuality and representation with an analysis of its cultural reception and the psychic fantasies, which underpin it. Whilst implicitly taking into account issues related to spectatorship, she is more concerned to address the psychosocial implications of the film as discussed through its reception in the UK press.

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Proceedings of the 20th International Conference on Literature and Psychoanalysis: 47-52

Reconstructing memories of masculine subjectivity in *Memento*: Narrative form and the fiction of the Self

CAROLINE BAINBRIDGE (*)

As suggested in the introduction, my paper scrutinises the representational collapse of hegemonic masculinities in Christopher Nolan's *Memento* (US, 2000) by interrogating the film through the lens of psychoanalytic perspectives on the perceived crisis in masculinity. What is it about this film, with its peculiar structure and narrative form, that inflects our sense of how the fantasy space of cinema can contribute to a broader cultural understanding of what masculinity means in the postmodern age?

Nolan's film is an intriguing text for a number of reasons. Formally, the film is inventive and confusing, to the extent that the narrative structure inflects the filmic narrative and alters our sense of its layers of meaning. Nolan claims that, at the level of form, this apparently complex narrative is, in fact, rather linear in structure; it is a linear narrative reversed. This rather oversimplifies the actual structure of the film, though, as there are two strands of narrative present in the film. Firstly, there is the narrative we see unfold in colour, which we are meant to correlate to the first person experience of Leonard, the film's protagonist. This is the reversed narrative that reveals itself incrementally, seemingly hopping from end to beginning through the story the spectator is working to comprehend. The spectator, here, is asked to identify with Leonard as the subject of the narrative. Secondly, we have a narrative that is represented in the black and white sequences of the film. This strand unfolds in a more traditional manner, moving forward in time. It is further distinguished from the primary narrative by the fact that it resides in the space of the second person. As spectators, here, we function as auditors to a message that is conveyed predominantly through the use of voice-over with the images accompanying seeming to represent the present experience of Leonard in the motel room or the past memories of a story that functions as a kind of metaphor for the one we are watching. The puzzling connection between these narratives is central to our sense

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that the movie does not simply involve solving a puzzle. There are a number of fleeting shots and clues embedded in each of these narrative strands to sustain our sense of puzzlement through to and beyond the end of the film. In addition, there is confusion created by the film's opening sequence (which is shot in reverse). This sequence is the only sequence in the film without an overlap. There is a perceived gap between the end of the story (the second colour sequence) and the assumed outcome that is presented as a *possible* future outcome but simultaneously undone by the nature of its representation, its being screened in reverse. For the spectator, then, this is a demanding movie. On the one hand, we are asked to read the colour sequences in the usual manner by decoding the discourse it proffers. On the other hand, the black and white sequences seem to function as a site of exchange – we are not being presented with a story but rather with something akin to conversational gambits that invite us into a dialogical relation with the narrative. We realise very early on that we are being asked to contribute to the meaning being made as the story unfolds, and that our engagement with the narrative is integral to the meaning it will eventually have (though I think we only realise the extent of this participation once we reach the end of the film). The consequence of this is that the spectator is left with no sense that this is a story that resides in the past or that has a discernible ending. The diegetic present insists within our viewing experience and, as I will argue, has consequences for the spectator's relationship to affect or pleasure in the film.

In considering the structure of the film, it seems impossible to put aside the centrality of the experience of masculine subjectivity that dominates the narrative. Our protagonist is a man who is trapped in an endless present, a man, who, we are told, has no capacity for new memories. The last thing we are told he remembers is his wife dying. He has no means of gauging the time that has elapsed since this traumatic event because of his condition. Leonard's present life is a constant round of recognising clues and deciphering puzzles in order to avenge the murder of his wife and sustain a sense of justice in a world of turmoil and confusion. The character here seems generic, fulfilling a role familiar to us from *film noir* as the disaffected flawed (male) hero struggling to assert justice in some shape or form in a muddled and confusing world that seems to thwart all his efforts. This critical strain within film theory is well known and links such representations of masculinity to the socio-historical context of post-WW2 America and the psychological and emotional difficulties implied in the necessary re-working of the experience of masculinity that the events of this time entailed. For Nolan, *Memento* is a contemporary example of *film noir*, and it would seem important to examine the contemporary context of masculinity in order to get to the bottom of what the film has to tell us about the experience of masculine subjectivity in an increasingly postmodern setting in which confusion can be hailed as multiplicity and the terror of disintegration is disavowed as an opportunity to flex our gender constructs in increasingly empowering ways.

At the heart of this film and its representation of masculinity lies an extraordinary and overwhelming sense of lack or emptiness that prompts me to think of Lacanian accounts of the subject and desire. Psychoanalytically, a lack in being is central to a gendered relation to subjectivity within the symbolic order that parallels a supposedly feminised relation to language and culture. The phallocentrism implicit in such readings testifies to a mode of reading that is politicised and contentious in almost equal measure. What happens to notions of masculinity in such a context? And how does *Memento* enable us to think through this conundrum in ways that help us to escape the recuperative strategies deployed when this psychoanalytic tale is put to work in defence of symbolic certainties?

In *Memento*, the male body functions as a prop, as a key for the spectator struggling to make sense of what they are seeing. This is particularly evident in the tattoos written on Leonard's body. The body here becomes a signifier for both Leonard and the spectator of that which eludes Leonard's memory and his capacity for representation. The act as a constant marker of the castratedness of the position occupied by Leonard in the film, a position that functions to underscore the sense that knowledge and its attendant sense of mastery in the world is perpetually absent in this

narrative. The tattoos themselves seem to spell out the failure of this mastery and might be seen as simplistic metaphors for contemporary masculinity ('Don't trust your weakness'; 'Memory is treachery'; 'Notes can be lost'). Through the tattoos and the film's play with them as mementoes of an event that can only ever perpetually be recalled rather than accepted and assigned to the past, the body becomes the site of the failure of a notion of masculine subjectivity that is premised on mastery and control. Through the tattoos, Leonard is marked by loss (the loss of his wife and the loss of the symbolic certainties of masculinity). The tattoos define for us a desire for revenge that can never adequately be symbolised. Leonard seems to be defined in terms of traumatic loss here, a loss which can be theorised in terms of the death drive and the motivations of aggression and compulsion to repeat that characterise it.

This, then, is a representation of masculinity that seems to be defined in the context of trauma. Leonard functions throughout the colour narrative as though he is endlessly trapped on the brink of the so-called second moment of trauma that is so crucial to the recognition of the prior moment of trauma to which it refers. The second moment of trauma can be defined as the moment in which the randomness of an event triggers memories of an earlier one which might never have come to consciousness had the later event not occurred (Lukacher, 1986: 35). As Laplanche and Pontalis point out, the connection between trauma and the death drive is fascinating. After trauma, the psychic apparatus struggles to immobilise immense quantities of excitation in an effort to restore the capacity for an engagement with the pleasure principle (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1988: 465). In *Memento*, the pleasure principle is endlessly deferred because of Leonard's condition. Unable to make new memories, Leonard is unable to master the dominance of the immense quantities of excitation prompted by his own moment of trauma, the moment of his wife's apparent murder. The problem for Leonard is that he is constantly at the point of recognition that his wife's murder accounts for his condition, but, because of his inability to make new memories, the fact or truth of the experience can never fully be grasped. As Laplanche and Pontalis suggest, in trauma, the memory of the first scene occasions an influx of stimuli that overwhelm the ego's defences (1988: 467). The traumatic nature of the first moment of trauma can only be ascribed to it after the fact. This is the principle of *nachträglichkeit* or deferred action. Leonard is trapped by the overwhelming stimuli associated with his condition and he can seemingly never attain such a deferral. Instead, he becomes trapped in a compulsion to repeat that amounts to an attempt to work out such a deferral. The overwhelming death drive that dominates the plot can be understood in relation to these psychic mechanisms. This is the narrative perspective that elicits our identification and empathy with Leonard, the perspective that ultimately betrays us when the twist kicks in at the end.

Leonard is revealed at the end of the film as the most unreliable of unreliable narrators. Our dawning realisation of his skewed psychological world permits the logic of truth that is perceived in the narrative to become riddled with holes and gaps. Our sudden comprehension in the film's final sequence (the narrative opening) prompts a realisation that Leonard's death drive is all-consuming and bound up with the possibilities of narrative resolution. Leonard's desire at the end/beginning to renew a need for a target in choosing Teddy and the deliberation on how and whether to allow himself to do this reveal a deception at the heart of the filmic representation of his character and this forces the spectator into action and re-action in order to comprehend the filmic affect. The film's apparently traumatic representation of masculinity which seems to function as an elaborate metaphor for the contemporary experience of masculinity is revealed here as fraudulent. Our identifications and empathies are undone as we take on the second moment of trauma for ourselves and realise that the premise of the film itself constitutes a traumatic rupture in our expectations of cinema. Leonard's duplicitousness and self-conscious desire at the end of the film to construct Teddy as his new target and his deliberation of how and whether to allow himself to do this, reveals a deception at the centre of the filmic address. This is a shock for the spectator. We have been encouraged to trust no one but Leonard throughout the narrative but at the end he is

revealed as the most untrustworthy character of all. His self-deception can be understood as trauma, but, I wish to argue, we are duped here. The representation of masculinity with which we have been engaging amounts to a *masquerade* of trauma. Our shock at the end of the film prompts us to return to the beginning in order to try to decipher the clues that might have rescued us. The tattooed body gives this duplicitousness away in flash shots that we are too slow to see on first viewing. The materiality of the film and filmic techniques collude to conceal moments of material textual confession that attest to the cruelty of the play with the spectator. There are at least two subliminal shots in the film that reveal the slippage in the narrative on careful viewing. It is, then, arguable, that the holes in this narrative contribute to our sense of the lack at the heart of it. As spectators, we are plunged at the end into a realisation that our identifications have been premised on this lack and that it is the structure of the narrative that has made this possible. This amounts to a kind of textual deceit, an undoing of the potentiality of cinematic pleasure. We are used to cinema addressing us in ways that allow us unthinking access to pleasure, but, in *Memento*, the possibility of pleasure depends on a willingness to engage with the specificity of the film's process of enunciation. We are asked to surrender our usual relation to story in order to access the potential for pleasure, but the trust we extend to cinematic technique in order to do this is shattered and revealed as a cynical manipulation of patterns of identification at the end of the film. We are left in a subjective relation to the film that at the very least parallels the psychic experience of trauma. In order to get the narrative joke, we need to have sat through it and got to the end in order to perceive it as an event. The revelation of the joke and that fact that it is on us prompts us to re-examine the events in question in order to have a sense of mastery over the narrative truth.

The sadism implicit in the textual motivation undoes our relation to what we have seen, convinces us to re-view in order to seek out a truth that is not readily discernible. One viewing is not enough. The pleasure of the film is altered by each viewing and, paradoxically, ever more frustrated by its insistence on rendering us incapable of making meaning. Leonard's compulsive repetition of events elicits similar behaviour in the spectator. Our capacity for memory of what we have witnessed is undone by the narrative structure. We become intrigued by the attempts to recall memories instead of seeking to recall the events that trigger them. The truth of history and our history in the text are ultimately missing from the film. We are positioned in the realm of *nachträglichkeit* in which no real textual event is available to us. The event is rendered in terms of experience, affect, in terms of a past whose meaning can only be realised in the present. This is why the narrative structure of the film takes the form it does. In identifying with Leonard, we leave ourselves little room to appreciate the meaning of the past because we collude in trapping ourselves into an endless present. The back and white sequences of the film contribute to this by seeming to present us with a form of truth rendered as confession. The forward progression of the narrative in these sequences helps to foster a sense of security in what we are reading as meaning. It encourages us to feel safe in the endless present of the colour narrative structure. What we are left with is a seemingly endless deferral of a solution to the puzzle whose possibility is undone by the ending of the film. As we realise that Leonard has been masquerading, that there is more to the truth of his experience and memory than the narrative structure leaves room for, we become aware of the ways in which we have limited our scrutiny of the truth. The perceived trauma of Leonard's existence suddenly becomes clear as we cross the threshold of our own second moment of trauma and realise the extent of the deception we have entered into. The trauma we have attributed to Leonard is displaced onto the spectator and experienced as affect that needs to be deflected through mastery. Repeated viewings, especially through DVD technology, enable us to gain some sense of control over the meaning of this film, situating and constructing us in a more familiar position in which it appears that we can take control of this process.

What *Memento* offers, then, is an extraordinary example of a play with notions of enunciation and *nachträglichkeit* by means of the masquerade of trauma. The backdrop for this playful rendition of the cinematic process is the contemporary context of masculinity as perceived as being in crisis,

and, *perception*, here, is the key to understanding the implications of this film for a notion of contemporary masculinity.

Recently, Juliet Mitchell has highlighted the fact that trauma vacillates between the poles of absolute absence and presence, between perception and non-perception. In short, she argues that it is necessary to distinguish between memory and perception when trying to comprehend the nature of trauma. In trauma, what returns is neither the past event nor the memory of it. Instead, it is the perception of a situation, event, or object that reminds the subject of a past event (2000: 315). Mitchell uses these observations as the basis for a series of claims relating to the experience of trauma and the possibility of male hysteria. She argues that in experiencing an absence of something that guarantees our survival, we experience a kind of totalising absence that is perceived as death. In this situation, crucially, we become what we need, we take on a guise in an effort to deflect the truth of the absence and its unbearable association with death. At the root of trauma and its deflection or recognition, then, lies hysteria, the source of the masquerade.

In *Memento*, Leonard can be seen as adopting an hysterical masquerade of trauma in order to deflect the overwhelming sense of emptiness implied by the fact of his condition. In never fully being able to step across the boundary or threshold of the second moment of trauma, Leonard is trapped in a sense of emptiness that is characterised as death and meaninglessness. His remarks at the end of the film relate to this. As the spectator begins to realise the extent of the textual deceit, Leonard comments that he has to believe that his actions have meaning. We realise that Leonard has taken on the mask of the man with a condition in order to deflect and project the sense of emptiness or Bion's 'nameless dread' that is the consequence of his being trapped in an incomplete experience of trauma. His memory cannot be formulated. He is trapped in the realm of perception. His condition becomes an hysterical reaction to this, and the textual collusion with Leonard's hysteria compounds our inability to comprehend.

What does this mean for the truth of the narrative and/or for the truth of Leonard's subjectivity? It no longer makes sense to see Leonard's experience in terms of trauma. The film's refusal of traditional story structure renders its discourse into that of the hysteric. The slippage from trauma to hysteria becomes the key to understanding the filmic discourse of masculinity. Its fragmentation and fracturing necessitates a degree of posturing around the difficulty of managing the disintegration of masculinity without sliding into femininity. The text is hystericised and this is experienced as a kind of textual trauma in which the spectator feels tricked, hijacked, twisted by the twist. Such a reading enables us to reconsider the film's play with contemporary notions of masculinity. When we see what we have *not* perceived in the film, we become shifting subjects, vacillating between poles of absence and presence that seem to thwart patterns of symbolisation, language and control. The shift away from Lenny's question 'so where am I?' upon waking near the beginning of the film to 'so where was I?' at the end of the film can be understood in these terms. It is a shift from the discourse of trauma to the discourse of the hysteric. Thus, though throughout the film the first moment of trauma seems to haunt both us and the narrative, it is the second moment that needs to be sought out, and Leonard's hysterical discourse is what enables the spectator to take up this responsibility.

In conclusion, what the narrative seems to imply is that masculinity is fictionalised as a kind of trauma on the contemporary scene when it ought to be read as hysteria. The marked male body and the role of masquerade in the film are reminiscent of cultural associations with femininity. (It is fascinating that in revealing the twist at the end of the film, the death of Leonard's wife is rendered less certain for us. It is as though in order for masculinity to be traumatised, Woman needs to be removed from her role as reflective guarantor of hegemonic male desire. She needs to become that which is lost: the trauma masks itself by displacing the violent gesture on to that which can be sacrificed. Once Leonard's condition is considered as hysterical, however, the possibility of the feminine is reinstated: it is as though these discourses of masquerade and hysteria need to be aligned with the feminine as psychaoanlysis has always suggested. We should wonder at

what this implies for the representation of masculinity here and perhaps reflect on its occupation of a space akin to that of the feminine, a space of transition and tentative exploration.) It is the experience of loss that is crucial to masculinity here. What is it that is lost? A fiction of masculinity and sameness? A fiction of the mastery of narrative? The mystery of this narrative seems to imply both of these, but it also rejects them as inadequate in terms of the puzzle it presents. Structurally, the film helps us to raise important questions about the nature of gender and the interpellation of the subject in a contemporary postmodern climate in which identity if ever more elusive and the fixities of psychic stability are rendered ever more impossible. Masculinity is arguably not traumatised in postmodernity. Instead, it adopts the guise of traumatic neurosis as an hysterical symptom. This has an effect on structures of viewing and patterns of knowledge that, arguably, undermine logocentrism and locate the specificity of the subject in the gap between memory and perception. It is in its play with these ideas that *Memento* arguably re-presents to us the psychic status of contemporary masculinity as adopting an hysterical response to notions of its perceived crisis.

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Masculine jealousies in *The End Of The Affair* (*)

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INTRODUCTION

As Caroline Bainbridge and I have discussed, it is widely argued that Western societies are currently witnessing a crisis of masculinity. The cultural binary oppositions that in the past have sustained the boundaries of gendered sexualities have been tested and have begun to shift and the old narratives of masculinity, and what it means to be a man are no longer convincing. This has a number of implications for images of masculinity in popular culture and popular cinema, where one can argue that the prevalence of images of male suffering and emotional crisis are part of a broader 'cultural undoing' of masculinity. So how are we to theorise such a cultural response? From a feminist perspective, do these images of masculinity in crisis represent a meaningful shift in which new spaces for masculinity can emerge, which are less narcissistic and which can exist and live with difference, without resorting to strategies of mastery to overcome the other? As Caroline Bainbridge has discussed in her paper, postmodern culture does provide potential spaces for new, transitional formations of masculinity, which point to something new and different. However, as she also argued, these spaces may be reigned in by hegemonic discourses, which work defensively against masculinities, which trouble the boundaries of the old patriarchal moral order.

This paper explores these tensions, through an interdisciplinary framework, that draws on psychoanalytic and cultural theories to explore the representation of masculine jealousies and difference in Neil Jordan's 1999 film *The End Of The Affair*. I will also look at the discourses about the film and its cultural reception in reviews and articles in UK press, where fantasies of nation, Englishness and jealous possession predominate. I use *The End Of The Affair*, as a case study to explore the ambiguity of cinematic representations of jealous masculinities. This ambiguity connotes a mixed cultural response to masculinity in crisis, which reflects the jealous doubts and fears about the loss of male possession, which accompany a new reflexive awareness of the contradictions and costs of more traditional definitions of masculinity. However, the transitional, ambiguous quality

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of these representations are countered and potentially closed down in its cultural reception by hegemonic discourses within the UK press. Their responses to the film were shot through with anxieties about the potential failures of masculinity, the loss of mastery, and the fear of otherness. Interestingly, the language of jealousy and betrayal was a theme of these press reviews, in which anxieties about difference were encoded through the discourse of Englishness and nation. For purposes of clarification I shall first turn to the relationship between masculinity and jealousy.

MASCULINE JEALOUSIES

One definition of the crisis of masculinity is that it is about coming to terms with this notion of loss and a more flawed vision of its self (Butler, 2000; Cook, 1982; Radstone, 1995). Jealousy provides a useful case study to explore this, because it tests the ability to cope with the complex emotions and anxieties that arise in relation to wounded narcissism and feelings of loss. Jealousy has historically played a key role in shaping Western masculinities, and guarding the social and emotional boundaries of men (Baumgart, 1990; Mullen, 1991; Stearns, 1988; Yates, 2000). From a psychoanalytic perspective, it is possible to speak of a jealous sensibility on the part of men, where possession of the phantasy phallus has played a central role in the shaping of defensive masculinities and the negation of femininity as other.

Psychoanalytic theory argues that while ambivalence lies at the heart of subjectivity, a central ontological tension of human identities is about learning to live with difference, rather than to deny or entirely remove it (Craib, 1994; Laplanche & Pontalis, 1988). This is potentially fraught with tensions, conflicts and irrational desires. It is the analysis of these struggles, which underpins a psychodynamic perspective on the politics of identity and the conflicts of sexual difference (Frosh, 1994, 1997). The study of male jealousies provides a useful lens through which to study the concept of identity and (sexual) difference, as jealousy contains both love and hate and so is the proto-typical ambivalent emotion (Yates, 2000).

In psychoanalytic and social terms, jealousy tests one's capacity to cope with difference and the separateness of the object. Psychoanalytic accounts argue that normal, healthy jealousy is characterised by an ability to tolerate ambivalence (Fenichel, 1946: 512-513). In tracing jealous feelings back to the unresolved conflicts of the Oedipus complex and for Klein (1957) the depressive position, classical psychoanalysis places jealousy at the heart of its narrative of the ambivalent feeling subject. In this sense, psychoanalytic discourse argues that jealousy is a fact of life, and an extremely painful, if normal unhappiness that has to be endured (Baumgart, 1990; Craib, 1994; Freud, 1922, 1917). Following on from this, one can argue that certain forms of jealous feelings can provide evidence of the ability to cope with emotional ambivalence (Hinshelwood, 1991: 341). It may be a sign that one is able to tolerate the kind of internal conflict that occurs when encountering difference and otherness. I apply this model of jealousy to Bollas's (1993) model of a 'good-enough Oedipus complex', which he associates with the subject's capacity to tolerate psychic complexity. Bollas's approach can applied in order to think more positively about the potentialities of contemporary masculinities as it implies the capacity to tolerate otherness and the complexities of difference.

However, more extreme and overly possessive forms of masculine jealousy – or the unconscious denial of jealousy altogether, may also be read as symptomatic of a destructive narcissistic defence against some imagined threat to the self and a fragile over-precarious identity (Fenichel 1946: 512). These more destructive jealousy scenarios present a more pessimistic picture regarding the psychic narcissistic underpinning of masculinity and the possibilities of change. The implication is that at moments such as these, the crisis of masculinity has not brought about an open-ness to change, but rather, has evoked a more petrified, hysterical response. The tensions between these different jealous positions, which may also overlap in different instances, also reflect the tensions of our debate regarding the hegemonic significance of hysterical masculinities as a cultural form.

From a socio-cultural perspective, sexual jealousy has in the past been socially and legally sanctioned in Europe as the male prerogative, and as a means to defend the integrity of men. Throughout the 20th Century, however, the rules of entitlement and possession have changed and the cultural codes surrounding male jealousies are now often ambiguous. In psychoanalytic and cultural terms, this also opens up new spaces for a different kind of response when faced with the uncertainties of potential jealous scenarios.

It is not surprising that if men are finding it hard to cope with the changes and losses of late modernity, then jealousy is one of the main places where such anxieties might emerge and find representation in popular culture. The study of popular cinema provides a useful lens through which to explore masculine jealousies, as jealous Oedipal struggles have occupied an important role in the history of Western narrative cinema (Lebeau, 2001; Mulvey, 1975). However, the possessive gaze of the hero and the emotional and moral outcomes of jealous triangles are now often less certain and far more ambiguous than in previous years. In order to illustrate and explore these issues and themes in more depth, I now turn to *The End Of The Affair*.

CASE STUDY: *THE END OF THE AFFAIR*

The End Of The Affair (1999) is a drama about a passionate adulterous love affair in London during World War 2. The film is based on the 1951 novel of the same name by Graham Greene, and is directed and adapted by Neil Jordan. It stars Ralph Fiennes as the jealous lover Maurice Bendrix, Stephen Rea as the husband Henry and Julianne Moore as the wife and lover, Sarah. The film does not offer the spectator any comfortable identificatory positions within the jealous triangle. Instead, it opens up critical spaces for imagining a different kind of settlement between the rivalrous parties concerned, and potentially invites a more emotionally complex response from the spectator. However, as I go on to discuss, the film received a mixed response in the UK press and its textual ambiguities unsettled the British critics. One can read this as a defensive territorial response to the potentiality of space made available through the film's exploration of jealousy.

HYSTERICAL BENDRIX; REFLEXIVE JEALOUS HERO OR DRAMA QUEEN?

The jealousy of the leading male protagonist, Maurice Bendrix, occupies a central role in the narrative and provides a good example of a more nuanced, post-modern portrayal of jealous masculinity. Although the story belongs to Bendrix, his narrative is constantly de-centred and undermined by other voices and by the events that take place. Throughout the film, Bendrix struggles to know everything, and to possess all the facts, but he doesn't and can't. Bendrix's preoccupation with his own jealousy is a major theme throughout the film and provides a central narrative focus for his account of jealous loss and desire. Bendrix's jealousy resonates at a number of levels; the search for the lost object, a quest for knowledge and truth and the lacking jealous subject who projects everything onto the idealised other.

Bendrix's relationship to his own jealousy is paradoxical because while he seems to be utterly taken up with his jealous feelings, he is nevertheless able to in effect stand back and observe them, to use his skills as a writer to record and analyse them. Bendrix's ambiguous jealous sensibility embodies a mixture of character traits associated with modernism and postmodernism. For example, as a writer, he is in many ways, the postmodern subject par excellence, who, in effect, is able to deconstruct himself as he tells the story, highlighting the performative nature of masculinity. For the spectator, this provides the space for a more critical relationship to the jealous protagonist, as one is invited to identify and question him at the same time.

Bendrix's angry insecurity and quarrelsome manner may make him an 'unlikely hero' (N. Jordan, *Time Out*, 12-19/1/2000, p. 22). But he nevertheless offers the audience an example of reflexive, feeling-ful masculinity, as throughout the film he constantly articulates his jealousy in the mode of a Freudian confessional, and shares with us even his most nasty feelings of jealous possession. In this way, he is at once all surface and depth, and this helps to produce more varied and critical spaces for audience identifications. However, in main, the more complex and nuanced portrayal of Bendrix's jealousy is achieved at the expense of the female protagonist, whose subjectivity is given less narrative depth and instead is idealised in a fairly traditional manner. A section of the narrative is told from her point of view, and is narrated by her in the form of a voice over. However, what we *see* is *his* vision of what she is saying and so her story is mediated by his interpretation of events. In a sense then, in giving *his* interpretation of *her* story, he also steals her narrative, something that reinforces Bendrix's theft of the diary within the story itself. In so doing, he also excludes her from the new potential space he now occupies.

This scenario illustrates the debate we cited earlier about whether recent representations of a 'new' more feeling-ful masculinity in popular culture signify a substantial cultural shift, or whether such representations merely point to something more circular and superficial. Do such images of emotional masculinity point negatively to a form of 'melodramatic' masculinity based more on an empty and superficial identification with the feminine, as in the form of a hysterical mimicry, or in a more Kleinian vein, in the form of an envious appropriation? One could argue that in the case of Bendrix in *The End Of The Affair*, it is his story of emotional unhappiness that remains dominant throughout. Like an emotional transvestite, he steals her clothes and vicariously, she is given space to become a player in Bendrix's psychodrama of jealousy and lost romance.

HOMOEROTICISM AND RIVALRY; THE TENSIONS OF SAMENESS AND DIFFERENCE

However, the film does challenge more traditional patriarchal narratives of jealousy, which more usually involves two men jealously hating and killing each other over a woman. The rivalry between the husband and lover is portrayed less rigidly than is normally the case, and the boundaries between the two are men more fluid, as they end up living together and finding friendship with one another. Freud (1922) argues that there is a close relationship between the repression of homosexuality and morbid jealousy and rivalry. This has key implications for representations of jealousy and the toleration of sexual difference. *The End Of The Affair* does present the possibility of a different outcome between the jealous men. For example, Bendrix (the jealous lover) ceases to hate his rival Henry (the husband) and adopts a close affectionate relationship with him instead. Thus, from a Freudian perspective, the affection between the two men is less defended in its depiction of masculinity (and by implication, the repression of homosexuality appears lessened), resulting in a withdrawal of negative projections between the rivalrous parties concerned.

This ending would suggest a shift from what Leslie Fielder (1970: 348) has described as the "violent repression of homoeroticism in the History of Hollywood films". As a number of feminist scholars have since documented, the repression of homoeroticism and its projection onto female characters in the form of the masterful gaze, has been a recurring theme in the history of patriarchal cinema. However, the authoritarian denial of homosexuality has also been associated with violence between male characters, where for example, 'male buddy movies' in particular, blur the boundary, however, "between pejoration and titillation" (Radstone, 1995: 163). Representations of destructive male rivalry in jealousy films can also be seen in this light and can be viewed as an authoritarian defence against homosexuality and the differences associated with femininity.

However, in *The End Of The Affair*, the Jealous ending is more ambiguous and promises a different settlement between the parties concerned, which in turn has implications for the ways in which masculinity is proposed and imagined. On the one hand, the lessening of the projections

between the two men at the end of the film implies an acceptance of sameness between them; but it also emphasises their difference in relation to other models of rivalry, where the masculinity of the jealous subject and rival is more usually constructed as different, and as a defence against any possible desire between them.

Yet it is still the case that the positive aspects of the jealous ending in *The End Of The Affair* is compromised and comes at a cost. As I mentioned earlier, the portrayal of male soul searching and bonding is arguably at the expense of the female protagonist Sarah who in the end dies. In contrast to Deborah Kerr who played the role of Sarah in an earlier 1955 film version, Julian Moore's portrayal of the role is more disembodied and saintly. Her subjectivity is given less space and has less narrative depth than the lover and the husband, who in the end, literally embrace over her dead body. So although the representation of male rivalry does appear to open up new spaces for a good-enough jealousy, which mitigates against the desire for mastery, this is hegemonically countered by the idealised depiction of Sarah, whose saintly demise does seem to offer a solution for the 'failing' masculinities depicted on screen. Indeed, one can argue that her demise may be essential to it.

In this film we see two kinds of 'failing' masculinity, firstly in the guise of the hysterical jealous lover, Bendrix and secondly in the guise of the depressed and jealous cuckolded husband Henry. In parallel with Julian Moore's mannered impersonation of 1940's upper middle class English femininity, both masculinities are represented through the trope of the English gentlemen. As I now go on to discuss, it was this theme of Englishness, together with the question of its authenticity, which found most expression in the publicity reviews around the film.

NEIL JORDAN AS THE OUTSIDER

The more complex portrayal of male jealousy in *The End Of the Affair* is related to the subtlety of Greene's original book, but also to Jordan's screen play and his interpretation of the novel. Jordan is renowned for making controversial 'crossover' films, which appeal to both art house and mass entertainment audiences (e.g. *Mona Lisa* 1986, *The Crying Game*, 1992, *Interview with the Vampire*, 1994, *The Butcher Boy* 1997). In interviews, Jordan positions himself somewhat romantically as 'the outsider' to the British establishment and he draws on the discourses of authenticity and nation, but in an oppositional way, to discuss jealousy both as a marker of 'real' male passion, and also as marker of national difference between the repressed English and the more liberated Irish:

> "It was very interesting making this film as an Irish person, because our relationship to emotion in language is far more combative. We have extreme explosions of emotion. For me to be dealing with this degree of understatement was fascinating.... The image means much more. It's a very un-Irish thing…. The Standard English accent is part of a culture which is designed to conceal emotion" (*Time Out*, 12-19/1/2000, pp. 20-22).

Jordan argues that Greene did not conform to the model of the emotionally repressed Englishman, and in this respect, Jordan identifies with, and says he feels a certain empathy for the man and his work. Jordan infers that Greene was (like him) the 'outsider' in terms of British masculinity, and he points to the unconventional eroticism of his relationship with his lover, the "decadent" Catherine Walston as evidence of this (*Time Out*, ibid.).

ENGLISHNESS, NATION AND THE STRUGGLE IN THE UK PRESS

However, Jordan's critical interpretation and treatment of Englishness in the film and his unconventional adaptation of Greene's work caused a certain amount of consternation in the UK

press. Just as Neil Jordan positions himself and appears to identify with the predicament of the lover and the romantic outsider, the UK press responded like angry cuckolds, and put up a more spirited jealous defence of the object, the object being Graham Greene, and in particular, Greene as a signifier of Englishness. The desire to re-coup and control the potential unpleasures of the text and its losses was thus dealt with in the UK press, by focussing possessively on Graham Greene as a part of English heritage.

For example, in the reviews, discourses of jealousy and nation converge about the fidelity of the film to Greene's novel and the national authenticity of the book's adaptation to the screen. The English press also position Jordan as an outsider, but in more negative terms as a "foreigner" (Andrews, 2000, p. 18), trespassing on the hallowed ground of Graham Greene, who they claim for their own. It is as if Jordan the Irish "outsider" had trespassed on and taken liberties with Greene's novel and the British literary tradition, which for them, he appeared to represent (Case, 2000, pp. 20-22; Patterson, 1999, p. 27).

There was criticism from reviewers about (the liberties he had taken with the plot, especially in terms of) the "needless sexual reunion" of Bendrix and Sarah's trip to Brighton (Bradshaw, 2000, p. 4). It is as if this excessive representation of "infidelity", itself constituted an infidelity on the part of Jordan to Greene's novel, and it appears to have offended the sentiments of certain overly English possessive critics who feel that Jordan betrayed the authentic English literary heritage of Graham Greene.

The inferred jealous battle for possession of Greene's literary heritage is of course absurd, given that he was an international writer (and in fact wrote the novel while staying with his mistress on the very sunny un-English Isle of Capri). However, issues of truth and national authenticity, which is meant to be a defining feature of the heritage film genre, were a constant theme in the reviews. For example, English critics believed that despite all the authentic period visual details of the props, scenes and costumes and so on, the film nevertheless presents an inaccurate historical picture of Englishness during the Second World War. There was criticism that the clipped English voices of the American actor Julianne Moore and the Irish Stephen Rea were a trifle over done (Quirke, *Independent On Sunday*, 13/2/00). Related to this was the criticism about the choice of an American to play Sarah and an Irishman to play the cuckolded husband. In contrast to the very English Peter Cushing (the husband in an earlier version of the film), Stephen Rea's portrayal of the husband was too weak and depressed, and he didn't come across as jealous enough. But the choice of Fiennes for the part of Bendrix (whom Greene originally based on him self) received universal praise from the critics (Bradshaw, 2000, p. 2). Fiennes' interpretation was universally praised amongst other things, because he is and *appears* to be so English, and his interpretation of Bendrix/Greene was said to be all the more authentic for that (Bradshaw, 2000, p. 4).

The historian Raphael Samuals (1994) argues negatively, that a "cult of authenticity" exists in Heritage films that work to legitimate and reproduce a particular idealised and reactionary view of nation and of that nation's historical past. More broadly, one can argue that the desire for authenticity and a fidelity to 'the real' is related to the loss of faith in the narratives that once defined and codified the myths and patriarchal certainties in the West. However, in *The End Of The Affair*, this loss of faith, together with its disorientating emotional connotations, are both evoked and problematised in a number of ways, which touch on anxieties about the strangeness of a settlement where the certainties of the borders, once constituted by the struggle for mastery rivalrous possession, are left open and unguarded. However, as discussed, the UK press responded defensively to the loss of mastery, and the tensions of difference implied by these new spaces. This cultural resistance, together with the unconscious anxieties underpinning it, were articulated and channelled through the discourses of jealousy, Englishness and nation.

Such tensions and fears have a number of implications for the cultural shaping of masculinities, and as discussed in our papers, the potentiality of new spaces in popular cinematic texts. In psycho-analytic terms, these resistances also point to the potential psychic anxieties about the strangers

'within' and without, and the imaginary others, which threaten the overly narcissistic borders of the Western patriarchal imagination (Kristeva, 1991). Learning to live with ambiguity and difference is easier said than done, but a necessary step in learning to tolerate the personal and political uncertainties of contemporary cultural life.

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Black statements: Sylvia Plath's "Little Fugue" and Paul Celan's "Death Fugue"

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In this paper I will compare Plath's "Little Fugue" with Celan's "Death Fugue" as poems of mourning and attempts at restitution that describe a primary scene of loss. Both poets use metaphors of the Holocaust, an event so unspeakable in its horror that they must retreat into surreal symbolism to confront absence. It's difficult to talk about Holocaust imagery in Plath without reference to "Daddy". I will refer to that poem, but my primary focus will be on "Little Fugue".

Celan's parents came from Galicia and Bukovina the most eastern part of the Autro-Hungarian Empire. Born in 1920, he was brought up as a Jew, albeit not a particularly religious one. At the insistence of his mother, High German was spoken in his home but he spoke Romanian at school and later learned Yiddish, Hebrew, and French. He lost both of his parents, his father dying of typhus in a camp and his mother shot by the Germans. Sent to a labor camp, he was forced to shovel and to build roads. After escaping, he returned to Czernowitz where "Death Fugue" was first published in Romanian at the end of the war with the title, "Death Tango". In 1947 the poem was published in a collection in German.

From this brief personal history it can be seen that Celan's poem, written at a time when the losses and devastation he experienced were still very fresh, can be described as a poem of witness as well as a poem of mourning. Mourning exists on several levels: personal, the loss of his parents; cultural, the loss of country; linguistic, loss of his mother tongue, German; and collective, those lost in the Holocaust. Such specific claims of loss cannot be made for Plath's "Little Fugue". Yet, there is, I think, a political context in which she bears witness and a personal one, the loss of her father. So it is not suprising that the two poems have much in common.

Celan's poem, written in 1944, is based on direct reports of the death camps from returning survivors and his parents' deaths, while Nazi imagery in Plath's poem, written in October, 1962, is derived from second-hand post-war sources. But both poems are elegies that express melancholy through metaphorical surreal discontinuities. Additionally, both poets use the elegiac form against

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a background of German culture that they love and despise. In both poems an authoritarian figure represents German cruelty, as personified by Celan's camp commandant and Plath's father. Each poet voices despair and anger over cultural and personal abandonment.

The two poems' most obvious link is the word "fugue" in the poems' titles. According to Webster's, «The musical term refers to a contrapuntal musical composition in which one or two melodic themes are repeated or imitated by successively entering voices and developed in a continuous interweaving of the voice parts into a well defined single structure». Another meaning, from the Italian fuga is a running away, flight. And finally «a fugue is a pathological disturbance of consciousness during which the patient forms acts of which he appears to be conscious but of which on recovery he has no recollection» (WID 918). A discussion of the different ways in which "fugue" applies to each poem will reveal how «Little Fugue» and «Death Fugue» are attempts at mourning by Celan for his parents and by Plath for her lost father.

Celan's "Death Fugue" begins with a seductive rhythm that he prolongs in a repetitive refrain: «Black milk of daybreak we drink it at evening/ we drink it at midday and morning we drink it at night/ we drink and we drink» (F 31). The "we" of the poem is the voice of the victims whose horrors are hidden beneath the musicality of the opening phrases. Felstiner sees this metaphor as «bittersweet, nullifying the nourishment vital to humankind» but suggests also that black milk may not be a metaphor at all but a liquid camp inmates were given (F 33). A more real association is of black milk as ash from the crematorium. So perhaps Celan is describing a real place where «reality overtook the surreal» (F 33). The lack of nourishment of the "we" forms the crux of the poem's fugal form as Celan repeats it at the beginning of the second, third and fifth stanzas. Celan's deprivation is also voiced through the inmates. Like them, he has deprived of "mother's milk".

Celan was very close to his mother and felt guilty that he did not protect her from deportation and her subsequently being shot as unfit for work. He wrote several elegies for his mother, "Winter" and "Black Flakes" a few years before "Death Fugue". These poems are tender. In the line, «I sought out my heart so it might weep» his grief is evident (F 19). In "Death Fugue" tenderness turns into bitterness because mother's milk has not only dried up, it has been poisoned. Celan is angry at himself for abandoning her. We might say that the poem's deceptively lyric and romantic cadences are Celan's fugue-like attempt to repress his feelings about how his mother died, the mother he desperately misses and wants to remember in her pre-war identity. As Leonard Olschner has observed, «The poem *Todesfuge* represents an attempt to order the unorderable, to grasp the perfidy of the murder machinery, and also to define a mode of expression to exorcise the language-German, the language of his mother and his mother's murderers» (Olschner 80 in Friedlander). It could be argued as well that the poem as a psychological fugue laments the German amnesia or lack of mourning for the many mothers who were murdered by the Nazis.

Eric L. Santner has argued that the "Final Solution" need to be theorized under the sign of massive trauma, meaning that these events must be confronted and analysed in their capacity to endanger and overwhelm the composition and coherence of individual and collective identities that enter into their deadly field of force (Santner in Friedlander 151). Robert J. Lifton sees the survivor's task as «that of formulation, evolving new inner forms that include the traumatic event» (Lifton in Friedlander 152).

Freud theorizes:

> We describe as traumatic any excitations from outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield (*Reizschutz*). … It seems to me that the concept of trauma necessarily implies a connection of this kind with a breach in an otherwise efficacious barrier against stimuli. Such an event as an external trauma is bound to provoke a disturbance on a large scale in the functioning of the organism's energy and to set in motion every possible defense measure. At the same time, the pleasure principle is for the moment put out of action (Freud PP 29-30).

Thus we can look at Celan's representation of evil in "Death Fugue" as originating in massive trauma and the poem as an attempt to integrate this trauma into the psyche and repair the damage. The poem reflects Freud's notion of the work of mourning which is the way «human beings restore the regime of the pleasure principle in the wake of trauma or loss» (Santner in Friedlander 146). The repetition in the poem of «we drink we drink» and «black milk of day break» embodies Freud's repetition compulsion, the necessity for the trauma to be repeated (MM Freud). Celan repeats, «We shovel a grave in the air» three times and a fourth again with the variation of «a grave in the clouds». Here the trauma is addressed through metaphor that disguises the terrible reality that the graves in the air as well as the clouds are ashes rising from the crematorium. The repetition underscores Thanatos as the instinctual force of the poem.

The murderers are symbolized by the camp commandant who «lives in the house he plays with his vipers he writes/ he writes when it grows dark to Deutschsland your golden hair Margareta». He is a sadist who «grabs for the rod in his belt he swings it his eyes are blue». Here we have the cold Nordic eye that Plath will use in her description of her German father. The commandant also «whistles his hounds to come close», a reminder that Germans frequently called Jews dogs and dogs, men. «He whistles his Jews into rows has them shovel a grave in the ground» and «he orders us strike up and play for the dance». This is a metaphorical reconstruction of the fact that «the condemned were forced to sing sad music while others dug graves» (Jewish Black Book Committee 308-309). The trauma of the entire Jewish people is re-enacted in Celan's description of the "master". And yet, despite the harsh depiction, the rhythm of the lines reduces the barbarity to a nursery rhyme, especially, «He shouts jab at the earth deeper you there you others sing up and play. He shoots you with shot made of lead shoots you level and true». These lines bear the nursery rhyme rhythm of lines in Plath's "Daddy", «The snows of the Tyrol, the clear beer of Vienna/ Are not very pure or true» (CP 233). Felstiner says that in translating Celan the icy Nordic eye called for a folksy idiom and a hackneyed rhyme (Felsteiner in Freidlander 252). Folksy suggests Grimm's fairy tales, the thrill and fear in their being read to you as a child, the "*volk*" of German culture and with the repetition of drinking, the German beer halls. Here's where I think Celan's language, like Plath's, tries to evoke the primitive, the Id, in confronting the terrible father, the "master" and the trauma of his cruelty. Of course in Plath it's fantasy or imagined sadism but that doesn't negate the feeling.

Both "Daddy" and "Death Fugue" are incantations as if both poets are trying to exorcise their dead. For the camp commandant is death, and in Celan's poem more than the camp commander's murders are represented, all of German culture is indicted. The poem's title evokes Bach's *Art of the Fugue*; its rhythms emulate it. Felstiner points out that the title also «sets this poem within, although desperately against the grain of, a profound tradition in German culture: the association of music with death, as in Wagner's *Liebestod*, Schubert's *Erlkonig* and Bach's *Komm Susser Tod*». «*Spielt susser Tod*, says the "master" in Celan's *Todesfuge*, "play death more sweetly"» (Felsteiner in Friedlander 241). Thus the work of overcoming trauma is collective and individual. The cruelty of mass murder must be faced by Celan whose parents died at Nazi hands and who was made to do forced labor, but the events described in the poem were experienced by millions.

Before moving on to "Little Fugue", two more points about "Death Fugue" that I see as part of the mourning process embedded in the poem's rhythms and speech. First the commandant is seen in the action of writing to his wife or girlfriend, Margareta, and these lines are repeated three times «he writes/ he writes when it grows dark to Deutschland your golden hair Margareta/ he writes it». Deutschland, rather than Germany, evokes "Deutschland Uber Alles", a song that will forever connote the Third Reich. Its music is the subtext of the poem as the setting of the camp symbolizes the most heinous crime of the Nazis, genocide. Dennis Schmidt notes, «German remained always the language of his confrontation with death, the language of real annihilation» (Schmidt in Fiorettos 115). But what is the camp commander writing? Would he be relating the terrible acts he is committing? I think not. Celan's act of writing the poem becomes an act of witness to disclose

murder that cannot be made by the Jews who shortly will be in the graves they are digging. To bear witness is to mourn.

Secondly, the closure of the last couplet of the poem when Celan invokes the golden haired Teutonic Margareta alongside the dark-haired Sulamith, the beloved in the "Song of Songs", may or may not be a preliminary return to the pleasure principle in rejoining Jewish and German identities. But Margareta reminds us of Faust's heroine and signals the bargain that the camp commandant has made with the devil. Celan is again representing his mother tongue as debased. Could there be some restitution in the figure of two women who represent reconciliation thus making it possible for him to speak German without being reminded of Hitler rather than Goethe? Felstiner thinks otherwise saying, «Paul Celan's Death Fugue still ends purely, by doing what Nazism attempted to forbid, naming the other. Archaic, inalienable, truly Shulamith has the last word, not to mention the silence resounding after» (254). Or is the last couplet the final irony of the poem, namely that the German past and language is forever tainted? This is why the Hebrew woman, Sulamith, has the last word. This may suggest a moving on from the loss of his mother and the desecration of his mother tongue to a less painful identity. Celan moved to Bucharest in 1945, Vienna in 1947 and Paris in 1948 where he wrote exclusively in German. As a permanent exile, the meaning of fugue as flight in "Death Fugue" takes on a new resonance. In the final year of his life Celan visited Israel, possibly a last effort to master grief and reconstruct a new self, where the Hebrew language would become the mother tongue. With a new symbolic mother he might complete the mourning process. Paul Celan committed suicide in Paris in 1970.

Plath's poems describe a horrendous historical event that she did not personally participate in, as Celan did. In fact, Plath's use of Holocaust imagery has been unacceptable to many early critics of her work such as Irving Howe, George Steiner and M. L. Rosenthal since the loss of her father at the age of eight was an individual loss. Therefore, how can she appropriate images of mass murder and Nazism for her personal mourning? Susan Gubar has suggested about what such readers feel, «Plath's non-Jewishness as well as her lack of a personal stake in the disaster made her speaking on behalf of the victims appear a desecration» (Gubar 178). Elie Wiesel has said, «no one has the right to speak on their behalf» (FKM 194). But critics like Terrence de Pres have asserted of those who write about the Holocaust who have not experienced it «We cannot *not* imagine» (PD 228).

I would say that Plath made use of Nazi barbarity to express her personal suffering, most notably her father's death when she was eight, but in doing so she also described the victims of Nazism's experience of terror. Furthermore, there is ample evidence of Plath's awareness of and sensitivity to the Holocaust as a woman born in America in 1932 whose childhood years were the years of Hitler's rise to power and World War II. As the granddaughter of Austrians, she grew up in a German-speaking household with a father who was a German immigrant and a mother of Austrian descent. She explained in an interview that because of her origins «my concern with concentration camps and so on is uniquely intense» (Orr 169). At the time she attended high school in Wellesley, Massachusetts, and Smith College, many books and films about the Holocaust were being produced such as *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Furthermore, Plath associated her father's death in 1940 with World War II. Therefore, I think it is unfair to see her use of Holocaust imagery as primarily voyeuristic and narcissistic. She was aware of, and perhaps, because of her background, even felt guilt about the extermination of the Jews. Her imaginative expression of mourning arises from this historical context.

In "Little Fugue" Plath tries to open up communication with the dead. Whereas Celan's elegy is speaking for the dead, Plath's elegy is an attempt to speak to the dead. The yew as Plath knew from her study of Robert Graves *The White Goddess* is «the death-tree in all European countries» (Graves 193). With the yew tree as a channel to death, and the poem's contrapuntal structure of images of black and white, and its repetition of "Yew" and "You", the poem, like Celan's, is a death fugue. As Celan repeated «We drink and we drink», thereby becoming one of the soon to be dead with «graves in the air». Like the black boot of Plath's "Daddy", the black images throughout

“Little Fugue”, crystallized in the black yew tree, can cannote the death-bringing black shirted Fascists. The second line «Cold clouds go over» is the image of white, a blankness or «death in life» state that counterpoints the black images of death.

Plath plays on and repeats the word “yew”, interchanging images of the yew tree and the pronoun “you” to address the dead father. As Tim Kendall observes, «His voice is the voice speaking through the yew hedge, “black and leafy”» (Kendall 76). It seems to me there is an implicit wish in the poem to join the father in death, as in Celan’s poem there is his latent desire to join the dead mother in the image of “black milk”. Recalling the “you” that she repeats in “Daddy”, in a rhyming pattern, «You do not do», «I have had to kill you», «I used to pray to recover you», and her use, the German familiar form du, it is clear she is trying to recover her father. The poem is about the impossibility of communicating with him through any of the senses. As Jahan Ramazini points out, «Whereas the dead could often be seen, heard, and spoken to in traditional elegies, this elegy opens with an oblique representation of the deafness, dumbness and blindness of both mouner and mourned» (Ramazini 273).

If we trace the varied forms of address as embodied in the “yew” we see in the opening line that the father is making a recriminatory gesture, «The yew’s black fingers wag». An earlier draft used “agitate” rather than “wag”, suggesting the speaker’s troubled state of mind. In the seventh stanza the poet sees the father’s voice, a confusion of the senses, which is like the tree’s «Black and leafy», and «A yew hedge of orders». Reading “yew” as “you” we note the father’s dictatorial control over the daughter. The yew’s wagging black fingers become increasingly accusatory as the yew becomes more threatening.

The line that follows «Gothic and barbarous, pure German», makes the father’s characteristics like those of the Germans in World War II, as Plath repudiates the uncivilized elements of the Nazis through her own particular dead. In the next line, «Dead men cry from it», we can see the most direct correlation with Celan’s “Death Fugue” and the Holocaust. I agree with Susan Gubar that while «Plath undoubtedly used the disaster to express her personal suffering, in the process she also illuminated the experiences of civilians persecuted under the Nazi’s genocidal rule» (Gubar 182).

In the seventh stanza Plath conflates the yew and Christ, «The yew, my Christ then,/ Is it not as tortured?» Linda Bundtzen views this Christ image as «an unconscious pattern of guilt» (Bundtzen 192). Tim Kendall argues that, «Christ, like the yew, is an intermediary, sacrificing himself so that the sinful might be spared the wrath of God the Father. Implicitly, the yew plays a similar role, protecting the speaker from another kind of patriarchal cruelty» (Kendall 77). Or could it be that the yew (father) and Christ (daughter) are equally implicated in this scenario of “black statements” with the father as death and the daughter as perpetual mourner? To return for a moment to “Death Fugue” this can be compared to the sacrificed Jews and the death-wielding commandant joined together in the dance of death. In both cases for each speaker, therapeutic mourning becomes impossible.

According to Melanie Klein, «In normal mourning the individual reintrojects and reinstates… his loved parents who are felt to be his “good” inner objects. His inner world, the one he has built up from his earliest days onwards in his phantasy was destroyed when the actual loss occurred. The rebuilding of this inner world characterizes the successful work of mourning» (Klein 354). In “Little Fugue” the daughter cannot connect with the father and her anger in not being able to reconstitute him means she has to try to reach him over and over and therefore continually mourn. The “Gothic” as a description of him refers not only to him as a German but also to the text of Plath’s poems as a form of writing to him over and over. Freud termed this “repetition compulsion” when the mourner must relive the original trauma. In Celan’s “Death Fugue” the act of remembering his dead mother and the circumstances of her death is so painful that Celan wrote, as Peter Szondi said on «the terrain of death and mourning» (Szondi 388). The unresolved mourning meant that

after “Death Fugue”, he tried to write poems in a language that gives no words for what is happening (Fynsk 162).

Plath’s failure to introject an idealized image of her father has her imagining him as a butcher during the Great War in a California delicatessen lopping sausages that are «Red mottled, like cut necks». In an earlier draft she wrote «like cut throats» followed by «The throats of Jews», which she crossed out. Clearly she identified with the victims of Nazi brutality showing striving for some insight into its horror. Plath’s father was a scientist with a Ph.D. and this memory might have led Plath to recreate him as a figure like Dr. Menegle who experimented on camp inmates.

The “you” in stanza ten that follows describes the father who has disappeared in «Great silence of another order» that is his death. «I was seven, I knew nothing», a parody of the Germans’ defensive «I didn’t know about the camps», is a denial of her inheritance from her father. Melanie Klein writes «When hatred of the loved lost object… gets the upper hand in the mourner, this not only turns the loved lost person into a persecutor, but shakes the mourner’s belief in his good inner objects as well. The shaken belief in the good objects disturbs most painfully the process of idealization, which alone can save the ego from anxieties that it will destroy itself and the loved dead person through its sadism» (Klein, Mourning 3555). The speaker recalls, «You had one leg, and a Prussian mind». “Prussian mind” associates him with militarism, autocracy and order. The one leg refers to the amputated gangrenous leg of Plath’s father, a result of undiagnosed diabetes. Unable to remember her father, she declares, «I am lame in the memory», and projects his maiming and his sadism onto herself.

The poem fits the musical definition of fugue through its repetitive “you” and “yew” with an additional musical component. Celan evokes Bach for his indictment of German culture that can contain both genocide and Bach’s fugues; Plath condemns German culture through a blind pianist who plays Beethoven. «He could hear Beethoven: Black yew, white cloud», repeating the white and black contrast of the second line, and reinforcing the poem’s contrapuntal structure of the fugue. The pianist’s playing has «horrific complications./ Fingertraps – a tumult of keys.» The horror behind the blind pianist’s playing (Is he blind to the horror of the culture the music represents?) is revealed in stanza ten as the German father with whom she is trying to communicate, «the yew hedge of the Grosse Fuge». The “Grosse Fuge”, her dead father’s commanding shadow with the weight of authoritarian Germany behind it, contrasts with “The Little Fugue” that is her fragmented poem.

All she remembers of him is his “blue eyes” a reminder of the Aryan “master race” and “a briefcase of tangerines” an image of color that might negate the “black statements” of the poem. For the line is followed by the statement «This was a man, then!» with its suggestion of Shakespeare and a heroic figure. But this leads her nowhere except backwards to her father’s death, «opened, like a tree blackly». Judith Kroll points out, «The final lines of the poem suggest that she has survived a catastrophe» (Kroll 114). The speaker becomes an amnesiac, going through the motions of living the roles of wife and mother:

> I survive the while,
> Arranging my morning,
> These are my fingers, this, my baby.
> The clouds are a marriage dress, of that pallor.

She becomes psychologically deaf and dumb in a fugue like amnesiac state living the half-life of the *Musselmanner* or “non men”, the “Moslems” of the camps who no longer feel (Levi SA 90), and who Des Pres says «could be called neither living nor dead but rather seemed to be like the living dead» (Des Pres, S 88-89). Punning on morning, she arranges her own “mourning” that, to cite the OED definition of fugue is «a dissociative reaction to shock or emotional stress in a neurotic, during which all awareness of personal identity is lost, though the person’s outward behaviour may appear rational». Plath committed suicide on February 11, 1963.

Though “Little Fugue” is not directly about the Holocaust, but primarily about unsuccessful mourning for a lost father, the poem exhibits empathic imagination for the most cataclysmic event of the Twentieth Century, central to when Plath grew up. She might have said what Adrienne Rich, a member of Plath’s generation, writes, «we were trying to live a personal life». However, «the great dark birds of history» flew «into our personal weather». As a post-Holocaust poem, “Little Fugue” may lack the first-hand witness intensity of Celan’s “Death Fugue”. Nevertheless both poets ask us to confront loss and raise the issue of how we overcome devastating trauma. I think we can learn much about mourning and recovery or lack of it from both poems.

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An analysis of aging women in film and television

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Research on aging and gender shows that a broader range of images exists in the real world than in the "reel world". In reality, older women may be stereotyped as kind or cruel, maternal or unaffectionate, wise or foolish (Sherman, 1997). However, in children's films and television shows, older women are particularly likely to play negative roles. Sherman (1997) suggests that older women are portrayed as evil or cruel in children's media much more often than young men, young women, or older men.

Theories on women and aging may be used to explain the image or archetype of the "cruel" older woman. One common theory has long suggested that women become more androgynous as they get older; that is, in addition to their feminine "communal" characteristics, they take on traditionally masculine, "agentic" characteristics such as decisiveness, assertiveness, and aggressiveness (e.g., Gutmann, 1985). It is common for people to perceive such masculine traits,

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when they are demonstrated by women, as bitchiness or cruelty. Hollywood uses the villainous archetype to its advantage, but it does not seem interested in challenging the stereotype by writing roles or casting older actresses in more positive ways. Although this archetype may be potent, people may not assign it often to people they know. Recent research indicates that women in real life are not typically perceived by others as especially agentic: older men and women tend to be perceived similarly, with older men seen as more powerful than older women, and older women seen as more caring than older men. However, older women have been perceived as less sexual than older men in our culture for centuries (Sherman, 1997).

The typical roles for older women are similar in television and film. They include the good wife, the contented homemaker, the harpy, the matriarch, and the bitch (Meehan, 1983, pp. 110-111), the feisty older woman or the loveable granny (Lindsey, 2003, p. 626), or the nurturing mother or the sadistic mother (Kaplan, 2000, p. 467; M. Haskell, 1987, p. 8; Doane, 1987, p. 79).

The actresses playing these roles were the lucky ones. Northcott (1975) found that older female roles were almost non-existent on television in the 1970s with only 1.5% of all female characters on television over the age of 64 (p. 184). Signorielli and Bacue's (1999) longitudinal look at television discovered that women over 65 received only 3% of all roles. The majority of women (60%) played settled adults (p. 557). In examining data from Fall 2001, Signorielli (2002) indicated no changes in the presentation of women and aging. McCormick (2001) asserted that Hollywood has a "wrinkled ceiling" for women, but not for men (p. 46). Deutsch, Zalenski, and Clark (1986) described a double standard for aging that appears in the media. Men retain their attractiveness and competence as they age, whereas women lose their attractiveness and become incompetent. Bazzini, McIntosh, Smith, Cook, and Harris (1997) noted that «older females were cast in a particularly negative light» in film (p. 541). Signorielli and Bacue (1999) reported a similar trend in their study of television roles from 1960 to 1990 (p. 557). Griffin (1993) referred to the negative portrayal of aging women as «the politics of aging» (p. 2).

Signorielli (1982) helped explain why so few older women are cast in television roles. Most scripts, she claimed, emphasize home, family, marriage, or romance for women, meaning most of the roles are for women young enough to be perceived as romantically attractive to the male leads and the audience (p. 594). By extension, as women age, and lose their fertility and sexual desirability, they are presented as less feminine, more unhappy, less attractive, and as having colder personalities (p. 595). It further follows, argued Bazzini et al. (1997), that women are going to be held to «a more rigid standard of beauty» than men since being young and romantic is crucial to the roles written for them (p. 532).

D. Haskell (1979) concluded that the women's movement changed the jobs held by television women, but not the script focus on romance. Markson (1997) concurs: She suggests that relatively few older female characters are presented as professional women, and those who are, are portrayed as harming themselves or their families by focusing on their careers. McNeil (1975) reported that 74% of female roles on television fit into the family-romantic categories (p. 266). Thus, the emphasis on relational roles keeps women confined to the "inner world" of the family, while men deal with the more important concerns of business and politics, argued Van Zoonen (1994, pp. 93-94).

Hollywood films and network television shows are built on a basic premise: The audience likes younger actresses (under 40 years of age) because they are perceived as attractive and feminine. Conversely, the audience dislikes older actresses (over 40 years of age) because they are perceived as unattractive, and they demonstrate behaviors more typically defined as masculine in our culture.

To test these Hollywood assumptions, we designed a study. We chose five actresses who had 30-year careers so each actress could be evaluated when she was early in her career, in the middle of her career, and late in her career. Therefore, we selected Jane Fonda, Lucille Ball, Katherine Hepburn, Angela Lansbury, and Maureen O'Hara.

The following is a list of the actresses and the films from which their clips were chosen. Lucille Ball appeared in *The Long, Long Trailer* (1954), *Yours, Mine and Ours* (1968), and *Mame* (1974). Jane Fonda appeared in *Cat Ballou* (1966), *On Golden Pond* (1981), and *The Morning After* (1986). For Katherine Hepburn, we selected clips from *The Philadelphia Story* (1940), *African Queen* (1951), and On Golden Pond (1981). Angela Lansbury performed *The Court Jester* (1956), *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* (1971), and *Mrs. Harris Goes to Paris* (1992). Maureen O'Hara starred in *Redhead From Wyoming* (1953), *The Parent Trap* (1961), and *The Christmas Box* (1995). In all, 15 clips were included in the study, so that each of the five actresses appeared three times. Each clip ran about 1.5 minutes; the actions of the actress dominated the clips.

The clips were edited together randomly and shown to 76 college students at a research university in the American South. After each clip, we asked the participants to rate the actresses for likeability and for attractiveness. In addition, we asked the participants to mark a list of adjectives they would assign to the character in the clip. The adjectives were feminine and masculine modifiers borrowed from the Bem Sex Roles Inventory.

Our results found no interaction for gender or for race (African American and white). What we did find surprised us. Predictably, all groups rated the actresses as most attractive when they were young. However, all groups liked the actresses the least when they were young. Even more

TABLE 1
Number of feminine traits assigned to characters

	Early Career	Middle Career	Late Career
Males	2.63	6.12	5.55
Females	2.08	5.09	4.92
African Americans	2.42	5.59	5.29
Caucasians	2.29	5.59	5.29
Totals	**2.35**	**5.60**	**5.23**

TABLE 2
Number of masculine traits assigned to characters

	Early Career	Middle Career	Late Career
Males	6.21	4.98	4.64
Females	5.62	4.40	4.45
African Americans	5.81	4.82	4.30
Caucasians	6.02	4.55	4.79
Totals	**5.91**	**4.69**	**4.54**

TABLE 3
Perceived likeability of characters

	Early Career	Middle Career	Late Career
Males	3.21	3.48	3.24
Females	3.04	3.62	3.25
African Americans	3.20	3.48	3.25
Caucasians	3.06	3.61	3.24
Totals	**3.13**	**3.55**	**3.24**

TABLE 4
Perceived attractiveness of characters

	Early Career	Middle Career	Late Career
Males	3.32	3.19	2.89
Females	3.46	3.41	3.07
African Americans	3.28	3.25	3.05
Caucasians	3.49	3.35	2.91
Totals	**3.39**	**3.30**	**2.98**

difficult to explain was the fact that the participants marked the highest number of masculine traits and the least number of feminine traits when the actresses were young. The participants marked fewer masculine traits and more feminine traits in the late career clips than in the early career clips.

In effect, the participants found the actresses most attractive when they also found them most masculine. Nothing in the literature we reviewed explains these results. We discussed the following possibilities:

1. One possibility is that the participants' cultural perspective affected the experience. However, we have tended to reject this theory. Males and females, African Americans, and Caucasians demonstrated the same response patterns. A shared cultural perspective is highly unlikely.
2. The actresses do compose an atypical grouping, since all of them have had long, successful careers. We did ask the participants to rate the actresses based only on the scene shown. However, we cannot preclude the possibility that the participants liked these actresses before they took the survey or were familiar with the actresses from other roles. This could explain why the participants loved Lucy and liked Hepburn. However, Maureen O'Hara probably was an actress unknown to many in this college-aged population, and yet her numbers reflect the same trend. Further, this is not an audience that would like the politics of Jane Fonda. Jane was the least liked of the five actresses, but the trend remained the same because the participants liked her better when she was older than when she was early in her career. If intertexuality was a major influence on the results, we think the results for Fonda, Lansbury, and O'Hara would have reflected a different statistical pattern than that for Lucy and Hepburn. Since the trends were constant among the actresses, intertexuality does not explain the results.

3. None of the scenes from their early careers showed the actresses in a maternal or caregiving role. Fonda, Hepburn, O'Hara, and Lucy played the romantic leads and all engaged in a dyadic conversation with a male. Lansbury, the lead female, discussed love with a female confidant. In the ten scenes when the actresses were in the middle or late in their careers, children were present in five of them. Fonda is the only one not shown with a child. Caregiving to a child could lead to more feminine traits being marked. However, this possibility does not explain why the trend continued in the five other scenes when no children appeared with the actresses.
4. Perhaps the results are due to personality being evaluated differently than physicality. When the actresses were young and attractive, the participants focused on their physical appearance. Once the actresses had aged and they less attractive, the participants might have focused more on personality. In effect, the salient characteristic as the actresses aged shifted from appearance to personality.
5. When the actresses were young and beautiful, they were assertive, and they could get away with being assertive because of their physical attractiveness - explaining the high number of masculine traits marked. The later-life roles were designed to be more feminine and nurturing because the filmmakers wanted to make the actresses more appealing to the audience – explaining the high numbers of feminine traits marked. This is a theory we plan to study in our future research.

There is some indication that television scripts are including more women over 40 in prominent roles (Lindsey, 2003). Dixie Carter, now over 50, plays the role of a lead attorney on *The Practice* (Lindsey, p. 629). In the role of "Maxine", on *Judging Amy*, Tyne Daly plays an active, professional woman and grandmother (Lindsey, p. 626). It is interesting to note that Daly's character was to be married during the 2002-2003 season.

Our results suggest that Hollywood and television should write more scripts that provide major roles for older women. Extrapolating from our results, we think the audience would enjoy older characters, particularly if they had meaningful roles. Our results challenge the stereotypes which confine older actresses to being portrayed as wicked hags or doddering grannies. Television and movie roles should reflect the dynamic roles that older women play in real life as part of families, as professionals in the work force, and as important members of society. Scriptwriters have proven that they can create these roles; Captain Janeway, of *Star Trek Voyager* fame, is one example. Audiences may be ready for older women to be part of media life.

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The mythos of terrorism through the prism of Sigmund Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*

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When Sigmund Freud was 65 years old, he noted in a letter to his son Ernst: «das ruhige Alter scheint auch so eine Fabel zu sein wie die gluchliche Jugend», meaning that «a peaceful old age is as much a fable as a happy youth». Freud wrote his tome on aggression and civilization (known as *Civilization and Its Discontents*) in 1929 and it was published in 1930 when he was 73 years old. The first two chapters are a reaction to responses from close friends (including to Romaine Rolland) related to his earlier text *The Future of An Illusion* and its focus on religion that he had written at 71. Freud's continuous productivity into his more mature years (as well as his struggles with cancer, combined with an ever-present sense of humility which always emerges in his texts, noting that history may say things differently than he says them now), are several of the many reasons that his works and insights continue to inspire many today. That Freud died in England marks this country especially as a land of freedom for him, a resting place from the terror that he experienced in Austria eight years after he wrote *Civilization and Its Discontents*.

After all, it was in 1938 that Anna Freud was summoned to Gestapo headquarters in Vienna for interrogation. It was that incident which made Freud and his family determined to escape from Austria. Out of a desire for himself and his family to survive, he bribed whomever necessary to secure his passage to France, into the waiting arms there of his former patient and then a practicing psychoanalyst Marie Bonaparte. A few weeks later, he and his family continued their move to England, where he lived just about one year longer. That fateful handwriting on the wall of Anna Freud's interrogation room still hovers with us metaphorically, as we are all as conscious now of terror as Freud was then in a literal way.

He had noted in *Civilization and Its Discontents* that the «greatest threat to civilization» was

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«the constitutional inclination of human beings to be aggressive towards one another» (Freud 108). Furthermore, he continued (using his psychodynamic constructs) that most of us traditionally internalize our sense of aggression against ourselves by using our superego to hold the ego in check. While we all struggle with many forms of aggression, including anger at ourselves and amongst ourselves, few of us are ever likely to become violent. Mild bickering (and other tempests in tea pots) are the usual expressions of our anger. However, we all learn hatred even if we never externalize it outwardly.

The most violent individuals do not seem to have a superego that works to keep their ego in check, but their superego strength (with all its potent force like that of a demi-god in its metaphoric power), gets expressed externally onto others – individuals, groups, institutions, or even countries – as if the superego strength could be world changing (as it has been in many cases). Moving to the most horrific types of aggression once this superego has gone external, it will encompass acts of murder on a variety of fronts, including but not limited to the following:

- On an individual basis, manslaughter, third, second and first degree murder;
- Serial killing, which appears to have a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde component in the murderer, who often uses seduction to entrap victims. In his chapter «The Structure of Evil» in *Cracking Up, The Work of Unconscious Experience*, the psychoanalyst Christopher Bollas suggests that serial killers feel dead already due to traumatic experiences in their lives. He notes that when the serial killer turns his repressed rage onto the victim, it is with a maliciousness that betrays the seduction of the victim in what Bollas says is an imitation and reliving of what they (the serial killers) felt had happened to themselves. Certainly when Charlie Manson was told that he had received the death sentence for his and his group's serial killings, bordering on mass murders, he laughed and said that the death sentence did not matter because he was "dead already".
- Moving from serial killing on to the most egregious form of aggression, mass murder or mass murder/suicide bombing represent two of the most treacherous forms of murder, Bollas suggests that the mass murderer Saddam Hussein, for instance, while in power kept Iraqis in check by keeping them in a state of terror with a variety of techniques deployed by his royal guardsmen often in the middle of the night.
  - In terms of the mass murderer/suicide bomber, we have to focus on the innocents who are dying along with the bomber. We must call the suicide bomber instead a "mass-murderer/suicide bomber" or just a "mass murderer" to get to the real heart of the matter.

Indeed, to help disband the hordes of individuals who may wish to join the mass murderers or suicide bombers on a daily basis in our own time, a new category of psychosis (or neurosis depending on the level or stage of development) may need to be added to that listing of psychological disorders known to humankind, and it could be called (among other possibilities) *Terrorist, Terrorist Syndrome Psychosis* or *Terrorist Syndrome Neurosis* (neurosis if at a stage of fantasy level only) with an inventory of attendant symptoms to include but not be limited to the following:

- A sense of superiority that includes excessive hatred of another group often masking a powerful sense of worthlessness, self-hatred and repressed rage that becomes externalized onto others;
- A sense of paranoia that seems to indicate that they «must get others before others get them first»;
- A delusional system or pattern of thoughts and thinking related to the killing of others, often genocidal in nature;
- A personal sense of meaninglessness with a seeming absence of personal identity except to identify one's self as a martyr for a cause in what would appear to be a borderline personality set of symptoms; and
  - A sense of rage that seems pre-Oedipal and Oedipal (totemically) in nature among others.

In so attributing symptoms and characteristics in treating terrorism itself as a social psychosis, societies can begin to be able to cut into the idealizations in which some engage concerning mass murderers and mass murderer/suicide bombers, those who claim that they are acting for political or religious reasons (although at some level they are and may be symbolically), but when in fact they are most often additionally in the grips of psychological despair related to other, earlier developed psychological problems and unfortunately educated to feel comfortable with expressing intense feelings of hatred externally. These individuals are then either self motivated, obsessed, "triggered" or otherwise driven by or into a genocidal desire and rage to exterminate others. There are often attendant other issues related to gender in these cases and can often include forms of misogyny, not that all terrorists are male and that all hate women.

Furthermore, it is not that the terrorists do not have reasons for their despair, anguish and misery (psychological issues often repressed and some of which are being symbolically replaced and displaced from the originally repressed material); it is just that the path they have chosen to "be cured" (as they see it) includes dying and bringing others along with them. To idealize the mass murderers/suicide bombers and their conduct (as some do and will continue to do) condones it. These terrorists are not martyrs but often naive (even if highly educated in some instances) and easily brainwashed foils far from constructive ends who suffer from their own psychoneurotic and psychotic issues which while repressed are not even known to themselves. In fact, harkening back to Freud, he suggested further, that those who are excessively aggressive (for either positive or negative reasons) have usually suffered deeply at the hands of others. While their pain and suffering might have been horrific in the instance when immoral and internationally illegal violence are the psychological weapons of choice, these sufferings do not justify projecting violence externally onto others.

In 1929 Freud felt that some individuals could not handle their own aggressive instincts, either because they had not been trained to do so, or they were not committed enough to a sense of group agreement that must be intrinsic within civilization about what constitutes the nature of civilization and the laws that we must all agree upon in order to govern ourselves in what we have come to call civilization. A necessary amount of repression of narcissistic conduct must occur as well as sublimations of violent instincts if civilization as we hope for is to be sustained or to survive.

Mass murderers historically use a variety of jingoistic rants and rationales – from the political to the religious – to justify their murderous conduct. They incorporate their genocidal impulses learned through hate mongering on a number of fronts, often taught from early childhood. We must learn the causes so that we may more be able to quickly intervene. In one case, for instance, as Lou Michel and Dan Herbeck explain in their biography *American Terrorist, Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing*, Timothy McVeigh was afraid that the government of the United States would take over the lives of all; in his paranoia and delusions of grandeur, as we know, he blew up a Federal building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to try to strike back at the government that he saw as so dangerous.

McVeigh had a personal history that indicated forms of abuse including bullying in early and late childhood (much like the Columbine High mass murderers had and bullying even as Osama Bin Laden experienced within his own family unit where he was often taunted as being "a slave" along with his mother). What pre-Oedipal trauma leading to seemingly unmitigated rage existed is not that easy to garner, but is most probably warranted within the developmental aspects of the sense of feeling abused. We do know that McVeigh felt closer to his grandfather than to either his mother and father for whatever reasons, but this may indicate for both himself (and similarly for Bin Laden) a structural format whereby additional rage literally eventually gets displaced onto individuals, social institutions and countries as father figures that they wish to destroy. The repressed anger that McVeigh experienced from incidents of taunting no doubt helped to stimulate

his becoming a gun collector and gun aficionado. He even purchased some land where he could go and privately shoot his guns with a friend.

While having success in the Gulf War because of his prowess with guns there, upon coming home, he was unable to get what he considered to be a good job for some time; he was eventually forced to become a security guard. His former anxiety about the government closing in on individuals continued; it was this concern and McVeigh's reaction to the government's destruction of the Waco, Texas Branch Davidian Compound that either triggered or reawakened his desire to externalize his aggression (in whatever pre-Oedipal, Oedipal, or both of these in tandem, formatted rage), enhancing his rather dramatic delusions and paranoia. These feelings represented his own sense of himself (or lack of a palpably socialized, civilized self); his internal fear; his awful sense of vulnerability; and his seeming need to externalize brutal hatred. As we all know, he was eventually arrested, tried, convicted, and executed for mass murder. However, McVeigh's atrocity is still being reviewed as, presently, the Judicial Watch in Washington D. C. has an outstanding suit on behalf of some of the Oklahoma City survivors that attempts to link Timothy McVeigh to Iraq, claiming that McVeigh was involved in a larger, international conspiracy even to receiving terrorist training in Iraq.

In another case of the more recent mass murderer, Osama Bin Laden, he has said in one of his tapes to Al Jazeera that the weakness of Americans is that they are in love with life and the strength of his own type is that they are in love with death. Adam Robinson notes in *Bin Laden, Behind the Mask of a Terrorist* that Bin Laden believes that he works for Allah and will receive his reward hereafter. Additionally, Bin Laden feels strongly that so-called "Israeli-loving Americans" hate Muslims. Ironically, but perhaps he does not know this, according to statistics from the American Conference of Christians and Jews, the number of Muslims in Canada is now greater than the number of Jewish citizens, and Islam is currently the fastest growing religion in the United States. That is because America is a pluralistic society with cross cultural motivation as part of its heritage – even though American pluralism has been historically scarred with violence along the way. However, within the legal system of the United States and other countries of a democratic persuasion, redress is allowed for many of the least and most heinous of abuses.

It is more apparent that Mr. Bin Laden is projecting his own internal and repressed hatred for Muslims and for himself while accusing others of the same. Additionally he is projecting his intra-psychic confusion as he along with members of his Al Qaeda network under his command have themselves killed a goodly number of Muslims around the world. Mr. Bin Laden believes that only he can determine who is a "good" Muslim and who is not. Such is his sense of superiority that must be laced with its opposite at some level – intense self-hatred – intra-psychically and unbeknownst to himself. His paranoia is linked to being a citizen of no country and to his fear of what might happen to religious sites, like Mecca and Medina which he feels that those from other religions wish to occupy or destroy. Mr. Bin Laden's delusions of grandeur are well known, too, and his meta-linguistics have fooled some of the people but never all of the people. He is self-infatuated as are his fanatical and often naive followers very few of whom are women, although an occasional one blows herself up in copy-cat fashion as did Ms. Hiba Daragmah of Tubas, The West Bank, on May 15, 2003. She was a young English scholar and intellectual whose life became a tragedy for us all. Ms. Wofa Idris was the first Palestinian woman to kill herself on a Jerusalem street. The cult-like tendencies are clear. In Russia, indicating the cross-cultural nature of this cultish phenomenon, within a four month period (April through July 2003), six Chechen women participated in suicide/mass murder bombings. The victims of these bombings must never be forgotten.

On another note and nevertheless, many educated and spiritually engaged and religious Muslims disagree with the terrorist mode and are beginning to have their many voices heard. Often they are attacked by the more fundamentalist and conservative among their ranks. Indeed, Fatima Mernissi (one among many scholars in the Islamic world) in her cogent analysis *Islam and Democracy, Fear of the Modern World*, bravely and calmly looks at the cultural history (over

hundreds of years) of violence in relation to attacks on and the deaths of Muslim clerics and women by other Muslims.

As we interpret the conduct of mass murderers and mass murderers/suicide bombers, we must realize that they are "guilty" by reason of insanity which becomes evil (ultimately representing forces of chaos and nihilism) and totally destructive in opposite proportion to goodness that one hopes for within civilizations. Terrorists condemn themselves to death and kill innocent others on the way out of this world. In the West, we do not have to look very far back in history to realize that during Hitler's reign of mass murder/terror, over 32 million people died, either in concentration camps, on national battle fronts, or fighting in resistance movements. Anne Applebaum notes in her *Gulag: A History* that over twenty-million died on the Russian front alone trying to prevent Nazi incursions and aggressions. We are unfortunately becoming used to dealing with mass murderers who think that they are superior to all others in their anti-historical, anti-philosophical, and anti-civilization condemnations. Unfortunately, terror has become a way of life as well as a way of death for all of us on the planet, and we must continue to seek ways to halt it. Finding constructive ways to deal with the pandemic of world terrorism will challenge us all. Since 2000, there have been well over 100 acts of mass-murder/ suicide bombing plus many other random acts of terror.

Ultimately, too, whether we like it or not, history, legend and myth are linked with terror. Indeed, we all know that Freud pits many of his theories within the realm of myth, and he did this as well in *Civilization and Its Discontents* in his concern about externalized aggression. He felt that "two Heavenly Powers" were in conflict with one another on this plane of reality we traverse today, and these powers for him were Eros, the instinct for love, and Thanatos, the instinct for death. While these two vary within one's psycho-dynamic, when Thanatos is externalized, even the language of mass murderers can seem to have a mythic component where there are no grey areas, only grandiose and bombastic blacks and whites with a complete lack of a sense of an obligation to a constructive social dynamic other than that narrow one so carefully defined and created in mind tunnels with no light at either end. Additionally, Joseph Campbell tried to categorize this intrinsic, mythic anathema within most cultures, that is, the divide between what would appear to be good and evil as well as pro- and anti-civilization impulses.

There are many examples of terrorism in World Literature as, for example, in Joseph Conrad's brilliant novella, *Heart of Darkness*, where there are palpable senses of cross-cultural and national betrayals along with tragic misunderstandings. Slowly, we the readers become aware of the bodies of dead, black Africans strewn under masses of trees along with the images of broken-down machinery and machinery parts that had been imported from the West, none of which worked within this other landscape on this other continent. We all sense the horror.

Within popular culture today, too, there are attempts to look at the struggle between Eros and Thanatos. For instance, we see evidence of intra-psychic conflict in the film *Punch Drunk Love*, wherein, just before they kiss, the lovers say that they would like to pulverize one another, but decide to make love instead. Freud's work indicates that, in this sort of instance, violence has not yet been alienated completely from Eros. In another film, Michael Moore's provocative film *Bowling for Columbine*, attempts are provided to Americans and to the world to make all more conscious of the irony of the fact that individuals within the United States apparently have highly over-determined interest in weaponry and in mass murder as what might appear as a seeming pastime. Too, in synagogues, mosques, and churches in America today, one becomes very aware (despite constitutionally guaranteed freedom of worship or lack thereof) how ironic it is that the three great monotheistic religions of the world keep misunderstanding one another and forgetting that we are cousin religions if not symbolic brother-sister religions. Perhaps the world could do with more interfaith initiatives to help as reminders of the need for freedom of worship (or for those who prefer, to refrain from worship). In New York City, for instance, there has been a grass roots movement in the last couple of years to develop interfaith dialogues in open forums.

Finally, cultural icon, Professor Michael Ignatieff of Harvard University provides a cogent analysis of nationalistic issues (which he feels are paramount in most of these genocidal outbreaks) and conflicts in relation to what is considered to be civil and what is not civil across national borders in several recent works (his book *Blood and Belonging, Journeys Into the New Nationalism*, and in his essay «*Human Rights, The Laws of War and Terrorism*», in the *Journal of Social Science* entitled *International Justice, War Crimes and Terrorism: The U. S. Record*). Ignatieff cogently echoes Sigmund Freud's interest in *Civilization and Its Discontents* in what Freud called «the narcissism of minor difference», and Ignatieff notes the irony within that phrase – as we come to realize that the narcissism of minor difference is made into something more ominous as hate mongers change it to «the narcissism of major difference», which exaggerates all differences beyond any pale or hue of humanity into the monstrosity which leads to monstrous behavior. Along with Ignatieff, others at the Kennedy School at Harvard engage convincingly concerning the terrorist (suicide bomber/mass murderer) discourse pandemic with brilliance.

In conclusion, I would bring our attention to the work of a young man from Montana named Greg Mortenson who is attempting to help change one small corner of the world. In an article titled «*He Fights Terror With Books*» (*Parade Magazine*, April 6, 2003), the reporter Kevin Fedarko notes that «Mortenson almost single-handedly has pursued a passionate campaign to educate Northern Pakistan's children – especially its girls». Mortenson had been climbing a mountain in Korphe, Pakistan, in memory of his sister who had died the year before. He was saved from death and nourished back to health by locals after almost dying from the climb. After that, he decided to dedicate part of his life to the children of Korphe; he opened a school and is now a teacher and administrator there for part of each year. He wanted to return something to that community and to some of whose members whom had helped him to survive. Greg Mortenson and many more like him must be our mentors, those who around the world do something to help in the private wars against terror, even those private wars which may flame at times within our own hearts. As Franklin D. Roosevelt said, in his inaugural speech of March 4, 1933, three years after the publication of Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*: we have nothing to fear but fear itself.

In losing our fear and allowing our insights to keep us constructing and re-constructing civilization, we embrace Freud's sense of Eros. Love lives on from generation to generation, and it is only the force of love and understanding which shall defeat the death mongers who hate so passionately creating evil from their psychological forms of despair. For while we all will die eventually, our entrenched, constructive acts and the memory of our love bequeathed to others are still alive and will survive.

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The mirror cracked: Femininity and the rhetoric of castration in Shakespeare's "The Rape of Lucrece"

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Shakespeare's "The Rape of Lucrece" presents the dialectical struggle for dominance between the genders. Through metaphor, the complaint mediates the aggressive and ultimately narcissistic bond of heterosexual masculinity and femininity. In the course of the lament, masculine figures employ the phallic rhetoric of metaphor to assert themselves as dominant only to experience self-consumption at the end of the poem. This occurs when femininity removes itself from the masculine-feminine symbiotic relationship.

Although it seems self-evident that some kind of connection exists between the genders, during the Renaissance the bond between them was socially regulated through the publication of masculine honor and feminine chastity. In the 16th century, the chastity of a man's wife was considered an integral part of his honor and necessary in ensuring the lawful line of offspring, who would inherit their father's name and property. This, however, presented a problem for the men of the Renaissance, since their reputation (and their very identity) relied on something over which they had no power. As Mark Breitenberg asserts: «Husbands [were] dependent on their wives' reputation for chastity – that is, dependent on something ultimately beyond their control, despite considerable effort to the contrary» (98).

In order for men to retain their masculinity, it was necessary for them to prevent their gender opposites from committing adultery. This was often achieved through the subjugation of women, and much of the literature of this period reflects men's desire to regulate femininity and female sexuality. As George Puttenham suggests in his *Art of English Poesy*, poetry (which connotes masculinity) has the ability to pacify and persuade; it brings order to the words of the mother tongue (207). Shirley Sharon-Zisser agrees that:

> Early modern treatises on the art of rhetoric anasemically bespeak an underlying conception of language as a perilous and far from neutral medium. Anxiously associating language

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> with the archaic, oceanic, engulfing maternal body, such treatises struggle to re-produce it as a differentiated, partitioned symbolic economy gravitating to a phallicized general equivalent. (55)

Both action and rhetoric subjugate femininity [in order to preserve chastity]. But as Breitenberg suggests, "Lucrece" relies on the «mutuality and rivalry» (110) of opposites. The opening of the poem presents rivalry in the form of Lucrece, a woman who turns her chastity into the chastisement of men. Lucrece, whose fidelity ensures Collatine's honor, robs her husband of his masculinity by refusing sexual intercourse; she thereby castrates him. Throughout the poem, Lucrece is referred to as a "maiden", a woman who has not yet experienced sex. This characterization suggests that Lucrece's and Collatine's marriage has not been consummated. It is true, however, that during the Renaissance the word "maiden" also connoted marital fidelity (chastity). In "Puritanism and Maenadism in A *Mask*", Richard Halpern discusses «the replacement of the Catholic ideal of female virginity with the Protestant ideal of chastity, that is, of a monogamous marital relationship» in the early modern period. Appropriately enough, Halpern asks whether «Christian liberty allows the virgin girl to refuse her seducer», and «the married woman to refuse her husband».

Though Halpern's argument is concerned with the role of virginity and chastity in Milton's "Comus", it can nevertheless give the reader insight into the dilemma of Shakespeare's complaint. «The virtuous resistance of the Lady may become revolt if not relinquished at the proper moment. In excess, both virginity and sexuality overturn domestic rule», contends Halpern. If Lucrece denies not only other men, but also Collatine sexual intercourse, then this act is castrating. The lament supports Halpern's contention when it describes Lucrece's breasts «like ivory globes circled with blue,/ A pair of maiden worlds unconquered» (163). Her figure remains unmolested, suggesting that she has not yet had sex. Lucrece is therefore presented as a woman barring Collatine from his masculinity.

Castration imagery is also pervasive at the very opening of the complaint. In the second verse, the reader learns of «lust-breathèd Tarquin» (143) who is «borne by the trustless wings of false desire» (143) on his way to rape Lucrece. He is so overwhelmed with passion that he practically flies to Lucrece's chambers. The reference to flight ("trustless wings") and the emphasis on desire, however, also mythologically allude to Uranus, the castrated father of the gods and ruler of the sky, from whose severed penis sprung the goddess of love. The verb "borne", then, not only serves to describe the way in which Tarquin is carried by his lust, but also to iterate and connect Tarquin to the genesis of desire. From castration, from demand, desire is born.

Arguably, the "false desire" which carries Tarquin has two meanings as well. The desire is "false" not only because it is not Collatine who is about to have sex with Lucrece, but also because the desire springs from a married woman's unwillingness to perform sexually for her husband. The desirous Collatine must channel his frustration into words. He tells his comrades of his wife's beauty, the act that initially drives Tarquin to rape Lucrece:

> For he [Collatine] the night before, in Tarquin's tent,
> Unlocked the treasure of his happy state:
> What priceless wealth the heavens had him lent
> In the possession of his beauteous mate;
> Reck'ning his fortune at such high proud rate
> That kings might be espousèd to more fame,
> But king nor peer to such a peerless dame. (144)

It is socially necessary that Lucrece be made to perform for some male figure. Collatine's frustration compromises masculinity, and marriage, that which ensures the subjugation of femininity, is rendered nonsensical. Sharon-Zisser asserts that:

> Lucrece's beauty is blazed or "boast[ed]" (1.36) in a homosocial context not prior to her matrimonial confinement and her construction as "that name of chaste" (1.8) – the very

> embodiment of the gynecologized signifier of a phallus-affirming illustrative *collatio* – but after them. This blazoning takes place within the setting of matrimony rather than the exchange of women, and that may be considered the traumatic "primal scene" that drives the text at least as much as the usually foregrounded rape […] (59)

Collatine recites his *effictio* in the presence of his comrades. He holds his wife up as an idealized object of desire, assigning himself the role of desirous lover – one whose love remains unrequited. But why would a married man need to pine over what he already should possess? Because Collatine exhibits Lucrece as a desired object in a situation devoid of women (and therefore devoid of the subjectivity needed to define what is masculine), he not only reveals his own desire to consummate his marriage, but also the desire to reinstate femininity as a bolster for the masculine subject. Sharon-Zisser goes on to explain that the blazon offered during the opening lines of the complaint does not, as some might believe, attempt to reaffirm masculinity, but rather signify its absence:

> It [the blazon] then uses that non-phallicized, maternally-charged "augmenting" to hollow out an ontologically present "something": the plenitude of phallic authority that is affirmed in the patriarchal marriage link rhetorically inscribed into the illustrative *collatio*. (59)

The blazon represents unrequited love (since Lucrece seems to refuse her husband intercourse), yet it transfers the emptiness of the Petrarchan scenario onto masculinity. Despite the marriage between Collatine and Lucrece, the marriage's unconsummated status gives precedence to unrequited love, turning the blazon into what Sharon-Zisser terms «the Petrarchan mutilation of the body of the female love-object [which is] used to re-erect, re-collate the phallic sovereignty threatened (conceptually castrated) by an excess of unrequited sexual attraction» (59).

But rhetorical re-assembly of a castrated masculinity is not enough to subjugate femininity so long as the actual feminine object is not physically subdued, and so Tarquin must rape Lucrece. The masculine subject, whose seeming physical dominance springs from a castration anxiety repeatedly and accidentally revealed in the complaint, uses Lucrece's violation to re-establish masculine identity. In a way, femininity must act as a mirror in which masculinity can view itself and be identified. Jacques Lacan postulates in his "Mirror Stage" that identification is dependent on viewing the self through other objects (reflections): «We have only to understand the mirror stage as *an identification*, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image […]» (2). The ego, in an attempt to end desire, projects a unified ideal of itself onto an object with which it makes an identification. But what exactly does this identification entail?

The ego identifies with an object in so far as it searches in the object for that piece of itself, which will complete the ego's sense of autonomy. Lacan, however, acknowledges that «this form situates the agency of the ego […] in a fictional direction […]» (2), since no object can fulfill the demand of the ego. The insufficiency of the object to absolutely gratify the ego emphasizes the alienation of the subject from the object. The ego, too, must realize that in looking for an absolute version of itself, it reveals its own lack-in-being that requires paranoid forms of compensation. As Lacan states: «the mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation» (4). The ego's endeavor to manipulate objects into being ideal versions of itself leads to alienation and subsequent anxiety over its own lack; egoic demand for completion can only ever end in desire.

The masculine subject perceives itself as unified, since it is not physically "castrated"[1]. So, when the masculine subject seeks an ideal version of itself via object-relations, it recognizes that its understanding of itself as absolute is a lie. In order to compensate for this realization, the

[1] For an extended discussion on egoic castration and the misrecognition of the penis for the *phallic*, see Lacan's "The Signification of the Phallus".

subject publicizes its masculinity, in Collatine's case, by holding up the chastity of his wife. Collatine depends on Lucrece to show him an ideal version of himself, but since Lucrece has removed herself from the economy of marriage, she reveals Collatine's lack-in-being. Lucrece, the mirror in the complaint and the representation of femininity, challenges the idea of woman-as-narcissistic mirror/metaphor for masculinity by withdrawing herself from the function of reflection. Whether from unrequited love, or the fact that Collatine and Lucrece are physically separated (Collatine is in "Ardea" and Lucrece is in "Collatium"), the opening of the poem presents masculinity without a mirror by which to measure itself, castrated. Without a narcissistic reflection with which the masculine subject can identify, masculinity cannot exist.

With Lucrece removed from the masculine/ feminine dialectic, masculinity, now frustrated by the hyper-chaste Lucrece, needs to reinstate its corresponding other in order to affirm its identity. The frustration Collatine rhetorically articulates, Tarquin sets out to end in an attempt to reassert (reflect) masculinity. Tarquin rushes to Collatium «with all too timeless speed» (158) in order to violate Lucrece, and in line 295, begins the journey to her chamber:

> And their heartens up his servile powers,
> Who, flattered by their leader's jocund show,
> Stuff up his lust, as minutes fill up hours;
> And as their captain, so their pride doth grow,
> Paying more slavish tribute than they owe.
> By reprobate desire thus madly led,
> The Roman lord marcheth to Lucrece' bed. (158)

The imagery of the army and the Roman nobility in this stanza, imagery that connotes masculinity and conquest, heralds the rape of Lucrece. These images suggest an aggressive masculinity on the way to subdue the enemy.

As this section progresses, the allusions to rape and conquest become increasingly vivid. The images, however, do not vilify Tarquin as a rapist, but idolize him as a questing epic hero:

> The locks between her chamber and his will,
> Each one by him enforced retires his ward;
> But as they open, they all rate his ill,
> Which drives the creeping thief to some regard.
> The threshold grates the door to have him heard;
> Night-wand'ring weasels shriek to see him there;
> They fright him, yet he still pursues his fear. (305)

Tarquin must literally fight the house in order to get to his foe, "his fear", (or unbridled femininity). The fact that he is in an enclosed space (the house), symbol of the womb, archetypally connotes the struggle of the hero with suffocating/ devouring femininity. Tarquin seems first to prevail as the «unwilling portal yields him way» (159). The constant shrieks of the house and the force Tarquin expends opening the doors also anticipates the central theme of the poem: rape. The poem does not only invest physical action in Tarquin in order for him to succeed, but also rhetorical power. The house, the realm of femininity, consequently, is turned into a metaphor for bodily violation.

Metaphor, which brings obscurity into clarity, links metaphorization to phallic masculinity, the visible heterosexual gender. The western tradition has always associated clarity with the penis because of the penis's seemingly unified form. The female genitalia, however, are internal, unseen, and, as such, cannot be as easily defined or described as the penis. In "The Sex Which Is Not One" Luce Irigaray agrees «woman has sex organs more or less everywhere. This is doubtless why she is said to be […] incomprehensible […]» (28). The feminine subject, therefore, connotes confusion because of the internalized structure of her genitals. And as Aristotle asserts in his *Rhetoric*, «metaphor must always apply reciprocally to either of its co-ordinate terms» (174). Metaphorization,

then, functions to phallicize that which has been gynocologized. The use of metaphor as a copulation of parts, which, in the complaint, presents the feminine subject as a mirror/metaphor for the masculine one, also reiterates the need for the consummation between gender opposites.

Even though Lucrece does not appear in this section of the lament, the rape of the feminine space turns Tarquin's journey to Lucrece's bed into a metaphor for her own eventual violation. It anticipates the violence against Lucrece and reinstates phallic dominance through metaphorical rape of an enclosed area. Metaphor, here, is employed to reaffirm masculinity.

In the end, however, Lucrece's rape remains purely rhetorical. The actual, physical rape is not recorded in the poem. The epic quest, the conquest of the enemy, ends anticlimactically with Tarquin fleeing: «He [Tarquin] thence departs a heavy convertite; […] He in his speed looks for the morning light» (179). Masculinity has almost been reestablished, but the lack of climax signifies another castration, one that Lucrece will make reality at the end of the complaint, destroying any chance for reflection.

After Tarquin leaves, Lucrece summons Collatine back to Collatium, in order for him to witness the final castration. Any attempt to reestablish the symbiosis between femininity and masculinity is destroyed when Lucrece finally kills herself:

> Even here she sheathèd in her harmless breast
> A harmful knife, that thence her soul unsheathèd:
> That blow did bail it from the deep unrest
> Of that polluted prison where it breathèd. (224)

Once again the effort to reassert masculinity over femininity is undercut by Lucrece's ability to chastise. She takes her life, symbolically reenacting bodily rape, but it is *she* who penetrates her body with a phallic object. In doing so, Lucrece reveals that the phallus can be wielded by either a man or a woman, and thereby dissociates the anatomical penis from the symbolic phallus. What she makes Collatine desire at the beginning of the poem, Lucrece robs from him in the end.

Collatine and Lucrece's father fall on top of her lifeless body and lament the loss of their feminine other: «Then son and father weep with equal strife/ Who should weep most, for daughter or for wife» (227). Both Collatine and Lurcetius complain about Lucrece's death. The role of lamenting, initially assigned to the complainant Lucrece, is now invested in her masculine relatives, further demasculinizing husband and father. Lucretius's lamentations also reveal the requirement of a narcissistic mirror for masculinity: «If in the child the father's image lies,/ Where shall I live now Lucrece is unlivèd?» (225). With Lucrece dead, Lucretius has no way of identifying what he is. He goes on to compare his daughter to a «poor broken glass» (225). He holds his daughter up, not as a metaphor for his own masculinity, but as an object unable to fulfill its function. «I can no more see what I once was» (226), exclaims Lucretius. Without the necessary narcissistic reflection, masculinity cannot define itself, and metaphorization becomes a tool of masculine castration, rather than affirmation.

According to Sharon-Zisser, the death of Lucrece symbolizes the final castration of the masculine characters: «What the poem ends with is not Collatine's reerection but his castrative "fall" (1.1775) into Lucrece's blood, a necrophilic coupling with a gynecologized substance that, as consequence of a woman's self-empowering act, is nevertheless depleted of the gynecologized function usually inscribed into it» (64). The poem, however, does attempt to reinstate the dialectic between the genders after Lucretius and Collatine complain.

Brutus, who watches Lucrece commit suicide, advises her husband and father not to bemoan their loss, but to use it as a catalyst for action, to turn it into a metaphor. In a last ditch attempt to salvage masculinity, «Brutus […] pluck[s] the knife from Lucrece' side», and states:

> Now by the Capitol that we adore,
> And by this chaste blood so unjustly stainèd,
> By heaven's fair sun that breeds the fat earth's store,

By all our country rights in Rome complainèd
Her wrongs to us, and by this bloody knife,
We will revenge the death of this true wife. (229)

Brutus, in picking up the dagger, tries to regain the phallus stolen by Lucrece. He urges his compatriots to turn Lucrece into a metaphor for action, to pacify femininity with the rules of rhetoric, and to reassemble castrated masculinity by using femininity to produce movement. He also tries to reestablish Collatine's honor by publicizing his wife's chastity. But as so often has been the case in this poem, Lucrece is able to undermine the intentions of men. Despite Brutus's urgency for remetaphorization and publication of honor, his attempts fall short of their intended mark.

Throughout the complaint, masculinity tries to assert its dominance over femininity via a living object reduced to playing the role of a narcissistic reflection (a metaphor). This metaphorization allowed the affirmation of the masculine subject, and a way through which honor and feminine subjugation could be guaranteed. At the end, however, Lucrece is dead. The mirror for masculinity has been shattered. Without femininity present so that masculinity can understand itself, masculinity becomes nonsensical and gender is undermined. The only possible metaphor at the end of the poem is catachretic, and thereby insufficient. This catachretic decline of metaphor leads the soldiery to attack royal Tarquin, symbolizing the destruction of the quintessential masculinity of Rome, its Father-King:

They did conclude to bear dead Lucrece thence,
To show her bleeding body through Rome,
And so to publish Tarquin's foul offence;
Which being done with speedy diligence,
The Romans plausibly did give consent
To Tarquin's everlasting banishment. (230)

The absence of a living Lucrece destroys the metaphoric underpinnings of gender, and foregrounds it as a lie. It insists that woman-as-guarantee of an uncastrated masculinity can only ever be a misrepresentation. The subject, whether masculine or feminine, remains separated from the Real, and the use of a narcissistic mirror to define existence reveals this separation. The imaginary function of metaphorization, which, in the complaint, is used to reaffirm masculinity, inevitably presents the masculine subject with his own castration, and thereby introduces him to the law of desire beyond the bar of reflection.

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Cultural politics of fantasy in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*

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«This green plot shall be our stage.»
(Peter Quince, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, III.i.3-4)

A Midsummer Night's Dream is green. What else is Celtic about this play? It has a changeling, a motif we associate with fairy folk. It has fairies. It has nature sprites and natural magic. It emphasizes the power of imagination. It has a strain of melancholy – in Bottom's loss of Titania. It has magical language. If the real world cannot be dominated, language at least can be bent to the will, a strategy of control open to those without other recourse. These characteristics – emphasis on imagination, melancholy, and magical use of language – Matthew Arnold defined as belonging to the Celtic strain in English literature.

According to Arnold's formulations of its influence on English literature, "Celtic" pertains to the ancient Gauls and Britons, and the modern Bretons, Welsh, Irish, and Gaelic Scots. Arnold (1867), writes, «If I were asked where English poetry got... its turn for style, its turn for melancholy, and its turn for natural magic, for catching and rendering the charm of nature in a wonderfully near and vivid way, – I should answer, with some doubt, that it got much of its turn for style from a Celtic source; with less doubt, that it got much of its melancholy from a Celtic source; with no doubt at all, that from a Celtic source it got nearly all its natural magic» (Harrold & Templeman, Eds., p. 1100). I take "natural magic" here to mean the magic of nature itself. This Celtic "natural magic" – the alchemy of nature – shows itself in *A Midsummer Night's Dream's* invoking and representation through personification of the splendors of the physical world; the bringing into view of nature sprites and little people who appear and disappear; the details of dew, shadows, hawthorn bud, mustard seed, honey, cobweb and moth – all constantly in motion; the invocation of the coming and

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going of light and darkness, and the turning of the seasons; all this and the delightfulness of its aural and visual appeal fall into what Arnold defines as the Celtic in English literature.

Celtic forces appear in Shakespeare's plays from the beginning to the end of his career. They brood on the margins of the Lancastrian tetralogy, haunt Mercutio in the form of Queen Mab, exert latent, maternal power in *Hamlet* (Aguirre, 1996), and get renounced when Prospero gives up his Druidical staff and charms, relinquishing the aid of his "weak masters" – those «elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves» who work by moonshine (1616, 5.133-41). In Shakespeare's history play *Richard II*, the combination of an undefeated Irish rebellion and Richard's personality as a fantasist undermine his kingship. Failing to control the material world of royal England, Richard journeys to Ireland to quell what he imagines are his subjects. The banished Henry Bullingbrook, a realist, lands during Richard's absence, circulates a false rumor that Richard is dead and thus disperses Richard's Welsh supporters, setting the King up for abdication/usurpation. In Shakespeare's Scottish play, the occult dominates Macbeth's imagination and invades the stage in the uncanny moving forest out of ancient Welsh poetry (Castay, 1984). In this play, the patriarchal, oedipal unconscious and the irrational embodied by its protagonist stab their way into history (Hunter, 1988). History is then stabilized as continuity when the boy Malcolm, patrilineal heir to the Scottish crown, joins forces with the English King Edward to defeat the spuriously-charmed Macbeth, a "devilish" (1603, 4.3.118) hibernal giant. Malcolm's Scottish-English alliance figures the accession of the Scottish King James as "newly planted" joint monarch of England, Ireland, and Scotland, consequent to the uprooting of the barren Tudor sceptre of Macbeth/Elizabeth. Katherine Duncan-Jones observes that by 1601, Ireland had drained the pockets of the English gentry and Queen Elizabeth's infertility was blamed for crop failures in her realm. Elizabeth «had become deeply unpopular both with many of the landed gentry, bankrupted by forced contributions to the Irish wars in 1599, and the rural poor, who superstitiously associated a succession of bad harvests with the inauspicious rule of a barren old woman» (Duncan Jones, 2003: 4). Both Elizabeth and James were crowned rulers of England with Welsh ancestry stemming from the red-haired commoner Owen Tudor.

A Midsummer Night's Dream contrasts and joins two realms. One realm adopts a phallic stance and supports conquest, as in Theseus's battle against the Amazons and his slaughter of the Minotaur, half-man, half-beast. The other kingdom uses the magic within its own realm, as in Titania's rule or Queen Mab's. The play represents an English state of mind in which a Celtic imaginary functions as a creative repository of occulted power and the infantile unconscious. The occulted power in the drama transforms and deconstructs the violent heterosexual yoking comprising patriarchal, Athenian dominance. Revisioning the patriarchal primal scene though the use of the Celtic, yoking proves productive and transformative. The fairies as unseen watchers and unrecognized agents in the Athenian social world I am analogizing to the unconscious and I am identifying them as Celtic, an occulted, creative force in English culture. The Minoan vis-à-vis the Greek was for Freud an image of the preoedipal giving way to oedipal thinking. I argue that the latent oral/primal scene fusion fantasy at the heart of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* provides a developmental analogue for the Celtic world absorbed into English national character to manifest creative effects.

Violent yoking goes with government in the play. Heterosexual yoking and violence represent patriarchal Athenian/Elizabethan hierarchy. The transformative fairyland, which can be read as both Celtic and Minoan, opposes and undermines the Athenian/Elizabethan hierarchy structuring the court scenes that begin and end the play. The Celtic/Minoan transformative moon, labyrinth, and dream-scape deconstruct and counter the «cold fruitless moon» (I.i.73) Theseus perceives. In the forest, the moon is metamorphic, illuminating a labyrinthine, green world at the center of which one sees a union of beauty and the beast. The ultimate in transgression of differences, the spectacle provided by the Bottom-Titania liaison can be read as a figure for the metatheatrical and intertextual synthesis *A Midsummer Night's Dream* achieves in its dreamlike fusions of disparate source materials.

By focusing attention on the play's ocularity, its strands of imagery of eyes and sight, one can identify latent primal scene and oral fusion fantasies. These fantasies underlie and motivate the

hierarchical structure of Shakespeare's world and threaten its stability. The play enacts these fantasies in shape-shifting fullness while containing them within a dramatic form that both collapses and maintains Elizabethan hierarchy. Multiple staging of scenes involving porous boundaries effects the play's style of subversive conservatism. By transmitting the unseen in visible form, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* alchemically brings suppressed Celtic imagination into dynamic harmony with an early modern linguistic and social sensibility.

In this play a Celtic consciousness observes and influences what goes on in world remaining unconscious of it. Although the Celts were long thought to have existed on the margins of England, modern genetics tells a different tale of the Celtic in England. Far from having been defeated and forced to the edge of Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, the Celts intermarried with successive waves of immigrants (Capelli et al.). Like the appearing and disappearing force of the forest in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the Celtic fused into English national character, to manifest creative effects.

A Midsummer Night's Dream's taps into the legends of Huon de Bordeaux, which contain the figure of Oberon. Shakespeare, from Stratford, not far from Wales or from Cornwall, invokes the faery tradition and the Green Man motif, part of the local folklore of his native region. Warwickshire, Shakespeare's native region, had also been home to Thomas Malory, who during the Wars of the Roses composed his compilation of Arthurian romances centered on the Lady of the Lake, Queen of Faery Land.

Marjorie Garber writes, «Concepts of dream and the dream world in the English Renaissance derived from a number of significant sources: the literature and philosophy of classical Greece and Rome, the native heritage of English folklore, and the medieval tradition of the dream vision» (1974: 1). A bearer of culture, Shakespeare translated and transformed these traditions. Shakespeare's plays are compromise-formations synthesizing diverse cultural streams. He wrote in the era when English nationalism first found literary voice, and defined English patriotism in John of Gaunt's famous deathbed speech in *Richard II*. If we think of England as a state of mind, not a consciously organized political institution (Richard Rose, quoted by Bogdanor, p. 6), we must regard this state of mind as hybrid, rooted in a diverse genetic heritage and at least in part a matter of language. The language Shakespeare spoke absorbed Renaissance influences of new literacy. Thanks to the printing press, book loads of foreign stories, names, and images flowed into English, which managed to assimilate to its already hybrid stock of Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, and Norman-French, the Athenian Theseus, the Cretan Minotaur, the Amazon, the Babylonian Pyramus and Thisby, Ovid's metamorphic tales and Apuleius' *Golden Ass*, with Isis. This language invokes and controls visible and invisible worlds.

The drama's historical topicality alludes to Queen Elizabeth's virginity, in a play preoccupied with virginity and its loss. Though Cupid has taken aim at Elizabeth, a «fair vestal, throned by the west» [in England], his love-shaft was quenched, says the Fairy King, «in the chaste beams of the wat'ry moon», and «the imperial votress passed on,/ In maiden meditation» (II.i.158-163). When Theseus lectures Hermia on the happiness of sexual penetration and the endurance required to live as «a barren sister» all her life, chanting «to the cold fruitless moon», he is careful to remark the «single blessedness» of those who «undergo such maiden pilgrimage» (I.i.72-78). These references and those to Diana, goddess of the moon and of the hunt, and to the Fairy Queen, can be taken as reverential bows to the virgin monarch and they have led commentators to infer that Elizabeth was in attendance at a performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* given to celebrate a (second) marriage.

Since we are watching a play named as a dream, the title of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* suggests an equation of dreaming and playwatching. If we follow this implication psychoanalytically, we may ask what latent dream thoughts or fantasies are transformed into the manifest play we see or read. Freud calls the interpretation of dreams the "royal road" to the unconscious. The royal road to the latent content of this play may be to look at what Lacanian psychoanalysis would call its "Imaginary". In Lacan's reformulation of psychoanalysis, what he calls the register of the

Imaginary refers to both a chronological stage in individual maturation and the later survival of sense-making patterns marked by its preverbal, pre-oedipal forms of understanding.

This register refers to what Freud called narcissism and ego psychologists call the oral stage, centered on the eyes and mouth, on taking in, on seeing ourselves mirrored in the mother's face, on being fed, on developing trust in the outer world's capacity to sustain us, on mastering self-other differentiation and primal ambivalence, and on preverbal, sensory perceptions. Lacan thought the central event of this early phase of development was the "mirror stage" in which the small child identifies its own image either in the face of the mother, especially in her eyes, or in an actual mirror. Object-relations analyst D. W. Winnicott (1971: 131) points out that what a child sees when it looks into the mother's eyes is related to what she sees when she looks at the child; identity formation via internalization of an identification is thus a matter of mutual gazing rooted in the fusion with the body of the mother characterizing primary narcissism. Imaginative constructs rooted in and evoking this early stage of human development show a preoccupation with illusions of oneness, doubling, and binary spatial relationships of inside/outside (Clement & Cixous: 164-165).

Although *A Midsummer Night's Dream* opens in a world apparently ruled by father figures and therefore an oedipalized world, we are immediately given signs of female noncooperation with male desire when Theseus complains about how slow the moon is in bringing in his nuptial hour: «This old moon […] lingers my desires/ Like to a stepdame or a dowager,/ Long withering out a young man's revenue» (I.i.4-5). Theseus imagines he has waited so long for marital consummation his estate will have dwindled by the time he gets it. Having won his Amazonian bride by capture, Theseus looks forward to marriage, whereas she seems cold and unwilling. Her initial speech is sad, one can conclude from Theseus's call to his Master of Revels to awake the spirit of mirth. Theseus won his wife by doing her injuries; and in place of Revels called to cheer her up appears the young man Demetrius, who seems determined to marry Hermia against her will. Hermia counterparts Hippolyta and the dowager moon as representations of female noncooperation with patriarchal authority and desire. These parallels clinch when Hermia decides to elope from her father and Athenian law to a refuge provided by Lysander's dowager aunt, «Of great revenue» (I.i.158-159), who lives seven leagues outside Athens.

The flight to the green world of the forest brings the lovers into the domain of the Fairy, a pre-oedipal world of synaesthesia, identity confusion, nurturance, and magical transformations. Freud speaks in "The Uncanny" (1919) of how works of art can create powerful emotional effects by first setting up a version of reality and then invading it by another. Though there are some comically uncanny effects in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, such as Bottom's transformation into a halfass, the effect of the opening of the drama into the green world is more marvelous than uncanny. It is not that the real world gets invaded by the irrational, as in the apparitions of Hamlet's father's ghost or the coming of Birnam Wood to Dunsinane, but that the green world accommodates and supports female and pre-patriarchal desires thwarted by harsh Athenian realities dramatized by the opening of the play. Freud's theory of literature as a form of daydreaming or playing suggests that literature is a domain where we may make up for the limitations of reality. The Celtic-inflected realm of fairyland in this play seems to correspond to the capacity to transform reality to conform to wishes.

Though Oberon is King of Fairyland and King of Shadows, his power doesn't extend over his wife. We see a contest between male and female power evocative of pre-oedipal conflict between matriarchal domination of the nursery and paternal jealousy of the amount and quality of attention a mother gives to her infants at the expense of her husband's claims on her. Most apparent is Oberon's attempt to separate the Indian boy from Titania. One can read Oberon's wish to make the changeling child a member of his train as a demand for sexual differentiation, a masculinization of the pre-oedipal child. Whereas the development task of the oral stage is self-other differentiation, the oedipal stage differentiates genders and generations, conventionally dividing boys from girls and boys from their maternal identifications and girls from their maternal attachments. In order to separate the changeling boy from the mother-figure Titania, Oberon resorts to the very unpatriarchal

recourse of cuckolding himself and thus shifting Titania's bond from the Indian child to the monstrously transformed Bottom, on whom she dotes and whom she feeds, pets, and protects as if he were another one of her infants. While Oberon is effecting through visual aphrodisiac the masculine identification of the changeling child whom he wins by default, Helena alludes to the passing of love between women. She laments to Hermia, whose name suggests "hermaphrodite", that marriage is rending their "ancient love asunder". She recalls how once they were as if "incorporate", one body «Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,/ But yet an union in partition» (III.ii.208-210). Helena's vision of their fused bodies evokes the imaginary register of narcissism in which a child is part of the mother, unindividuated from her body, with which it identifies. The same patriarchal system of sex/gender socialization that divides the Indian boy from Titania and places him as a follower to Oberon divides the two women as they "join with men" (III.ii.216) in marriage.

The monstrous coupling of Beauty and the Beast raises to view another aspect of the unconscious fantasy material informing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Freud's later work on dreams identified mastery of fears as a function of the dreamwork, an advance on his first idea that dreams are disguised attempts to fulfill wishes rooted in infantile pleasures. While there is pleasure in the ridiculous spectacle of Titania enraptured with her grotesque Bottom, this pleasure is latently alarming for prospective brides and grooms, and in retrospect humiliating for Titania. Titania and Bottom as improbable lovers provides a comic version of what Iago in Othello calls «the beast with two backs» – a primal scene fantasy in which heterosexual coupling degrades and bestializes. This same fantasy recurs in the play-within-the-play to which three newly married couples form an audience at the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In "Pyramus and Thisbe", we hear about how Thisby was deflowered by a lion, left a bloody scarf as a trace of the violence, and how her husband in consequence stabbed himself in the pap. This deflowering-devouring, blood, and attack on the breast echo Hermia's reference to her virgin patent in Act I, and perhaps the Amazons' cutting off of a breast to seal their commitment to the warrior life, as well as Hermia's dream of her heart being eaten by a serpent.

Thus far I have identified three kinds of unconscious fantasy material in this drama: 1) primal scene fantasies of forced love, sex as violence, as monstrosity, and as oral/visual enchantment; 2) preoedipal-oedipal borderline fantasies of gender rebellion and differentiation; 3) oral fantasies of a maternal realm of magical transformation, shapeshifting, boundariless fullness. From a classical psychoanalytic view, one might say that the play reaches this transformative realm through regression to orality from an oedipal world resisted by female noncooperation aided by antipatriarchal male seduction on the part of Lysander, who won Hermia's heart by rhymes and love songs rather than by getting her father's love first as the law decrees.

The oral, narcissistic or imaginary register iteratively shows itself in the imagery of the drama. Imagery of eyes and sight marks *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Hermia gasps, «O hell, to choose love by another's eyes!» (I.i.140). Helena demands of Hermia, «teach me how you look» (I.i.192). Lysander imagines the Moon seeing herself reflected in a body of water: «Phoebe doth behold/ Her silver visage in the wat'ry glass» (I.i.209-210), an image that seems to evoke maternal narcissism and the mirror stage of development. Among the drama's numerous references to eyes and sight, we must include the spying by the fairies, especially Puck and Oberon; the instances of dreaming and waking, when the world appears to Hermia «with parted eye,/ When everything seems double» (IV.i.189-190); the love juice applied to the eyes and producing visual rapture. The play's thematic preoccupation with the imagination as a creative transformer of reality in poetry, love, and lunacy point to the Imaginary register too. This preoccupation is born out in the overall conflict of the drama, which deploys the metamorphosing forest against the sharp Athenian law which it modifies so that Theseus gives up hunting, overrules Egeus to allow Hermia and Lysander their hearts' desire, and champions the artistry of the play-within-the-play. Although men take verbal command of the play once the couples move toward marriage, the charm of the drama is in

the dreamy, shapeshifting, synaesthesthetic, preverbal lullaby world of the forest, opened to a reality beyond the filters of differentiated senses, sexes and even species. As Theseus observes of the breakdown of language in the prologue to the play-within-the-play, there is «sound but no *government*; nothing impaired, but all *disordered*» (my italics). Theseus's speech about how he must rule over love, lunacy, and poetry was put into his mouth by a poet who thereby rules him (Montrose, p. 192). Theseus conquered the Cretan Minotaur, but a Minoan-Celtic underworld charms him.

If the central fantasy of this drama may therefore be analyzed as oral fusion subverting oedipal differentiation, how shall we interpret the play-within-the-play, which customarily reads in Shakespeare as an encapsulated version of the deepest meaning of the overall work? Oral fusion may be part of the visual imagery implicit in playwatching. The conflict of young lovers divided by family obligation in "Pyramus and Thisby" reflects the conflict of Hermia and Lysander with Demetrius and Egeus; so in that sense the play holds a mirror up to the social realities of the onstage audience. This coheres with the oral, narcissistic dimensions of reflection and projective identification. The interior play also functions as a replay of the primal scene fantasies aroused by the idea of Theseus wooing with a sword (love as violence), the spectacle of Titania in bed with monstrous Bottom, and the orgiastic connotations of the flights through the woods and the square dance-like changes of partners among the four young lovers. The play begins with a primal scene fantasy reported in words, moves toward an enacted scene of monstrous sex denied by exaggeration, assigns the orgiastic forest scenes to dreamland, and then distances sex-as-violence to a play.

But a play-within-a-play, like a dream within a dream, expresses in disguised form the deepest meaning of the overall structure it denies is real by saying it is only a dream. This strategy of psychic distancing provides a layer of protection that allows a social unpleasantness to emerge in shadow form. In this play, the unpleasantness is the representation of sex as violent and infantilizing, and courtly love conventions of desire with required obstacle as ridiculous. Subversion of patriarchal, oedipal culture inheres in the notion that the world of fathers is at heart ruled by subliminal fairy forces of shapeshifting provision and magical words.

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J. M. Coetzee's *Youth: Scenes from Provincial Life II* – Anxiety in England

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J. M. Coetzee's *Youth* (2002) is the second volume of an experimental memoir which began with *Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life* (1997). This second volume depicts events from 1959 when he is planning to leave South Africa for London through the early 1960's when he is about to leave England for graduate work in linguistics in the United States. In both volumes of the memoir, Coetzee depicts himself from a distance, creating an angle of vision which he has termed "autrebiography" (*Doubling* 394). This coinage refers to his use of a detached and uncertain third-person narrator who reports events of his own past in the present tense. He depicts his past self – both the "boy" and the "youth" – as autre, an unknown other who is a continuing presence or a haunting, unresolved problem. The past self, according to these techniques, continues to exist and is unknown.

Julia Kristeva observes that, since Freud opened our awareness of the unconscious, the "self" is seen as a shifting illusion:

> "our self," so poised and dense, which precisely no longer exists ever since Freud... shows itself to be a strange land of borders and othernesses ceaselessly constructed and deconstructed (191).

In expressing a sense of otherness in the self, the techniques of Coetzee's memoir indicate the influence of psychoanalysis.

Hermoine Lee observes that, in his portrait of the artist as a young man, «Coetzee is even harsher toward his youthful self than Joyce was to Stephen's high aspirations» (14). Joyce depicts young Stephen Daedalus as he prepares for flight from the cultural and religious limitations of provincial Ireland to the detachments of high modernism. In *Youth*, Coetzee defines the young man's motives for flight from his family and the burdens of racism in South Africa, but he primarily is concerned with the youth's behavior and awareness after he arrives in England. The emotionally blighted youth expects to achieve artistic and psychosexual fulfullment in London, which he sees as an idealized center of modernism. He is following the path of such early twentieth century writers as T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, whom he has described as «young colonials struggling to match their inherited culture to their daily experience» (*Stranger* 6).

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If the question, «Who am I?» impels the writing of an autobiography. Then Coetzee's answer identifies three interwoven influences: political structures, artistic models, and personal emotional needs. In all these sources of self-definition, however, the youth is experiencing anxieties of disposession.

In the opening section of the memoir we see the youth's daily experiences in South Africa. He is supporting himself in Capetown with several part-time jobs while completing his undergraduate studies in mathematics and English. He has moved away from his family home and, therefore, in Freud's terms, he has begun «the great task of detaching himself from his parents» (*Introductory Lectures* 337). His anxieties and hopes concerning such a separation are explicit early in the narrative.

First, we are told in a single-sentence paragraph that, by moving away from his home, «He is proving something: that each man is an island; that you don't need parents» (3). The assertion that he is «proving something» appears pretentious, and, further, it is somewhat surprising that this "literary" youth reverses John Donne's famous aphorism of interconnectedness: «No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent» ("Meditation XVII" 108). In addition to this implicit rejection of Donne, the youth becomes shrill in generalizing from his personal flight to an assertion that «you don't need parents».

In fact, two short paragraphs later, a barrier to the youth's achieving of maturity is identified as a hidden childish weakness or vulnerability:

> «There is something essential he lacks.... Something of the baby remains in him. How long before he will cease to be a baby? What will cure him of babyhood and make him into a man?» (3)

The youth's efforts to identify this "something essential" that is missing from his personality is one of the major issues throughout the memoir.

An immediate problem of narrative identity in *Youth* emerges from his manipulative lies. On the very first page, for example, we learn that the young man has lied to his landlord in renting an apartment. Although he is a college undergraduate supporting himself with part-time jobs, he identifies himself as a "Library Assistant" in order to be seen as more mature, reliable and respectable. In subsequent scenes, he frequently misrepresents himself to gain employment or to aggrandise himself to other people. These lies indicate the youth's anxiety concerning his identity and his manipulative reliance upon the mask of a false self.

In attempting to satisfy both his personal and cultural needs, the youth flees from South Africa as well as from his parents. After he arrives in England, his anxieties entrap him in a cold insensitivity toward the women and men he meets and also inhibit his attempts to define himself as a writer. The provincial who travels from South Africa in search of maturity expects the cultural energies of London to enrich him with emotional and artistic development. Nevertheless, he imagines that Londoners see him as a "forlorn" White South African «in search of parents» (87). The youth's «great task of separation» is only beginning. In addition to freeing himself from childhood anxieties, he must define himself in a state of independence from his South African home, and he must find a cultural purpose to replace the lost certainty which had been provided by his cosmopolitan modernist cultural fathers.

Love affairs described in the narrative have a recurring bleak emptiness and lack of passion. In a love affair after moving from his parents home, for example, his relationship with volatile Jacqueline collapses after she reads his diary and finds a variety of critical comments upon herself and upon their living together. The youth is not certain whether he left his diary around so that she would find it or if she has invaded his creative privacy, but her outraged departure leads him to reflect upon the issue of truthfulness in his diary (130). The question of what should be permitted to go into his diary and what should be kept forever shrouded from language goes to the heart of his concerns as a writer:

> If he is to censor... ignoble emotions – resentment at having his flat invaded, or shame at his own failures as a lover – how will those emotions ever be transfigured and turned into poetry? Besides, who is to say that the feelings that he writes in his diary are his true feelings? (*Youth* 9-10).

Such questions concerning the uncensored revelations in his journal are pertinent to the memoir itself. His relationships with women are almost entirely reported as selfish, unfulfilling, and even dishonorable. Lee says that he treats all the women he makes love to with cruelty, contempt or resentment «presumably to be revenged on his mother's unbearable devotion...» (14). This callousness is particularly apparent in his seduction and subsequent neglect of Marianne, a South African college student who tours London with his cousin, Ilse. After sleeping with Marianne, he is disgusted by the sheets and mattress bloodied by her ruptured hymen, and he is thoughtless in sending her home in a cab and then neglecting to call her. He wonders whether «the depths he has wanted to plumb have been within him all the time, closed up in his chest: depths of coldness, callousness, caddishness» (131). When his cousin writes to him about Marianne, she addresses him in the formal language used to a stranger. The youth recognizes this voice as one of the homiletic "home truths" from South Africa. In answering the question, «Do you want to know the truth about yourself» (132), he confronts his coldness and heartlessness, and discovers another dimension of his disinheritance.

In *The Problem of Anxiety*, Freud discusses the fear of the «loss of the object's love» as a source of anxiety (84). In the first volume of Coetzee's memoirs, *Boyhood*, there is a discussion of anxiety which the child experiences from his fear of the loss of his mother's love. After observing the collapse of the marital love between his mother and father, the boy comes to believe that his mother "chose" to love him as she chose to love his father, and she could choose to reject him if she wishes (*Boyhood* 162). Her love appears to him to be contingent, dependent upon his ability to continue to meet some unnamed criteria which he does not understand. At one point, the boy says that the «debt of love to his mother baffles and enfuriates him to the point where will not kiss her» (*Boyhood* 47). The boy's achievement in school is said, however, to be an attempt to demonstrate that he is worthy of her love (*Boyhood* 122). Freud says that

> the initial cause of anxiety is... loss of perception of the object, which becomes equated with loss of the object. Loss of love does not enter into the situation. Later on, experience teaches that the object may continue to be present but may have become angry with the child, and now loss of love on the part of the object becomes a new and far more enduring danger and occasion for anxiety (119).

Using startling imagery, Coetzee writes that the boy «would rather be blind and deaf than know what [his mother] thinks of him». He would prefer «to live like a tortoise inside its shell» (*Boyhood* 162). This preference for a life in a shell leads him into an isolation which is threatened by any woman who shows affection toward him or attraction him in his *Youth*. It seems likely that his inability to feel passion toward these women reflects the fear of loss that he experiences in any intimacy.

The youth's sense of a "contingent" relationship to his mother may contribute to his inability to understand or accept any woman's expression of interest or affection for him. He states that only love and art are worthy of giving one's self to without reserve (85); yet when any specific and actual woman such as Jacqueline, Sarah, Caroline, Marianne, or Astrid shows interest in him, he cannot comprehend why she might seek his company. Fearing the motives and the encroachments upon his freedom by these lovers, he nonetheless believes that in encountering the woman of his destiny he will be able to achieve passionate maturity as a man and as an artist (134). Such fantasies of a magical escape from himself appear throughout the memoir, and they exemplify his "babyish" evasions of his own emotional patterns.

The youth's flight from South Africa parallels his flight from his family. Both escapes are responses to anxiety and disposession. As a result of the historical shame and violence of Apartheid, he loses his connection to the land and the history of his family home. He identifies the brutality of

the Sharpville massacre, and he describes a tremendous throng of PAC marchers as defining a moment when South Africa's «history is being unmade» (39).

As a provincial in the period of the collapse of European colonialism after World War II, Coetzee's experiences might be seen to be representative of the generational experience of those who did not wish to «perish of shame» (124) as various racist and colonialist structures became discredited and collapsed in the decades following the Second World War. In these terms, Coetzee's anxiety could be seen as a «generational issue» (Bollas 259), not merely an instance of individual suffering. Coetzee indicates such a generational issue in stating that, as a European, he has no legitimate claim upon the land of South Africa. He says that he and his friend, Paul,

> «are here on this earth, the earth of South Africa on the shakiest of pretexts.... From Africans in general,... he feels a curious, amused tenderness... a sense that he must be a simpleton if he imagines he can get by on the basis of straight looks and honorable dealings when the ground beneath his feet is soaked with blood (17).

Individual good will is not adequate to moving forward from the brutal history of racist colonialism. A similar awareness is asserted in Coetzee's recent novel, *Disgrace*. The central character, a disgraced professor in the humanities, is beaten and robbed in a violent attack by Africans, and his daughter made pregnant by a rape. The daughter says, the Africans «see me as owing something. They see themselves as debt collectors, tax collectors» (158). The daughter's acceptance of suffering is paralleled in the expectation of pain derived from history in *Youth*.

In the memoir, the youth rejects a girlfriend's suggestion that he «should have therapy» because he believes his «burden of unhappiness» should be accepted and made into art (13-14). Coetzee's formal innovations in the "autrebiography" may indicate such a therapeutic achievement. His use of the present tense, for example, parallels the Freud's sense of access to the past. In *The Introductory Lectures*, Freud says,

> Whenever someone gives an account of a past event, even if he is a historian, we must take into account what he unintentionally puts back into the past from the present or some intermediary time, thus falsifying his picture of it (336).

By using the present tense, Coetzee acknowledges his inevitable presence in the depiction of his earlier self. The desires of the narrator are implicated. In his own work as a linguist and literary critic, Coetzee has examined Kafka's use of the present tense in "The Burrow" without making explicit reference to Freud. Coetzee says that the present tense in Kafka's story expresses an "acute anxiety" that «attack... may come at any moment and without warning» (*Doubling* 227). In discussing the youth's increasing anxiety in England, Coetzee says that «tests no longer came with fair warning... or even to announce themselves as tests» (163). The present tense exhibits both the youth's continuing perceptions of danger, and the narrator's lack of certainty about the resolution of that anxiety.

The sources of the youth's anxiety include his loss of cultural, generational and literary certainties as well as his inability to meet his emotional needs.

In "What is a Classic", an essay title echoing T. S. Eliot's earlier work, Coetzee employs oedipal terminology to define Eliot as a modernist who distanced himself from his "father country" to assert a cosmopolitan destiny, a «paternity... from Virgil and Dante» as an alternative to his actual provincial history in America (*Stranger* 3-7). Coetzee then discusses his own aesthetic rapture upon hearing Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier, but he also notes the re-evaluations of Bach's composition in the history of the musical canon (8-12). In *Youth*, Coetzee reports making a physical separation from his provincial past, like Eliot's leaving America, but he insists that the modernist affirmations of impersonality and a timeless classicism are aspects of his heritage that the youth must learn to interrogate. Coetzee's memoir exemplifies his belief that our historical being includes «understanding ourselves as not only as objects of historical forces but as subjects of our own

historical understanding» (*Stranger* 13). In England, this provincial artist's anxiety results, in part, from the discovery that he is disposessed of certainty even in his relation to literature and culture.

In describing his conversations with one of his IBM co-workers, the youth observes of the British, «They do not discuss their desires or larger aspirations. They are silent on their personal lives, on their families and their upbringing, on politics, religion and the arts» (*Youth* 51). These are, perhaps, rather typical social evasions, but they indicate that the British social environment contributes to the youth's entrapment in a "false self" which he developed from childhood fears. In Winnicott's terms, this submission to the false self results in «the hiding of the true self that has the potential for creative use of objects» (*Playing* 120). It appearss that Coetzee's efforts toward poetic expression are impoverished by his «horror of spilling emotion» (61) reinforced by the inhibitions of British social life. His reiterated observations that he is «cold and unresponsive», and shows «meanness, poverty of spirit» (95) indicate the emotional limitations imposed by the rigid boundaries of the false self.

Such restricted access to his emotions is further exemplified in the youth's crude generalizations defining intellectual or artistic values which he has derived from anecdotes concerning the lives of artists. The youth says, for example, that «Artists must taste all experience, from the noblest to the most degraded» (164); and he believes that women because they can recognize «the secret flame... that marks him as an artist» (5). Such generalizations mask the individual contents of events defining his relationships to woman and himself.

Hermoine Lee has stated that the literary models Coetzee is most concerned with in *Youth* «are all style and no confession», and they indicate the weakness of his own formal, defensive style in the memoir (15). Nevertheless, the memoir is explicitly about the struggles of the young, late 20th century provincial who must redefine his relationship to modernist cultural values before being able to mature as a person and as writer. After reading through «the sprawling corpus» of Ford Madox Ford for his Masters degree, for example, he arrives at the dismaying realization that the writer is «a let down», and he is «disappointed in his hero» (112).

Significantly, the last poems the youth writes during the period of this memoir are assemblage poems constructed through the impersonal processes of the huge Atlas computer which he has been working on as a programmer. It seems that these poems are the dead end of his identifications with derivative aesthetic principles or even a surrender to his inhibitions by the aspiring provincial artist.

When he retreats from the demands of poetry writing, his first attempt at fiction is, quite appropriately, a depiction of a blighted love affair about a

> Nameless young man who takes a nameless young woman to a... beach. From some small action of hers,... he is suddenly convinced she has been unfaithful; furthermore, he realizes that she has seen he knows, and does not care.... That is how the piece ends (62).

Coetzee observes that the story refers to a woman he knew in South Africa. She is, perhaps, Caroline, who arrives in London to pursue an acting career and provides an intermittent and uncertain intimacy which includes his suspicion that she is engaged in other love affairs (69-70, 110).

The youth's experiences in England do not lead him toward a personal and liberation from anxiety. In fact, in England as a foreigner, he discovers a deeper personal loneliness, and in his last job in England, he works with the TSR-2 Atlas Project computers in weapons research (83). Having escaped from the shame and guilt of being a white South African, he finds himself both a beneficiary and a potential victim of the development of nuclear weapons in the Cold War. He discusses the terror he experiences in England during the Cuban missile crisis and the irony of escaping from the bullies of South Africa to the position of «siding with the Americans who behave like bullies in Europe as all over the world» (84). In these terms, Coetzee's anxiety is not

simply a coldness or gloomy moroseness derived from his artistic aspirations or from the emotional inhibitions derived from his family. It is, in addition, a generational experience.

Winnicott states that the irresponsibility of youth gives a cultural value to immaturity. Youthful emotions are the price of psychological development:

> The sense of guilt in the adolescent is terrific and it takes years of development in an individual of a capacity to discover in the self the balance of good and the bad, the hate and destruction that go with love, within the self (175).

At the end of the memoir, the youth is poised at the edge of a decision to study for a Ph.D. in linguistics in the United States. He does not seem to be expecting to escape from his personal or cultural history as he did when he fled South Africa.

He recognizes that he and his friend from India, Ganaphy, are two sides of the same coin. Ganaphy is starving himself in a kind of grief at his separation from his mother, and Coetzee has been fleeing emotional confusions in his relationships to his parents. Each of the young men is «locked into an attenuated endgame playing himself... further into a corner and into defeat» (169). There has been a foreshadowing of this kinship with Ganaphy earlier – when in Satijat Ray's *Opu* trilogy, the youth recognizes his own «trapped mother; engaging feckless father» in the characters of the Indian film (93). In the youth's recognition of kinship with Ganaphy, he clarifies his own emotions and accepts a connection to another person as well as another provincial culture. This is a moment indicating a capacity for growth.

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A philosopher of narrative looks at *The Franklin's Tale*

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I have to do two things in twenty minutes: to present a new philosophy of narrative and to show how it applies to Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale*. In spite of "apparence", about the illusions of which "Holy Chirche" does not allow us to gieve, I believe it can be done, but only with the help of magic. So to waste no time, let's start with a children's "Knock knock" joke – forgive its simplicity:

> Knock, knock!
> Who's there?
> Amos.
> Amos who?
> A mosquito.

Oh, but it wasn't so simple after all – that's the first illusion. I want you to note a key feature that was brought to our attention very early, by Dinnaga, an Indian Buddhist philosopher of the sixth century. What was a single thing in the answer to the first question, that is, the name "Amos", was no longer a single thing in the answer to the second question, because it had metamorphosed into the indefinite article "a" and the first syllable of the word "mosquito". Singularity is obviously not necessarily preserved when one changes one's intentional perspective on the world. As Dinnaga himself put it, «Even "this" can be a case of mistaken identity» (see Matilal, 1986, 332). What is magic about this? Well, the phonemes more or less remained the same; the Real, we might say, went on as before, but our Symbolic choice divided it up another way. Indeed, instead of the harmless name "Amos", one was faced with a stinging reminder of the unpleasant, a mosquito, and, by a nice self-referentiality, the mosquito can be a metaphor for the joker who caught you out. Because of that, one might call it «litel myn tragedye», for the pattern is precisely the same as *Troilus and Criseyde*, in which a beloved turns unfaithful, something desired to something profoundly unwished for. Magic enough, for many a conjuror takes advantage of our naïve

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assumption that, once we have identified what we call a single "thing", its singleness and thingness will remain unchanged through time.

So our choices can slide over the Real, and, just as much, the Real can slide under our choices, and choices, of course, are a matter of desires and fears. We carve the world up in certain ways in what we call "entities" and "properties" in order to make it as safe and rewarding as possible, but, patently, we do not always succeed.Take a writer on medieval epistemology, Alexander Broadie, «A central feature of an intuitive act» - and by that he means an act of sensing, such as seeing or hearing – «is that *is* makes immediate visual contact with its object» (Broadie, 1989, 91). So there is a printer's error, or Broadie's error: instead of saying, «A central feature of an intuitive act is that it makes immediate visual contact with its object», we read, «A central feature of an intuitive act is that is makes immediate visual contact with its object». Instead of "it", the neatly precise "object" which the very sentence itself counsels us to make contact with "immediately", we are presented with "is". The "is" subverted the "it"; Real existence, being, the "is", intruded upon the comfortable Symbolic, the "it", part of the reassuring order of objects, the order of things, and, naturally, the order of words which we take to match those "things".

The trouble is that, not only are things part of the unreliable Real, but we are part of it ourselves. The "is" can subvert the "it" inside a self. Of course, if we all had identical desires then we might hold thinghood a little more securely, but we don't. We can't go along with Chrétien de Troyes, who writes in his *Cligés* (vv. 2793-99):

> They [the lovers] consider themselves to be one only as the desire of each passes forth from one to the other; so they both desire one thing together, and in so far as they desire one thing, there are those satisfied to say that each one has the hearts of both.

But as lovers and spouses well know their two desires cannot fuse into "one longing" as the troubadour Marcabru would have it. Whatever we commonly, as we say, identify out of the Real, it is undeniable that neither our "intuitive acts", that is, our actual sensing, can be the same, nor the choices that we have learned to make can be the same. In all conscience, it is laughable to believe otherwise. Sensing and perceiving are thus different on two levels: first, they are *both* different from person to person; and, second, they differ from each other within each person, for we can never know all the ways in which our conscious interpretation of our own sensing differs from that of others, even when we are assuring each other – and have to – that it does not.

Yet does not this seem to be drifting towards scepticism? If I hold up my hand, as G. E. Moore famously did a hundred years ago (Moore, 1959) and say that this is a *thing* I and you can be sure of, this hand, there can be no doubt, can there, that there is one thing that we both recognize? But this is to miss what, to quote Marcabru again, "segurana fianssa", *secure trust*, does for us. Take two aspects of this hand of mine together: my sensory experiences of this hand and yours are incontestably different. There, you didn't feel that, did you? And what of the epistemic aspects of it? Consider my memories of this hand and yours – how different are they? But come now, the objector retorts, we can neglect those vague differences.

Now what is it «to neglect those vague differences»? To take an actual objector, the erstwhile Professor of Logic at Oxford, David Wiggins. Of course, he says, there is halo of vagueness about any of our identifications, but what is vague for me is vague for you; we can leave the negligible out. Now examine carefully what is being said here. Wiggins does not see that to say that one person's vagueness is the same as another's is equivalent to saying we must neglect all that we separately consider negligible, and this is plainly an *exhortation* to take the supposed "singularity" of "the entity" for granted. But there is no doubt that we cannot possibly know beforehand that what is "negligible" for you is "negligible" for me; tomorrow we may find it was not.

The phrase «take for granted» that I have just used deserves the kind of analysis J. L. Austin used to perform. After all, it includes those slippery words "take for" and what do they mean? Do we not use them thus, say, of that very printer's error we just looked at that Broadie took an "is" for

an "it", that is, "to take for" is *to accept an illusion of one thing for another thing*. «It was so foggy I took him for his brother.» What in this case is the illusion we are taking for real? – Why, our *granting* something – and what is "to grant"? – It is to say that there is nothing in the case that will be to our disadvantage, discomfort, or actual hurt, for our body is involved, its motivations of fear and desire. Maurice Merleau-Ponty said that «this *presumption* on reason's part» (his emphasis), this postulation of «a totally explicit knowledge», was «the fundamental philosophic problem» (Merleau-Ponty, 1970, 63).

So in order to refer to any portion of the Real, we have to begin by treating the rough superimposition of our *differing* choices on it as if they were *identical* ones. To put it another way, we have to behave *as if* we have achieved perfect singularity, when we have not. To put it another way again, for it is difficult to get one's mind round this tacit trick we are all involved in – even at the present moment! – we have, as our very method of dealing with the Real, to treat this tentative, illusory, hoped-for convergence of our differing choices from the Real as if it were already exact, as if, with Chrétien de Troyes, the desires that guided those choices were identical. Singularity, this talk of commonly recognizable things, selves, words, rules, is actually an *apparence* produced by our trust in each other. We have to say to each other that we are *seeing that* when what we are really doing is *seeing as*. So objectivity, that nice, pure, safe, timeless logical anchor in the world depends on human trust, "trouthe". This means that all rationality depends on faith, not the reverse. There is no doubt that the Real confronts us; existence is there determining the outcome of our hopes, but it does not and could not finally correspond to the words that we place upon it. We cannot escape having to use the *illusion* of objectivity to handle the *Real* of existence.

This produces a plausible explanation of what happens when someone makes an informative statement to another. A speaker and a hearer first get a rough convergence of their understandings of a portion of the Real by assuming that they have the same single thing in view, and then, by means of some clue, the speaker effects an updating of the hearer's perspective, a performance which, as you may notice, has exactly the structure of the joke we started out with. To put it crudely, of this watch, I say «Do you see this watch that we both know about in the same way», and then add, «but we don't know about it in the same way, because it was given to me by my son». Notice that it never occurs to us that the mutual "object" is now different from what it was before; after all, weren't we talking about "the" object?

You can see why this method is tacit, why we are unconscious of it. Firstly, your choice is from the Real, my choice is from the Real – how insidiously easy therefore to move to the belief that our choices perfectly coincide when, in order to talk at all, we have to behave as if they did. Secondly, to bring the trust into the open looks for all the world as if I am doubting you, as if my faith in you was imperfect. This, I would argue, is the moral source of many complaints of conservative philosophers against that favourite Aunt Sally of theirs, the Sceptic, with a capital S, for a common ploy of theirs is to suggest that the Sceptic is *untrustworthy*. Modern metaphysicians, particularly, are prone to fall into this trap, for many of them in their ontologies are determined to take the Real as populated with «determinately singular entities», whether "things", "persons" or "properties" (sse for an example of one who believes that objects must have «determinate identity-conditions», E. J. Lowe, 1998, 37).

Now what is morally wrong with this? Ask what a proper faith is. It is certainly not blind. It does not depend on certainties. Have not theologians over the centuries protested that faith is not certainty – «Oh, Lord, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief.» If the Real can subvert the Thing and the Self, escape the word, rule and custom that attempts to keep it roughly within bounds, then there is risk in every act of trust. To trust someone is not to be sure that they will do exactly as you personally expect. To believe that they will is to put yourself in a narrative over which you have little control, as well as committing the narcissistic sin of believing that your desire is their desire, your objective world is theirs, absolutely without any awkward residue. This is what all jokes and stories are about. Are they not repeated demonstrations of what happens when someone favours

their own objective choice from the Real while disregarding all clues to the contrary? Look at the rioters in *The Pardoner's Tale*, at Oedipus, at Othello, at Marlowe in *She Stoops to Conquer*, at Pip in *Great Expectations*. The temptation is very great, especially if one's self-estimation is bound up with holding to the faith as if it had no risk in it whatever, as if existing public agreements – religions, nationalisms, ideologies – were based on an absolutely *segurana fiannsa*, for no trust can be secure. To trust is to love, and to love is not to believe that you and your beloved desire "one thing". To love is to accept that the "one thing" that we happen to be *postulating* is not guaranteed to retain its singularity. It surely may have become plain to you by now that to believe that any entity, person or thing, is publicly as we privately take it to be is an act of *superstition*. To quote Josiah Royce, the American philosopher: «Blind faith says, "I dare not question": the postulate says, "I dare be responsible for assuming"» (Royce, 1885, 298). So a proper trust is imperfect, and has to be so – and one might add, if it is to be perfect. So all promises are in this sense rash, and that is why *The Franklin's Tale*, *The Wife of Bath's Tale* and the biblical story of Jephthah have a hidden allegorical power for in each the promise made reveals itself to encompass much more than the promissee imagined.

Now one of the symbolic agreements that comes to have insistent meaning for most of us is marriage. So, given the epistemological account I have just outlined, one can immediately find common ground with critics of *The Franklin's Tale* who say the following: «the Tale is not about marriage, but what it is like to be married» (Lee, 1984, 170); or that «Chaucer creates a portrait of a marriage in which moral compromise and an acceptance of imperfection substitutes for the ethical absolutism depicted in the *Legend* tales» (Hallissy, 1993, 35); or «an ideal marriage is not one that never encounters problems» (Pulham, 1996, 84). But, unfortunately, one comes across as many critics for whom the existing Symbolic, and even the medieval one, are unquestioned and unquestionable oracles. One might produce as evidence all those patriarchs for whom Dorigen and Aurelius are to be castigated either for their immorality or for the feebleness of their personalities. I must say that I have been surprised as I went on exploring the researches on *The Franklin's Tale* what astonishingly extreme expressions of disapproval are to be found among them. Edwin Benjamin finds Satan «lurking in the neurotic fancies of a pretty woman» (Benjamin, 1959, 124); Robert Burlin speaks of Dorigen's «irrational and giddy femininity» (Burlin, 1974, 196). D. W. Robertson thinks her «downright silly» to take her oath seriously.

Let us suppose instead that Dorigen, Aurelius and Arveragus have a notion of "trouthe", of the keeping of promises, that allows for the risk I spoke of, in that they had a proper concept of faith. This, notice, does not imply that they are gifted with a sure understanding of the dilemma that they get into; in fact, it implies the opposite. If words only have a slippery hold on the Real, someone may perform a moral act without fully understanding what they have done, may, indeed, have only an oblique understanding. Very few of the researchers have realized what was being promised when Dorigen asked Aurelius to remove the rocks. For the pair to allow freedom to each other is to allow each one to follow a desire even should it come to that desire running counter to that of the other. How far this is from Chrétien de Troyes. And for the rocks, what are they if not an image of the real? In that "derk fantasye", what was Dorigen unconsciously expressing? Several conservative critics dismiss her as "hysterical" without realizing the implications of what they were saying (for an example, see Sledd, 1947/48, 23). As has been pointed out by Stephen Knight and Ellen Martin, two of the more reliable critics, the fantasy is overdetermined (Knight, 1980, 23; Martin, 1992, 124): it was hardly the conscious interpretation that she was anxious about her husband's safety at sea, for it is far more credible that she is anxious about her own anger at his absence, deriving from a rightful sexual frustration; she was questioning the chivalric tradition (that, for example, thought it right that a knight should abandon his wife for two years) and with an image that represented an uneasy boundary, the liminal place in which she found herself in the existing ideology, all that talk of God's providence, not being as Burlin sees it as «a piece of metaphysical foolishness», but a poetic way of challenging the clerkish system of thought that

envelopes and attempts to define her; conversely and simultaneously, they are a phallic image of the patriarchal power which she suffers and the male body representative of it – as Martin puts it, that the woman finds «frightful-grotesque-dangerous-compelling-intriguing-risible-desirable-adorable» (Martin, ibid.). With these indications, it is highly credible that, instead of being flirtatious as some have called her, she was indirectly proposing love when she proposed the task to Aurelius, its "impossibility" a metaphor for the difficulty of challenging the medieval Symbolic.

The conservatives view Aurelius as a person who makes a "seamy proposal" with nothing but lust on his mind (Condren, 1999, 159), who is nothing but «an earnest sophist» (Gaylord, 1994, 335), one who «cleaves to the letter and not to the spirit» (Grudin, 1996, 131). D. W. Robertson makes the extraordinarily revealing remark that Aurelius could have used his thousand pounds to purchase «the Venereal services of a variety of amiable and capable wenches for a number of years» (Robertson, 1980, 287)! – which betrays not only how far this judgement is from the actual possibility, but the prejudice that motivated that judgement. There seems little doubt that latent perception of Dorigen's sexual frustration and thus her looking for love was precisely what gave rise to a genuine love in him. We cannot fault him for his courtly-lover attitudes and thus mock him with the Franklin, for that is just what the tradition had inculcated in him; none of that detracts in the slightest from his being in love. Consequently, he had a right to read her demand as real though concealed in indirection, that is to say, *pace* Michaela Grudin, he cleaves to the spirit and not to the letter; furthermore, he was also right to meet it with a similar indirection in the carrying out of the task. It seems much more likely that his perception of Dorigen's sexual frustration was precisely what gave rise to a genuine love. Consequently, he had a right to read her demand as real though concealed in indirection; furthermore, he was also right to meet it with a similar indirection in the carrying out of the task. Not a single critic has considered the possibility that there was a genuine love between Dorigen and Aurelius, however forced they were by the Courtly Love ideology to mystify it in poetic, magical ways. No one seems to have followed out the implications of this: it makes sense of Arveragus's release of her, for far from demonstrating his loyalty to the knightly code, it evidences his own sense of responsibility for what has happened, that there is a sense in which he has forfeited her love since his absence was the cause of the real promise that she made. The conservatives all want to see her on the way to some kind of rape in the garden, but what if she is weeping at the fearful and novel responsibility of her own free choice which has placed her is this near-tragic dilemma, weeping that she actually desires the love of Aurelius and can hardly admit it to herself, though Arveragus's act has opened her mind to that freedom. Again, what if Aurelius had taken her to the garden? She had promised to love him and he her: this would have been no rape.

That Arveragus could not bring himself to publicize his correction of the public morality we can perhaps forgive him, but note that Chaucer does publicize it in the very text. He has enabled his audience to consider such a drastic revision of chivalric tradition under cover of apparently supporting it, a nice touch of "apparence" in a text which purports, through the mouth of the Franklin, to suspect it.

To conclude, we can perhaps then say, with Kittredge, that Chaucer was giving his picture of an ideal marriage in *The Franklin's Tale*, but the picture was not that of Kittredge's, who concentrated on the opening vows, but on an marriage that was ideal because it confronted its own imperfections, saw the Real in "trouthe" that every story and every joke rehearses.

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Big mamas: The devouring feminine in contemporary cinema

EMILY FOX-KALES (*)

Any conversation about women and weight immediately forces us to consider a series of paradoxes. It is well-documented via marriageability rates, earned income statistics, and self-esteem measures, that the overweight woman is the object of persistent stigmatization socially, economically, and psychologically; she is, in short, a victim of «oppression, recession, and depression» (Gregory, 1994). This leads us to the first paradox: despite her corporeal substantiality, the outsize woman in contemporary culture is rendered politically and socially invisible – voiceless and powerless, she is a «full-figured phantom» who at best achieves only a «negative visibility» (Goodman, 1995). Feminist writers such as Chernin and Bordo (1993) interpret the dis-empowerment of the large woman and the concomitant idealization of the super-thin anorectic/androgynous body as an expression of patriarchal desire for the reestablishment of the "waif", the childlike feminine whose fragility speaks of restraint, abstinence, self-denial, and passivity. While post-"liberation" women may view their boyish bodies in male business suits as escape from their grandmother's procreative fate, in yet another paradox, their obsessive preoccupation with achieving that body shape drains them of the psychological and professional energy needed to really achieve equality in the male marketplace. For the threatened male establishment, however, while the tiny size "zero" colleague at the boardroom table neutralizes anxiety about female dominance, the big woman represents the threat of «throwing her weight around» – demanding equality or still worse, power and control, and thus taking up too much psychological and social space at that table.

While the consequent marginalization of the large woman can thus be contextualized as a collective social response to male anxiety about encroachment of feminine power in their domain, a more universal understanding of her image in contemporary culture is located in analytic models of unconscious developmental processes. As E. Ann Kaplan has noted: «The cinema is the closest analog in the realm of the Symbolic to access the maternal body» (1987). To this end, I invite you to "screen" a subset of films in which the "big mama" appears, not as the object of ridicule (as in

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the stereotypically clumsy, apologetic, and desexualized "fat lady" in mainstream Hollywood films like the recent *Shallow Hal*) but rather cast in the image of a destructive engulfing man-eater. In sharp contrast to the cinematic images of the woman who represents the object of male desire, these grotesque fleshy forms are the projections of male sexual fear. In this sense, the cinema screen itself can be read as a symptom (Cowie, 1993) onto which anxiety is displaced in an attempt to regain control of disturbing early affects and intrapsychic primitive fantasies, particularly those of castration and annihilation by an omnipotent maternal figure.

The early pre-Oedipal phase of oral organization represents the child at its most vulnerable, dependent on the mother for survival and both physiological and psychological nurturance. The oral mother is both womb and breast, the mother of plenitude who is omnipotent and all-controlling; her disappearance creates enormous life-threatening anxiety in the child, and her re-appearance relief and bliss. But the oral mother is also the phallic mother, who at this early stage is believed by the infant to possess (like himself) both penis and vagina. The primitive fantasy is that in her seemingly enormous body she possesses penetrating objects which could annihilate the defenseless infant or engulf him with her monstrous and powerful capacities.

Lina Wertmuller's 1975 film *Seven Beauties* follows Giancarlo Giannini's desperate attempt to survive in a brutal and chaotic world as he woos the Nazi commandant of the death camp in which he has landed after a series of mishaps and comic failures as a gigolo-gangster. His greed for life propels him to dare the impossible: an absurd brazen yet pathetic bird, he warbles an Italian love song with parched and tremulous lips; like a tiny flea, he nibbles his way up the enormous mountain of his captor's breast. His eyes widen in terror and awe – much like the infant fearful of engulfment in his mother's huge vulva – as he peeks up between her legs from his prostrate position at her knees while she sits, a bloated Marlene Dietrich holding all the accoutrements of phallic power – cigar, whip, even a menacing cattle prodder with which she sizes up his shriveled penis with contempt. The high angle shots with which the scene is filmed intensifies the victim's insignificance, emasculating him still further as he grovels in a fetal position on a huge swastika under a portrait of Hitler gazing down from the wall. Wertmuller extends the black humor by focusing the camera on a painting on the other wall of Bronzino's *Venus and Cupid* – a cruelly comic juxtaposition of classical allegory with the brutal animal "courtship" proceeding on the floor below.

And in this scene the oral mother is writ large (literally) in that great orifice of a mouth as she yawns in boredom and swigs from a beer mug – a grotesque "mother" who provides food to her victim out of a sadistic curiosity to see if he could possibly gratify her own sexual appetite: «You make love to me, then I'll kill you with my bare hands.» (This motif of the sexual man-eater will be repeated in the other films as well: in *Happiness* where that is precisely what the overweight Kristina does to her unlucky lover, and in *What's Eating Gilbert Grape?*, where Gilbert learns about the mating habits of the praying mantis, who eats her mate after copulation.) Our hero's predicament recreates the primitive psychic territory of the maternal Kleinian split between the potentially life-giving nurturant "good" breast and the murderous "bad breast" who has the power to destroy him with the flick of her whip.

The conflation of food and sex is another analytic allusion in the construction of these devouring cinematic females. Classical models of infant sexuality identifies pre-oedipal cathexis of the mother's breast as the first libidinous object connecting food to sexual gratification. In the *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis*, Freud says: «If an infant could speak, he would no doubt pronounce the act of sucking at his mother's breast by far the most important… it is the starting-point of the whole of sexual life.» (p. 389, SE). In these films, however, the food/sex connection subordinates the nurturant capacity of the oral mother to the annihilating possibilities of female sexual appetites. As the old rock song by Hall & Oates warns: «Oh-oh here she comes, watch out boys she'll chew you up – she's a man eater!» Female sexual appetite represents the threat of *being* eaten – consumed and incorporated in the woman – and thus must be controlled and

contained. Thus these monstrous cinematic images of big women stand as both embodiments of this male sexual fear as well as a warning to women who would be aggressive in expression of their own sexuality. Notes Christopher Lasch in *The Culture of Narcissism* (1979): «The… aggressive overtures of sexually liberated women convey to many males the same message – that women are voracious, insatiable», and trigger the same pre-oedipal fantasies of a «possessive, suffocating, devouring and castrating mother». The cultural subtext of these grotesque images is that true femininity requires social and sexual passivity and little appetite for either sex or food, signaled by the slender form of the restrained dieter who achieves body mastery and control.

In the film version of Stephen King's thriller *Misery* (1990), the oral and phallic mother takes on murderous and equally monstrous shape in the form of Kathy Bates as a psychotic nurse with a criminal history of infanticide who initially appears as the caretaker, who seeks in this case to consume the mind as well as the body of her prostrate captive, a best-selling author. She sequesters him in her isolated mountain lair, immobilizes him by literally tying him down in bed and exploding into rages like an angry demanding mom: «You better start showing me a little appreciation, Mr. Man!» She is the suffocating infantilizing mother who won't allow separation, first "castrating" him by hobbling his legs in a sequence where lightning ghoulishly highlights her face in the best Gothic horror tradition as he looks up at her terrifying image, again his helplessness visually expressed by the high angle camera work. He is the prisoner of yet another phallic mother, who possesses a seemingly endless arsenal of weapons – hypodermic needles, knives, axes, and rifles to prove the point. More significantly she is the ego-engulfing mother who seeks to control and co-opt his creativity, forcing him to churn out lowbrow bestsellers – no doubt a self-referring commentary by King on his own artistic dilemma about "selling out". The motif of the insatiable appetite of the devouring maternal recurs here as bad visual joke: the nurse trots out her pet pig, watches old Liberace TV shows in bed while "pigging out" on potato chips, and in the mortal struggle of the film's finale, is bludgeoned to death by her captive with her prized statue of a pig. Thus is sanctioned an extraordinarly brutal assault upon the controlling monstrous mother who must be destroyed to free the hero's creative energies. In the film's "happy" coda, our chastened author goes on to write his first critical success: no longer creatively drained and devoured by catering to his admiring female fans, he triumphantly avers that he wrote this new book "for myself".

The figure of the man-feeder/man-eater makes a repeat appearance in a darkly comedic performance by Camryn Mannheim (one of a very few overweight contemporary woman actresses) in the independent film *Happiness* (1998) in which director Todd Solandz mercilessly and dispassionately skewers the pretensions and perversions of a dysfunctional American family. Among a collection of voyeurs and telephone perverts, pederast psychotherapists, and philandering spouses, we find Kristina, the lonely lady who seeks the companionship of a fellow apartment house neighbor. She confesses to the murder and castration of Pedro, the doorman, who sexually accosts her as he brings up the bundles of cakes and fudge she was planning to devour in an all-night eating binge. Here again food and sexual appetites converge, as the unsuspecting would-be lover is first fed a dish of strawberry ice cream, and then, as he lies on top of her, spent and satisfied, Kristina breaks his neck with her bare hands. While she avers it was a "crime of passion" she also expresses her repugnance for the man's sexuality: she cuts up Pedro's body into parts and puts them in her freezer in plastic bags. The scene also draws upon the popular psychology assumption that for the lonely fat woman, food is a substitution for sex. As she tearfully narrates her confession, she takes a moment through her distress to order – and proceed to devour – a hot fudge sundae.

The sequence's final image of the regressed male, curled up in a fetal position in the maternal bed, refers us on to the later developmental phase of separation-individuation, during which the traumatic realization of sexual difference, and with it the enactment of the Oedipal drama, relieves the male child of his fear of the omnipotent mother; after all, she is now "castrated" in his mind and

rendered harmless, receding to her remaining lifetime function as passive nurturer but also dangerously fused with her son. Post-war analysts, including Chodorow, Chasseguet-Smirgel, and notably Kimble-Wrye, who writes of the «sticky, sensual mother-baby adhesion» (1999) posit the overly possessive engulfing mother from whom male patients must learn to separate in order to establish their autonomy in the world and engage in mature adult relationships.

It is within such a context that we are to understand the struggle of the young male protagonist in Lasse Halstrom's coming of age film *What's Eating Gilbert Grape?* (1994). Gilbert (Johnny Depp) must free himself from his mother's physical and emotional neediness which threatens to arrest his adult development. Gilbert's mother (the only biological "real" mother among these films) is the biggest "mama" of them all: at 500 pounds she is literally "stuck" in the family house in which she lives with her four adolescent children (including the retarded Arnie, played by Leonardo Da Caprio). The house is built on weak foundation (literally and figuratively); its structure threatens to collapse with the sheer weight of the mother – a metaphor for her destructive self-indulgence. Since the father's suicide, mother has embalmed herself in food and fat and sits in the living room, immobilized, while her children prepare enormous quantities of food for her to consume. Defeated and depressed at her losses, the bottomless pit of her emotional hunger and sadness is as insatiable as her appetite; she is "eating up" the freedom and autonomy of Gilbert and his siblings in a family system that doesn't allow for boundaried ego development. The massive flesh which spills over bodily boundaries represents the life-threatening nature of the "bad breast" mother who abandons her young to tend to her own self-feeding. Her withdrawal threatens to imprison her children in dead-end lives, stuck in both the decaying house and in an arrested developmental space. After devouring her meal, she demands «Get me my birthday boy»; we wonder if he is next on the menu. Only when her son is arrested does she rouse herself to emerge from the house for the first time in 7 years and storms into the county jail, a giant Behemoth bellowing for the release of her child. This would appear to be her final redemptive act: exhausted and spent, like a beached whale, the mother makes her way upstairs to die, and since it is not possible to remove her body without calling in the National Guard for a special crane, her children decide to cremate her by setting the house ablaze – thereby finally setting themselves free to go «anywhere we want».

Ultimately, all the outsize devouring female figures in these films are destroyed, providing the viewer with an opportunity to master the anxiety – both intrapsychic and cultural – of the sexual fear they embody. At the same time, we must also recognize some caveats in too reductionist a reading of these monstrous maternal screen images. The premise of the phallic and castrating omnipotent mother depends on a phallocentrist analytic model which in recent years has been subject to challenge. Having a penis is no longer necessarily viewed as the exclusive royal road to power and dominance, even if the imagery of contemporary cinema may still operate from that assumption. Rejecting Freud's notion that anatomy is destiny, theorists over the past half-century, from Karen Horney to Carol Gilligan, have expanded understanding of gender formation and identity into social and cultural realms. Feminist critics such as Paula Caplan (1998), who writes of the psychoanalytic bias toward "mother-bashing" and father preference, continue to work toward far less polarized theories of sexual development. With the development of more fluid and flexible models of gender development and sexual difference, we may in turn see the "shrinking" of the monstrous maternal down to a more human – and humanized – image on the cinema screen.

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How a poet sees

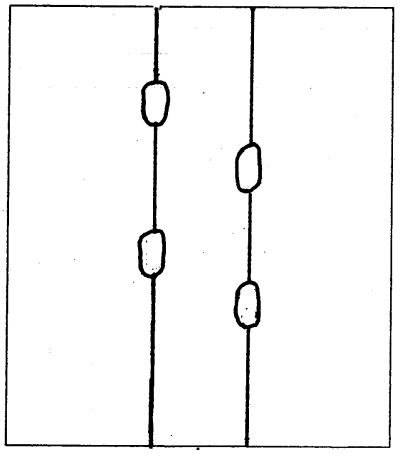
FRANCIS CARTIER (*)

This is your poet speaking. ... Passengers will please unfasten any mental seatbelts.

DROODLES

In 1918, Guillaume Apolinaire published a book called *Calligrammes*. About 50 years ago, comedy writer Roger Price, inspired by Apolinaire, began publishing hundreds of wonderfully funny visual puzzles he called *Droodles*. Droodles can give us remarkable insights into how the mind perceives things. My favorite is in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1



(*) Mensa Education & Research Foundation.

Do you see what this is? …. This is a bear… climbing the other side of a tree.

Now you see it! Right? Where did it come from?

Research has taught us much about how we see, but there are still many fascinating mysteries about it, about what we believe we see, and why we sometimes don't see at all. As just one example, I've read a lot of the research on reading and, frankly, I have no clear idea of how I am reading this!

MIRRORS

Now imagine yourself looking in a mirror. Everything is reversed from right to left, but not from top to bottom. Why? Think for a moment before you read on.

Why are you puzzled?

It's because the question is wrong! Actually, the image is not reversed at all. Top is at the top. Bottom is at the bottom. Left is at the left and right is at the right. You instinctively use your right hand to comb the hair on your right side, don't you? Words can trick you about what you think you see.

Every psychologist understands that we don't get meaning from the world we live in. Some say we construct it. I prefer to say that we impose meaning on our perceptions. Among those who do that are politicians, criminals, poets and we psychologists. Often, other peoples' language usage profoundly influences what we see or believe we see.

What's more, what you believe you see is even more influenced by what you say.

Forensic psychologists have been doing a lot of fascinating and disturbing research on the accuracy of testimony by eyewitnesses of crimes and accidents. I don't have time to report it all here, but all psychotherapists should be aware of it. I'll mention only an old, classic study by Professor Eunice Belbin at, I think, Cambridge University, about 50 years ago. I'm reporting this from memory.

Dr. Belbin made an appointment with each of her students, then made each one wait alone in a reception room for several minutes, seated facing a bicycle safety poster.

She then asked each one into her office. She asked half of them to write down a detailed description of the poster. The other half were not asked to describe it. In both cases, she then showed an exact copy of the poster and said, «This poster may or may not be identical to the one you saw. Is it the same or not?»

Most of those who had not been asked to write a description said it was the same.

However, many who had written down their descriptions said that it was different and stuck adamantly to the mistaken descriptions they had written.

In other words, once we commit ourselves to an erroneous perception, we tend to defend it even in the face of reality. «I said it, so I must believe it.»

CHARLES DARWIN

«Actions that were first voluntary, soon became habitual, and at last hereditary, and then came to be performed even in opposition to the will.»

FROG'S EYES

The frog's eye and brain are not equipped to process information about static objects, only things that move. Information about stationary objects is blocked.

Humans, too, are victims of selective blindness. We often fail to see things around us because they are too familiar and seem to convey no new information, or because we are focusing our attention elsewhere.

We don't know nearly enough about attention though it's a vital survival function. Visual attention seems to be a pair of processes. The first, the process of focusing on a stimulus or idea, has received a lot of research. The other equally important process involves concurrent decisions about which stimuli to ignore.

Let me emphasize that. Visual attention is always partly, and often largely, selective blindness to other stimuli considered to be irrelevant at the moment.

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

Sherlock Holmes often says, «Doctor Watson, you see but you do not observe.» We'll explore that now because poets, like detectives, do not merely see, but observe.

LOUIS PASTEUR

«Where observation is concerned, chance favors only the prepared mind.»

I once developed a course in problem solving for Air Force staff officers. In the section on gathering information, I wanted to include lessons to teach observation. As part of my search for helpful ideas, I went back, as I often do, to William James. James had a footnote to J. S. Mill. Mill said (again this is from memory), «There is not properly an art of observation. One must prepare oneself by learning everything possible about the subject to be observed.»

One day, doing on-the-spot research on observation, I was following an aircraft maintenance officer inspecting a repair hangar. In an empty area, he stopped and made a note on his clipboard. I asked what he noted. He said, «There's supposed to be a fire extinguisher right here.»

Aha! Mill and Pasteur were right! The prepared observer sees not only what is there, but also what's missing!

JONATHAN SWIFT

«Vision is the art of seeing the invisible.»

ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD

«Familiar things happen, and mankind does not bother about them. It requires a very unusual mind to undertake the analysis of the obvious.»

A poet often does just that: analyses the obvious. A poet's unusual mind may habitually or deliberately become ingenuous, with childlike curiosity and clarity of vision. It's a kind of courageous vulnerability. Like the uninhibited child in the fable, a poet sees that the Emperor is naked. Why? Two of the reasons are inherent in that enlightening fable. Like a child, a poet can be immune to both social pressure and fear of being thought a fool.

A poet is also capable of escaping from our customary blindness to familiar stimuli. A poet may examine a prosaic object or incident, and bring his eye, memory and imagination into an interpretation of it. The finest example I know is Wordsworth's "View of Tintern Abbey". I wish I had time to read it to you. (It is included, however, in the Appendix to this talk.) Instead, consider

this shorter poem. It's trivial by comparison to Wordsworth, but may make my point. It's one of about a hundred poems I've written about what I see on my morning walk.

THE SECRET

This young mother and her daughter,
Perhaps going on five,
Are both dressed in clean Thrift-Shop.

The girl is prancing along,
Grins skippingly alternating with laughter.
She's chattering in a giggling voice
That masks (from me, at least)
Any clue to the source of her joy.

The mother clutches her hand
And stares blankly ahead
As though dreading their destination
Or some grim place they started from.

She knows something the little girl
Doesn't know.

Perhaps many others saw that pair and had similar thoughts. A major difference is that, as Monir Saleh said last March, a poet writes it down.

Of the many writings of Francis Bacon, I most admire the list of fallacies he compiled in his *Organum*. My favorite is what he called the "First Idol of the Tribe": «To suppose greater order and regularity in nature than is really there.»

The human mind is so intolerant of ambiguity and disorder that it habitually generates, imposes and then believes its own constructions of order and regularity. I know a few psychologists who sometimes succumb to that illusion – and stick to it for a lifetime.

On the other hand, a poet's perceptions mature and change. The great Shakespeare scholar, Frank Baxter, said, «I reread Hamlet every year and see something new each time – and that's not because Hamlet has changed.»

Last February, Norman Rosenblood wrote that Freud «refers to the artist's capability of entering into his unconscious in a way most people cannot…. [an artist] turns away from reality and transfers all his interest, and his libido too, to the wishful constructions of his life of phantasy.»

That is mostly nonsense. Perhaps it may be true of some poets who need psychotherapy. Sylvia Plath, for instance. Most poets, though, are remarkable because they see and confront reality with fearless clarity. Many poets are so remarkably mentally healthy that we perceive them as abnormal.

And, indeed, poets are abnormal, but not because they have some special kind of perception that others don't have. Quite the opposite! A poet is devoid of, or somehow circumvents, the common culture's selective blindness, inhibitions and other barriers to clear perception that I've been talking about. We often call the result "creative thinking".

Actually, there is no such thing as creative thinking. There is only thinking. But real thinking is so rare that when we encounter it, we feel the need to celebrate the occasion with a special adjective.

Most people have frog's eyes and can't see anything that is "standing still". A poet can see both moving objects and those that are stationary or even "immovable".

You may take that as either a poetic metaphor or as a psychological metaphor. It works both ways. Freud expressed himself in metaphor far more often than some have noticed. Freud once said that the mind is a «poetry making organ». As I interpret that, he was referring to thinking in metaphors.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

«[A poet's] language is vitally metaphorical: that is, it marks the before unapprehended relations of things….»

It has been argued that a poet is different because a poet actually sees in metaphor. I do not find that argument compelling. First of all, most of us see in metaphor about as often as we see in reality. And we often mistakenly believe that our metaphors are reality. Secondly, a poet sees reality and uses metaphor to talk about it because reality is so often ineffable, that is, indescribable in simple prose. As Elliot Eisner said, «Poetry offers a means to say what might not otherwise be said.»

In his essay, *Of Beauty*, Francis Bacon said, «There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion.» A poet can see the ordinary in ways that make it seem both strange and beautiful.

BEAUTY IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

It's a cliché. It's obvious. Of course, obvious is the word we use when we don't intend to give an idea any further consideration. To those who have only frog's eyes, this old saying is stationary, undeserving of examination. But the idea that beauty is in the eye of the beholder is a fundamental truth about the psychology of poetry. So let's actually consider it now.

Look up the word "*behold*" in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Some of the definitions include: to see intently and fully, to pay close attention to, to contemplate. The word behold is also significantly related to holding onto and belonging to.

So beauty is only in the eye of an actual beholder. Only a precious few of us are beholders. Most people merely glance and only rarely behold the obvious or the ineffable. Fewer still write down what they actually behold. Those who do we call poets. A poet mostly talks to himself about what he beholds, and lets us overhear him. A poet lets us hear through his eyes. That includes, as Shelley says, «the before unapprehended relations of things.»

Appendix

References and some notes that I couldn't fit into the speech:

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7. Leonard Schlain (1998). *The Alphabet vs. The Goddess: The Conflict Between Word and Image*. New York: Penguin/Arkana. A fascinating book even in the parts you may not agree with. Cf. pages 387 ff., about perceptual differences related to French noun gender vs. English lack of noun gender. Much of this book is about the assertion that images are right brain (feminine) whereas linear print is left-brain.
8. John Stuart Mill, *Logic: Book III*, Chapter vii, Reasoning.
9. William James (1890). *The Principles of Psychology*. New York: Henry Holt. His Chapter XIII, Discrimination and Comparison, is still well worth reading.
10. Dale Purves, & R. Beau Lotto (2002?). *Why we see what we do: An empirical theory of vision*. Sunderland, MA: Sinauer Associates. The human visual system is not organized to generate a true representation, «but rather a statistical reflection of the visual history… of the individual. Thus, what humans actually see is a reflexive manifestation of [the] past rather than a logical analysis of the present.»
11. Francis Cartier et al. (1961). *The Air Force Staff Officer*. Maxwell Air Force Base. Ala.: Air University Press.
12. Charles Darwin (1872). *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, Chapter 1. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1898.

– Thomas Carlyle: The eye of the intellect «sees in all objects what it brought with it the means of seeing.»
– Yogi Berra: «You can observe a lot just by watchin'.»
– English has an astonishing number of words about visual perception. Consider this incomplete list and ponder the subtle distinctions each one allows us to make.

Aware	Peek	[*Plus, of course, several words*
Apparition	Peer	*such as Invisible, Blind, Overlook, etc.*]
Attend	Peruse	
Behold	Scan	
Chimera	See	
Gaze	Spy	
Glance	Stare	
Glimpse	View	
Illusion	Vision/Envision	
Look	Watch	

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Man against himself: Werther's suffering and suicide

GABRIELE DILLMANN (*)

Goethe's novel *Die Leiden des Jungen Werthers* (The Sorrows of Young Werther) is a book about suicide. Several insightful articles and book chapters have been written that grapple with the novel's protagonist's (and often the author's) preoccupation with suicide. From interpretations based on aggression originally aimed at the oedipal rival and now directed towards the self to the Adlerian notion of a deep rooted sense of inferiority ("Minderwertigkeitskomplex") to investigations of narcissism, these interpretations all focus on a distinct aspect of human pathology, which may indeed contribute to suicidal behavior but which nevertheless does not in and of itself determine it. Goethe's ingeniously creative and at the same time scientific mind, infused with a certain rebelliousness against the intellectual *zeitgeist* picked up on a phenomenon that was not a stranger to its time. Suicide occurred then not less often than now.

If Goethe is irritated with the first version (and for that matter the second version as well) of his wildy successful first book later on in his life, it is not so much for having written a book that would influence others to follow Werther's example, but rather that it could not achieve what it had set out to accomplish: namely to depict the nature of the suicidal mind and by way of doing so to offer a remedy to such an affliction. In his "Kampagne in Frankreich" Goethe defends himself against the accusation that his novel brought on a dangerous craze among the younger generation by pointing out that, on the contrary, the existing latency of this malady had inspired him to do something about it:

> Es entstand eine Art zärtlich-leidenschaftlicher Asketik, welche, da uns die humoristische Ironie des Briten nicht gegeben war, in eine leidige Selbstquälerei gewöhnlich ausarten musste. Ich hatte mich persönlich von diesem Übel zu befreien gesucht und trachtete nach meiner Überzeugung anderen hülfreich zu sein; das aber war schwerer als man denken konnte, denn eigentlich kam es darauf an, einem jeden gegen sich selbst beizustehen, wo

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> denn von aller Hülfe, wie die uns die äussere Welt anbietet, es sei Erkenntnis, Belehrung, Beschäftigung, Begünstigung, die Rede gar nicht sein konnte.[1]
> [There arose a kind of tender-passionate asceticism, which, since we lacked the humorous irony of the Briton, was generally bound to degenerate into a distressing form of self-torment. I had tried to free myself personally from this malady and aspired, in accordance with my convictions, to be helpful to others; but this was more difficult than one might think, for it was really a matter of helping each individual against himself.][2]

Goethe in his characteristically ambitious style is hard on himself. Today, as we have so much more knowledge of how the brain functions, of the unconscious workings of the psyche, and how societies function sociologically, suicide still remains an enigma and suicide prevention constitutes a substantial and often frustrating challenge. Seen in the light of these efforts, Goethe's little book is an enormous accomplishment, for the author not only solicits empathy, understanding, and forgiveness for his protagonist, which constitutes the basic tenet for any psychological investigation, he also educates the reader in the inner workings of human self destruction, thus one could say he provides a guide for suicide prevention, and offers his book as a companion to those suffering from isolation and loneliness. The most compelling findings in contemporary suicidology reflect Goethe's ingenious accomplishment.

While suicide is still discussed in terms of its moral and ethical implications, suicide is generally no longer condemned as a sinful act. Since the beginning of the 20th century the focus has shifted to the inner psychological workings of human self-destruction. While the numerous authors of books on suicide all deliver extensive insights and information on the topic, they also all agree that there is no single all-encompassing approach or truth to understanding suicide. At best, we can distinguish certain inclinations usually bound to the discipline from which the individual author operates, such as for instance: Durkheim's sociological study *Le Suicide*, A. Alvarez' philosophical contemplations in *The Savage God*, Karl Menninger's psychoanalytic account of self-destruction in *Man Against Himself*, and the recently published book *Night Falls Fast* by psychiatrist and scholar Kay Redfield Jamison who makes a compelling case for the link between clinical depression and suicide. Edwin Shneidman, a leading suicidologists, who has studied the phenomenon of self-destruction for over four decades and who has written several comprehensive and insightful books on the topic, takes a somewhat different approach to understanding suicide in that he accepts the disturbing truth that in suicide there are no universals and no absolutes. In *Definition of Suicide*, Shneidman asks the question of what the «common overtly discernible and sensibly inferred characteristics of suicidal acts» are. He finds ten common characteristics with the understanding, however, that «each suicide is an idiosyncratic event, and that a definition of suicide needs to focus on relevance rather than the veridical value of the laws of physiology or physics» (121).

> Rather I am for a practical definition, guided by wisdom and common sense, that applies sensibly to almost every conceivable situation of self-destruction, whether done characterologically (macrotemporally) by a Cesare Pavese (1935-1950 [1961]; thoughtfully (mesotemporally) on principle by a Socrates; dyadically (mesotemporally) by a John Doe with cancer who arranges his own death; or reflexively (microtemporally), born out of the si-

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[1] In his autobiographical account *Campagne in Frankreich* (*Werke*, vol. 10, 188-363), Goethe describes the events that took place between 1792 and 1793. He writes these down between 1820 and 1822. This quote is on page 321f.

[2] Unless my own, translations of "Werther" passages are from Harry Steinhauer's translation *The Sufferings of Young Werther*.

> tuation-of-the-moment and the esprit de corps, by a soldier in combat who throws himself, in the presence of his comrades, on an enemy granade. Each of these instances, I would maintain, can be meaningfully conceptualized – and in some cases could have been usefully treated – in terms of the 10 commonalities of suicide (122).

In Goethe's *Werther* we can find indeed all ten of the common characteristics of suicide. I will restrict my discussion to the affective, cognitive and relational aspects of suicide in the novel. For your orientation, however, I will briefly list Shneidman's commonalities.

1. The common stimulus in suicide is unendurable psychological pain.
2. The common stressor in suicide is frustrated psychological needs.
3. The common purpose of suicide is to seek a solution.
4. The common goal of suicide is cessation of consciousness.
5. The common emotion in suicide is hopelessness-helplessness.
6. The common internal attitude toward suicide is ambivalence.
7. The common cognitive estate in suicide is constriction.
8. The common interpersonal act in suicide is communication of intention.
9. The common action in suicide is egression.
10. The common consistency in suicide is with life-long coping patterns.

1. THE COMMON STIMULUS IN SUICIDE IS UNENDURABLE PSYCHOLOGICAL PAIN

A person who commits suicide does so in order to bring about cessation of consciousness. The psychological pain is perceived as so painful that the predominant focus is to arrest that pain. Thus the stimulus is not the pain itself but to relieve the pain. Two persons may find themselves in one and the same external situation, but their internal situations may vary so significantly that one would rather die than live. This explains why two individuals may respond to extreme situations in opposite ways. How a person's internal situation, his psychological make-up, varies from that of another can best be understood psycho-dynamically. While psych-ache, a term Shneidman coins in his later writings, however, is one of the essential conditions of every suicidal act, it is in itself not sufficient to cause a person to self-destruct otherwise most if not all psychological pain would lead to suicide. Other factors, such as severe hopelessness, the experience of constriction, and the need for egression will coalesce with psych-ache to create a lethal situation.

The narrator or "editor" of Goethe's novel does not leave the reader guessing what it is that urges Werther to commit the "schröckliche Tat" [the terrible deed] (104).[3] He mentions two reasons: «Den Verdruss, den er bei der Gesandtschaft gehabt hatte, … und dass er dadurch seine Ehre unwiederbringlich gekränkt hielte» [that he thought of his honor as being irretrievably injured], and «Das ewige Einerlei eines traurigen Umgangs mit dem geliebten Geschöpfe, dessen Ruhe er störte, das stürmische Abarbeiten seiner Kräfte ohne Zweck und Aussicht.» [the endless monotony of a sad relationship with the loved woman, whose peace he disturbed, the loss of his energies without purpose or hope.] Werther's particular psychological pain, I believe, is best explained psychoanalytically. His honor is irreparably injured and his situation with Lotte is hopeless. The intensity with which Werther responds to the insult he experiences amidst guests of the nobility

[3] All references to "Werther" and all citations are from the Diekhans edition.

whose haughtiness he abhors is indicative of the vulnerability of his self-esteem. Werther reacts to the embarrassing situation at the Duke's house with narcissistic rage and a self-destructive impulse: «Da möchte man sich ein Messer in Herz bohren,» [I should like to stab a knife through my heart] especially after he is ridiculed by those who are socially his kin (79).

Why Werther experiences this event so strongly as a blow to his self-esteem and sense of self needs explanation. I will do so with the help of a particularly useful self-psychological concept: Kohut's theory of self-object idealization needs. Werther is extremely dependent on the positive approval of his person by those whom he chooses as objects of admiration. I am not so much referring to the need to be loved and nurtured, as to the need to be protected and sustained by an omnipotent other. Werther needs to idealize another person, whom he can look up to, who can serve as a role model, give him a sense of orientation in the world, and most of all, who can – because of these qualities – soothe, edify and support the vulnerable and feeble self he intuitively seeks to shield. Thus older men play an important role in his life. The uncle, who passed away, the "Amtsmann" (Lotte's father), and most importantly, the Duke of C. serve as such father figures, as idealizing self-objects. Werther's own father had died when he was a young boy, a circumstance that can be seen as a disruption of his idealizing needs. The Duke of C. immediately fulfills Werther's need for admiration of another «Ich habe den Grafen C. kennelernen, einen Mann, den ich jeden Tag mehr verehren muss. Einen weiten, grossen Kopf, und der deswegen nicht kalt ist, weil er viel übersieht; aus dessen Umgage so viel Empfindung für Freundschaft und Liebe hervorleuchtet» (70). [I have become acquainted with the Duke of C——, a man whom I am compelled to respect more and more every day, a man of broad and great understanding, who, though able to comprehend much, is not unsympathetic; my association with him clearly demonstrates his great capacity for friendship and love.] Clearly, to be appreciated and liked by his object of admiration then creates a sense of wholeness and strength, a boost for his lack of self confidence – a lack of which Werther mourns in an earlier passage «Guter Gott, der du mir alles schenktest, warum hieltest du nicht die Hälfte zurück und gabst mir Selbstvertrauen und Genügsamkeit!» (69). [Good Lord, You who has given me all this, why did You not withhold half of it and give me self-confidence and contentment?] Not without pride then, Werther reports that the Duke of C «nahm teil an mir, als ich einen Geschäftsaufttrag an ihn ausrichtete und er bei den ersten Worten merkte, dass wir uns verstunden, dass er mit mir reden konnte wie nicht mit jedem…. So eine wahre warme Freude ist nicht in der Welt, als eine grosse Seele zu sehen, die sich gegen einen öffnet» (70). [He showed an interest in me when I went to him on a matter of business, and he perceived after our first words that we understood each other, that he could talk to me better than to most people. There is no other joy so true or so warm in this world as that of finding a great soul responding to your own.] His sense of worth is further heightened by the fact that not only is he noticed and considered special by somebody whom he admires, but to a certain degree he is even considered as an equal by that person. It is solely the Duke's approval of him that makes Werther's work situation bearable. How devastating then for Werther when the Duke fails to take him under his wing in a very belittling and shaming situation! The reason for the pain is twofold: Werther's idealized self-object now seems rather ordinary and Werther is left uncared for, reduced to a sub-human, alone with his pain like a bird that's been kicked out of its nest with a broken wing. The result is a further fragmentation of his already beleaguered self – an extremely painful experience.

Werther also suffers from a lack of mirroring by a loving and caring other. In self-psychological terms, Werther manifests symptoms that reveal a severe mirroring deficit. Just like Werther seeks out father-figures throughout his life for his idealizing needs, he attaches himself to individuals who can provide him with nurturing and loving feed-back of how he wishes and needs to be seen by himself and by others. These self-objects then are noticeably all women: Lotte, Fräulein B., his deceased older friend, and conspicuously unavailable as a self-object his mother. His friend from his youth had understood him when being misunderstood left him feel alienated from the world. «Missverstanden zu werden ist das Schicksal unsereinem!» (13). [To be misunderstood is the fate

of a man like myself!] «Die grosse Seele» [the noble soul] of his youth provided him with an opportunity to feel special and singularly wonderful. «In deren Gegenwart ich mir schien mehr zu sein, als ich war, weil ich alles war, was ich sein konnte» (13). [In whose presence I seemed to be more in my own eyes than I really was, because I was everything I could be.] Just like a child who with the loving eyes of a parent watching with joy will delight in a healthy kind of exhibitionism when attention is bestowed on him or her, Werther demonstrates genius when in her presence: «mit dem Stempel des Genies» (13) [with the mark of genius]. The fact that he lost his friend to death due to her advanced age is of serious consequence to Werther. Not only does he experience a tremendous loss, but he is also confronted with the idea that cessation of life is real. For individuals who commit suicide, the previous death of a loved one in many cases contributes significantly to the formation of the wish to die. Werther has lost several important people in his life to death: his father as a child, the above friend, and recently his uncle.

Werther's relationship with Lotte is painful because the situation is hopeless. While Lotte does clearly not feel indifferent towards Werther, and she may even be in love with him, for the experience of being in love is not to a small part a narcissistic response to being admired and loved, she is nevertheless committed to Albert. She had promised her dying mother to take care of the children, with Albert as an able and responsible provider for all of them. Werther loves Lotte but were he to live with her in Albert's stead he would invariably have to conform to a bourgeois life-style he is not committed to. Lotte's clever observation «Warum denn mich? Das Eigentum eines andern. Just das! Ich fürchte, es ist nur die Unmöglichkeit mich zu besitzen, die Ihnen den Wunsch so reizend macht» (106) [Why just me, who belongs to another man? I fear it is only the impossibility of possessing me that makes your desire for me so strong] summarizes what the reader may have long suspected. It is also an explanation to why Werther rejects Wilhelm's suggestion that he either try to «embrace the fulfillment of his desire» (48) for Lotte or try to rid himself of his emotions before they devour all of his strength. If this is true, then how can we understand Werther's behavior? It is again Lotte, who provides the answer. «Schon lange ängstigt mich für Sie und uns die Einschränkung, in die Sie sich diese Zeit her selbst gebannt haben» (106). [For some time now, I have been concerned for you and us in regard to the constrictions which you have imposed upon yourself.] The key word here is constriction. Werther cannot think outside of his box. It is the inner conviction of the emotionally constricted individual that there is only one thing that is worth pursuing, an all or nothing attitude in which affect and intellect are narrowed to only two choices love or death, or, in other words, as William Davis succinctly reflects on Werther's characteristic intensity «The *all or nothing approach* too easily exposes the nothingness on the other side of the equation».[4]

This last point relates to Shneidman's 7th characteristic of suicide: The common cognitive state in suicide is constriction. Suicide is not only based on emotions but also on reason. The way a person sees his or her world philosophically, how he or she syllogizes based on that understanding of the world, has a great impact on how a person arrives at the, for him "reasonable", decision to end his life. To quote Shneidman «Figuratively speaking and from the point of view of logic, the suicidal individual hangs himself from his major premise and makes an erroneous deductive leap into oblivion» (*Definition* 136). Semantic fallacies occur frequently. The suicidal person imagines, for example, how others will mourn his death after he commits suicide, since everybody who commits suicide gets attention, without realizing that there is no longer an "I" to experience the attention. This psycho-fallacy also occurs when a person imagines himself as himself in an after-

[4] William Davis, «The Intensification of the Body in Goethe's "Die Leiden des jungen Werther», *Germanic Review, 69* (3), Summer 1994, 114.

life consisting of qualities that are in direct opposition with his present natural state. In the meantime life itself comes to a halt, nothing is of any importance or relevance that does not provide the "total" solution

2. THE COMMON INTERPERSONAL ACT IN SUICIDE IS COMMUNICATION OF INTENTION

This point deals not so much with the psychodynamics that happen between, usually two, people that can trigger a suicide, such as rejection, abandonment, and revenge, if in conjunction with other relevant factors, but rather it deals with the interpersonal acts common to suicides specifically. Those are communicating the intention to commit suicide to others and, as we shall see in point 9., egression, the act of escaping a given situation. Most people intent on ending their lives leave clues, consciously or unconsciously. These clues can be verbal such as «I am leaving» and «I won't be seen again», and they can be expressed in actions, such as giving away possessions, taking care of personal business, bringing things in order. The communication can take place in a variety of ways, from silence to loud cries for help. A person may act altogether different than normally in a situation, perhaps louder or more obnoxious, perhaps quieter and more withdrawn than one would expect.

Werther leaves an abundance of clues pointing to his wish to end his life. From an innocently conceived of philosophical statement praising suicide as a means of freedom from life «dass er [der Mensch] diesen Kerker verlassen kann, wann er will» (14) [that a human being can leave this prison whenever he wants to] to a seemingly inncocent figure of speech describing negative emotions of the nature «wo ich mir eine Kugel vor'n Kopf schiessen möchte» (43) [where I should like to put a bullet through my head] to his overt communication of his wish to die, he does not leave those who are intimately involved with him in the dark about his intentions. Then how can we understand the fact that no significant intervention takes place? One answer may lie in the tragic truth conveyed in the children story *The Boy who cried Wolf*. Werther mentions the idea of suicide so often that those around him fall victim to the generally assumed notion that those who talk about suicide will not really commit it. This misconception has been responsible for many completed suicides that could have otherwise been prevented. Another explanation may be that those who understand that Werther might be in serious danger simply do not know how to respond to such a crisis. The lack of adequate means for intervention still haunts us today at a time when education efforts are so vast. Denial also plays a key role in the suicidal dyadic. The thought of losing a loved one to suicide can be overwhelmingly painful. The perception of one's own guilt and responsibility in the other's fateful act can be downright paralyzing. We get a good idea of this in the scene when Werther's servant comes to Lotte and Albert's home with a request to borrow Albert's pistols for a trip his master plans to take. Lotte is beside herself when her husband coldly agrees to grant Werther his wish.

> Das fiel auf sie wie ein Donnerschlag. Sie schwankte aufzustehn. Sie wusste nicht, wie ihr geschah…. Sie gab dem Knaben das Gewehr, ohne ein Wort vorbringen zu können… ging in ihr Zimmer in dem Zustand des unaussprechlichsten Leidens. Ihr Herz weissagte ihr alle Schröcknisse. Bald war sie im Begriff, sich zu den Füssen ihres Mannes zu werfen, ihm alles zu entdecken, die Geschichte des gestrigen Abends, ihre Schuld und ihre Ahndungen.… Eine gute Freundin, die nur etwas zu fragen kam und die Lotte nicht wegliess, machte die Unterhaltung bei Tische erträglich, man zwang sich, man redete, man erzählte, man vergass sich. (123)
>
> [She felt as if a thunderclap had hit her. She swayed trying to get up. She didn't understand what was happening…. She gave the boy the gun without being able to utter a word… went to her room in a state of inexpressible sorrow. Her heart anticipated all the horrors to come. Soon she was about to throw herself at her husband's feet, to tell him everything,

what happened last night, her guilt and her presentiments… A good friend who had only stopped by to ask Lotte something and whom Lotte didn't allow to leave, made the conversation at the dinner table bearable; one practiced self-control, one talked, one told stories, one forgot.]

Albert's fateful response to Werther's request seems ignorant, if not callous and cold. To say that he wished for Werther's death, on the other hand, is a speculation we are not entitled to. The editor speaks of Albert's «Bestürzung» [consternation], which indicates the author's intention is clearly not to portray Albert as a calculating and inhumane monster. Albert had been tired of Werther, exhausted by his probing and beleaguering manner. Certainly his concerns in regard to his relationship with his wife were justified. But that is a long cry from asserting that he consciously hoped for Werther's death. If he had indeed subconsciously wished for it, he would be in need of our utmost sympathy – for his suffering due to his feelings of guilt and shame would be immense.

3. THE COMMON CONSISTENCY IN SUICIDE IS WITH LIFE-LONG COPING PATTERNS

The way a person responds towards life's challenges such as disappointments, failures, pain, and losses throughout his or her life, whether with rage or acceptance, denial or resolution, is consistent with how a person handles times of severe distress. This consistency also exists in the suicidal scenario.

«Wie froh bin ich, dass ich weg bin!» [How glad I am to be gone!] With these words Werther begins his first letter to Wilhelm in the novel, and with this stormy entry Goethe introduces his protagonist to the reader. As readers, we come to expect a passionate, driven, stressed and – as the title reveals – young man, who, we find out immediately, regrets leaving his best friend behind, but nevertheless cannot help feeling relieved about the opportunity to have an excuse for leaving an uncomfortable situation. This initial scene paradigmatically characterizes Werther's response to difficult situations: his solution is to leave the scene until his final egression from life itself. His life-long coping patterns are consistent with his suicide. Werther finds himself spiraling into a depression when his desire for Lotte remains unfulfilled. He begins to realize that without any hope for an improvement of his situation, he will continue to deteriorate emotionally (21 August). He tries to escape his painful situation by taking on a job in another town – not without realizing, however, just how fruitless this attempt might be: «Ist es nicht vielleicht das Sehnen in mir nach Veränderung des Zustands, eine innre unbehagliche Ungeduld, die mich überall hin verfolgen wird?» (60). [Isn't it perhaps the longing in me for change, an inner uncomfortable impatience that will haunt me no matter where I go?] His own rational insights do not protect him from making faulty decisions. Since his only motivation to take on the job is the escape from an unbearable situation, the effectiveness of his solution is doomed to fail from the start. It is no surprise then that he finds his work unfulfilling and boring, and it is only a question of time for him to throw in the towel and leave. After a short stay at the Duke's estate, he contemplates going to war, and not for any expressed political or ideological reasons, but rather once again as a means to escape his emotional pain. Although Lotte and Albert have married in the meantime, he returns to Wahlheim in order to be closer to Lotte again only to continue on in the same hopeless fashion as before.

Werther's own prophecy in regard to the futility of trying to escape his problems fulfills itself. Tragically, however, it never occurs to him that his decision to commit suicide is once again an act of egression and that he merely continues to employ the same coping mechanism over and over. He can see no other solution. He returns to Wahlheim with an escape plan. Before he had left for the embassy post, he had already resolved to die: «Adieu. Ich seh all dieses Elende kein Ende als das Grab» (62). [Good-bye. I see no other end to his misery than the grave.] This plan had been delayed due to the ambivalence inherent to the nature of the suicidal act. Once back in Wahlheim, it

is only a question of time before he pursues his final escape, since nothing in his thinking has changed.

Goethe does not leave the development of his protagonist's escapist character trait unmotivated or up to speculation. It is to be found in Werther's childhood. Werther's escapist personality is learned and behavioral in nature. He learned how to respond to a difficult situation from his mother whose reaction to her husband's death was to leave their home for the city. Werther criticizes her decision when he returns to his hometown without recognizing the impact of this childhood experience on his development and life. «Zu eben dem Tore will ich hineingehn, aus dem meine Mutter mit mir herausfuhr, als sie nach dem Tode meines Vaters den lieben, vertraulichen Ort verliess, um sich in ihre unerträgliche Stadt einzusperren» (82). [I want to go through the same gate, through which my mother had left the familiar place with me after my father's death, only to lock herself into her unbearable town]. What he learned from this experience, is the following: although my mother found herself in an intolerable place after she left town, it still would have been much worse to stay or she would have not left. Whether this interpretation of their situation matches Werther's mother's motivation to leave or not is not primarily relevant. What is important is that from the child's perspective and logic this was a truth to be learned and remembered.

The narcissistic injuries Werther had experienced in his childhood and which would repeat themselves throughout his life in the compulsive manner characteristic to this type of psychological pathology had become so intolerable that Werther's only solution to escape this pain was to end his life. It is conceivable that by reading "Werther" a desperate soul with similar injuries to his sense of self found solace in seeing himself reflected in this work – and thus not so alone in the world. There is much hope in that thought for the one who would kill himself out of loneliness and a sense of permanent isolation.

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Proceedings of the 20th International Conference on Literature and Psychoanalysis: 125-131

Freud, the writer of *Leonardo* (*)

LÁSZLÓ HALÁSZ (*)

At our 18th Conference, among others, I reported (for details Halász, 2002) that young subjects (35 well-motivated secondary-school students yet to take their school matriculation examinations) with no psychology education or previous information on the author (even his name was unmentioned) read an 1700-word excerpt from Freud's *Leonardo* as a painter, in the light of his relationship with his mother and Mona Lisa, and Leonardo as an inventor-scientist in the light of his relationship with his father. The subjects' task was to categorize the text, namely to assign in to the genre drama, dissertation, essay, novel, report, or short story (one genre, two genres or even more, as they found it appropriate). (For summarized data see Figure 1).

Although the proportion of dissertation and essay categorizations was somewhat higher than that of novel and short story ones, the difference was not significant. (The data for report and drama were negligibly low.) In other words, the naïve subjects basically speaking judged the totally unfamiliar text to be as much a literary narrative as a scientific-expository discourse. Anyway, this means that they supposed the author to be a fiction witer as much as they did a scientist. Were they right or not?

Leonardo is special kind among Freud's case studies. Usually the material for such a study was based on the interaction between Freud and a patient. In other words, in addition to him only the patient could have a direct knowledge of the material. It was quite a different story when the subject of the case was an artist very famous for centuries. Under such circumstances the raw material per se had already been published. When Freud began work on *Leonardo*, the papers and books around him were piled high. It was rather difficult to produce a work that would grab the attention, especially since Freud was an admirer of Leonardo like many of those who had already written about him How, then was it possible to draw up a really remarkable case study, and to speak differently from them?

Leonardo's elegant appearance was not news, nor was his Renaissance versatility. But it was mysterious that his activity as an experimenter displaced his work as a painter and the artist often left his creations unfinished. At the same time, he was an unusually gentleman in his personal relationships. He had a horror of violence which, however, did not prevent him back from being an

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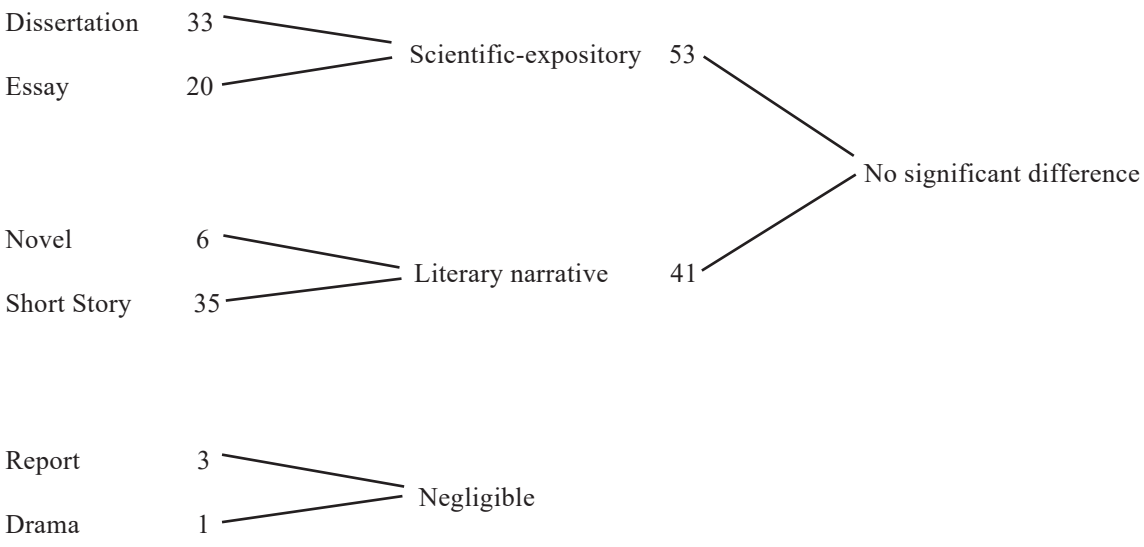
FIGURE 1

Proportions of the genres in percentages (as compared to the number of total responses = 65)



unbiased observer at the executions of condemned criminals or an officer of the engineers engaged in designing destructive weapons. An additional characteristic in that «*In an age which saw a struggle between sensuality without restraint and gloomy asceticism, Leonardo represented the cool repudiation of sexuality – a thing that would scarcely be expected of an artist and a portrayer of feminine beauty*» (Freud, 1985: 158). Although accused of homosexuality, he was acquitted of the charge. It may be that his tender relationship with the youth never took form. «*He merely converted his passion into a thrist of knowledge*» (*ibid.* 164), and he subordinated his art to pure knowledge. Here is an emerging picture.

If Freud really had aspired to write an extraordinary narrative concerning an extraordinary man, then now a revealing turn must follow in the work, one that would give a new direction to the course of events. Freud quotes Leonardo himself, who was writing about the flight of vultures when he suddenly interrupted himself: «*It seems that I was always destined to be deeply concerned with vultures; for recall as one of my very earliest memories that while I was in my cradle a vulture came down to me, and opened my mouth with its tail, and struck me many times with its tail against my lips.*» (*ibid.* 172).

The scene – says Freud – is much more a phantasy than a memory image. Leonardo probably heard about this from his mother. It is, certainly, full of significance and meaning. It is similar to a dream image of passive homosexuals about fellatio. Behind it is the memory of sucking the mother's nipple. The mother – in Egyptian hieroglyphics – is represented by a vulture. This was the symbol of motherhood because the Egyptians believed that male vultures did not exist and that the females were impregnated by the wind. Leonardo was able to read about this and thought that «*he also had been such a vulture child – he had had a mother, but no father*» (*ibid.* 181).

Leonardo was born illegitimate and was already five years old when his father received him into his family. A strong instinct for infantile sexual research (where a child comes from and the role of the father), is intensified in Leonardo on account of his own situation. Like many children

he, too, imagined for some time that his mother had had a penis as he did. Thus his phantasy said: «*That was the time when my fond curiosity was directed to my mother, and when I still believed she had a genital organ like my own*» (*ibid.* 189). The cases of homosexual men attest that their love for the mother is repressed, while they themselves identify with the mother and search for a love object like themselves.

Focusing on his protagonist, Freud tells an interesting story that he intertwines with related mini-stories and interpretations of them. Following a presentation of the psychological development of homosexual men, he directs the readers's attention to some parts of Leonardo's diary in which the latter speaks of certain expenses item by item in extraordinary detail. All these items are connected with a certain Caterina's – his mother's – funeral. The accounts, which seem to suggest petty-mindedness, are, to Freud, really memories of the son's repressed attraction towards his mother.

However fascinating Freud's treatment of Leonardo's childhood memory, actually is, it cannot be continued indefinitely without loss of interest on our part. After all, Leonardo is Leonardo; he rests on his works and not on the events just narrated. The storyteller must introduce another change in order to keep his tale from losing its appeal. According to him, the artist saw in the *Mona Lisa* the stepmother, recalling the enigmatic smile of his mother when kissing him. In *St Anne with Two Others* (the Madonna and Child) in which Mary is sitting on her mother's lap and extending her hands towards the infant Jesus, on the lips of both women incarnations of Leonardo's real mother and his tender stepmother – Mona Lisa's smile can be seen, too. But now it expresses intimacy and not a thrilling mysteriousness. The artist immortalizes the desire of a son fascinated by his mother and recalls the lost paradise. «*With the help of the oldest of erotic impulses he enjoyed the triumph of once more conquering the inhibition in his art*» (*ibid.* 227).

Until now the role of the mother has overshadowed that of the father. But the father also arouses Freud's predilection for storytelling and analysis, by means of one of Leonardo's diary entries. On the day of the father's death Leonardo mentions the hour twice, at the beginning and at the end of the laconic text. The well-known pedant precision, the perseveration of figures, is a sign of the affective inhibition. Leonardo wished to occupy the place of his father in line with his desire for his mother. He had wished to surpass his father in the house, ever since puberty albeit not in erotic areas. Like his father who as a distinguished stranger abandoned the peasant girl he had nonchalantly made pregnant, his son paid no attention to his intellectual children: his paintings.

«*But if the imitation of his father did him damage as an artist, his rebellion against his father was the infantile determinant of what was perhaps an equally sublime achievement in the field of scientific research*» (*ibid.* 215). Leonardo was able to reject religious and secular authority precisely because he had learnt in his first years to break away from his father and from his fear-arousing power. This helped Leonardo to carry his infantile being unchanged into his research activity, sometimes in very important inventions, and sometimes in things without use, such as the painted lizard with big eyes and glued wings, horns and beard. He was quite happy, while his friends were frightened to death.

All these things convince us – if we need convincing – that Freud is able to describe clearly the dramatic structure of personality, the pressing confusion which, as Stefan Zweig (1931) pointed out, rules in the conflict-ridden realms of consciousness and unconsciousness. The whole effect is increased by the fact that the shaping of character and fate through a series of crises is accompanied by an exchange of attitudes and roles. The turn does not depend on the subject's control (Rieff, 1959: 131). Personal dispositions and regressive forces are in conflict with each other. Leonardo loses so that he can also win. With his unique endowments his artistic career is turned in a scientific direction that one of the components of his infantile past brings into prominence.

Freud was interested in Leonardo on account of his own deep dilemma. The «choice between the sensuous pleasure of art and the intellectual pleasure of scince» was his personal decision, too, «and like Leonardo, if with less agony and earlier in his life, he chose science rather than art, or

rather subsumed the latter in the former» (Kuspit, 2000: 27). Freud thought that poets and researchers can recognize similar truth, but that their approaches and aims necessarily drive a wedge between the aspirations of these two groups. The separation between arts and science could be followed up the end of the Renaissance and opposition between the romantic poet and the qualified researcher not only deeply pervaded Freud's professional identity, but also constituted an essential point in how to define psychoanalysis as a new science (Yerushalmi, 1989). Freud made a clear distinction between the psychoanalyst and the artist possessed by a divine madness, by demoniac inspiration or spiritual intuition. But if the figure of the psychoanalyst – first of all as he/she is represented – had indeed become clearly separate from that of the artist, Freud would hardly have put such an emphasis on this.

One of the characteristic modes of narration is when we know the protagonists, and their external and internal worlds by means of an omniscient narrator standing outside. This role is perfectly convenient for Freud as a psychoanalyst. Combining the ramifying threads, Leonardo, «*this great and mysterious man*», appears before us in Freud's presentation. Nevertheless, at the end of his work Freud excuses himself. After all, the material «*which tradition makes available*» (*ibid.* 228) is unrealiable and fragmentary. At this point in time we cannot rid ourselves of the idea that Freud has chosen his protagonist not despite, but just because of this. In this way he is not constrained to follow the sources relating to Leonardo. His freedom is not less than in his typical case studies. Here, too, he has to analyse riddles «*to find a solution*» (Freud, 1979: 245).

Freud's work reminds us the authors of highly-esteemed classic detective stories. Confronted by fragmentary evidence and scattered traces he finds the explanation of the story, the meaning of the ambiguous signs in the past (Brooks, 1984: 269). The prototype of this detective is Oedipus, who finishes his work only when he discloses the terrible truth about himself. Both detective and psychoanalyst are aware of the fact that puzzle-solving can be only accomplished if they can reach the meaning hidden behind the surface. It is the discovery of time, minute details which change the whole picture that is decisive (Zizek, 1994: 108, 112-113). According to the Sherlock Holmes tradition, nature can be read like a book; the point is to observe the tiniest details and then to group them logically. Perhaps one can make allowances for the spectacular deductions, perhaps one shakes one's head over the missing link in the argumentation. «This particular narrative genre clearly supports the tradition of privileged withholding – and it was eagerly supported by Freud. Early in his career, he argued that if the reader was not inclined to agree with his formulation, additional data would scarcely change his mind.» And if the author uses genre well, «Who would want to break off an exciting and suspenseful account only because some detail seemed out of place or some sequence seemed unlikely?» (Spence, 1987: 118, 121).

The omniscient author is the master; he builds up the structure of the narrative and the reader's understanding. «There is, however, a large difference between Freud's detective story and other in-stances of the genre: in the novels of Conan Doyle or Agatha Christie, author and reader are engaged in a contest in which they are armed with the same weapon, their ability to reason along lines cause and effect; but these are precisely the lines that Freud has told us he will not pursue, and as a result the reader comes to his task with a double disability – not only he must to look to Freud for the material on which his intelligence is to work; he must also be supplied with a way of making that material intelligible. And, of course, it will be Freud who supplies him, and who by supplying him will increase immeasurably the control he already exercises. Not only will he monitor the flow of information and point to the object that is to be understood; he will stipulate the form in which the act of understanding will be allowed to occur» (Fish, 1989: 535).

One of the key components of the story is Leonardo's relationship with his mother, more precisely with her death. Freud put on record that he used a "*discovery*" in Mereshkovsky's biographical novel (1912), namely that the latter's identification of a certain Caterina as Leonardo's mother. Although Freud (*ibid.* 197) mentioned that according to an Italian Leonardo expert this person was only a servant in Leonardo's household who stayed a short time, he took his lead from the Russian

writer, having said that «*This interpretation by the psychological novelist cannot be put to the proof, but it can claim so much inner probability, and it so much in harmony with all that we otherwise know of Leonardo's emotional activity, that I cannot refrain from accepting it as correct*».

As if such an approach were not odd to say the least on the part of a researcher, Freud increased the problematic nature of the material unintentionally, too. What he considered certain, was not certain. It cannot be excluded absolutely that the father took Leonardo into his home relatively soon after his birth. And if was so, almost everything in the Freudian story would be ruined. But supposing that in this respect Freudian starting point was based on firm data, it is unquestionable that the growth of the cult of St. Anne contributed significantly to the background of *St Anne with Two Others*. The pope sent out indulgences for those who prayed to the saint. The prayer could be read on a note and St. Anne, the Virgin Mary and the infant Jesus could all be seen on a great number of xylographs. By the time Leonardo began to paint his work, this xylograph was rather fashionable in Catholic Europe (Clark, 1980: 347-348).

But a more serious problem is that the vulture which is of central importance to Freud, is simply a mistake on the part of the German translator of Leonardo's diary and another translator of Mereskovsky's novel, too. Leonardo wrote about a kite. Thus, the parallels relating to vultures from cultural history simply have no place in Leonardo's childhood mental world. But all these things cannot be erased from Freud's "novelist" text, surely this is authentic so – namely Freud's and not Leonardo's –, and without them the text would lose much of its originality, richness and meaning. It would be diminished of such great virtue in it: from its deep and astonishing portrayal of human beings in general to its presentation of Leonardo's «*powerful instinctual passions which can nevertheless only express themselves in so remarkably subdued a manner*» in particular (Freud, *ibid.* 228). We understand that when Freud's attention was called to the translating mistake more than ten years after publication his work, he admitted what he had to admit, although he was not willing to alter in the slightest the several latter editions published in his lifetime. How could he do so when not long before he had confessed to Lou Andréas Salomé «*This is the only beautiful thing I have ever written*» (Gay, 1988: 268). Despite Freud's above mentioned choice in his early life, this is much more the attitude of a poet who – in line with artistic freedom and imagination – may transform the facts (may neglect some and make up others) than that of a scientist.

«*I have often observed that the subject-matter of works of art has stronger attraction for me than their formal and technical qualities, though to the artist their value lies first and foremost in these latter. I am unable rightly to appreciate many of the methods used and the effect obtained in art*» - remarked Freud, correctly (1985a: 253). This means that he was rather contentoriented in a one-sided way when interpreting a work of art. Though it may be said that among the arts narrative literature was the closest to him owing to written words which are quite appropriate for analysis, this does not change the fact he was «*simply a layman*» (*ibid.*) even in literature, at least in the earlier sense of the term. Thus, all this fails to explain why Freud made so many important mistakes with regard to content, or to put it in another way, why he dealt with the "subject-matter" so arbitrarily when writing about, say, Leonardo, Jensens' Gradiva or Moses the Man (see Halász, 1996, 1992). Even based on his above moderate self-critical reflection, mere maximalist caution could have been expected in the processing of the data. Considering this, I do not think that his most important short cuts could have been caused by «his withdrawal from the visual to the literary» (Kuspit, 2000: 26), but by the frequent prevailing of the brilliant storyteller (novelist, if you will) over the scientist.

Aristotle (1968) identifies the specifity of literature in its mediating cognitive (informative) function between history and philosophy. Like history, it describes individuals and events, but like philosophy it generalizes them. It tells us not what has happened, but what may happen. Hirsch (1984), following Philip Sidney, says that the poet suggests a general principle (like the philosopher), and also gives an example (like the historian). Freud's astonishing case histories are quite close to this example-giving function.

So would I say that Freud's case study at issue can, like the less extraordinary other ones, be only read as a literary narrative fiction? As a matter of fact, the majority of Leonardo researchers rejected Freud's conclusions "with horror", as Clark points out (1952: 4, 151-152). Despite this, Clark recognized «some passages of fine intuition», even in connection with *St Anne with Two Others* he recalled that «I cannot resist quoting the beautiful and I believe profound, interpretation which Freud has put on this picture. (…) it is the unconscious memory of these two beloved beings, intertwined as if in a dream, which led him (i.e. Leonardo) to dwell with such tenderness on the subject of the Virgin and St Anne. Whether or not this is true in fact, it seems to express the mood of the Louvre picture; and explains the apparent nearness in age of mother and daughter, the strange interminglings of their forms, and their remote, mysterious smiles». «Whether or not this true in fact»: with these words one of the leading Leonardo experts of our age surrenders to Freud's fine (in)sight. As another art historian points out in a recent monograph: «A painted smile representing an artist's infantile memory of his mother will always remain a possibility. But better the "possible" account that answers our questions than a documentable interpretation that says nothing» (Collins, 1997: 110).

At the end of his *Leonardo* Freud remarked: «*If in making these statements I have provoked the criticism, even from friends of psychoanalysis and from those who are experts in it, that I have merely written a psychoanalytical novel, I shall reply that I am far from overestimating the certainty of these results*» (Freud, 1985: 228).

In other words, the author of a literary narrative fiction has become extraordinarily cautions, I would say that he is now an anxious scientist, the author of an expository technical text, of a non-literary nonnarrative nonfiction, as though he had had enough of the earlier genre. He clarifies exactly why cannot Leonardo be considered neurotic. He emphasizes that psychoanalysis is not able to «*throw light on the fact of Leonardo's artistic power*», but «*renders its manifestations and its limitations intelligible to us*» (*ibid.* 230). And he indicates in an effective and quite general way «*what psychoanalysis can achieve in the field of biography*» (*ibid.* 228). In reply to our question at beginning of the paper, yes, the naïve subjects were right. The reader of Freud's *Leonardo* has two contradictory atti-tudes simultaneously: a willing suspension of his/her disbelief, as is usual with a literay work; and maintenance of his/her doubts about anything that is not factually correct or testable, as is usual with a scientific work.

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Fantasies of intra-uterine life and immaculate conceptions: Breton, Éluard, Dalí and Ernst

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My aim in this essay is to analyse some representations of visions of intra-uterine life, both in fiction and in the visual arts, as powerful fantasies of a blissful return to the safety of the mother's womb, a dream, however, laced with feelings of ambiguity.

With recent advances in technology applied to the areas of medicine and new reproductive technologies, namely visual imaging of the inside of the body, including ultrasound foetal imaging, two interrelated fantasies, the dream of extra-corporeal gestation, or ectogenesis, as well as the fantasy of returning to the jouissance of intra-uterine life, or at least of having a much better scientific knowledge of what happens inside the maternal womb, can be seen as much closer to being concretized.[1] If on the one hand artificial wombs will likely be developed in the next few decades,[2] the period of intra-uterine life is gradually being charted, becoming better understood, both from the physiological as well as the psychological point of view. Uterine replicators where adults can retreat to if they so wish, as a form of therapy or as a stress-reducing technique might not be far away.

The fantasy of extra corporeal gestation, which many women indulge in, both as a means of feeling more in control of their own bodies, completely taken over by the foetus during the nine months of pregnancy[3] and as a way of not feeling disadvantaged in relation to men in the work-place, has as its counterpart the dream of intra-uterine existence, which seems to be a predominantly male fantasy.

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[1] For a discussion of the politics of foetal imaging see Rosalind Pollack Petchesky's "Foetal Images: the Power of Visual Culture in the Politics of Reproduction". In *Reproductive Technologies: Gender, Motherhood and Medicine*. Ed. Michelle Stanworth. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987, 57-80.

[2] At the moment uterus replicators already exist in order to bring animals to term.

[3] For different accounts of woman and pregnancy see for example Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and Julia Kristeva's "Stabat Mater" in *Tales of Love*.

I will be looking at selected works by Salvador Dalí, André Breton and Paul Éluard's *The Immaculate Conception* (1930) as well as Max Ernst's collage novel *La Femme 100 Têtes* (1929) as examples of this fantasy. These subversive, iconoclastic, anti-clerical texts and paintings can be said to be informed by a drive to return to one's origins, to the primal scene and the inaccessible moment of conception, as well as to the womb and to the moment of birth, making discernible what has remained hidden and repressed.

THE DESIRE FOR ORIGINS: BACK TO THE WOMB, BACK TO THE CELL

Surrealist art and writings are permeated with an immense panoply of images and insights that powerfully prefigure many of today's most pressing concerns about the body, identity, procreation, reproduction, as well as a transgressive drive to interrogate a number of widely held assumptions, conventions and dogmas that have shaped our patricentric society.

Surrealist politics and poetics, stressing as they do the breaking down and transgressing of boundaries, stretching the limits of all manners of bodily borders and frontiers, their irreverent playing with long-standing conventions and taboos, such as the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, Virgin births, male procreation and intra-uterine life sound a very topical and contemporary note in our technologically-obsessed world.

The concept of intrauterine life, which will be the primary focus of this essay, constitutes a recurring thematic concern in Surrealist art and writing. This fantasy can be read as amounting to a deep-seated wish to go as it were before the primal scene of origin, the vision of one's copulating parents, to an earlier stage, the fantasy of watching one's conception inside the womb itself. This transgressive dream appears profusely illustrated in the work of Hans Bellmer, André Breton, Paul Éluard and Dali, to cite only the most salient examples.

Freud called «such phantasies – of the observation of sexual intercourse between the parents, of seduction, of castration, and others – "primal phantasies"» ("A Case of Paranoia Running Counter to the Psycho-Analytic Theory of the Disease", 154).[4] Freud identified three primal fantasies: the primal scene proper, in which the child supposedly watches his or her parents in the act of copulation, that of seduction and that of castration. As Hal Foster explains, they were first called scenes and only later were they termed «fantasies, when it became clear that they need not be actual events to be psychically effective – that they are often constructed, in whole or part, after the fact, frequently with the collaboration of the analyst. Yet, though often contrived, these fantasies also tended to be uniform; in fact, the narratives appeared so fundamental that Freud deemed them phylogenetic: given schemas that we all elaborate upon» (*Compulsive Beauty*, 57-58). As Hal Foster goes on to elucidate, Freud considered them fundamental «because it is through these fantasies that the child teases out the basic riddles of *origins*: in the fantasy of seduction the origin of sexuality, in the primal scene the origin of the individual, and in the fantasy of castration the origin of sexual difference» (58; emphasis mine). In addition to these, Freud postulated another primal fantasy, that of intrauterine existence, which, according to Hal Foster, «might be seen as an ambiguous salve to the other, traumatic fantasies, especially that of castration, to which it is technically anterior» (58).

[4] According to David Lomas the primal scene «was one of a cluster of archetypal scenarios which were regularly uncovered by Freud during analysis» (11). For Lomas, in addition, «phantasies, the stuff of psychoanalysis as much as that of surrealism, are narrative scenarios which have as their purpose a *mise-en-scène* of unconscious desire» (55).

Jean Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis, for their part, note how these primal (or originary) phantasies (*Urphantasien*) can be seen, in terms of their function and content, similar to myths of origins. As they state: «In the "primal scene", it is the origin of the subject that is represented; in seduction phantasies, it is the origin or emergence of sexuality; in castration phantasies, the origin of the distinction between the sexes» (*The Language of Psychoanalysis*, 332).

Why this concentration of male intrauterine fantasies, then, in Surrealist art? It can be seen as an integral part of the same drive to, on the one hand, bring to light and articulate, in either word or painting, the memories of repressed primal scenes, while on the other hand it partakes of a strong, subversive impulse to interrogate deep-rooted conventions and beliefs that make up the fabric of Western society, and which the Surrealist artists are bent on dismantling and overturning.

The fantasy of intrauterine life is intricately related to the dream of a going back to the mother's womb. In "The Uncanny" (1919) Freud looks at the fantasy of "intra-uterine existence" (367) and relates the idea of being buried alive by mistake which, as he suggests, is for many people regarded as the most uncanny of all, to the fantasy of intra-uterine existence. As Freud maintains, psychoanalysis «has taught us that this terrifying phantasy is only a transformation of another fantasy which had originally nothing terrifying about it at all, but was qualified by a certain lasciviousness – the phantasy, I mean, of intra-uterine existence» (366-367). In "The Wolf Man" (1918) Freud similarly reflects on the fantasy of going back to the womb, which can be seen as equated with not just a dream of rebirth but also of copulation with the father inside the womb, so that he «might obtain sexual satisfaction from him, and might bear him a child» (342). As Freud summarizes, recapitulating the so-called "Wolf-Man"'s plight, «the wish to be born of his father (as he had at first believed was the case), the wish to be sexually satisfied by him, the wish to present him with a child... complete the circle of his fixation upon his father. In them homosexuality has found its furthest and most intimate expression» (342). Extrapolating from the "Wolf-Man"'s case, Freud argues that the "womb-phantasy" is

> frequently derived... from an attachment to the father. There is a wish to be inside the mother's womb in order to replace her during intercourse – in order to take her place in regard to the father. The phantasy of re-birth, on the other hand, is in all probability regularly a softened substitute (a euphemism, one might say) for the phantasy of incestuous intercourse with the mother (342).

As Freud further elucidates, «there is a wish to be back in a situation in which one is in the mother's genitals; and in this connection the man is identifying himself with his own penis and is using it to represent himself» (343). As Freud concludes, «thus the two phantasies are revealed as each other's counterparts» (343).[5] In *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud refers to intra-uterine life mentioning some typical dreams «at the basis of which lie phantasies of the intrauterine life, namely, dwelling in the mother's womb and parturition» (198). Freud goes on to provide the example of a young man «who in phantasy already uses the intrauterine occasion for spying on the intercourse between the parents».[6]

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[5] As Joseph Francavilla in analogous vein notes, «the return to the womb, which is a return to one's original place of birth, is a return to the once-familiar, the uncanny and the homelike, and an attempt to recapture oneself at an early stage» (110).

[6] Quoted in Otto Rank's *The Trauma of Birth*, 192.

Fantasies of intra-uterine life and male pregnancy abound in Salvador Dali's work. In his book *The Secret Life* (1942) Dali wrote a chapter in which he recreates his implausibly clear memories of intrauterine existence: «The intra-uterine paradise was the colour of hell, that is to say, red, orange, yellow and bluish, the colour of flames, of fire; above all, it was soft, immobile, warm, symmetrical, double, gluey» (27).[7] Dalí starts the chapter called "Intra-Uterine Memories" with the following words:

> I presume that my readers do not at all remember, or remember only very vaguely, that highly important period in their existence which anteceded their birth and which transpired in their mother's womb. But I – yes, I remember this period, as though it were yesterday. It is for this reason that I propose to begin the book of my secret life at its real and authentic beginning, namely with the memories, so rare and liquid, which I have preserved of that intra-uterine life, and which will undoubtedly be the first of this kind in the world since the beginning of literary history to see the light of day and to be described systematically (26).

Dali goes on to associate that period of pre-natal life with «a lost paradise» (27),[8] drawing on Otto Rank's *The Trauma of Birth* (1924), in which Rank mentions the gratification of libido inside the uterus which leads, according to Rank, to a feeling of nostalgia for that contentment that in turn may later cause anxieties and even neuroses. In "The Uncanny" Freud similarly refers to the phantasy of intra-uterine existence as being «qualified by a certain lasciviousness» (367), a trait which is present in Dalí's memories. Salvador Dali provides his own description of these perceptions:

> It seems increasingly true that the whole imaginative life of man tends to reconstitute symbolically by the most similar situations and representations that initial paradisial state, and especially to surmount the "horrible traumatism of birth" by which we were expulsed from paradise, passing abruptly from that ideally protected and enclosed environment to all the hard dangers of the frightfully real new world, with the concomitant phenomena of asphyxiation, of compression, of blinding by the sudden outer light and of the brutal harshness of the reality of the world, which will remain inscribed in the mind under the sign of anguish, of stupor and of displeasure (*The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, 27).

Salvador Dalí can be said to have prefigured contemporary ultrasound images of the fetus inside the womb, floating in the amniotic fluid.[9]

In their study of prenatal life, *The Secret Life of the Unborn Child*,[10] Thomas Verny and John Kelly point out how the unborn child is «an aware, reacting human being who from the sixth month

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[7] In this context it might be interesting to introduce here Sartre's description of the slimy feminine in *Being and Nothingness* (*L'être et le néant*, 1943, 608-609) and Simone de Beauvoir's response in *The Second Sex* (223).

[8] Ralf Schiebler similarly places the origin of the joys of childhood and pleasure in Dalí's life «in his mother's womb. With characteristic originality, Dali starts his autobiography with his memories of an intra-uterine paradise» (*Dali: Genius, Obsession and Lust*, 27). Schiebler goes on to note that «pleasures there were optical, with his strongest memory being of "a pair of eggs fried in a pan, without the pan" – as though mirroring his own developing eyes. The frequent occurrence of floating eggs in his later works can be interpreted as an expression of his desire to return to the paradise that provided those pleasures» (27).

[9] See also the section "L'Amour" in Dalí's *La Femme Visible* (1930). According to Paolo Scopelliti there is a privileged connection between *La Femme Visible* and Breton and Éluard's *The Immaculate Conception* (*L'Immaculée Conception*. Édition facsimilé du manuscrit du Musée Picasso, 52), while the influence of Otto Rank's *The Trauma of Birth* is clear in both cases.

[10] Although it is unlikely that there was any direct influence, the title of this book seems to echo Dalí's own *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*.

on (and perhaps even earlier) keeps an active emotional life» (x). Indeed, «the foetus can see, hear, experience, taste and, on a primitive level, even learn *in utero*... Most importantly, he [sic] can *feel* – not with an adult's sophistication, but feel notheless» (x).

Drawing on Freudian material, and considering Dalí's fervent adoration of his mother, whose sudden, early death on February 6, 1921 prompted him to swear to himself that «I would snatch my mother from death and destiny with the swords of light that some day would savagely gleam around my glorious name!» (*The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, 153), it is tempting to interpret his intra-uterine memories as indeed a double desire to substitute his father as well as to be reborn and return to his mother's womb.

Dalí, who, as Ralf Schiebler puts it, «had boundless respect for Freud» (*Dalí: Genius, Obsession and Lust*, 32), having met him in 1938[11] and done a portrait of him, *Portrait of Freud* (1937),[12] writes about the maternal placenta and the umbilical cord in highly symbolic, Freudian terms.[13] Recollecting a moment just before going to sleep when sometimes people are woken up with a jolt, as if falling into a void, Dalí associates it with the traumatic memories of being born, expulsed from the "paradisial state" (*The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, 29) of intra-uterine bliss. Drawing on Freud, Dalí then goes on to reflect on the "paradisial significance" (30) of dreams of flight and on parachute falls, symbolically associating the parachute with the placenta, while the strings attaching the parachutist to the parachute are equated to the umbilical cord uniting the foetus to the maternal placenta. For Dalí, then, the presence of images of parachute jumps in pre-sleep are

> nothing other than the fall of all those who, unable to surmount the frightful traumatism of their first birth, desperately attempt to hurl themselves into the void, with the infantile desire to be reborn at all costs, "and in another way", all the while remaining attached to the umbilical cord which holds them suspended to the silk placenta of their maternal parachute (*The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, 30).

The influence of Otto Rank's book *The Trauma of Birth* is also remarkably clear here. In a chapter on the symbolic meaning of dreams and the intrauterine situation Rank connects dreams of falling with the anxiety of birth, examining also the potential meaning of dreams of flying. As Rank observes,

> *sensations of inhibition or flying*, which frequently alternate in the same dreamer, the former sensation frequently occurring in individuals who had a difficult birth... is used by the Unconscious in fulfilling its wish not to come away from the mother. But the latter flying sensation, changing the violent birth trauma into an easy floating out, as suggested by the stork fable, reproduces deep down in the Unconscious the state of well-being, namely, that of floating in the primal foetal condition... The corresponding anxiety situation seems to be reproduced in *dreams of falling* (78).

Still with reference to the traumatism of birth, Dalí meditates on the death-wish, considering that the latter

> is often explained by that imperialist and constant compulsion to return where we came from, and the suicides are generally those who have not been able to overcome that traumatism of birth, who, even in a brilliant social midst, and while all the candelabra are sparkling in the drawing room, suddenly decide to return to the house of death. In the same way the man who dies from a bullet on the field of battle with the cry of "Mother!"

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[11] When Dalí met Freud he took with him to show the latter his painting *Metamorphosis of Narcissus* (1937), which I mention later in the context of uterine life.

[12] Dalí also made a sketch of Freud on a napkin (1938). See Celia Rabinovitch, 121-122.

[13] As Jonathan Wood remarks, «in accordance with Surrealist writing as a whole, the thinker at the heart of Dalí's intellectual concerns was Sigmund Freud» (Introduction to Kirsten Bradbury's *Essential Dalí*, 11).

> on his lips expresses with truculence that wish to be born again backwards, and to return to the place from which he emerged. Nothing better illustrates all this than the burial customs of certain tribes, who inter their dead crouching and bound in the exact attitudes of the foetus (27-29).

Several of these images are visually illustrated in a striking way in some of Dalí's drawings in the "Intra-Uterine Memories" section of his book *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, including a representation of a foetus as a parachutist, tightly held to his/her placental parachute which is also reminiscent of a jellyfish, a cracked egg inside which lies a haunting figure which can be seen as a feotal skeleton, as well as a cow, from whose head and torso sprout tree branches, pregnant with what looks like the the contours of a human foetus (28). Dalí's subversive desire to imaginatively go back to the womb can be read not only in Freudian terms of an uncanny return to the forbidden but alluring and protective maternal space[14] but also possibly as a fantasy of an autonomous foetus.

A PLACENTAL ECONOMY

Luce Irigaray has developed, throughout her work, a comprehensive theory and poetics of intra-uterine life. In *Sexes and Genealogies* Irigaray reflects at length on the symbol of the womb and of intra-uterine existence, as well as on the intricate connection between the embryo and the placenta.

Dalí's image of the surrealistically depicted baby in a foetal position attached to the parachute can be usefully compared with Irigaray's vision of the placenta as «that first home that surrounds us and whose aura accompanies our every step, like a primary safety zone» ("Body Against Body: In Relation to the Mother", *Sexes and Genealogies*, 15).

Irigaray recurringly insists on the importance of developing a feminine imaginary and symbolic which will include the placenta, of which, Irigaray laments, no image has been formed in our culture. In "On the Maternal Order", Irigaray reflects on the "placental relation" (*Je, Tu, Nous*, 38) between mother and feotus and observes how these relations, «which the patriarchal imagination often presents (for example, in psychoanalysis) as in a state of fusion, are in fact strangely organized and respectful of the life of both» (38). Dalí's reminiscences of his intra-uterine existence, namely of the silk placenta that protected him, thus, can be read as visual illustrations of his transgressive urge to «be born again backwards», as he put it in *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí* (29), as well as his desire to find himself again inside the protective space of the placenta. This fantasy is once more graphically represented in Dalí's painting *Family of Marsupial Centaurs* (1942), in which the children «can come out of, and go back into, the maternal uterine paradise» (*The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, 71). According to Dalí, and returning to the comparison between the placenta and a parachute, the marsupial centauresses

> also have this meaning of the parachutes of birth – "parabirths" – for thanks to the "holes" which the centauresses have in the middle of their stomachs their sons can at will enter and leave their own mother, their own paradise, so as to be able to become gradually habituated to the environmental reality, while consoling themselves in the most progressive manner for the memory, unconscious but incrusted in their soul, of that wonderful pre-natal lost paradise, which only death can partly restore to them (30-31).

Commenting on this picture Kirsten Bradbury notes that Dalí attributed the painting to Otto Rank, in whose work Dalí, «believing that he had pre-birth memories... was greatly interested» (*Essential*

[14] See for instance Dalí's painting *The Enigma of Desire* (1929) for a graphically symbolic illustration of his complex feelings for his mother.

Dalí, 142). The predominance of rounded shapes in this painting, corresponding to the centauresses' bodies, also evokes reminiscences of intra-uterine life, as Dalí himself stressed in his *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí* (71).

Another meaningful and vivid instance of Dalí's fascination for images of intra-uterine scenes is the photograph taken by a Hungarian photographer, Philippe Halsman, whom Dalí had met in 1941 and collaborated with until 1979, representing Dalí in a foetal position, asleep inside an egg, beginning *ab ovo*, as it were.

Salvador Dali's *Metamorphosis of Narcissus* (1937) can also be interpreted as a symbolic representation of, amongst other themes, a longing for the paradisial state of feotal existence. The mirror of the lake, over which Narcissus leans, can be seen as evoking the amniotic fluids inside the placenta, while the several instances of doubling of the Narcissus figure in the painting might suggest the repressed longing of the individual to take on multiple guises, one of which could merge with the amniotic waters of the uterine space of the rounded lake, with Narcissus sitting in its shallow waters.

David Lomas also reads Salvador Dalí's *Metamorphosis of Narcissus* (1937) as illustrating, amongst many other things, «the blissful solitude of life *in utero*» (180). Lomas describes the figure of Narcissus in Dalí's painting as «crouching down in what can best be described as a foetal position... bathed in a warm ethereal glow» (180). Analysing Dalí's painting alongside the poem he wrote about the same theme and bearing the same title, *Metamorphoses of Narcissus*, Lomas goes on to note how in the picture «the space that cocoons Narcissus basically recapitulates the shape of his head which the poem describes as being like a chrysalis; consequently, it is a tomb in which he dies and becomes invisible, but also a womb-like place where he is preserved in order to be later reborn» (181). Both Dalí's painting and the poem can also aptly be read as conflating the drive to Eros with the death drive.[15] Another painting by Dalí that Lomas considers as dramatizing a recreation of intrauterine existence is *The Birth of Liquid Desires* (1931-2) in which, according to Lomas, «the putative son, another Narcissus, immerses his hand in a fountain contained within a cavernous, overtly uterine space» (180).[16]

Discussing Lacan's engagement with the Freudian notion of primary narcissism, which the former sees as somewhat problematic, Ellie Ragland observes: «If prototypes of primary narcissism are to be found in the state of sleep or in intrauterine life, Lacan asks, how can energy shift between one person and another? Although Melanie Klein pushed psychoanalytic theory of a fantasmatic basis for primary narcissism all the way back to fetal life, Lacan viewed such Kleinian theories as imaginary allegories» (*Essays on the Pleasures of Death: From Freud to Lacan*, 23).[17] Imaginary allegories they may be, but the strength of their imaginative pull has been powerfully translated in fictional and visual form by many Surrealist artists.

Another artist who also drew inspiration for his work in repressed primal fantasies is Hans Bellmer, who in several of his early drawings from 1934 evokes in symbolic form uterine life, such as *Interior of the Brick Doll, Peppermint Tower IV* and another two works designated as *Untitled*, one of which represents a partially broken doll lying within a brick wall, standing possibly for the uterine space,[18] while the other depicts two little girl dolls inside a womb-like shape while outside, floating, can be seen a kind of parachute carrying what looks like a nest, a placenta-like parachute that prefigures Dalí's ones.

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[15] Lomas similarly contends that the figure of Narcissus «encapsulates the seductive enticement of the death drive» (181), an impulse to regress into a form of atavistic, almost vegetal repose.

[16] Lomas further remarks that «this motif, with its connotations of a wished-for return to prenatal existence, carries over to the *Metamorphoses of Narcissus*» (180).

[17] See in this respect Melanie Klein's *The Psychoanalysis of Children* (1937).

[18] See Sue Taylor's *Hans Bellmer: The Anatomy of Anxiety*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000.

In *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* Irigaray takes up again the theme of "life in the womb" (36) and of the feminine "envelope" (35), which can be equated with the uterus or the placenta. In "The Envelope: A Reading of Spinoza, *Ethics*, 'Of God'" Irigaray muses that while on the one hand man «gets his envelope» (*An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, 84) from woman, «in or through his *necessary fetal existence*» (84; emphasis in the original) woman, on the other hand, «who enveloped man before birth, until he could live outside her, finds herself encircled by a language, by places she cannot conceive of, and from which she cannot escape» (94).

Indeed, in "Body Against Body: In Relation to the Mother" Irigaray propounds a radically new perspective to the Freudian conjecture on the murder of the father by his sons as the founding scene of our Western civilization. Irigaray, by contrast, offers a different theorization of this "primal" scene. As she muses:

> Unless – but this never crosses the threshold of thought – this murder of the father means not a desire to take the father's place as rival and competitor, but a desire instead to do away with the one who has artificially severed the bond with the mother in order to take over the power of creating any world, particularly a female one (*Sexes and Genealogies*, 17).

Irigaray then goes on to establish a connection between the penis and the period of intrauterine life, as well as between the penis and the umbilical cord. As Irigaray polemically maintains:

> According to this interpretation, phallic erection, far from being all-powerful, would be the masculine version of the umbilical cord. If phallic erection respected the life of the mother – of the mother in every woman and of the woman in every mother – it would repeat the living bond to the mother.... The penis evokes something of the life within the womb... Men would be performing an act of anticipatory repetition, a return to the world that allows them to become sexual adults capable of eroticism and reciprocity in the flesh (17).

Although not wishing to draw any inferences between Dalí's tense relations with his father and his subsequent break with him and Irigaray's psychoanalytic insights, I am tempted to suggest that the many representations in Dalí's work of umbilical-like cords and rounded placental forms, not to mention phallic shapes, can be read as symbolic of his unuttered desire to be one with his mother, to find protection and bliss in the envelope of her womb, the «immemorial intrauterine abode» in Irigaray's words in "The Fecundity of the Caress" (*An Etics of Sexual Difference*, 215). Dalí's painting *The Enigma of Desire – My Mother, My Mother, My Mother* (1929), with its numerous inclusions of the words "ma mère" on a huge, womb-like shape that dominates the canvas, also reminiscent of a tomb, as well as the many phallic shapes clustered in the closely fused figures in the left (daggers, a fish and a grasshopper) is ineluctably suggestive of Dalí's repressed sexual feelings for his mother.

Drawing on Luce Irigaray's work, and considering what she perceives as Irigaray's wish to reformulate both the "corporeal" and the "conceptual" frames that underpin the concept of "becoming woman" (*Irigaray and Deleuze*, 222), Tamsin Lorraine contends that for Irigaray «the intrauterine space is an anoedipal space, a space of plenitude rather than lack, singularity rather than universality, and the interactive attunement of singularities rather than the grid of social positioning that pertains to all» (222), a concept that seems aptly prefigured and illustrated in Salvador Dalí's description of his intra-uterine memories. In addition, as she further suggests, «the umbilical cord represents desire for this anoedipal space» (222).

As Lorraine stresses, in relation to criticism levelled at Irigaray that the latter places disproportionate emphasis on the role of the mother, Irigaray's «compelling accounts of the intrauterine

experience» (65), as well as her glowing and intense portrayals of the symbiotic relationship between the mother and the fetus, are intended to buttress two central points. As Lorraine explains Irigaray's argument, the first point suggests that

> it is due to a kind of matricide that we forget or belittle our origins in the mother; and (2) that this matricide is due not simply to our reluctance to remember our messy confusion with our own mother (in a literal sense) back in the womb, but also, and more important, to a whole symbolic system that replicates this matricide in countless ways on multiple levels (66).

Lorraine goes on to observe that «what the matricide comes down to is not merely refusal to acknowledge the mother as a person in her own right, but refusal to acknowledge our own corporeality and the ongoing constitutive effects of encountering a world as an embodied being always in process» (*Irigaray and Deleuze*, 66). It might be interesting here to refer briefly to Dalí's numerous works where the Virgin Mary appears represented by Gala, Dalí's wife and muse, but also mother surrogate, in a complex fusion of heterodox, iconoclastic roles, such as *Madonna* (1946), *Leda Atomica* (1949), *Jour de la Vierge* (1947), *The Madonna of Port Lligat* (1950) and *The Sistine Madonna* (1958), amongst others, which were painted during his nuclear-mystical period.[19] Indeed, and with reference to the Virgin Mary, it is apposite to remark that her embodied becoming, her development as a woman, can be said to have been arrested and paralysed as far as her representations in Christian iconography and narratives are concerned, an aspect that I will return to in my examination of André Breton and Paul Éluard's book *The Immaculate Conception* (1930).

IMMACULATE CONCEPTIONS AND THE ETERNAL FATHER

Salvador Dalí's connections with the theme of intra-uterine life extended as well to a cooperation with André Breton and Paul Éluard in their also collaborative book *The Immaculate Conception* (1930).[20] Dalí produced a frontispiece for the book and probably further collaborated with an unsigned insert in the first edition of *The Immaculate Conception*).[21] Interestingly, in *The Immaculate Conception*, in the first chapter entitled "Conception", there is a description of the uterine space which is reminiscent of Dalí's one: «This room is absurd, we must be careful. There are walls here that you will never breach, walls at which I will fling insults and threats, walls that are forever the colour of blood, of blood that has been spilt» (32).

Otto Rank's *The Trauma of Birth* (1924), on which Dalí had drawn extensively in his *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, similarly exerted a decisive influence on André Breton and Paul Éluard's *The Immaculate Conception*, a book which traces the interior and exterior life of a human being from conception and intra-uterine existence to death and the Original Judgement. Indeed, Rank himself mentions an Immaculate Conception, that of Jesus and describes Christianity as an ethico-religious sublimation of the primary trauma of birth, describing Christ as having succeeded in surmounting the traumatism of birth. According to Rank,

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[19] See Dalí's *Manifeste Mystique* (1951).

[20] As Paolo Scopelliti explains, the first part of *L'Immaculée Conception*, "L'Homme", had appeared two months prior to the publication of the book in the second number of *Surréalisme au service de la révolution* (S.A.S.D.L.R., 10-14), accompanied by 20 drawings by Dalí. As Scopelliti notes, «l'insertion des dessins assigne un rôle de commentaire au texte: ils lui étaient pourtant étrangers, puisque Dalí les avait composés six mois plus tôt; mais l'existence préalable d'une profonde affinité est justement ce qui a permis cette insertion» (*L'Immaculée Conception*. Édition fac-similé du manuscrit du Musée Picasso, 24).

[21] See Introduction by Antony Melville to *The Immaculate Conception*, 20 and Paolo Scopelliti's Introduction to *L'Immaculée Conception*. Édition Fac-similé du manuscrit du Musée Picasso, 15-62.

> The infantile theory of the Immaculate Conception, as a dogmatic concept of the birth trauma, fits in unconstrainedly with this explanation of the Christ legend. It announces in the sense of the hero myth, the most extreme development of which is represented by the Christ figure, that also this negative hero, who has succeeded to a great extent in the mastery of the birth trauma, was not born in the natural way, indeed, did not even enter the mother in the natural way (*The Trauma of Birth*, 137).

For Rank, crucifixion «corresponds to a painfully emphasized return to the womb, after which follows quite consistently the resurrection namely, birth and not rebirth. For here it is also a question of nothing but a repetition and reproduction of the process of birth, ethically and religiously sublimated in the sense of a neurotic overcoming of the primal trauma» (137). In *The Immaculate Conception* Breton and Éluard can be seen as addressing in a satirical vein precisely the religious dogma of the immaculate conception while simultaneously engaging at a deeper level, through symbol and sublimation, with the latent content of the unconscious in the shape of intra-uterine dreams.

As Antony Melville points out, many of the images in Breton and Éluard's section on "Intra-Uterine Life" «can be linked to Rank's book: the cosy darkness of a world where neither day nor night exist, the face of the woman dreamed "from within" in a "bubbling up of light", the sweetness of a harmonious state» ("Introduction" to *The Immaculate Conception*, 10). Thus, Breton and Éluard can be said to illustrate Rank's theory about the fantasy of the «uninhibited gratification of all physical needs in the intrauterine form» (*The Trauma of Birth*, 77), namely the «satisfaction of the libido in the womb and the nostalgia for this, which after birth causes anxieties that may lead to neurosis» ("Introduction" to *The Immaculate Conception*, 10).

The Immaculate Conception was a collaborative effort, written together by André Breton and Paul Éluard in a fortnight, in the summer of 1930, when they were both alone and living in the same building, two floors apart. In a letter to Gala, on the 27th August 1930, Éluard explains: «I'm writing a long text with Breton on mankind in five parts: conception, intrauterine life, birth, life, death. Not bad. But such hard work!» (quoted in Vincent Gilles's "Love of Books, Love Books", 152).[22]

In the second part, "Intra-Uterine Life", in characteristic surrealistic fashion, it is hard to read in this automatic piece of writing any explicit reference to existence inside the womb. The reiterated allusion to fishes, phallic in shape, and jellyfishes, reminiscent of the placenta, might be an important clue: «Oh, to travel on jellyfish back, skimming the surface and then plunging into the depths; to have the appetite of blind fish that have the appetite of birds which scream at life!» (*The Immaculate Conception*, 35).

Vincent Gille describes Breton and Éluard's *The Immaculate Conception* as «probably one of the most important texts of the surrealist movement» ("Love of Books, Love Books", 152). As Gille goes on to maintain, «the idea behind it and its ambitious nature make it one of the most daring surrealist initiatives, although it has never truly been acknowledged as such: the true extent of the mysterious influence exerted by this rich and informative book has yet to be assessed» (152).[23]

Max Ernst was also interested in the questions surrounding alternative forms of procreation (he describes his origins as having hatched from an egg laid by her mother)[24] as well as the fantasy

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[22] According to Breton, they wrote that book to settle accounts with «psychiatrists of the old school» (*Entretiens*, 160). Breton, in fact, had already integrated in the Preface to the *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* an extract from the *Annales Médico-Psychologiques*, which described a meeting on surrealism, whose minutes included a request that Surrealists should be punished, namely the author of *Nadja*, for he had suggested that mental patients assassinate their doctor.

[23] Annie Le Brun describes *L'Immaculée Conception* as «one of the most profound and lyrical reflections upon amorous freedom» ("Desire — A Surrealist Invention", 302).

[24] See "Some Data on the Youth of M. E. as Told by Himself", 28.

of intra-uterine existence, namely in his "An Informal Life of M. E. (as Told by Himself to a Young Friend)".[25]

Max Ernst's collage novel *La Femme 100 Têtes* (*The Hundred Headless Woman*) (1929) is connected by a series of intertextual and visual echoes to Breton and Éluard's *L'Immaculée Conception*,[26] which came out at the end of November 1930, one year after Max Ernst, in *La Femme 100 Têtes*, had anticipated the title of Breton and Éluard's book in several of the captions for some of the collages in the first chapter and in so doing suggested the relevance that theme would have in surrealist art and thought. In addition, André Breton wrote a foreword in 1929 for Ernst's collage novel, an "Avis au lecteur".

Max Ernst's *La Femme 100 Têtes* consists of nine chapters evocative of the nine months of pregnancy and it appropriately starts with the plate *Crime ou miracle: un homme complet* (*Crime or miracle: a complete man*), evocative of a placenta from which a man escapes, flying down to Earth but still held by the umbilical cord like parachute threads, a vision that may have contributed to inspire Dalí's images of silken parachutes.[27] Plates 2, 3 and 4 illustrate a failed immaculate conception while Plate 12 cryptically hints that it may have been successful. The plates share what looks like a laboratory setting, with electrical wires, alembics and vases for experiments, where men conspicuously attempt to create or recreate life artificially, toying with electrical sparks reminiscent of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, without much success.[28] These plates also partake of an atmosphere grounded on the fantastic, with echoes from alchemy and Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books, amongst others.[29] While in Plate 2, *L'immaculée conception manquée* (*The failed Immaculate Conception*) a girl-woman on a bed tries to avoid a man standing next to her as if ready to conduct an experiment,[30] in Plates 3 and 4, *La même, pour la deuxième...* (*The same, for the second...*) and... *et la troisième fois manquée* (*... and the third time failed*), respectively, the overbearing female forms tower above the men who try to dominate them.

In Plate 12, *L'immaculée conception* (*The Immaculate Conception*), a tiny figure of a man on the left is completely overpowered by a reclining woman apparently waiting to receive some word

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[25] Margot Norris, however, argues that «Not only Ernst's writings, but his paintings also, contest the notion that prenatal life offers some wholeness or integrity of form» (*Beasts of the Modern Imagination: Darwin, Nietzsche, Kafka, Ernst, & Lawrence*, 140).

[26] As David Lomas also points out, «woven into the textual fabric of *L'Immaculée Conception*... are a host of references to Max Ernst» (73). In addition, and extending this web of ressonances to Salvador Dalí, it is pertinent to note that Ernst, like Dalí, was a fervent admirer of Freud, and an assiduous reader of his work.

[27] Werner Spies observes that Ernst's plate about the apparition of the «complete man» «recalls Milton, Blake, Byron, Nietzsche» (*Max Ernst: Collages: The Invention of the Surrealist Universe*, 224). Spies further remarks that Ernst «adds a balloon – or unknown planet – for the earthward journey of his "complete man", who is taken from Blake's frontispiece to "The Grave"» (224).

[28] M. E. Warlick points out that «the cover illustration for *La Femme 100 têtes*... contains a headless female figure whose body is superimposed upon a crucible seen through the cutaway opening of a brick furnace. This comparison of a female body to an alchemical vessel recalls one of Ernst's earlier drawings, *The Cold Throats*... In both works, the "woman without a head" signifies the alchemical vessel and the receptive feminine role within the alchemical process» (*Max Ernst and Alchemy: A Magician in Search of a Myth*, 111).

[29] Werner Spies suggests other intertexts: «The *homunculus*... Spalanzani's Olimpia in E. T. A. Hoffmann's Sandmann (a favorite book of Max Ernst's); Pygmalion and Galatea; Merimée's statue in *La Vénus d'Ille*; and, closer to our time, the central theme of the German silent film inspired by the Golem in Arnim's *Isabella von Ägypten* (Wegener's *Golem* and *Homunculus*; Lang's *Metropolis*)» (Max Ernst: *Collages: The Invention of the Surrealist Universe*, 228).

[30] David Lomas ponders about this scene: «Is he not the abusive father from a long-forgotten traumatic scene of childhood seduction? A sobbing cherub in the foreground is the sole witness to this less-than-immaculate conception» (*The Haunted Self: Surrealism, Psychoanalysis, Subjectivity*, 88).

or emanation from a caged head in the shape of an egg (the Eternal Father?), in an environment reminiscent of a factory with pistons and sundry machinery. M. E. Warlick significantly reads Ernst's *La Femme 100 Têtes* as having as its central character an "alchemical child" (*Max Ernst and Alchemy: A Magician in Search of a Myth*, 111), since the goal of the alchemists, the Philosopher's Stone, was the conception of a child in a laboratory environment, while Loplop, Ernst's bird-like *alter-ego*, and the Woman «become the archetypal parents whose destructions and purifications are accomplished within a cyclic process» (111).[31]

In his drive to transgress and react against bourgeois values and norms Ernst called his collages "phallustrades",[32] a term Robert D. Newman explains asserting that Ernst «sought a new way of fathering but was aware that the contradictory elements he yoked together constituted political and social commentaries» (*Transgressions of Reading: Narrative Engagement of Exile and Return*, 35). Indeed, in some ways the collages dealing with the immaculate conception can be seen as anticipating artificial insemination, a method through which women can be impregnated without losing their virginity, while simultaneously partially erasing the role of the Father in procreation. Several plates feature the Eternal Father who, however, is shown as old and weak, attempting in vain to keep the world in (patriarchal) order, as in *Le Père Eternel, la barbe sillonnée d'éclairs continus, dans une catastrophe de métro* (*The Eternal Father, his beard laced with continuous lightning, in a subway accident*) (Plate 60) and *Le Père Eternel cherche en vain à séparer la lumière des ténèbres* (*The Eternal Father tries vainly to separate the light from the shadows*) (Plate 137). Significantly, Max Ernst also produced a painting called *The Immaculate Conception* (c. 1922), which unfortunately was lost.[33]

In many ways the male fantasies of self-genesis and of an autonomous fetus, as represented by Max Ernst in his Immaculate Conception Plates in *La Femme 100 Têtes*, as well as in Breton and Éluard's *The Immaculare Conception*[34] and Dalí's work, namely in *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí* and *La Femme Visible* can be seen as inscribed in the irreverent, demythologyzing impulse that is at the centre of Surrealist politics and art. The Surrealist artists were obsessed with the fantasy of male procreation, a dream which can be seen as part of their drive to question and subvert many of the most deeply entrenched tenets of Christianity and bourgeois society in general. The fantasy of male procreation can also be seen as closely interrelated to the dream of intrauterine life, since imagining life inside the uterus can be read, from this perspective, as a desire to take over, as it were, the mother's womb and explore its possibilities from a male viewpoint.

In turn, the Surrealists' appropriation of the Virgin Mary as an emblematic symbol of this radical questioning of values and conventions stresses the subversive elements of the cult of the Virgin, who can be interpreted as a dissident figure, someone who through her Immaculate

[31] Loplop might be seen here as a heretical reference to the Holy Ghost, often represented by a dove.

[32] Ernst's "phallustrades" can be seen as an echo of Fourier's "phalansteres".

[33] Malcolm Gee notes how sometimes Ernst used «the perspective systems of Ucello and Piero della Francesca for burlesque effect, as, for example, in the lost painting *The Immaculate Conception* (c. 1922), but even here there is, arguably, a homage to the hallucinating possibilities of this technique» ("Max Ernst and Surrealism", 50).

[34] Katherine Conley remarks that the overall title as well as the chapter titles of Breton and Éluard's *The Immaculate Conception* were chosen before they started writing, so that the image of the Virgin Mary in effect rules thev text. As Conley states, «not only is the text named for her, but the frontispiece to the original edition was illustrated with a familiar photograph of the statue at Lourdes. The Picasso Museum manuscript also shows a supplementary image of her: another postcard as the Immaculate Conception, as she appeared at Azpeitia in the Basque region of Northern Spain – a reflection of the influence of Salvador Dalí, who was from this region, on the artistic and personal lives of Breton and Éluard at the time» (*Automatic Woman: The Representation of Woman in Surrealism*, 28). Although Salvador Dalí was from Northern Spain he was from Catalonia and not from the Basque Country, a very different region.

Conception flaunts and challenges long-standing laws. The Surrealist artists captured precisely this paradoxical sense of obedience and dissension that stands at the heart of the Biblical story of the Virgin Mary, who thus became an unlikely surrealistic icon.[35] The dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, which was declared by Pope Pius IX in 1854,[36] was the object of severe criticism and satire on the part of the Surrealist artists who, as Katharine Conley observes, «ostensibly favored freeing women from their reproductive function (*Automatic Woman: The Representation of Woman in Surrealism*, 41) turning «the Virgin Mary (or an Automatic Woman)» (41). Into «an appropriate ideal».

With the introduction of new reproductive technologies like human cloning or the fusion of eggs, women would be able, if they so chose, to procreate on their own, without male intervention. The Virgin Mary, then, in this scenario, would no longer be the only woman to have given birth on her own, since other women, given the advent of human cloning, might also reproduce without male agency, in what can be seen, from our contemporary perspective, as a challenging and almost surrealistic scenario, as transgressive as male pregnancy, also envisaged by many Surrealist artists.

CONCLUSION

The impulse behind many of these scenes suggests a transgressive, rebellious, anti-religious drive to access places hitherto veiled in secrecy, wrapped in taboos. Fantasies about these forbidden, repressed sites and visions, such as primal scenes, intra-uterine life, Virgin Births and pregnant males can be seen as part and parcel of a related anti-clerical, blasphemous, revolutionary, anti-bourgeois impulse so characteristic of Surrealist politics and poetics. If Virgin Births can be regarded, from a woman's point of view, as potentially liberating, since no male intervention is necessary, they can be considered, from a male perspective, as threatening to an androcentric social order, to the Law of the Father. Visions of pregnant males, conversely, can be regarded as at least in part encoding a rejection and fear of women's procreative capacities, while simultaneously evoking a desire to be independent of the need for woman in reproductive terms, wishes that amount to a rebellion against the tenets promulgated by the Church as far as the family is concerned, and which also constituted one of the targets of criticism and satire on the part of the Surrealists and many other artists.

To conclude I just wish to suggest that with the development of some new reproductive technologies many of these scenarios can be made feasible and concretized. These Surrealistic visions, once considered fantastic and only feasible within the discourses of art, have now become prophetic and newly contemporary once again. Might the development of artificial wombs make the fantasy of a return to the lost paradise of the maternal womb obsolete, no longer operative? What about the corresponding female fantasy of going back to the womb, the place of beginnings? Is it as widespread as it appears to be in the case of men? These visions also force us to confront and reflect on the psychological consequences of some of these scenarios. How will the trauma of birth be revised with the inception of artificial wombs? With the technical feasibility of "virgin births" and "immaculate conceptions", as well as with the potential advent of human cloning, how will the psychological map of humankind be rewritten and reconfigured? These questions constitute

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[35] For more examples of the Surrealist's use of the symbol of the virgin Mary in their work see Katherine Conley's *Automatic Woman: The Representation of Woman in Surrealism* (1996).

[36] See Marina Warner's *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary*, 249.

a fundamental challenge to all of us and need to be seriously addressed and reconceptualized, in the light of a new surrealist revival and its novel futuristic scenarios that may provide useful hints to rethink the changes in our human condition.

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Learning to treat one's ambivalently-regarded enemies (*)

MAX DAY (*)

«*Everyone is a prisoner of his own experiences. No one can eliminate prejudices – just recognize them.*»

(Edward R. Murrow)

This is a memoir of my hejira from hating members of certain backgrounds to learning to deal with them in a humane way. "Anecdotal" is the best insult or devaluation to anything in modern psychiatry, especially to psycho-analytic ventures. Yet we live and recall our lives in anecdotal fashion and thus establish our personal values. It is useful to keep in mind that "anecdote" means «secret or hitherto unpublished or details of history» (O.E.D.). None of my personal hejira could be repeated with "an n of 243".

A common clinical problem for therapists is how to deal psychotherapeutically with people one has regarded for various reasons as one's enemy. This is different from counter-transference, which refers to unconscious conflicts stirred up in the therapist by the patient, of which the therapist may not yet be aware (Heimann, 1950; Day, 1977). It is also different from the beginning therapist's needing to learn where one fits in with people generally and to accept differences in outlook. This is a problem for people outside the field of psychotherapy. Aryeh Neier, himself a Holocaust survivor, came to this country and, at the age of 26 became a worker for the American Civil Liberties Union. In 1977 (1979), he was at the center of the famed Skokie case, where he fought for the right of a neo-Nazi group to march through Skokie, an area with many Jewish

(*) A smaller version of this paper was delivered in Greenwich (England) at a meeting of The Group for the Arts and Psychology, Friday, July 4, 2003.

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Holocaust survivors. This he wrote about in "Taking Liberties: Four Decades in the Struggle for Rights" (2003).

One's secret views linger on and are attitudes stemming from one's value system, that come up frequently for consideration in one's work. Of course one is limited forever by one's own experience even as one meets new ideas later on in life. To call it a prejudice is superficial and merely descriptive. It is, in fact, an attitude or outlook, based on a well-rationalized belief system. We all have our belief systems, which offer a combined outlet for our libidinal and aggressive impulses. Well known belief systems are religions, Judaism, Christianity or Islam but there are many other systems such as scientism, psycho-analysis, vegetarianism, feminism and on many others. We could not get along without them and yet they may get in the way of our work, especially so for the beginning therapist. Since it takes ten years to learn to become a psychotherapist, if one devotes oneself totally to it, most such inner clashes are likely to occur within that time interval. One is likely to react to any unusual values of the patient different from one's own with the inner exclamation of «What! You believe that?!» After about ten years one stops looking over one's shoulder to see what one's supervisor or teacher is saying about what one is doing. By then one might have seen a wide variety of patients and one can position oneself better in the spectrum of humanity. After enough experience, one can rely more on what one has experienced, what works for one, what does not work for one and can begin to accept views of life different from one's own. Yet one can rely only on one's experience, not on statistics. I shall attempt to examine some of my own value systems, the part they played in my work and how I learned, step by step, to cope with them and use them constructively for my patients sake.

I compared notes with some of my colleagues about this matter, who asked what kind of paper I was writing. One, a researcher in the biology of schizophrenia with some background in dynamic psychiatry said, «Of course. You find something to like in the patient.» He did not elaborate on what you find to like nor on what you do with the negative feelings. Another, an analyst, admitted «I get rid of them unconsciously».

I came from a Jewish family in Canada, which had emigrated from Poland to Toronto. There were twenty of us there ultimately. We lost one hundred members of our family through Nazi actions in the Holocaust. Yet we had enemies on all sides for generations. We hated and feared the Russians because of the Pale of Settlement they had imposed on Jews after Russia conquered and dismembered Poland, so that Jews were not allowed to live in Moscow or Saint Petersburg, unless they had lots of money. Then there were the pogroms of 1905 after Russia lost its war against Japan. We hated the Poles for their anti-Semitism, the Germans for the Holocaust and the Arabs for their battle against the Jews for the last hundred years in Palestine. The historical irony is that the first Polish coins were minted 800 years ago by a Jew. Since Jews were hired as tax collectors by the Polish princes, age-old anti-Semitism was fostered by their doing this work for the Polish king. Yet in the eighteenth century the Poles and the Jews were united in their battle against Russian hegemony. By 1920, Pilsudski, the president of Poland announced that there were three million Jews too many out of three and one half million Jews in a total population of thirty-five million. Jews had to get out, did so and went wherever they could. My parents left in this exodus. Yet their Polish tradition lingered on. When they did not want me to understand something they spoke in Polish. So I learned that "Puzhe spatch?" meant "want to go to sleep?" "Oitchets" meant "father". My mother would say «Lift up your "pzheprashem"». I knew she meant «Lift up your behind». Only when the GAP met in Byalistok in 2000 did I learn that "pzheprashem" meant "excuse me". So she had been politely saying «lift up your excuse me». Thus are traditions conveyed, maintained and at times misunderstood.

Yet at times Muslims and Jews were united. With the advance of Christianity from France through the Iberian peninsula in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Muslims and Jews united against their common enemy, the Christians, who were coming through the Muslim Iberian Peninsula from Christian France. With the defeat of the Byzantines in Palestine, the Umayyad

Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik in Damascus began to build the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (Stager, 1999), which is not a mosque but a revivification of Solomon’s Temple. He got substantial financial contributions from Levantine Jews. Again Jews and Muslims were united, when they had a common enemy, the Christians. The rest of the time, Jews were regarded as “dhimmi”, “inferior souls”. But these were mere historical realities, some of which we were not yet aware of and some of which we paid no attention to, since we were more preoccupied with more recent anti-Jewish feeling.

I shall now review how my attitudes became problematic for me in my professional work and how they changed with more clinical experience.

In the sixties I taught groups of medical students at the Massachusetts Mental Health Center for two hours at a time twice a week for one month for each group. One student was named Kanaane. I recognized at once that he was Palestinian and had to hold my feelings in check. I had to fight against my inner wishes to make clearer the origin and meaning of the name, since the meaning and origin of all names attract me. Yet this was just after there had been two wars against Israel in 1948 and 1956. I restrained myself, successfully it turned out. In this case inhibition of my feelings was the path chosen, so I could continue to teach him.

I was a member of the admissions committee of the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute in the sixties. We were told to review the case of an Egyptian man for admission. There had already been two wars fought with Egyptians against the Israelis. The committee was ready to reject him. He had already been rejected for training by the Analytic Society in London, so their decision was reasonable. I looked around and saw that all the members of the committee were Jewish. I proposed we get a committee composed of non-Jews to review the case. Here I was insisting on fairness, a reaction-formation against my inner feelings instead of inhibition.

Sometime in the seventies I interviewed a German man, who told me how he had lost his father in the Second World War. He recalled a poignant memory, in which he and his mother were fleeing along the highway and British planes were strafing the highway. They had to roll off the road and into the bushes to escape injury. I was pleased with the memory and yet horrified by it. I was glad I had no time treat him and referred him to someone else. Now I wish I had treated him. This was a case of avoidance on my part.

Sometime in the seventies I was referred a woman, who came from what was originally Sudetenland. That was the northern rim of what had been Czechoslovakia before the Second World War. The Germans had claimed it from the Czechs because of Germany’s expansionist designs, alleging that some Germans lived there. In order to avoid war, Czechoslovakia was prevailed upon by France and England to cede it to the Germans. This they did. A year later Germany ran over Czechoslovakia and engulfed it and the Second World War was on its way. Then Germans settled more thickly in Sudetenland. After Germany was defeated, the Czechs drove the Germans out of there. This woman was part of that exiled German population. She had originally been referred to me for group therapy. I was so entranced by her story that I treated her individually for several years about her marital and other problems. Meantime I learned how much suffering she and her family had endured during the political upheaval. I was no longer on guard about my feelings about Germany, nor did I have to refer her to someone else. I became involved in understanding her and what she had lived through. So I had moved from inhibition, through reaction-formation, and avoidance to allying myself with her human woes.

In 1980 I was invited to attend a meeting in Berlin for psychiatrists in the United States armed forces in Europe from Scandinavia to Greece. I looked forward to this locale with interest and trepidation. The city was interesting in itself. The staff in German restaurants was courteous. When I saw the Kaiser Wilhelm Church, in the spire of which the R. A. F. had bombed a hole, so that a tree now grew out of the gaping hole at the top of the spire, I felt good. One evening we passed a store that was being rebuilt and on the wooden boarding surrounding it, someone had painted the graffito “Zyklon B”. This was the gas used to put Jews to death in the extermination camps. I grew righteously indignant. After three days I could not bear my anger and hatred. I began to appreciate

what psychotics must feel about the burden of rage they carry around. I began to forgive people. I saw teen-agers walking with their arms around each other and thought they were too young to have been involved in the Holocaust; I could not hate them. Then I saw young adults. I forgave them; they could not have been involved. Then I saw an older man with one arm. Could he have lost it in the Battle of Stalingrad? Then one day we visited the Jewish Center and talked with the director. I asked him what future was there for the Jews in Germany. He stumped me with «What future was there for the Jews in the United States?». In the midst of this his secretary stumbled in with the incomprehensible news that some American planes had crashed in Iran. We later understood that this was Jimmy Carter's ill-fated attempt to free the American hostages in Teheran. We went out to the parking lot and there was a little Santa Claus figure dressed in the denim uniform of the Berlin police. I asked him what he was doing there. He said «We have to protect the Jews». Taken aback, I asked «from whom?» He said «from Nazis, Germans and P. L. O. people». I was properly stumped. By the time we got to our hotel in half an hour, the clerk at the desk was pounding the desk, saying «The Israels would never have done that!». I had gone from fear of the Germans, hatred of them to being held up as an ideal.

Sometime in the eighties I was referred a Russian man for group therapy. He had a calamitous childhood in which his father's Krohn's Disease dominated family life. By chance I had already had a patient, whose father had Krohn's disease and I had learned how it affected his life. That patient's father could not associate with people at work, since he created such smells, going to the toilet eleven times a day. When my current patient's father built a house he had a big exhaust fan installed. I could tell my patient why, since my other patient had taught me about that. The present patient had urged his mother to divorce the father, to no avail. He had even run away from home in his teens. Yet this cruel father later took him to M.I.T. to show him where he might develop himself. This he did. In the therapy group he would be silent for 5 or 6 weeks at a time and then explode in anger. This he could not have done at home. After five years of group therapy, he left and came back for analysis. There he worked over these early relationships, at times, smashing the wall of the office, again what he had wanted to do at home and had not dared to do. As he worked things out, he wrote some scientific papers and developed a company which used these ideas. In time he met a woman he loved, married her and moved out west. From time to time, when he returned east to see his mother he would come to see me. Early in the analysis, he had let me know that he had had a maternal Jewish grandfather. Perhaps this was to feel closer, as he could not with his father. What had made it possible for me to work with him despite his being Russian? Again as with the German woman, the pathos of his life moved me, so I could ally myself with him.

I had another patient, who had been a student of mine in the past. He was either Polish or Russian or Lithuanian or White Russian, depending upon how the map was carved up at any time. They had all been enemies of the Jews. He came to me, when his wife presented him with a baby. He was intensely afraid he would be as cruel a father as his drunkard father had been to him. With continuing work, he mastered and enjoyed fatherhood. Then he wanted to explore the family genealogy, which I encouraged. My own interest in genealogical research tied me to him. He had been afraid to do this for fear of finding out more terrible things about his father and the family. Hesitantly he began to pursue this with my encouragement and began to discover what hardships his parents had been through, that, in part, had led to his father's cruelty, drinking and neglect of the family. He went through a change in viewing his father as I had in viewing my various patients. This was very instructive to both of us.

Recently I had to see a medical specialist with a name like Jeremiah Abraham. I looked at him and he was a short dark skinned man. I at once worried he might be a Muslim. I asked him where he came from, since his English was excellent and unobtrusive. He said he came from India. Understanding my concern intuitively, he explained that he was a Christian and that in India, Christians use biblical names. Again I had been caught up in my belief system. This I resolved with open curiosity and relief at the explanation.

In all these cases over the years, I gradually developed the ability to split myself, so I could keep my historical hatreds and fears to myself and keep another part of myself open to each of these people. First I had to resort to inhibition, then denial, then reaction-formation and finally attained the ability to ally myself with the human misery of the individual by splitting myself in two, part of me for my traditional view and part of me for my current humane, therapeutic stance. I also learned to show open curiosity, which I had been unable to do several decades earlier.

Why did I try so hard and so long to achieve this state? It was not because it was moral or reasonable or humane. It was rather to master this part of me as a challenge.

How did I develop this ability? There were two sources. I think much credit is due to my mother. She was a "fremder hunt" meaning "a strange dog" in the midst of my father's family. She became a confidant for many of these relatives, to whom she was related through my father, but let me know privately of the idiosyncrasies of each one. She continued to be a respectful confidante for them for thirty years after my father died, so her tact and understanding worked. These qualities must have played a part in my learning to split myself with my patients, as she had with her relatives.

Having some of this talent re-inforced in my training helped me gradually learn to love my enemies. After my internship in New York, I came to Boston State Hospital looking for a father and found him in Elvin Semrad a sceptical, lapsed Catholic. I showed him off to my wife in a case conference and she said he was fat. I said «no!». She pointed out that his fat was leaking out over his shoes. The love for this man encouraged me and others to understand psychotics as people and not as despicable creatures to be looked down on. I had to hold my belief systems in check to do this. With these two models I learned to cope with my belief system.

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The aesthetic, scientific, and psychosexual implications of Thoreau's punning (*)

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«A written word is the choicest of relics», Thoreau argues in *Walden*. «It may be translated into every language, and not only be read but actually breathed from all human lips ... carved out of the breath of life itself» (p. 102). Here he expresses an attitude toward language that informs all his writing. Philological authorities like Wilhelm von Humboldt preached that language grew like an organism. Nineteenth-century linguistic organicism tempted Thoreau to conceive of words biologically.

Underlying Thoreau's pronouncements about speech is the notion that words are either alive or virtually so. «We cannot write well or truly but what we write with gusto. The body the senses must conspire with the spirit – Expression is the act of the whole man ... that our speech may be vascular» (2 Sept. 1851). The organs of the body must supply the verbal organism too. «The intellect is powerless to express thought without the aid of the heart and liver and of every member.» Physical life pumps through language, so that it's vain «to sit down to write when you have not stood up to live. Methinks that the moment my legs begin to move, my thoughts begin to flow – as if I had given vent to the stream at the lower end & consequently new fountains flowed into it at the upper.» Linking verbal fluency with the circulation of bodily fluids, Thoreau works out this hydraulic conception of diction with meticulous detail: «You need to increase the draught below – as the owners of meadows on C. River say of the Billerica Dam. Only while we are in action is the circulation perfect. The writing which consists with habitual sitting is mechanical wooden dull to read» (19 Aug. 1851).

The man of science studied nature as a dead language, Thoreau thought, and the result was reflected in scientific writing. «What a keepsake a manual of botany! In which is uttered breathed, man's love of flowers. It is dry as a *hortus siccus*. – Flowers are pressed into the botanist's service» (30 Jan. 1852). As his wordplay with *pressed* here demonstrates, Thoreau wanted no such funereal

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 Thoreau's works are cited from the Princeton edition; however journal entries dated after 27 April 1852 refer to journal entries in the *Writings*, ed. Bradford Torrey (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1906). Emerson's journals are cited from *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks*, ed. William H. Gilman et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960-82) with alternate readings and editorial markings silently omitted.

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album filled with «stillborn words, the falsettos, the wing-clipped and lame words» (26 Jan. 1858). Thoreau's waspish rejection of such diction as impotent and eunuchoidal reflects a desire for speech lively enough to sting. «My work is writing, and ... no subject is too trivial for me, tried by ordinary standards; for, ye fools, the theme is nothing, the life is everything» (18 Oct. 1856).

«All that interests the reader is the depth and intensity of the life excited», Thoreau continues. To excite life in the reader requires the writer to render his own life. His sentences «must have the essence or oil of himself, tried out of the fat of his experience and joy» (23 Dec. 1856). So writing on set themes is vain. «We must wait till they have kindled a flame in our minds. There must be the copulating & generating force of love behind every effort destined to be successful. The cold resolve gives birth to – begets, nothing» (30 Jan. 1852). Our titillated era makes it hard to imagine that Thoreau's chastity was not a cold resolve. It was his artistic and amatory response to «the theme that seeks me, not I it. The poet's relation to this theme is the relation of lovers. It is no more to be courted. Obey – report.» As this passage extolling verbal copulation suggests, Thoreau shared Emerson's desire for «spermatic, prophesying, man-making words» (*JMN*, VIII, 148). He often imagined language as seeds germinating in an audience.

As *Walden*'s chapter "Higher Laws" reveals, he was sufficiently influenced by Hindu tradition to flirt with the notion that seminal retention enhances creativity. Thus he regrets that «there is to be attributed to sensuality the loss to language of how many pregnant symbols» (VI, 207). Because of his hydraulic physiology and psychology Thoreau took his responsibility for disseminating ideas far more literally than we might suppose:

> The mind may perchance be persuaded to act – to energize – by the action and energy of the body. Any kind of liquid will fetch the pump.
> We all have our states of fullness & of emptiness – but we overflow at different points. One overflows through the sensual outlets – another through his heart another through his head – & another perchance only through the higher part of his head, or his poetic faculty.... We can perchance thus direct our nutriment to those organs we specially use. (7 Sept. 1851)

If he ever applied his crude theory of bio-feedback, most morsels must have been religiously routed over the high road of the mind, while gastrointestinal traffic was diverted from the dangerous junction of the crotch. If recording «whatever things I perceive with my entire man ... will be poetry», the entire man definitely included what he had elsewhere dismissed as «the superfluous juices of the body» (14 Dec 1840). Thus he ends his meditation on vascular writing rather ambiguously: «It is always essential that we love to do what we are doing, do it with a heart. The maturity of the mind, however, may perchance consist with a certain dryness.»

Yet when he experienced the dryness of scientific language he was often repelled. «It turns the man of science to stone.» Brushing his hand against a rock while studying lichens, he found himself smoothing back his skin as if «prepared to study lichens there. I look upon man but as a fungus. I have almost a slight, dry headache as the result of all this observing.... To crown all, lichens which are so thin, are described in the *dry* state, as they are most commonly, not most truly seen. Truly, they are *dryly* described» (23 March 1853). More than the Wordsworthian fear of murdering to dissect underlies this passage. What troubles Thoreau most is how scientific observation kills the observer by excluding him as a creative perceiver. The highest ideal of nineteenth-century science became the elimination of all subjectivity – its characteristic vice, collecting masses of dead data. Inadvertently becoming the object of his own observation, Thoreau finds himself amalgamated to the rock and the lichen – painfully so. Thus objectified, man risks becoming a fungus himself. With determined punning on *dry* Thoreau seeks to extricate himself from the toils of a dead scientific language involving a hypertrophy of intellect. Etymologically, one antidote to excessive dryness was *humor* (from Latin *umor*, meaning moisture).

Thoreau criticized Linnaean botanic terminology because of the fixed, uniform, and *unequivocal* meaning at which it aims. Those aims, rather than its being couched in Latin, make it a dead

language. From his belief that «if you have undertaken to write the biography of an animal, you will have to present to us the living creature», it follows that stylistically «a history of animated nature must itself be animated». By moralizing and personifying all nature, in words that were doubly tropes, the older Elizabethan naturalists attested to the belief that Thoreau proclaimed at *Walden*'s sandbank as a philogeologist: «There is nothing inorganic.» To speak Nature's language the poetic observer had to approach her as a lover, for «Love is the burden of all Nature's odes. The song of the birds is an epithalamium... In woods and pastures, and the bowels of the earth, this is the employment and condition of all things» (2 March 1840). The naturalist's employment was to merge with her for a loving moment so that his figures of speech would echo the pulsating rhythm pervading every nook and cranny.

How did Thoreau get a suitably animated style for his works about animate nature?

> He would be a poet ... who nailed words to their primitive senses, as farmers drive down stakes in the spring, which the frost has heaved; who derived his words as often as he used them – transplanted them to his page with earth adhering to their roots. (*W*, V, 232)

The *wild* was the *willed*, Thoreau thought, so despite Romantic sputterings against the intellect a natural style demanded patient effort. «Write often, write upon a thousand themes rather than long at a time, not trying to turn too many feeble somersets in the air, – and so come down upon your head at last», he urged. «Antaeus-like, be not long absent from the ground. Those sentences are good and well discharged which are like so many little resiliencies from the spring floor of our life, a distinct fruit and kernel itself, springing from terra firma.» He wanted a prose so alive to the earthy meanings in which words were rooted that its leaps and bounds could make a reader sense the physical analogies from which the Spring sprang.

So he continues his acrobatic manifesto:

> Let there be as many distinct plants as the soil and the light can sustain. Take as many bounds in a day as possible. Sentences uttered with your back to the wall. Those are the admirable bounds when the performer has lately touched the springboard. A good bound into the air ... is a good and wholesome experience, but what shall we say to a man's leaping off precipices in the attempt to fly? He comes down like lead. In the meanwhile you have got your feet planted upon the rock, with the rock also at your back, and ... can say, –
>
> "Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
> From its firm base as soon as I."
>
> Such, uttered or not, is the strength of your sentence. Sentences in which there is no strain. (*W*, IX, 107-108)

With so little strain that it is scarcely noticeable except to those willing to jog along as they read, the «distinct fruit and kernel, springing from terra firma» becomes «as many distinct plants as the soil ... can sustain». Only six sentences later does it become clear that Thoreau is also talking here about *planting your feet distinctly when you run or walk* (Roman farmers planted seeds by stamping them into the soil with the footsole – in Latin, *planta*, hence the etymological connection).

Thoreau relished Carlyle's humorous style. But despite his admiration, Thoreau insists that Carlyle's is not the purest and finest form of humor. That is «more quiet the more profound it is». Carlyle's overflowing verbal exuberance is too copious and boisterous, whereas Thoreau wants «a man's diamond edition of his thought... so clipped and condensed down to the very essence of it, that time will have little to do. We know not but we shall immigrate soon, and would fain take with us ... all kinds of *dry* portable soups, in small tin cannisters, which contain whole herds of English beeves boiled down.» This punning statement rationalizes the drier, more condensed and less obvious wordplay that he preferred to Carlyle's straining after effect. In the oxymoronic concept of *dry humor* Thoreau found a way to balance the cerebral and physical currents that make man «the hydrostatic paradox – the counterpoise of the system» (18 Feb. 1841). Hydraulic humor psychology

let Thoreau imagine that by venting the system witty speech helped drain and regulate it, so serving the cause of vascular expression.

The family cat Min was robbed of a mouse by a rooster who strutted over, tossed it up and swallowed it alive, then crowed to celebrate the feat. «It might be set down among the *gesta* (if not *digesta*) *Gallorum*», he observed (4 Dec. 1856). The Latin possessive *Gallorum* can mean either *Gauls*' or *roosters*', so this learned mock-heroic joke is neat enough. But the net effect is perhaps still one of Carlylean strain. The best are dead-pan puns that almost escape notice. «I have a cousin ... who regularly eats his bowl of bread and milk just before going to bed, however late. He is a very stirring man» (18 Mar. 1861). No more is said – and no more needs to be said – to demolish that methodical milksop.

«My mother says that she has been to the charitable society», he recorded. «One old jester of the town used to call it "the chattable society"» (11 Mar. 1859). The old jester's impulse was healthy, for «the analogies of words are never whimsical and meaningless, but stand for real likenesses» (*PJ*, I, 92). By exploring analogies between the sounds of words, however coincidental, the perceptive listener may suddenly overhear the universal harmony. Then, struck by the beauty of the world, his body vibrates like a tuning fork. A man blowing a horn one still evening seemed «like the plaint of nature in these times.... It is as if the earth spoke.» Clarified and dehumanized by distance,

> it is a strangely healthy sound for these disjointed times. – It is a rare soundness when cow-bells and horns are heard from over the fields – And now I see the beauty and full meaning of that word sound. Nature always possesses a certain sonorousness ... which indicates her sound state.... I drink in a wonderful health – a cordial in sound. The effect of the slightest tinkling in the horizon measures my own soundness. I thank God for sound it always mounts, and makes me mount. (3 Mar. 1841)

The slightest tinkling in words could likewise stimulate health and send Thoreau soaring skyward in etymological ecstasy.

Consider this sparkling passage from *Walden*, which derives from a journal entry sans puns that he had made only six months before:

> Not long since I was present at the auction of a deacon's effects, for his life had not been ineffectual: –
>
> "The evil that men do lives after them."
>
> As usual, a great proportion was trumpery which had begun to accumulate in his father's day. Among the rest was a dried tapeworm. And now, after lying half a century in his garret and other dust holes, these things were not burned; instead of a *bonfire*, or purifying destruction of them, there was an *auction*, or increasing of them. The neighbors eagerly collected to view them, bought them all, and carefully transported them to their garrets and dust holes, to lie there till their estates are settled, when they will start again. When a man dies, he kicks the dust. (pp. 67-68)

Revising it, Thoreau pitched upon the ironic possibilities in the word *effects*. He mocks the Deacon's Christianity as *ineffectual* in not discouraging the laying up treasures upon earth. Similar verbal whimsy inspired the bogus definition of an *auction* as the multiplication of goods whereas the Latin root really refers to the increasing of prices. Allusions to Shakespeare and Homer resonate oddly as the original meaning of key terms is slightly warped by the context; at the same time modern slang is jangled by scrambling the phrases «kick the bucket» and «bite the dust».[1] We may be tempted to

[1] This observation is from Martin Bickman, *Walden: Volatile Truths* (New York: Twayne, 1992), p. 69, who corroborates my own sense of the meanings at play in this passage.

equate the *settling* of an estate with the *settling* of dust in garrets. It becomes only natural that *trumpery lie* there, since the function of trumpery (from French *tromper*) is to *deceive*. Thoreau knew that etymologically a *bonfire* was a *baneful* fire. But by the time that he inserted this detail in the passage, his mind had become so sensitized to the radical meanings of its words that he probably toyed with the notion that such purifying destruction as Hector's pyre might also be called a *bone* fire and was in any event surely a *good* fire.

If Thoreau amused himself with such speculations while composing the passage, our aim in reading *Walden* need not be to reproduce them all. One may certainly conclude that such writing tries too hard to prove his thesis in "Reading" that «it is not all books that are as dull as their readers» (p. 107). «To read true books in a true spirit», he there argues, «is a noble exercise, and one that will task the reader more than any exercise which the customs of the day esteem. It requires a training such as the athletes underwent, the steady intention of almost the whole life to this object» (p. 101). The metaphor is extremely suggestive. To catch all Thoreau's wordplay would indeed require prolonged philological training. A lifetime spent practicing to read *Walden* in this sense would almost surely be misspent – a grotesque series of philological Texas drills culminating in a sorry Super Bowl of the mind. His language insists on a physical element in intellectual discipline: both are *exercises*. A professional athlete reading *Walden* might not understand that «the steady *intention* of the whole life to that object» involves stretching the mind and bending it steadily like a bow, so that the intent reader can live with intensity. Still, those accustomed to stretch their tendons can appreciate aspects of Thoreau's style that conventional academic analysis scarcely touches. A scholar like me can clarify his intent and the etymologies underpinning it. But my reading will be just as impoverished if I forget that this book was written for neither professional athletes nor professional scholars but for «poor students» (p. 4). Better to miss some of the wit with which Thoreau tried to lure us into becoming better readers than to miss the main goal of that activity. When he says that we must apply our whole life to reading, he means not our lifetime but our *whole* life – namely, a life that is integrated, healthy, and wholesome (the words *whole* and *healthy* are cognates). On this subject academics may have less to teach others than they might wish. Fortunately, for a halfway sensitive reader the glorious rhetoric of *Walden* not only exposes cultural complacency but punctures the hot-air balloons in which literary intellectuals love to ride while they loftily survey that terrain.

Etymologically, puns are *pointed* words, from Italian *punti*. They are thus well-suited to puncture conventionalism. In most writing «a very little information or wit is mixed up with a great deal of conventionalism in the style of expressing it», Thoreau felt. «Some life is not simply expressed, but a long-winded speech is made, with an occasional attempt to put a little life into it» (25 Nov. 1857). His wordplay stems from a determination to put a lot of life into his prose. His puns are the snap, pop, and crackle of words that quietly explode as they suck vitality from the earth about their roots. Fusing popular humor like that of Artemus Ward, Josh Billings, and the era's scores of Phunny Phellows with the snappish insights of the Victorian sage, his learned wisecracks can still be appreciated by anyone with the wit to recognize them. Even if they only elicit a groan, at least it attests that the audience is still alive.

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A work of self reconstruction

NELLY GROSSMAN KUPPER (*)

Albert Cohen's most widely read text is a short autobiographical composition entitled *Le Livre de ma mère*. In addition to the text's title suggesting homage to the mother, Cohen explicitly dedicates his text to her «chérie, ce livre, c'est ma dernière lettre.» (76). (Dear, this book, it is my last letter).[1] Many critics praise this text as a celebration of the mother. The renowned author Marcel Pagnol, for example, describes Cohen's effort as the most beautiful story of love. *Le Livre de ma mère*, could be translated into English as The Book About My Mother or My Mother's Book. The former translation indicates that she is the subject of the text, that he is writing about her. The latter translation could indicate that he wrote it for her or that perhaps she was the source of this text and he, the son, transcribed it. Is it a book about his mother? Is it his mother's book? The French title is not clear. What is more important, however, is that its ambiguity is irrelevant because we can state with absolute certainty that, contrary to this work's apparent homage to the maternal object, it in fact leaves very little room at all for the memory of the mother. The latter is a starting point through which the aging narrator, horrified by his own reflection in the mirror that recalls to him his mother's image as an old woman, reconstructs happy memories of himself in his childhood, during his mother's youth and then in his own youth. I hope to demonstrate this fact by starting out with a couple of simple statistics.

First, out of the one hundred and sixty six pages, only approximately fifty two, roughly one third, focus on his mother specifically, her habits, her behavior and her appearance. Second, the text both opens and concludes with the narrator speaking of himself – his pain, his estrangement, his fears. In fact for a text dedicated to the loving memory of a mother, *Le Livre de ma mère* is surprisingly disparaging of the aging subject – the Mother, the Son and his reflection in the mirror, while glorifying youth and vibrancy. One small passage within the work, however, helps in revealing the answer to this paradox.

The narrator indignantly directs the attention of the reader towards society's loathsome preference for external appeal and force over intrinsic qualities. The narrator invokes several literary and historical romantic couples to draw the conclusion that physical appearance is pivotal in inspiring love. He argues that Juliet would have undoubtedly rejected Romeo had he lost his nose

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[1] Translations from *Le Livre de ma mère* are mine.

during some accident, that Ophelia would have surely no longer loved Hamlet had he lost thirty pounds due to some medical condition and that Petrarque would have certainly dedicated less mystical poetry to Laura had she suddenly lost her legs. Poor Laura, the narrator ads, would have still had the same gaze and the same soul, but Monsieur Petrarque needed her to have thighs in order *for* his soul to love Laura's soul (89-90). With such brutal examples, the narrator puts to shame the fickleness of human nature and social sanctioning of external beauty, youth and strength over internal beauty. Scornful as he is of society's stance, he himself cannot escape its indoctrination.

The narrator is drawn repeatedly to his elderly image in the mirror, reflecting his mother, whose aging figure he describes almost to a compulsive detail. As he examines his own reflection, perceived as deformed by age, fear, despair, and resentment overwhelm and devastate the narrator, who struggles to reconcile and alleviate his horror with memories of happiness of his childhood, during his mother's youth.

In *Black Son*, Julia Kristeva writes, «the nostalgic does not desire the place [...] this mother or this lover [...] of his youth, but his youth itself.» The narrator, as he stares into the mirror, mourning the lost object that is his mother, admits that he is really looking for his childhood. «L'homme veut son enfance, veut la revoir, et s'il aime davantage sa mère a mesure qu'il avance en age, c'est parce que sa mère, c'est son enfance» (33). (Man wants his childhood, wants to see it again, and if he loves his mother even more as he advances in age, it is because his mother, is his childhood). Remembering the time when his mother was young, he mourns his childhood, the precious moments of plenitude in a dream-like existence.

«Je me souviens aussi de nos promenades du dimanche en été, elle et moi, tout jeune garçon.» (45). (I remember also, recalls the narrator, our Sunday walks, in the summer, she and I, as a small boy). «On se souriait avec satisfaction.» (46). (We smiled at each other with satisfaction). The smile of *satisfaction* is an important choice of words demonstrating the memory of this past to be not of just simple cheerfullness but of gratification and plenitude, a kind of complete happiness that contrasts sharply with the complete sadness of the present where «un malheur est dessous, permanent, inoubliable.» (11). (sadness is beneath, permanent and unforgetable). «Maman de mon enfance, auprès de qui je me sentais au chaud.» (51). (Mother of my childhood, next to whom I felt warmth). The happiness of youth and vibrancy is palpable during moments when the narrator recalls his childhood and youth. Words youth and childhood are regularly linked with summer, tranquility, warmth, and happiness. Similarly positive, chimerical sentiments are attributed to the Mother during the narrator's childhood, when the Mother was young.

In his dreams, she appears as a young woman, «belle comme en sa jeunesse, mortellement belle et lasse, si tranquille et muette.» (113). (Beautiful as in her youth, deathly beautiful and weary, so tranquil and silent). The image of her in her youth is complemented by confidence, evidenced by silence and tranquility. The body is also noted in another recollection. «Elle a été jeune ma vieille Maman. Je me rappelle qu'un jour du temps où j'avais six ans, elle était venue me chercher a l'école [...]. Comme je l'avais retrouvée belle, ma jeune Maman. [...] Je l'avais regardée avec ferveur, ma svelte Maman de vingt-cinq ans et je lui avais dit qu'elle était la plus belle Maman du monde. Et elle avait ri de bonheur.» (144). (She was young my old Mom. I remember one day during the time when I was six, she came to get me from school [...]. How beautiful I found her, my young Mom. [...] I watched her with fervor, my svelte Mom of twenty-five years of age, and I told her that she was the most beautiful Mom in the world. And she laughed with happiness). In addition to being very beautiful, *when* the old Mom was young, she was also statuesque, reveling in the admiration of her son. The repetition of the word young, coupled with the word beautiful and with insistence on watching and admiring, clearly demonstrate appreciation of the youthful, physical form.

Likewise, as Kristeva notes, memories of the lover of his youth also illustrate joyful moments. The narrator recalls a scene during his youth when his mother came to see him in Geneva. At the end of her visit he takes her back to the train station, from where she will be returning to France.

He waits for her train to leave and then he takes a taxi to Diane's house. «Je regardais avec joie mon jeune visage dans la glace du taxi.» (109). (I watched with joy my young face in the taxi mirror). This scene is interesting for two reasons. First, the mirror, unlike in present-time, provokes joy. The reflection affirms his youth, closely linked to the feeling of happiness. Second, this glance in the mirror is significant because it happens *after* his Mother's departure. As if the aging form in a sense contaminates youth and vibrancy, he reestablishes his joy in seeing his young form after the Mother's aging form is no longer present.

The next scene is important because here there is again a mutual smile of satisfaction like the one he shared with his mother during her youth, this time the partner is different. «Cette nuit du départ de ma mère, [...] Diane me raccompagna chez moi et, [...] nous avions le même jeune sourire rassasie.» (110-11). (That night of my mother's departure, Diane accompanied me to my place and, [...] we had the same young satisfied smile. The aging mother's departure allows for happiness as the young faces of the narrator and his girlfriend reflect and deflect each other's gaze. The smile is satisfying because the other becomes a mirror reflecting the youthful self.

The ubiquitous mirror is likewise present when the narrator is his Mother's age, after her death. «Me voici, un homme pale qui veut comprendre [...] transpirant et respirant avec peine [...] chaque respiration de moi est une mort qui veut vivre [...]. Me voici devant la glace, follement dans mon maIheur aspirant a quelque bonheur, tristement me grattant de douleur [...] souriant et faible devant ma glace ou je cherche mon enfance et ma mère [...] Je suis là, devant la glace, fenêtre sur la mort.» (149-50). (Here I am, a pale man who wants to understand [...] perspiring and breathing with pain [...] each breath from me is a death that wants to live [...]. Here am I in front of the mirror, madly in my unhappiness aspiring to some happiness, sadly scratching myself with pain [...] smiling and weak in front of my mirror where I am looking for my childhood and my mother [...]. There I am, in front of the mirror, window to my death). This physical reflection obviously projects a very different self image. Contrary to the vision in the mirror he saw at his youth, in his old age the mirror reveals a ghostly vision, pain, unhappiness, weakness, and death.

Similar pessimistic sentiment is apparent in description of the older Mother. Emphasis is continually placed on the significance of the Mother's love. «Si différent de mes occidentales passions, le saint amour de ma mère était né dans le mariage, [et] avait cru avec la naissance du bébé que je fus.» (p. 19). (So different from my passions of the occident, the saintly love of my mother was born in marriage, and grew with the birth of the baby, that was I). Reemphasizing the idea, the narration inserts lyrical sketches describing the Mother's behavior towards narrator in various situations. These sketches usually contain a repetitive phrase, like a refrain in a poem. One of the longest sequences lasts for twelve pages and centers on the phrase «amour de ma mère, a nul autre pareil.» (88). (Love of my mother, equals no other). The insistence on the intrinsic is conspicuously marked with unflattering descriptions of the Mother's aging physical form, which visibly disturbs the focus of the chant.

«Pendant ses séjours a Genève, elle m'attendait toujours à la fenêtre [...] Je revois son visage à la fenêtre penché, trop gros [...], si concerne et attentif, un peu vulgaire d'excessive attention.» (99). (During these visits to Geneva, she always waited for me at the window [...] I see her now again, her face out of the window, too fat [...] so concerned and attentive, a little vulgar with excessive attention). Another time the description is not only derogatory, but even dehumanizing in its detailing.

Reducing a grown woman to a defenseless child-like deformation, the narrator remembers her as «mignonne quand elle était sans son dentier, si désarmée, [...] enfantine et prononçant mal sans ses fausses dents, mais par maternelle coquetterie se retenant de rire et mettant sa main contre sa bouche vide.» (105). (cute when she was without her dentures, so harmless, child-like and pronouncing poorly without her false teeth, but with maternal coquetry refraining from laughing and putting her hand in front of her empty mouth). The gesture of her hand, concealing her mouth,

illustrates to the reader what must have been very clear to the son. She is uncomfortable with her condition. Yet, her son callously disregards her privacy to provide meticulous detail of his vision.

He, likewise, describes his recollection of her arriving at the train station to visit him in Geneva. «Elle se dépêche gauchement [...] avec un peur horrible de tomber [...] elle avance vers moi [...] avec ses cheveux frisés, son nez un peu fort, son chapeau trop petit, ses talons un peu de travers et ses chevilles un peu enflées. Elle est un peu ridicule d'avancer ainsi péniblement, le bras en balancier, mais je l'admire, cette maladroite aux yeux fastueux.» (79). (She hurries awkwardly [...] a little afraid of falling [...] she advances towards me [...] with her hair frizzy, her nose a little strong, her hat too small, her heels a little crooked and her ankles a little swollen. She is a little ridiculous advancing painfully like this, her arm for balance, but I admire her, this awkward woman with luxurious eyes). His love for her and the beauty of her eyes, do not leave him blind to the shortcomings of her aging form. Why does he not stop at the description of her eyes? Why do the details of her physical description matter? Why are they imprinted in his memory with such vividness? And why is he compelled to recall them? Because more than any other subject it is the aging process, the regret of one's youth and the horror of one's age and death that dominate the narrator's focus. It should not be surprising then that the introduction and the conclusion of the text reemphasize these elements.

In the conclusion of the text the narrator suddenly hears the door-bell ringing. «Je me suis levé en hâte et j'ai regardé par le judas. Mais ce n'était qu'une affreuse vieille de bienfaisance [...]. Je ne lui ai pas ouvert.» (168). (The doorbell rang. I got up in a hurry and looked through the peep hole. But it was only a frightening old woman from a charity [...]. I didn't open the door for her). Literally he is frightened by the old woman on the other side of the door; metaphorically, he wants to keep old age out while he grasps to images of a youthful self that bring forth happiness.

The introduction of the text also maintains a strong focus on the self. «Chaque homme est seul [...] et nos douleurs sont une île déserte [...] Oh le pauvre perdu qui, devant sa table, se console avec des mots... Somptueuse, toi, ma plume d'or [...] va au hasard tandis que j'ai quelque jeunesse encore» (9-10). (Every man is alone, and our pain is a desert island. Oh the poor lost man who is in front of his table, consoling himself with words. Sumptuous, you, my golden pen go haphazardly while I still have some youth left). The author's own age and the reflection that he carefully studies in the mirror haunt and torment him. With his pen, the narrator struggles to carve a path through despair, to purge himself of the haunting fear and the appalling vision, to seek comfort in images of himself as a child, when his Mother was young and strong, and himself as a young and vibrant lover fiercely desired by young and beautiful women. Cohen's *Le Livre de ma mère*, with its ambiguous French title is a book neither about his Mother, who is mostly absent from the text, nor for his Mother whose aging image, when it does appear, is profoundly deformed. *Le Livre de ma mère* is a tool of reconstruction for a son, haunted by the aged image in the mirror after his mother's death.

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Hamlet Big Toe?

Neuropsychology and literary characters

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«Does Hamlet have a big toe?» When I was teaching Shakespeare, if things got too quiet, I used to ask my students that. They would look at me oddly for a few seconds – what is he up to now? But then they would burst into a passionate discussion of the paradoxical nature of literary characters. «Of course he has a big toe! He's human, isn't he? Humans have big toes. If he's human, he has a big toe.» «It's simple logic. If he doesn't eat, does he get hungry? Of course.» Maybe someone would quote Shylock's famous line, «If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh?»

Other, cannier students, though, would say, "How can Hamlet have a big toe? He's not real. He's just a bunch of words on a page." "Hungry? How can a tissue of words get hungry?"

Then would come the most damning comment of all. «The text never mentions his big toe.» To be sure, toes are mentioned twice in *Hamlet*, but not, as it happens, Hamlet's big toe. And, of course, what is not mentioned in the text cannot be, as we critics say, "in" the play. If not "in" the play, then it is something we supply, and we are guilty of "reading in". If the student is a good postmodernist, he might quote Derrida's flat statement, «*Il n'y a pas de hors-texte*». Outside of text, there is nothing. If Hamlet's big toe is not mentioned in the language, why then it simply cannot exist.

WARRING CRITICS

My students' debate reflects a critical controversy that has gone on for two centuries now. We could call the two sides the realists and the formalists. The realist idea that one could consider literary characters as real people began in the late eighteenth century with Maurice Morgann's influential essay of 1777, which purported to prove that Falstaff was not a coward. Morgann proceeded by assuming Falstaff was a real person. That is, he assumed that it was "fit to consider [literary characters] rather as Historical than Dramatic beings; and, when occasion requires to account for their conduct from the whole of character, from general principles, from latent motives,

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and form policies not avowed"[1]. He treated what the language says about Falstaff as though it were the history of a real person, and he concluded that Falstaff was in fact not a coward but brave. Morgann adopted – created, really – the principle that character determines actions rather than actions defining character. As writers like to say, "The character took on a life of his own." "The character himself decided what he was going to do." Morgann thus inaugurated a long period of character criticism, based on that principle, culminating in the elaborate analyses of character by A. C. Bradley at the beginning of the twentieth century[2]. In general, nineteenth-century readers and critics tended to look through narratives, either fiction or drama, toward a supposed historical reality they purported to represent.

The psychoanalytic critics adopted that realist postion with enthusiasm. Ernest Jones insisted in his early study of *Hamlet*, "No dramatic criticism of the personae in a play is possible except under the pretence that they are living people." "In so far and in the same sense as a character in a play is taken as being a living person, to that extent must he have had a life before the action in the play began, since no one starts life as an adult."[3] Hence Jones claimed he was justified in talking about Hamlet's childhood and therefore his oedipus complex. Presumably he would have been equally justified had he chosen to talk about Hamlet's big toe. And psychoanalytic critics have carried on this tradition as recently as Marvin Krims' several papers for this conference and the *PsyArt* journal.[4]

A great many critics, however, and in particular writers have argued the other way, claiming that literary characters are just words. Thus Edgar Allan Poe complained of the "radical error" of trying to account for Shakespeare's characters' actions, "not as if they were the coinage of a human brain, but as if they had been actual existences on earth".[5] E. M. Forster had fun distinguishing Homo Sapiens from Homo Fictus. Homo Fictus rarely sleeps, he pointed out, only eats food for social purposes, and is much given to dying or getting married at the end of novels. As for Homo Sapiens, in real life, Forster notes, "We cannot understand each other, except in a rough and ready way". "In the novel we can know people perfectly and... in this direction fiction is truer than history."[6] Proust praised that first novelist who decided to suppress real people in favor of "things... which the spirit can assimilate to itself". «The ingenuity of the first novelist lay in... the suppression, pure and simple, of 'real' people."[7]

I have a favorite among these rejections of characters as real people. The painter Matisse answered a lady who was visiting his studio and complained, "Surely, the arm of this woman is too long". "Madame", replied Matisse, "you are mistaken. That is not a woman, that is a picture. *Avant tout, je ne creé pas une femme, je fais un tableau*".[8]

In other words, the artists were claiming a right to a creativity that goes beyond merely representing historical reality. They were pointing to the art-ness of the work of art. Art has a form that is not natural, anymore than a painting is the thing depicted. Art is not history.

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[1] Morgann 1777, 171-2.
[2] Bradley 1905.
[3] Jones 1949 [1910], 20.
[4] Krims 2002, for example.
[5] Poe 1902 [1845], 12: 225.
[6] Forster 1927, 98.
[7] Proust 1981 (1913-1927), 1: 91.
[8] Matisse 1939, 14.

Matisse's visitor looked at his not-very-realistic picture and saw a woman. In 1944, Fritz Heider and Marianne Simmel performed a famous experiment[9]. To Smith College students, then all women, they showed an animated cartoon of a large black triangle, a small black triangle, and a circle, the three of them moving in various ways in and out of a rectangle, including a sequence in which the big triangle hits the smaller triangle, as the experimenters said, "relentlessly". After this short came the main feature. The psychologists told their subjects, "Write down what happened in the picture." Of the 34 subjects, all but one described the movements as actions of animate beings, in all but two cases human beings. When another group of 36 subjects were asked questions like, "What kind of a person is the big triangle?", the students responded with great uniformity (97%) with terms like, "quarrelsome", "dominating", "taking advantage of his size", and the like. Eight per cent even went so far as to assert that the big triangle had a lower I.Q. than the smaller one. The experimenters concluded that the subjects organized the movements "in terms of actions of animated beings, chiefly of persons". And "acts of persons have to be viewed in terms of motives in order that the succession of changes becomes a connected sequence".

A long line of experiments confirm Heider and Simmel's findings and indeed, extend them from students to very young children. Thus, infancy experimenters Premack and Premack report:

> When shown two bouncing objects, one of which becomes trapped in a virtual hole, the infant will interpret the action of a second object that restores the motion of the first as helping and will code it positive.
>
> * * *
>
> We show an infant two bouncing balls. The one that bounces higher and faster is preferred by the infant. The preferred ball moves into the vicinity of the other and demonstrates its superior bounces several times, as though offering an example. It even assists the other directly, placing itself below, lifting it, helping it to bounce higher. The infant will interpret the actions in this and the previous example as helping, coding them both positive.[10]

I notice that these experimenters, like Heider and Simmel, cannot avoid using the language of human motivation to describe these merely physical objects (balls and triangles). None of us can escape the inference for a very good reason.

As that experiment and many others show, even as infants, we make this inference that scurrying triangles and bouncing balls have to be understood as persons. Even in the first few months of our lives, we begin to attribute to events causality, probability, and realism. Then, as infants, we draw a distinction between objects that move themselves and objects that are moved by other objects. For example, billiard balls that simply knock one another about are objects that move because they are acted upon. We adults would say they are inanimate. The infant understands these inanimate objects through a causality based in what the psychologists call "intuitive physics". By contrast, Infants explain the movements of self-moving objects (which we would call "animate") through intention. In effect, infants have an "intuitive psychology".[11]

Some observers of children attribute these skills, this «intuitive psychology» and «intuitive physics» to learning. Others, especially those who favor explanations through evolutionary psycho-

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[9] Heider and Simmel 1944.
[10] Premack and Premack 1995, 210-11.
[11] Leslie 1987. Spelke, Phillips and Woodward 1995.

logy like Stephen Pinker, assume we are born with them. They are part of our genetic make-up. One answer then to the puzzle of Hamlet's big toe is that, however we encounter Hamlet, on the pages of a book or on stage or screen, he is self-moving. We therefore interpret him as animate. We give him motions and intentions. And just as we attribute intentions to him to explain his actions, we give him the normal complement of human digits. We give him a big toe.

I FEEL HIS PAIN

One answer, then, to the question, Does Hamlet have a big toe?, is that we give him one. But this does not tell us whether Hamlet is, so to speak, "really real". Can we, as the psychoanalytic critics do, assume that he has a past and a future beyond the boundaries of the play?

Actually, we do more than merely attribute motives and intentions to Hamlet. We feel emotionally toward him. That is why he feels real to us, because we feel real emotions toward him. We feel his perplexity and frustration. We may share his craziness or his intellectuality. We may feel his disgust at Claudius, at his mother, at Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, at Polonius, at Ophelia – in short, at the world. We may like him or dislike him. We may admire him or feel contempt. We may feel annoyed that he is dilly-dallying instead of getting on with the revenge of his father.

We endow Hamlet with the kind of reality that leads us to feel emotionally about him. When we feel an emotion, we generally point to some object as causing it. Not without reason.

For generations of psychological experiments, researchers have used representations to stimulate emotions. People shown a picture of dog droppings or fly-covered garbage or a decaying corpse will show disgust. People shown a movie of a chain saw killer will feel fear (as Hollywood well knows). People will feel desire when shown porn pictures. Peter Lang has created a database of hundreds of pictures calibrated for arousing-relaxing, pleasant-unpleasant, desirable-undesirable, and these are widely used in experiments on emotion.[12]

I have been a subject in some of these brain imaging experiments, yet, even as my head is in the brain scanner and the experimenters are showing me images of emotion-arousing objects, I know perfectly well I am seeing just ink on paper or pixels on a computer screen. The emotions come anyway. I never lose the awareness that I am seeing only a picture or pixels or a film but my emotions come willy-nilly.

We respond to representations of human situations the same way, with the emotions we would feel toward the situation if it were real. Psychiatrist Leslie Brothers, who has specialized in studying primate social cognition, writes that the emotional networks with which we respond to facial expressions are evolutionarily old and involve such deep structures as the amygdala. "These networks are set to trigger behavioral dispositions appropriate to the social situations in which primates have commonly found themselves throughout their history."[13]

We humans are so very social creatures that we are wired tightly to what we see of our fellow human beings. We will feel the emotion appropriate to a situation even if we are perfectly aware that it is not happening to us but to someone else. We are looking at a representation, not the real thing, but the emotions we feel are real enough (or at least as real as anything else). We *feel* them in our bodies. But we also know that the representation we are being shown is just that, a representation, not the "real" thing.

We could say, then, that we feel real emotions about Hamlet and his doings, and that makes him real for us. Thus the Hungarian novelist and critic Stephen Vizinczey writes, "The only virtue

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[12] Lang 1993.
[13] Brothers 1997, pp. 98-99.

a character needs to possess between hardcovers, even if he bears a real person's name, is vitality: if he comes to life in our imaginations, he passes the test".[14]

But is that so? Our very real emotions don't make the porn picture or the picture of dog droppings as real as what they were pictures of. Can our emotions make Hamlet real? Do our emotions entitle us to give him a big toe? Do they entitle us to give him a past before the play, complete with Oedipus complex? I don't think so.

HAMLET'S FEATURES

Finally, though, I think there is an answer, one that combines linguistics and neuropsychology. One day, long ago, I was discussing this critical puzzle with the linguist Morris Halle. He suggested a resolution to my paradox that, over the years, has seemed to me quite satisfactory. He noted that linguists (at that time) imagined as part of our language skill, a lexicon that we carry in our heads, in effect a dictionary. But this is not an ordinary dictionary. Besides the usual information about meaning and pronunciation, this dictionary contains information about usage (and even today linguists would agree that the lexicon stores information about the idiosyncrasies of words).

Halle said that the entries for verbs and nouns, including proper nouns, have markers for the various properties that can be assigned to those words. In the case of nouns, for example, there are count nouns, those which one can enumerate. "I have five straws." And there are mass nouns, to which numbers cannot attach. You can't say (in English), "I have five hay".

For example, the entry for "boy" might say that it has the syntactic features: [+ Noun], [+ Count], [+ Common], [+ Animate], and [+ Human]. "Boy" can go with verbs that require a common noun, a human noun, or a countable noun. But "boy" could not go with verbs that require a non-animate noun. Thus, you can say, "The boy died", but "The boy elapsed" is nongrammatical because "elapse" calls for a non-animate noun.[15]

Morris Halle suggested that a literary character is a proper noun, and, like the boy, countable, animate, and human, but the literary character lacks a feature that ordinary people have, namely, location. The straws and the hay and the boy can all be located, but the fictional character Hamlet cannot. He is not in Elsinore – to say he is, is to assume he has historical reality. Shakespeare's Hamlet is not "in" the text my students were holding. He is not even "in" the Branagh movie, since he is simultaneously "in" the Olivier movie or the Gibson movie or any number of stage productions.

The question, "Where is Hamlet?" makes no more sense than asking, "Where is literature?" We cannot say where either is, except figuratively. "Literature is in the hearts and minds of humankind." So with Hamlet. "Hamlet is in the hearts and minds of humankind."

His big toe like his appendix or his pancreas or other parts of his fictional anatomy therefore has no location, unlike your big toe or mine. He has a big toe, but you cannot, so to speak, put your finger on it. Yet surely literature is real enough and so is Hamlet's big toe, whether or not we can situate it north, south, east, or west.

That is an odd kind of reality, though. While Morris Halle's idea seems to me to solve the problem in a technical way, it also seems rather more linguistic than psychological. Hamlet's having or not having a linguistic feature doesn't really speak to me as a human being having feelings about Hamlet in a book or on the stage. What makes Hamlet real for me, big toe and all, is, I think something else.

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[14] Vizinczey 1986 [1968], 198.

[15] I am grateful for help in this section to my colleague in Classics, D. Gary Miller.

Interestingly the linguistic proposal, that Hamlet lacks a feature for location, corresponds to what goes on in our heads. With a literary character, a writer capitalizes on the way our brains are organized.

We have, roughly, three sensory systems that tell us about the world «out there» beyond our sense organs. We have sight, hearing, and sensorimotor information about movement, touch, our limbs' positions, and so on. These three systems input to three different regions of the brain: vision to the occipital lobes, sound to the temporal lobes, and touch, and other sensorimotor information or the parietal lobes across the top of your head. Our brains then put the separate information coming in from our sense organs together to make a three-dimensional world «out there» beyond our skins and senses. That is why we sense the book we are reading as though it were an object unconnected to our senses and independent of them.

Our brains use two pathways to create the world we perceive. The sensory information from our eyes and ears and body travels on two different neural systems, a "what" path and a "where" path.[16]

The "what" path runs from, say, the occipital lobes at the back of my head down to the bottom of the temporal lobes that run along behind my ears. That is where we keep our linguistic skills, like naming objects. That is where we decide "what" the object we are seeing is. That is where we put the name Hamlet to the figure before us on a stage.

The brain also takes that information from, say, the occipital lobes at the back of my head up through the parietal lobes, under the upper sides of my skull. There we have the systems that orient our bodies to the world around us, the "where" or dorsal system. The "where" system is quick and crude. There is, for example, no color perception in the "where" pathway. "Where" operates rapidly and uncritically so as to enable us to run around obstacles and catch baseballs and dodge SUVs bearing down on us. Having this fast "where" path considerably improves our chances of survival.

By contrast, "what" operates more judiciously. It does have color, obviously. And this ventral pathway allows us to correlate our immediate sensory data with what we already know. We identify objects and relate them to our memories and enter them into our verbal discourse.

THE PAPER HAMLET

Let me put the stage or screen Hamlet aside for a moment and talk only about the Hamlet we imagine from the pages of an edition of the play, the paper Hamlet. Imagining that fictional Hamlet is not quite the same as construing our sensations into a three-dimensional book with weight and separate pages.[17] Philosophers debate the ontological relation between what we call "the play *Hamlet*" and any physical embodiment of *Hamlet* in a book or performance; I have no wish to go into those knotty problems.[18] It may be, however, that, once we recognize that the literary character exists in our minds in these two different modes, "where" and "what", many of those problems will disappear.

Brain science tells us about the literary character that, since there are two pathways, we *can separate the what of Hamlet from the where of Hamlet*. That must be what we are doing when, by an act of imagination, we create a fictional Hamlet from the pages of a book. We are imagining a what-Hamlet in our minds. But there is no question of this Hamlet having a "where", a feature for location. That is happening, or, more properly, not happening, in another pathway.

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[16] Bownds 1999, 196-97. Bear 1996, 266-69. Zillmer 2001, 129-130.
[17] Holland 2002.
[18] "Aesthetics: The Ontology of Art", 2003.

In effect, Halle's linguistic features, in this instance at least, correspond to different activities in the brain. His linguistic explanation says, in effect, that as we read about Hamlet, our "what" pathway infers various things about him, but our "where" pathway doesn't locate him in any specific place.

Some neuropsychologists think that what most call a "where" pathway should really be considered a "how" pathway[19]. According to this conception, the brain filters or calls up sensory information from the posterior lobes according to what needs to be acted on and how it needs to be acted on. In other words, the brain selects sensory information to serve motor programs. But the literary situation rules out action. We are not going to stand up from our reading (or in the theater, for that matter) and cheer Hamlet on to his revenge. We are, in Kant's term, "disinterested". Hence a "how" pathway would be just as irrelevant to a fictional Hamlet as a "where" pathway.

I have been writing as though these two pathways were wholly separate. They are not, of course. In everyday life, the two brain systems combine their information. They talk to each other so as to coordinate actions toward what is being perceived. But in the literary situation, we are not going to move. Hence, the "where" pathway is doing less and presumably saying less to the "what" pathway. And there is little purpose in the "what" pathway combining its information with the missing information in the "where" or "how" pathway, since we are not going to move. Presumably, the interaction of the two systems matters less when we are suppressing motor impulses in order to experience literature, although the interaction is useful, indeed essential, in everyday life.

In sum, the paradoxical nature of the literary character, this centuries-old controversy among the critics, arises from the very nature of our brains. Because, when we read a story or a poem, our brains separate what from where, we can have an illusion that the literary characters we meet in books have big toes and childhoods and Oedipus complexes.

In this respect, though, how do fictional characters differ from real historical figures? Suppose I read in a book about Marco Polo and the Silk Road. Those two are a person and place of which I have not had and, so far as the man is concerned, can not have any physical experience. I have no more "where" for them than I do for Hamlet. Yet, surely Marco Polo (unlike Hamlet) had a big toe and, once upon a time, had I been staying at a caravanserai on the Silk Road with him, I could have seen and touched it. What is the difference between them?

When I read about Marco Polo, I do not acquire a "where" experience of him any more than I do when I read about Hamlet. But I do acquire semantic or "what" information about him. And part of my semantic (or my "what") memory of Marco Polo includes a real location for the man in time and space. When I read about Hamlet, though, my "what" information about him does not include a belief that he existed in real time and real locations.

We could say, then, quite simply, that the difference in our experience between fictional and non-fictional characters consists of a difference in semantic or "what" information about them. Non-fictional characters in books come with real locations in space and time, and we can believe in a "where" for them even if our brains' "where" system has not sensed them physically. Fictional characters in books lack such a believable, semantic "where" as well as "where" information from our sense organs.

THE ACTED HAMLET

But what happens to this peculiar relation I have to Hamlet in a book when I see Hamlet on a stage or a screen? This Hamlet, obviously, differs from the Hamlet we imagine from a page. Hamlet onstage or onscreen does have the same kind of three-dimensional location as any other

[19] Goodale et al. 1992. Goodale and Milner 1993.

aspect of physical reality, indeed, as the stage or screen itself. With an acted Hamlet, our "where" path endows the actor with location just like any other person we see in life and any piece of physical reality. He is right there, eleven rows in front of me or on the screen in the television set in the den.

But our "what" path, our inferences about what we are seeing, would tell us that this is not Hamlet, but an actor playing Hamlet.

This is the reverse of the Hamlet we create from a book. This Hamlet has already been created for us. No imagination on our part is required. This Hamlet has a where, but the minute we try to pay attention to the "what" of this Hamlet, we recognize that we are pretending that this actor really is Hamlet. And the pretense goes away.

Endowing this actor with a "what" gets us into the much more complicated question of what we believe and disbelieve when we are "rapt" or "absorbed" at a book, play, or movie. In that state, as Coleridge pointed out, we cease to disbelieve.[20] We become unaware of our own bodies and our surroundings. More importantly, since we do not plan to move, we stop testing the reality of what we see.[21] We simply enjoy the illusion. Hamlet exists for us as both a "where" and a "what". At least he does if we allow ourselves to be "lost", "rapt", "absorbed" in the experience of stage or screen or even radio.

The minute I begin thinking of the physical reality of the theater and the actor on the stage, however, my willing suspension of disbelief breaks off. The literary spell is broken. I know I am sitting in a theater, watching an actor pretend.[22] I may lose even the emotional reality of this Hamlet.

Consider Shylock's famous question: «If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh?» I don't doubt that if Laurence Olivier were playing Shylock (as he did in 1973), and if I were to stick a needle in him, Laurence Olivier would bleed. But it would be Laurence Olivier who is bleeding, not Shylock. If we are not talking about an actor playing Shylock, if we are talking instead about a Shylock in the pages of *Merchant of Venice*, how can I stick a needle in that Shylock? How can I tickle an imaginary Venetian? Paradoxically, Shylock's rhetorical question poses precisely the problem of the ontological status of whatever actor is playing him.

In short, the paradoxical nature of the literary character – Is he real? Is he human? Does he have a big toe? Does he get hungry? – arises from the very nature of our brains. Because our brains can separate what from where have separate what and where systems, we can have this illusion that literary characters in books or onstage are "real" people.

SOME LARGER ISSUES

There are some larger points to be made here. Notice how the critics' debate simply enacts this anomaly in our brains' processing. Prince Hamlet in a book lacks a where. If Hamlet has a where, it is a where we imagine, which is no where at all. In daily life, we never separate a what from a where. They always occur together, aspects of one perception. It is only when we imagine, as in responding to literature in writing, that we can have a what without a where. This is unnatural, and the critics are stumped. They try to decide between a Hamlet perceived as we normally perceive things and a Hamlet with a what but no where, and that, unless we talk about the brain, makes no sense. The critics are trying to deal with, not an optical illusion, but a brain illusion by coming down on one possibility or the other. Naturally, they can't settle the question.

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[20] Coleridge 1907 [1817], ch. xiv. Holland 1968, ch. 3.
[21] Holland 2003 and in press.
[22] Holland, in press.

The answer to this centuries-old conundrum for literary critics lies in understanding how our brains function normally and how they function when we are experiencing literature. I have to wonder how many other philosophical and critical controversies could be solved the same way.

In my papers for some years now, I have been progressing through various traditional questions about literature: Can we separate the text from ourselves? Why do we suspend our disbelief? Why do we feel real emotions toward characters we know are fictional? In the book that is emerging from these lucubrations, I consider other such questions. Do texts make meaning? Or do readers make meaning and, if so, how? And, as in this paper, are literary characters people?

All these questions demonstrate the importance to our ideas about literature of nowing how the brain links us to the world and to our inner selves. When we enjoy literature, we turn brain systems on and off in ways that we don't in everyday life. In this paper, we have seen one example, Hamlet's big toe. We do not, in life, separate "what" from "where". "What" and "where" come into our perceptual systems as a single object, one chunk of reality. But in literature, we can and we do.

When we experience literature, we switch brain systems on and off in odd ways. I have been finding that oddity again and again as I have been trying to answer some of these literary questions. Reading fiction or poetry or watching a play or movie, we open up and shut down systems in our brains differently from the way we use those systems in ordinary life. Why?

Literature, I am coming to believe, is some kind of game that we play with our brains. Psychological literary critics and theorists, in order to understand how literature works, need to understand how our brains work. And we certainly need to ask, If literature is just some kind of brain game, why do people do literature at all?

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Notes on Arthur Schnitzler's *Dream Novella* and Stanley Kubrick's film *Eyes Wide Shut*

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Arthur Schnitzler was born in 1862 in Vienna and died in Vienna in 1931. His narrative, *Dream Novella*, was first published in 1925 in the journal, *Die Dame* (The Lady), in the December issue 1925 and the March issue 1926. In the same year, the novella was published by Fischer Verlag in Berlin as a book. The story tells of a well situated bourgeois married couple. He is thirty-five years old and a doctor with his own practice and consultations at the outpatients' clinic. She is some years younger than he is and seems to be totally absorbed by her duties as wife and mother.

The time-frame of the narrative spans thirty-four hours, starting in the evening at nine o'clock while the couple's small daughter is reading a fairy-tale out loud, who falls asleep doing so.[1] She wakes up with a fright when her father shuts the book and says that it is time to go to bed. The nursery governess comes in and puts the little girl to bed. Once the parents are alone, they talk about their experiences in the seductive atmosphere of the previous evening, the last masked ball of carnival season. They tell each other of their encounters and their relief at finding themselves once again in the sheltered intimacy of the familiar other. The night after the ball they are even united in the bliss of love in a way they have not experienced for a long time.

The conversation gradually extends also to other secret wishes and fantasies of the couple and is mainly shaped on the initiative of Albertine, who is the first to tell of the erotic attraction of a young man whom she had seen in the hotel during their last vacation in Denmark and to whom, after mutual signs of fascination, she would have given everything, even though at that time she had also especially felt and enjoyed the closeness to Fridolin. In response to a question about comparable experiences on his part, he tells of a quite young girl with loose blonde hair on the beach who, despite mutual attraction, had ordered him to go away. Through their departure, both relationships were left in limbo, but Albertine thought that in future they should always tell each other such things straight away.

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[1] The fairy-tale functions in the novella as the bearer of the mysterious, futural element. The galley in the fairy-tale, for instance, crops up once again in the dream of Albertine. The connection between dream, memory, external and interior reality as well as the fairy-tale character would have to be investigated in a separate study.

This conversation is suddenly interrupted by the maid who reports to Fridolin that he should come urgently to the privy counsellor because of an emergency. The chamber maid brings him his fur coat, he quickly takes leave of his wife and, in his thoughts, he is already somewhere else. When he arrives at his patient's place, the patient is already dead. He issues the death certificate and opens the window through which warm spring air flows in. Suddenly, Marianne, the daughter of the house, reveals feelings of affection and desire to him. Despite the fleeting thought that she would look better if she were his lover, his feelings remain rather indifferent. Relieved, he takes his leave after the bell rings and Marianne's fiancé comes in. Now he can take leave of both of them and goes out into the night, at first with no definite destination.

On the way he comes across tipsy students who jostle him, a homeless man on a park bench and a small, dainty prostitute who accosts him. He goes off with her to her room, but because of inhibitions which are not clear to him, he cannot desire her.

> He drew her to him and started to make love to her as he might to an ordinary girl or a woman that he loved. She resisted and, feeling ashamed, he eventually desisted.[2]

Back on the street, he decides to note down the house number and have her sent wine and some sweets the next day.

He goes on and comes to a coffee-house which makes a rather dilapidated impression on him. There he meets an old friend with whom he had studied medicine but who never succeeded in completing his studies. Instead he has become all the more a talented and desired pianist. His name is Nightingale. Nightingale recalls at once his earlier debts to him which he can now pay from a well filled wallet.

Fridolin wonders about this and becomes curious. Nightingale reveals to him that he plays piano for a secret society at a place unknown to him. After Fridolin insists for a long time, Nightingale agrees to take Fridolin with him and to tell him the password. But beforehand, Fridolin must get hold of a costume and a mask.

On the advice of the costume hirer, Fridolin chooses a monk's habit. His experiences with the costume hirer and his daughter, Pierrette, who seems to be more a kind of Lolita and ignites his erotic desires, are here mentioned only in passing. A coach which, with its coachman sitting unmoving in a high top hat and completely in black, reminds Fridolin of a funeral coach, brings him to the unknown place. Fridolin is admitted after giving the password, "Denmark", which awakens associations with the erotic fantasies of Fridolin and Albertine during their last vacation.

Then the occult atmosphere of the house surrounds him. Women with masks and cavaliers in multicoloured clothes are walking up and down.

> The room opposite was suffused with dazzling light, and there the ladies were standing motionless, each with a dark veil covering her head, brow and neck, and a black lace mask over her face, but otherwise completely naked. Fridolin's eyes roved hungrily from sensuous to slender figures, and from budding figures to figures in glorious full bloom; and the fact that each of these naked beauties still remained a mystery, and that from behind the masks large eyes as unfathomable as riddles sparkled at him, transformed his indescribably strong urge to watch into an almost intolerable torment of desire.[3]

Suddenly a slim, boyish lady approaches him whose voice seems familiar, but her face remains hidden behind a mask. She warns him urgently to leave the house immediately. But he wants to stay with her and, despite the danger she has hinted at, asks whether he can see her again. She

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[2] Arthur Schnitzler *Dream Story* translated by M. Q. Davies, introduction by Frederic Raphael, London 1999, p. 26.

[3] *ibid.* p. 46.

refuses. He is asked once again for the password, but he knows only the password for admission, not that of the house. He is then confronted with the demand that he take off his mask. He refuses at first and a lady in a nun's habit avows that she is prepared to vouch for him. But because he wants to prevent this, he declares that he is prepared after all to take off his mask, give his name and accept all the consequences. She pleas with him not to believe that he can save himself and her as well in this way.

> And, turning to the others, 'Here I am, at your disposal – all of you!' Her dark costume fell away from her as if by magic, so that she stood there in all the radiance of her white body...[4]

Even before Fridolin can recognize her face, he is pushed out by the others. He tries to make a mental note of the house so as to find it again.

The coach brings him back to the city by a roundabout route. Even the coach itself assumes an eerie character with its opaque windows and tightly locked doors which seem to open by themselves through an invisible mechanism. He reflects once more upon his experiences in the mysterious company.

> And he vowed not to rest until he had again found the beautiful woman, whose dazzling nakedness had so mesmerized him. Only now did he think of Albertine - and felt as though he were obliged to conquer her as well, as though she could not, she would not be his again until he had betrayed her with all the others he had met that night, with the naked woman, with Pierrette, with Marianne, and with the little trollop from the narrow back street.[5]

At four o'clock in the morning, Fridolin comes home and meets with Albertine, who is drowsy with sleep. He is taken aback by the sudden, shrill laugh with which she awakens from a dream. And he asks her to tell him her dream.

In this dream, in various sequences as if in parallel to Fridolin's experiences of the past night, Albertine lives through and describes erotic fantasies. They go beyond the usual boundaries of what Albertine could imagine in a waking state. Thus she says,

> It would be... hard to conceive of anything in normal conscious life that could equal the freedom, the abandon, the sheer bliss I experienced in that dream. And yet throughout all this I never for a moment ceased to be aware of you.[6]

Her Bacchanalian dream fantasies intensify and mix with sadistic desires that have their culmination in Fridolin's crucifixion, which she allows to happen without pity.

> I wanted you at least to hear my laughter while they nailed you to the cross. And so I burst out laughing as loudly and piercingly as I was able. That was the laughter, Fridolin, with which I awoke.[7]

Some authors try to understand Albertine's dream on the level of the manifest dream. This leads to very contradictory statements and contortions. In William H. Rey's interpretation, for instance, there is no reference to the fact that the dream follows, so to speak, a hermeneutic of understanding. Thus, the dream is not simply a matter of the removal of the "inhibitions of

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[4] *ibid.* p. 53f.
[5] *ibid.* p. 58.
[6] *ibid.* p. 66.
[7] *ibid*. p. 68.

consciousness" and the "release of libido", as Rey says[8], but rather it comprises also complicated mechanisms such as condensation, displacement, inversion into the opposite and, not least of all, dream censorship.[9]

Fridolin resolves to take revenge on Albertine and even to separate from her. The next morning he packs the monk's habit and the pilgrim's hat which he has to return to the costume hirer.

> He had worked out his program for the day carefully and even with a touch of pedantry.[10]

He forgets, however, to take the mask with him. This parapraxis will later on be the key to understanding Albertine more deeply who, with the mask, gives a sign of her sensitive way of dealing with Fridolin's attempts at erotic emancipation.

And this parapraxis is not the only reference to Freudian thinking. The fact that Schnitzler invites all sorts of depth-psychological interpretations can be seen, for instance, in the study by Hertha Krotkoff on the *Dream Novella*.

> One could easily be tempted to construct intentional resonances from the common features in the title and theme of the works by Freud and Schnitzler. The idea of a position taken toward Freud's scientific interpretations of dreams in the form of a novella lies to hand. The extent to which conjectures in this direction are justified may perhaps be revealed sometime by the diaries.[11]

With other authors, the relation to Freud often seems somewhat forced. This reveals both the possibilities and limits of the dream narrated in literature vis-à-vis the 'really' experienced clinical dream. It can easily happen that Schnitzler's genuine achievement is overlooked.

There is in any case clear evidence that Schnitzler used depth-psychological insights in a literary way already in 1880, long before Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* was published in 1900. Schnitzler's unfinished sketch *Spring Night in the Surgery Theatre* serves as evidence. It was written already twenty years before the *Interpretation of Dreams*.

> Without exaggeration it can be said that even before 1894, Schnitzler's writings reveal all the convictions and insights that in his later works are regarded as obviously having been influenced by Freud. All the principal features can be recognized: the hidden depths of the personality, the various levels of consciousness, the domination of the conscious by the unconscious, doubts about the freedom of will, knowledge of the significance of dreams, the enormous influence of childhood experiences on development and the psychological significance of sexual impressions.[12]

Kenneth Segar, who regards Schnitzler as being predestined to have a deeper access than others to the lives of people because of his original profession as physician[13], even refers to

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[8] Cf. William H. Rey *Arthur Schnitzler: Die späte Prosa als Gipfel seines Schaffens* Berlin 1968, p. 109.

[9] Cf. Rainer J. Kaus *Literaturpsychologie und literarische Hermeneutik: Sigmund Freud und Franz Kafka* Bern, Frankfurt/M., New York 2003.

[10] Schnitzler *op. cit.* p. 70.

[11] Hertha Krotkoff 'Themen, Motive und Symbole in Arthur Schnitzlers *Traumnovelle*' in: *Modern Austrian Literature* Volume 5, Numbers 1/2, New York 1972, p. 73f.

[12] Frederic Beharriell 'Arthur Schnitzler: Freuds Doppelgänger' in: *Literatur und Kritik*, eds. Gerhard Fritsch, Rudolf Henz *et al.*, Salzburg 1967, p. 548.

[13] Cf. Kenneth Segar 'Determinism and Character: Arthur Schnitzler's *Traumnovelle* and his Unpublished Critique of Psychoanalysis' in: Oxford German Studies, edited by P. F. Ganz and T. J. Reed, Oxford 1973, p. 114.

similarities between Freud and Schnitzler in the terminology they employ. Particularly striking is Schnitzler's concept of 'middle consciousness' to which he attributes an intermediate position just like Freud does to the 'preconscious'.[14] A semi-conscious state between unconsciousness and preconsciousness that Michael Scheffel sees at work precisely in the mutual investigation of each other undertaken by Fridolin and Albertine.[15]

Apart from performing his medical duties, Fridolin, the protagonist of the novella, also seeks out all the stations of the previous night after Albertine's dream confession, but this tour becomes a series of disappointments for him. He looks for Nightingale and is told of his violent disappearance. When giving back the costume he meets the daughter of the costume hirer once more and has to admit that she is a whore. The sweets which he wants to take to the young prostitute, Mizzi, he cannot deliver personally because in the meantime she has been admitted to hospital. With Marianne, the daughter of the deceased privy councillor, he wants to begin his revenge on Albertine. He imagines a kind of double life.

> Being at once a hard-working reliable progressive doctor, a decent husband, family man and father, and at the same time a profligate, seducer and cynic who played with men and women as his whim dictated – this prospect seemed to him at that moment peculiarly agreeable. And the most agreeable thing of all about it was that later on, when Albertine imagined herself secure in the haven of her tranquil conjugal and family life, he would be able to smile coldly and confess his sins to her, and thus get even for all the bitterness and shame she had brought upon him in her dream.[16]

But when he sees Marianne again, he is overtaken once again by his original indifference. He tries to find the villa again in which he had met the mysterious beauty, and does indeed find it, but there he is handed a letter with the repeated warning to cease all his investigations.

He tries intermittently and repeatedly to assure himself of the familiar everyday world. He calls home; after his consultations he checks on his wife and child and discovers to his relief that Albertine's mother is visiting her and that his daughter is learning French with the governess.

> And it was not until he reached the stairs that he again had the sense that all this order, balance and security in his life was really an illusion and a lie.[17]

In a coffee-house he reads in the evening paper about the attempted suicide of a refined, strikingly attractive baroness who reminds him of the woman who had wanted to risk her life for him at the orgy of the mysterious society. He visits the anatomical institute for pathology where he finds only a corpse that he tries to identify. But he has to acknowledge that her face had been hidden behind a mask for the whole evening and he becomes aware that,

> ever since he had first read the notice in the paper, he had been imagining the faceless suicidal woman as having Albertine's features; indeed, as he now realized with a shudder, his wife had been incessantly hovering before his eyes as the woman he was seeking.[18]

After a confusing, emotional leave-taking from the desired woman, which is burdened by guilt feelings, Fridolin comes home in the early hours of the morning. With alarm he discovers next to Albertine's face the mask which he had obviously forgotten that morning. He is shaken and

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[14] Cf. *ibid.* p. 119.

[15] Cf. Michael Scheffel *Formen selbstreflexiven Erzählens: Eine Typologie und sechs exemplarische Analysen, Kap. 5. Narrative Fiktion und die „Märchenhaftigkeit des Alltäglichen" – Arthur Schnitzler*: Traumnovelle *(1925/ 26)* Tübingen 1997, p. 186ff.

[16] Schnitzler *op. cit.* p. 80.

[17] *ibid.* p. 79.

[18] *ibid.* p. 90.

starts sobbing. He then feels Albertine's hand stroking his hair. He resolves to tell her everything. Albertine listens to him calmly and responds to him, smiling, that basically both of them should be grateful for the fate of having survived for the moment all the confusions and entanglements. To Fridolin's sceptical question whether she knows that for certain, Albertine replies,

> 'As sure as I am of my sense that neither the reality of a single night nor even of a person's entire life can be equated with the full truth about his innermost being.' 'And no dream,' he sighed quietly, 'is altogether a dream.' She took his head in both her hands and pillowed it tenderly against her breast. 'Now we are truly awake,' she said, 'at least for a good while.'[19]

The novella ends where it began, with the little daughter. With a "victorious" ray of sunlight and the bright laughter of a child from the next room, the new day begins. It is characterized by the interplay between the protagonists, Fridolin and Albertine, as well as the secondary figures. The sequence of Fridolin's encounters with women represents one of Schnitzler's special techniques. Through the intermeshing of day and night in the narrative, a precise temporal determination can be made. The beginning and the end are defined by the couple's child. The *Dream Novella* is subdivided into seven sections. Sections four and five deal mainly with the world of the unconscious. The intermeshing of interior world and external world, dream and reality is shown in their split and reconciliation – an equilibrium that is very unstable and is only granted in the happiness of the moment.

For a long time, Stanley Kubrick had the intention of filming Arthur Schnitzler's *Dream Novella*. He purchased the film rights already in 1971. Schnitzler himself had also written a film script in 1930. At the invitation of the director, Georg Wilhelm Pabst, who wanted to take advantage of the success of other films based on Schnitzler's works, he wrote the manuscript for a silent movie version. In this he envisaged a real attendance at the ball which in the novella is transposed into a shared memory and which will crop up again in Kubrick later on as a party at Victor Ziegler's, a friend of the couple.[20] But the film script remained unfinished. Pabst turned it down and it was not realized. It would be interesting to be able to compare both film versions. But we cannot do this. For a long time it was also not certain whether Kubrick himself had access to Schnitzler's script.

> That Kubrick's analogous way of proceeding was probably immediately inspired by Schnitzler's own preliminary work has been demonstrated by research in the meantime, for Kubrick had asked Schnitzler's heirs for permission to read the draft script during his own preliminary work.[21]

In Kubrick's film, Schnitzler's protagonists, Fridolin and Albertine, become Bill and Alice Harford. Kubrick's film composition employs cuts, supplements and changes to the novella in order to integrate it better into the film. The sequence of events in the whole story and also most of the dialogue are essentially similar to Schnitzler's.

> Entire dialogue passages are adopted as well as the sequence of events. All the more significant are the smaller and larger deviations.[22]

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[19] *ibid.* p. 99.

[20] Sylvia Mieszkowski, 'Das Leuchten der Möglichkeiten': Arthur Schnitzlers *Traumnovelle* und Stanley Kubricks *Eyes Wide Shut*, in: *Bündnis und Begehren: Ein Symposion über die Liebe* edited by Andreas Kraß and Alexandra Tischel, (Reihe Münchner Universitätsschriften, Geschlechterdifferenz & Literatur, Publikationen des Münchner Graduiertenkollegs, Bd. 14, eds. Gerhard Neumann and Ina Schabert), Berlin 2002, pp. 210f.

[21] Kay Kirchmann *Stanley Kubrick – Das Schweigen der Bilder* 3rd. enlarged edition, [1]1999, Bochum 2001, p. 251.

[22] Georg Seeßlen/Fernand Jung *Stanley Kubrick und seine Filme* 2nd. ed., Marburg 2001, [1]1999, p. 287.

One of the most significant differences is that at the end of the film Victor Ziegler, obviously a friend of the Harfords, gives his commentary on the entire story to Bill. Victor confesses that he, too, was at the orgy. "If you knew about all those who took part in it, you wouldn't be able to sleep at night", he says. Bill asks hesitantly about the beautiful woman who warned him. She was only a hooker, Victor replies. The whole thing was nothing but a staging, a "fake" to keep him from talking. He says the woman had been a drug addict, and the orgy did not have anything to do with her death. This conversation to make the background to the mysterious happenings explicable is not to be found in Schnitzler.

A further difference is the time of year at which the novella is set. In Schnitzler it is the carnival season in which people like to get dressed up and wear masks anyway. Apart from that, the choice of this time means that the story takes place at the end of winter. In Kubrick's version, the events take place in the time before Christmas, a sign of domestic family togetherness.

The password for admission to the secret society in Schnitzler is "Denmark" and refers to an experienced seductive erotic situation, whereas in Kubrick, the password is "Fidelio", a symbol for fidelity. This is a counterposition par excellence.

Also missing in Kubrick's version is the recollection which Albertine has in Schnitzler of the time shortly before her engagement when Fridolin was more reticent than she would have liked him to be. Whereas in Schnitzler, in the end, so to speak, all the threads run together in the dream, in Kubrick the climax of the film is Bill's visit to the orgy of the secret society.

Kubrick also takes the liberty of transposing the story in his own way. For him, film is a narrative artistic genre. The filmic narrative thus overlaps with the literary narrative. Kubrick's understanding of himself as an artist derives from the nineteenth century, even though the film is set in present-day New York.

Kubrick says in an early commentary on the subjects of his first films,

> The representation of reality has no bite. It does not transcend. Nowadays I am more interested in taking up a fantastic and improbable story.

And he adds,

> I always enjoyed representing a slightly surreal situation in a realistic way. I have always had a penchant for fairy-tales, myths and magical stories. They seem to me to come closer to our present-day experience of reality than realistic stories, which are basically just as stylized.[23]

In his film, Kubrick knows how to refuse in a subtle way, precisely by apparently fulfilling the norms of the bourgeois art industry.

There are musical and typological allusions in *Eyes Wide Shut* in descriptive names such as "Restaurant Verona", "Café Sonata" and "Gillespie's Coffee Shop". Other symbols include the many texts in newspapers, advertisements and on posters. While Bill is being driven in a taxi to the location of the Bacchanalian society, a neon sign appears along the way with the enticing message "Happy Holiday". Kubrick makes further ironic and even cynical allusions with the name of the newspaper, "Holiday Special", in which Bill reads of the drug death of the mysterious woman. The headline on the front page, "Lucky to be alive", also seems to be very dramatic. In the jazz bar where he wants to meet Nightingale, a poster can be seen behind his back with the text, "All exits are final".

The places, architecture, interiors and their furnishings also have decisive significance in Kubrick's films. For Bill, the protagonist in Kubrick's film, the place of the orgy and the secret society signifies a counter-pole to his marital home. This is the site of the narcissistic affront to both marital partners.

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[23] Kubrick, cited after Nelson, Thomas A. *Stanley Kubrick* Munich 1982 p. 120.

In the interior of the country house where the secret society meets, mirrors reflect the orgiastic happenings as visual doubles. In contrast to other scenes in the film, they are also filmed with a lighting and colouring that is richer in contrast.

In contrast to the warm tones of Victor Ziegler's villa in which at the beginning a party is taking place as a parallel to the ball in Schnitzler, the site of the orgy is drawn in gloomy, cold colours. The happenings are underscored by cult singing which stands in stark contrast to the waltz melodies of Ziegler's villa. A red car is parked in the driveway to the country house. Carpets and curtains are red, and also the carpet which lies at the centre of the ritual meeting.

The form in which the ritual of the orgy takes place is circular. Even the half-naked women are grouped about the high priest in the form of a circle. The masked groups gather around Bill threateningly. Even the room's architecture is characterized by curves and thus shows the room to be the centre of the happenings. The scene positioned approximately in the middle of the film is also no accident.

The reason for presenting the novella's content in such detail was to be able to detect Kubrick's deviations more precisely. The central position of the dream is weakened in Kubrick's version, but its emotional significance is communicated. The significance of the dream in the novella requires a more precise explication and interpretation.

By way of *résumé* it can be said that the entire world of symbols and motifs such as the coach and the Dane's yellow handbag in Schnitzler, is implemented in Kubrick in a filmic form. The mysterious, dreamlike dimension is expressed in Kubrick through lighting, colouring, slow or fast or continuous camera movement, including pan shots, and the resolution of the images (coarse-grained or super-clear takes).

Allow me one more short remark. Kubrick creates coherence in his films in subtle ways. The number on the protagonist's number-plate is 9987. This number refers to the year of production of his penultimate film, *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), and simultaneously to the film, *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999).

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A concordance: Lacan's "Function and Field of Speech and Language" and T. S. Eliot's *Waste Land*

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Concluding the 1966 published version of his "Discours de Rome" (1953), "Function and Field of Speech and Language", Lacan quotes several lines from the *Upanishads* (5.1), and it may be interesting to note that it was almost exactly in the same fashion that T. S. Eliot had concluded his *Waste Land*, about three decades earlier (1922).[1]

Was this no more, on the part of Lacan, than a fashionable way to end his paper – a mere rhetorical "flourish" (Muller & Richardson, 95)[1bis] –, at a time, the Fifties, when the literary world in France knew, or at least had heard of Eliot's great poem?

On the other hand, I cannot help thinking that this curious coincidence is more meaningful than it seems. That Lacan somewhat knew Eliot's works can perhaps be attested by the fact that his paper, earlier on, also quotes four lines from "The Hollow Men", a nice phrase indeed for anyone discussing "empty speech"!

Two reasons incite me to insist on the importance of such a convergence. In the first place, Lacan's choice of Eliot's poem amounts to a positive critical judgment and is a way to inscribe aesthetics into history, highlighting as it does the new poetic form Eliot, in the footsteps of James, Proust and the Surrealists, had more or less inaugurated in 1922 – alongside with Joyce. I take this to have been a way of implying that henceforth, since 1900 and Freud, literary interpretation – and I mean interpretation, analysis, not reading, which is something each of us does as he or she "pleases" – literary analysis, then, could no longer be carried out as if psychoanalysis had not existed.

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[1] "Fonction et champ de la parole et du langage en psychanalyse", *Ecrits*, Paris: Seuil, 1966; *The Waste Land and other poems*, London: Faber and Faber, 12th ed., 1952; and: *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound*, edit. by Valerie Eliot, London: Faber, 1971.

[1bis] John P. Muller & William J. Richardson, *Lacan and Language*, New York: International Universities Press, 1982.

The second reason concerns Lacan's difficult style and thought. For quotations, indeed, here from the *Upanishads*, elsewhere from other sources,[2] often prove a good way into an author's "meaning". In the case of "Function and Field…", which is a text of great importance – a *discours programme*, in fact –, the concordance mentioned has incited me to look once more into the page where the quotation from the *Upanishads* can be found. The last page of Lacan's long paper, it can be taken as a poetic conclusion and hold, as we shall see, interesting information.

I

The Waste Land, then. Let me start with an obvious comment: the poem, at first, strikes us as discontinuous or even chaotic; on this, most readers and critics agree.

Indeed, Eliot's work appears as a broken uneven sequence, made up of disconnected fragments, and it is hardly surprising that descriptions of admirers and scornful commentators – when the work was not yet accepted by all – rang remarkably alike: a «cross-word puzzle of […] spurious algebra» for Wyndham Lewis, who did not like it, it was «a sort of inspired mathematics», for Pound, who held it on the baptismal font. In 1932, in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, Paul Elmer Moore heralded Eliot as «a lyric poet of chaos», while *The Times Literary Supplement* of September 28, thirty years later, by its polite embarrassment, clearly pointed to the difficulty of describing Eliot's poem in recognized terms: «There is no general agreement about what kind of poem *The Waste Land* is.»

One clever way of begging the question is of course to see the text in terms of sentiment. However disconnected in appearance, *The Waste Land* is then described as «a succession of connected states of feeling or "emotions".»[3] If at times we find it difficult to «follow the argument», and if «no critic can provide [the readers] with a magic thread to take them through the labyrinth», it is simply because the «connections are not connections of logic, but connections of feeling».[4] And indeed it is not badly put. Except that we are left with the essential question on the nature of this connection between feelings, and still do not see why it takes a disorganized text to render feelings or the connections between them. Here was, no doubt, an intuition which could have been rich in consequences, but instead of leading to further developments, it occurred as a conclusion, as if the problem set by Eliot's poem could suffer no solution, no answer, really; the significance of its strange new form being, without appeal, referred to the mysterious area of human emotions. «Oh, do not ask "What is it?"»

To this question – but with some delay – modern criticism replied by developing an interest in forms, or rather, and more precisely, the historical forces at work in the production of art and poetry at the turn of the Twentieth Century eventually produced such an interest some decades later. Until then, until the Fifties, approximately, it seems we had been under the illusion that literature was an accurate representation of reality and that its proper domain was precisely our relationship to the world, that is to say emotions. This seemed all the more so since one of the main criteria of the excellence of a literary work, for the critics, resided in the exactitude with which feelings were depicted, literature being considered as an inexhaustible source of information for the student of human behavior. (No doubt, "human behavior" had not always been the main concern of the art critic or of the critic of poetry, those were more generally preoccupied with the ideal standards of perfection, more metaphysically or even "religiously" inclined (the "sacred" dimension of art), but it cannot be said that an interest in "emotions" had altogether been absent

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[2] Lacan's essay on Edgar A. Poe is well known; his *séminaires* on Shakespeare's *Hamlet* can also be mentioned.

[3] A. J. Wilks, *A Critical Commentary on T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land*, London: Macmillan, 1971, p. 67.

[4] Helen Gardner, "*The Waste Land*", Manchester University Press, 1972, p. 19.

from their quest.) And suddenly, all this – the interest in human behavior and also the idealist stance – was changed! Critical emphasis was laid on form rather than on content, and one tended to pay more attention to the former than to the latter.

Such a shift was no doubt a sound one, if only because it contained the implied warning that the accuracy of literature – a servile transcription of appearances – could no longer be taken literally. Behind it there lay the hope that the reflection on form would lead to a fuller understanding of the literary object. The dichotomy between form and content was not abandoned, but a device was introduced, a theoretical instrument, whose function it was to set aside reality as it was immediately perceived and to enhance the act of representation (form), in the implication that its analysis would reveal what was concealed behind appearances, thus helping us to discover reality as something more complex and richer than what appeared to the naked eye. The inquiry into form, then, could be conceived as a worthwhile detour which could eventually lead to content again, to meaning, the literary work being envisaged as a succession of strata and no longer as a mere surface.

Of those strata, however, of the new depths suspected, nothing was ever said; the investigation into form which was to lead back to human emotions never got there; no sooner had the intuition of a mystery beyond the "surface" resulted in a new critical attitude than the mystery became suspect and, as such, forgotten. The progress towards more objectivity, more logic, more rationality led to a stalemate.

To the psychoanalyst, today, such a failure, which amounts to an omission, is not devoid of meaning. That formal analysis is a necessary part of the task of the critic, no one will dispute, but the enterprise cannot be considered as an end in itself. For forms are signs also, and tell us something about the determinations at work in their production.

These determinations can lead us to the "subject" of the work of art. Obviously, this is a very difficult concept, and we must distinguish the individual subject – the "soul" of the producer as psychoanalysis has defined it – and a collective subject – an object for the socio-historian –, but what is common to both is that the production process escapes conscious control. And here psychoanalytic theory can be of help, suggesting for instance and to begin with, that an exclusive concern with form also has the function of a screen. Indeed, not to consider forms as signs does amount to a denial, yes, to an unconscious desire *not to know*, and we can sum up what is being repressed in the enterprise as meaning or pleasure, unconscious desire in a word. At most, what can be discerned in the discourse of the "literary" critic is traces of what has been repressed, and in the end the original question remains: «What is it?»

Is literature once so reliable, then, no longer to be trusted, and what is the literary anthropologist to do, thus deprived of his material and left with considerations on form alone?

For the question is still with us, it seems, waiting for an answer.

At this point, I trust no one will be surprised if I say that I see only one course of action open: start with the words, start with discourse, which is a way of taking seriously the intuition about "feelings" and their "mystery" mentioned by the most perceptive critics. But we shall see it is also a way of refusing the critics' abrupt dismissal of a search into the mystery. The implied hypothesis is of course that the mystery is borne by the words themselves and that the reason for such a strange architecture as that of Eliot's *Waste Land* is given by the architecture itself. Thus are we embarking on an inquiry into language, as the final stage of this analysis will show.

And indeed, it is such an inquiry that the very form of Eliot's poem encourages, an encouragement which is also to be found in the arts of the time, for the *brokenness* was not entirely new when Eliot started writing. The worlds of painting and music, not to mention the cinema with Eisenstein, had given rise to new forms. The *collages* of Braque and Picasso, the striking structure of *The Rites of Spring*, such disorganization of material, necessarily had an historical significance. Accepting to see forms as "representations" of a "collective" subject is of course a way of giving some meaning to the disorganization which appeared with *The Waste Land* and even a few years

before (the specific details of the realization depending on an "individual" subject). To which can now be added that with literature the problem is even simpler since language constitutes its prime material, an entity we happen to know quite well.

A "medley" of various short poems worked into one, a mosaic of impressions, memories and quotations, *The Waste Land* has no apparent coherence and we are at a loss to decide what "it means". And at this point, luckily, it dawns on us that this lack of meaning – in the plain, usual sense – is precisely the very meaning of the poem. This is what I meant when I wrote that *The Waste Land* encouraged an inquiry on "form". For one way or another no rebus is devoid of sense; as Eliot reportedly often explained: «It means what it says.» Simply, we must make sure we are looking at it in the proper fashion. What is the proper way is another matter, but to know that it exists opens new horizons to us.

Here, we must not confuse reading with analysis. In a way, what *The Waste Land* is also telling us is that there is no "proper way" of reading it We know this: reading is but a construction of meaning by each reading subject (Norman Holland). Beyond the elementary recognition of given signs – letters or ideograms, words, sentences –, when we read, we each project our own meaning into these signs: such is the polysemic quality of language. And the less directive the surface guide-line – narrative or descriptive –, the freer the construction of meaning(s). *The Waste Land* fully demonstrates this point: it is for each individual reader to decide what the meaning will be; from which it follows that whatever re-connecting of the disconnected parts takes place – if it does – is to be ascribed to the reader and not to the text, whose "surface" therefore remains disconnected.

So much for reading, and from what precedes it becomes obvious that reading and analysis are two completely different experiences. For this is where the unconscious desire of the analyst has to be taken into account and… "discounted". For, naturally, the object under analysis has to have been read or heard in the first place. It is at the price of such a "dis-counting" that one will be a psychoanalytic critic and not simply a reader.

Because we are confronted with two different processes, two different objects in fact, the text as I read it and the text as what was produced by an author – which is not the same thing –, we cannot speak of "meaning" as if it were One. And another dimension of the notion of meaning has also to be taken into consideration: I alluded to this when I said that language could no longer be considered as "a mere surface". No longer restricted to the amount of information sent – the "message" as it can be received –, the text comes to point to the unconscious relationship which must have existed between the producer and his discourse. In the same way as all our behavior has a significance, so have the words and sentences that we speak or write: such is our symbolical dimension. I short, when I speak or write I say more than I consciously think, and the unconscious nature of my discourse – by definition *not* the result of a conscious decision – may cause me to reveal what I might have preferred to leave unsaid or, better, may cause me to reveal something I do not readily accept as my own. All this is well known today, as is the analogy between the structure of the dream and the structure of language.

But in 1922, this was so new, so revolutionary, that the author of a poem which proclaimed such a truth – however implicitly – may have vaguely apprehended he had "spoken too much".

With *The Waste Land* – and "Gerontion", and "Prufrock" in a lesser manner –, there appeared in English poetry a new form characterized by its apparent lack of logic. Poetry, it is true, as it is the mode of expression nearest to man's innermost feelings, has always functioned in this way, therefore not inclined to be concerned with narration or description. But some form of relationship with reality, with the "surface", had always been maintained, whereas *The Waste Land* reveals an attitude that is radically new.[5]

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[5] There had been other examples in history of such a radicality, and for example Coleridge's "Kubla Khan", but they were isolated examples.

Thus can be explained Eliot's decision to provide a guide-line for his work and also the trouble he took to name such sources as might help to «elucidate the difficulties of the poem» for «any who think such elucidation of the poem worth the trouble». A pattern was found – after the various parts of the poem had been written –, and thanks to the Grail Legend and to "vegetation ceremonies" the work acquired some unity. The maze of the poem could then be approached and a dramatic progression was somewhat found in the quest it was illustrating. We have to recognize that with the Fifth Part and the theme of the "Chapel Perilous" a "manifest" meaning becomes distinguishable. To lead us through the labyrinth of this final stage of the Quest, here is an Ariadne's thread and the "vegetation goddess". With less obscurity than in the preceding Parts, the poem begins to assume some dramatic and thematic coherence. "Quest", here, is what will give significance to the whole mystery. At last, the isolated incomprehensible fragments seem to fall into place and design a coherent pattern out of which the difficulties that faced the reader so far adequately symbolize the ordeal the quester has to go through before reaching his goal. Thus does the conclusion stand in a clear opposition to the obscurity that has prevailed so far. Thus is justified beyond expectation the dislocation of the first four Parts: it enhances structurally the achievement of the quester.[6] But what this achievement is we shall never know.

Perhaps one sees what contradiction is implied here: to write a "broken", silent poem – «It is what is indirect, allusive that counts; it is the dislocation» – but *at the same time* try to provide a guide line and a rewarding ending for the readers of the dislocated poem.

Writing about the necessity for the modern poet to be difficult, Eliot explained that «the poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary language into meaning». ("The Metaphysical Poets", *Selected Essays*, London: Faber, 289) An *Ars Poetica* for our time, this certainly is good advice.

This seems, however, to have been a rule too difficult to follow. For it implied the acceptance that one's poem could be devoid of meaning as the notion had been understood so far, the acceptance that his poem mainly consisted in words whose meaning was not what it seemed at first. In a way, Eliot wasn't doing his poem justice. For wasn't the wish to provide his readers with a guideline – on second thoughts – an unconscious way to lead them astray in making them believe that meaning was within reach? It amounted to a confusion between conscious discourse and meaning, a confusion we find when a dream as experience is mistaken for its meaning, a meaning that can only be adumbrated through a painstaking analysis.

Fortunately, the poem is here to set things right: it is here to be read, that is, I repeat, experienced. «To dislocate […] language into its meaning», this is precisely what psychoanalysis does, and as we saw it is not the same enterprise as reading or writing. "Dislocated", the discourse of the modern poet reveals in its own fashion the structure of language: a mask, a façade, and unconscious desire. As in the dream or the slip of the tongue, the architect is always hidden, making sure, behind the scenes, that the unspeakable is spoken… but in a form which cannot be (directly) understood. In *The Waste Land*, there is only a frail mask, for the Grail legend is a very thin façade indeed. In *The Waste Land*, it is the primary process that speaks, and it is not in its nature to be easily deciphered. In the end, the Grail legend and the fertility myths, the painful march towards salvation or purity no more than provide a rationalization for a "meaning" which remains secret. "Salvation", "sacrifice", "purification", are words which still have to be analyzed.

Already, in sending his poem to Ezra Pound for criticism and correction, Eliot was adding to what original dislocation it already had. Accepting to see his text amputated was a good way to produce a broken up poem. In a way, by asking for Pound's advice and emendation, he was uncons-

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[6] Conceived *after* most of the poem had been written, the theme of the quest may nevertheless help to make of *The Waste Land* a story of renunciation or a tale of redemption, and it also defines Eliot's work as different from a piece of Surrealist writing, but it is no help when it comes to accounting for the richness and complexity of the poem.

ciously proceeding to its amputation himself. The final product, like a message with some of its passages left out, would be nicely cryptic. That he should have chosen Pound, *il miglior fabbro*, as agent for the operation is far from meaningless, no doubt; this also could be analyzed.

Perhaps do we have now a slightly better understanding of the way *The Waste Land* was conceived and written. Built like a *collage*, with allusions to Shakespeare and the *Bible*, reminiscences of Baudelaire, Dante and Verlaine, quotations from Webster, Shakespeare, Spenser, Marwell, Goldsmith and others, the "method", which may have been devised to say that words are only as good as those who read them, safely provided the poet with a mask at the same time: a screen. In this profusion of quotations and allusions, I see a defense of a psychological nature. What better way to hide oneself and one's innermost feelings than to clothe them with the words of others, words that are part of a cultural heritage and which have at once the import of a deep personal statement and the impersonality wherein to conceal this?

What is symbolically staged in the writing of *The Waste Land*, what actually took place in its production, was an escape from scrutiny – hard luck for Dr. Leavis! The poem, among other things, is the result of a desire for secrecy. This is how I interpret the obscure nature of Eliot's poem, the way it "resists" meaning: the result of unconscious forces, an irrepressible compulsion to speak, but the necessity also that what is said shall remain secret. Two contrary forces – let me repeat this – thus obtained satisfaction in the writing of the poem: the urge, the drive to speak, and the impossibility not to remain silent. We recognize the structure of the dream, and we have learnt it is also the structure of language whose role is to carry information while at the same time concealing what we can call the subject's unconscious desire. Eliot's poem is made of this tension between utterance and silence. What *The Waste Land* offers us is a discourse whose function is to remain unintelligible. Part of the riddle thus becomes clearer. Not only do we realize that the meaning of the poem is not to be sought on the "surface"[7] of its words and phrases, but this discovery is in itself one of the meanings of *The Waste Land*. Already, this is a first explanation for the brokenness of Eliot's poem. Its simplest and most obvious meaning, once one has turned the picture the other way round, lies in this unconscious "refusal" to say something. A refusal, that is, that the forces responsible for the choice of this particular discourse, and responsible for the tension, also, should come to light. Not that communication is absent from the poem; as in the dream, it confronts us with a "meaning", and with an emotion, simply, we do not know what is being signified and what the reason for our emotion is. So that before even studying the details of the writing, before looking at its texture – words, images and phrases –, its general organization – disorganization – enables us to sense this tension at the primitive level of its conception: the structure of *The Waste Land* is that of the dream.

In this perspective, "The Notes On The Waste Land" which accompany the poem proper must be considered as part of the poem itself, something like an "afterthought", something like the denial in "The Love Song Of J. Alfred Prufrock":

> "That is not what I mean at all.
> That is not it, at all."

Meant to help the reader, these learned notes bring to mind the rationalizations one is so naturally inclined to produce when it comes to explaining one of our dreams without the necessary analytic precautions. It amounts to taking for the dream itself what the dream used for its construction in its undertaking to secretly express desire – day's remnants – and this is *not* the dream. For as we know, and Freud sufficiently warned us about this, dreaming – those secret movements of the "soul" – always precedes the words with which, later on, we will try to describe what "happened" during sleep and is of course an experience not readily accessible to consciousness, a memory only. The literary allusions and quotations which make up part of *The Waste Land* enabled

[7] I use "surface" for lack of a better word, but it is misleading since the notions of inside and outside cannot be applied to language: unconscious desire – Freud's unconscious thoughts – is built into language and cannot be dissociated from it; all we can do is look for "traces" or "signs" of these "thoughts".

the poet to preserve his secret, the Notes provided the reader with a "guide-line" that would lead him or her safely away from where unconscious desire might have been discerned. In a way, this was to make us dream… And it is of course the task of literature… and of language: the creation of a necessary "space" for hallucination and pleasure.

Perhaps are we beginning to understand how untenable the position of the "critic" of *The Waste Land* is? Here is a text about which one cannot communicate anything but what crosses one's mind, since the only available statement of an objective nature about Eliot's poem is simply that it is made of fragments of past literary works. And then, is that so simple? Some readers and critics do not like to tell what crosses their minds – but who does? –, besides the obvious fact that we don't always know with precision what we have just felt or imagined. And then what about those who will remain silent in front of the silence of the poem, who will accept its mystery as an invitation to muteness, and refuse to see something, anything, in it?

There remained the invitation to scholarly criticism, a neat way to remain silent also while saying a lot of possibly interesting things. It is true that the solution of the rebus may lie in a secret "connection" which would unite all those various quotations and allusions, but beyond some thematic relationships such a hidden connection has not been brought to light. So that the dilemma remains: either one refuses to look at the Notes and glosses, and the poem cannot be "understood", or one follows the hints of the glosses, and it is not the poem that one reads. As if, apparently, between an embarrassed or stubborn silence and the talkative silence of misplaced erudition, there were no alternative.

The answer, of course, lies in the objection, made by some – those who preferred silence –, that an enjoyment of the poem could be arrived at without the help of the glosses which accompany *The Waste Land*, and it is difficult to disagree with them although it does not seem possible to totally disregard the cultural factor when dealing with the act of reading. But they admitted there existed the danger of reducing the poem to a mere riddle for scholars,[8] and, respecting as it were the "silence" of the unconscious subject, they were pointing the way and treating poetry as an experience and not as a source of immediate knowledge.

But there were those – the rest of the literary establishment – who could not bring themselves to accept that poetry wasn't concerned with "knowledge" and "meaning" and felt they had a role to play at reconnecting the fragments of the puzzling mosaic. Eliot, of course, with his Notes and glosses was inviting them to go on with their search. This, we must remember, was 1922. So themes were traced out, quotations and allusions duly recognized, and thanks to a myriad of scholarly commentaries *The Waste Land* was so enriched at to become a possible memorial of western culture in its English version. Thus was obscured the novelty of Eliot's poem and missed the "meaning" of its particular form which consisted in stressing the importance of experience, pleasure, desire.

We must accept this discrepancy between art and criticism: meaning is not where we think it is. Only by taking unconscious desire into consideration can we hope to arrive at an understanding of what literature has to tell us.

In the end, in spite of its new revolutionary form, *The Waste Land* remains a piece of writing, *un écrit*, and as such cannot be asked "to tell the truth" directly.[9] The truth of the (unconscious) subject, I mean. As we saw, the theme of the Quest was an attempt to give coherence to the isolated, incomprehensible fragments. But although it is true it makes the reading of the poem easier, it has nothing to say about the subject and its truth. I have already mentioned the necessary unawareness of the writer. We find such unawareness, for instance, in Eliot's declaration that the

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[8] «One of the greatest dangers in reading *The Waste Land* [is] that of resting in a delighted sense of discovered *meaning* because we have recognized an allusion.» (Helen Williams, *T. S. Eliot: The Waste Land*, London: Arnold, 1973, p. 51.)

[9] But "in spite of" is not appropriate, since it is the reader's attitude which will determine whether this *écrit* can be given some meaning, and his decision will be a consequence of the new form heralded by the poem.

end of the Quest "justifies" the whole poem. In his letter to Bertrand Russell of October 15, 1923, indeed, he says he is glad Russell has liked *The Waste Land* «and especially Part V which in [his] opinion is not the best part, but the only part that justifies the whole, at all»[10] For if the advocation of acceptance and renunciation does give some "meaning" to the poem, one can also argue that it might nevertheless leave some of the readers – who enjoyed the poem – unsatisfied. This theme of the end of the Quest, consciously chosen, leaves too much unexplained. But mostly, as I have already pointed out, isn't it highly con-tradictory to try and give meaning to a piece of writing whose "form" precisely signifies a poem "is" and doesn't have to "mean".[11] For as we saw, the very form of *The Waste Land* does oppose experience and signification. In an attempt to do away with the brokenness of his poem – and naturally we are here dealing with unconscious processes –, Eliot proceeded to what we can call, borrowing the term from Freud, a "secondary revision".[12] This is what we usually do when we write, and I have already used the word "rationalization". Once again, this is a good demonstration that we always say more than we think or that we do not say what we think we are saying. The organizing principle of *The Waste Land*, the architect of the poem – for those who are interested in meaning –, is not to be sought on the level of intention. The chosen pattern – the Grail Legend – is simply a metaphor which by definition has no direct intelligibility and remains to be analyzed when meaning is discussed.[13]

The controlling, the ordering, this is where part of the fantasy lies: and it is a testimony of Eliot's illusion. Clearly, it corresponds to a wish to organize chaos, and it does point to a desire for coherence in life. But such ordering cannot be carried out with our attention restricted to what is conscious only.

Which brings us back to the "primary process". Indeed, in spite of all the traditional rational manoeuvers Eliot – in his time – could not avoid displaying, there is much in his poem that proclaims the prominence of unconscious forces. Not a deliberate experiment in automatic writing, «He do the police in different voices», as the poem was first named, nevertheless strongly suggests submission to a production process that escapes the control of consciousness.[14]

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[10] See, B. C. Southan, *A Student's Guide to the Selected Poems of T. S. Eliot*, London: Faber, 3th ed., 1977, p. 90.

[11] The reference is to Archibald Mc Leish's poem "A poem must not mean, but be".

[12] See: «It is hardly rash to assume that the unintelligibility of the dream's content as it exists in the memory has led to its being recast in a form designed to make sense of the situation. That situation, however, is in the process deprived of its original meaning and put to extraneous uses. But […] it is a common thing for the conscious thought-activity of a second psychical system to misunderstand the content of a dream in this way, and this misunderstanding must be regarded as one of the factors in determining the final form assumed by dreams.» (S. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams, Standard Edition V*, p. 243). Chapter VI of the same volume is devoted to Secondary revision, pp. 488-508.

[13] This is what "façades" are for. What Eliot wrote about Joyce's *Ulysses* perfectly applies to *The Waste Land*, though not in the way one may think: «It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.» (*The Dial*, Nov. 1923).

[14] On automatic writing, Eliot has commented: «I know for instance, that some forms of ill-health, debility or anemia, may (if other circumstances are favorable) produce an efflux of poetry in a way approaching the condition of automatic writing […] What one writes in this way may succeed in standing the examination of a more normal state of mind.» (in Wilks, *A Critical Commentary*, op. cit., p. 85);

and again, when writing about *Les Pensées* of Pascal, in 1931:

«[…] it is a commonplace that some forms of illness are extremely favorable, not only to religious illumination, but to artistic and literary composition. A piece of writing meditated, apparently without progress, for months or years, may suddenly take shape and word; and in this state long passages may be produced which require little or no retouch. I have no good word to say for the cultivation of automatic writing as the model of literary composition; I doubt whether these moments can be cultivated by the writer; but he to whom this happens assuredly has the sensation of being a vehicle rather than a maker.» (*Selected Essays* [1932], London: Faber, 1951, p. 405).

Admittedly, Eliot had no good word to say for «the cultivation of automatic writing as the model of literary composition», and we know he went as far as writing that he suspected "automatic writing" to «spring from a shallower source» (William Blake, *Selected Essays*, p. 319); but at least the process is not unknown to him, and in spite of his restrictions we may construe the admission that it can sometimes lead to interesting results, as for instance in the metaphysical conceit which develops «by rapid association of thought». (*Selected Essays*, p. 282)[15]

Chaotic like a dream, disrupted, *The Waste Land* signifies with its particular form. Its brokenness demonstrates the quasi absence of a traditional "façade". As a new art form, Eliot's poem is of considerable historical importance. As the author of the poem himself wrote: «Any radical change in poetic form is likely to be the symptom of some very much deeper change in society and in the individual.» ("The Auditory Imagination")

II

Perhaps do we understand better, now, Lacan's choice of a passage from T. S. Eliot's poem, a passage which was quoting from the *Upanishads* what the "Thunder" had to say.

No doubt, the Thunder does not say the same thing to Eliot and to Lacan, but what seems to matter for both authors is the presence of a *voice*. In fact, Lacan simply uses the word "voice" and the phrase "voice of the Thunder" to illustrate, in poetic fashion, one of the points he has just made in his long and important paper. An interpretation which is not too difficult to make is that he chose to borrow a few lines from Eliot's great poem in order to stress the paramount importance of language in humans. And in his stride, of course, he also gives us a psychoanalytic reading of the concept of "voice". Imagining for his readers, or rather his hearers (at the time they were young psychoanalysts), a socratic dialogue, he insists once more on the idea of *language as law*, the law to which humans are submitted.

> The psychoanalytic experience has discovered in man the imperative of the Word [*le verbe*] as the law that has formed him in its image.

For not only is speech what is given us in order that we speak, express ourselves, but it is also our own name. True, Lacan does not embark on his theory of the "name of the father" in his conclusion, but I feel confident that this is how we can understand his insistence on the *gift* of speech. Yes, the first thing I was given, even before I could speak, and of course before I could realize I had received such a "gift", was my name. And this is quite simply the archetype of language as a linguist sees it. For the operation by which a child is given a name is not different *in structure* from the operation by which an object is named: thus do the words "imperative" and "speech" (*le verbe*) make sense.

Obviously, between the two operations, there is a difference, and only in the case of the infant receiving a name is it a clear determination. But the structure in both cases is the same and this is no doubt what Lacan wanted us to understand: humans give names… to things, to the world around them, and… to their children. In the end, the fact that a child receives the gift of language, that is to say inherits a particular idiom, is also a determination, a law. That parental desire is not so obviously present in the vocabulary or in the rules we learn as children as it is in our name does not imply there is no determination here. Let me repeat this: the structure is the same, and it is the

[15] A verification, which remains to be carried out fully, would show how the mechanism of free association – the primary process – directed the composition of Eliot's poem, at least partly, which would be a way, of course of providing the various "broken" parts with and a new and different "unity".

structure of representation. Thus it is a "voice" *la parole*, which makes us "subjects". This voice is the voice of parents, needless to say, or at least voices in our close environment when we are infants, but more generally it is the voice men and women use to name objects out there, the language they use to represent the world, this world from which they are irremediably separated.

When he borrows "control thyself" from Eliot – which supposedly is the first teaching of the Thunder –,[16] Lacan does not seem to have austerity or mortification in mind, and he does not seem to be thinking of charity in its traditional sense either when he repeats "give", in the same way as he is not particularly considering sympathy when he writes "have compassion" – though this is possibly a virtue one might expect of a psychoanalyst.[17] No, in this occurrence, he places the debate elsewhere, and it becomes a philosophical debate: what he is intent on demonstrating is simply the power of speech. *La parole* as determination, and though this may well have its origin in a preoccupation with the "Name of the Father", it has much wider implications. As I have just pointed out, we are here confronted with a fundamental structure: received by humans at birth, speech, more generally, demonstrates our ability to represent (and that this goes beyond verbal language is obvious).

> … for it is through [*par voie*] this gift that reality [*toute réalité*] came to man and by his making use of it [*par son acte continué*] that he maintains it.

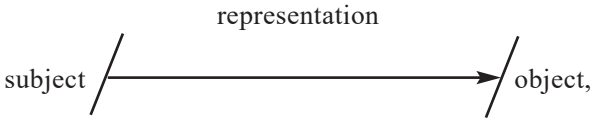
This is what Lacan reads in what the Thunder has to say, his interpretation – and this is where he repeats «*le texte sacré voulant dire*» three times –, for it is what the sacred text means, in his view, that he would like his hearers to understand too.

> … men are recognizable by the fact that they speak [*se reconnaissent par le don de la parole*]

And "Devas" and "Asuras", who in the poem, with men, listen to the voice of the Thunder, are just human creations, creations of language, gods and demons who proceed from men's capacity to represent or symbolize.

And at this point, still bearing the structure of representation in mind, we remember Freud's story about his grand child playing with his reel. For the only sound – word? – which is uttered by Prajapâti, the god of Thunder, in *The Waste Land* and in "Function and Field…" alike, is "Da". I know this leads to "Damyata, Datta" and "Dayadhvam", control, give, sympathize, but I also notice that Lacan takes great care to treat the three verbs as responses to or interpretations of the original "da". Indeed, we recognize the sound: this is what Freud's grand son was repeating, *fort* and *da*, and this verbal operation is a perfect example of what a linguistic signifier is! Which of course Freud did not let go by unnoticed. And as we do not want to confuse psychoanalysis and linguistics, I shall simply add that this is a perfect example of what representation is. Once more, we come across the structure we have already met: the structure of language.

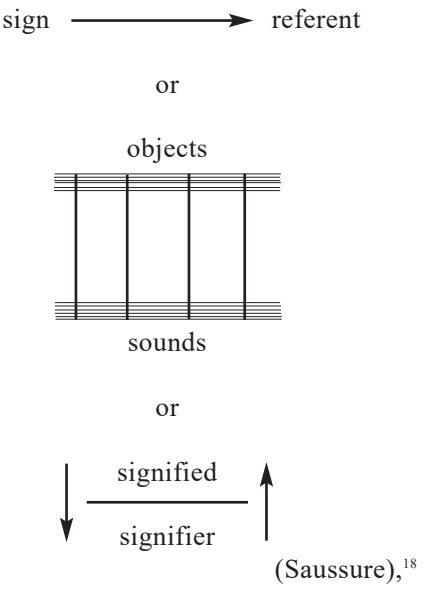
Suddenly, then, it all seems quite clear: humans represent, that is to say replace with signs the world from which they are separated,



[16] Whereas Eliot had not quoted what "the Thunder" was saying in the same order as in the *Upanishads* Lacan respected that order.

[17] No doubt, except that genuine "analytic" sympathy may imply clear-sightedness, prudence, and the refusal to limit itself to a compassion that would simply consist in suffering with the patient.

replace it, that is, in hallucinating, or, to use a formula which will carry less desperation, in pretending they are not really that separated from it. Already, Freud had said that the dream had the structure of a sentence. Lacan adds: «the unconscious is structured like a language.» And it is true that when I dream I represent. Naturally, such representation is but an hallucination, but it has the structure of speech: from the world out there to a representation of it. For whether we illustrate both operations thus:



(Saussure),[18]

a single structure stands out, which applies equally to the dream and to language.

But I must be more specific. The dream, this is well known, is not intelligible, not directly intelligible, and the rules which allow "communication" (even though such communication most of the time holds a considerable portion of misunderstanding) do not apply in its case. And yet, when we realize that, in spite of the necessary adequation of words and things, *words are not the things* they represent, *we end up with the structure mentioned above*, a structure commanded by the central separation between the subject and the world: *barre, béance*. Thus is the difficult concept of "unconscious" liable to receive a satisfactory illustration (representation of representation): what is unconscious in me is not structured differently from what is latent in my discourse. Again, this is well known: whatever our precautions, when we speak, there is a lot that remains unsaid, «*parole vide, parole pleine*».

All this, Lacan must also have read in *The Waste Land*. What the poet obscurely expressed in 1922, the psychoanalyst analyzed some thirty years later. Splitting, displacement, the metaphor, such were some of the ideas discussed by psychoanalysis, and the knowledge we gained from the discussion has enabled us to form a new conception of the subject – no longer to be confused with the agent. If we do not know who we are – with precision – at least we know who we are not, and it

[18] Lacan chose to invert the terms of the Saussure's "formula", with Signifier on top and signified below; this is well known.

is a beginning. *The Waste Land* also was a beginning, the first historical manifestation in poetry of what Freud had found in dreams, and Saussure in language. For Eliot was at least faintly[19] aware that his poem spoke of the solitude, the separatedness of the "subject". The difficult problem of subject and object, he had found in Bradley's works, as a philosophical student; both the modern poet and the philosopher are confronted with man's inescapable seclusion:

> My external sensations are not less *private to myself* than my thoughts or my feelings. In either case *my experience falls within my own circle, a circle closed on the outside*; and, with all its elements alike, *every sphere is opaque to the others* which surround it […] In brief, regarded as an experience which appears in a soul, *the whole world for each is peculiar and private to that soul*. (Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, 336, italics mine)

Emphasizing the uniqueness and the solitude of each human being, Bradley defines the nature of objectivity along the lines of phenomenology.

To phenomenology, Lacan will add the reflection on form and on language. This is also to be found in *The Waste Land* expressed metaphorically, but ready for us to interpret. Indeed, the very *form* of Eliot's poem is telling us how it could be "heard". And this leads to the spoken word, that is to say to language. In "The Metaphysical Poets", Eliot wrote:

> The poets in question […] were […] engaged in the task of trying to find the verbal equivalent for states of mind and feeling. (*Selected Essays*, p. 289)

This is precisely what language is: an equivalent, a representation. *The Waste Land* defines poetry as language in its essence: this is Lacan's *parole*.

Thus are some of the most mysterious of Lacan's poetic formulations liable to be given a plausible interpretation thanks to what we may assume his understanding of *The Waste Land* was. We have already seen the unconscious «structured like a language», we can add: the subject as "an effect" of the signifier (although here, instead of "signifier", I think Lacan could have said: «parole and/or desire of the Other»),[20] and «language as the condition of the unconscious». As for the central idea of his demonstration, that is to say that man is subject to the law of speech, I hope it is now clear. Naturally, I shall never know what these words meant *precisely* for the subject who produced them – as is often the case with "poetic" discourse –, but they do enable me to build a model which makes sense, a model which permits me to answer various questions of a psychological, linguistic or even philosophical nature. In a word, the system described seems very coherent. Which does not mean that it cannot be criticized, improved or, more modestly, developed.[21]

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[19] "Faintly", because even though Eliot may have had the intuition he was breaking new ground, it is far from certain that he felt from the onset the historical importance of his poem. See:

> It is hardly too much to say that Eliot himself, at first, did not regard *The Waste Land* as a great poem, but was gradually persuaded that it might be, perhaps was. (T. S. Matthews, *Great Tom, Notes towards the Definition of T. S. Eliot*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974, p. 73.)

[20] But in this instance he obviously had sexual difference and the "phallus" in mind.

[21] On Eliot and language, see: Harry T. Antrim, *T. S. Eliot's conception of Language* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1971); and also Hugh Kenner, *The Invisible Poet: T. S. Eliot*, (rpt.) (London: Methuen, 1965).

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Destroyed but not defeated: Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*

A psychotherapeutic story

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It is a psychological analysis of Hemingway famous story that we have used it as a psychotherapeutic aid for hopeless and depressed people and also psychological victims of war in a more comprehensive therapeutic plan.

The first sentence of the book announces itself as Hemingway's: «He was an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf stream and he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish.» The words are plain, and the structure, two tightly-worded independent clauses conjoined by a simple conjunction, is ordinary, traits which characterize Hemingway's literary style.

Santiago is the protagonist of the novella. He is an old fisherman in Cuba who, when we meet him at the beginning of the book, has not caught anything for eighty-four days. The novella follows Santiago's quest for the great catch that will save his career. Santiago endures a great struggle with a uncommonly large and noble marlin only to lose the fish to rapacious sharks on his way back to land. Despite this loss, Santiago ends the novel with his spirit undefeated. Some have said that Santiago represents Hemingway himself, searching for his next great book, an Everyman, heroic in the face of human tragedy, or the Oedipal male unconscious trying to slay his father, the marlin, in order to sexually possess his mother, the sea.

We are told that after forty days Manolin's parents decided that «the old man was now and definitely salao, which is the worst form of unlucky». This sentence proclaims one of the *novel's themes, the heroic struggle against unchangeable fate*. Indeed, the entire first paragraph emphasizes Santiago's apparent lack of success. For example, «It made the boy sad to see the old man come in each day with his skiff empty». And most powerfully, «The sail was patched with flour sacks and, furled, it looked like the flag of permanent defeat».

This type of descriptive degradation of Santiago continues with details of his old, worn body. Even his scars, legacies of past successes, are «old as erosions in a fishless desert». All this changes suddenly, though, when Hemingway says masterfully, «Everything about him was old

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except his eyes and they were the same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated». *This draws attention to a dichotomy between two different types of success: outer, material success and inner, spiritual success*. Also, Santiago's eye color foreshadows Hemingway's increasingly explicit likening of Santiago to the sea, suggesting an analogy between Santiago's indomitable spirit and the sea's boundless strength.

«The old man had taught the boy to fish and the boy loved him.» Manolin is Santiago's apprentice, but their relationship is not restricted to business alone. Manolin idolizes Santiago "as we are meant to" but the object of this idolization is not only the once great though presently failed fisherman; it is an idolization of ideals. This helps explain Manolin's unique, almost religious, devotion to the old man, underscored when Manolin begs Santiago's pardon for his not fishing with the old man anymore. Manolin says, «It was Papa made me leave. I am a boy and I must obey him», to which Santiago replies, «I know... it is quite normal. He hasn't much faith.»

Despite the clear hierarchy of this teacher/student relationship, Santiago does stress his equality with the boy. When Manolin asks to buy the old man a beer, Santiago replies, «Why not?... between fisherman.» And when Manolin asks to help Santiago with his fishing, Santiago replies, «You are already a man». By demonstrating that Santiago has little more to teach the boy, this equality foreshadows the impending separation of the two friends, and also indicates that this will not be a story about a young boy learning from an old man, but a story of an old man learning the unique lessons of the autumn of life.

In fact unity us one of main themes of the story. Hemingway spends a good deal of time drawing connections between Santiago and his natural environment: the fish, birds, and stars are all his brothers or friends, he has the heart of a turtle, eats turtle eggs for strength, drinks shark liver oil for health, etc. Also, apparently contradictory elements are repeatedly shown as aspects of one unified whole: the sea is both kind and cruel, feminine and masculine, the Portuguese man of war is beautiful but deadly, the mako shark is noble but a cruel, etc. The novella's premise of unity helps succor Santiago in the midst of his great tragedy. For Santiago, success and failure are two equal facets of the same existence. They are transitory forms which capriciously arrive and depart without affecting the underlying unity between himself and nature. As long as he focuses on this unity and sees himself as part of nature rather than as an external antagonist competing with it, he cannot be defeated by whatever misfortunes befall him.

This ecstatic, almost erotic, imagery stands in stark contrast to the careful art of fishing we see later in the novel. The fact the fishing requires both calm detachment and violent engagement (a kind of masculine flourish) further illustrates the unity of a world which both oppresses man and out of which the strength to resist that oppression comes.

Hemingway also peppers the novella with numerous references to sight. We are told, for instance, that Santiago has uncannily good eyesight for a man of his age and experience. When Manolin notices this, Santiago replies simply, «I am a strange old man». Given the previously mentioned analogy between Santiago's eyes and the sea, one suspects that his strangeness in this regard has something to do with his relationship to the sea. This connection, though, is somewhat problematic as it might suggest that Santiago would have success as a fisherman.

The simplicity of Santiago's house further develops our view of Santiago as materially unsuccessful. It is interesting, though, that Hemingway draws attention to the relics of Santiago's wife in his house, presenting an aspect of Santiago which is otherwise absent throughout the novel. This is significant because it suggests a certain completeness to Santiago's character which makes him more of an Everyman "appropriate for an allegory" but mentioning it simply to remove it from the stage makes its absence even more noteworthy, and one might question whether the character of Santiago is too roughly drawn to allow the reader to fully identify with his story.

There is an interesting irony in the inversion of roles between the paternal tutor Santiago and the pupil Manolin. While Santiago took care of Manolin on the water by teaching him how to fish, Manolin takes care of Santiago on land by, for example, making sure the old man eats. When

Santiago wants to fish without eating, Santiago assumes a parental tone and declares, «You'll not fish without eating while I'm alive». To which Santiago replies half-jokingly, «Then live a long time and take care of yourself». This inversion sets up the ensuing narrative by making the old Santiago a youth again, ready to receive the wisdom of his quest. Santiago's almost childlike dream of playful lions "symbols of male strength and virility" before his voyage is also a gesture of Santiago's second youth.

There is a premium placed on masculinity and the obligations of manhood. When Santiago wakes Manolin up to help him off, the tired boy says simply, «Que va.... It is what a man must do». As for what this manhood entails, perhaps the most illustrative thing Hemingway says so far is in his characterization of Santiago's humility. Hemingway says of Santiago, «He was too simple to wonder when he had attained humility. But he knew he had attained it and he knew it was not disgraceful and it carried no loss of true pride». Humility and the acceptance of obligation, then, appear to be marks of manhood, a concept Hemingway will flesh out through the course of the novella.

Santiago's start into the sea is an excellent demonstration of Hemingway's descriptive art in its successive engagement of various senses. First, there is smell: «The old man knew he was going far out and he left the smell of the land behind and rowed out into the clean early morning smell of the ocean.» Next, there is sight: «He saw the phosphorescence of the Gulf weed in the water.» And lastly, there is hearing: «... He heard the trembling sound as the flying fish left the water.» This use of different sensory imagery helps create a powerful description of the sea. As the novella's title might indicate, the sea is to play a very important role in the narrative, and Hemingway's exquisite introduction of the sea, signals that importance. As its title suggests, the sea is central character in the novella. Most of the story takes place on the sea, and Santiago is constantly identified with it and its creatures; his sea-colored eyes reflect both the sea's tranquillity and power, and its inhabitants are his brothers. Santiago refers to the sea as a woman, and the sea seems to represent the feminine complement to Santiago's masculinity. The sea might also be seen as the unconscious from which creative ideas are drawn.

Santiago muses about the fragility of the birds he sees. He says, «Why did they make birds so delicate and fine as those sea swallows when the ocean can be so cruel? She is kind and very beautiful. But she can be so cruel...» This dichotomy in the sea's temperament is further illustrated by Santiago's gendered explanation of the sea's many faces.

According to Santiago, people refer to the sea as a woman when they love her. When they view her as a enemy and rival, though, they refer to her as a man. Santiago «always thought of her as feminine and as something that gave or withheld great favors, and if she did wild or wicked things it was because she could not help them». Despite the chauvinism characteristic of Hemingway, this view of the ocean is important in that it indicates that while the sea may bring fortune or ruin, the sea is unitary. It is not sometimes one thing and sometimes another. The good and the bad, or what people perceive as the good and the bad, are all equal parts of this greater unity.

The gendered view also suggests an alternative conception of unity, unity between the masculine and the feminine. As the descriptions of those who view the sea as a man are cast in a negative light, one might argue that the story is repudiation of a homosocial world of competitive masculinity. Man and man will always yield strife; man and woman, Santiago and the sea, complement each other and create a peaceable unity. The representation of the feminine, though, in so abstract a context problematizes this judgment, especially when the only flesh and blood woman we see in the story, the tourist at the very end, is supposed to upset us.

«... I keep them with precision. Only I have no more luck anymore. But who knows? Maybe today. Every day is a new day. *It is better to be lucky. But I would rather be exact. Then when luck comes you are ready*.» He had maintained the precision and exactitude of his previous works in the work. That this was not appreciated was a matter of luck or, one might assume, the caprice of

literary tastes. In light of this interpretation, The Old Man and the Sea is frequently read as a symbolic fictionalization of Hemingway's own quest for his next great catch, his next great book.

Santiago's statement that his eyes adjust to the sun during different parts of the day furnishes another example of the importance of sight and visual imagery in the novella. Santiago says, «All my life the early sun has hurt my eyes, he thought. Yet they are still good. In the evening I can look straight into it without getting the blackness. It has more force in the evening too. But in the morning it is just painful». Given the likening of natural time cycles to human age, e.g. September as the autumn of life, it is plausible to read this passage as a statement of the edifying power of age. While it is difficult to find one's way in the morning of youth, this task becomes easier when done by those who have lived through the day into the evening of life.

About the turtles, Santiago says «Most people are heartless about turtles because a turtle's heart will beat for hours after he has been cut up and butchered. But the old man thought, I have such a heart too and my feet and hands are like theirs». This identification is important as it corroborates our understanding of Santiago's indomitability, the quality of undefeated-ness Hemingway noted early in the novella; with his body destroyed, his heart, his spirit, will fight on. This foreshadows the harrowing task Santiago is about to face with the marlin. Also, Hemingway tells us that Santiago eats turtle eggs for strength and drinks shark liver oil for health. In this way, he internalizes the characteristics of the sea and adopts them as his own.

The episode in which Santiago talks to himself on the ocean can be taken to corroborate the autobiographical interpretation of the novella. Santiago's speech is really Hemingway's thought; the old fisherman figuratively sails the author's unconscious, represented in Freudian symbolism by the sea, in an attempt to pull forth the great story from its inchoate depths. According to this view, everything takes place within Hemingway's mind, a self-referential allegory of the heroic artist «Now it is time to think of only one thing. That which I was born for» searching for greatness in a world which seeks to deprive him of it.

That the fishermen call all the fish tuna and only differentiate between them when they sell them is at once a statement of the theme of unity and a repudiation of the market. It is not ignorance the underlies this practice, but rather a simplifying "though not simplistic" appreciation of the unity of the sea. There are fish and there are fisherman; those who are caught and those who catch. This distillation of parts heightens the allegorical quality of the novel. The market forces the fisherman to forget this symbolic binary relationship and focus on differentiation, requiring a multiplication of the terms of difference. As the novella stakes out a position of privileging unity, this market-driven divisionism come across negatively. This makes sense in light of Hemingway's previously mentioned anger at the unappreciative literary audience for his previous effort.

The next section begins Santiago's pursuit of the hooked marlin, and there is a good deal of simple description of the mechanics of catching such a fish. This helps create a sense of narrative authenticity, the clean conveyance of reality for which Hemingway assiduously strove.

For instance, Hemingway's description of the marlin's initial nibbling on the bait utilizes the same phrases again and again, e.g. "delicate pulling". While this may express the actual event perfectly, the repetition creates a distancing effect, pushing the prose more toward poetry and less towards realistic objectivity. As noted before, this heightens the allegorical quality of the narrative, which, at least explicitly, Hemingway denied.

The unanimous response with which Santiago's thoughts of loneliness are met is another expression of the theme of unity in the novella. Santiago thinks to himself, «No one should be alone in their old age.... But it is unavoidable». As if in response to this, Hemingway introduces a pair of friendly dolphins in the very next paragraph. «They are good», says Santiago. «They make jokes and love on another. They are our brothers like the flying fish.»

Then, as if on cue, Santiago begins to feel sorry for the marlin he has hooked. This pity for the great fish is intensified when Santiago recalls seeing the misery of a male marlin after he had

caught its mate. Saddened deeply by this demonstration of devotion, Santiago and Manolin, with whom he was fishing, «begged her pardon and butchered her promptly».

This heroic angle is played up even more when Santiago ends these reflection by thinking, «Perhaps I should not have been a fisherman.... But that was the thing I was born for». Again, this emphasis on fate is typical of heroic stories, especially tragedies.

Interestingly, one might also read this statement of fate as an expression of Santiago's own place in a symbolic story about the writing process itself. Santiago, a product of Hemingway's authorial imagination, was born to play the role he has in the narrative. In this way, the character's succumbing to fate is a comment on the creative process by which the author controls the destiny of his or her characters.

Santiago's identification with and affection for the marlin increases the longer he is with the fish. In order to convince' the fish to be caught and to steel himself for his difficult task, Santiago says, «Fish.… I love you and respect you very much. But I will kill you before this day ends». Soon after, Santiago tells the bird that has landed on his boat that he cannot help because he is "with a friend". And later, Santiago goes as far as to wish that he could feed the marlin, calling it his brother.

The cramping of Hemingway's left hand is interesting. First, it creates tension by debilitating the protagonist even more, making failure more likely and so his triumph sweeter. Second, if we accept the autobiographical reading of the novella, it can be a symbol for writers block. This is importantly different from Hemingway's previous attempts to blame the readers for his recent lack of success. Now, suddenly, the fault is his own. But not fully. The hand reacts in spite of its possessor's intention, and Santiago speaks to his hand as if it operated independently of himself. This certainly makes the question of who is responsible for Hemingway's failures more complicated. In addition, Santiago's response to the cramp also affords us an opportunity to investigate Hemingway's conception of manhood. As Hemingway writes, «It is humiliating before others to have a diarrhea from ptomaine poisoning or to vomit from it. But a cramp, he thought of it as a calambre, humiliates oneself especially when one is alone». A man's sense of humiliation does not depend exclusively on the presence (or imagined presence) of others who would look upon him with disgust or disdain. It rests on an internal standard of dignity, one which privileges above all control over one's self. It is not only inconvenient or frustrating that Santiago's hand cramped, it is, as Santiago says, «unworthy of it to be cramped». This concern with worthiness is a important to the novel. Santiago's concerns about his own worthiness come to a head when he finally beholds the fish he is tracking. When Santiago finally catches a glimpse of the great marlin, he imagines he is in some sort of aristocratic feud, with each participant needing to demonstrate his prowess to the other before the fight. Not, though, to intimidate the opponent, but rather to demonstrate his own status, to show the other that he is a worthy antagonist. «I wonder why he jumped, the old man thought. He jumped almost as though to show me how big he was. I know now, anyway, he thought. I wish I could show him what sort of man I am. But then he would see the cramped hand.» This necessity to be seen as worthy in the eyes of a perceived equal or superior complicates the internal standard of manhood which Hemingway seems to elucidate elsewhere. From the time Santiago sees the fish to the end of the book, he seems obsessed with the idea of proving himself a worthy slayer of such a noble beast. This obsession, more often than not, is couched in self-ascriptions of inferiority. Santiago thanks God that marlins «are not as intelligent as we who kill them; although they are more noble and able». And he thinks to himself, «I wish I was the fish... with everything he has against only my will and my intelligence». The dissociation between intelligence on the one hand and nobility and ability on the other is very interesting, as it amounts to an exaltation of the natural and animalistic over the human, if we accept intelligence as the mark of humanity. This heightens the stakes of the struggle between the marlin and Santiago, and almost necessitates the long battle that ensues, for Santiago's eventually victory can only be seen as deserved if he has proved his worthiness and nobility through suffering. In the end, though, we

might still ask, according to the novella's own terms, whether Santiago's victory over the fish amounted to a *triumph for humanity or a miscarriage of justice*, in which an ignoble human brute defeats the sea's paragon of nobility. Santiago continues his obsession with proving his worthiness to the hooked fish. He says, «I'll kill him... in all his greatness and glory. Although it is unjust. But I will show him what a man can do and what a man endures». Again, the fish is construed as a noble superior, the death of which would be unjust. The last sentence foreshadows the intense struggle to ensue. Also, because of the particularities of traditional English usage, the last sentence of the quote can be read two ways. A man can refer to a human being or a male. As Hemingway is usually understood to conflate the noblest qualities of human beings with the noblest qualities of the male sex, I think it is best to read the statement both ways at once. Making Santiago a representative for all humankind serves primarily to heighten the allegorical nature of the novel.

In the next paragraph, Santiago makes some very interesting comments about the nature of worthiness, emphasizing its curiously fragile nature. Having told Manolin on several occasions that he was a strange old man‹strangeness here is synonym for nobility, something which normal people apparently lack‹he must now prove it; «the thousand times he had proved it mean nothing. Now he was proving it again. Each time was a new time and he never thought about the past when he was doing it.» This is a difficult passage to interpret as it could be read as an expression of Santiago's particular psychology, as a matter of fact, he never thought about the past and always needed to prove himself as each new situation arose, or as a broader statement about nobility, one which holds that nobility is not a really a quality of character but of actions. Given the novella's aforementioned emphasis on allegorical generality, it seems safe to accept the latter reading. As with the necessity of having one's worthiness recognized by others, this alienation of nobility from the person to his deeds complicates Hemingway's internal standard of manhood.

Worthiness and being heroic and manly are not merely qualities of character which one possesses or does not. One must constantly demonstrate one's heroism and manliness through actions conducted with dignity. Interestingly, worthiness cannot be conferred upon oneself. Santiago is obsessed with proving his worthiness to those around him. He had to prove himself to the boy: «The thousand times he had proved it mean nothing. Now he was proving it again. Each time was a new time and he never thought about the past when he was doing it.» And he had to prove himself to the marlin: «I'll kill him... in all his greatness and glory. Although it is unjust. But I will show him what a man can do and what a man endures.» A heroic and manly life is not, then, one of inner peace and self-sufficiency; it requires constant demonstration of one's worthiness through noble action.

He even concludes that «man is not much beside the great birds and beasts. Still I would rather be that beast down there in the darkness of the sea». Again, Nature, and the marlin especially, is privileged above even the greatest exemplars of human greatness. In order to counteract these feelings of inferiority, Santiago recalls an almost mythic arm wrestling match he had in his youth. Given that this match lasted a full day and night with blood flowing from beneath each participants' fingernails, it seems reasonable to read it as hyperbole, underscoring the fable-like quality of the novella.

At one point in the novel, Santiago's concern about worthiness takes on an added dimension. Instead of concerning himself solely with his own worthiness to kill the marlin, he now concerns himself with whether the people who will buy and eat the meat of the marlin will be worthy to do so. «How many people will he feed, he thought. But are they worthy to eat him? No, of course not. There is no one worthy of eating him from the manner of his behavior and his great dignity.» This extension of unworthiness from the killer to consumer underscores how truly inferior Santiago thinks people are with respect to great beasts such as the marlin. If he truly believes this, though, why would he continue. He may prove his own worth by enduring his struggle, but there is no way for the people in the fish markets to prove themselves. Indeed, the exalting the nobility of his prey too much seems to exclude commercial fishing for marlins altogether.

The theme of unity comes out in this section as well. Whereas this theme had previously taken the form of Santiago's identification with the sea and its creatures, Santiago expands the scope of his identification by including the celestial bodies as brothers. He claims fraternity with the stars on several occasions and justifies his need to sleep by considering the behavior or the moon and sun and ocean. He says, «I am as clear as the stars that are my brothers. Still I must sleep. They sleep and the moon and the sun sleep and even the ocean sleeps sometimes on certain days when there is no current and a flat calm». This broader identification underscores the unity of human life with all of nature.

When he finally does fall asleep, Santiago has a very interesting dream. He dreamt of «a vast school of porpoises that stretched for eight or ten miles and it was in the time of their mating and they would leap high into the air and return into the same hole they had made in the water when they leaped». The imagery here is obviously sexual, emphasizing the feminine character of the sea which Santiago spoke about in the first section. Santiago's final confrontation with the fish after he wakes further develops Santiago's equality with the fish and the operative conception of manhood which Santiago works to uphold. Pulling in the circling fish exhausts Santiago, and the exasperated old fisherman exclaims, «You are killing me, fish.... But you have a right to. Never have I seen a greater, or more beautiful, or a calmer or more noble thing than you, brother. Come on and kill me. I do not care who kills who». As before, the marlin is Santiago's exemplar of nobility. It is very interesting that Santiago does not seem to care who kills whom. This, like so much of Santiago's relation to the fish, seems to recall an aristocratic code of honor in which dying by the hand of a noble opponent is as noble an end as defeating him. Indeed, it might even be a preferable end because one does not know under what conditions one will die. Santiago's obsession with valorizing his opponent seems to a far cry from our common idea that one must devalue or dehumanize that which we kill. To view a victim as an equal is supposed to render killing it a sin, and make oneself susceptible to death: the golden rule, if you don't want to die (and who does?), don't kill others. Santiago defies this reasoning, thought he accepts the consequences of its logic of equality. Instead of trying to degrade his object, he elevates it, accepting with it the equalizing proposition that his death is as worthy an outcome of the struggle as the his opponent's death. He is only worthy to kill the opponent if he is worthy to he killed by him: two sides of the same coin.

That this relates to Santiago's (and we might suppose Hemingway's) conception of manhood is likely obvious. The connection between the fish's behavior and masculine *behavior is brought out most powerfully when Santiago tells himself, «Keep your head clear and know how to suffer like a man*. Or a fish....» Comporting oneself with grace (or calmness as Santiago's quote in the previous paragraph indicates) in the face of pain is central to the novella's idea of manhood. Santiago himself says «*pain does not matter to a man*», and it is only by ignoring his pain that he can sustain the effort to capture the fish. Withstanding pain, then, handling it as a man, is the essence of proving himself worthy to catch the marlin.

This last section of the novella constitutes the tortuous denouement of the plot. Caught out far at sea with a dead, bleeding marlin lashed to the side of his boat, Santiago is asking for trouble and trouble he receives. Everything he has worked so hard for slowly but surely disintegrates, until he arrives back on land in worse condition than he left. *Triumph over crushing adversity is the heart of heroism, and in order for Santiago the fisherman to be a heroic emblem for humankind, his tribulations must be monumental*.

Hemingway vision of heroism is Sisyphean, requiring continuous labor for quintessentially ephemeral ends. What the hero does is to face adversity with dignity and grace, hence Hemingway's Neo-Stoic emphasis on self-control and the other facets of his idea of manhood. *What we achieve or fail at externally is not as significant to heroism as the comporting ourselves with inner nobility. As Santiago says, «Man is not made for defeat.... A man can be destroyed but not defeated»*.

Hemingway accentuates Santiago's personal destruction by reiterating his connection with the marlin he has caught. Soon after he has secured the marlin to the boat and hoisted his sail, he

becomes somewhat delirious, questioning if it is he who is bringing in the marlin or vice versa. His language is very telling. «... If the fish were in the skiff, with all dignity gone, there would be no question.... But they were sailing together lashed side by side.» The more the marlin is devoured, the less strength Santiago has until, when the marlin is simply a bare skeleton, Santiago «had no thoughts or feelings of any kind».

The sharks are interesting creatures. While this may have some credence, I think the sharks are better read as representations of the negative, destructive aspect of the sea and, more generally, human existence. As we have seen, the theme of unity is very important in the novel, but this unity does not only encompass friendly or innocuous aspects of the whole. While he battles against them, the sharks are no less creatures of the sea, brothers if you will, than the friendly porpoises Santiago encounters earlier in his expedition.

Reflecting on his victory over the mako, Santiago says the shark is «cruel and able and strong and intelligent. But I was more intelligent than he was. Perhaps not.... Perhaps I was only better armed». The other shovel-nosed sharks are not positively described «they were hateful sharks, bad smelling, scavengers as well as killers» but they are certainly part of the ocean environment.

On a psychoanalytic reading of the novella, the sharks might be seen as representations of a guilty conscience. The son has killed the father, the marlin, to possess the mother, the ocean, and now suffers for his transgression, an inversion of Orestes whom the Furies pursued for killing his mother.

Santiago's discussion of sin is very significant in a novella about man's resistance against fate. *He wonders if it was a sin for him to kill the marlin. «I suppose it was even though I did it to keep alive and feed many people. But then everything is a sin.»* Santiago attempts to assuage this doubt by recalling that he was «born to be a fisherman as the fish was born to be a fish». Ignoring the invalid inference made in the first quote «if killing X for reason Y is a sin, it does not hold that all actions performed for reason Y are sins» this is an important point. According to this reasoning, Santiago is fated to sin and, presumably, to suffer for it. This seems to express Hemingway's belief that human existence is characterized by constant suffering, not because of some avoidable transgression, but because that's just the way it is.

Thinking more, Santiago reasons that he did not only kill the marlin for food. Speaking to himself, he says, «You killed him for pride and because you are a fisherman. You loved him when he was alive and you loved him after. If you love him, it is not a sin to kill him. Or is it more?».

Hemingway's treatment of pride in the novella is ambivalent. A heroic man like Santiago should have pride in his actions, and as Santiago shows us, «humility was not disgraceful and it carried no loss of true pride». At the same, though, it is apparently Santiago's pride which presses him to travel dangerously far out into the sea, «beyond all people in the world», to catch the marlin. While he loved the marlin and called him brother, Santiago admits to killing it for pride, his blood stirred by battle with such a noble and worthy antagonist. Some have interpreted the loss of the marlin as the price Santiago had to pay for his pride in traveling out so far in search of such a catch. Contrarily, one could argue that this pride was beneficial as it allowed Santiago an edifying challenge worthy of his heroism. In the end, *Hemingway suggests that pride in a job well done, even if pride drew one unnecessarily into the situation, is a positive trait*.

Adding to his guilt about killing the marlin, Santiago then recalls his enjoyment of killing the mako. As noted earlier, the mako is not a unconditionally wicked creature. As Santiago says to himself, «He lives on the live fish as you do. He is not a scavenger nor just a moving appetite as some sharks are. He is beautiful and noble and knows no fear of anything.» Why then could he enjoy this killing and not the marlin's? Santiago offers two short responses, though neither one really answers the question: «I killed him in self-defense.... And I killed him well.» The second response seems to more significant, but this would mean that killing the marlin was not a sin since he killed it well too. This suggests Santiago's sin, if it exists, must be interpreted differently.

Throughout this final section, Santiago repeatedly apologizes to the marlin in a way that pro-

vides another way to read Santiago's sin. He says, «Half fish.... Fish that you were. I am sorry that I went out so far. I ruined us both». According to this and similar passages («And what beat you, he thought. Nothing, I went out too far»), Santiago's transgression is no longer his killing the fish, but going out too far in the ocean, «beyond all people in the world». While the former sin helped account for the inescapable misery of the human condition, the latter focuses instead on escapable misery brought about by intentional action. Santiago chose to go out so far; he did not need to do so, but in doing so he must surrender his prize, the marlin, to the jealous sea.

This understanding of Santiago's sin is strange because it seems to separate man from nature in a way which contradicts the rest of the novella. Going out too far is an affront against nature similar to the hubristic folly of Greek tragedy; he has courted disaster through his own pride. Nowhere previously in the novel was this apparent, though. The sea seemed to welcome him, providing him company and food for his expedition. There was no resistance from nature to his activities, except perhaps the sharks, but these were never made to be nature's avengers. This reading of Santiago's sin thus seems very problematic.

Santiago's discussion of luck after the second shovel-nosed shark attack is interesting dramatically, as it once foreshadows Santiago's misfortune and offers the slightest illusion of hope for the reader as the novella approaches its end. He wonders to himself, «Maybe I'll have the luck to bring the forward half in. I should have some luck. No.... You violated your luck when you went too far outside». This clearly foreshadows the loss of the entire marlin. Later, though, Santiago remarks that «Luck is a thing that comes in many forms and who can recognize her?». This statement certainly suggests that luck may be with Santiago even if it is not apparent to him or to the reader. Of course, there is no luck for Santiago, but suggesting there might be makes Santiago's eventual misfortune more powerful.

That Santiago completes the novel undefeated and still in possession of his dignity, is demonstrated by his conversation with Manolin. His first words to the boy are «They beat me. They truly beat me», referring to the sharks. Immediately, though, he moves to mundane matters such as what to do with the head of the marlin and what Manolin has caught in his absence. When Santiago refuses to fish with Manolin because of his own lack of luck, the boy says he will bring the luck. Soon, Santiago is talking about how to make a new killing lance in preparation of their next voyage. *Finally, in the last sentence of the novel, we are told that «the old man was dreaming of lions», the same symbols of strength and youth which he enjoyed before his voyage. True to Hemingway's formula for heroism, Santiago, for all this trials and tribulations, remains the same unsuccessful but undefeated soul as before.*

Hemingway draws a distinction between two different types of success: outer, material success and inner, spiritual success. While Santiago clearly lacks the former, the import of this lack is eclipsed by his possession of the later. *One way to describe Santiago's story is as a triumph of indefatigable spirit over exhaustible material resources*. As noted above, the characteristics of such a spirit are those of heroism and manhood. That Santiago can end the novella undefeated after steadily losing his hard-earned, most valuable possession is a testament to the privileging of inner success over outer success.

Triumph over crushing adversity is the heart of heroism, and in order for Santiago the fisherman to be a heroic emblem for humankind, his tribulations must be monumental. Triumph, though, is never final. Hemingway vision of heroism is Sisyphean, requiring continuous labor for quintessentially ephemeral ends. What the hero does is to face adversity with dignity and grace, hence Hemingway's Neo-Stoic emphasis on self-control and the other facets of his idea of manhood. What we achieve or fail at externally is not as significant to heroism as the comporting ourselves with inner nobility. As Santiago says, «*Man is not made for defeat.... A man can be destroyed but not defeated*».

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Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*: Science, Science Fiction, or Autobiography? (*)

SHERRY GINN (**)

Many scholars have analyzed the life and fiction of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (see for example, Fisch, Mellor, & Schor, 1993; Levine & Knoepflmacher, 1979). Most of the focus has been upon her most famous work, *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* (for example, Mellor, 1988; Bennett & Robinson, 1990; Van Luchene, 1980). Written when only 19 years old, *Frankenstein* tells the tale of a man obsessed with creating life, but then abandoning that life once it breathes. It has been repeatedly suggested that the tale of *Frankenstein*'s creature is autobiography, Mary's own tale as seen through the eyes of a 19-year-old woman (see for example, Mellor, 1988). Some claim the novel to be the first legitimate example of the genre we now call science fiction. Some study the novel in terms of its depiction and frank indictment of science. Indeed, study of the scientific aspects of the novel is so popular and timely that the present author and others have presented or published papers on this theme (Ginn, 2003; Ketterer, 1997). The National Library of Medicine has developed a traveling exhibit (www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/frankenstein/frankhome.html) examining Frankenstein's science, and a conference dedicated to this theme (Frankenstein's Science: Theories of Human Nature in the 18th and 19th Centuries) was held in Canberra, Australia in 2003.

The present paper will discuss all of these themes briefly. However the major focus on the paper will be to briefly analyze Mary's life from a psychosocial perspective. I will discuss Mary's life before and after *Frankenstein* within the framework of Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, and the revisions of portions of the theory as proposed by Marcia and colleagues (1980; 1987; 1989; 1994; Patterson, Sochting, & Marcia, 1992).

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THE LIFE OF MARY SHELLEY

The essential elements of Frankenstein's story, taken from Mary's own life, have been identified as (1) a white gravestone; (2) a motherless child; (3) a beloved father turning his back on his child; (4) a university student conducting wild experiments; and (5) dreams of rekindling the life of a dead child. A number of excellent biographies have been written about Mary (Mellor, 1988; Nichols, 1988; Seymour, 2000; Sunstein, 1989), and I will only summarize her life here. Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin was born in 1797, the second daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft, author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. She was the only daughter of William Godwin, author of *Caleb Williams* and *A Certain Justice*. Unfortunately, MWG died 9 days after giving birth to Mary. Thus, the white gravestone is her mother's and Mary is the motherless child. Certainly it is known that Mary spent countless hours at her mother's grave during her childhood and adolescence. She even frequented the graveside with Percy Shelley where, it is presumed, they realized their love for one another. Or, at least, Percy continued his pursuit of an ideal soul mate personified in the daughter of two of the persons he most idolized at that time of his life. William Godwin turned his back on his daughter, not once but twice. Unable to cope with raising children, little Mary as well as Mary Wollstonecraft's other daughter, Fanny Emlay, William Godwin sought a wife. Mary found life intolerable following her father's marriage to Mary Jane Clairmont. The new Mrs. Godwin's jealousy of Mary and her mother, with its resulting insecurity, made life unbearable for Mary; Mary did not relish having anyone take her mother's place nor did she enjoy her father directing his attention and affection to anyone other than herself. These jealousies made life increasingly unbearable for William Godwin, so much so that he sent Mary away, to live in Scotland with people he or she barely knew. And, when Mary eloped with the already married Percy Shelley in 1814, her father rejected her again (while still demanding money from Percy). Percy was the student conducting wild experiments in his university rooms; he was expelled for writing a paper extolling the virtues of atheism. Finally, Mary reportedly dreamed of rekindling the life of the daughter born prematurely in 1815. Mary gave birth to 4 children in her short life with Percy (he died in 1822), and she had at least one miscarriage, almost fatal. Only one of her children survived to adulthood. Mary blamed Percy for the death of their son, William, and her treatment of Percy following William's death led to intense feelings of guilt following Percy's death by drowning. It is likely that Mary never recovered from that guilt.

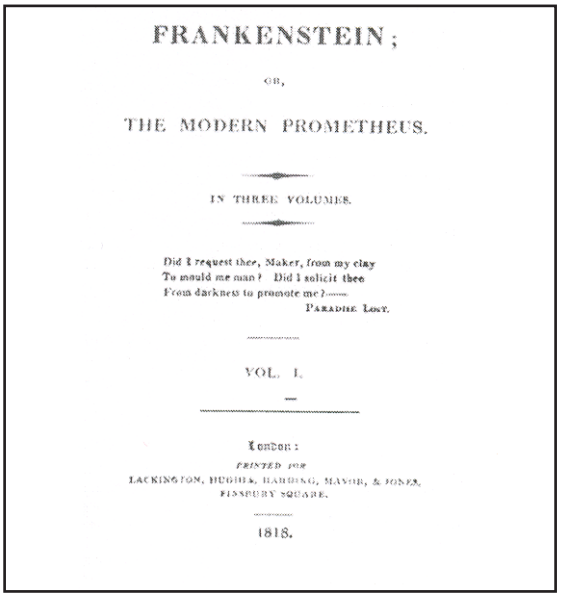
THE MYTH AND STORY OF FRANKENSTEIN

To alleviate the boredom caused by a cold and wet summer in Geneva, Lord Byron proposed that each member of the summer's party write a ghost story. Those people included Mary and Percy Shelley, Claire Clairmont (Mary's stepsister), Byron, and his physician and friend, Joseph Pollidori. Each member undertook the task, but most quickly wearied of it. Pollidori actually conceived a vampire story, but his contribution was not well received by Byron. Mary is the only person who wrote a novel. In her preface to the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein*, Mary tells how *Frankenstein* was conceived during a horrific dream, but some scholars greet that statement with the skepticism due someone recalling an incident from their past (Florescu, 1975).

The young Victor Frankenstein attends university and becomes obsessed with the creation of life. He creates a man out of body parts of dead men and animates the Creature. Horrified at the sight, Victor rejects the Creature when it awakens. Abandoned, the Creature is forced to fend for himself. The Creature teaches himself to read and learns that he is different from other men. The Creature falls in love with a family of poor peasants, the deLacey's, but they reject the Creature in fear when they finally see his distorted visage. The Creature vows to seek out his creator in order to determine why he is different from other men and to demand a mate, someone with whom he can

share his solitude. The Creature kills Victor's youngest brother, William, blaming Victor's abandonment for his evil nature. The Creature vows to kill others in Victor's family unless Victor complies with the request for a mate. Victor eventually creates a mate for the Creature but kills her in horror at the idea that the two Creatures might reproduce. In retaliation, the Creature kills Elizabeth, Victor's wife, on their wedding night. He eventually kills Victor as well.

FIGURE 1



FRANKENSTEIN;

OR,

THE MODERN PROMETHEUS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
To mould me man? Did I solicit thee
From darkness to promote me?——
PARADISE LOST.

VOL. I.

London:
PRINTED FOR
LACKINGTON, HUGHES, HARDING, MAVOR, & JONES,
FINSBURY SQUARE.

1818.

The first edition of *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* was published anonymously, in 1818, with a dedication to William Godwin and an introduction by Percy Shelley. Various claims as to authorship were forwarded and Mary was angered by the assumption by some that Percy was the author. Although Percy made extensive revisions to the first edition, for which Mary was grateful, she alone was the author of *Frankenstein*. After his (favorable) review of the novel Mary wrote Sir Walter Scott and claimed authorship. Other critics were not very kind to her following her claim. Indeed The British Critic stated… «the author is, we understand, a female; this is an aggravation of that which is the prevaling (sic) fault of the novel; but if our authoress can forget the gentleness of her sex, it is no reason why we should; and we shall therefore dismiss the novel without further comment» (April 1818). A second edition was published in 1831. Mary wrote the preface to this edition stating, «I bid my hideous progeny go forth and prosper. I have an affection for» … this «offspring of happy days». She claimed that she had made no substantive changes to the story, although that is not true. Since its publication, the novel has never been out of print; it is considered by some to be only a "minor" novel, but one taught in many institutions, within a number of disciplines (see for example, Behrendt, 1990). Over 40 motion pictures have been produced to date and countless stories have been written using the theme. But, how do we classify this story? Is it science, science fiction, or, as some have claimed, autobiography?

MARY SHELLEY'S SCIENCE

When attempting to determine if the story is scientific, *as written*, we must ask several questions. One of these is, could a young woman with no formal education really conceive such "hideous progeny"? Secondly, could a young woman really understand the scientific and philosophical principles necessary to write this story? However, the most important question concerns Mary's science: What exactly did she know and what exactly did she say? To answer these questions we must understand that, while Mary had no formal education, as was typical of women of her time, she was a voracious reader. Her journals for the years 1814-1818, which span the years when she wrote the novel, give us an idea of her reading list (Bennett, 1980-1988; Feldman & Scott-Kilvert, 1987; Spark & Stanford, 1951). A few of the books she read included her parents' books (*Enquiry concerning Political Justice* and *Caleb Williams, or Things as they are*, by William Godwin and *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, and *Maria, or the Wrongs of a Woman*, by Mary Wolstonecraft); *The Physiognomical System* of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim; *Rasselas*, by Samuel Johnson; *The Sorcerer* (Veit Weber), translated by R. Huish; *The Monk*, by Matthew Gregory Lewis; *Ruins of Empire*, by Volney; *History and Progress of the French Revolution*; *Paradise Lost*, by Milton; *The Sorrows of Young Werter*, by Goethe; *Plutarch's Lives*; and, *Emile*, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. All total, Mary read over 75 books during the year preceding the writing of Frankenstein. Interestingly, both Mary and Claire Claremont's journals of this significant year are lost.

One difference between the 1818 and 1831 editions of the text involves galvanism, or the use of electricity to stimulate nerve impulses. Mary was aware of Galvani's discovery. Luigi Galvani (1737-1798) proposed that electricity flows through nerves. Galvani showed that stimulation of a frog's nerve causes contraction of the muscle to which it is attached (1791). The scientific community was excited by the potential use of this new force and research was conducted throughout Europe on the application of electricity to induce and sustain life. Indeed, an attempt was made to shock Harriet Shelley back to life following her suicide by drowning. Victor learns of Franklin's experiments with electricity from his father in the 1818 edition, but references to his father's interest in science are omitted from the 1831 edition. Thus, Victor may place the blame upon his father by saying, if his father had shown more interest and knowledge in science, then Victor would not have been seduced by it at university leading to the monster's creation (1831 edition). Obviously Mary could not know how to animate life in enough detail to write it in the book; we do not have that knowledge in the 21st century. Nevertheless, the novel continues to resonate with readers to this day because of its criticism of science without conscience.

CLASSIFYING FRANKENSTEIN

Some claim the novel to be the first legitimate example of the genre we now call science fiction, a genre that: (1) is grounded in valid scientific research; (2) predicts what might be possible in the future given new scientific discoveries; and, (3) offers a humanistic critique of either specific technological inventions or the very nature of scientific thinking (Mellor, 1988). Jane Donawerth (1997) contends that *Frankenstein* is feminist science fiction because it introduced 3 themes that can be repeatedly observed in science fiction, as written by women: (1) locating a female voice in a male world; (2) creating an identity for women as alien; and, (3) the exclusion of women from science. While Mary Shelley was an extremely well read young woman, much of the scientific discoveries of the day were not broached in the novel. In addition, what was included was not always included correctly or in depth. It can be argued that the changes that Mary made in the novel between the 1818 and 1831 editions reduce the likelihood that the novel will become outdated. Reading the novel and using the characteristics of science fiction, as proposed by both Mellor and Donawerth, leads me to conclude that the novel does qualify as science fiction.

Certainly it is not as scientific as contemporary science fiction, but that does not mean that Mary did not introduce a new literary genre with *Frankenstein*. The novel presents a scathing critique of the science of her day that was anti-family and anti-female. Considering Mary's desire for a stable family, we can also see how many have stated that the novel is autobiographical in many respects.

Is *Frankenstein* autobiography? Consider the essential elements. Each is certainly drawn from Mary's life: the motherless child; the father rejecting the child; a grieving mother mourning for a dead child; a university student conducting wild experiments. Certainly each element found its way into the novel, but reducing the novel to autobiography is too simple. While in many respects Victor Frankenstein is modeled on Percy Shelley, there is no evidence that Percy resented such a portrayal. And, Mary never repudiated her father or her father's treatment of her, even during William Godwin's dreadful conduct following Mary's elopement with Percy, before their marriage. While Mary made quite a statement with *Frankenstein* about the problems arising from lack of family relationships and parental abdication of responsibility, it is doubtful whether she consciously meant to indict her own father for his treatment of her in childhood.

Nevertheless I believe that reading *Frankenstein* and Mary's other work within the context of her life allows us to understand her more clearly. It is my contention that this understanding will be effected most clearly by reading Mary's life and work with the framework of psychosocial theory.

THE EIGHT STAGES OF MAN

Erik Erikson (1950, 1968, 1969, 1974, 1975, 1980, and 1982) proposed that personality development proceeded through a series of 8 stages, with each stage occurring in response to demands placed upon the individual by his or her environment. In response to these demands the individual confronts a conflict that will lead to growth and further psychic development *if* the individual can successfully resolve that conflict. Thus, resolving conflict at each stage of development compels the individual toward growth, whereas failure to resolve the conflict results in failure to develop and grow. Each stage is a time of increased vulnerability and also a time of challenge and potential, representing the turning points in our lives.

The first stage confronting the individual, called trust vs. mistrust, occurs during the first year of life. In this stage the infant must come to trust that his or her caregivers will fulfill his or her needs for food, warmth, comfort, and love. A feeling of physical comfort coupled with a minimal amount of fear about the future sets the stage for the lifelong expectation that the world will be a good place in which to live. Failure to have its needs met leads the infant to mistrust not only the caregivers, but also others in the social environment as well.

The second stage arises during the second and third years of the child's life when the first demands for autonomy are made upon the child. By this age the child is learning to walk and talk, and the parents now demand that the child toilet-train. Successful resolution of this stage of autonomy vs. self-doubt leads the child to begin life independently of the parents.

During the third stage of initiative vs. guilt, the child becomes even more independent and begins interacting with its world, primarily through fantasy and play. These activities serve the purpose of preparing the child for the roles he or she will play as an adult. Behavior becomes active and purposeful within an ever-widening social environment. Parents must allow the child the freedom to pursue play so that the child may learn how to interact with other people. Additionally the child assumes greater and greater responsibility for his or her body, toys, pets, and behavior. Anxiety and guilt result when the child's attempts to master its environment are restricted. However, Erikson believes that such guilt is relieved easily whenever the child experiences a sense of accomplishment, which is likely to occur often during this stage of development.

The fourth stage is called industry vs. inferiority. The child has now begun formal education and is coming into contact with people, other than the parents, who exert influence. The child must

master the rigors of school while learning to deal with even more people within its environment. Children direct all of their energy during this period of development toward mastering their own intellectual skills.

During adolescence the child confronts the question «Who am I and why am I here?» The heart of the fifth stage of development, identity vs. role-confusion, is the identity crisis. The adolescent must confront the roles that he or she has played in his or her life thus far and incorporate them into a cohesive identity. To this end the adolescent must be allowed to explore new and different roles or different paths in previous roles. Failure to synthesize an identity leads to the inability to find direction in life and pursue a meaningful future. Following identity development the adolescent enters young adulthood, in which the overwhelming social pressure is to find a mate. Increasingly intimate relationships with friends and the drive toward marriage and procreation characterize this stage of intimacy vs. isolation. Young adulthood is thus a period of childbearing and childrearing.

Middle adulthood, referred to as generativity vs. stagnation, is characterized by launching the children into the world. The individual's children are now entering into their own 4th or 5th stages of development and the middle-aged individual may now feel a need to "give-back" to the world. The person becomes concerned with future generations; this concern may manifest itself in charitable work. However, the primary task of this stage is helping younger generations of people develop useful and productive lives. Finally, the individual enters old age, the stage of integrity vs. despair. The individual must look back upon his or her life and be satisfied. They should have developed a positive outlook throughout the previous 7 stages. If they have done so, then reflection on their life will show a life well spent. Not every decision was a wise one and life may not have turned out exactly as one wanted; however, failure to look back upon one's life with satisfaction yields despair.

READING MARY WITHIN ERIKSON'S FRAMEWORK

For the purposes of this paper, and in the interest of brevity, I will only discuss Mary Shelley within the context of Erikson's 5th and 6th stages of development, as it is my contention that her life can best be understood by recognizing her failure to resolve the two crises of adolescence and young adulthood, that is, the crises of identity and intimacy. I propose that whereas Erikson's theory of psychosocial development can be used to analyze Mary's life, the theory should be modified as suggested by several researchers (Douvan & Adelson, 1966; Gilligan, 1992; Rogers, 1987; Patterson, Sochting, & Marcia, 1992). These investigators proposed that the fifth and sixth stages of Erikson's theory be reversed for women. That is, women are socialized to pursue intimate relationships and these relationships are more important concerns for female adolescents than is the development of an identity. Indeed Rogers (1987) found that care and concern for others were related to the development of a sense of self in women. In that study, at least, the development of intimate bonds with others predated the development of identity. Analysis of Mary's life and fiction provides much support for this hypothesis.

Exactly who was Mary Shelley, the woman? Mary Shelley was the daughter of two of the most influential authors of their times. She longed to live up to the reputation of her parents. She then eloped with and later married a man destined to become one of the greatest poets in the English romantic tradition. Although she did publish many works of fiction and nonfiction during her life that were generally well received, she was best known for the work she did as Percy's literary executor. Her greatest fame during her lifetime arose out of her scandalous relationship with Percy Shelley. And, although we know her now as the author of *Frankenstein* and greatly admire her and her work, following the publication of this, her most famous work, many believed that Percy had actually written the tale and simply published it under Mary's name. The film

Frankenstein, wondrously directed by James Whale (1931), gives credit to *Mrs. Percy B. Shelley* as the author of the original work. Long after Percy's death we see Mary living a life devoted to promoting her husband's reputation and raising their sole surviving child, Percy Florence. Mary subsumed her identity into Percy's: she was Percy's lover, then his wife, and lastly his widow and champion. Whereas we know her for her own works in our time, she was less known in her own time as her own person and more so as Percy's wife and widow. A chronology by Peter Dale Scott lists only 2 events occurring in her life following the 1831 publication of the novel: William Godwin's death in 1836, and Mary's own death in 1851 (Levine & Knoepflmacher, 1979). In other words, Scott gives credit to Mary for writing *Frankenstein*, but does not consider her life beyond her greatest literary achievement. Thus, for the most part Mary was defined in terms of her greatest work of fiction, her father and mother, and her husband, although interest in Mary, her life and her other literary accomplishments have enjoyed a resurgence of interest within the last few years.

FIGURE 2

(Corbis-Bettman)

Although Mary was a published author herself before she met Percy Shelley, she credits Percy with encouraging her to continue writing. In the preface to the 1831 edition Mary wrote that Percy «was from the very first anxious that I should prove myself worthy of my parentage and enrol (sic) myself on the page of fame. He was forever inciting me to obtain literary reputation.» Mary's relationship with Percy is not easy to classify. While Mary kept a journal throughout her life, and she and Percy kept a joint journal following their elopement, she does not give us intimate details of her life with Percy. We can speculate about Percy's attitudes toward "free love" and how Mary received that attitude. Some have speculated about relationships that Mary might have had with other men and about relationships that Percy might have had with other women, including Mary's stepsister, Claire Clairmont (Gittings & Manton, 1992). I myself speculate about Percy's relationship

with Bryon. Mary considered Percy to be her soul mate, and he felt the same way about her, at least in the beginning. She considered him to be both a mentor and critic, by virtue of his classical education, a luxury not afforded to her as a woman. Certainly she was his mistress and then his wife. She followed him into exile following their elopement, even though they were virtually penniless, a circumstance that probably contributed to the death of her first child. We also know that she was not happy throughout much of their marriage, because of the scandal of their elopement, the suicide of Harriet Shelley, the constant presence of Claire Clairmont, her father's relentless demands for money, the refusal of Percy's family to provide for them, Percy's dalliances with other women, the deaths of 3 of her children and her worry about the health of the fourth. Only one of Mary's children survived to adulthood (Percy Florence), and it is almost certain that she blamed Percy for the death of baby William. Mary met Percy when she was 15 years old, eloped with him when she was 16 and was widowed shortly before her 25th birthday. She became the woman Percy wanted her to be, the daughter of two of the most famous authors of their day. One wonders did he love her for herself or for her antecedents.

It is my contention that meeting Percy gave Mary a further sense of identity, beyond that afforded to her by being the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin. Percy then molded Mary into what he wanted a wife to be, and since she loved him so much and trusted his judgment, she allowed him to create her, just as Victor created the Creature. However, while in the novel Victor rejects the creature upon first seeing his horrible visage, Percy does not reject Mary. Rather, she rejects him following the death of baby William. And that rejection led to Mary's misery for the remainder of her life: she was never able to make it right. Her creator died. Mary claimed that her life ended with Shelley's death. Some have speculated that guilt motivated her to lionize Percy. He certainly became more perfect each year beyond his death. Mary sought to publish Percy's poems and served as his literary executor, battling for many years with her father-in-law for the right to publish Percy's work.

While Mary's identity as wife and daughter is not in question, one wonders whether Mary established a sense of self that is separate from William Godwin, Percy Shelley, and Mary Wollstonecraft. Marcia and associates have proposed that Erikson's 5th and 6th stages of development are reversed in women. Thus, whereas men develop a sense of self when in their teens that enables them to establish intimate relationships with others, Marcia proposes that women are socialized to establish those intimate relationships early in life. Only after marriage, child bearing, and child rearing can a woman develop a sense of identity, a self beyond partner and children. Unfortunately for Mary, Percy's untimely death meant that she was forced to find a way to provide for herself and her child; her father-in-law only provided for Percy Florence after a long series of negotiations. Mary attempted to assuage her guilt following Percy's death as well as provide financially for her son by becoming Percy's literary executor, although her father-in-law harassed her about this until his death. Mary thus continued to identify herself as Percy's wife for the remainder of her life, and as we have seen, others continued to identify her that way for over 150 years.

While Frankenstein has endured for almost 200 years, it is only within the last 20 years or so that Mary has been "re-discovered" by literary scholars. While none of her other published works have enjoyed the same success as «her hideous progeny», Mary published several pieces of short fiction, a number of novels (namely *Falkner*, *Lodore*, *Valperga*, *The Last Man*, and *The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck*), 2 allegorical plays (*Midas*, *Proserpine*), as well as several works of nonfiction throughout the remainder of her life. She enjoyed a wide circle of friends, but never remarried after Percy's death, not necessarily because she did not want to. It is doubtful if many men would want to live in Percy's shadow. She had a close relationship with her son and his wife, but Percy Florence left no heirs. Much of Mary's adult life was spent in atonement for her birth, her scandalous elopement, her novel with «neither principle, object, or moral», and her "cold" treatment of Percy before his death. Her mysterious illnesses finally took their toll on her in 1851 when she was but 53 years old.

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The phenomenology of space – Attic memories and secrets

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> Washington – Contractors installing ductwork in an attic found a suitcase containing the skeleton of a baby who apparently died more than 20 years ago. «When they attempted to remove it, the suitcase basically came apart in their hands», police Lt. Josiah M. Eaves said. He said the blue suitcase appeared to be more than 30 years old. The skeleton which was wrapped in cloth, «appears to have been there quite a long time, in excess of 20 years», Eaves said. Police estimated that the baby was 1 or 2 months old at death.
> The house was built in 1928 and was occupied by the same family until the mid-1990s. The last of four elderly sisters who lived there died in 1995 at the age of 102, and the house was sold five years ago. The current owner told police she never went into the attic, and police said she is not suspected of wrongdoing.
>
> (*Houston Chronicle*, Wednesday, February 17, 2001)

In Suzanne Berne's *A Perfect Arrangement* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Press, 2001), a pragmatic architect says «Attics are wasted space», but the family maid, with far more insight, responds, as would I: «Not psychologically».

A house with an attic seems to resonate for us with more meaning and significance than a house without one. Attics (sometimes called "lumber rooms") make us think of history, interesting artifacts, old toys, books, clothes, linens, jewelry, and other treasures – but, most of all, of deep, dark, and significant family secrets.

It was in the attic of the house that I grew up in that, as a snooping teenager, I found the packet of letters from my mother to her first husband. Her FIRST husband. I had never dreamed

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that she had had but one husband – my father. And had I not ferreted out those letters, I probably still wouldn't know. But I DID know my mother. Because I did, I read every last word of those letters before I told her I had found them. It was a good thing I did, because the next day, while I was at school, she burned them all. Then, that night, my father took me aside – I'm sure at my mother's prompting – and confessed that he too had been married and divorced before he met my mother. Whether particular attics hide such secrets hardly matters. What matters is that psychologically we believe that they do. Attics frequently house just the sort of information I unearthed – evidence to which one is too attached to throw away, but which one very much wants to remain secret.

Before a discussion of attics can begin, it is essential to define what is meant by "attic" and to distinguish attics from upper rooms. Not all third floor spaces are attics, because many larger houses have third floor rooms that were normal living spaces. Some third floors have several bedrooms. Sometimes the third floor space was a huge, high-ceilinged, finished room used for balls and other parties. All such rooms were generally clean, furnished, and comfortably habitable. Such is the case with a room that is often cited as an "attic" which incarcerates a "madwoman", the upper room in "The Yellow Wallpaper". But Gilman clearly defines it as an upper room: «It is a big, airy room, the whole floor nearly, windows that look all ways, and air and sunshine galore» (42). And in "To Room Nineteen", Lessing calls the room to which Susan Rawlings retreats, «[t]he spare room at the top of the house» and the Rawlings family refers to it as «mother's room» (pb 265). Neither Gilman nor Lessing calls these habitable rooms "attics".

The title of Gilbert and Guber's *The Madwoman in the Attic* has become so well known that the concept of there being many madwomen housed in attics has been taken for granted and reached almost the stature of myth. The *only* truly mad woman in an attic that Gilbert and Guber cite as evidence is Bertha Rochester in *Jane Eyre*. None of the others they refer to (and they cite only three) is mad. The garret nun and Madam Walravens hide out in an attic in *Vilette*. The young Maggie Tulliver in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*, «pursues her anger in the attic of her father's house, where she punishes a fetish, a wooden doll» by driving three nails into its head. And Cassy, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, hides out in an attic, making ghostly noises so people will avoid it.

Almost everything that has been written and said about attics since Gilbert and Guber's tome *The Madwoman in the Attic* has accepted their thesis about attics. But in their book, they use the concept of the madwoman locked away (or retreated to) the attic as a metaphor for their thesis, that women writers were often isolated and treated with approbation, and – finding it physically and mentally impossible to do both, had to choose between living as wife and mother and writing. Bertha Mason Rochester, is their only example of what their readers have accepted as a given – that English and American fiction depicts many madwomen consigned to attics. In the other commonly cited example of insane women in attics, the narrator of "The Yellow Wallpaper" is housed in a third floor bedroom, not at attic. And although she is under much pressure from her husband, her sister-in-law, and her doctor to remain there, she is not locked in the attic, but has a key (which only she uses, in the final scene, to lock herself in).

A true attic is a storage area, often dark and dusty, and seldom visited.[1] Such an attic is described in Ken Kesey's *Sometimes a Great Notion*. Leeland refers to this "drafty" space as «the motherin' attic» (601). In it

> [a] small window at each end of the long room provided space and light enough to be a building site for spiders and a cemetery for flies; what light was left over strained through the little warped panes and sifted like soot from a chimney across an ominous array of boxes and chests and trunks, rough-hewn packing crates and ornate bureaus. A dozen or

[1] In questioning my friends about their "attic" experience, I've been saddened to be reminded that most houses built in the last few decades have no attics other then a minimal crawl space, and that their families, therefore, tend to save very little of familial and historical significance.

> so orange crates were lined up on end. About this array of larger objects... were gathered incidentals like [a] Teddy bear..., fifty years of paraphernalia, tricycles to tambourines, dressmaker's dummies to diaper pails, dolls, boots, books, Christmas ornaments..., and, over everything, dust and mouse manure by the bale. (600)

Similarly, the topmost room in the Tulliver house in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* is a «great attic under the old high-pitched roof», with «worm-eaten floors», «worm-eaten shelves», and «dark rafters festooned with cobwebs», as well as a storage trunk. The garret of Simon Legree's house in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is another classic attic: «a great, desolate space, dusty, hung with cobwebs, and littered with cast-off lumber»[2] (502). It contains «immense packing boxes and a small window..., which let in, through its dingy, dusty panes, a scanty uncertain light on the tall, high-backed chairs and dusty tables» (502). It is thought, as are many attics, to be «weird and ghostly» (502). Also, in Isaac Bashevis Singer's "The Little Shoemakers", «[t]he attic was stuffed with heirlooms – tables and chairs, cobbler's benches and lasts, whetstones and knives, old clothes, pots, pans, bedding, salting boards, cradles... [and] tacks full of torn prayer books» (45).

George Bachelard can not decide whether his paradigm house should have three stories (basement, first floor, and either second floor or attic) or four stories – basement, first floor, second story, and attic. He only mentions the attic in association with dreams and says that in attics one finds «a more tranquil solitude» (26). He is more interested in stairs and whether one is ascending or descending than he is in attics themselves. And what he says about "tranquil solitude" seems more appropriate to upper rooms than to attics.

Rather than vacillating over how many floors the paradigmatic house should have, it is more reasonable to distinguish between attics and upper rooms on the basis of their functions. Upper rooms, whichever floor they are on, are inhabited – nearly always as bedrooms.

Attics are not places of habitation, even for lunatics. They are storage places – personal, familial, and even communal warehouses for memories, memorabilia, and memoirs. Attics house domestic history – often a history that has been suppressed. Attics are recepticles of the facts, facts that have often been obliterated from public knowledge and public records; facts that often reveal deep, human, moral and life-changing truths. Things that people want to keep concealed are stashed in attics. Although attics usually comprise the third above-ground floor of a house, some attics are in unfinished eaves of the second floor of house that has no third floor.

FAMILY MEMOIRS, FAMILY SECRETS

Younger family members do not seem to be able to resist nosing about in attics whether they discover interesting information or not. They take pleasure in their snooping because they *expect* to discover secrets.

In *The Christmas Box*, a family finally learns why the elderly woman with whom they are living is so withdrawn and shuns their little girl, when the little girl prowls around the attic and finds a box whose contents reveals that the woman's own little girl had died and left her been heartbroken. This discovery provides the opportunity for the little girl become friends with the elderly woman, in a friendship which enriches both of their lives. In *The Man Without a Face* with Mel Gibson, the little boy explores the attic, expecting to find evidence of his tutor's licentious "secret" life, but finds instead a collection of mannequins which his tutor, a painter, uses as models.

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[2] That it used to be common practice to store old lumber in attics may account for the fact that the term "lumber room" is occasionally used in place of "attic" or "garret". The OED specifies only that a lumbr room is a storage place for discarded furniture and things. And Gilbet and Gubar, use the term interchangeably with the term attic (360, fn).

In Katherine Anne Porter's "Old Mortality" the only touchstones the young girls have against which to test the highly romanticized stories their parent's generation tell about the past and their Aunt Amy are the artifacts that are stored in «the lumber room», the attic. There, the «[p]hotographs, portraits by inept painters... and the festival garments folded away in dried herbs and camphor were disappointing when the little girls tried to fit them to the living beings created in their minds by the breathing words of their elders» (175). And there, their grandmother would twice yearly

> sit nearly all of one day beside old trunks and boxes,... unfolding layers of garments and small keepsakes,... crying over certain things,... looking again at pictures in velvet cases, unwrapping locks of hair and dried flowers, crying gently and easily as if tears were the only pleasure she had left. (175)

But the artifacts that move their grandmother to tears are not "impressive" to the young girls because the items were

> [s]uch dowdy little wreaths and necklaces, some of them made of pearly shells; such moth-eaten bunches of pink ostrich...; such clumsy big breast pins and bracelets of gold and colored enamel; such silly-looking combs.... (175)

To Miranda, «It seemed such a pity that these faded things, these yellowed long gloves and misshapen satin slippers, these broad ribbons cracking where they were folded, should have been all those vanished girls had to decorate themselves with» (175). What Miranda sees in the attic leads her to ask, «Oh, what did grown-up people *mean* when they talked anyway?» (197). Thus, it is in this attic that Miranda gains the first hints of the truths about her family's myths.

In A. S. Byatt's *Possession*, extremely significant family secrets are hidden in a garret that was once the bedroom of the Victorian poet, Christabell LaMotte. The garret is in a wing that's been closed since 1918 and has no electricity. To get there one must ascend first «a stone staircase and then further up a winding wooden stair» (20). The entry to the room is a «little door [which] was heavily paneled and had a heavy latch». The room itself is a «dark, cramped circular space» with «a roof carved with veined arches and mock-medieval ivy-leaves, felt-textured with dust» (21). There, hidden in wooden box beneath the bed are the love letters of LaMotte and the Victorian poet, Randolf Ash – letters that document their adulterous affair that produced an illegitimate child – the ancestor of one of the two protagonists of the novel, Maud Bailey. The letters provide much biographical information and throw new light on the couple's poetry. The letters also provide the clue that leads to the discovery (1) of the correspondence between LaMotte and Ash, which had been buried with him and (2) of the genealogical linkage between the twentieth century female protagonist of the novel and both Mott and Ashe.

In Ken Kesey's *Sometimes a Great Notion*, Leeland Stamper, who hates and is jealous of his more successful and popular older half-brother, finds in an old rolltop desk in the family attic, artifacts attesting to Hank's success and popularity: «a foxtail, and stacks of Christmas cards, an album of Glenn Miller 78's a cigarette smoked to the fading lipstick stain, a beer can, a locket, a shot glass, a dog tag, a service cap, and pictures that testify to Hank's popularity. Lee also discovers the letters that indicate the on-going love between his mother and his half-brother. There are scented love letters to Hank from Myra. One begins, "Dearest Hank"» (620). Another says «I have no way of telling you... how much I missed your hands and lips» and continues «can we ever see each other again[?]». She calls him "sweetheart" and makes it clear that she is only staying in the East until Leeland is grown, when she plans to return to Hank. Her letters are signed «all my love» (621). Leeland also finds the book of poems he had written in high school, which he had given to his mother and she had claimed she had lost in an automat, «in the mail of my brother!» (621). Leeland's response is «He has no right she has no right with my poems!» Perhaps most infuriating of all is the discovery that his mother had regularly written Hank for money for Leeland's tuition,

doctor bills, and insurance. As a result of his discoveries, Leeland «was almost beside myself with rage» (621).

Leeland's attic discoveries precipitate major changes in him. He quits seeking pity from women and realizes that he must «win back the strength I had bartered away [for] years». Consequently he fights and manages to hold his own against Hank, then joins Hank in a perilous attempt to run logs down the river to the sawmill (623).

INDISCRETIONS, SINS, AND CRIMES

Often attics are the spaces in which people and families try to hide family crimes, sins, and indiscretions.

In Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Gray keeps his portrait covered in a locked room «at the top of the house» (194). And it is there that he murders the painter of the work, Basil Hallward, after Hallward has seen the transformed portrait (255-256). During the murder, the portrait sweats «loathsome red dew that gleamed, wet and glistening on one of the hands as though the canvas had sweated blood» (280), revealing the corruption of Gray.

Similarly, Frankenstein carries out the secret experiments that will produce the monster in an attic. It is «a solitary chamber, or rather cell, at the top of the house and separated from the other apartments by a gallery and staircase» in which he keeps what he calls his «filthy creation» (36). Likewise, it is to the attic that Maggie Tulliver retreats to «fret out her ill-humours» and punish her Fetish doll «for all her [Maggie's] misfortunes» by driving nails into the doll's body (24).

Even in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* the crucial fact about the Rochester house's attic is not that it houses a pyromaniacal lunatic,[3] but rather the secret that it hides – that the woman whom he incarcerates and hides there in is Rochester's wife, whose existence he denies in hopes of committing bigamy by marrying Jane Eyre. The space in which Bertha Mason is incarcerated is clearly an attic, rather than a habitable room. To get there Jane and Rochester had to «ascend [ ] the stairs». They «mounted the first staircase, passed up the gallery, proceeded to the third story». There they must go through a locked «low, black door» and enter a tapestried room. Behind one of the tapestries is a «second door». The room that houses Bertha Mason is «a room without a window» – clearly an attic room (328).

In Elizabeth George's *In Pursuit of the Proper Sinner*, «the renowned London surgeon Sir Adrian Beattie has created the "chamber" that is "up two flights of stairs" and "behind a locked door in the attic" in which he practices S & M with prostitutes "up two flights of stairs" and behind a locked door in the attic» (379). The room's decor is «in part headmaster's office, operating theatre, dungeon, and mediaeval torture chamber» (379). In the cubboards are costumes which «ranged from a heavy wool nun's habit to a prison guard's uniform complete with truncheon» to «the more traditional garb... PVC get-ups of red or black, leather teddies and masks, high-heeled boots» as well as «the instruments of... [his] discipline, tidily arranged like the antique surgical instruments in the study» (380).

One of the ugliest report of events that took place in an attic comes not from fiction but from autobiography. As an adult Anaïs Nin records her memories of the attic in which her father beat her and her brothers and sexually abused her as part of her punishment. Nin writes that her father was «fond of spanking» (*Linotte*, cited in Bair 17). As Deidre Bair writes, he then «devised a more extreme form of cruelty: locking up Rosa [his wife] first, then walloping the children». To do this he «made the children march up to the dark and frightening attic, paddling them as they mounted

[3] As such a lunatic, she seems a strange choice for Gilbert and Guber to have chosen of symbol for talented women writers. Such a reading of "The Yellow Wallpaper", of course, does make sense.

the stairs with a hairbrush, a cane, or the flat of his hand» on the boys, but always «the flat of his hand on his daughter». Nin herself wrote «I would do anything to keeping him from lifting my dress and beating me».[4] Decades later, she writes of these experiences:

> My father has taken me up to the little attic room to spank me. He takes my pants off. He begins to hit me with the palm of his hand. I feel his hand on me. But he stops hitting me and he caresses me. Then he sticks his penis into me, pretending to be beating me.[5] (Bair 18, FN 25)

ATTIC HIDE OUTS

Precisely because attics are not considered to habitable, they are hide outs for people like Cassy in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, two characters in William Faulkner's *Absolom! Absolom!*, and for Bertha Mason Rochester in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.

In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Cassy exploits the legend that the ghost of one of Legree's slaves, who is believed to haunt the attic. She claims she hears ghosts in the attic, then setting a bottle near a knothole so that when a light wind blows it «the most doleful and lugubrious wails and sounds... which, in a high wind, increased to a perfect shriek» which seemed to «be that of horror and despair» (504). Then, after she and the young Emmeline "run away", they hide in the attic, in which they have prepared mattresses, candles, and books. They are safe from discovery there, because the garret is presumed to be uninhabitable by human beings but, instead, inhabited by ghosts. While Simon Legree searches the countryside looking for them, Cassy and Emmaline remain safely hidden in the garret.

In *Absolom! Absolom!*, two men hide out in the attic to avoid beinc captured by the law. Goodhue Coldfield first «nailed himself up in the attic to keep from being drafted into the Rebel army» and then chose to starve himself to death there (144). Later in the novel, Henry Sutpen hid for four years in the attic of the plantation house at Sutpen's Hundred after shooting his half-brother, Charles Bon. He too dies in the attic, when the house burns down.

BENEVOLENT MEMORIES

Although attics surely house positive memories, few are recorded in fiction. Occasionally, attics even house benign family spirits, as they do in Isaac Bashevis Singer's "The Little Shoemaker". Abba loves «to climb up in the attic». When he was there, if

> he listened attentively he would hear a whispering, a murmuring and soft scratching, as of some unseen creature engaged in endless activity, conversing in an unearthly tougue. He was sure that the souls of his forefathers kept watch over the house. (43)

CONCLUSION

It is clear that fiction writers make a clear delineation between attics and upper rooms. Upper rooms are places where human beings reside and where they often work their way to new insights into themselves and discover new and different ways of living. Attics, on the other hand, are

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[4] *Early Diaries-2*, 86, cited in Bair, 17.

[5] Bair writes, in a footnote, «These questions are those AN asked herself in (among many others) UD 1933-34, 35, 36, and 57; *Linotte*, D-1; and *Incest*».

storage places for things – letters, legal documents, artifacts, and photographs – that document personal and family history. The things residing in an attic do not change, but they may precipitate major changes in people who examine and learn from such history. Characters who explore the things relegated to or hidden in attics often learn things that change their lives, as the truth can do. Such is the case with Porter's Miranda, Brontë's Jane Eyre, Kesey's Leeland Stamper, and Byatt's Maud Bailey and Randolf Ash. And, whether they are changed or not, people can often learn the truths about their families – truths that may have infected their lives through patterns of living created by what Abraham, Torok, and Rashkin call «intergenerational memories».

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Remembering, acting out, working-through: The case of Sarah Kofman

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Trauma is a kind of wound. When we call an event *traumatic*, we are borrowing the word from the Greek where it refers to a piercing of the skin, a breaking of the bodily envelope. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud uses the term to describe a painful event not inflicted to the body but to the mind: the physical breaking of defenses becomes thus a psychic one. According to Cathy Caruth, trauma is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality that is not otherwise available. Trauma is an event which breaks through the protecting shield and overwhelms existing defenses against anxiety in a form which also provides confirmation of those deepest anxieties.

The experience of trauma repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly, through the unknowing acts of the survivor and against his will. The experience that Freud calls "traumatic neurosis" is the repetition and reenactment of an event that cannot simply be left behind. Cathy Caruth points out that the repetitions of the traumatic event, which remains unavailable to consciousness, suggest a larger relation to the event that extends beyond what can simply be seen or what can be known, and is inextricably tied up with the belatedness and incomprehensibility that remain in the heart of this repetitive seeing. Trauma is not a simple memory: while the images of traumatic reenactment remain absolutely accurate and precise, they are largely inaccessible to conscious recall and control. Like Freud and before him Pierre Janet emphasized, traumatic recall remains insistent and unchanged – unlike other memories – because it has never been fully integrated into understanding.

In a convincing and inspiring article published online on the Psyart Journal and called "Primo Levi: Speaking from the Flames", Rina Dudai asks the following questions: how can one comprehend the impossible that became reality? Can one process such an experience? Can it be represented in language in general, and in poetic language in particular? Rina Dudai's working hypothesis is that two opposite forces act simultaneously to convert traumatic experience into a poetic text: «This

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literary form gets its strength from the struggle between the urge to cry out from the burning core of traumatic experience on the one hand, and the drive to rationally construct the core of the trauma as a symbolic representation molded in language, thus keeping it at a safe distance.» In other words, the writer gives us a text in which the traumatic experience is revived to a degree that permits its processing, because the trauma is relocated in a protected area, while at the same time defense mechanisms operate on the expression of anxiety. For Rina Dudai, Levi's literary work is an example of the writer's struggle to position himself between those two opposite forces: «giving in to the pain by screaming it out loud, or controlling and disciplining it, by repressing it altogether.» In Primo Levi's case, the scream is hardly heard, poetic devices are used in an attempt to repress it. Dudai writes that «his text never displays the poetic balance, which could have enabled him to work it through, rather than acting it out».

My paper will concentrate on two aspects: (1) the role played by defense mechanisms, especially that of sublimation, in writing a literary text which finds its origins in a traumatic experience, and (2) remembering, acting out and working though, for which I will use Freud's article "Further recommendations on the technique of psychoanalysis: Remembering, repeating and working-through", written in 1924. My own question will be: how is it possible that some people succeed in creating a work of art that finds its roots in a traumatic experience? As an illustration of my ideas, I will present the case of the French philosopher Sarah Kofman (1934-1994). She was a philosophy professor at the Sorbonne in Paris, she was known as a feminist and deconstructionist and she worked closely with Derrida. She is the writer of (among others) *The Childhood of Art*, *Nietzsche and Metaphor*, *Quatre romans analytiques*, *L'énigme de la femme*, and *Rue Ordener, Rue Labat*, a short autobiography (87 pages) named after two streets in the 18th precinct of Paris. In this book she tells for the first time about the traumatic events she experienced as a child during World War II.

In 1942, Sarah Kofman's father, who was a Polish rabbi, was arrested by the Gestapo in the family house in the Rue Ordener and put on a train to Auschwitz, where he was beaten to death by a camp guard. The children were sent to French families outside Paris, but Sarah wouldn't be separated from her mother so both sought refuge with a former neighbor who lived in the Rue Labat, a woman Sarah loved passionately. To protect the Jewish girl, as well as to turn her into her own daughter, the woman, who's name is not mentioned, transformed Sarah into a French girl: she changed her hair and gave her new clothes, she called her Suzanne and taught her to eat pork and steaks cooked in butter. The relationship with this woman alienated Sarah completely from her Yiddish speaking family and her religion. Sarah's real mother had great difficulties and pain in accepting the situation, but Sarah was happy and she adored her new mother, who used to kiss and cuddle her and give her presents, things she hadn't be used to in the strict, religious and also very poor family she was born into. After the war, there was a bitter fight between the two women because both wanted to keep the girl. Suzanne had to become Sarah again and go back to her own mother, who abused her and didn't want her to go to college, while the other woman always supported her wish to read and study. Sarah hated her mother and she tried on several occasions to run away and go back to the woman she called *Mémé*, which is a term of endearment used by children to call their grandmother, but also sounds like *mamme* or *memme*, the Yiddish word for mother.

Sarah Kofman seemed to have forgotten this episode of her life. She didn't. As part of her implicit memory the childhood trauma played a fundamental role in her scientific work, especially in her first book, *The Childhood of Art*, published in 1970, in which themes from her own childhood seem to lie underneath her analysis of Freud's "Leonardo da Vinci". According to Freud, young Leonardo had to choose between two mothers: his own and his father's new wife, who «without any doubt took his mother's place in his heart». Kofman describes the way Freud connects several of Leonardo's paintings by way of a chain of signifiers: the recurrent female smile, which refers to the mother's smile. Kofman is particularly interested in Freud's analysis of Leonardo's painting of

Anna and Maria. Maria sits on her mother's lap and reaches for the little boy Jesus. Anna looks at the two other figures with a blissful smile. Both female figures seem to blend into one single mother figure. Freud writes that the two mothers of Leonardo's childhood become one mother, and that Anna's blissfully happy smile is meant to deny and cover up at the same time the jealousy the poor woman felt, when she had to give up her husband and later her son to a younger and more distinguished woman.

In a note, Freud compares this painting to a drawing with the same subject, where both figures are even more melted together: it seems that the two heads emerge from one body. Freud assumes that this sketch was an earlier version, a kind of dreamlike vision of the two women, and that Leonardo had a need to separate mother and daughter in the painting. This is the picture Kofman chose for the cover of her book, the one in which Anna's smile is hesitating, somewhat curious, and less serene than her smile in the painting. Also here Anna looks directly at the younger woman, as though her smile was meant for her only.

Freud analyzes Leonardo's repressed memory, and analyzing Freud's text, Kofman seems to talk about her own repressed memory. This is what she writes, and it is slightly different from Freud's version: «Anna's "blissful smile" is indeed the product of repression, of the artist's denial of his mother's suffering and the jealousy she felt when she had to give her son away to her rival. (…) Anna's smile refers to the smile of Mona Lisa, but it uncovers with even more power, in it's relationship with Maria's smile and Leonardo's repressed, that the mother's smile never existed.» *The mother's smile never existed*: unlike Leonardo, who was able to find an artistic form of reparation for the guilt he had felt about leaving his mother, Sarah Kofman cannot let her own mother smile. There is no reparation here, no working-through, but only a repetition of the representation of the two mothers, one smiling happily and the other not smiling and deeply unhappy. Like Freud writes in "Remembering, repeating and working-through", Kofman doesn't reproduce the scene as a memory, but as an act, she repeats it without knowing that she is. There is no way for her to bring in what Freud calls the supremacy of the pleasure principle, to change something that was charged with displeasure and pain into a mental object of remembrance and psychic processing.

Is it possible to differentiate Primo Levi's and Sarah Kofman's way of coping with trauma? What we see in Rina Dudai's analysis of the work of Primo Levi, is that defense mechanisms like rationalization and distanciation operate on the expression of anxiety. However, Rina Dudai writes that Primo Levi doesn't work through the trauma, but that he acts it out. I would like to suggest that there is indeed a form of working through, not in the form of a general break with a past, but in that of a cultural reinvention of the past by means of memory. The defense mechanism operating here could be that of sublimation.

The concept of sublimation is a problematic one, because it has never been developed by Freud into a real theory. In fact, though Freud wanted to produce a global theory of culture, a complete account of human existence, sublimation consists mostly of a number of loosely woven strands developed to varying degrees. Furthermore, sublimation is about the satisfaction of the drive, though this may be accounted for in different ways. Freud never presented sublimation as equivalent to sexual abstinence. The sexual drive is the raw material of culture, and as Freud writes in his *Introductory Lectures*, the impulses of the drive are "extraordinary plastic". Sublimation simply gives another aim to the drive, another satisfaction.

Could the concept of sublimation be related to the questions of trauma, memory and mourning usually invoked by theoretical work on the Holocaust? According to Freud, processes of working-through trauma or loss through the redistribution of libidinal investments (such as mourning) are sharply differentiated from the drive destinations, where the libido is channeled into symptoms or into cultural activity by sublimation. However a closer look reveals that both these moments in Freudian theory are governed by an identical problematic: that of *discharge*, of the safeguarding of "topographical" integrity against disruptive libidinal or mnemic excess. Psychoanalytically speaking,

mourning is a healthy process that permits the subject to recover from a loss, while sublimation is a process that saves the subject from neurosis: both processes are aimed towards reparation of the subject. In other words, could we use the sublimation concept in the case of Primo Levi?

Sublimation is a concept which is essentially linked to culture. Rina Dudai stresses Primo Levi's references to the Bible, Greek mythology and Dante's *Hell*, which he seems to need to speak about the unspeakable. Though, like the French historian Léon Poliakoff once said: «Auschwitz can never be a literary theme», and though Primo Levi wanted his book to be nothing more than the testimony of a man who witnessed the horror of daily life in the concentration camp, we are aware that *Is This a Man* is also a literary work. The meaning of a literary text must be found in the dynamic relationships between the different parts of the text, but also in intertextuality, the relationships between the text itself and other texts, to which it refers. This seems impossible in the case of *Is This a Man*, where the themes, the place and the action have nothing in common with existing literature. But maybe we can say that *Is This a Man*, without being a work of fiction, is still a literary work, because of the use of literary and rhetoric elements: themes like the journey and the perverted city, references to literature, metaphors and style, but foremost because of the author's reflections about his place and role in what he is telling, about fiction and reality, levels of narration, space and time. Even as a witness, the author controls the text and manipulates the reader.

In *Pour une psychanalyse de l'art et de la créativité*, Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel points out that creative impulses can be directed towards the reparation of the object, that has been destroyed by aggressive drives, but that true sublimation is aimed at reparation of the subject. According to Chasseguet-Smirgel, creativity is an instrument which is used to make up for faults made by others, and only then is there discharge and can we speak of sublimation. Creation by means of narratives as in Primo Levi's case, has a repairing, restoring function. It is a form of working-through, of reliving while trying to understand. Like Primo Levi wrote to his German translator, «as prisoner number 174517, I would like to speak to the German people and say: "I'm alive, and I want to understand you to be able to make a judgement about what you did."» Repetition without working-through (and there are many examples of this in Sarah Kofman's work) seem to only aggravate the trauma.

Still, Sarah Kofman tried to make up with her mother in the underlying discourse of her scientific work but in a way that is rather an acting-out then a working-through. In part of her creative scientific work, we see a need towards reparation of the object, which has been injured by aggressive drives. Analyzing Freud on the libidinal relationships between mother and daughter in *L'énigme de la femme*, she defends the mother where Freud writes that the feelings of hatred the daughter feels for her mother are linked to early weaning and the feelings of displeasure caused by it. She insists that the fault comes not from the mother but from the child, whose desire is endless and causes feelings of frustration. What we see here are two other defense mechanisms: projection (in her analysis of Freud's analysis of Leonardo) and identification (the child who's desire is endless).

I do not believe Sarah Kofman wanted to turn the traumatic events of her childhood into a work of art, and I do not believe she could have. Why? That's a difficult question. The first answer could be that she was still a child during the war, while Primo Levi was a young man. When he came back to Italy, his whole family was there waiting for him, his house was still there, while Sarah Kofman lost her father and her childhood's home. Her book starts with what happened to him, but then she doesn't speak about him again. This is the part of the trauma she cannot talk about, but which is contained in the interaction between her and her mother.

Cathy Caruth stresses that the traumatic text is the product of a double telling, of two stories: the story about the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival. But the most important aspect is that the literary text originated by trauma, is created by the combined action of several components: the traumatic event becomes a narrative through the use of repetition, but also goes back to earlier traumatic moments of the child's development and the way in which the child succeeded in coping with them. The manner in which the adult is able to use defense mechanisms to make a coherent story out of what seems impossible to tell, is linked to the aptitudes

he or she developed as a child. The trauma connects with earlier events which were never dealt with, so it is not only the external event that matters here, but the connection of external and internal danger, of present and past, of the fear of physical death and the fear of psychic death. There is a significant fragment in *Rue Ordener Rue Labat*, when Kofman writes about the anxiety she always felt while viewing Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes*. What is unbearable to her is the way the old lady's smiling face turns into a harsh, threatening mask: «The bad breast instead of the good breast, one totally separated from the other, one transforming into the other.» In Sarah Kofman's autobiography, the trauma seems to reenact very early, repressed conflicts with the mother.

In Primo Levi's work, Auschwitz is recreated as a narrative (Dante's *Hell*) and translated into the symbolic order, by which the author creates a distance between the text and the uncontrolled chaos of his own unconscious emotions, while Sarah Kofman doesn't succeed in leaving the illusionary order of the autobiographical mirror stage. She may enter the symbolic in her scientific work, but in her own life the father is not there to free her from the imaginary world in which the mother (or mothers) seem almighty. *Rue Ordener Rue Labat* is the poignant story of a child who finally remembers, while the aging woman reacts with the feelings and the knowledge of a grown-up. But there is no reparation towards the mother nor towards herself, no sublimation or discharge, no love, no pleasure, no visible guilt, only never ending hatred and pain. I think in Sarah Kofman's case, the wound has never healed, while in Primo Levi's case, the wound slowly turned into a scar, that remained painful and visible, but also enabled him to write, maybe to live. His identity was threatened but survived, while Sarah Kofman's identity disintegrated.

Sarah Kofman never succeeded in bringing a symbolic smile to her mother's lips. These are the last words she wrote about her: «Between my mother and me there were terrible scenes during dinners. I often went on hunger strike and stole sugar. Early in the evening she would turn out the light in my room. I remember reading Jean-Paul Sartre's *Les chemins de la liberté* with a flashlight.» And her last words about the woman she called *mémé* (which are also the last words of the book): «I wasn't able to go to her funeral. But I know that the priest said at her grave that she had saved a little Jewish girl during the war.» Sarah's real mother would not let her become who she wanted to be, she wouldn't allow the separation from her and let her experience *the ways of freedom*, she would not even feed her properly, she turned out the light of warm motherly love. *Mémé* saved her as a person but at the same time she destroyed the identity of the «little Jewish girl». Which was the good breast after all, and which was the bad one? Shortly after publication of *Rue Ordener Rue Labat*, Sarah Kofman committed suicide.

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Collaboration and collusion in Iain Pears's *The Dream of Scipio*

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This paper is an example of what could be called "applied literature". The impulse to comment on literature in this way arises from the interest I feel when a work deals with a problem or a subject with which I am struggling. I am drawn into the book by the fact that it engages in a real way with an issue which exists in my own life – or that of someone I care about.

The main subject addressed by *The Dream of Scipio* is the problem of what to do when you feel that the civilization with which you identify is under threat from forces which seem overwhelming. The first example of this situation in the book occurs in the last years of the Roman Empire, around 460 AD, in southern Gaul. Manlius, a Roman noble and a large landowner, knows that the values promoted by Roman civilization, as well as the territories which he owns and controls, may be overwhelmed by the barbarian tribes which had been entering the region for the previous fifty years. The Visigoths are pushing into Provence, and have laid siege to Clermont, 300 kilometres to the north-west of his lands. The Burgundians are to the north, up the Rhone River. The Vandals have recently sacked Rome. He knows Rome cannot send armies to defend the Roman establishment in southern Gaul. At the same time he is under another sort of threat. The spread of Christianity, which is hostile to classical learning and the values associated with the ancient writers, may wipe out the heritage which Manlius considers the flower of civilization.

This novel has three distinct plots. The second occurs in the fourteenth century, during the Avignon papacy. The third presents a direct parallel to Manlius's situation in the first plot: in the 1940s, the Germans have invaded France, and the central characters struggle with how they may be able to preserve some aspects of French civilization in the face of overwhelming German military force.

Another, smaller, survival issue occurs several times in the novel: a son is raised by a father who thinks he knows what is best for the son. Here the question is not maintaining civilization, but, for the son, the survival of his own being, his self.

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So the novel poses the question, "What can you do when you are faced with a threat or force which is much stronger than you are, and which may threaten your life?" Three possible answers are suggested:

1. Merge with your oppressor. Lose your own sense of your identity, and become an instrument, a tool of the greater force. Here there are some parallels with the Stockholm Syndrome, and possibly some parallels with cases of sexual abuse of children.
2. Consciously develop a strategy of compromising with the oppressor, in order to preserve some aspects of what you value. To do this, however, you need to have some sense of your own power.
3. Resist the oppressor completely, or (if possible) hide from him and ignore him. One way to do this involves overcoming the fear of death – either by not letting it affect your actions, or by adopting a philosophy or a religious outlook in which death represents reunion with God, and so is to be welcomed rather than resisted. This philosophy is important in the book, because it is articulated (in the first plot) in a compendium of classical civilization written by Manlius, called "The Dream of Scipio". Olivier, the protagonist of the second plot, discovers a manuscript of this document, and struggles to understand it. Julien, the protagonist of the third plot, is a scholar and professor in France. His speciality is neoplatonism, and one of his main goals in the book is to use his knowledge of the period to understand the real meaning of the document which Manlius wrote fifteen centuries earlier.

What does this novel suggest about the three possible responses to an overwhelming threat - surrender, compromise, and absolute resistance? I would like to look briefly at the first two plots, with this question in mind.

Manlius's solution is compromise: he decides to engage the support of a barbarian, King Gundobad of the Burgundians, whose realm is to the north. But to do this he has to make three main concessions:

1. He agrees to become Bishop of Vaison, even though he finds Christianity a primitive and contemptible set of beliefs. He does this to increase his political power in his own region. When Vaison rebels against him at a crucial moment, he is willing to kill his son by adoption, who is acting as an emissary of the city of Vaison. This is a political gesture to terrify the inhabitants of the city.
2. He becomes a vassal of the Burgundian king, who refuses to rule in the name of Rome, and wants to rule in his own name.
3. The Burgundian king insists that, if he is going to defend Manlius's estates, he must encounter no resistance. To ensure this, Manlius kills the man who has been his closest friend for twenty years. Manlius had promised to support him, but he is the head of a rival Roman clan. Manlius also steals the lands of this clan, and uses them to reward Burgundian soldiers.

Manlius is successful in his political goals. He is also successful, to some extent, in getting the Burgundian king to set up a legal system based on that of Rome, thus preserving the Roman legal legacy.

But the novel makes very clear that Manlius achieves no peace within himself. He has compromised some of his core values: telling the truth, honouring friendship, and securing a succession for his family. In addition, touching on a theme which will become much more important in the two subsequent plots, he persecutes the Jews of the region who will not convert to Christianity. This seems to be clearly part of a plan of his that he become a saint after he has died. So the conclusion to this part of the novel is that Manlius is successful in his strategic goal, but he compromises his integrity and values so much that he loses his soul.

In the Avignon plot, the leading figure, Cardinal Ceccani, is quite like Manlius: he would like a return to the past (in his case a return of the Papacy to Rome, after sixty years in Avignon). Like Manlius, Ceccani is highly political, and aware of his own power, and he is willing to compromise. But the figure who carries the main meaning in this plot is Olivier, a young poet and scholar who enters Ceccani's entourage as his messenger and factotum. This part of the novel contains an excellent depiction of a patriarchal relation. Olivier has his own interests and identity, but he is explicit about being willing to serve Ceccani and promote his political goals. When Olivier accidentally discovers Ceccani's plan to collaborate secretly with the English, in order to force the Papacy out of Avignon and back to Rome, Ceccani says,

> "What is your opinion of this plan?"
> "I have none, sir."
> "Do you not find it shocking? Fascinating?"
> "No, sir."
> "Why not?"
> "Because I am your servant, My Lord, indebted to you for everything I have. And because the doings of princes are not my affair. Whether Aigues-Mortes is French, or whether it is English, or whether it belongs to the emperor of China is of no matter to me. I serve you to the best of my ability. What else should concern me?"

Ceccani replies, "By God, I choose my servants well." (207)

But later in this story, Olivier realizes that Ceccani is also plotting to have the Jews condemned and persecuted, as part of his overall strategy. By this point Olivier is deeply in love with a young woman who is thought to be a Jew, although in fact she is of Cathar background. The only way he can save her is to betray his master, Ceccani, and reveal Ceccani's treacherous plot to the Pope. When he plans to do this, he realizes that he is breaking the rules of civilised behaviour, and that none of his friends would agree with what he is doing. The author comments, "By the standards of his day and age, his sin could not have been greater" (254). The Pope himself is astounded that Olivier is willing to betray Ceccani, and asks him why he is placing himself in danger of violent reprisals by his master. All Olivier knows is that he is responding from the depths of his being:

> "I do not know, sir. I can discover no reason or justification for it, and do not wish to. I am neither a theologian nor a philosopher, a lawyer nor a politician. I cannot find reasons; my skill is to sing about the impulsions of the heart, and that is enough." (367)

This is one of the key statements in the novel. Its content is reminiscent of Keats's definition of negative capability, that gift of the poet: "the ability to be in mysteries and uncertainties, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason." It also recalls existential moments in some novels in which a character acts with his whole being, in spite of what seems to be in his interest, rationally calculated. What Olivier does is right in his own view, but he suffers horribly as a consequence.

In the third plot in the book, set during the Second World War, Julien becomes the link for communication between two of his old school friends, one of whom is a highly placed administrator collaborating with the Germans, and the other a leader of the underground resistance. Julien knowingly compromises and collaborates, hoping to preserve some values which he considers crucial to French civilisation, until he realizes that he cannot count on agreements struck with the German regime, or with his friend the collaborator. His final act, like Olivier's, is an expression of who he truly is, and a rejection of all compromise.

What *The Dream of Scipio* suggests is that both submission to and compromise with an overwhelmingly strong power may promote the survival of the individual, but at such a great cost that survival may not seem worth while. Self-assertion and defiance, in contrast, may lead to death, but the authenticity achieved is much more satisfying.

In what way might this book's presentation of collaboration and resistance be applied to current problems? For many teachers of literature, the survival of our literary heritage, in an era of rapid change in the media of communication, is something that may only be achieved through compromise. For all of us, our relations with authorities in our own lives will (almost certainly) necessitate compromise. *The Dream of Scipio* suggests a range of possibilities in this area which are stark, but which may also be illuminating when we need to choose our path.

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Re-reading the book: A reader's response

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What seems like a very long time ago, in the rarefied environs of the old British library, I sat down to read a book. At first glance it seemed to be a book like any other, a 12th edition, published in 1975, retaining the original dust jacket with its portrait of a goatee-sporting author, and bearing the legend *5 Readers Reading*. *5 Readers* set me off on a singular exploration of the reader's relationship to the "book", that subtle synergy of the reader's psychological processes and auctorial invention. In truth, I was never quite comfortable with the idea that the author "was doing something to me" not least because the author's ascendancy was my negation and whilst I was capable of losing myself in a good book I felt that I must make ***some*** contribution to the journey. *5 Readers* and subsequent reader response and reception theory publications were remarkably reassuring in that respect! But the more I read, the more I began to wonder why no mention was made of the physical object, everything seemed to be geared towards the traditional close reading of the reader reading the narrative. Thus began my research into the reader's response to the book-as-object.

I hope that what I have to say now will further contribute to the ongoing dialogue of reader-orientated theories, because I believe that it is time to take a step back and look at the reading experience in a more holistic way. It is time to read the reader reading the book, because our interaction with western society's most significant artefact, that multi-layered creation that we call "book", offers a glimpse into our psyches both personally and collectively. Our dependence of and love for it is displayed prominently: ***textually***, in novels and journals, ***visually***, in every painting which uses the book as a prop or backdrop, and ***physically***, in the magnificent libraries of our old stately homes or in our own humble personal book collections. Even in our virtual and hidden libraries where the format or casing of the book substitutes monitors, hard drives, and software for boards, covering material and paper!

Over the last four years my research has led me to reassess the application of the initial premises of reader response theory and it may be helpful here to refresh our memories. The principle tenets are defined by Stephen Regan of the Open University as: the kind of reader that a text implies; the codes and conventions that a reader employs to understand the text; the mental processes that occur as the reader negotiates the text; and finally, social and historical difference

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between readers and reading groups. These are equally applicable to an examination of the physical object and it has become clear to me that the act of reading encompasses a wider range of activity than has hitherto been acknowledged and I believe [at the moment] is composed of three distinct stages. The first stage begins when the idea of wanting to read a book pops into my head; I might have a specific book or genre in mind in mind. I may conjure up a mental image of a universal "book" and look for what suits my mood at that moment. I might look for it by author or title – and if my memory is a little fuzzy my search for the elusive book might be directed by shape, colour or cover design. Certainly my searches in this mode can produce interesting results because either my search proves to be exceptionally successful or the recalled object bears ***absolutely*** no relation to the actual object. When I am browsing for a new book [non-subject or author specific] in a shop where my senses are inundated with sensory input, any of the physical attributes such as shape, colour or cover design might catch my attention and influence my initial selection.

The second stage of reading is the very moment that my gaze is drawn to the physical object, and [if unknown] I begin to assess physical attributes, which might prompt further investigation such as an assessment of the paper or the typeface. Does the cover design appeal to me? Is the typeface the right size? Is the ink the right density? Then in no particular order, I read the cover blurb, the first paragraph, or I dip into the middle of the narrative but, and some readers do this – I ***never ever*** read the closing paragraph!

The third stage that when I open the covers and begin to read, I might be so engaged by the story that I am able to ignore the physical attributes of the object that jar with me. Or by this stage physical attributes would have pre-disposed me to striking an empathic pose towards the narrative. At any stage I can reject a book ***but*** what has not been previously remarked upon is that I might reject it before I begin to read because of physical attributes. It is also entirely plausible that a book can feel alien if the narrative itself becomes a barrier to reading ease, as I will explain by example later on.

In addition, two other aspects demand brief mention at this point, environment and clothing. Where you are and what you are wearing will contribute to the ease with which you read your book. The phrase, which I used earlier "lost in a good book", implies that I as a reader am totally comfortable with the ambient conditions in which I have chosen to read and have established a rapport with my reading material. As Groucho Marx once observed "Outside a dog, a book is man's best friend, inside a dog it's too dark to read".

Before I continue any further, I seek your indulgence. In a few moments I'm going to ask you to bring your own unique experience of reading to the fore but with a shift in emphasis. I want you to consider the physical aspect of reading, which for the most part we ignore, take for granted or dismiss as obvious. I am going to ask you to close your eyes and imagine a scenario in which you are about to read. If anyone is uncomfortable with this now might be the time to grab a cup of coffee!

Close your eyes.

You are alone in a library and feel totally at ease. As you look around the room you observe that the shelves are stacked floor to ceiling with all types of books, some hardback, some paperback, some ornate leather bindings, others bright paper, or elegantly bound cloth and board.

- You go over to the shelves and browse, read the titles and touch the spines.
- A particular volume attracts your attention and you lift it down from the shelf.
- It sits comfortably in your hands – feels right – you choose this book to read.
- You walk over to a large comfortable chair – you settle into the capacious and welcoming cushions eager to begin reading – but something holds you back. Instead you take a long look at the object, the book that you have chosen.

- Your attention is drawn towards the covering material – you touch it – stroking your hand along the span of the front cover and the length of the spine – noticing how it feels against your skin – feeling every ridge and bump – you become aware of the scent – and lift it to your nose and breath deeply.
- Opening the book the smell of the paper strikes you – and you observe the texture of the pages before you – glancing momentarily at the ink and typeface you begin to read your book.

Now open your eyes.

Can you describe the book that you chose?

I suspect that not one of us imagined the same object with the same shape, size or colour because although we have an "ideal" for the word "book" we as individual readers flesh out our mental image of the object in our own unique way.

The physical object is a multi-layered creation pulling together the labours of several industries and how it is made ***will*** affect how you read the narrative. When a reader examines a book four of the five senses are engaged: sight, touch, sound and smell [yet on very intense days at the British library pouring over very old, dusty and acrid-smelling books – I certainly felt as if taste was involved too!]. When we choose a book a complex chain of events is set in motion whilst I am neither biologist nor neuroscientist I understand that the interaction between bio-chemical activities and psychological processes within the brain, precipitates an intricate sequence which directs the reader to select one book over another. Norman Holland defines the psychological processes that occur as the reader selects a book as defence, expectation, transformation and fantasy. Each reader will choose a book in a way that will maximise their own pleasure or minimise their own discomfort. Whilst Holland's canon of work explores the interaction of the reader with the written word, my research has revealed that his formula can be applied with equal validity to the physical object. There are many readers who will reject a book because of print size, cover decoration and paper quality because it spoiled the net amount of pleasure garnered from the experience of reading.

Let me suggest my own experience with a novel as an illustration of what can happen when the balance of reading becomes mis-aligned. My reaction to the story provides a pertinent example of the interrelatedness of the physical object and the reading experience, and the significance of the nature of the reading experience, no matter how careful we may be to academicise the process.

During my Masters I was asked to read the book *Emma Courtney* by Mary Hays. Published in 1796, it was a feminist text to be read in conjunction with feminist theory. When the book arrived I was bursting with excitement to read it. The Title typeface is bold, typical of the Oxford World Classics and it is placed with emphasis to draw the reader's attention and adds to a sense of the multiple layering of the cover. Instantly the reader becomes focussed on the heart of the picture, a young girl, seated she sketches; her eyes boldly assess her subject – you the reader – she is the epitome of sensibility, attired in the costume of the late eighteenth century. The reader's attention is diverted by another image and breaking contact with her gaze, you look through the broken windowpane where two lovers stand; freeze-framed in a moment of intimacy, she glancing upward to meet his stare, as his hand protectively cradles her arm. This illustration evokes a particular period within the long eighteenth century that I enjoy: romanticism, poetry, and the vogue for sensibility and aesthetics. Yet, this book provoked a strong sense of antipathy in me. Advertised by Oxford University Press as a "key sentimental novel". I had presumed that the word "sentimental" was applied in the eighteenth century sense of the word: abounding with sentiment, expressing quick intellectual feeling. My interpretation was that it was not and I found it to be a tedious read. Enjoying as I do the discovery of new eighteenth century novels to read, I opened the book with enthusiasm but alas, found myself facing dense, emotive, language, and a heroine to whom I could

not relate (silly, shallow and desperate). These aspects adversely affected my opinion about the physical object. A short story, it seemed to last much longer than the 196 pages dedicated to the narrative and perhaps worse still – although the artefact was physically unable to change, change before my eyes it did. The typeface metamorphosed into a small fiddly one and the layout became cramped and claustrophobic. As my sense of irritation with the story increased, my rejection of the physical object, which became a repository of my dissatisfaction with the story, was absolute.

By contrast, my investigation into the publication history of Robinson Crusoe, a book with a varied and colourful history, and in print every year since it was first published in 1719, was a complete reversal. As a storyteller Defoe is engaging both in his plot construction and his creation of characters. Of course Crusoe has aspects that do not sit comfortably with readers and many literary critics have remarked upon the often inconsistent nature of Defoe's writing (specifically John Sutherland in his amusing series, Puzzles in Literary fiction). For example, Defoe's inability at times to remember the simple facts of his tale as he enthusiastically drives the story onwards – Crusoe discovers the footprint on the beach which seems to imply that Friday has only one leg, or his magical acquisition of waistcoat pockets when he has swum to the shipwreck bare-chested. I became tolerant, even fond of Defoe's idiosyncratic storytelling as one is with a friend who tells amusing or "tall stories". Perhaps more curiously, I found that my respect for Defoe as a writer increased [with all his idiosyncrasies of style] because of the joy I was experiencing with each new edition of Crusoe that I discovered. In the four years that I have spent examining this book, the physical diversity of this novel is at times quite staggering.

It is at this point that I ask you to consider the construction of this truly amazing object in which we invest so much of ourselves! For the past year I have been learning how to bind books. It is not easy; it requires skill, patience good eyesight, moreover a meticulous eye for detail, specifically measurement. As someone who is long-sighted the ability to measure accurately is sometimes slightly wide of the mark and the results of my labours are more often than not frustratingly imperfect! I mention eyesight here because for the reader eyesight is obviously important. But what of those readers whose fingers or ears are their eyes – we are all dependent on some aspect of our physiology to access the written word – our response to the book-as-object is a sensory experience [if not a sensual one]. But how often do we who use our eyes, pay attention to the tactile element of reading? When this aspect of reading is brought into sharp focus it can produce interesting results and remind the reader that the way a book feels and looks can be just as important as reading the narrative.

During the delivery of a recent paper on the book as a physical object to a mixed group of students and lecturers at the University of Greenwich, I asked them to examine a collection of books [as I will ask you to do later]. Initially self-conscious, their apparent enthusiasm for rediscovering what we all normally ignore was very evident as they sniffed and touched and stroked and listened – and they were talking and smiling and laughing whilst they did so. My audience was rediscovering the sensual contact with the physical object and it was a happy experience. The old volumes were particularly popular for the "hands-on" experiment; they ***caressed*** or ***stroked*** the bindings – especially those that were leather bound. It is something we all do when choosing books – old or new, paper, cloth or leather – but it is so ingrained and perhaps so fleeting a process that we barely notice we are doing it.

So, in conclusion, I propose that the reader's response to the object begins before the response to the text begins, and that such readings of the medium may have significant implications regarding the communication of the text (in extremis, selection or rejection), and therefore any examination of the reader's response should include both an exploration of the reader's psychological involvement with the text, and an examination of interactions with (and responses to) both the physical object book, and the environmental conditions surrounding the selection and interpretation of a book.

> What I'd like you to do now is to come forward to the front and to the table where the books are placed and browse for a few moments. Some are old – some are not so old. But

imagine you are in a bookshop or library – pick a book up, examine it ***but*** (and this is important, rather than read the narrative examine the physical object – consider how the visual appearance affects you – notice how it feels in your hand – stroke the covers – smell the paper. Listen to the noise the paper makes as you turn the pages. Is the typeface fully formed and comfortable to the eye – is the ink dense enough? As you browse I'd like you to think about how these books compare with books that you own or have encountered and that evoke particular memories.

[5 - 7 mins to examine books]

Thank you if you'd like to resume your seats.

Sadly for me, this paper is now at an end. I hope that you have enjoyed my brief introduction to my research and that it gives you pause for thought when next you pick up a book to read! Whilst we must never forget that the true importance of the book-as-object is that it is first and foremost a tool for communication, I hope that now you'll agree that the object so beautifully crafted, can tell us more about ourselves than we have perhaps previously considered. I will leave you with a quote from Wordsworth's Illustrated *Books And Newspapers*, 1846.

> Discourse was deemed Man's noblest attribute,
> And written words the glory of his hand;
> Then followed printing with enlarged command
> For thought – dominion vast and absolute
> For spreading truth, and making love expand.

Thank you