

LITERATURE AND PSYCHOLOGY



Proceedings of the
Tenth International Conference on Literature and Psychology
Amsterdam • June • 1993

Edited by **Frederico Pereira**

Published by **Instituto Superior de Psicologia Aplicada, Lisbon**

Cover Painting: Still-life with books (1888), by *Vincent Van Gogh*

Cover design by *Jorge Ferreira*

Photocomposed by *Instituto Superior de Psicologia Aplicada* — Lisboa

Printed by *Guide - Artes Gráficas, Lda* — Póvoa de Santo Adrião

Depósito Legal nº 73957/94

ISBN 972-95486-5-X

1994

TENTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LITERATURE AND PSYCHOLOGY

Edited by Frederico Pereira

Amsterdam

June • 1993

**Center for the Study of Psychoanalysis and Culture (SUNY-Buffalo, USA)
Institute for the Psychological Study of the Arts (University of Florida, USA)
Instituto Superior de Psicologia Aplicada (Lisbon, Portugal)
Janus Pannonius University (Pécs, Hungary)
Group for Psychoanalytic Studies (University of Massachusetts, USA)
Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Littéraire (Université Paris VII, France)**

Published by Instituto Superior de Psicologia Aplicada, Lisbon

Contents

The International Conference in Literature-and-Psychology: A History	ix
Norman N. Holland	
Word Representation Thing Representation	3
Robert Silhol	
Freud and Bakhtin: The Hermeneutics of the Subjective Text	9
Antal Bókay	
From the Unconscious to Ontological Choice and Lived Experience: Sartre, Freud and the Literary Text	21
Erik Nakjavani	
Structural Correspondences in the Literary and Psychotherapeutic Process	35
Rainer Holm-Hadulla	
Do Not Forget the Author!	41
Carl Pietzcker	
Who's on the Couch?	47
David Sundelson	
Therapy and War in Cather's <i>One of Ours</i> and Barker's <i>Regeneration</i>	53
Anne Wyatt-Brown	
L'Intuition de la Découverte Psychanalytique dans <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> de Nathaniel Hawthorne	63
Pierre Met	
«The Neglected Technique of the Witticism»: A Philosophical Inquiry	69
Edmond Wright	
Don Juan et les Femmes	81
Han Verhoeff	
Maldoror, Mother and Child	91
Henk Hillenaar	
The Archaic Mother in the Late Novels of E. M. Forster	99
Sue Finkelstein	
Wives and Mothers in <i>Jude the Obscure</i>	105
Steven V. Daniels	
Günter Kunert's <i>Mann über Bord</i>: A Short Story as Family Romance	111
Walter Schöнау	
Romeo, a Lover Inhibited Lover by Childhood Trauma	119
Marvin B. Krims	
Creativity and Homosexuality: Strategies of Psychic Survival in Schiller and Goethe	125
Olga Nesseler / Thomas Nesseler	
Anger... and Anger: From Freud to Feminism	141
Kathleen Woodward	
Angel on the Loose: Sentimentality as Disguised Aggression in <i>The Old Curiosity Shop</i>	157
Richard A. Currie	

The Choice of a Sexual Identity: Alchemy and Gender in an Episode from Casanova's <i>Mémoires</i>	163
Nancy Blake	
(Homo-)Sexuality and (Post-)Analytic Theory: Lesbian and Gay Male Subjectivity as a Site of Cultural Struggle	167
William J. Spurlin	
«That's true. Negros stink.» Masochism and the Function of the Black Woman in Klaus Mann's <i>Mephisto</i>	175
Carlotta Von Maltzan	
Matric Fetishism	183
Angela Moorjani	
Sade, L'Espace et la Subjectivité	193
Frederico Pereira	
The Percy and Adams Families: Graveyard Representations of Chronic Depression	199
Bertram Wyatt-Brown	
Ambition and Evasion in Styron's <i>Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Madness</i> ...	215
Donald Vanouse	
The Good Person of Szechwan: Discourse of a Masquerade	221
Elizabeth Wright	
Les Composantes de la Théâtralité	229
Yves Thoret	
John Huston's <i>Freud</i>	235
Norman N. Holland	
Home and the Superego: The <i>Risky Business</i> of Being <i>Home Alone</i>	241
Andrew Gordon / Hernan Vera	
Romantic Relationships Between Psychotherapists and Patients in the Movies ..	253
Maria I. Vera	
Ms. Sammler's Planet: Margaret Atwood, Saul Bellow and Joanna Russ. Rescue the Female Child's Story	261
Marleen Barr	
Body & Soul: Strategies of Masking and Unmasking in the Photographs of Geneviève Cadieux	277
Anca Cristofovici	
Oscar in the Fantastic Shakespearean Glass	289
David Pollard	
De Greene à Green: <i>The Third Man</i>	299
Fabio Troncarelli	
Moses and Cain, from Saul to Paul	305
László Halász	
Programming a Scientific Psychology: Artificial Intelligence on the Couch	311
David Crane	

The International Conference on Literature-and-Psychology: A History

This volume includes the papers from the tenth of our annual international conferences in literature-and-psychology. Because, no doubt, of our exaggerated respect for the decimal system, several people asked me if I would contribute a short history of our conference for this volume.

I was there at the beginning. The original idea for the conference came from Antal Bókay (Janus Pannonius University). He got in touch with the Center for the Psychological Study of the Arts at SUNY/Buffalo, specifically with Murray Schwartz and myself. He suggested we visit him in Pécs. We did so that summer, 1982, and among the plans we laid was the idea of a literature-and-psychology conference. Antal showed us the possible accommodations and the remarkable collection of psychotic art that made Pécs a perfect place to start.

Start it did, in 1983. That first conference established a principle of openness that has guided all the conferences since, a principle derived from the then format of the annual literature-and-psychology conference we had been holding in Buffalo. Instead of having a few stars, a few famous (or infamous) speakers, we would give as many people as possible a chance to give papers. This principle of openness had more than practical consequences. It meant that our conference would not be doctrinaire. We would accept all the sects of depth psychology, not just Freud or American or British psychoanalysis, but Lacan, Jung, Horney, and, on occasion, cognitive science and neuroscience. We would not be limited as to genre, but open to papers on any kind or nationality of literature, as well as film, the visual arts, dance, and, on two tuneless occasions, thanks to Marcia Green, music and opera.

Because of this openness, I feel our conference has floated all kinds of ideas. Some have sunk, but many have gone on to become part of the foundation of our discipline. «The International» has created a space for innovation and creativity, for bringing together methods often separated, depth psychology in relation to cognitive science, reader-response theory, or feminism.

Our first meeting took place in Pécs, Hungary, in 1993, with Antal Bókay and Ferenc Jádi serving as *les responsables*, the good citizens who take care of the arrangements for food and lodging. In 1984, the redoubtable Robert Silhol (University of Paris) took over and, together with Nancy Blake (University of Montpellier), held the second conference in Montpellier. (That was the time when our unlamented Eastern Airlines left me planeless in the Gainesville Airport.)

In 1985, I think we just sort of forgot. (Ours has always been a rather casual operation.) But in 1986, we were back in business. Robert Silhol organized the conference in a Jesuit school in Aix-en-Provence. (It was good for our souls, I am sure, to live as those boys did.)

In 1987, we tried an American location, Kent, Ohio, under the leadership of Robert Bamberg of Kent State University. The conference was good, but we found the travel costs prohibitive for our Europeans, and we have not tried the U.S. again. Even so, the Kent conference saw our first publication. Vera Camden of Kent State edited some of the papers for her volume: *Compromise Formations: Current Directions in Psychoanalytic Criticism*, Kent State University Press, 1989.

1988 saw the conference back in Europe, in Kirschberg, just outside of Vienna with Antal Bókay shouldering the responsibility for arrangements. Despite the well-known Waldheim disease, the conference was by no means silent or forgetful. The mountains we could see through the big schoolroom windows made an imposing backdrop for our speakers, and the beer was gorgeous.

1989 brought us back to Pécs, again under the auspices of Antal Bókay. (If I am quiet about this one, it is because Jane and I were in Tiananmen Square at the time.)

In 1990 we turned to the splendidly modern conference center in Urbino, where excellent and most efficient arrangements were largely made for us by the able Professor Pino Paione and his Centro Internazionale di Semiotica e Linguistica. Urbino brought us Frederico Pereira of the Instituto Superior de Psicologia Aplicada (Lisbon), and Frederico took on the task of, for the first time, publishing the entire proceedings of the conference. Also, in Urbino, for the first time, we began to have separate sessions in French and German.

A handsome volume of the Urbino papers was available at our next meeting, at Regent's College, London, in 1991. It was Joan Byles who made possible this especially close and convivial meeting, with its memorable party at the Freud House.

In 1992, Frederico Pereira invited the group to Lisbon, a city that amazed and delighted us with *fado* and *vinho verde*. We were all impressed, I know, with the magnitude and seriousness of the Instituto's programs, of which our conference was only one.

Amsterdam was our site in 1993, thanks to the hard work and devoted hospitality of Walter Schoenau and Henk Hillenaar. A dinnertime cruise along Amsterdam's famous canals was only one of the festive evenings.

So far, Frederico Pereira has published three volumes of our papers: Urbino, 1990; London, 1991; and Lisbon, 1992, and he will publish the papers from Amsterdam, 1993. You should insist your library order all of them; order blanks are available from IPSA at the University of Florida.

Next year, our eleventh, we look forward to Sandbjerg in Denmark, at the time of the summer solstice, where Cay Dollerup will be our host. I think we can fairly say after ten years, that the Conference has become the oldest permanent floating colloquium in literature-and-psychology. Our participants have come not only from Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, and the U.S., but also as far away as China, Israel, and South Africa.

It has been able to survive only because, from the earliest days of the conference, a group of dedicated souls has supervised such matters as ordering the increasingly complex program, getting mailings out, introducing speakers, dealing with crises at the conference itself, and a host of other details: David Willbern (SUNY/Buffalo), Andrew Gordon (University of Florida), Robert Silhol and Yves Thoret (University of Paris), and Antal Bókay (Janus Pannonius). Above all, this informal steering

committee has provided a continuity of spirit and intention that has made all the difference.

Equally important are those who have come to all or most of the conferences. That has been the real continuity. I would like to list them but, for one thing, they are so many and, for another, that «most» is ambiguous. I would be afraid of omitting some deserving participant. Let us simply agree that it is the changing, but continuing membership that has made this conference what it is.

As for me, why is it me that you asked to write this history? I've not been to all the conferences — I'm not sure anyone has. Am I the oldest living member? Maybe. But I'd like to think of myself by the designation Andy Gordon awarded me in Amsterdam. Odd for a pagan like myself, but I like the idea of being,

The Godfather, NORMAN N. HOLLAND

PAPERS

Word Representation Thing Representation

ROBERT SILHOL (*)

Until I decided to choose Freud's text «The Unconscious» (1915) as a basis for discussion in a research seminar, I used to think this was a straightforward enough demonstration, a piece which was so clear in fact that it hardly needed any commentary. On trying to explain it to others, however, not only did I discover that this exemplary demonstration was going to take weeks of seminar sessions, but that there were points in it that I wasn't sure I understood. The notion of Preconscious, for one, greatly disturbed me. Here I was, a true believer, a faithful disciple who daily upheld the master's word, the purity and radicality of his «message», and all I was getting for thanks from the same master was this ambiguous, and to me impure, notion of the Preconscious which I could not fit into the model I had first received, a model quite simply made of Conscious and Unconscious with a bar in between and nothing else! And there was more, and worse, for when I saw how Freud, in the last pages of his paper, embarked on a discussion of «thing-presentation» and «word-presentation»,¹ I began to have doubts as to the validity of his demonstration. Confronted with what I took to be a consideration on language I found too summarily developed, I felt very depressed.

In the long run, though, I managed to follow Freud's reasoning, thus understanding, I think, what steps he had taken in his paper. It is these notions — word presentation, thing presentation — that I wish to clarify today, and we shall see that in the end Freud's paper on the Unconscious has a direct bearing on our research on literature.

The passage which deals more specifically with *words* is to be found in the last part of Freud's paper, the seventh, «Assessment of the Unconscious». Discussing the genesis of speech-formation in schizophrenia and the nature of the substitutive processes that occur in such cases, Freud comes to the conclusion that in schizophrenia we can observe «a predominance of what has to do with words over what has to do with things» (*Standard Edition* XIV, 200). A view that is widely accepted today.

The explanation he then gives at this point² in a nutshell can only be understood,

(*) Université Paris VII, Centre d'Anthropologie Littéraire, 10, rue Charles V, 75004 Paris, France.

¹ See the editor's comment in a footnote page 201, *Standard Edition* XVI, and especially: «The distinction between 'word-presentations' and 'thing-presentations' was already in (Freud's) mind when he wrote these earlier works (*The Interpretation of Dreams*, 1900; and Chapter IV of his book on jokes, 1905), and it no doubt derives from his studies on the aphasias. The matter was discussed at some length in his monograph on the subject (1891), though in somewhat different terminology.»

² Following a paragraph where he describes the structure of the metaphor: «What has dictated the substitution is not the resemblance between the things denoted but the sameness of the words

I think, if we keep the 1914 text on narcissism in mind.³ Here is the quotation:

(In schizophrenia) the cathexis of the *word* presentations of objects is retained. What we have permissibly called the conscious presentation of the object can now be split up into the presentation of the *word* and the presentation of the *thing*; the latter consists in the cathexis, if not of a direct memory-image of the thing, at least of remoter memory-traces derived from these. (201)

And this is immediately followed by the very sentence which first attracted my attention: «We now seemed to know all at once what the difference is between a conscious and an unconscious presentation.» (201) For how on earth can a presentation (*Vorstellung*) be unconscious?

A few lines below, Freud explains: «(...) the conscious presentation comprises the presentation of the thing plus the presentation of the word belonging to it, while the unconscious presentation is the presentation of the thing alone.» (201)

The statement, this time, seems clear: on one hand the image of the word (or the word as image, Freud explains himself very clearly on this in the Appendix C), and on the other the image of the thing. This is easy enough to understand: obviously, the infant is able to produce a mental representation of the breast much before it can use a name for it. And we all know that in a psychoanalysis we express what we feel with words in the hope — to put things roughly — that the naming of the symptom will make it disappear, the replacing with words amounting to an unveiling of its secret.

But we are still not told how a presentation can be unconscious, and we are not sure we can accept without further explanation that an unconscious presentation is that of the thing alone. Aren't we allowed to proceed forward and can't we go beyond the two well established principles just mentioned: that the thing precedes the word and that what is repressed is kept silent, unsaid?

It then struck me that perhaps my problem with Freud's formulation came from the way I was reading «*Vorstellung*». Indeed, Freud is not here dealing with language as such, but with the structure of language only, that is to say with what makes language possible in the first place. I think *Vorstellung* should be understood as an attempt at describing man's ability to know the world, man's ability to transform an object into an image, to «translate» reality into words, in short to represent. Something in us takes place which has the structure of an act of signification, but we are unaware of it and do not know what it means. The two examples I have chosen can show this.

What characterizes both the infant imagining the breast and the neurotic symptom is that in each case we have the same structure. Apparently, there is nothing common between the two situations: the infant has the image but not the word, language is not here yet, the baby can «imagine» but cannot name; whereas with the neurotic symptom, language is already gone, has been erased and only an unconscious act of conversion remains. And yet, we are dealing with the same structure. When the infant imagines, it transforms what it perceives into a mental image (or perception amounts to the creating of a mental image), and in the case of the neurotic something that is not named by a clear and intelligible sign is «told», or made manifest, on the body. Each time, to use Freud's word, a *substitution* has occurred, a substitute has been found.

Our original question was: how can a presentation be unconscious (or what is the nature of an unconscious presentation) and what does Freud's «thing alone» stand for? With this in mind, let's look at Freud's paper again. I will summarize his argumentation touching schizophrenia (Figure 1).

This is where our difficulties begin, for Freud goes too quickly or does not explain

used to express them.» (201).

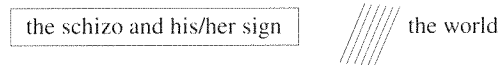
³ «On Narcissism: An Introduction», *Standard Edition* XIV, 69-102.

FIGURE 1

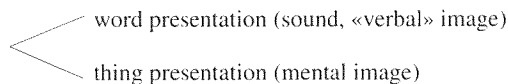
1) «object-cathexes are given up»



2) «the cathexis of the *word*-presentations of objects is retained», in other terms, the schizophrenic keeps the word and gives up the thing. The structure is the same as above:



3) «the conscious presentation of the object can now be split up into the presentation of the *word* and the presentation of the *thing*»



enough. His third step, above, cannot be inferred from the proposition which precedes it. His (correct) description of the sign (conscious presentation of the object) cannot directly be deduced from the fact that the schizophrenic experiences the sign as split from the object it represents in reality. We do have a split, yes, but it is not, not yet, the one Freud mentions. What we can say is that the discovery of a split between presentation and reality in schizophrenia led him to conceive of a linguistic model which was very near that of Saussure, with its signified and its signifier (again see his Appendix C where this is quite obvious), but also led him astray, temporarily, in his attempt at improving the concept he was working on. He does speak correctly of the «bar», or distance between subject and object, but in his third step he only does so metaphorically, using the bar between signifier (word presentation) and signified (thing presentation) when he should have stayed with the schizophrenic and distance.⁴ In a moment, of course, he will come back to the schizophrenic.

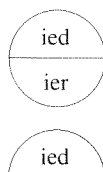
If we look at his «conscious presentation of the object» from a linguistic point of view, now, we can say that we do not understand how it can be split up — which is what Freud does — , for the simple reason that the «presentation of the word» he distinguishes on one hand already comprises the «thing presentation» he sets aside on the other; a word, in short, is already made up of signified and signifier, and these, besides, can in no way be split, except artificially for reasons of analysis or explanation. For the linguist (but not for Lacan, of course, who uses «signifier» in his own way), there is no such thing as a signifier without a corresponding signified.

Freud, then, was not, strictly speaking, reasoning as a linguist (in as much as he did not specify that signified and signifier are combined in an unsplittable unit), and as a psychoanalyst, here, from 2 to 3 he went too quickly. And yet, temporarily confusing the metaphor for the thing, or the bar of the linguist for the actual distance which separates man from the world, he is nevertheless progressing towards his aim: an understanding of the nature of the unconscious. By stressing the notion of splitting, and linking it with that of substitution,

⁴ On the notion of distance, see R. Silhol, «Me Jane, You Tarzan: on meaning», in *Compromise Formations: Current directions in psychoanalytic criticism* (Vera Camden , Ed.), Kent, Ohio, and London: Kent State University Press, 1989.

his paper helps us to understand how representation functions, which will in turn help us to understand how language itself functions. As I have pointed out, over and above «Word», *Wortvorstellung* corresponds to the action, to the mental act (*en amont*) which our ability to speak consists in. And we saw how linguistics and psychoanalysis, though with an entirely different object, come to findings that are not contradictory and even coincide on points of particular interest to us, psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic critics.

We can now go back to Freud's demonstration and to the «splitting up» he advocates, where *word presentation* corresponds, as I have shown, to a signified *and* its signifier, whereas the thing presentation is equated to a signified only.



For if there is no such thing as a signifier without its signified, the contrary is not true. What Freud has done is simply to point out how one can have a *signified* on its own: thing presentation. That this signified, which is a representation too, a mental image, should also be considered as a signifier need not be developed here, it is, I hope, obvious to you («*Il n'y a que du signifiant*», Lacan) .

Does this help us to understand more clearly the concept of unconscious? Probably not. For we still have to explain what prompted Freud to place his bar, his splitting up, as he did, between signified and signifier. My opinion is that he only answered the question that worried him metaphorically, that is to say placed the bar (which he did invent in *Die Traumdeutung*) not where it should be according to his previous and original model, but at a place where it *only represented* the «real» bar, i.e. between signified and signifier. Thus placed, it had a linguistic function, yes, that of stressing the difference there is, from a linguistic point of view, between sound and mental image. This is a good metaphoric way of expressing the distance there is between us and the world, but it has to be interpreted, translated, and as it is no help to the student of psychoanalysis.

The difficulty lied of course in the fact — discovered by Freud — that what is unconscious is kept silent, whereas the passage from unconscious to conscious can only take place thanks to a «linking up» with language. But this theoretical view, although quite correct, does not do justice to the complexity of the concept of unconscious and to the very elusiveness it stands for in fact. We all know this, the naming of a symptom will make it disappear only if certain other conditions are fulfilled.

This is no doubt why Freud brought back the example of schizophrenia into the picture. The putting into words is not always enough and he says, implying we have to examine the problem further: «*Die unbewusste ist die Sachvorstellung allein*», yes, but on certain conditions.

Such relations, which become comprehensible only through words, form a major part of our thought-processes. As we can see, being linked with word presentation is not yet the same thing as becoming conscious, but only makes it possible to become so. (202-203)

The final answer is to be found in the study of schizophrenia where, precisely, the «ego's attempt at flight» «consists in withdrawal of the instinctual cathexis from the points which represent the *unconscious* presentation of the object...» (203) What is at work with the schizophrenic is a rejection of the world,⁵ a separation, a retreat, in short an impossibility

⁵ We may even say that the schizophrenic has never entered the real world and has no knowledge of «distance».

to take our separation from the world into consideration. The real bar — the bar of the «real» —, the split Freud has been working on throughout his paper, is there.

The world, for the schizophrenic, is left out, (or more correctly, he is left out of the world) but the words remain. And if they are so often strange words it is because they are not attached to what they are generally supposed to represent. In fact, and Freud points this out brilliantly, these words have the status of the things that are missing. Hallucination confers them this status.

Thus are we led to discover that when we dream, and also when we fancize, read or write, we are all schizophrenics. This should help us in our enquiry into the nature of literature, the act of reading or the act of writing.

I read Freud's statement: «The unconscious is the presentation of the thing alone» as expressing metaphorically our distance from the world and the «objects» it is made of. I feel that an understanding of the way representation functions helps me to understand, and interpret rightly, I hope, Freud's concept. The thing alone, yes, but over there, behind the bar.

What matters in the end is that the setting aside of a «signifier» made of an image of the «thing alone» (which is Saussure's signified but which I call a signifier because it is a *representation*) enabled Freud to work his way back to a consideration on memory. Working on the notion of bar, to which corresponds today's «void» or *béance*, he had the intuition to articulate this concept with its corollary: memory, «memory-traces», in short our past. Hardly has he mentioned «thing presentation» (201) than he adds: «the latter consists in the cathexis, if not of the direct memory-images of the thing, at least of remoter memory-traces derived from these.» I see here an adumbration of our earliest determinations and of the concept of Other. Indeed such a concept seems ready to emerge from Freud's own words with which I will conclude: «The system *Ucs* contains the thing-cathexes of the objects, the first and true object-cathexes.(201)

Freud and Bakhtin: The Hermeneutics of the Subjective Text

ANTAL BÓKAY (*)

PARALLELS AND DIFFERENCES IN BAKHTIN'S AND FREUD'S HERMENEUTICS

The poststructuralist scene in criticism can be characterized by an «incredulity toward the meta- and even toward the meta-metanarrative»¹ of formalist-structuralist criticism. This tendency appears as a loss of interest in literature as semantically autonomous text with autotelic, essential form (this is the meta-meta level) and as a refusal of practicing the interpretative techniques (the acts of the meta level) that were developed by formalist schools from New Criticism to French structuralism. Paul de Man, who referred to this tendency in the opening paragraphs of his seminal paper *Semiology and Rhetoric* talked about the «move 'beyond formalism'» that happens through turning toward the «nonverbal outside», to the «external politics of literature» (de Man, 1979,3). This move was clearly accompanied by a turn toward the problem of representation, to functional aspects, and the epistemological role of literature. Such a turn, however, would bracket the whole intellectual development of our century that centered on the recognition of a radically new role of language. The general background of the «unforgettable linguistic turn» can be supplemented by the fact of non-transparency of literary language. On this account the longing toward a move «beyond formalism» would probably be detrimental to be realized as a move «beyond language». But it likewise seems to be true that language and linguisticity should properly be understood in a fundamentally more comprehensive way than the pure linguistic object.

Poststructuralist theories that refuse the «external politics» of modern marxism or New Historicism try to define this new *locus* of linguisticity as a place that can be found in the relation of text and reader. The poststructuralist internal politics understands this relation as being primarily (ontologically) linguistic, a dynamic, hermeneutic activity which is always open, never essential and final and always creative. The two major trends in this are deconstruction and hermeneutics. With a very crude differentiation it can be said that deconstruction comprehends this ontological-linguistic relation as formal (rhetorical) creation while hermeneutics (of Heidegger's ontological type) understands it as thematic (content oriented) creation. Deconstruction developed an articulated methodology, the rhetorical

(*) Janus Pannonius University, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Department of Literary Theory, Pécs, Ifjuság u.6, H-7624, Hungary.

¹ I rather consciously play here with the well-known expression of Lyotard (1979, XXIV).

interpretation, which can be understood as the analysis of the formal components of the relation — the so called reading — between text and reader.

Hermeneutics has never defined its method, there is no clear technique of elaborating how certain linguistic utterances can exist as «the house of Being». If we inquire about concrete processes of interpretation — such that is crucial in the critical profession — hermeneutic methodology is, however, very vague, very general. In a way everything can be and is called hermeneutics. On a more serious level hermeneutic interpretation is represented by such works as Heidegger essays on certain poets, poetic works, or Gadamer's book on a volume of Paul Celan.² The genuine hermeneutical interpretation practice can be based on the analysis of such classical works. Another way of doing this would be the study of the critical schools that were explicitly connected with hermeneutics (first of all Hans Robert Jauss and the Konstanz School). A third possibility would be the search for earlier, often unconscious traces of critical approaches that tried to elaborate an immanent, linguistical but non-formal conception. I would like to suggest that such non-philosophical hermeneutical practice was present in the work of Sigmund Freud and also in the early papers of Mikhail Bakhtin. Their parallels and differences can instruct us in several crucial points for the development of a hermeneutic-critical practice. It is known that Bakhtin wrote numerous works on Freudism³ «which — as has been put by Clark and Holquist — can be regarded basically as the critique of one kind of hermeneutics from the point of view of another.»⁴ The full analysis of the problem raised above — the Bakhtinian and Freudian interpretation of subjective meaning — will naturally not be attempted here, but I have chosen one work by each of the two to give a comparative analysis of them. Bakhtin's *Discourse in Life and Discourse in Art* was published in 1926.⁵ This is perhaps one of his best early writings, a summary of profound importance in Bakhtin's oeuvre.⁶ Freud never wrote a literary theory, so his figure might be a surprise in this context. However, he wrote papers about the way in which people, individuals create, interpret or fail to interpret texts which do not possess an external function, are not false or true, but which at the same time can be very important for us. In 1905 he published the essay *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* that was a work of genuine textual analysis.

Both Bakhtin and Freud firmly rejected those theories of meaning that are usually called in short *sociological-contextual* and *formal-semantic*. In the background of this rejection it is not difficult to see more general arguments against the conception of the subjective in the two trends. The traditional historical/sociological approach made an attempt to define literary meaning as a special form of a more comprehensive social context, something external to literature. The formal approach on the other hand reduces all meaning to formal linguistic

² See a selection of Heidegger's work in Martin Heidegger: *Poetry, Language, Thought* (translated by A. Hofstadter), New York: Harper and Row, 1971; H. G. Gadamer: *Wer bin Ich and wer bist Du? Kommentar zu Celans «Atemkristall»*, Frankfurt am M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1973.

³ For more details see Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist: *Mikhail Bakhtin*, Cambridge, MA 1984, 387, fn. 2.

⁴ Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist: *Mikhail Bakhtin*, 178.

⁵ The English translation of the essay used the name Volosinov, see V.N Volosinov: *Freudianism — A Marxist Critique* (Translated by I.R. Titunik), New York: Academic Press, 1976, 93-116. All further page references are to this edition, but under Bakhtin's name. It is important, however, to note that the original title used the term «slovo» that is «word» instead of «discourse» of the English translation. The difference is important because «word» is much less technical and more hermeneutical than «discourse» and it is clearly connected with religious and even mystic overtones (see the beginning of James Bible) that were important in the formation of the textual conception of Bakhtin.

⁶ About the author, the most important theses and, in general, about the Bakhtinian position see Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist: *Mikhail Bakhtin*, 146-170; Nina Perlina: Bakhtin-Medvedev-Volosinov: An Apple of Discourse, *University of Ottawa Quaterly*, 1(53), 1985.; Michael Holquist: Answering as Authoring: M. Bakhtin's Translinguistics, *Critical Inquiry*, 2(10): 307-321; I. R. Titunik: Preface to V. N. Voloshinov, *Freudianism — A Marxist Critique*, New York: Academic Press 1976.

structures, to the linguistic object. This is not an external but a reductive approach which excludes the literariness of literary meaning. These otherwise fundamentally different trends agreed that the meaning of literary works is no different in its essence from other semiotic phenomena, literary meaning being one specific type, a subset of the more general linguistic or social meaning.

For Bakhtin and Freud, for different reasons, these conceptions are utterly unacceptable. For them subjective meaning is autonomous and immanent. For both of them it is essential that the subjective is directly not available, but essentially it is mediated. And the defining momentum of this mediated nature is embedded into understanding, subjective meaning is not some thing that is found, but rather something *being created* in a dialogical process. The similarity of the principal starting points can also be pointed out in a fundamental thesis. Bakhtin's reasoning is much more explicit in this respect than Freud's.⁷ Using methodological-epistemological arguments he turned his earlier mentioned study against the so called «dualistic view» which holds that literature has a double nature and can be approached from two different directions, from theoretical poetics and from sociology, just like a piece of goods can be the object of physical-chemical analysis as well as of economic investigation. However, according to Bakhtin it is not literature but being itself that has two domains, a *natural* and a *social*, and within these literature — which is ideological — fully belongs to the social and is therefore not dualistic. For this reason the analytical approaches can not be dualistic either, but they must seek a unified, immanent social interpretation. Freud reaches a number of similar conclusions already in his early works. The epoch-making significance of *The Interpretation of Dreams* lies in the discovery of the unconscious. Freud denies that the meaning of dreams can be derived from biological or social factors, and maintains that there exists a specific domain of existence, a sort of «inner external world» which bears an independent ontological status. Dreams are the product of this fully real inner reality. In the chapter «The Question of a *Welanschauung*» of his book *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* he draws the necessary methodological conclusions: «Strictly speaking there are only two sciences: psychology, pure and applied, and natural science.»⁸ Bakhtin's and Freud's way of thinking is identical on one point: being can be divided into two parts, the inner and the outer, the objective and the subjective. Literature, jokes, dreams belong to the inner, subjective domain and can be understood exclusively by its own logic; that is, they do not have objective and subjective components. This in short means that the above type of meanings is essentially of a hermeneutic nature.

The similarities, however, can not conceal the differences, which can be put into two groups: difference in the definition of the nature of subjective meaning and in the methodology of the definition of subjective meaning.

Bakhtin regarded *the social* as the essential function and derived the personal from it: «even the most intimate self-awareness is an attempt to translate oneself into the common code.»⁹ The core of Freud's hermeneutics is, on the other hand, *the personal*. He would put the above cited statement by saying that the social language and system of values are nothing but the common articulation of the individual's attempts to become self-conscious.

⁷ In connection with Bakhtin's conception of language I have used the following works: Robert Stam: M. Bakhtin and Left Cultural Critique, in E. Ann Kaplan (ed.), 1988, 116-145; Gary Saul Morson: Who Speaks from Bakhtin?, *Critical Inquiry*, 2(10): 225-244, 1983; Caryl Emerson: The Outer World, the Inner Speech: Bakhtin, Vygotsky and the Internalization of Language, *Critical Inquiry*, 2(10): 245-264, 1983; Susan Stewart: Shouts on the Street: Bakhtin's Anti-Linguistics, *Critical Inquiry*, 2(10): 265-282, 1983; A more recent work, M. Holquist: *Dialogism — Bakhtin and His World*, London: Routledge, 1990.

⁸ S. Freud: *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, The Pelican Freud Library, vol 2, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973, p. 216.

⁹ Bakhtin, p. 114.

In this framework the subject does not translate himself into a common language independent from him, but he creates from himself the words and texts of a language that can be made common. For Bakhtin the social is an immanent quality, an independent, autonomous «field of being» within which certain component parts can be identified («*the aesthetic*, just as the juridical or the cognitive, is *only a variety of the social*»¹⁰). Freud considers the personal (realized in the continuous self-understanding activity of the unconscious) to be the ultimate reality of the subjective and divides into various spheres of existence (dreams, symptoms, fantasies, jokes, works of art) the different processes of life having a more or less subjective quality of being. These are forms of articulation which can make the personal tangible in individual life situations.

The seemingly parallel logic, however, points towards a methodologically very different direction as a result of the different starting points. For it would be entirely conceivable that after their respective starting points both authors define the concrete component parts of the subjective within its more general sphere of existence, and then within one of these component parts also describe the specific features of the meaning of works of art. This is what Bakhtin does, following a comprehensive definition he first describes the specific features of the component parts (ideology, ideological communication, aesthetic communication), followed by the description of the individual uses (specifics of the arts, and finally, the form of artistic communication). This path, however, can not be taken in the case of the personal, because it can not be conceived of as a general quality. If we were to do that, we would in reality have to reduce the personal to some external phenomenon — the biological — which would turn it into its very opposite, into something utterly impersonal, thereby «dehermeneuticising» it. This concept of the personal for Freud is not of a theory-philosophical origin however, but rather something compelled by a very practical problem. For it turned out in the case of psychiatric patients, more precisely in the case of certain patients (Anna O. etc.) that their problems could be solved by taking them to be problems of their personal lives rather than as those of general (organic/biological) disorders. In psychoanalytic therapy the patient is always present as a concrete person who is to be faced with a similarly concrete person, the therapist. It is these two who work out together the common language and world which can get at and cope with the destructive inner secret (the subjective meaning) manifested in the symptoms of the disease and in various physical and mental problems.

For Bakhtin communication is the axiomatic starting point, for psychoanalysis it is the ultimate goal. Bakhtin starts out from the general/abstract facts of communicativity, while for Freud communication stands in the centre as something to be achieved, something to do in life. In Freud's view the basic situation is the ontological absence of communication, the fact that the unspeakable becomes prevalent in numerous real-life situations. And the unspeakable, the uncommunicatable is bound to bring illness; health can only be maintained by continuously maintained communication, and therapy is nothing but the creation of a language to say the unsayable.

Thus Freud starts his paper with the personal, or more precisely, at the outset with its «phenomenon», with the individual. Similarly to the young Lukács he sets out from the inexplicable but well-known fact that undoubtedly there exist some individual texts for subjective use in the everyday life of people (for instance jokes and the people laughing at them) and it is possible to make out the sense of their use. If this meaning were not present and accessible, people would not use these texts. At the same time these texts seem to be without a function in an odd sense, they are neither objectively, nor socially sensible, but still they do exist and are considered to be important. Freud makes use of the same technique in the analysis of jokes, slips of the tongue and dreams.

In the following I will consider this rather strange, contrasting and at the same time

¹⁰ Bakhtin, p. 95.

parallel derivation separately — through the analysis of the text and logic of the two papers.

BAKHTIN'S SOCIAL HERMENEUTICS

Bakhtin's central notion, the «social» does not appear to be a revolutionary idea at the first glance. However, Bakhtin emphasizes something else, namely the ontological-hermeneutic function of the social. From traditional literary history to sociologically-oriented marxism the role of the social aspect has been epistemological-reflective. This view holds that the works are historically determined and relevant historical data may ensure their explicit understanding. For Bakhtin this was a secondary problem, he was interested in the first place in the social existence of literature, the social process in which the meaning of the work is shaped. The social here is not merely a reflective background, but a sphere of *activity*, continuously creating and maintaining meaning. This is shown by emphasizing that ideological formations are «*intrinsically, immanently sociological*»,¹¹ they maintain articulatory processes which preserve the conscious and unconscious meanings of a given community in the form of dialogues. The social in this case has two boundaries, one is the *external world* (the non-subjective world), and the other is the individual, the *inner world* (the non-social). It is this general principle that Bakhtin uses to work out his definition of art: «the artistic (...) is a special form of interrelationship between creator and contemplator fixed in a work of art.»¹² This definition does not aim at some independent phenomenon but rather at a specific *quality*, the work of art is merely the consequence, the realization of that quality. On the other hand this artistic quality is not primarily a reflection of the social, but in it self has social existence which is made up of certain individuals (authors and receivers) and their *modes and forms of relationship*. The artistic is not some found, external object or phenomenon but a relation that helps to maintain the existence of certain phenomena.

The next step is the precise definition of *relation*. Bakhtin uses a very simple example taken from everyday life in order to shed light on the essence of relation. Two people are talking, and in their dialogue, as in any other dialogue, moreover, as in the relational use of language in general, meaning is not composed of the objective, lexical meaning of linguistic elements but it is organized in accordance with the mutual social relations (linguistic convention) of the speakers. Here Bakhtin clearly rejects the foundational notion of structuralism, the possibility of autonomous meaning: «in life verbal discourse [word] is clearly not self-sufficient. It arises out of an extraverbal pragmatic situation.»¹³ In his conception the relational nature is not the problem of context but the essence of social communication; this kind of text ceases to exist if the relational background disappears. The relationship between the text and the relation therefore is by no means the same as that between the mirror and mirrored object (it does not depict the social), «the discourse [word] here *resolves the situation*.»¹⁴ That is, some kind of mutual activity is taking place.

The relational quality is also characteristic of every area of social existence, «social communication». The word *communication* does not mean conveying information but creating and maintaining a system of values in dialogue. From among the various different types of social communication *aesthetic communication* has as its special characteristic feature the quality that it «*is wholly absorbed in the creation of the work of art, and in its continuous recreation of contemplators, and does not require any other kind of objectification*.»¹⁵

¹¹ Bakhtin, p. 95.

¹² Bakhtin, p. 97.

¹³ Bakhtin, p. 98.

¹⁴ Bakhtin, p. 100.

¹⁵ Bakhtin, p. 98.

This idea gives strength to the definition cited above: literature is a type of social communication in which the articulated value system is wholly a part of the text or the use of text. *Everyday communication* is significantly different from *artistic communication*. In everyday communication the subjective meaning is not present in a textually articulated form, it is only presented contextually. In the case of literary text, however, the subjective enters the text, the text is expanded, «*the situation enters into the utterance as an essential constitutive part of the structure of its import.*»¹⁶ The most significant problem of a truly literary theory of language is this: *how does the subjective, the aesthetic get textualized?* Bakhtin analysed three processes, such as the entymemic nature of the word, the concept of intonation and the third person. These are the basics of Bakhtin's hermeneutics.

The *enthymemic nature of the word* refers to the special structure of the social subjective meaning. The enthymeme is an inference in which one precondition remains unsaid though it is implicitly there at the same time. The enthymemic content of real-life situations is external, coming from the environment (the shared knowledge of the conversational partners), the subjective text, on the other hand, integrates this double quality in its own use. The enthymemic Word has no *double meaning* but *double existence*. This must be emphasized because it could easily be construed that this double meaning is the same as that often investigated already by the structuralists. But for Bakhtin, and in general in the works of hermeneutics, the double meaning has an ontological role; it is not an informational trick or a source of communication error but the precondition for the existence of the text. Bakhtin clearly refers to this specific double quality, the fact that the word has double nature, «real» and «potential», verisimilar and possible, an «utterance as a meaningful whole is comprised of two parts: (1) the part realized or actualized in words and (2) the assumed part.»¹⁷ In the case of a «poetic work» both components are compactly contained in the textual event, the text object and the interpreting act belonging to it, thus becoming «*a powerful condenser of unarticulated social evaluations.*»¹⁸ These evaluations, the centres of the totality of subjective meaning, are expressed only indirectly, in fact they go unsaid (or more precisely, unsignified). Any kind of conceptual signification makes the signified *external*, something that is a separate, autonomous object or phenomenon. However, subjective meaning in this case becomes dogmatized, thereby losing its subjective quality of existence: «on the contrary, whenever some basic value judgement is verbalized and justified, we may be certain that it has already become dubious, has separated from its referent, has ceased to organize life.»¹⁹

The second important term, intonation refers to the *specific way* in which subjective meaning gets fixed into a stable constant. Intonation is the process whereby the context is activated and articulated, and then it projects as a second level onto the world of objects and event. Out of these objects and events symbolic objects, poetic phenomena and stories are shaped. Intonation mediates between body and soul, the subjective and the objective, it «*always lies on the border of the verbal and the non-verbal, the said and the unsaid.*»²⁰ Intonation is the form of representation of the «implied value judgements» of the given group in the text or in the situation, «living intonation moves verbal discourse beyond the border of the verbal.»²¹

The enthymemic character and intonation jointly refer to some kind of a subjective core meaning which marks the centre of the social-subjective existence of the text. The reality of this central core was captured by Bakhtin in his third important term. The subjective

¹⁶ Bakhtin, p. 20.

¹⁷ Bakhtin, p. 100.

¹⁸ Bakhtin, p. 107.

¹⁹ Bakhtin, p. 101.

²⁰ Bakhtin, p. 24.

²¹ Bakhtin, p. 102.

text does not denote something but it exists. Bakhtin poses the question as to who is the addressee of the intonation, the reproach involved in the analyzed simple dialogue. «Clearly not to the listener but to somebody else» — he writes —, «This tack of intonational movement patently makes an opening in the situation for a *third participant*.»²² The third participant takes its shape from the text, that is, from the use of the text. It is through this third participant that the subjective text shapes the complete triple system of use, the relation between the speaker, the listener (who is «witness and ally») and the personified mutual experience brought to life in their connection. The third participant is some kind of an articulation of experience, which we create and at the same time confront in the dialogue, something for the existence of which our own activity is always required, but which also goes beyond our own feelings, being both objective and subjective simultaneously, belonging to us in a deep sense and yet independent from us, using Bakhtin's word: «fired with enthusiasm». Every text which belongs to the sphere of social subjective meaning «*is the expression and product of the social interaction of three participants: the speaker (author), the listener (reader) and the topic (the who or what) of speech (the hero)*.»²³ Later — comparing this with Freud — it will be extremely important that Bakhtin calls this system, made complete by the third person, «the social soul of the word», some sort of a script which must be followed in order to understand the text. However, the listener can only succeed if he is absolutely clear as to the position of the other participants in the text, that is to say, if he can reconstruct the social core of the threefold system of relations. The third person is the very component which articulates this collective basic meaning in the process of subjective existence.

At this point I have to stop this rather sketchy investigation of the Bakhtinian system. A more complete interpretation could go on by pointing out from the analyzed text and from other papers by Bakhtin what practical results were derived from the above theory; that is, how the theory can get down to the concrete individual texts. The enthymemic nature can lead us to the specific Bakhtinian semantics, and through the notion of intonation it is possible to unfold his hermeneutic syntax (e.g. the *kronotopos* as the intonational framework of events). Finally, based on the third participant, a pragmatic system can be constructed in which Bakhtin ingeniously brought into a unified theory the author, the reader and the narrative elements of the work of art; that is, he presupposed an artistic existence-narrative in which the work, the reader and the author are interpreted through being integrated into one single act of existence.

The work of art, the literary text, the *cronotopic* structure, the dialogical narrative, the receiver reaction (laughing as the source of the genre of the novel) appear at the end point of the system, all the results which were provided by the Bakhtinian system for the understanding of subjective meaning.

FREUD'S RADICAL-INDIVIDUAL HERMENEUTICS

In his essay *The Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*²⁴ Freud starts out from the fact that there are special texts in which, if we really think about it (though we somehow seldom do), things do not work the way they usually do in our language use about the world. Such texts can be dreams or fantasies but they can also be less free in their form, like stories, texts, rhymes, literary works or, for that matter, jokes. The joke is a frequently

²² Bakhtin, p. 103.

²³ Bakhtin, p. 105.

²⁴ Sigmund Freud (1905): *The Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, translated by J. Starchey, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976.

produced, relatively well-definable, short and simple piece of text. Its words and sentences have meaning, and yet — from a certain aspect — it is totally nonsensical, for why is it that people tell jokes? The jokes have no representational value, it is not possible, or not necessary to find a correlatable reality for their use. In short, jokes are texts with a subjective function.

This is the very quality that interests Freud the most: if they do not have an «external» use, then what is their «inner meaning»? The joke can be approached from two different points of view. One, the more frequent one, is the definition of the general modality of the «funny» (humorous). With due respect Freud looks at each of the concepts of «humour» or «the comic» worked out by philosophers and aestheticians but he also points out that there is no answer to be found in them to the question why jokes exist. The second approach therefore will be the analysis of the individual phenomenon, the joke that is understood as a concrete existent.

With this seemingly simple but truly novel direction of his starting point Freud gets into a definitional trap, that is, into a *hermeneutic circle*. For the definition of something (e.g. the joke) we need a group of phenomena which more or less clearly qualifies as that thing. In the case of grammatical phenomena (say the sentence) it is relatively easy because (in the linguistic form or the utterance) there are some objective cues which delimit the domain of investigation independent of the investigator. The joke, however, is subjectively defined in the sense that a certain text is taken to be a joke by one person and another one is not. There is no objective defining feature independent from us. Therefore Freud uses a very simple method, something *is a joke if he laughs at it*: «It is natural then that we should choose as the subjects of our investigation examples of jokes by which we ourselves have been most struck in the course of our lives and which have made us laugh the most.»²⁵

Freud's similarity with Bakhtin's position lies in the fact that Freud also starts off from a social situation: somebody tells him a joke and he laughs. The crucial difference appears in the next step: Freud is not interested in the general, social qualities of jokes (the humorous, the comic) but in the inner mechanisms of the individual text. He avoids both the sociological reduction and the aesthetic generalization of the problem.

Such a starting point, however, can easily lead to two other reduction types. One of them is psychologizing, a procedure whereby instead of the nature of the joke the psychological reactions of its users are analyzed. The other is the main trend modernism: the structural analysis of the linguistic object. Quite the contrary of our expectations, Freud — just as a good early formalist — starts to investigate the language of individual jokes. His method, which leads to the development of a radical-individual hermeneutic practice, is suspiciously different from the usual structuralist inquiries because he introduces an «effect-adequate» linguistic analysis. Similarly to the method used in choosing the joke-texts, he constantly searches for linguistic transformations whereby the text of the joke loses its «funny» character. For if it is possible to find a text-grammatical phenomenon which, once lifted out of the text, deprives the joke of its joke-like character (i.e. Freud stops laughing at it), then an objective linguistic element is discovered which can be defined as the essence of the joke.

Freud performs his search in the structuralist direction even in the sense that he makes a formal analysis, because content is extremely diverse, and it is quite obvious that a certain content alone can not be the source of the joke. In the course of this analysis he takes the following steps: (1) In the case of a certain type of jokes he discovers that the essential quality lies in the manipulation of *syntactic form* (e.g. condensation based on sound effect, rhythm, rhyming, alliteration, similar sounding, transformation of word order etc.) that evokes the desired effect, laughing; (2) In the case of another type it is the meaning that has the role of making the text a joke. On this *semantical level* (e.g. ambiguity, reference,

²⁵ Freud, 1905, p. 46.

double interpretation etc.) it is the confrontation of meanings which produces a new, funny meaning; (3) Finally, there are numerous jokes whose funny force lies in the contradictions of the context of use and the environment surrounding the text. Thus jokes can also be created by the *pragmatic level of language*.²⁶

The result of the formal-linguistic analysis is contradictory. On the one hand it is clear that «technique alone is insufficient to characterize the nature of the jokes», and on the other hand it has been proved that — at least in a number of cases — «if we undo the technique of a joke it disappears».²⁷ To put it more simply: jokes are textual but cannot be defined by certain features of linguistic objects. The direction of the search therefore is this non-linguistic textual path in the case of individual jokes.

With respect to the joke it is not difficult to collect features that place the social existence of the joke-text into the foreground, the feature that constitutes the Bakhtinian plane of investigation. The joke by its very nature is dialogical, it is always told, seldom written down. If somebody knows a joke, he can not wait to tell it. However, for this to happen very complicated social conditions must hold. It is not possible to tell a joke anytime, and even if it is on a certain occasion, we have to know what is appropriate for the given situation. These components make up the social context of the joke. The joke has a special social choreography as well. For every successful, told joke we need a narrator, a listener, the joke-text (the act of telling) and laughing. The latter is extremely important because it makes visible an element in a joke (the effect) which is much harder to capture in the case of a literary work. It could be argued that the joke involves collective components of social existence (collective experiences) which do not simply mirror social existence but which articulate and keep alive the specific communicative experiences of social existence.

However, in the case of the joke this would be a suspiciously weak explanation. First of all, our general knowledge about jokes does not reveal any kind of elevating content which, based on the above, should be regarded as an instance of such texts. This has been noticed by Freud too, he notes that «these stories have something to conceal», and «they have something forbidden to say».²⁸ However, the social order of values intends to show rather than conceal itself, it opens up to people instead of being secretive (the joke undoubtedly belongs the field of the «hermeneutics of suspicion»)²⁹. On the other hand it is a fundamental character of a text representing values that its sense derives from some source which is intended to be conveyed to us. With it, and within it, we over and over again return to an inexhaustible origin. Therefore the fundamental meaning of such texts and the meaning of their existence lies in the genesis. The joke, however, is different. In general it is of no interest who invented it. It might be the case though, for example, that the secret police are looking for the inventor or narrator of a political joke. But in such a case the «official» conceives of the joke as something ideological, conveying a set of values. In certain cases jokes can have this feature. But to a reaction like this, — when somebody gets offended by a joke — we say that «he does not understand the joke»; that is, he does not take the joke as a joke.

For the existence of the joke is not determined by its genesis but rather by its reception and effect, *the joke-text is a reader-text*. Similarly to the joke, or even more extremely, every dream is also a reader-text, or more precisely, the dream is a radical reader-text,

²⁶ It is important to note that Freud fairly clearly develops three different aspects of syntactical, semantical and pragmatical of his linguistic analysis. The major papers that defined this idea, however, were published only in 1938. See Ch. Morris: Foundations of the Theory of Signs, In *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science* (O. Neurath, R. Carnap & Ch. W. Morris, Eds.), pp: 77-139, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

²⁷ Freud, 1905, p. 113.

²⁸ Freud, 1905, p. 150.

²⁹ Paul Ricoeur: *Freud and Philosophy*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.

because it is not written by anybody, it is just read. The dreamer himself can do nothing either but read his dreams and draw conclusions from his readings to some meaning. It is important to stress that here the term «reader-text» does not denote such and such a feature of acquisition or cognition but rather the specific mode of existence of the text and its meaning. In a very general sense we are talking about an important type of text not often recognized before, about subjective text. In the case of subjective text reading has a very important, meaning-creating role, it is reading that creates a subjective context which keeps the text alive. Personal texts are extreme versions of subjective texts and their analysis can shed light not only on radically personal texts (like e.g. psychotic texts) but also on any text-meaning which has the personal as one of its major components.

For Freud the social-ideological, for the above reasons, can not give a satisfactory final explanation for the existence of joke-texts. At this point — quite instructively — Freud goes back again to the starting basis, to the definition of the joke: «a joke is what I regard as a joke», he insists. However, this statement is something different from what it was at the outset because in contrast to its phenomenological character this new version leads us to the true source of the joke-texts, that is, to their subjective conditions. Thus the meaning of the joke must be sought after somewhere in the world of personal experiences, but again in an ontological sense, in the sense that we have to find how the personal experiences can create the text.

Freud chooses an ingeniously simple example. There are innocent jokes, and there are those which clearly represent some kind of a desire. These are the so-called tendentious jokes which can have sexual or aggressive content. Freud clearly shows how these jokes integrate an inner interest into their text. As a result of being banned, sexual acts are strongly restricted. In order to get around these restrictions a fantasy construct is invented which brings the sexual act into the text, so it directly and lexically utters it and thereby gives pleasure. This sexual text product is called obscenity. Obscenity, however, is banned almost everywhere, so people create text modes in which sexual wording is avoided but a sexual reading is made possible. The content of such jokes is thus nothing else but the enunciation and circumvention of a concealed, unconscious desire. The joke, therefore, is a text which serves the articulation and interpretation of personal emotions lying deep in the psyche. This is why jokes are so important for us. It is interesting, however, that Freud — transforming it into his own radically personal plane — repeats Bakhtin's principles of analysis, i.e. the three persons, the entimemacity and the concept of intention.

The joke — as apposed to a jest — involves three participants. These are the inventor (narrator), the listener and the phenomenon or person which or who the joke is about. The third person is, however, not a hero articulated in the text but the centre of desires (in psychoanalytic terms, the object of the desire) which are materialized in the text. Originally the third person is real, the relation to it is not hermeneutic but actual. The personal text, the joke-text creates this third person as a construal of fantasy. In this way the third person is not one given externally but something imagined on the basis of the emotions and desires of the first person, a construct created through the understanding of *inner feelings*, thus it is hermeneutic in character. Freud analyzes this process in a very concrete way through the reconstruction of the origin of sexual jokes. In the beginning there was the sexual act, which could directly satisfy the sexual desire. The necessary restrictions and banning on this, however, leave a significant part of such desires unsatisfied. Satisfying desires is self-articulation, the possessor of the desire realizes his own personal existence by the sexual act, but an unsatisfied desire remains unarticulated and goes with a lot of inner tension, some intangible bad feeling. Restrictions on acts that bring satisfaction urge people to seek other ways of realizing their desires. This is aided in the first place by a special inner text and story creating psychological activity, fantasy. Fantasy is already of hermeneutic nature, for it construes a story which does not reproduce but interprets (and through understanding,

materializes, makes tangible) the forces of the desires that are otherwise intangible. Fantasy creates an inner world of text which can make possible the satisfaction of desires, self-accomplishment even with restricted use of the external world.

In connection with jokes of aggressive and sexual content Freud gives an exact description of the process whereby the original primary satisfaction of desires becomes a text-like hermeneutic construct of fantasy. The original primary act-like satisfaction is made textual, verbally accomplished by *obscenity*. Obscenity itself requires two people, and the person at whom it is directed must be present or at least imagined as present by the narrator of obscene words. Quite the contrary, in the case of sexual jokes people start telling them when there is no female person in the company (her presence may cause shame). The third person is a fantasy-figure whose inner reality is no less tangible than the reality of the objects of the outside world, it is quite possible to relate various experiences or dispositions to this person though it is not a real person. Thus the telling of the joke suggests a peculiar use of text in a situation in which the text itself is dialogical because it contains in its tissue, in its existence the subjective participants of the dialogue. This is, however, which can make possible the hermeneutic, text-creating nature of the dialogue because the role of the third person is to ensure the hermeneuticization of the processes by conveying them through understanding. The third person realizes a personal subjective meaning for both of the other two, something that can be found and created in an analogical relation to and *behind* the meaning, the existence of this person. Therefore, the third person can be regarded as the centre of subjective meaning, the source of personal-subjective enthymemicity.

The joke enthymeme, however, is more than the Bakhtinian conception. The jokes, just like Bakhtin's ideological texts, work by social approval. As we have seen in the case of Bakhtin's «Well yes» example, in every joke we can find a certain collective meaning which derives from the habits of telling jokes, from the acceptance of laughing at them and in general from the social canon of the joke. This is also an enthymeme, for behind every joke there is the sense of «laughing at it» which projects the horizontal-referential text meaning to a vertical-subjective one. It is this social enthymeme behind which Freud discovers a vertically deeper, *personal enthymeme*, the fact that every joke, in addition to and beyond accomplishing the unsaid compromises of a community, has a very special and powerful force, the indelible need for the satisfaction of personal desires. Every joke, and especially the tendentious jokes, have a very strong unconscious basis. It is the unconscious which gives them a real meaning, and it is this driving force which enforces the social regulation and the actual linguistic event. In this sense a joke — and every personal text — derives from the individual and creates the social and the objective adequate to it. An inner secret desire finds a situation and a theme.

This is a strange, reversed and active semantics. For in the case of external language we have certain signs which denote certain domains of meaning, the speaker of the given language knows what to think of on hearing a given word. In the case of subjective language the process is the opposite. There is an inner experience, a desire which seeks objects in order to articulate itself. While the external language reproduces, the subjective language produces, creates. It is as if the language were just, in statu nascendi, coming into being then.

For the unconscious is not some hidden space in the soul, not a secret text. The unconscious is something created, always residing on the borderline of being and not being, in itself it is a lifeless emotion which always strives for fulfillment and existence. Through it the individual always puts his own self in the affirmative, and the symptoms of a disease, a work of art, art itself, or a joke are all procedures for self-fulfillment and unconscious articulation. By this the unconscious does not become sayable, for it has not become independent. Only dependent on me can any object or text possess the dynamics of the unconscious, without me they lose this feature. Thus a phenomenon possessed by the unconscious is not describable but it can be *experienced*, and the unconscious always has to be reconstructed

and realized from it. The unconscious resides in repeated action, not in reflection, it is not possible to refer to it. Therefore the phenomena bringing the unconscious into existence do not represent, do not say it but rather make it shareable. They open up the possibility for personal joint action. Joint action is significant because people can have very similar experiences from various points of view, but some of them are better at articulating them in to a possibility for action. There exist various different forms of activity organized for a community which provide individuals with a grand opportunity to articulate experiences by making personal content collectively shareable which most people would not be able to articulate. This is why funny people — to the utter amusement of others — invent and tell jokes. This way the joke ensures the articulation of a certain area of the unconscious experience and makes the realization of pressing inner desires and self-accomplishment possible.

This conception of the joke text (that is, the view that the evolving meaning in it is virtually the articulation of the unconscious brought to life) claims the existence of an extremely delicate and intangible meaning that is essentially paradoxical by its nature. For the personal text is *radically individual* because the articulated experience by its nature belongs to somebody, it is absolutely immanent and, in the final analysis, private (the language use of mental patients is private in the same sense). It lacks logocentric quality. However, desires have a basic feature which resolves this privacy: a desire is always directed at something, it can only exist as something projected on to something else. Therefore personal meaning, on the other hand, is *radically relational* in its nature. It is relational at its beginning, and not at its end, in its socially complete form (as in the case of the people engaged in a conversation in Bakhtin's example), it is the precondition of creating and maintaining the relation. In the beginning there was the relation, which then materializes and becomes reality (an act, a text). Therefore modality and intonation do not surround but precede and create the text and are articulated in it. This is an odd, reversed pragmatics. A successful joke, an important confession or an appropriate metaphor is not information about something external but rather the creation of my own self, bringing something previously lifeless into existence. It must be noted, however, that this articulation is always a *par excellence mis-articulation*, self-production through misunderstanding. The original, the «real» is never available, in an important sense it does not exist.

Psychoanalysis provides a rather detailed analysis of this process, the relational origin of subjective meaning, both from the authors's and from the receiver's point of view. The two relevant concepts are *transference and countertransference*. An individual does not make and know the text of his life objectively but creates, *composes himself* in accordance with his emotions and desires. The unsayable basis, the source of composing is the unconscious relation which originates in the biological depth of our nature, immediately at work and active from the time we are born. And transference is the relation which is used to find an answer to such desires by mobilizing our own desires. Our answer to personal texts is always a personal text, we are either happy or feel hatred, and it is the rarely recognized furnace of these emotions in which we build up our own reactions to the relation of the other and to the precious words he derives from his own relation to us.

I must admit, however, that this interpretation is much closer to the ideas of the late Sándor Ferenczi than to the early Freud of the Joke essay. In 1905 Freud introduced the economy of instincts as the final cause of jokes and with this he included a non-hermeneutic, biological principle into his system. The transference/countertransference hermeneutics, on the other hand, may offer a clue to understanding personal text and develop a radically individual hermeneutics and an adequate hermeneutic practice.

From the Unconscious to Ontological Choice and Lived Experience: Sartre, Freud and the Literary Text

ERIK NAKJAVANI (*)

«What is irritating about him [John Huston] is that he doesn't believe in the unconscious.»

Remark attributed to Jean-Paul Sartre (FS xii)

For Christopher Bollas in appreciation

After a conversation with Jean-Paul Sartre in June 1979, Serge Doubrovsky writes: «*Sartre à Freud, c'est non*» (78). Sartre initially agrees with Doubrovsky's Freudian interpretation of Antoine Requentin's bisexuality in *La Nausée*. He simply tells Doubrovsky: «*I willingly grant you Requentin's bisexuality. At the time of writing [La Nausée], I didn't realize it. But, having reflected on it since, I have clearly discerned it myself. I'm not therefore against your interpretation ...*» (78). However, Sartre firmly adds: «*what I continue to refute absolutely is your Freudian mode of conceptualization, your notion of the unconscious. A lived-experience obscure to itself, yes; the unconscious, no*» (78).¹ Doubrovsky is then led to consider Sartre's seemingly unwavering negative response to the Freudian unconscious in the twilight of his life as the «ultimate, brutal confrontation of giants in the shadows» (78).

Such confrontations are obviously foundational to Sartrean thought. I would even go further and say that they constitute it in its entirety as its dialectical grid. For Sartre, the honor of rigorous thought or *theoria* (as the Greeks perceived it with its quasi-religious connotations) lies in its oppositional and paradoxical nature. Sartre's polemics for and against Husserl, Heidegger and Marx are well known examples of Sartrean dialectics. It is within this vast zone of dialectical clash of theories that Sartre challenges the Freudian concept of the unconscious. He also offers his concepts of the original, prereflective, ontological

(*) University of Pittsburgh, Comparative Literature Program, 102C Swarts Hall, Bradford, PA 16701, USA.

¹ Translations from *Le Livre Brisé* are mine.

choice of oneself and later of lived-experience (*le vécu*) within this very zone. Both of these concepts, one after the other, are to occupy the place that his theoretical rejection of the unconscious leaves empty.

For my part, however, the concepts of ontological choice of the self and lived-experience take on their significance within the boundaries of the Sartrean dialectical notion of *thinking in opposition to oneself*. Within these boundaries, the two concepts in their seeming denial of the unconscious open up a space that I would refer to as a specific «dialectic of reversal and coincidence.» In this dialectic, I find points where the concepts of the ontological choice of the self and lived-experience, on the one hand, and the unconscious, on the other, intersect. I believe that the theoretical status of the line where this intersection takes place has so far been largely suppressed in Sartre scholarship and needs to be studied.

I do not seek to overlook or to cover up the oppositional nature of the Sartre-Freud discourse on the unconscious but rather to broaden and deepen it along the course of its trajectory. Subsequently, I attempt to capture a moment or point of cumulative convergencies in this trajectory *before* it reaches the mode of «ultimate» negation discovered by Doubrovsky. As Lee Brown and Allan Hausman have argued, «Sartre's polemic against Freud should not ... obscure the degree to which his own theory is Freudian» (1981, p. 540).² This particular moment presupposes two stages: first, Sartre's criticism of the concept of the unconscious; second, his redefinition of it and its appropriation in new and useful ways.

Since redefinition-appropriation endeavors are always energized by ambivalence, my task will be to clarify the nature and the sense of the Sartrean ambivalence toward the concept of the Freudian unconscious. This ambivalence often surfaces in Sartre's *oeuvre* and, in my view, takes on considerable space in it, particularly in *Being and Nothingness* (*L'Être et le néant*), *Saint Genet, Comedian and Martyr* (*Saint Genet, comédien et martyr*), *The Critique of Dialectical Reason* (*Critique de la raison dialectique*), *The Words* (*Les Mots*), the three volumes of the *The Idiot of the Family* (*L'Idiot de la famille*) and the posthumously published *The Freud Scenario*. As a result, a new formulation arises from this analysis. It will consist essentially of my recasting of Doubrovsky's formulation: *Sartre à Freud, c'est oui et non*. Much depends on how one understands and articulates this «yes and no». Finally, I shall apply the concept of lived-experience to literature and draw from it the consequences it has for practicing a Sartrean mode of psychoanalysis of the literary text.

SARTRE'S QUARREL WITH THE FREUDIAN CONCEPT OF THE UNCONSCIOUS IN *BEING AND NOTHINGNESS*

For the purposes of this essay, I discern four pivotal points in what Sartre finds unacceptable in the Freudian conceptual framework. I treat them in the order of their importance and relevance to the concept of the unconscious.

First, the «young» Sartre rejects what he judges to be «the language and the materialistic mythology of psychoanalysis» in *Being and Nothingness* (52). His quarrel is specifically with the Freudian structural division of the psyche into the «id» and the «ego.» By this distinction, he charges, «Freud has cut the psychic whole into two» (1956, p. 50). Sartre perceives this as an act of violence done to the integrity of the psyche and sets out to remedy it. Roughly equating the ego with consciousness and the id with the unconscious, Sartre concludes that, in Freud's manner of conceptualization, «I *am* the ego but I *am* not the id. I hold no privileged position in relation to my unconscious psyche. I *am* my

² In his «Sartre et Freud», Léo Fretz, however, maintains the opposite view by declaring that, «in Sartrean ontology, there is no place for the unconscious» (*Dans l'ontologie sartrienne, il n'y a pas de place pour l'inconscient*), p. 241.

own psychic phenomena in so far as I establish them in their conscious reality» (1956, p. 50).

If psychic realities unfold entirely in *consciousness*, it would then logically follow that consciousness, as a psychic whole, is a mode of «transcendent ego», all of whose «objectively discernible manifestations» ought to be regarded «as symbols maintaining symbolic relations to the fundamental, total structures which constitute the person» (1956, p. 569). The totality of these structures, by definition, excludes the Freudian id-ego and ego-super-ego dualities. According to Sartre, the distinction between the id and the ego (Freud's formulation of this distinction is much more complex and intricate than Sartre acknowledges) «privileges» the latter over the former. He views Freud's distinction as partially biological, wholly mechanical and, therefore, deterministic. For his part, Sartre considers the instinctual constituents of the id to be simply a presentation of the «real», of the *existent*. He explains that «instinct or, if you prefer, original drives and complexes of drives constituted by our individual history, make up *reality*» (1956, p. 50). This is so because instincts and drives fall into the category of being «in-itself» (*en-soi*). Deprived of the pure ontological status of being *for-itself* (*pour-soi*), they can be «neither true nor false». As such, they enter the realm of *things*, «exactly like this table» (1956, p. 50).

Sartre attributes a magical quality to the Freudian unconscious that places it beyond empirical theory. «Freud is obliged to imply everywhere a magic unity», writes Sartre, «linking distant phenomena across obstacles, just as sympathetic magic unites the spellbound person and the waxed image fashioned in his likeness» (1956, p. 54). The unifying magic of the unconscious operates above and beyond the Freudian model of structural divisions and propagates its symbolism everywhere within the psyche. It is able to do so, because the «unconscious drive (*Trieb*) through magic is endowed with the character 'repressed' or 'condemned' which completely pervades it, colors it, and magically provokes its symbolism» (1956, p. 54).

The «young» Sartre correctly recognizes that such deterministic dual psychic structures *deconstruct* his considerable efforts of constructing a philosophy in which total consciousness is coextensive with total freedom and responsibility. No doubt it is a mistake to consider the Freudian concept of the unconscious as a rigid, linear, mechanistic, deterministic structural model. The Freudian concept of the unconscious, even in its simplest formulation, defies such narrow considerations of it. Nevertheless, Sartre states that «existential psychoanalysis rejects the hypothesis of the unconscious; it makes the psychic act coextensive with consciousness» (1956, p. 570). The unconscious as a concept is objectionable to him because it defines itself as a possible apology for avoiding the difficulties that accepting the consequences of «bad-faith» (*la mauvaise foi*) entail. He formulates bad-faith as being a powerful way of deceiving oneself consciously (as opposed to the manner which in psychoanalysis the unconscious dupes consciousness without the subject's awareness of it) in such a way as to avoid free choice and its attendant responsibilities. In a more technical Sartrean language, bad-faith is the desire of the «for-itself» to exist as «in-itself», that is to say, for a «consciousness that would found its own being-in-itself through the pure consciousness that it would have of itself» (1956, p. 566). Through the phenomenon of bad-faith the deceiver and the deceived cohabit (magically?) within the unity of consciousness. The reluctance to see oneself simultaneously as the deceiver and the deceived creates difficulties for the individual. Sartre asserts that in order «to escape from these difficulties people gladly have recourse to the unconscious» (1956, p. 50).

Second, Sartre refuses the status of a «concept», with its assumption of universal structural validity, to the Freudian id-ego division of the psyche. He discerns no *compelling* evidence of universal validity in this Freudian structural model and its conceptualization. He relegates this psychic division to the level of a «hypothesis». As far as he is concerned, it is akin to «the hypothesis of the Oedipus complex [which], like the atomic theory, is nothing but an 'experimental idea' and it is not to be distinguished from the totality of the experiences

which it allows to be realized and the result which it enables us to foresee» (1956, p. 51). The hypothetical, in this sense, merges with the speculative. I am not suggesting that Sartre is questioning the validity of the speculative as an effective modality of thought. He is merely contrasting it with the conceptualization of existential reality and contesting it on empirical grounds. As an example, he mentions how psychoanalysis hypothesizes impulses as psychic facts. «I *am* not those psychic facts», he points out, «in so far as I receive them passively and am obliged to resort to hypotheses about their origin and their meaning, just as the scholar makes conjectures about the essence and nature of external phenomena» (1956, p. 51). Thus, for Sartre, psychoanalytic truth remains not only independent of the individual subject, in the manner of external nature, it can only fully realize itself in what, inspired by Gaston Bachelard, one can call a «coefficient of passivity». Sartre's nascent philosophy of consciousness and freedom refuses validity to such truth.

Third, Sartre argues that the discovery of the psychoanalytic «truth will necessitate the cooperation of the psychoanalyst, who appears as the *mediator*, between my unconscious drives and my conscious life» (1956, p. 51). This mediation in the comprehension of the psychoanalytic truth now indicates a secondary external feature in relation to consciousness. «The Other appears as being able to effect the synthesis between the unconscious thesis and the conscious antithesis. I can only know myself through the mediation of the other, which means that I stand in relation to my 'id', in the position of the *Other*» (1956, p. 51). From the Sartrean vantage point, the hypothesis of the unconscious as the Other within the same subject (*l'autre-sujet*), or the «internalized-Other», and the necessity of the mediation of the psychoanalyst between the unconscious and the analysand double the effect of passivity and alterity in psychoanalysis.

These observations are lucid, perhaps somewhat too lucid, too Cartesian. They are trenchant, however, and carry a kernel of truth within the limits and limitations of Sartre's early philosophy. Their truth, I believe, goes to the heart of certain aspects of the psychoanalytic enterprise, and possibly exceeds Sartre's specific intentions in the chapter he devotes to «Existential Psychoanalysis» in *Being and Nothingness*. In the enormity of its sadomasochistic conflicts as the internalized-Other, the id creates an inescapable hell («*L'enfer, c'est les autres*»). The objective, determining role the Other as the unconscious (and the super-ego) plays in the individual's apprehension and appropriation of a subjective liberating truth in psychoanalysis is objectionable to Sartre. Positing human reality as the sum of one's freely chosen and totally conscious acts, psychoanalysis (at least in the way that Sartre perceives it at this time) is a theory that greatly attenuates such reality or attempts to eradicate it.

As far as Sartre is concerned, to think that the internalized-Other would introduce «into my subjectivity the deepest intersubjective structure of the *Mit-sein* [sic]» (1956, p. 51) is an illusion. Even if it did, the basic structure of *Mitsein* would also be fraught with the kind of conflicts that Freud associated with the super-ego. In any case, for Sartre, giving credence to such hypothesis would be tantamount to *theoretical* «bad-faith». The investment of the id with «the position of the Other» as an implacable coercive instinctive force within the individual psyche would dismantle the foundation of the Sartrean ideal of the free and totally conscious, if *forgetful*, individual.

Fourth, Sartre rejects the Freudian concept of the «censor». The «hypothesis of a censor» for him represents no more than «a line of demarcation with customs, passport division, currency control, *etc.*, to reestablish the deceiver and the deceived» (1956, p. 50). Sartre is being no doubt facetious here in his choice of metaphors but indeed serious in his intention. In other words, he regards the «censor» to be an arbitrary and mechanistic psychic device. He construes the censor as an elaborate illusory network that scrutinizes the symbolic intimations of the unconscious. The various neurotic and psychotic symptoms, even in dream-work, must pass through the elaborate censorial work of this powerful psychic

device. Again, the censor operates independently of consciousness, even if Sartre would have more accurately discussed it in its Freudian relation to the preconscious.

This independence from consciousness is exactly the defining characteristic of the censor. Sartre concludes that «the effort to establish a veritable duality and even trinity (*Es*, *Ich*, *Uberich* expressing themselves through the censor) has resulted in a mere verbal terminology» (1956, p. 53). In short, the censor has no existential basis in a philosophy of consciousness. «The very essence of the reflexive idea of hiding something from oneself implies the unity of and the same psychic mechanism and consequently a double activity in the heart of unity, tending on the one hand to maintain and locate the thing to be concealed and on the other hand to repress and disguise it» (1956, p. 53).

SARTRE AND EXISTENTIAL PSYCHOANALYSIS

Sartre's refutation of the Freudian foundational concept of the unconscious opens up a theoretical space for him to attempt an outline (it remains just an outline rather than a systematic treatment) of «existential psychoanalysis» in *Being and Nothingness*. This space is coincidental with the place that the structure of the unconscious occupies in psychoanalysis. Sartre uses it as the site of his own theorization of the original, prereflective, ontological choice of oneself. The two key terms here are «ontological» and «prereflective». He insists that the «information which ontology can furnish concerning behavior patterns and desire must serve as the basic principles of existential psychoanalysis» (1956, p. 575). It is obvious that this theoretical operation allows Sartre to graft existential psychoanalysis onto the main body of psychoanalysis. He does so by appropriating the latter while seemingly rejecting its foundational concept of the unconscious. However, one may find traces of the concept of the unconscious in this rejection. There is an eerie resemblance of the individual's «prereflective» choice of being (indeed, the whole notion of a prereflective *cogito*) to the unconscious in all but nuances of terminology and its origin within the intentional object of a unified consciousness. Theoretically, the prereflective consciousness and the unconscious *serve a* similar function. The prereflective consciousness, as lived consciousness or consciousness of consciousness, is not cognitive; it does not yield knowledge. It may indeed be taken by definition as «nonknowledge» (*non-savoir*).

Even though Sartre claims that «this [existential] psychoanalysis has not yet found its Freud», he stresses that «the first outline of [...] its] method has been established for us by the psychoanalysis of Freud and his disciples» (1956, p. 569). Thus, it seems justifiable to me to claim that existential psychoanalysis approximately consists of a radical ontological *rethinking* of the Freudian psychoanalysis rather than its total exclusion. Ostensibly, Sartre negates the concept of the unconscious too sketchily in order to recuperate a modified version of it on another plane. This refutation-recuperation approach precisely underlines what I have already referred to as Sartre's ambivalence toward the concept of Freudian unconscious. For me, the presence of this ambivalence is pervasive in existential psychoanalysis. If this is so, as I believe it is, what are the overall patterns of conflation of psychoanalysis and existential psychoanalysis?

First, one may advance the argument that the concept of the human psyche as a totality does not negate Freudian psychoanalysis, for the simple reason that this totality is exactly what psychoanalysis *seeks*. Similarly, psychoanalysis does not begin with the idea that this psychic totality is a given, as existential psychoanalysis clearly does. This is a crucial point that has not yet been sufficiently recognized by Sartre scholars. Sartre himself certainly so understood it. That is precisely why he can state that «the goal of psychoanalysis is to *decipher* the empirical behavior patterns of man; that is to bring out in the open the revelations which each one of them contains to fix them conceptually» (1956, p. 568).

Brought out and conceptualized, each one of these behavior patterns as an example of human conduct

symbolizes in its own manner the fundamental choice which must be brought to light, and since at the same time each one disguises this choice under its occasional character and its historical opportunity, only the comparison of these acts of conduct can effect the emergence of the unique revelation which they all express in a different way. (1956, p. 569)

This «unique revelation» is no less than the *recognition* of wholeness of psychic life, which is the goal of psychoanalysis — Freudian, existential or in any other form. It matters not whether this wholeness is already given but it is masked or it is hidden and would have to be rediscovered. Every human act, regardless of its scope, is, then, a symbolic representation of a totality that issues forth from the original ontological choice; it is a prereflective choice that is not directly intelligible as being coextensive with any given act and discernibly present to it. Are we straying too far here from the concept of the unconscious? I think not.

The hidden presence of the original ontological choice in each act will have to be traced back to this transcending, totalizing choice that is subject to *forgetting*. *Concealed and yet omnipresent, this choice resembles the unconscious in its function*. I must hasten to add, nevertheless, that the originary ontological choice is conceived in lived consciousness and remains persistently conscious, even if it is completely forgotten. It remains in consciousness because it has no other psychic domain to contain it. Consciousness is the sole psychic container in existential psychoanalysis. The individual may not recognize (*connaître*) the original ontological choice but can always comprehend it (*comprendre*) through existential analysis. That is precisely why this analysis has to be effected by considering every human act as a constituent of a constellation of other acts, each of which carries the same traces of the original ontological choice. In relation to the unconscious, psychoanalysis operates in an identical way.

Second, *the individual's original ontological choice is irreducible, in the same manner that the unconscious is irreducible*. One cannot get beyond it. It is coextensive with *pure freedom*, which «is strictly identified with nihilation» (1956, p. 567). Freedom as nihilation is «precisely the being which makes itself a lack of being» (1956, p. 567), which renders itself identical to desire as a «lack of being» (1956, p. 567). Therefore, a series of straightforward existential equations emerges: consciousness = freedom = lack of being = desire. Desire is a lack, too, because its manifold modes cannot be conceived «as little psychic entities dwelling in consciousness; they are consciousness itself in its original projective, transcendent structure, for consciousness is on principle consciousness of something» (1956, p. 557). Furthermore, no human being can be reduced to such entities on the assumption that each of these entities bursts forth from an abstract internal gestalt of harmonies and agreements with the others. Such a gestalt would make of the individual the point of «intersection of universal schemata» (1956, p. 558) that Sartre regards as an absurd postulate.

The spatial dimension of the original ontological choice necessarily lies ahead of it, as it were. It always *progresses*, and its temporal dimension is always the future, even when such future is expressed in a configuration of conditional tenses. By its very definition, it cannot regress to a preontological structure without a subject, as structures do for structuralists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss. Beyond the ontological choice of oneself there is no more than consciousness of consciousness, which, by Sartrean formulation of it, is nothingness. Hence, according to Sartre, «existential psychoanalysis recognizes nothing before the original upsurge of human freedom...» (1956, p. 569).

Since the individual's original choice of being possesses no past, it can only project itself towards the future and acquire a history within its own self-generated futurity. Of course, that is not to say that the ontological choice denies a diachronic dimension to the

configuration of acts related to it. Quite to the contrary, the diachronic dimension of each present act is the main feature of its upsurge and development of its synchronic effects.

To the extent that existential psychoanalysis refuses to consider the individual's action in its immediate, surface manifestation and finds levels of significance in it that have already been organized below this surface, existential psychoanalysis places itself within the boundaries of Freudian psychoanalysis. Everyone objectifies the original ontological choice through action in a wholly new way. There are only traces of this choice that one may glean in the individual's converging desires and inclinations. However, these traces do not always reveal the original ontological choice. A lack of awareness resides in them. The potential of forgetfulness is intrinsic to the ontological choice. I would suggest that, by recognizing the darkness at noon in the synchronic surface of human acts, existential psychoanalysis allies itself inextricably with Freudian psychoanalysis. Both treat human beings as an open-ended adventure in the making in a life-long struggle between the hidden and the manifest in the psyche. Neither the transcendent ego for Sartre nor the ego for Freud is in position of *total* knowledge. Yet both men recognize the necessity of the ego's or consciousness's struggle to make such knowledge conscious and its own. The existence of consciousness notwithstanding, the only difference I detect is that Sartre locates the choice of being in the realm of thought (since the prereflective is by definition still a particular stage of the reflective) and Freud places it within the sphere of the emotive. Incidentally, since existence does not adequately lend itself to thought, it is worth noting that the affective falls more squarely within the existential structures. I would say that in existential psychoanalysis Sartre wishes to place himself somewhere between Descartes and Freud.

Third, Sartre hypothesizes that «the libido is nothing besides its concrete fixations, save for a permanent possibility of fixing anything whatsoever upon anything whatsoever» (1956, p. 569). In this context, the libido in itself falls into one of the choices that support the Sartrean theorization of the original ontological choice. Again, Sartre does not offer a systematic rebuttal of the existence of the libido. He simply denies it a determining force in human acts. «We will gladly recognize along with the Freudians», Sartre writes, «the innumerable relations existing between sexuality and certain matters and forms in the child's environment. But we do not understand by this that a sexual instinct already constituted has charged them with a sexual significance» (1956, p. 612).

Accordingly, the libido in itself, as I have just mentioned, is a matter of choice of being, one of the unlimited modalities of being-for-itself, a human project. Sexual signification is part of the *signifying* structure of a particular ontological choice. Therefore, Sartre can say that infantile sexual relations «reveal to the child the For-itself's modes of being and relations to being which will illuminate and shape his sexuality» (1956, p. 612). In matters of sexual desire and behavior, to rediscover what one has freely chosen to do with the libido and then forgotten will shed much light on one's present sexual orientation, desire and practices. This act of rediscovery and remembering is effected through the agency of existential psychoanalysis and, if desired, it can undo, attenuate or augment the original choice. This is what essentially comprises the goal of existential psychoanalysis. Since, as J.-B. Pontalis has expressed it, «the Freudian sexual theory is not reducible to sex» (*The Freud Scenario* xvii), the goal of existential psychoanalysis is not alien to psychoanalysis.

Yet everything in consciousness or transcendent ego, as Sartre formulates the psyche, conspires against the goal of existential psychoanalysis. This is so because in Sartrean philosophy of bad-faith as negation of freedom is a stubborn psychological given. Under coercive situational forces, bad-faith suppresses and falsifies the meaning of the original ontological choice.

FROM THE UNCONSCIOUS TO ONTOLOGICAL CHOICE TO LIVED EXPERIENCE: THE SARTREAN PSYCHOANALYTIC ITINERARY

What the preceding sections of this essay point out is, above, all Sartre's complex

ambivalence to the concept of the Freudian unconscious. «What did psychoanalysis represent for him»? we may ask with Pontalis in his preface to Sartre's *The Freud Scenario*. And with him, we may reply: «A useful, no doubt indispensable, instrument of knowledge; but an *instrument* that once he had set to work he would succeed in appropriating» (xv).

What is the mode of the Sartrean appropriation of psychoanalysis as an «instrument of knowledge»? I have already asserted that it is an *ontological rethinking of psychoanalysis in general and the concept of the unconscious in particular*. I would maintain that the specter of Freud and psychoanalysis haunt Sartre's writing as much as — and perhaps, implicitly, even more than — Marx and Marxism. In any case, it seems reasonable to say that Sartre's qualified but explicit adherence to Marxism as the «unsurpassable philosophy of our time» goes hand in with his equally qualified but latent affinity with Freudian psychoanalysis during the long years of writing the three volumes of *The Idiot of the Family*. Marxism and psychoanalysis as instruments of knowledge provide Sartre with the foundational structures necessary to forge new dialectical means of access to knowledge, even though the persistence of psychoanalysis in his work is more pervasive and diffuse.

What are the salient points of the Sartrean psychoanalytic itinerary? First, there is Sartre's replacement of the mysterious, omnipresent unconscious by an equally mysterious and omnipresent original, prereflective, ontological choice. What is not immediately understood, however, is that Sartre moves from the ontological choice made within the prereflective, lived consciousness to the larger notion of lived-experience. Sartre tells us that the «point of departure [of existential psychoanalysis] is experience; its pillar of support is the fundamental, preontological comprehension which man has of the human person» (1956, p. 568). It is our common knowledge that everything in early Sartrean philosophy hinges upon foundational conscious choices that are then *realized* (made real) in action. Consciousness, action, praxis, experience, these are concepts that permeate Sartre's *oeuvre*. What stands out among them and takes on immense importance in relation to the unconscious is what Sartre calls «lived-experience» (*le vécu*).

In a 1970 interview, «Sartre par Sartre», he signals his theoretical progression from the concept of the ontological choice, as opposed to the unconscious, to lived-experience as a «conscious-unconscious» phenomenon. «In the book that I am writing on Flaubert [*The Idiot of the Family*]», says Sartre, «I have replaced my notion of *consciousness* — even though I still use the term a lot — by what I call *lived-experience (le vécu)*... which does not designate neither the refuges of the preconscious, nor the unconscious, nor the conscious, but the terrain in which the individual is constantly submerged by himself, by his own riches, and where consciousness has enough cunning to determine itself by forgetting (*l'oubli*)» (1972b, p. 108).³ It is a long and consequential sentence that requires close analysis. First, Sartre relegates his *concept* of consciousness, which is the foundation of psychic totality in *Being and Nothingness*, to a *notion*. Subsequently, he replaces it with the operative concept of lived-experience. As Pontalis has pointed out in his preface to *The Freud Scenario*, «Sartre used to take the greatest pleasure in seeing his ideas overthrown, always provided that he was the one to draw the consequences» (xii). Overthrowing his concept of consciousness in favor of lived-experience testifies to the accuracy of Pontalis's remarks. Lived-experience now takes both the place of the conscious and the unconscious, a psychic whole in which the «individual is constantly submerged by himself». To be submerged by oneself in lived-experience through forgetting is — at least, theoretically — to embrace all: the thought as well as the unthought, the known as well as the unknown, knowledge as well as nonknowledge, the conceptual as well as the emotive. Each of them falls within the immensities of lived-experience that includes the imaginary as well as the real. In short, the concept of lived-experience makes room for the unconscious in its all-inclusive body.

³ Translations from *Situations VII*, *Situations IX* and *Situations X* are mine.

Later, Sartre expands on his concept of lived-experience by reformulating it as «what is ordinarily called the unconscious» (1972b, p. 111). He prefers to call it «a total absence of knowledge doubled by a real comprehension» (1972b, p. 111). He points out that he is making «a distinction here between comprehension (*compréhension*) and intellection: there may be an intellection of a practical schema but only comprehension of an emotion» (1972b, p. 111). Sartre uses «comprehension» in the German tradition. He makes a distinction between *Verstehen* and *Erklären* (explication) and contrasts it with intellection, which is a cognitive process.⁴ It is crucial to the understanding of the notion of lived-experience that one grasps the complex sense of the unconscious as «a total absence of knowledge doubled by a real comprehension». It would seem to me that by comprehension Sartre means an extraordinary intuition of knowledge beyond any empirical and cognitive proofs. And this is close as one can get to the notion of the «third ear» and the «third eye» in psychoanalysis so that one may hear the inaudible voice of the unconscious and see (in both senses of the verb) the invisible.

In a more technical language, Sartre expands on the notion of lived-experience by adding that it is «precisely the ensemble of the dialectical processes of psychic life, a process which remains necessarily opaque to itself because it is a constant totalization, and a totalization that cannot be conscious of what it is» (1972b, p. 111). As a unifying principle of the *praxis*, totalization now has to make a synthesis of the «multidimensional» nature (*pluridimensionalité*) of lived-experience and its unlimited signification. It is necessarily opaque, because it is no longer restricted to a singular, linear meaning but rather to the limitless and unconditional sense of lived-experience. «One may be conscious, in fact, of an exterior totalization», Sartre writes, «but not of a totalization that equally totalizes consciousness. In this sense, lived-experience is always susceptible to comprehension, but never to knowledge» (1972b, p. 111), at least not straightaway. From my viewpoint, that is as close as one can come to the Freudian concept of the unconsciousness without coinciding with it.

With the partial theorization of the concept of lived-experience Sartre offers us a new, complex and useful equation: lived-experience = consciousness + the unconscious (total absence of knowledge + comprehension). The opacity of lived-experience in the midst of consciousness's transparency is a fascinating concept.⁵ It operates much like reflection as a quasi-knowledge. As Sartre tells us «all is there, luminous» and «reflection is in full possession of it, apprehends it all» (1956, p. 571). But this apprehension does not immediately become *knowledge*; it lacks the means to do so. Therefore, it manifests itself as a «mystery in broad daylight ... because this possession is deprived of the means that would ordinarily permit *analysis* and *conceptualization*» (1956, p. 571). Analysis and conceptualization are possible only afterward. As a result, reflection «grasps everything all at once, without shading, without relief, without connections of grandeur — not that these shades, these values, these reliefs are somewhere hidden from it, but rather because they have to be established by another human attitude and because they can exist *by means* of and *for* knowledge» (1956, p. 571). Sartre now incorporates these features in lived-experience. The conscious-unconscious foundation of lived-experience, its luminosity and opacity, its plurisignificance,

⁴ For a discussion of the differentiation between *Erklären* and *Verstehen* as *compréhension* see Rhiannon Goldthorpe's «Understanding the Committed Writer», p. 148.

⁵ I want to thank psychoanalytic critic Professor Han Verhoeff of the University of Amsterdam, who in an undated letter to me, comments: «I am not altogether happy with terms like 'opaque' 'le vécu', and 'le pratico-inerte', by which Sartre indicates unconscious realities. It seems to me that the Freudian unconscious represents less a sort of *sous-réité*, but rather a reality of its own, an *anti-réalité*, with its own symbol[s], its own logic, and its own *évidences*.» However, for me, Sartre's notion of «le vécu» represents Sartre's *rethinking* of the Freudian unconscious rather than appropriation and replacement of it.

its intimations of limitless *sense* of the experiential legitimize placing it squarely within the terrain of psychoanalysis in a new and interesting way.

THE CONCEPT OF LIVED EXPERIENCE AND THE LITERARY TEXT

For me, one of the most fascinating modes of lived-experience is its transformation and *quasi-objectification* into the literary text. Achieved through conventional oral and scriptural processes, this quasi-objectification of lived-experience has considerable significance. Within a Sartrean perspective, one may claim that the literary work is steeped in the opacity of lived-experience, in its plurisignificance and multidimensionality. One may call literature the voice or language of lived-experience. In the scriptural tradition, the work of the literary criticism resides precisely in affirming the literary text as the language of lived-experience. In each act of reading, critical intelligence seeks to facilitate the comprehension of the text by exploring its generative, signifying structures as open-ended and hence inexhaustible. Beyond this act of comprehension, it is the task of criticism to develop a hermeneutics of the open-ended literary text and to conceptualize what the literary comprehension yields in interpretative activities.

This critical affirmation of the literary text as quasi-objectification of lived-experience would acknowledge simultaneously the acceptance of the radical role that the unconscious plays in the literary text. One may refer to it as *textual unconscious* that may manifest itself as the «weird» opacities that are always present everywhere in lived-experience. The critic's job is, then, to elucidate his or her response to this textual «weirdness» that presents itself as quasi-knowledge or nonknowledge (*no-savoir*) and to conceptualize it. Consequently, criticism is an act of «constant totalization», too. The critic engages in a hermeneutic enterprise that surpasses itself at the very moment of its realization. In this sense, the critical work always begins anew at the very point of its ending. In short, the literary text, regarded as a mode of lived-experience, provides an unending literary discourse for a potentially unending critical discourse, each of which would be a new mode of comprehension of the text and its rigorous critical conceptualization.

How can such critical work be accomplished? First, one needs to clarify the connections Sartre makes between language and lived-experience and in turn the unconscious. «As far as the unconscious structure of language is concerned», Sartre maintains, «we must see that the presence of certain structures of language renders an account of the unconscious» (1972b, p. 97). So, Sartre confirms the possibility of expressing the unconscious within «certain structures» of language. How can one identify these structures? «From my standpoint», Sartre says, «Lacan has clarified the unconscious as the discourse which separates through language or, if you prefer, through counterfinality of speech: verbal ensembles are structured as practico-inert ensembles through the speech act» (1972b, p. 97). The principal notion here is the «practico-inert». As Thomas R. Flynn cogently puts it, in Sartre's later work the «practico-inert» is the «functional heir to 'being-in-itself'» (240). Sartre adds that «it denotes the realm of sedimented praxis, of passivity and counterfinality. It extends and refines the notions of otherness and recalcitrance ...» (241). As I understand it, the practico-inert is the *reification* of human work, and human productions, intellectual and artistic as well as material. It introduces a sense of otherness or alterity (*altérité*) in the midst of the human world that alienates human beings from their own creations. «These ensembles [of practico-inert] express or constitute intentions», Sartre explains, «which determine me without being mine» (1972b, p. 97). Language deceives us in appearing always as our language, seemingly permeating us from the depths of our subjectivity, but, in fact, it is never entirely ours. We always possess language as an «exterior property» (1972b, p. 41). If certain structures of language coincide with the practico-inert ensembles, it would follow that they take up

an interspace within language that one can designate as the unconscious. The lexical, syntactic, and semantic structures of the language are primarily exterior to us. «The words aren't in me; they are outside me» (1972b, p. 41). Language is always already there before our birth, always preceding us, and always continuing independently of us after our death and disappearance. Language engulfs us. «We're within language [*le langage*]» (1972b, p. 40), like Noah in the belly of the whale. Sartre further enlarges the scope of language by reminding us that

language is a kind of immense reality.... I am constantly in contact with it: not only to the extent in which I speak, but precisely to the extent in which it is already for me an object which envelops me and through which I can grasp (*prendre*) things. It is only afterward that I discover its communicative function. (1972b, p. 40)

From a phenomenological point of view, Sartre remarks that «there is not any mental process that is not intentional», but he goes on to say that «there is not any either that is not stuck, deviated, betrayed by language; but reciprocally we are accomplices in these betrayals that *constitute* our depth» (1972b, p. 97). Filtered through language with our collaboration, our intentions slip through our fingers, so to speak, and we can no longer recognize them as ours except under the sign of our «depth», or our unconscious.

I would say that the literary text in its considerable stretches provides an example of deviations, silences, lapses, obscurities, suppressions, omissions and final compromises and betrayals of our intentions. All of these acts of defiance of consciousness are the effects of our «depth» or the unconscious dwelling within our lived-experience. «The highest comprehension of lived-experience can bring forth its own language», Sartre says, admitting that this language «will always be inadequate but will often have the metaphoric structure of a dream» (1972b, p.111). Thus the language of lived-experience as literary discourse affirms the existence of a primary process. Within this primary process the unconscious expresses itself through condensation and displacement, but it makes itself known as the work of a binding or secondary process such as dream-work. «The comprehension of the dream intervenes», Sartre argues, «when a man can translate it into a language which in itself is a dream-language [*rêvé*]» (1972b, p. 111). He adds:

Lacan says that the unconscious is structured like a language. I would rather say that the language which expresses the unconscious has the structure of a dream. To put it otherwise, the comprehension of the unconscious, in most cases, never finds its clear expression. (1972b, p. 111)

This is a highly lucid way of defining the literary work within a psychoanalytic context.

Now the question arises: How does the dream language of lived-experience achieve its metaphoric dimension? To answer this question, I find it helpful to have recourse to Sartre's dialectic of meaning (*la signification*) as denotation and the more complex notion of unlimited meaning or sense (*le sens*) as connotation. In his preface to René Leibowitz's *L'Artiste et sa conscience*, Sartre observes that «an object is signifying when one intends through it another object. In this case, the mind pays no attention to the sign itself: it moves toward the signified object» (1964, p. 30). Sartre considered words also to have a materiality of their own, to be objects, which are used by the writer in order «to aim at something other than themselves» (1972b, p. 54). In aiming at something else, a specific word denotes and, therefore, fulfills its referential function. The denotative function of words defines the language as *communication*, whose goal is the transformation of information as knowledge. «Ordinarily», writes Sartre «... a man who has *something to say* chooses a means of communication that may transmit the greatest quantity of information and that may contain minimal structures of *disinformation*» (1972a, p. 433). Sartre now engages

us in the dialectic between the concepts of information and disinformation. I equate information with the immediate and direct relationship between the signifier and the signified or the literalness in the oral or written discourse. For Sartre, the writer of prose designates, informs, discloses, albeit that «he is a man who designates *in a certain way*» (1976, p. 44), that is, in conformity to the scriptural process.

The designative language does not possess what I have called elsewhere «the luxury of transcending power of potential multiple meanings» (236).⁶ Such language in its purest form would constitute scientific writing. The aim of such language is communication of conceptual knowledge and its reception or *understanding* as such.

On the contrary, connotation (*le sens*), is the domain of Sartrean notion of unrestricted multiplicity of signification that a signifier may produce. There is no necessary direct relation between the signifier and the signified in connotation. Connotation operates on the plane of slippage, diffusion and dispersion of the signified. It is on this plane of slippage of signification that connotative language may merge with the *disinformative* language. «In contrast [to denotation]», Sartre notes, «connotation is not distinguished from the object itself.... I shall say that an object connotes when it is the incarnation of a reality which transcends it but which cannot be grasped outside it and that its infiniteness does not allow it to be expressed adequately by any system of signs» (1964, p. 54). Connotation operates on the level of pluralities that function as a whole; «it [connotation] is always a matter of totality: the totality of a person, of an environment, of a period, of the human condition» (1964, p. 54). As a result, the connotative language cannot be *understood* in the manner of the denotative language; it can only be *comprehended* as one comprehends the language of dream, the language of lived-experience; in short, the language of the unconscious. This comprehension approximately corresponds to Sartre's paradoxical formulation of «understanding without understanding» in the «Interview with Jean-Paul Sartre» (22-3). Understanding without understanding identifies within lived-experience the elements attributed by Freud to the unconscious.

The denotation-connotation dialectic and its attendant dialectic of information and disinformation bring us in turn to a new dialectic of knowledge (*savoir*) and «nonknowledge» (*non-savoir*). As I have mentioned earlier, one may generally say that the writer of non-literary prosaic text (*le prosateur*) strives to communicate conceptual knowledge; in other words, whatever is formulated as knowledge. This may also be the intention of a literary prosaic text, such as a novel. On the whole, however, literary productions are efforts in connotative communication and fall into the category of disinformation and nonknowledge, that is, lived-experience. «Lived experience», Sartre states, «is life grasping itself, but without knowledge or thetic consciousness being indicated» (1976, p. 111). The literary text as the language of lived-experience represents efforts to offer an intuitive comprehension of nonknowledge which, as such, persists to stay *incommunicable*. In «*Plaidoyer pour les intellectuels*», Sartre declares:

The writer's [the literary writer's] task aims at communicating the incommunicable (being-in-the-world) [*l'être-dans-le-monde*] by taking advantage of the portion of disinformation [*désinformation*] contained in the common language and to maintain the tension between the part and the whole, the totality and the totalization, the world and being-in-the world as *connotations* of his work. (1972a, p. 454)

This disinformation is the slippage of the singular, predetermined, referential structures of denotative language (lexical and syntactic) into the plural, indeterminate, self-referential

⁶ For a fuller treatment of denotative and connotative language see my article «Neither Structuralism Nor Deconstruction: Sartre on Existentialist Semiotics», pp. 236-38.

syntactic structures of connotative language of lived-experience in the literary work. This work is done through the alchemy of style. «For me», Sartre comments in an interview, «... style is above all a way of saying three or four things in one. There is the simple sentence, with its immediate meaning, and then, underneath it, simultaneously, different meanings organize themselves in depth» (1976, p 137). It is no doubt the task of the critic to acknowledge the existence of the immediate, literal textual meaning and then continue to discover its manner of saying «three or four things in one». In the process of going from the denotative surface features of the literary text to the multiplicity of meanings that organize themselves in its depth, the critic, if sensitive enough, has an intimation of the textual unconscious.

Furthermore, Sartre tells us that «what we must do is to attempt a psychoanalysis of things» (1956, p. 600). It is when we approach words as objects that these remarks become truly consequential for psychoanalytic literary criticism. «What ontology can teach psychoanalysis», he writes elsewhere, «is first of all the true origin of meanings of things and their true relation with human reality» (1956, p. 603). Within the literary discourse as the language of lived-experience, this «true origin of meaning of things» emerges from the unconscious structure of experience. What the critic needs is to respond to the literary text in such a way as to allow the innumerable meanings of the word-object dispersed by the unconscious be comprehended and then fixed as conceptual knowledge. The «validity of a work», Sartre reminds us, «depends upon its taking account of *the whole* in the mode of nonknowledge, of lived-experience. By the whole, I mean the social past and the historical conjuncture as they are lived without being known» (1972a, pp. 452-53). He hypothesizes that it is through the mediation of silence that the literary style works its magic. He insists that «the literary object appears as a communication beyond language by the non-denotative silence that has closed in upon itself through words even though it was produced by them» (1972a, p. 437). Nonknowledge, silence, absence, dispersal of meaning, disinformation, if not the unconscious itself, are, at least, some of the features which may be incorporated into the concept of the unconscious through the act or *rethinking* it. What the method of psychoanalysis (to which Sartre has no objection) allows the critic to do is to comprehend nonknowledge, to hear the voice of silence, to welcome the deferral of meanings in their dispersal in the literary work, to recognize disinformation as the hidden gift of the unconscious.

WORKS CITED

- Brown, Lee & Allan, H. (1992). Mechanism, Intentionality, and the Unconscious: A Comparison of Sartre and Freud. In *The Cambridge Companion to Sartre* (Christina Howells, Ed.), pp. 495-538, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Doubrovsky, S. (1989). *Le Livre Brisé*. Paris: Bernard Grasset.
- Goldthorpe, R. (1992). Understanding the Committed Writer. In *The Cambridge Companion to Sartre*, (Christina Howells, Ed.), pp. 140-147, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Flynn, Th. R. (1992). Mediated Reciprocity and the Genius of the Third. In *The Cambridge Companion to Sartre* (Christina Howells, Ed.), pp. 345-369, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fretz, L. (1986). Freud et Sartre. In *Lectures de Sartre* (Textes réunis et présentés par Claude Burgelin), Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon.
- Howells, Ch. (Ed.) (1992). *The Cambridge Companion to Sartre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 140-177.
- Nakjavani, E. (1993). Neither Structuralism Nor Deconstruction: Sartre on Existential Semiotics. In *Literature and Psychology II. Selected Proceedings of the Pennsylvania Foreign Language Conference (1988-1990)*, pp: 234-40, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University.
- Sartre, J.-P. (1956). *Being and Nothingness* (Trans. Hazel E. Barnes). New York: Philosophical Library Inc..

- Sartre, J.-P. (1964). *Situations, IV*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Sartre, J.-P. (1972a). *Situations, VIII*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Sartre, J.-P. (1972b). *Situations, IX*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Sartre, J.-P. (1976). *Situations, X*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Sartre, J.-P. (1981). Interview with Jean-Paul Sartre. in *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre* (Paul Arthur Schilpp, Ed.), La Salle, Illinois: Court Publishing Company.
- Sartre, J.-P. (1985). *The Freud Scenario* (Trans. Ed. J. B. Pontalis / Trans. Quintin Hoare). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Structural Correspondences in the Literary and Psychotherapeutic Process

RAINER HOLM-HADULLA (*)

INTRODUCTION

Ever since the days of its founding by Sigmund Freud, psychoanalysis has always looked to literature as a source of enlightenment. From the description of the Oedipus complex onwards, Freud and his successors have perceived literary works as offering decisive psychoanalytical insights. Freud believed that poets and writers enjoyed an especial intimacy with the unconscious. Their ability «playfully» to create unconscious constellations of motifs was something that, according to Freud, scientists could only aspire to by laborious roundabout methods: «What we cannot reach flying we must reach limping» (1920). He was consistent in suggesting that every psychoanalyst should have a thorough grounding in literature. If psychoanalysts looked to literary works of art as a font of inspiration to help them understand their patients better, they could, by the same token, use their own discoveries to improve their understanding of those works. But beyond the definition of this interrelation, only occasional thought has been given to structural correspondences between the therapeutic and the literary process (v. Holland 1978, Schönau 1991, Pietzcker 1992).

In the following examination of the similarities and structural correspondences between the literary and the therapeutic process, it is not my intention to apply fragments of psychoanalytic theory to artistic creations or to individual artists; nor do I wish to use motifs created by artists as a basis for analytical discoveries. I shall rather attempt to compare aesthetic and psychoanalytic practice. Following the philosophical aesthetic of Baumgarten, I here assume that representations such as memories, imaginings, fantasies and dreams are to be regarded as aesthetic categories. Baumgarten (1741) talks of aesthetic empirical experience, or «the art of aesthetic experience... by which we are enabled to feel things clearly» (p. XVIII). Representations occurring in the analytical situation can be made transparent by means of the basic aesthetic functions of poesis, aisthesis and catharsis. The German scholar Jauß (1982) goes so far as to regard these basic functions — the productive, the receptive and the communicative aspects of aesthetic experience — as forming the basis of a meaningful apprehension of reality itself: in the crisis of the Modern Age, the disparity between our experience of the world and the world as it is perceived and ordered by science allows aesthetic experience to «offset the loss of experience within modern industrial society» (loc.

(*) Neue Schloppstrasse 42, D-69117 Heidelberg, Germany.

cit., p. 11). As in hermeneutics, it is here too a question of «resisting aesthetic escapism and of employing aesthetic experience in order to understand historical life.» (loc. cit.).

POIESIS, AISTHESIS AND CATHARSIS IN THE LITERARY WORK OF ART AND IN PSYCHOANALYSIS

I should here like to describe individually the structural correspondences of aesthetic experience in the literary work of art and in the psychotherapeutic situation in terms of the basic functions of production/poiesis, reception/aisthesis and communication/catharsis. Artists, patients and analysts are productive on account of both conscious and unconscious motives. The patient develops images, fantasies and dreams. By virtue of these creations, he arrives at a view past events which become experienced through the process of productive visualization. His personal and social history lose the character of aggregates of mere exterior occurrence and become an actually experienced past and present. Something similar happens in the author's act of poietic creation. Marcel Proust's *Recherche* provides an excellent example. Only by their reformulation in the novel do events which have simply occurred take on the aspect of personal experience. In other words, history becomes personal history only through being represented in fantasy and in literary form. When Goethe says, «and if man falls silent in his agony, God gave me the power to say what I am suffering», this signifies not only release and relief but also creation in the service of the integration of experience. Poiesis in conversation, in literary composition and in the therapeutic situation seems to spring from a general need to be at home within oneself and one's world. The process of shaping in words and images deprives the inner and outer world of its alienness. It is a process of anamnesis, of visual recognition: «It is not the heightened awareness of the new or the surprising image of another world that gives the aesthetic experience its full profundity, but rather the gate of recognition of submerged experience which is thereby opened, the lost time that can now be found again ...» (Jauß, loc. cit., p. 43).

The productions of the patient and artist undergo a process of reception. This process is one of active shaping; it is — following the original meaning of aisthesis — a recognizing act of seeing: «Aisthesis as the basic receptive aesthetic experience thus corresponds to various conditions which comprehend the consciously enjoyed re-imbibing of the aesthetic object as an enhanced deconceptualized renewed act of seeing, in a word as a 'complex succinctness of perception' (D. Hennrich) and thus redress the preponderance of recognition via concepts vis-à-vis sensory recognition» (loc. cit.). The therapist and the reader take in the information imparted and relate it to their own mood and their own experience. They open themselves up to a world of perception evoked within them by the productions of the artist and the patient. The therapist systematically uses his work of receptive formulation to represent the patient in his world, and the reader does the same, although not always intentionally. Just like the recipient of a work of literature, the therapist at first only partly comprehends what it is that moves him. His reception is a form of «creative, if not conscious, continued formulation.» (Pietzcker 1992). In this regard, the activity of the therapist is to be understood as a form of guided fantasizing, analogous to Norman Holland's «introjecting reading» (1968). Like the poet, the patient wishes to be heard and imbibed and not seen through. As when literary texts are being dealt with, so the reception of the patient's utterances is not the same thing as their interpretation: «Reception is the basis and interpretation the superstructure of literary reading. Reception is the «practice» of literature; interpretation is reflective and systematic investigation, the theory of this practice. The fact that many readers combine the two when reading makes no difference to the fundamental distinction between these two ways of dealing with literature.» (Schönau 1991, p. 37). The distinction between reception and interpretation is a fluid one, however: «Even the process of reception imposes order on the text; even here it is talked about. The process of interpretation expands

on these attempts at ordering — more consciously, of course, with greater detachment, in as controlled a manner as possible, and in accordance with the rules of an art of understanding.» (Pietzcker 1992, p. 12). In the psychotherapeutic situation it often comes about that the therapist starts thinking interpretatively about the psychodynamic conflict of the moment, about structural considerations, defence mechanisms employed and so on at the point when the therapeutic process begins to flag, when the «receptive productivity» (Hofmannsthal 1910) of the therapist is affected and he has to fall back on auxiliary constructions. In the course of a free-flowing exchange, the associations and fantasies of the therapist, who is — introjectively — taking in the projections of the patient, might well have a healing effect in their own right. This is because the ideas and fantasies of the therapist are formulations of frightening and often disintegrative experiences which the patient frequently cannot come to terms with — that is to say, structure by means of fantasy — on his own. To this extent, the therapeutic process should be regarded rather as a joint process of creation than as a process of interpretation.

The third moment of the aesthetic experience, catharsis, is generally interpreted in accordance with Aristotle's definition. Freud saw it thus, too: «The observer can himself be affected by what he sees, can identify with the persons acting, can give free rein to the passions thus aroused within his breast, and can feel pleasantly purged through their release, as though healing had been bestowed upon him» (loc. cit., p. 73) This conventional view of catharsis is inadequate, however, in that it overlooks the communicative side of the experience. Catharsis has always been a communal, affective experience. It is something that one person induces in another. Its practical function is to activate the aesthetic experience for the communication of modes of seeing and experiencing.

Following the thinking of Melanie Klein (1955), modern psychoanalysis has recognized «projective identification» as a central mechanism of human communication. This means that an author — be he patient or artist — produces in the other an affective state and an imagined world which allow an aspect of his own way of experience to inhabit the other's being. As in the act of reading, the therapist is «generally given the illusion that we ourselves actually experience what is happening «out there» in the book as though it when happening «right here» inside our own psychic world. This requires an introjection of the world of the book; but it also demands a projection of the reader's expectations and experiences into this world, so that one can best speak of a fusion....» (Schönauf 1991, p. 62). The projected experience is reworked in his own terms by the psychoanalyst. The patient, in turn, is in a state of identificatory exchange with the inner experience of the therapist. This is not simply the famous communication from «unconscious to unconscious», but an active process of production, reception and communication. If this act of processing succeeds, then the therapist can, of means his interpretation, give back to the patient in expanded form the experience initially rendered up to the therapist. If all goes well, the patient will recognize himself in this and adopt for himself the new way of seeing and experiencing, identifying with it and proceeding with his interior play of language in enriched form. At this point a fundamental distinction between the therapeutic situation and the reception of a work of art may be noted. The therapist can see from the reaction of the patient whether his intervention is coherent and whether it serves to expand the patient's perceptive framework. By contrast, the reader finds no immediate response in the work of art. This is why many psychoanalysts and scholars of literature find fault with the analogy between therapeutic and literary reception. The distinction between the two modes of reception can be relativized, however. Firstly, the reader — following his own, always individual, process of reception — enters time and again into the experience of the literary work of art and can examine his own mode of seeing. Secondly, a «consensual validation» exists for the reader, as for the therapist and patient. It is true, of course, that the reader cannot expect a direct reply from the work of art, but he can discuss his own reception process

with other readers, and the readers — literary scholars, for instance — can enter into a discourse which examines and validates their own individual modes of seeing. Thirdly, the reader — if he feels himself addressed by the literary creations and reminded of his own psychological background constellations — finds in the documents relating to the life and sufferings of the artist a connection with his own human story — this too is the sense of a «consensual validation».

In order to elucidate the aesthetic production, reception and communication process in the psychotherapeutic situation, I should now like to describe the history of an individual case.

CASE HISTORY

A young female doctor makes insistent applications for psychoanalytic treatment. She is suffering from powerful diffuse and phobic fears which are increasingly interfering with her ability to work and are seriously affecting the rest of her life, too. In the preparatory conversations, the patient reveals her suffering, but also shows her mental and emotional agility, only promptly at the beginning of the analysis to involve herself in a threatening/threatened situation and give me considerable occasion for concern and fear. That which is — despite her deep seated fears — attractive about her, her inner and verbal nimbleness, gives way to a profound helplessness and diffuse tension. The patient describes her long-standing suicidal tendencies, mentions the impulse she has experienced to throw herself under a train, like a female friend of hers, and has the notion that she can perhaps only find safety in a psychiatric clinic. Whilst I am concerned that I may not be able to keep her as an out-patient, she describes to me her fears of losing me. I could fall seriously ill, or even die. My initial impressions are fragmentary and imageless. After the first holiday separation, it all comes bursting out of the patient: she tells me that during these weeks she has felt desperate and paralyzed — on occasions, as if dead. Now, immediately prior to my arrival, she was completely confused, she tells me: she has been able to think of nothing but me, she has seen my face everywhere, she has no longer been able to distance herself from what has become a strange, uncanny relationship, she has not been able to think properly at all and has been in a state of powerless confusion. Whilst the patient speaks in tones of genuine fury, she communicates a diffuse feeling of fear to me, a feeling of profound disquiet but also of annoyance. Again I entertain doubts as to whether out-patient treatment is possible in this case. Then extremely direct images of abortions present themselves to me.

The formation of inner, scenic visual images helps to start clarifying my confusion. I can now say to the patient that «Your rage and disappointment at me are giving you an impulse to destroy what is developing here, the fruit of our work together.» At the same time, I go on, she is probably in doubt as to whether «my feelings of benevolence towards you are sufficiently strong to bear your rage and disappointment.» After a brief silence, the patient says, in a different tone of voice, that a highly concrete image is passing before her eyes: «A baby is being slaughtered above me. It's ghastly, monstrous.» I say to her, «Perhaps your need to protect me means that you have to eliminate yourself in good time and attack what is growing inside you.» The patient is silent for a moment and then says that she actually feels a great longing for me. The transparent wall that was dividing us has vanished, she says. A painful scene occurs to her. As a little child, she was weakly and suffered from an illness of an unclear nature: towards the end of her second year, she had to go to hospital and it was thought she might die. Her parents were not allowed to approach her bed: they had to remain outside. She sees before her, says that patient, how on returning home after her three-week spell in hospital, she spoke only with her father — and this in perfect High German — whilst not even wanting to

recognize her mother as her mother. For the patient, this memory underscores the fact that it was the pain of separation and her own rage that made her want inside to obliterate both herself and my receptiveness.

THE STRUCTURING OF PSYCHIC LIFE IN LITERARY AND THERAPEUTIC FORMULATION

I should like to look at the vignette from the case described above in terms of the aesthetic formulation of an initially unbearable situation. Following Sigmund Freud (1920) and drawing on the work of Melanie Klein (1957), I assume that associations, dreams and interpretations on the part of both the patient and the therapist are creative performances which serve the reparation and integration of fragmented experience and the destructive tendencies which lie behind this. When giving treatment we observe how the formulation of fantasies is encouraged by the holding atmosphere of an analytical space and the interior space of the analyst, into which the patient can expand without destructive results.

The images and fantasies that arise in the patient and the therapist possess, like literary works of art, the character of transitional objects (v. Schönau 1991). Transitional objects are, according to Winnicott's theory, objects in which the subjective experience of reality merges with its objective character. A meaningful fantasy is thus the portrayal of the experience of reality bound up with interior life. These formulations constitute a «transitional space» in which one finds one's way to a view of oneself and of one's own reality: «This intermediate realm of experience — which is granted the infant between primary creativity and objective perception based on the scrutiny of reality, and which is not questioned in terms of its belonging to interior and exterior reality — forms that major part of the child's experience and is preserved for the rest of its life for extraordinary experiences in the spheres of art, religion, imagination and creative scientific work» (Winnicott 1971, p. 25).

For Winnicott, a therapeutic relationship is productive when patient and therapist succeed in «playing together» (Winnicott 1967) and establishing a common space for fantasy. The experience of a work of art probably functions on similar lines. The experience succeeds if exposure to the work of art opens up an inner space which brings together in a creative game not only the work of art and the artist, but also the interior world of the receptor.

From this it follows that the utterances of patients and works of art that promote a creative psychic process must not be reduced to their indicative function as the representation of something else which has then to be inferred. This would be the detective or the denotatively scientific moment in the therapeutic conversation and the philological in the comprehension of a work of art. By contrast, therapeutic and literary communication, which evokes scenic representations and sensory/aesthetic experience in free association, dream and fantasy, is more closely related to the poetic than to the scientific, which of course strives for the systematic exclusion of connotation. In the psychotherapeutic situation, as indeed in the reception of a work of art, the occurrence of imagined pictures and of fantasies is a creative moment which appears for a few brief instants, structuring both the inner life and the world of perception. The degree of truth it embodies is owing rather to a concrete graphicness in the sense of an aesthetic awakening of awareness than to a logical recognition. This process of «becoming visible», and the usefulness of that which has become visible for the organization of internal and external reality can — in order to avoid the irrationalism of empathy — be tested precisely. The empiricism of the psychoanalytical and the literary situations permits us to prove the coherence of an interpretation. It ensues from the productive response of the patient and reader — in the form of significant recollections, dreams and fantasies, for instance — which put that which is understood into pictured form.

Let us think back for a moment to the case history described above: in a situation of confusion and despair, the patient induces in me graphically scenic fantasies of abortion.

By immersing myself in these fantasies and recalling details of my own experience, I can structure my interior life in the moment of transference/counter-transference interweaving. By the same token, a literary creation can help me bring diffuse experience to bear upon my personal and also intersubjectively mediated view of things. In the therapeutic situation, I give the patient an interpretation as the product of my own formulational work. This intervention evokes in turn a scenic world of perception within the patient and helps her to continue her story in graphic form, to clarify it and develop it further. This opportunity for direct contact is not available in the case of a literary work of art; but I can, as outlined above, enter into a virtual conversation with the artist, whom I know from various documents, and see how this conversation develops with other readers. This probably constitutes the crucial moment of a critique which elucidates and further develops the work of art.

The opening-up and organization of a space for fantasy can make symptoms redundant. Until the beginning of her analysis, the patient described above suffered from attacks of asthma requiring treatment. After the first few weeks of treatment, the patient forgot her anti-asthmatic spray in my treatment room, and her obstructed breathing vanished. Evidently the patient could use the analytical situation as a relationship which made the symptom redundant. Only two years later, when the patient had become pregnant and was facing up to the fact of being a mother herself, did she recall that, between the ages of eight and ten, she used always to sleep with her mother and that this put a stop to her nightly asthma attacks. The idea presents itself that the patient was able to use the psychoanalytical situation and the developing fantasy space as a holding matrix (Chasseguet-Smirgel) in order to formulate her psychic drama beyond the concretizing reification in the psychosomatic symptom (v. Benzenhöfer, Holm-Hadulla 1985). The work of art, too, can be of assistance as the culminating point of the personal drama in order to prevent regression into diffuse experience, with the necessity of concretizing this — wordlessly — in symptoms.

LITERATURE

- Baumgarten, A.G. (1741). *Texte zur Grundlegung der Ästhetik* (Texts on the foundations of aesthetics) (Translated and edited by H.R. Schweizer). Hamburg: Meiner (1983).
- Benzenhöfer, U. & Holm-Hadulla, R. (1985). Zum Asthma bei Marcel Proust (Asthma in the writings of Marcel Proust). *Materialien Psychoanalyse*, pp. 210-222
- Freud, S. (1920). Beyond the Pleasure Principle. *Collected works, Standard Edition*, 18: 64.
- Eliot, T.S. (1961). *Selected Essays*. London: Faber.
- Holland, N.N. (1968). *The Dynamics of Literary Response*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Jauß, H.R. (1982). *Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik* (Aesthetic experience and literary hermeneutics). Frankfurt: Suhrkamp
- Klein, M. (1955). *New Directions of Psycho-Analysis*. London: Tavistock.
- Klein, M. (1957). *Envy and Gratitude*. London: Heinemann.
- Pietzcker, C. (1992). *Lesend interpretieren. Zur psychoanalytischen Deutung literarischer Texte* — Band 1 — (Interpreting through reading: The psychoanalytical interpretation of literary texts — Vol. 1). Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann.
- Schönau, W. (1991). Einführung in die psychoanalytische Literaturwissenschaft (An introduction to psychoanalytical literary criticism), *Sammlung Metzler*, Band 259, Stuttgart: Metzler.
- Winnicott, D.W. (1967). The Location of Cultural Experience. *International Journal Psychoanalysis*, 48: 368-372.

Do Not Forget the Author!

CARL PIETZCKER ()*

When you include the author in your psychoanalytic interpretation of his texts or try to understand them on the basis of his life experiences, when you even go so far as to take the author and his whole life as the basis for a psychoanalytic understanding of his works, you will, sooner or later, hear the reproach that you are psychoanalyzing the author himself. But this procedure is regarded as improper because the author is definitely not lying on a couch as would be the case in a psychoanalytic therapy. He therefore can give no associations and can neither confirm nor reject interpretations. Also, the interplay of transfer, countertransfer and countertransfer analysis which is absolutely necessary for the recognition of the unconscious can only be played between text and interpreter, but certainly not between author and interpreter. Therefore, the interpreter who includes the author in his analysis will only end up with his own fantasies, with a mechanical usage of psychoanalytic terminology, with a short circuit of the author's work and life, with a mere asserted causality, with a psychopathology of the work as well as the author and with a destruction of the literary quality of the literature which certainly would not be included in such an equation of text and author. These are indeed serious reproaches. I have heard and read them often enough. But are they justified?

It is a truism that the author and his associations are not available to us when we interpret a text. But this lack can be compensated for: Other literary texts of the author as well as letters, diary notes, records of conversation make it possible for us to get to know the author's unconscious fantasies, especially when certain motifs, pictures and scenes recur. Just like free associations, they show us the way to the author's latent fantasies through the jungle of their contexts. As in a therapeutic situation, we can also try to take into account the various documents, texts and letters in order to interpret them together with our answers to them, just like a countertransfer analysis. We can, as is also the case in therapy, set the gained ideas with the help of psychoanalytic theories which themselves have been the results of therapy, into new contexts. The resulting hypotheses can either be rejected or temporarily confirmed on the basis of present knowledge and the analysis of our countertransfer. We will not, however, receive a «yes» or «no» from the absent author. We have to take over this part ourselves, splitting ourselves into his and our own role and reconsidering our interpretations with the help of the given material. When we use the author's works and life in this way, we establish associations which lead us to those unconscious fantasies that have been incorporated into the text. We then have created

(*) Universität Freiburg, Deutsches Seminar, Werthmannplatz, D-79085 Freiburg, Germany.

more room for associations and have provided more material than those who only refer to the text in analogy to the therapeutic situation and their own situation towards the text. They can only rely on the associations within a given text and on their own ones.

Certainly, in a therapeutic situation the analyst is alone with his patient. He allows only that what the patient tells him in this situation to be interpreted, no documents from outside and no persons are permitted, neither parents nor other relatives. It is true that anyone who models the relation between interpreter and text solely on the process of psychoanalytic interpretation between the interpreter and the text without consulting outside material or even the author's own analysis as knowledge about the author can indeed elucidate the author's unconscious processes with the help of a methodical limited countertransfer analysis and can also perform his interpretation in analogy to the psychoanalytic therapy. But then he also has to make do without a confirmation or rejection from the text. He also has to find the answer in an interpretive ego-splitting. The major difference is that he renounces a wealth of possible associations and sticks to the here and now although he should consider the fact that at one time the text was created by an author who has taken issue with his own situation. This way, the interpreter is in danger of fading out the historical dimension of the text.

When we look psychoanalytically from a text or an opus to its author and try to get some analytical knowledge about him, or when we look from the life of this author which we also try to interpret his work psychoanalytically, we are proceeding from the assumption that the opus or the text has been created by one or perhaps even more authors, that the author incorporated fantasies here which can also be unconscious ones he has developed during the course of his life and that we have the possibility to receive answers from these fantasies which would make it easier to understand his life as well as his work. Thus, the close examination of both his life and his works contribute to a mutual illumination. In fact, extreme cases have proven that the behavior of the author in other contexts, for instance his relation to the other sex or to writing, contributed a lot to the understanding of his texts, their forms, details and even their theory. But it is not justified to short-circuit author and opus, or even to interpret the latter as a mere symptom. What is important are the fantasies, their origin and function, and not a complete causal chain of the author's life, or even the deduction from one single experience to his works. It is impossible to either find an unequivocal reason for a text, for instance a trauma in the author's childhood, or to infer a necessity of a literary performance from one single fantasy. There are different ways of reacting to an experience, including fantasies and writing, and there are also different ways of treating fantasies in literature. Above all, the real author is not identical with the redundant, implicit author of a text, so that he is actually not the authority from which his signs organize themselves. Anyone who bears this in mind can profit by looking from the text to the fantasies, from these to the author, from him to the fantasies again and back to the text. When the interpreter always faces mediation and is always moving between two different contexts without unequivocal certainty, he can illuminate them mutually.

On the other hand, anyone who directly confines himself to his situation towards the text waives essential psychoanalytical knowledge. He excludes not only the reflection on genetic aspects, but also tendentially the historical from the psychoanalysis. In any case, he, when restricting to the direct present, clips his backward look on that process in which a fantasy has developed itself out of a compromise between desires and resistance. Anyone who acts like this does not make much use of the manifold dimensions of Freud's fantasy conception. Freud wrote:

Man darf sagen, eine Phantasie schwebt gleichsam zwischen drei Zeiten, den drei Zeitmomenten unseres Vorstellens. Die seelische Arbeit knüpft an einen aktuellen Eindruck, einen Anlaß in der Gegenwart an, der imstande war,

einen der großen Wünsche der Person zu wecken, greift von da aus auf die Erinnerung eines früheren, meist infantilen, Erlebnisses zurück, in dem jener Wunsch erfüllt war, und schafft nun eine auf die Zukunft bezogene Situation, welche sich als die Erfüllung jenes Wunsches darstellt, eben den Tagtraum oder die Phantasie, die nun die Spuren ihrer Herkunft vom Anlasse und von der Erinnerung an sich trägt. Also Vergangenes, Gegenwärtiges und Zukünftiges wie an der Schnur des durchlaufenden Wunsches aneinandergereiht.¹

Anyone who is, like me, of the opinion that without fantasy analysis a psychoanalytic text analysis is not possible, and who understands fantasy the way Freud did, must under consideration of all uncertainties examine its «three time moments», and thus include also the motive for writing a text and, above all, the «great desire of the person» as well as its development in the past. It is imperative to work out «the past, present and future as being on the line of the continuous desire». Therefore, we have to take a look beyond the text to the author. We must regard the author as one aspect of the development of a text. He has to be one of the vanishing points of interpretation, even when we know nothing or nearly nothing about him as for example in the cases of Shakespeare or Sophocles. From the perspective of this vanishing point which should be thought of as historical the text should be reconstructed as a fictional construct.

The epistemologically motivated restriction to the situation towards the text corresponds to the transfer of the therapeutic to the interpretational situation. It also corresponds to the conviction that a psychoanalysis as cultural sciences is only possible when it follows the setting of the therapy. But, however much psychoanalytic cultural science may owe to therapy and however much it may be exposed to the knowledge gained by therapy, it always has to consider its own context which means, in our case, the literary process between author, text and reader. In addition, it must always consider to what degree therapeutic knowledge and ability contribute to the understanding of this literary process. In our case, the renunciation of one essential aspect of the literary process, the author, amounts to a considerable loss of knowledge, not only in so far as this aspect will no longer be part of the analysis, but also in so far as the other aspects, text and reader and possibly also the interpreter, can not be understood in the whole manifoldness of their interactive behavior. Anything, therapeutic analysis promotes as exemplary stories, theorems and methods should be applied by cultural sciences, even when it is not always possible to create a situation equal to a therapeutic one. Let us turn once more to what Freud said:

die Psychoanalyse begann als eine Therapie, aber nicht als Therapie wollte ich sie Ihrem Interesse anempfehlen, sondern wegen ihres Wahrheitsgehaltes, wegen der Aufschlüsse, die sie uns gibt über das, was dem Menschen am nächsten geht, sein eigenes Wesen, und wegen der Zusammenhänge, die sie zwischen den verschiedensten seiner Betätigungen aufdeckt.²

These are contexts the promoters of the «Imago» turned their attention to, for instance those between life and work of an author. The orientation toward the clinic alone can have the consequence that the cultural-critical power of the psychoanalysis is reduced to a minimum.

Anyone who follows such contexts is necessarily moving in a hermeneutic circle which moves from the analysis of the text to the analysis of the author, to the analysis of one's own reactions, to the consultation of psychoanalytic knowledge, to the study of these within the text, to the development of structures and configurations, to the consideration of the

¹ Sigmund Freud, Der Dichter und das Phantasieren, in *Sigmund Freud, Gesammelte Werke [G.W.]*, Ffm 1960 ff., vol. 7, pp. 217 f.

² Sigmund Freud, Neue Folgen der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse, 34, Vorlesung, in *G.W.*, vol. 14, 169.

author's ways of behavior, back again to the text and so on and so forth. This becomes a process of mutual correction and confirmation in which no terminology can be applied mechanically. It is a process which never results in an ultimate truth. Though it may well come to some conclusions, some things will remain unexplained. Absolute certainty is not possible here, perhaps not even that which may be gained by the analyst and his patient when both are convinced that they have agreed on one and the same interpretation. So, what we gain is no absolute knowledge. Nevertheless, it is the best result we can achieve in this field. Anyone who excludes psychoanalysis here seems to insist upon an understanding which equates science to the absoluteness of proved statements. But since these are not possible in our case he rather remains silent when it would be necessary to talk openly and to develop the ability to name and bear hypotheses, differentiations and uncertainties. So, in my opinion, what Freud said in general about sciences can also be applied here where interpretations with an eye to the author are concerned:

Es wäre ein Irrtum zu glauben, daß eine Wissenschaft aus lauter streng bewiesenen Lehrsätzen besteht, und ein Unrecht, solches zu fordern. Diese Forderung erhebt nur ein autoritätssüchtiges Gemüt, welches das Bedürfnis hat, seinen religiösen Katechismus durch einen anderen, wenn auch wissenschaftlichen, zu ersetzen. Die Wissenschaft hat in ihrem Katechismus nur wenige apodiktische Sätze, sonst Behauptungen, die sie bis zu einem gewissen Stufengrad von Wahrscheinlichkeit gefördert hat. Es ist geradezu ein Zeichen von wissenschaftlicher Denkungsart, wenn man an diesen Annäherungen an die Gewißheit sein Genüge finde und die konstruktive Arbeit trotz der mangelnden letzten Bekräftigungen fortsetzen kann.³

I understand this neither as an authority quotation nor as a warrant for inaccuracy, but rather as an encouragement to practise science in such a way that would be adequate to its contexts and conscious of its limits and uncertainties. Thus, we should take the reproach of the inadmissibility of laying the author on the couch as a warning to be cautious. But we should not take it as a basic objection to the method in general because this method is a possible and even necessary one.

Although we are justified in looking at the author psychoanalytically as long as we proceed in a manner appropriate to literary studies and psychoanalytically competent, know the limits and cope with the uncertainties, this method is often criticized. Mostly, the criticism does not even come from the psychoanalysts. It is rather about the attitude of this method towards literature. Though we can observe this attitude also with psychoanalysts, it is more evident in the feuilleton and in literature. Critics state that the psychoanalytic examination of the author psychopathologizes him and his work, destroys meaning and aura of both and ignores the literariness of literature.

Let us see if this is correct. Anyone who psychopathologizes an author, which surely enough does happen, activates a non-psychoanalytic concept of disease. For the sake of healing pragmatism, psychoanalysis must differentiate tendenciously between «sane» and «insane» when it is utilized as therapy. But as a science, and this is what cultural sciences are all about, it does not know the concept of disease. Rather, it works with contradictions in order to understand psychic processes: first with contradictions between the principles of desire and reality, then with those between structures. When contradictory processes are observed in an author, this is from the psychoanalytic point of view no exposure, no unmasking and no elevation of the interpreter over the examined author, always provided that the interpreter is conscious of his own contradictoriness and openly shows this. When

³ Sigmund Freud, Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse, 3, Vorlesung, in *Sigmund Freud, G.W.*, vol. 11, 44f.

he has the necessary psychoanalytic tact, he will not make his analysis of an author who is still alive public because it might be possible that the author feels exposed and stripped of his creative drive. This, however, is a general problem of all literature as long as it strives for knowledge.

A psychoanalytic interpreter would not rate psychic contradictoriness and the author's suffering from it as a disease. He rather considers it as a condition for the author's ability to realize the contradictoriness of his environment more clearly than his adapted contemporaries and, what is more, to combine these outer contradictions with his inner ones and to incorporate them into his work. An examination of the author's suffering allows the interpreter to realize the author's psychological makeup more distinctly, and thus also his fantasies which the author revives by the creative act of writing. Anyone who proceeds like this will never pathologize the author's work or reduce them if anything to mere symptoms, daydreams, unconscious fantasies and methods of coping with certain experiences. The effective presentation of fantasies, the artful and conscious usage of processing mechanisms, the poetic pervasion of the realized and recognized reality with unconscious fantasy scenes indicate to the interpreter that the author has managed to gain some distance from inner contradictions which is actually one condition for shaping outer reality. In this way, a work is not alienated from its meaning as a medium serving as a helpful means to operate in this world and to understand it. In any event, this meaning may be qualified as soon as we understand the works as a product of an also unconscious process.

It is self-evident that this does not agree with a scientific point of view because this would always accept *l'art pour l'art* without questioning it. This is even the same with a science that insists upon a text-based interpretation. Both, however, are positions which neglect numerous aspects of the literary process. Apart from this, we do meet in literature interpreters who return to the author's biography. Again and again, works and life of an author are connected with each other. This is carried out often enough in combination with an argumentation which is definitely not altogether free from psychological content. But it should not be psychoanalytical. I suppose, the reason for this is that the works would then appear as a product of an also unconscious process behind which the author's intention, self-image and the so evidently perceptible social life are in danger of vanishing.

Anyone who considers himself a literary specialist and interprets psychoanalytically, but excludes the author from psychoanalytic analysis reduces the object of literature, i.e. the literary process between author, text and reader by one essential aspect. He short-circuits text and interpreter in a way that he also loses track of the interpreter as a historical being who as interpreter faces a text which originated in another historical context. He thus reduces his psychoanalytic interpretation by neglecting not only the historicity of the text, but also his own. But text and interpreter are part of a historical process. They are historically defined answers to historically defined situations. They are answers provided by historical events, the historically socialized author, the historically developed text and the interpreter who is influenced by his own time. All of them include parts of the unconscious and are also defined by these. This would become lost if texts were not understood and analyzed as products of one or more authors. The process in which they were created, which came to a halt in the texts as a compromise and whose inner contradictoriness lives on in their reception would not be considered and reflected upon again. Instead, the process is experienced and appreciated aesthetically as a motionless moment within the static picture of the text which has been established by interpreting it. The historical as well as the communicative situation, the psychological structures, the norms of author, text and interpreter do not separate, and thus are not reflected psychoanalytically.

It is certainly true that anyone who dares to take a look at the author can persist in seeing him as an unhistorical individual being because nothing forces him to look beyond the author in his historical context. It is equally true that the historical situation of a text

can be investigated without an analysis of the author by simply examining the language, pictures, ideas and conditions for the production and reception of a given text. But all of a sudden, this will become part of a psychoanalytic text interpretation: here, you have the psychological aspect, there, you have the historical one. This way, no text can be understood as an individual historical answer. Alone the existence of one or more authors, even if we had to invent them for lack of knowledge, makes it possible for us to comprehend the individuality of a text we examined psychoanalytically with a view to socialization and production as a particular manifestation of a historical universal. Anyone who regards the author as one of the vanishing points of the text does not necessarily have to get this far, he would, however, have the chance to do so.

Often enough, the rejection of an analysis of the author serves to preserve the aura of his work, the unquestioned submersion into the internal regions of a holy and aesthetic object, which results in an idealization of author and work. The identification with both remains protected. A psychoanalysis of this kind which is applied to the text only in such a limited way now serves as a mean of a religion of arts and rescues the aesthetic pleasure which has often vanished. On the other hand, when I look from the text to its author and understand the text as something created I disturb the absoluteness of its aura. The interpreter would regard the text rather as some kind of object separated from and thus understandable to him. Identification and idealization would dissolve and the author would become an object of perception. For those who have identified with author and text and have associated their own desires, fears and possible solutions with them, this means that now their otherwise hidden fantasies and emotions become objectified and psychoanalytically elucidated. This is surely frightening. Taboo subjects are not for the public. Therefore, texts and work shall not be desecrated. As a consequence, it is always the interpreters who are identified, the idealizing apostles who would reject the analysis of their authors or even their art in general. Do not dare to analyze a Stefan George, his *gestus* and *pathos* before his apostles. But how would you be able to understand this *pathos* and that of the texts without asking about their author and his unconscious process? A perception of art which seeks an unquestioned and unquestionable truth in art which magically preserves and heightens the self and the world leads to the demand that the author not be interpreted psychoanalytically because this would end in the loss of the psychological monopolized object of literature and its function.

When we look psychoanalytically from text to author and vice versa, the unquestioned aesthetic taboo region would indeed be destroyed. So, the interpreter, knowing that he is separated from the text, faces it as a historical, created and thus conditioned one. And this is exactly the way how a new submersion, a new pleasure and a new knowledge and reflection become possible: by an interplay between absorption in the text and detached perception, between sensual experience and reflection. It is all about the relation between interpreter and literary text, about a subject-object relation as a process of reflection. It is certainly neither about a reverential and solemn fusion, nor about an indifferent distance from the object which is being cut into pieces as with a scalpel, nor about a depreciating or even pathologizing attack. What is important is the interplay between all possibilities of objectification on the one hand, and of empathy on the other. During this process, interpreters risk the pain of separation and knowledge, but nevertheless take pleasure in submerging, absorbing and realizing. With such an interplay in scenes between subject and object in which interpreters get to know themselves as being separated from their object, but still open to it, it is possible and necessary to view the author psychoanalytically. There is no justified reason to assume that he is therefore on a couch.

Who's on the Couch?

DAVID SUNDELSON (*)

In 1990, Alvin Kernan published a book called *The Death of Literature*.¹ Reports of this death may be greatly exaggerated, but the patient certainly seems to be in trouble. From the academy, voice after mournful voice joins Kernan in bemoaning the loss of confidence and high cultural status that literature and literary studies have enjoyed for so long. Psychoanalysis, although it stubbornly refuses to die, often seems similarly afflicted: dismissed by scholarly outsiders as unscientific and theoretically incoherent, by many in the healing professions as impractical, and by nearly everyone as endless and impossibly expensive.

Perhaps it is natural that two such invalids should turn to each other. Literary criticism brings psychoanalysis in from the cultural margins. In return, psychoanalysis offers powerful and still glamorous theories — never mind how many or how different. Just as important are its examples of sheer hermeneutic zest. The «Dora» case history, bursting with the triumph of Freud's unfolding interpretations, makes a fine tonic for weary academics, no matter what their critical inclinations.

Literature itself has given psychoanalysis not just Oedipus and Electra but a storehouse of traditional methods for representing inner life, from soliloquy to lyric, from dream vision to realistic novel. Psychoanalysts continue to use them, as in Joyce McDougall's recent exploration of theater as a metaphor for psychic reality and the latest work by Christopher Bollas, which places what amounts to a short story between sections of more conventional exposition.²

As with literary criticism, the admiration is mutual: psychoanalysis has always been a tempting subject for fiction. Its twin promises of emotional healing and profound insight offer rich opportunities for drama and irony. Ten years ago, D. M. Thomas drew on these opportunities with peculiar flair in *The White Hotel*. Recently, two more novelists have made the couch their subject, with results that suggest its potential rewards and also its dangers: Pat Barker in *Regeneration* and Irvin D. Yalom in *When Nietzsche Wept*.

Yalom's ostensible subject is Nietzsche, but the presence of Freud as a character gives an even greater charge to his novel, as it does to *The White Hotel*; it also creates nearly insurmountable problems. Yalom is a practicing psychiatrist and professor of psychiatry. Freud is not only a towering figure in Yalom's own field and a household god of modern

(*) 1678 Shattuck Avenue, Suite 330, Berkeley, California 94709, USA.

¹ Alvin Kernan, *The Death of Literature*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990.

² See Joyce McDougall, *Theatres of the Mind: Illusion and Truth on the Psychoanalytic Stage* (London: Free Association Books, 1986) and Christopher Bollas, *Being a Character: Psychoanalysis and Self Experience* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992).

culture; he is also a celebrated literary stylist whose works are often compared to great novels.³ To place Freud in any fiction is to risk having it sink beneath his weight and, at the same time, to risk an unintended slide into parody. For the psychiatrist-turned-novelist, to incorporate not only the master's ideas but the master himself is to dare comparison with a doubly mighty forebear, to engage in a particularly risky Oedipal struggle.

In *The White Hotel*, that struggle is self-conscious and sophisticated, and the result is an odd kind of standoff. Thomas begins with a prefatory tribute to «the majestic figure of Sigmund Freud» and to the case histories, which he describes as «masterly works of literature, apart from everything else.» He then introduces fictional letters from Freud and Ferenczi, and, later, a case history of his central character supposedly written by Freud. This section of the novel reproduces in uncanny if somewhat vulgarized fashion not only the characteristic material of Freud's own case histories but their literary style.

If Thomas sounds more like Freud than Freud, the apparent homage both expresses and conceals an underlying rivalry. The rivalry is more apparent in later sections of *The White Hotel*, which reveal the utter inadequacy of the fictional Freud's interpretations. In the end, the novel comes to bury Caesar, not to praise him, to subordinate what Thomas calls, ambivalently, «the great and beautiful modern myth of psychoanalysis» to his own violent and mystical vision of modern history. In that vision, his main character's fantasies and physical symptoms turn out to be prophecy, not hysteria: they anticipate both the violence that befalls her in the Holocaust and the compensation of an apparently concrete afterlife.

At first glance, rivalry with Freud or with anyone else seems a long way from the central concerns of *When Nietzsche Wept*. More than thirty years ago, Leslie Fiedler identified an unconscious homoerotic fable at the core of American literature,⁴ and Yalom's book suggests that nothing much has changed. Yalom cooks up a plot in which Lou Salome, worried that the great Nietzsche is suffering from the breakup of their relationship, tricks him into seeking help from Freud's collaborator Josef Breuer. The doctor, it turns out, is just as much in need of a cure and has a similar affliction. Just as Nietzsche cannot get Salome out of his mind, Breuer is haunted by obsessive thoughts about his former patient, Bertha Pappenheim (who was disguised as «Anna O» in *Studies in Hysteria*). Breuer has become alienated from his wife and seems about to join what Fiedler described as the «long line of heroes in flight from woman and home».

For both Nietzsche and Breuer, it turns out, the cure is remarkably simple: blame the woman. Each man is released from obsession when he realizes that the creature who enslaves him is perversely seductive and deserves only rejection. The turning point in the plot thus comes when Salome, having coaxed Breuer and Nietzsche into seeing each other, returns to Breuer's office for news of the man she calls «our» patient. With that word, she goes too far. Breuer suddenly becomes a champion of his patient's privacy — a bit late, since until this point he has been happy to conspire with Salome behind Nietzsche's back — and indignantly refuses to tell her a thing.

The glee underneath his righteousness is almost palpable. At last, as Nietzsche later puts it, a man has «stood up» to this bossy siren, with «her preening; her turning her head first one way, then the other, her smile, her cocked head, her open and adoring gaze,

³ See, for example, Steven Marcus, who compared the major case studies to «modern experimental novels». «Freud and Dora: Story, History, Case History» in *In Dora's Case: Freud-Hysteria-Feminism* (Charles Bernheimer & Claire Kahane, Eds.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1985. The essay was first published in *Partisan Review* (Winter 1974). Jay Martin praises *The Interpretation of Dreams* in similar terms: «Freud's mind naturally organized itself according to the principles of storytelling practiced by the novelists of his time». *Who Am I This Time: Uncovering the Fictive Personality*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1988, p. 203.

⁴ See *Love and Death in the American Novel*, New York: Doubleday (Anchor Books), 1992. (First published in 1959; revised ed. New York: Stein and Day, 1966).

the play of her tongue as she moistened her lips, the touch of her hand as she rested it on his.» Once she has stalked out of his consulting room in a huff, Breuer can cement his relationship with Nietzsche by revealing the whole strategem. Together, the two men denounce their Calypso's wives. The previously aloof and stony Nietzsche is at last able to celebrate his release from captivity with a satisfying cry («'It's good, Friedrich'», says Breuer. «'Strong tears are cleansing'») and, even better, a hug. The only thing missing is a drumming group.

As a men's movement soap opera, *When Nietzsche Wept* is not unsuccessful. Yalom draws on the contemporary hunger for dysfunction, manifest or hidden, in the lives of the famous, and his notion of showing not one but several imposing cultural figures with their pants down is hard to resist. At its best, his book has the appeal of the edifying «We Were There» series once popular for pre-teens (*We Were There On the Oregon Trail*, *We Were There At the Battle of Gettysburg*). Here, it's *We Were There When They Discovered Psychoanalysis*: «'Perhaps — here Nietzsche almost whispered as if he were conveying a secret of great significance — perhaps symptoms are messengers of a meaning and will vanish only when their message is comprehended.'»

Yalom serves up enough of these gee whiz moments to engage anyone with a soft spot for cultural history, however scrambled, but two unexamined features of the high-class male bonding he celebrates spoil the fun. First, there is the nagging problem of rivalry, for which Yalom provides a tired metaphor in the chess games Breuer likes to play. Yalom seems to resolve this issue by having Breuer yield during their extended dialogues to Nietzsche's superior reasoning and more powerful personality.

In fact, however, competition and envy are not banished from the novel; they are only displaced onto its basic premise. Is there not something downright ungenerous about fictionalizing the early history of psychoanalysis but making Freud a marginal character? Yalom seems to let us in on exciting discoveries about the unconscious, the meaning of symptoms, the interpretation of dreams, and clinical technique («'Perhaps it will be easier to talk without looking at me'», says Breuer. «'Or lie down on the bed.'»), but he takes those discoveries away from Freud, whom he wishfully portrays as inexperienced and deferential, and gives them to Nietzsche and Breuer. Breuer does pay lip service to what he calls Freud's «extraordinary gifts», but the real if unacknowledged point is that those gifts were not so extraordinary after all.

Another flaw is just as hard to ignore, especially in a novel about self-examination written by a psychiatrist. Breuer thinks to himself that he is usually able to see women «as they really were»: «he saw the reality of their breasts: clusters of mammary cells floating in lipid pools. He knew about their leakages, dysmenorrheic problems, sciatica, and various irregular protrusions — prolapsed bladders and uteruses, and bulging blue hemorrhoids and varicosities.»

No wonder Breuer flees from the women in his life — his wife, his patient, and Lou Salome — to the loftier pleasures of conversation with the great Nietzsche! The physical revulsion in this passage is one side of an apparently unconscious misogyny which emerges even more clearly in the pervasive resentment of female seductiveness and strength and in the humiliation, sooner or later, of every woman in the novel. The complement to this misogyny is the homosexual romance between Breuer and Nietzsche. It begins when Breuer tenderly massages the philosopher on his hotel-room bed after Nietzsche has collapsed from a drug overdose, and ends with the chaste but climactic hug: «For a moment, Nietzsche looked frightened, cornered. But, at Breuer's approach, arms spread, he, too, opened his arms.»

In the end, Yalom steps back from the precipice he almost imagines. Hypnotized by Freud, Breuer sees himself running off to Venice to begin a new life, and the vision scares him into a renewed appreciation of his attractive and reassuringly unbossy wife. However, since the vision seems tame (Breuer imagines himself working as a cook), we might wonder

just what frightens him so much. Perhaps an answer lies in the metaphor Yalom uses to describe Breuer's interaction with Nietzsche, one that hints at feminization even more drastic than a cook's. «Breuer found himself thinking again of chess games with his father.... of ignoring his defense until, like lightning, his father's queen struck behind his lines and threatened mate.» The image suggests a danger from the rear and expresses uncertainty about its source: is it the father who threatens «mate»? A queen? The father's queen? Conjured up by the philosopher's potent rhetoric and ideas, the chess metaphor suggests disturbing possibilities that the novel does not explore or even recognize.

The period setting, the use of writers and other historical figures as characters, and the focus on psychotherapy in Yalom's work are also features of *Regeneration*. In addition, like Breuer in *When Nietzsche Wept*, Pat Barker's psychiatrist hero learns, as he puts it, that in psychotherapy, «healing *does* go on, even if not in the expected direction.» There the resemblance ends, however, between books as well as heroes. Yalom's tale suffers not only from thematic undercurrents that give the lie to his resolutely upbeat stance but also from a professorial anxiety that we may Miss The Point. He cannot stop himself from telling us too much, either about Viennese eating habits or about the importance of his heroes and their ideas.

Nothing could be further from this puffery than Barker's sober understatement. She conjures up a historical era by what her characters think and say, not by what they eat, and, although some of them are well-known literary figures, her novel has none of the high culture name-dropping that mars Yalom's. Instead, she seems to guard her characters' privacy as they guard it themselves; we get to know them slowly and, even in the end, incompletely. Barker chooses figures who, while not unfamiliar, are not such celebrities that there is little left for the novelist to imagine. In this way, she preserves a sense of permanent mystery about character — even in a novel about psychotherapy — and avoids the rivalry with grand paternal ghosts that preoccupies Thomas and Yalom. Indeed, part of Barker's achievement, aptly reflected in her title, is to breathe new albeit fictional life into figures who might otherwise be forgotten.

As Barker explains in a note, the poet Siegfried Sassoon, after being decorated for bravery in World War I, made a public protest against the continuation of the war. In response, the authorities sent him to a military hospital, where he met Wilfred Owen, also a poet, and became a patient of Dr. W. H. R. Rivers, a neurologist and an early admirer of Freud. *Regeneration* focuses on Rivers during his treatment of Sassoon and several other patients, all of them officers traumatized by their experience of trench warfare. Owen and Sassoon are not major figures, and Rivers is so obscure that he might as well be fictional. As a result, Barker's novel lacks the gossipy allure of *When Nietzsche Wept* but offers instead the absorbing coherence of traditional fiction. No character, like Yalom's cartoon-like Nietzsche, jumps off the page as if from a different reality or, like Thomas's Lisa Erdman, fades away into transparency.

History in *Regeneration* is nevertheless more than just the local color with which Yalom decorates his story. It is rather the condition in which the characters live, one that calls into question the very idea of therapy. Barker's interests are less grandiose and more precise than Thomas's or Yalom's. What does it mean to do psychotherapy, Barker asks, in a world that obliterates life on an unprecedented scale? Rivers brings his patients relief from their muteness and their nightmares only to send them back into action. He knows that Sassoon, opposed more than ever to the war but driven to share its horror with the soldiers he loves, may try to resolve the conflict by seeking his own death after his release from the hospital.

Rivers also comes to realize that, while therapy may be an act of rebellion against destructive forces — against history — the rebellion itself is impure. In the novel's most powerful and disturbing scene, Rivers visits a hospital and watches another psychiatrist, Dr. Lewis Yealland (also a historical figure) treat a case of combat-induced muteness by

applying electric current at literally torturous levels to the patient's larynx. Rivers hates Yealland but is forced to acknowledge their kinship.

«He remembered an incident shortly after Prior's arrival when he'd dragged a teaspoon across the back of his throat, hoping that the choking reflex would trigger the return of speech. This did sometimes happen. He'd seen more than one patient recover his voice in that way. But he'd tried it while in a state of acute irritation with Prior, and the choking had occasioned a momentary spasm of satisfaction. Very slight, but enough to make him feel, in retrospect, discontented with his own behavior.»

Even the most humane therapy involves the same impulses to dominate and destroy that are hideously triumphant in Yealland and on the battlefield. Rivers can recognize and feel the full power of these ironies — and contemplate a «rebellion of the old» to match Sassoon's — only at the end of the novel. This is the unexpected and very qualified healing that his work with other men brings about in him. The muted, ambiguous resolution makes Breuer's sudden return to domestic contentment in *When Nietzsche Wept* seem unearned and simplistic.

Barker finds both less and more than Yalom or Thomas in the therapeutic process. On the one hand, she demystifies it. Rivers simply encourages his patients to recover the traumatic memories they have repressed and to accept feelings at odds with their training and expectations. The method is hardly mysterious, and the results are generally quite undramatic, like the change Rivers notices in a patient named Burns.

«Rivers, going downstairs to make the tea, thought that a curious thing had happened during that conversation. For the first time, Burns had been able to put the decomposing corpse into some kind of perspective. True, he hadn't managed to talk about it, but at least it hadn't prevented him, as it so often had in the past, from talking about other, more bearable aspects of his war experience.»

Here, as elsewhere in the novel, healing is measured by a change in the ability to speak. The change is brought about by patience — Rivers avoids topics he feels Burns is unprepared to discuss — and to recognize it requires attentive listening and interpretation. Sassoon works in a similar fashion to help Owen with his poetry, encouraging the powerful and distinctive style that emerges slowly from what Sassoon at first derides as «War Office propaganda.»

For Burns and Owen and a patient named Prior, who initially can neither speak nor feel, therapy brings the return of an authentic voice. When it comes from coercion, however, the return of speech signals psychological death, not recovery. This is the case with Callan, the mute officer treated with electric current by Dr. Yealland. Yealland sees malingerers, not victims, and wants to turn them into soldiers. «'Remember you must behave as becomes the hero I expect you to be'», he tells Callan, and adds, when Callan has the presumption to signal his readiness for another dose of current, «'You must speak, but I shall not listen to anything you have to say.'»

Barker defines Yealland's inhumanity as a failure to listen that negates the speaker's real identity — a refusal to interpret, to enter into a collaboration about language like that of Sassoon and Owen or Rivers and his patients. A version of this refusal is justified and celebrated in the hymn that offends Rivers when he hears it in church.

«God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform...
Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His works in vain;
He is His own interpreter
And he will make it plain. Amen.»

Rivers notes dryly to himself that «[s]ince the Somme, this seemed to have become the nation's most popular hymn.» Here the unwillingness to interpret is more than just a theological stance; the hymn expresses a national abdication of responsibility that allows the slaughter to continue.

In a culture that embraces this hymn and makes use of Yealland's smug brutality, the interpretations that Rivers provides for his patients and Sassoon provides for a fellow poet exemplify the work that men and women must do in order to remain fully human. Since publishing *The Death of Literature*, Alvin Kernan has written that «if we want to preserve some kind of literature, ... then the time is short in which to begin saying plausible and helpful things about it.»⁵ In spite of its quite genuine modesty, *Regeneration* makes a claim for literature and for psychoanalysis that could hardly be greater.

⁵ «Plausible and Helpful Things to Say About Literature in a Time When All Print Institutions are Breaking Down», in *English Inside and Out: The Places of Literary Criticism* (Susan Gubar & Jonathan Kamholtz, Eds.), New York and London: Routledge (The English Institute), 1993.

Therapy and War in Cather's *One of Ours* and Barker's *Regeneration*

ANNE WYATT-BROWN (*)

Two novels about World War I, Willa Cather's *One of Ours* (1922) and Pat Barker's *Regeneration* (1991), examine the relationship between war and psychotherapy. Indeed Merrill Skaggs, a recent Cather critic, asserts too dramatically that Cather «systematically set out to psychoanalyze Claude Wheeler [the chief protagonist] with Freudian categories in *One of Ours*» (Skaggs, 34). Both writers acknowledge the reports of veterans that battle heightens soldiers' intense emotions and commitment to their fellows. Sharon O'Brien comments that Cather was «fascinated by the transformation in identity soldiers experienced in battle» (1989, 189), and both authors emphasize that war provided protected opportunities for men to play female nurturing roles without provoking comment (*OO*, 238-41; *R*, 107- 08). Perhaps Cather thought that novel writing was the equivalent of battle in the formation of character.

Fundamental differences in culture and gender attitudes divide the two writers — Cather was a forty-five-year-old single woman, a politically conservative, middle-western American, whose 1922 novel earned a Pulitzer Prize. The action of the novel takes place in Nebraska, the place of Cather's rearing, and in France. Pat Barker is a forty-nine-year-old, married, British novelist, currently living in the north of England. Her novel is set in Craiglockhart, a hospital for shell-shocked officers in Scotland, near Edinburgh.

Not surprisingly each novelist takes a radically different narrative stance. Writing soon after the event, Cather identifies strongly with her male protagonist, Claude. The anguish of the novel's ending mirrors her own disillusionment with her country and with war as a psychotherapeutic shortcut to maturity. Barker offers a more traditionally feminine, but complex view of her subject matter. Writing seventy years later than Cather, she regards the war through an intricate lens, treating its multiple ironies with her own irony and compassion. She divides her attention between two historical figures, Siegfried Sassoon, a famous antiwar poet, and W. H. R. Rivers, a psychotherapist who pioneered treatment of war neuroses (Stallworthy, 1974, 190). Despite the divide of culture, country, time, and authorial stance, both novels draw the same conclusion: the war victimized young men and troubled those elders who are willing to learn from the stories of active combatants.

Historical circumstances helped to shape the perspective of both novelists. Cather began the novel in 1919, a period of growing disenchantment with the exalted war aims of the Wilson administration. Barker, a Yorkshire native, published her novel in 1991, at the

(*) University of Florida, Program in Linguistics, 112 Anderson Hall, Gainesville, FL 32611, USA.

end of the Cold War. Neither writer was a combatant. Each relied on research to reconstruct what neither knew first hand. Self-conscious about being an interloper in an area where she lacked personal experience, Cather painstakingly set about to correct her deficiency. She consulted war veterans and read the diary of a doctor who had been on a troop ship when soldiers were stricken with influenza. When she wanted to include details of the battlefields, she traveled to war-torn France to examine the aftermath (Lewis, 1953, 118-19; Lee, 1989, 166). Barker had the disadvantage of writing after most veterans of the war had died. Therefore she immersed herself in several archives, where she read Sassoon's autobiographical and poetic manuscripts and Rivers' work.

Both novels reveal the complex but different ways that women writers can develop their distinct «voice», a necessary process of female creativity according to Belenky et al. (1986, 16). On the one hand, they show remarkable empathy for men whose careers are quite different from theirs. On the other, they domesticate these events by emphasizing the human relationships of their protagonists. By such means they create the web of connections that Carol Gilligan declares to be characteristic of women's thinking (Gilligan, 1982, p. 8).

Cather had the misfortune to write when few understood or tolerated her strategies. As a result, contemporary male reviewers, like Sinclair Lewis and H. L. Mencken who had long admired her work, withdrew their support. They expressed outrage at the attempt of a middle-aged woman to appropriate the youthful male preserve in *One of Ours* (Schwind, 1984, 53-54). Oblivious to Cather's reliance on firsthand testimony, Ernest Hemingway condescendingly dismissed the novel for being influenced by *Birth of a Nation* (O'Brien, 1989, 186; cf. Schwind, 1984, 55-56). Firmly convinced that women had no business writing war novels, these male writers — none of whom had fought in the war either — ignored the signs that Cather did not endorse all of the romantic views of her protagonist (Woodress, 1987, 333-34; O'Brien, 1989, 186). No doubt they were fooled by the passion with which she expressed the feelings of an engaged participant.¹

Yet recent female critics like Sharon O'Brien (1989) and Jean Schwind (1984), who reverse the argument by showing that Cather undermines Claude's romanticism, sometimes overstate their cases. Schwind contends that Cather consistently and deliberately subverts Claude's romantic and artistic visions of France and of battle (1984). She misses the regret with which Cather bids farewell to cherished beliefs. As Hermione Lee, a British literary critic, has pointed out, the situation was more complicated. Cather struggled to purge herself of her romantic ideals to achieve genuine realism. Keeping Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* in mind as a model, she intended *One of Ours* to be a «portrait of a dim young farmboy... confronting his destiny» (Lee, 1989, 169, 171-72). Cather shared Claude's enthusiasm for Joan of Arc, for example. Moreover, at moments in the novel she seems to endorse Claude's romantic views. Thus when the troop ship leaves the harbor with its cargo of «boys», her description sounds like a letter she wrote about the incident at the time (Lee, 1989, 16). The sight of brave «boys», looking as if they are going to a football game, inspires a scene presented without irony. Stirred by the sight, an older man recites Longfellow's famous stanza, «Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State!» from «The Building of the Ship». A later episode in which a young man dies «like a brave boy giving back what was not his to keep» (OO, 222-23, 244), suggests how compelling was her longing for the heroic and uncomplicated values of the past.²

¹ Sara Ruddick has recently called Cather's war novel, «a peculiarly innocent account of an American rebirth away from home» (Ruddick, 1989, p. 276, n. 24).

² Claude champions Joan of Arc in a history paper at college (Schwind, 1984, 58), just as Joan's romantic biographer does. Yet Cather identified with Joan and admired the romantic biographer herself (Woodress, 1987, 63). Cather's later novels, and her unfinished one, «Hard Punishments», set in medieval Avignon (Woodress, 1987, 492-93), suggests that she never entirely subdued her romantic sensibility.

O'Brien demonstrates that Cather had a disturbed sense of sexual identity, but is less convincing when she finds lesbian subtexts in Cather's novels. From twelve till about nineteen, Cather dressed as a boy and called herself William Cather, Jr. or William Cather, M. D. (Bennett, 1951, 178-79; O'Brien, 1987, 96, 120). She claimed to be the namesake of her maternal uncle William Boak, who died in the Confederate army. In truth, her parents had named her for her paternal aunt Wilella, who had died of diphtheria (O'Brien, 1987, 13).

A brief comparison of Cather to Dorothy Sayers, twenty years her junior, puts Cather's situation in a different perspective. Sayers had an illegitimate son and later married. Her most famous creation, Lord Peter Wimsey, is now widely regarded as her own fantasy of a perfect man. In adulthood, however, Sayers resembled a «stout, bald, cigar-smoking, pork-pie wearing» eccentric. She was embarrassingly oblivious to the effect of her appearance on other people. Despite her crossdressing and outré behavior, A. N. Wilson explains her peculiarities. «One feels», he asserts, «that one of the reasons she had such an 'odd' sexual life is that, in all probability, she thought about it much less than she did about Dante, the *Chanson de Roland* and her own creations» (Wilson, 3).

In contrast, Cather was never actively heterosexual although she sometimes found men attractive. In high school she made no secret of her desire to be a boy and openly entertained fantasies of warrior glory or a surgeon's career (O'Brien, 1987, 31, 78; Woodress, 1987, 53, 55-56). Although she shocked her contemporaries with her masculine appearance and deep voice, nonetheless she made women friends. Ultimately they and their mothers taught her some discretion. In her second year of college Cather abandoned her short hair and wore more suitable clothes (O'Brien, 1987, 120, 140). At that point she began having crushes on a series of attractive and often very feminine women. That change, according to O'Brien, marks Cather's exchange of her male identification for a female lesbian one (O'Brien, 1987, 140).

Sharon O'Brien believes that many of Cather's artistic decisions resulted from her need «to conceal 'unnatural' love» (O'Brien, 1987, 140). Hermione Lee and James Woodress, however, find little evidence of a lesbian sensibility in her writing. Woodress, clearly upset by the thought that the writer he admired might have been a lesbian, reluctantly agrees that Cather's romantic feelings were engaged primarily by women. He argues persuasively, however, that the novelist «clung to the image of childhood as the autonomous, sexless, happy period in life and tried to hang on to her own childhood through dress and memory» (Woodress, 1987, 141).³ Hermione Lee praises Sharon O'Brien for offering an «inspired» feminist reading, but warns against «blithe appropriations of Cather as a lesbian-feminist». Cather, Lee declares, «would not have thought of herself as such» and showed no sign of battling male hegemony (Lee, 1989, 4, 10-11).

Cather's infatuations with women, her frequent repudiation of the feminine perspective, and fascination with both historically famous lesbian and crossdressing writers, ranging from Sappho to George Sand (O'Brien, 126-27, 135, 136; Steiner, 1981, 502, 505-6) indicate that she might have been either a lesbian or a homosexual transsexual (Blanchard, 1990). Phyllis Rose wonders if she used male protagonists «to hide her own attraction to women behind a male mask, or because she felt more like a man than a woman?» (Rose, 1985, 18). Lacking access to Cather's letters, journals, and early drafts, we cannot resolve the question.

Regardless of her sexual orientation, Cather wrote convincingly from the male perspective. Carolyn Heilbrun points out that she did such a remarkable job of ghostwriting S. S. McClure's autobiography that even his family thought that he had written it (Heilbrun, 1988, 112). O'Brien reports that Cather felt that this act of «literary ventriloquism» prepared her for creating male narrators later on (O'Brien, 1987, 297).

³ Convinced that Cather lived a celibate life and thus should not be called a lesbian, (Woodress, 1987, 127), Woodress refers to her «alleged lesbianism» throughout.

Cather's novels suggest that although in girlhood she longed to be a boy, in adulthood she sublimated her feelings in a series of sex-free novels. After college she settled happily into a sheltered female world. A succession of women loved and took care of her. Like Sayers, she escaped to the comfort of novel writing. She believed, as A. N. Wilson puts it, «that what goes on inside your own head is of far more interest than what passes for reality outside it» (Wilson, 1993, 3). Cather's first major novels, written when she was in her forties, describe the Nebraska of her childhood, a time of intense emotion. Gradually as she grew older and daily life held less appeal, she began to turn back to the more distant past. Her final unfinished manuscript was set in medieval Avignon (Woodress, 1987, 492-93).

Remnants of her childhood male identification appear in her fiction. Late in her life, despite the comfort and security of her successful career, Cather clearly dreaded having her thoughts and feelings exposed and judged harshly. In 1922, the year she published *One of Ours*, she joined the Episcopal Church (Woodress, 1987, 336). Although the church officially disapproved of homosexual behavior of any kind, in practice it was more forgiving than many other sects, including the Baptists, the faith in which she had been reared. Still, Cather insisted that her letters and manuscripts be burned after her death. According to Woodress she feared that her enemies sought to discredit her (Woodress, 1987, 502-03). These acts and anxieties suggest that Cather dreaded that posterity would judge her deviant.

Yet O'Brien is not persuasive when she suggests that *One of Ours* «contains an encoded narrative that is far more interesting and potentially subversive than the surface plot» (O'Brien, 1989, 188). She attributes Cather's inconsistent attitudes toward romanticism in *One of Ours* to a psychic dilemma. She feels that Cather both envied her cousin's chance at glory and felt guilty that he had become the family sacrifice. Claude's apotheosis, says O'Brien, expresses Cather's «combat envy», whereas the darker side of the narrative reveals survivor guilt. Moreover, O'Brien claims that Cather's «painful attack of neuritis» in 1923, one year after the novel's publication, was psychological in origin. It resulted from her identification with her cousin, a sense of guilt, and the «fear of retribution» for her «unfeminine ambition» (O'Brien, 1987, 384).⁴ Combat envy and survivor guilt may have played a role by intensifying Cather's usual tendency to overwork. Yet the novelist had many attacks throughout later life when presumably survivor guilt was no longer an issue. On those occasions she often had to stop writing for long periods.

Instead, I would argue that some inconsistencies of the novel reflect the psychic difficulties of becoming a biographer of a family member in middle age. Because Cather was recreating her cousin's life and death rather than inventing the life and feelings of people she had seen at a distance, she experienced the biographer's dilemma, which is similar to that of the psychoanalyst. She had to do justice to her cousin's feelings, no matter how inaccessible they might be or how different they might be from hers. Her primary tool was her countertransference, over which she had imperfect control. The novel shows the unconscious pain of abandoning, at least temporarily and partially, a belief in the nobility of battle and the possibility of male honor. These were ideas she had absorbed in childhood from her mother's stories of her Confederate brother, who died in the Civil War. Cather's identification with men and her love of classical literature had deepened her convictions. Her intense, if transient, war-inspired identification with her cousin reinforced these cherished ideas.

Her own statements about the first germs of *One of Ours* support this hypothesis. Cather reported feeling compelled to write this account when her cousin, Grosvenor (G. P.) Cather, died in the last months of the war. Although Edith Lewis, Cather's companion, calls G. P. «a favourite cousin» (Lewis, 1953, 117), James Woodress remarks that the

⁴ In her later essay, «Willa Cather's 'Mainly Battle Yarn', O'Brien attributes the neuritis to the frustration of Cather's maternal ambition. She thought of *One of Ours* as a child, which she was powerless to protect from cruel reviewers (1989, 201).

young man had been jealous of her successful escape from Nebraska and contemptuous of her life as a writer (Woodress, 1987, 304). Furthermore, Cather's relationship with G. P.'s parents appears to have been troubled as well. She created two negative fictional portraits of her uncle while describing her aunt as worthy of pity and affection, but not of full respect.⁵ These feelings help explain Cather's reaction when hearing the news of her cousin's death: «she was overwhelmed by the thought that anything so exalted could have happened to someone so disinherited by hope» (Woodress, 1987, 304). In 1922, Cather wrote Dorothy Canfield Fisher, a writer and friend, that she had felt obsessed by his presence, never knowing «when he would come to her». According to Woodress, she became increasingly reclusive to be free for his appearances. He was «an expensive boy to keep», for whom she claimed a sense of «blood identity» (Woodress, 1987, 304). For all these reasons it seems likely that Cather still identified with men, at least in part. Nonetheless, the more she learned about the war and its inglorious aftermath, the more tenuous her idealistic convictions became.

The writing began in elation but ended in depression, and the seeds of cultural and personal dependency permeate the novel. Generically the novel is a bildungsroman with subdued mock heroic overtones (*OO*, 199, 203). It contains references to classical literature that are periodically offset by grim or mundane occurrences. Claude, the protagonist, has much in common with Paul Morel in Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, despite Cather's loathing for Lawrence's novels (Cather, 1922a, 50-51). Claude shares Paul's sensitive and romantic nature, as well as his dependency on his mother. Unfortunately, unlike Paul, Claude is unable to fight free of family bonds. Therefore, in the early sections of the novel depression mars his chance to build a normal life. Education, which offered Cather a means of escape, does not free the young man. His pious mother insists that he attend a bible college rather than the state university. Although he wishes to transfer to the university and complete his degree, his father forces him to abandon his dreams. Claude reluctantly leaves this third-rate college to take over the running of the family farm.

Disappointed in his aspirations, Claude is unable to cling to his college friends, the Erlichs. They are a German family in Lincoln who respect his romantic ideals and might help him find a suitable wife. He pays a post-collegiate visit to them. When he finds the gap between his dreams and the realities of his daily life deflating, he refuses to repeat the experiment (*OO*, 68-70). Thus, he must choose between two young women in his farming community, Enid and Gladys. He picks the wrong one. Beguiled by his mother's gentle idealism and other-worldly nature (*OO*, 107, 205), Claude convinces himself that Enid will be an ideal wife. Everyone else, even Claude's innocent mother, thinks he is making a mistake, for Enid specializes in denying the flesh, being a vegetarian, a prohibitionist, and would-be missionary in China.⁶ Unfortunately, Claude has no one in whom he can confide, and no one enlightens him on the possible connection between Enid's proclivities and her attitude toward sex. The inevitable occurs. Claude suffers from acute sexual frustration when his wife repeatedly rejects his overtures. He feels angry, rejected, and inclined to blame himself for her indifference (*OO*, 172-73). Enid, true to her nature, seizes the first

⁵ Cather's portraits of relatives are often marked by pain and occasional hostility. She created an affectionate but condescending portrait of her Aunt Franc in «A Wagner Matinee» and in *One of Ours*. Mrs Wheeler, Claude's mother, has warm qualities, but her religiosity interferes with Claude's chance to receive a liberating education at the University of Nebraska. Claude's father and wife, presumably based on her cousin's kin, have no redeeming qualities (Woodress, 1987, 87). Although no one explains why Cather had a tendency to write about her intellectual aunt as if she were child-like, Woodress points out that it was Aunt Franc's overly enthusiastic letters that encouraged Cather's father to make the move to Nebraska in the first place (Woodress, 1987, 33). Cather often misunderstood her own motives and was thus surprised when relatives complained.

⁶ Claude's first kiss is Lawrentian in its mood. Like Paul Morel's reaction to love-making with Miriam, Claude is overwhelmed with «a terrible melancholy» and «drove home feeling weak and broken» (*OO*, 128).

opportunity to follow the missionary trail; after eighteen months of marriage she leaves for China to nurse her ill sister.

As a result, the United States' entry into war offers Claude a socially-sanctioned opportunity to escape. At this point, the dramatic irony of the novel intensifies. Claude sees himself as «the hero of the Odyssey on his homeward journey,» but a few pages later the narrator describes his ideas as «Quixotic» (*OO*, 199, 203). Gladys, a schoolteacher like Cather and at times her mouthpiece, regards him as a proper hero at last. She calls him «a vivid, confident figure» worthy of commemoration (*OO*, 212), but in her social isolation she lacks any one against whom to compare him.

Throughout the remainder of the novel, Cather develops a complex point. On the one hand, the war offers her troubled hero, Claude, an escape from the prison of his early life (*OO*, 246, 332, 366), and a healing friendship with David Gerhardt, a talented violinist. Still, on occasions Claude's bravery and his sexual attitudes seem childlike. Unlike the other men he is delighted to escape from the burden of sexuality and has no trouble resisting the temptations of French women. Cather emphasizes his sexual innocence; unlike his creator he even lacks a conception of homosexuality. A key scene involves a dead German officer, whose personal effects reveal his effeminacy. Claude insists that the young man whose picture they find in the officer's locket must be his younger brother. David Gerhardt can hardly contain his mirth at such *naïveté* (*OO*, 348-49).

Claude may be an inarticulate Homeric hero, but his friend David is hardly more informed. He speculates that their generation is being sacrificed «to bring a new idea in the world» (*OO*, 330-31), but when pressed has no idea what that idea might be. Later events prove that the sacrifice of their lives-both die on the same day-might have been in vain. Yet throughout these sections, the narrator treats both young men with gentleness as if acknowledging that the world would be the poorer without their belief in honor and valor. After all Cather had expressed similar opinions repeatedly in her newspaper articles during her early adulthood (O'Brien, 1987, 149-50, 154-55).

Finally, lest we should miss the repeated hints that the author no longer shared Claude's confidence that war provides a helpful form of psychotherapy, in the final chapter Cather explicitly rejects his misguided idealism (Schwind, 1984, 55- 57).⁷ Claude's «luck», she states in the penultimate paragraph, lies in his death, which allows him to keep his illusions intact. Many men whose heroic deeds had charmed a nation, she noted, are beginning to die by their own hands, victims of disillusionment and despair (*OO*, 370). The war provides Claude a chance to find himself, but its lessons, Cather insists, would not have sustained him in the postwar era.

The ending of Cather's novel reflects the disillusionment of the 1920s, an attitude which her critics believed to be the exclusive property of young men. Her novel marks the beginning of the «gross dichotomizing» or binary thinking, «a persisting imaginative habit of modern times», which Paul Fussell traces «to the actualities of the Great War» (Fussell, 1975, 75). Cather implies that the fissures in society are permanent, between soldiers and civilians, men and women, and young and old. Her relentless emphasis on the experiences and perspective of young men did little to bridge that gap; no autonomous women or realistic elders grace its plot. As Woodress puts it, the novel «really is a document of the 'lost generation'» so well described by Malcolm Cowley (Woodress, 1987, 329; Cowley, 1951). In some of her subsequent novels Cather, according to Alfred Kazin, revealed «not a little of the bitterness of the postwar spirit- to the persistent exploration and evocation

⁷ Skaggs calls the ending happy, «for her protagonist dies a happy death, as he deserves. It is affirmation of a sort, to suggest that a splitting world may bury a good-hearted Nebraskan, but not ignominiously» (1990, 44). She makes no reference to the next to last paragraph, with its reference to post-war suicides.

of the past» (Kazin, 1942, 182), but in others we can see signs of what John Clayton calls «gestures of healing» (Clayton, 1991, 4).

Historically-based accounts of the role that Rivers and Craiglockhart War Hospital played in resuscitating young officers — the subject of Pat Barker's *Regeneration* — also describe the unbridgeable chasms that the war created, the polarizations between young and old, sick and well, officers and men, sane and insane, brave and cowardly (Fussell, 1975, 90; Hynes, 1990, 244). In contrast to these narratives and to Cather's novel, Barker takes a more maternal position, constructing a novel of healing out of unpromising materials. She emphasizes the reconciliations that are possible, the victories that even vulnerable or damaged individuals can achieve in an imperfect world, but is careful not to overstate her case. Her novel is optimistic although she starts with the assumption that the war was fought for the wrong reasons and served little purpose. By focusing on hospital life she avoids battle scenes. Instead she recreates the feelings and experiences of hospitalized combatants, young officers and poets, like Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen. The former comes under the benign supervision of W. H. R. Rivers, a neurologist and anthropologist who by most accounts was «a generous and good doctor» (Stallworthy, 1974, 190, n.). One painfully graphic scene late in the novel reveals Rivers' humane qualities. His gentleman's code forces him to observe silently the coercive techniques of a fellow physician and medical researcher though he feels implicated by his silence (*R*, Chapter 21). Although Barker clearly challenges the code by which Rivers lives, she also implies that anthropology provides a far better training ground for psychotherapy than many kinds of medical research.

Rivers' job was to restore the young men to sufficient health that they could return to the front to do their duty. Siegfried Sassoon, the poet, becomes Rivers' patient because he has written an impolitic but powerful manifesto demanding that the war end without the unconditional surrender of the Germans. He could have been court martialed, but Robert Graves, the poet and friend of Sassoon, convinced the war board to hospitalize him instead.

Paul Fussell in *The Great War and Modern Memory*, who quoted extensively from Sassoon's own recollections of the matter, presents Rivers as a hero, a father figure who heals the young and sends them back to the battlefield. Samuel Hynes in *A War Imagined* reports a more complicated picture, culled from Rivers' postwar writings. «Something odd had happened in the doctor-patient relationship», Hynes comments. «The patient had not been converted, but he had disturbed the doctor's dreams» (Hynes, 1990, 179). Pat Barker incorporates and transforms both perspectives by giving equal weight to Sassoon's and Rivers' perspectives. *Regeneration*, the title of her novel, provides the theme, but the idea of what constitutes regeneration changes gradually. Barker systematically undermines the distinctions between groups, showing the similarities between sick and well, doctors and patients, as well as those divided by gender, age, and military experience. She shows the doctor learning as much as his patients. The war changes him as much as it does those of his young charges who survive. By such means the process of gross dichotomizing that the war began gradually subsides.

Events repeatedly challenge the assumptions upon which Rivers rests his convictions. The doctor, in common with Robert Graves, initially assumes that Sassoon wrote «A Soldier's Declaration» primarily to express his own feelings of outrage, without the expectation that his document would change anyone's opinion. According to the taxonomy of James Britton, a writing theorist, Rivers and Graves classify Sassoon's script as expressive rather than conative or persuasive (Britton et al., 1975, 14). They turn out to be wrong. The document not only greatly affects Rivers but is now regarded as one of the most important statements of the Great War. By the time Rivers' therapeutic techniques cause the young man to abandon his protest, the good doctor has begun to doubt the justice of his position.

When Sassoon was initially assigned him, Rivers believes firmly that it is «his duty to go back, and it's my duty to see he does» (*R*, 73). His contractual thinking sounds

like Enid's in *One of Ours*, who thinks that if she cooks and keeps a good house she has been a good wife (OO, 172). Still Rivers' anthropological training and experiences have already taught him that his perspective is no more valid than those of his native informants (R, 242). Therefore, he is open to the young rebel's countercultural message. Rivers' willingness to learn from his patients is also similar to the psychoanalytic role later played by D. W. Winnicott, who came to psychoanalysis from pediatrics and never ceased listening attentively to and learning from his patients. Winnicott, however, rarely had a patient as articulate and convincing as Sassoon, who despite his positive transference remains determined to convert the doctor to his own position. Sassoon may have suffered from what Rivers calls an «anti-war complex», but his perspective prevailed. Not for nothing have some called World War I Britain's Vietnam.

Barker uses several fictional devices to enrich her historical narrative. For example, the story of Billy Prior, a working-class officer from the north of England, involves strong female characters, who were excluded from the male-dominated world of the army hospital. Sarah Lumb and her companions at the munitions factory are unimpressed by the upper-class view of the world as exemplified by Sassoon and Rivers. One of them comments wryly on the habits of that class, «Beats me how they breed» (R, 200). Once Sarah accompanies a woman friend to the hospital, where she accidentally discovers a ward full of maimed soldiers, who are being hidden from the public eye. Sassoon who hates civilians for their ignorance of the real suffering that the war causes (R, 69) would have relished Sarah's reactions to the sight. She senses that the men fear that she will reject them as subhuman. Understandably she resents «being forced to play the role of Medusa when she meant no harm». More important, however, the thought that they were being hidden away angers her. «If the country demanded that price», she ruminates, «then it should bloody well be prepared to look at the result» (R, 160). Prior respects her honest indignation (R, 134). One feels confident that she would be very helpful to him in his ambition to become a politician after the war (R, 163).

Besides the fictional subplots, Rivers' own observations also heal the divide. After hearing Sassoon describe his bereaved isolation, the doctor recognizes that «the experience of these young men paralleled the experience of the very old. They looked back on intense memories and felt lonely because there was nobody left alive who'd been there» (R, 118). Moreover during the novel Rivers becomes more convinced that the young soldiers have such a high incidence of anxiety neurosis, because «the war that had promised so much in the way of 'manly' activity had actually delivered 'feminine' passivity, and on a scale that their mothers and sisters had scarcely known» (R, 107-08). Later when he worked with the Royal Flying Corps, Rivers had a chance to compare the reactions of pilots to those in observation balloons. The latter, the most vulnerable to attack, had the gravest mental problems. By this time he believed that «this apparently intensely masculine life of war and danger and hardship produced in men the same disorders that women suffered in peace» (R, 222). Yet despite the war, talented soldiers like Wilfred Owen have their moments of transcendence. The poetic collaboration between Sassoon and Wilfred Owen demonstrates that anger cannot keep Sassoon from helping the talented younger man find his poetic voice.

Barker is careful not to overstate her positive conclusions. Class warfare does not subside. Prior challenges Rivers's thinking as often as Sassoon, but Rivers dismisses the working class young man as «bloody-minded» (R, 101). Furthermore Sassoon may help Owen write powerful poems, but poetry cannot save the younger man from death. Owen died a week before the armistice. His parents first learned of his death a few hours after the Armistice bells had started to ring (Stallworthy, 1974, 286).

Finally, Rivers paid a price for his empathy and lack of distance from his patients and for the emotional strain of his work. His psychotherapy cures his patients, but he

turns out to be as vulnerable and troubled as the young men whom he treats with such compassion. At the novel's end he is pleased to discover that at last he has broken out of his introverted shell and has learned that «a society that devours its own young deserves no automatic or unquestioning allegiance» (R, 249). Unfortunately, he has only a short time to savor this change. His war neurosis (R, 140) — the night sweats, irregular heartbeat, and nightmares that have disturbed his sleep — shortens his life. He died in 1922, the year Cather published *One of Ours*, the moment when, according to her, «the world broke in two» (Cather, 1936, v).

REFERENCES

- Barker, P. (1991). *Regeneration*. Rpt. New York: Dutton, 1992. [R].
- Belenky, M.F., Clinchy, B.Mc., Goldberger, N.R. & Tarule, J.M. (1986). *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bennett, M.R. (1951). *The World of Willa Cather*. Revised Edition. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961.
- Blanchard, R. (1990). Gender Identity Disorders in Adult Women. In *Clinical Management of Gender Identity Disorders in Children and Adults* (Ray Blanchard & Betty W. Steiner, Eds.), pp: 79-91, Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.
- Britton, J., Burgess, T. Martin, N., McLeod, A. & Rosen, H. (1975). *The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18)*. Houndmills Basingstoke Hampshire: Macmillan Basingstoke Hampshire.
- Cather, W. (1922a). The Novel D  meubl  . *Not Under Forty*. 1936. Rpt. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968.
- Cather, W. (1922b). *One of Ours*. Rpt. New York: Vintage Classics, 1991. [OO].
- Cather, W. (1936). *Not Under Forty*. Rpt. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968.
- Clayton, J.J. (1991). *Gestures of Healing: Anxiety and the Modern Novel*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Cowley, M. (1934). *Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920's*. Rpt. New York: The Viking Press, 1956.
- Fussell, P. (1975). *The Great War and Modern Memory*. Rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Heilbrun, C.G. (1988). *Writing a Woman's Life*. New York: Norton.
- Hynes, S. (1991). *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture*. New York: Atheneum.
- Kazin, A. (1942). *On Native Grounds: An Interpretation of Modern American Prose Literature*. Rpt. Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956.
- Lee, H. (1989). *Willa Cather: Double Lives*. Rpt. New York: Vintage, 1991.
- Lewis, E. (1953). *Willa Cather Living: A Personal Record*. Rpt. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1989.
- O'Brien, S. (1987). *Willa Cather: The Emerging Voice*. Rpt. New York: Fawcett Combine, 1988.
- O'Brien, S. (1989). Combat Envy and Survivor Guilt: Willa Cather's «Manly Battle Yarn». In *Arms and the Woman: War, Gender, and Literary Representation* (Helen M. Cooper, Adrienne Auslander Munich & Susan Merrill Squier, Eds.), pp: 184-204, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Rose, P. (1985). *Writing of Women: Essays in a Renaissance*. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press.
- Ruddick, S. (1989). *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace*. Rpt. New York: Ballantine Books, 1990.
- Schwind, J. (1984). The «Beautiful» War in One of Ours. *Modern Fiction Studies*. 30: 53-71.
- Skaggs, M.M. (1990). *After the World Broke in Two: The Later Novels of Willa Cather*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
- Stallworthy, J. (1974). *Wilfred Owen*. Rpt. London: Oxford University Press and Chatto and Windus, 1975.
- Steiner, B.W. (1981). From Sappho to Sand: Historical Perspective on Crossdressing and Cross Gender. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 26: 502-06.

- Wilson, A.N. (1993). Complete with Spats. A Review of *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul* by Barbara Reynolds. *London Review of Books*. May 17, 3, 5.
- Woodress, J. (1987). *Willa Cather: A Literary Life*. Rpt. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989.

L'Intuition de la Découverte Psychanalytique dans *The Scarlet Letter* de Nathaniel Hawthorne

PIERRE MET (*)

Dans son ouvrage publié en 1960, *The Unconscious before Freud*¹, Lancelot Law Whyte retrace l'histoire de la pensée et montre que dès l'Antiquité, l'homme a eu l'intuition de phénomènes échappant à sa conscience. A la fin du XIX^{ème} siècle, Freud se démarquera de la définition statique de la conscience, le rationalisme, pour établir une conception dynamique des phénomènes inconscients montrant ainsi que la raison ne contrôle plus totalement la pensée, ou le comportement de l'homme. Comme le montrera R. Silhol dans le Texte du Désir² le psychanalyste «(...), à savoir écouter le sujet peut espérer lui permettre de changer, peut lui communiquer le pouvoir de se transformer, c'est à dire de ne plus (de moins) répéter.»

I

La Romance publiée en 1850 sous le titre de *The Scarlet Letter*³ par Nathaniel Hawthorne comporte deux parties: un prologue d'une quarantaine de pages, rédigé après coup, *The Custom House* et le récit proprement dit, *The Scarlet Letter*.

A Boston au XVII^{ème} siècle, une jeune femme adultère, Hester Prynne refusant avec obstination de révéler à ses juges puritains le nom du père de sa petite fille Pearl, est condamnée par une société répressive à porter une lettre «A» d'étoffe écarlate. Son mari légitime, de retour dans la colonie le jour de sa condamnation se cachera sous l'identité de Roger Chillingworth afin de pouvoir exercer sa vengeance sur le séducteur de sa femme: le Révérend Arthur Dimmesdale.

Le lecteur comprend que l'histoire est construite autour d'un personnage central, le père absent, et que l'intrigue consistera à rechercher le père et à le faire mourir lorsqu'il

(*) Université de Paris VII, Centre d'Anthropologie Littéraire, 8, rue Charles V, 75004 Paris, France.

¹ Law Whyte Lancelot (1962), *The unconscious before Freud*, London: Tavistock Publications.

² Robert Silhol (1984), *Le texte du Désir — La critique après Lacan*, Paris: Ecrits/Cistre.

³ Hawthorne Nathaniel (1850), *The Scarlet Letter*, USA: Ticknor, Reed and Fields.

Dans cet article, les chiffres entre parenthèses suivant les citations ou les références au texte de *The Scarlet Letter* indiquent les numéros des pages de l'édition de l'oeuvre. «Centenary Edition», Volume I, Ohio: Ohio State University, 1962.

se dévoilera. Ce manque témoigne de l'intuition qu'avait Hawthorne du clivage de l'être. Le titre est un signifiant double: il représente un texte écrit par un auteur, ainsi qu'un objet (la lettre) que l'inspecteur affirme avoir découvert dans le grenier de la Maison des Douanes. La lettre écarlate est composée de deux parties distinctes: un morceau de tissu brodé accompagné d'un parchemin enroulé, maintenu par un ruban défraîchi.

But the object that most drew my attention in the mysterious package was a certain affair of fine red cloth (.....) it was the capital «A». 3(31)
In the absorbing contemplation of the Scarlet Letter I had hitherto neglected to examine a small roll of dingy paper around which it had been twisted. 3(32)

L'Auteur a recours à la métaphore: *The Scarlet Letter* devient un rébus, l'alphabet constituant l'écriture des pensées latentes, le texte (le manifeste) représentant la réalisation du Désir inconscient. Le monde de la Romance est un monde double dont les différents composants s'interpénètrent.

(...) a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other. 3(36)

Le monde intérieur (le jour, la ville) côtoie le monde extérieur (la nuit, la forêt). La maison du gouverneur (chapitre 7) représente le moi organisé alors que le jardin en friche, illustre le Désir, non maîtrisé. Portes et fenêtres rendent cependant possible la communication entre le lieu de l'activité consciente (la maison) et l'inconscient (le jardin).

Hawthorne met en scène, des personnages doubles : Chillingworth est le Mari de Hester, mais aussi le Père persécuteur. Dimmesdale est l'amant de Hester, mais aussi le père absent. Le sujet du troisième sermon de Dimmesdale insiste sur la séparation du spirituel et du temporel 3(247) où le double endosse ce qui heurte la critique du moi, et réalise les aspirations du moi qui n'ont pu aboutir. Le sujet se voit donc coupé et lutte contre l'incomplétude. La relation amoureuse mise en scène par Hawthorne (deux hommes aimant la même femme) est vécue comme frustrante. Hester ne peut avouer son amour pour Dimmesdale et Chillingworth ne peut révéler son identité.

Rechercher le père (Dimmesdale) c'est aussi retrouver la partie manquante de soi-même, afin de ne faire qu'un; résoudre une équation posée en ces termes:

$$\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} = \text{infini (complétude)}$$

En faisant vivre Dimmesdale et Chillingworth dans la même maison, celle d'une veuve, Hawthorne a l'intuition d'une conception dynamique de la psychologie des profondeurs; il établit une circulation entre deux parties de l'habitation. La maison de la veuve, c'est la psyché, constituée de deux instances qui communiquent: le psychique conscient et le psychique inconscient. Hawthorne a l'intuition que quelque chose empêche le latent de devenir manifeste, le passage est parfois obstrué: «proving that there was light within him, and that it was only the outward medium of the intellectual lamp *that obstructed the rays* in their passage.» 3(20). Mais qui est ce gardien qui laisse ou ne laisse pas passer ce qui provient de l'inconscient ? Pourquoi dans la forêt, Pearl ne pourra-t-elle pas traverser le ruisseau ? Pourquoi le texte, compagnon de *The Scarlet Letter* est-il retenu par un ruban? Pourquoi un buisson de roses, métaphore du moi inconscient, siège du Désir, s'épanouira-t-il librement devant la prison, métaphore du moi conscient? Hawthorne semble croire en un heureux hasard. 3(48)

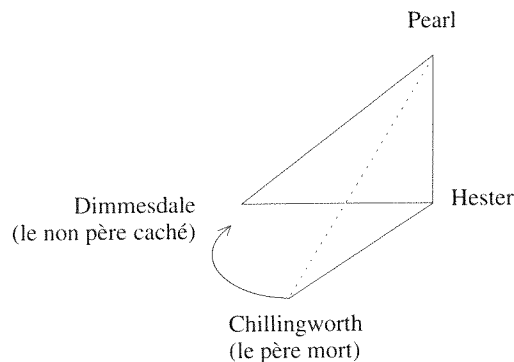
Pourtant, la mission de l'inspecteur de *The Custom House*, contrôlant les échanges

entre l'Amérique et le monde extérieur, n'anticipe-t-elle pas déjà le rôle de la censure, du travail du rêve, mis en évidence par Freud à la fin du Chapitre IV de *L'Interprétation des rêves* (Die Traumdeutung 1900).⁴

II

Hawthorne a l'intuition que l'homme est déterminé par des forces inconscientes qui échappent à sa maîtrise. Les personnages de *The Scarlet Letter* adoptent une conduite que la raison n'explique pas. Pourquoi Hester, femme mariée, s'est-elle laissée séduire par Dimmesdale, son Pasteur? L'auteur utilise une métaphore freudienne et met en scène un déplacement: il remplace le père mort Chillingworth par le non père caché, Dimmesdale (voir Figure 1).

FIGURE 1



Les personnages semblent prisonniers de leur destin. Pourquoi Dimmesdale reste-t-il en Amérique, au lieu de s'enfuir en Europe avec Hester? Hawthorne semble expliquer sa conduite par l'inscription du Désir parental (le Désir de l'Autre). (...) «all spiritual as he seems, — Hath *inherited* a strong animal nature from his father or his mother.» 3(130)

Le Désir inconscient est destructeur du moi et Dimmesdale vit sans le savoir avec un ennemi sous son toit 3(193). Le sujet sera la victime du refoulé. Cependant, afin de permettre à la vie de continuer, sans trop de désagrément, Chillingworth (le surmoi) demande à Hester (le moi) de garder le secret, de refouler le Désir. Freud montrera plus tard qu'un tel accord satisfait le principe de plaisir. Au chapitre 7 intitulé The Governor's hall 3(100), Hawthorne utilise une métaphore, véritable retour du refoulé. Souhaitant rencontrer le Gouverneur, Hester et Pearl pénètrent dans sa demeure, malgré l'interdiction d'un laquais. La maison organisée (le moi conscient) est séparée d'un jardin à l'état sauvage (le moi inconscient) par un mur comportant des orifices (portes, fenêtres). Il est donc possible aux forces profondes de l'être de se montrer en défiant les autorités. Quand il se manifeste, le Désir ne peut être réprimé par le surmoi. Pearl qualifiée de «living hieroglyph» 3(206) est une force sauvage non maîtrisable, tel le ruisseau serpentant à travers la forêt. Pourtant son murmure révélera le secret à quiconque prendra la peine de l'écouter.

The Scarlet Letter est la tentative de Hawthorne de vaincre par l'écriture, ce qui prendra plus tard comme nom générique la «castration». Le titre de la Romance aurait pu être

⁴ Sigmund Freud (1929), *Die Traumdeutung*, Gesammelte Werke, Tomes II et III (1942) (Traduction française: *L'Interprétation des rêves*, PUF, 1967).

«The Posthumous Papers of a Decapitated Surveyor» 3(43). Ces mémoires d'outre-tombe sont avant tout la métaphore du manque. Le chapitre 1, intitulé «the prison door» 3(47), accumule de nombreux symboles destructeurs: le cimetière, la prison, l'échafaud, lieu où l'on coupe, où l'on arrache, où l'on fabrique de bons citoyens. «(...) an agent in the promotion of good citizenship» 3(55). Hawthorne a l'intuition de la sexualité en temps que rupture. Hester et Dimmesdale reconnaissent être séparés de la société: «(...) a great law had been broken;» 3(91).

Contrairement à la balafre, trait de sabre glorifiant le front d'un capitaine de marine 3(233), la lettre écarlate de Hester est une blessure qui ne se referme pas. «The spot never grew callous; it seemed on the contrary, to grow sensitive with daily torture» 3(86). C'est l'inscription du Désir dans le sujet. (Scar = cicatrice et Scarlet = couleur de sang). Souhaitant réaliser la plénitude de l'être Hawthorne réunit les principaux personnages de la Romance chez le Gouverneur (chapitre 8: The elfchild and the Minister).

Il imagine une vérité nouvelle permettant de vaincre l'incomplétude de l'homme et de la femme: l'unité 3(263). L'Apôtre de cette révélation, possédant la clé du silence, ne précède-t-il pas le psychanalyste, dans sa tentative pour libérer l'amour refoulé?

III

Lors de son interrogatoire sur la place du marché, Hester refuse de livrer le nom du père de son enfant, et le Révérend Dimmesdale est incapable d'avouer sa paternité. La justice n'utilise pas la bonne méthode car elle attache trop d'importance à ce qui se voit (le manifeste) et néglige, ne comprend pas que le manifeste se trouve en relation avec quelque chose qui se cache à l'intérieur: le latent. Hawthorne a la prescience de l'attitude que Freud définira comme étant celle du psychanalyste. «But, as for me, I come to the inquest with other senses than they possess (...) I shall read it on his heart.» 3(75)

Chillingworth, défini comme le médecin du corps et le médecin de l'âme est présenté comme le sujet supposé savoir. Il sait percer le secret de l'âme et lire dans le cœur (le Moi), défini comme étant le lieu du secret. Rien n'est inaccessible à quiconque possède cette nouvelle méthode d'investigation. Homme froid, il sait qu'il ne faut rien demander au patient, ne pas l'interroger: «I ask not» 3(73). Afin de rendre visible ce qui ne l'est pas et investir le siège du Désir, Chillingworth livre bataille. C'est le père persécuteur. Il ressemble ainsi à Freud qui lors des premières analyses, éperonnait le malade qui devait tout dire. «He has violated in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart.» 3(195)

Hawthorne souligne l'importance de l'intuition 3(130) et établit l'échange sur une relation de confiance quasi familiale. En faisant cohabiter Dimmesdale et Chillingworth dans la même maison, l'auteur permettra au médecin de cheminer quotidiennement sur la frontière séparant le conscient de l'inconscient: «(...) they took long walks on the sea-shore, (...) one was the guest of the other.» 3(123). Individu au regard glacial (comme la mort), Chillingworth a appris à contrôler son émotion à l'aide de sa volonté. Connaissant son Désir, il se masque et reçoit le prône du Révérend Dimmesdale avec une attention flottante. La Chaire, lieu de révélation de l'Écriture permet à quiconque sait décoder l'énigme de la parole de signifier le secret 3(243). Chillingworth a compris que la nature de l'homme est de refouler, et qu'il prend plaisir à se tromper. L'aveu serait libérateur mais impossible parce que le refoulement n'est pas encore vaincu 3(132): «— Thanks be to him who had led me hither! answered the minister» 3(253).

En faisant de son héros, l'artisan de la prise de conscience de son Moi par l'individu et permettant ainsi sa libération, Hawthorne a l'intuition d'une méthode d'investigation spécifique fondée sur le rapport transférentiel entre Dimmesdale et Chillingworth conduisant à la transformation du sujet.

IV

Les autorités puritaines ne possèdent pas la bonne méthode pour découvrir la vérité. Hawthorne a conscience que seul l'homme de lettres (*learned man*) peut percer le mystère.

La vérité emprunte la littérature comme moyen de médiation, et il appartient à l'écrivain de broder des lettres. Hawthorne met au point une méthode et explique que dérouler le manuscrit accompagnant la lettre écarlate, c'est déjà prendre possession du secret 3(33). Il faut procéder par étape, et descendre marche par marche l'escalier emprunté par la métaphore. «*My imagination was a tarnished mirror*» 3(34). Pour pénétrer l'inconscient, il ne suffit pas de regarder, car on ne voit rien. Il importe que le questionnement soit constant et la plus grande importance est attachée à la façon dont s'organise l'analyste. Hawthorne utilise un médium, «*the moonlight*», un territoire neutre 3(36), pour traquer ce qu'il appelle des «*illusive guests*» 3(35), «*(...) a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet (...)*» 3(36). Ce territoire neutre, c'est le sommeil, siège du rêve. Endormi, le sujet se retrouve dans un autre monde, à la frontière de la réalité et de l'Imaginaire. Le Rêve est le miroir embué de l'inconscient grâce auquel le Symbolique pourra se signifier. Hawthorne établit une relation entre le rêve et l'écriture. L'écriture révélera l'identité du sujet; la plume reliera le monde matériel au monde spirituel. La main qui a brodé la lettre écarlate écrira la Romance. La littérature est bien un lieu d'échange. Pour établir la vérité, il faut changer de lieu; sortir de la Maison afin de pénétrer dans le jardin. Lors de sa condamnation, au chapitre 2, Hester est physiquement présente sur l'échafaud, mais son esprit est ailleurs. Une rêverie que nous appellerons réminiscence, faite sur le mode de l'association d'idées, réursive, lui permet d'effectuer un trajet régressif. Voyageant dans le temps, elle quitte Boston, traverse l'océan et se retrouve jeune fille chez ses parents, puis mariée à un homme de lettres en Hollande. Ce récit du rêve retournera dans les profondeurs de l'inconscient et Hester se réveillera sur l'Echafaud en étant devenue une femme de lettres. Le Moi inconscient ne se laisse pas facilement explorer, c'est la résistance.

«they discussed every topics (...); and yet no secret such as the physician fancied must exist there, ever stole out of the minister's consciousness into his companion's ear.» 3(125)

Hawthorne allonge Hester sur le lit où le Désir (*Pearl*) est présenté comme endormi. «*(...) seated herself on the bed where the child was sleeping; while he drew the only chair which the room afforded, and took his own seat beside her.*» 3(73) Tel un psychanalyste, Chillingworth agit sur le mental au moyen de la pensée. Il a compris que la frustration est la cause de la maladie et que le symptôme sert de satisfaction substitutive. Le secret, au plus profond de la conscience est défini comme étant une souffrance. Dimmesdale est torturé par des «*spectral thoughts*» 3(145), signes de la remontée de l'inconscient dans le conscient. Ce n'est pas un hasard si le commencement de la maladie du Révérend Dimmesdale coïncide avec le début de sa relation avec Roger Chillingworth. Les symptômes s'aggravent. Il décline, gâte sa voix, a le teint pâle et tient toujours sa main sur son cœur. Il devient évident que la vie psychique du pasteur est le siège d'une bataille, entre les différentes instances de la psyché.

Au chapitre 12, Dimmesdale sort de chez lui alors qu'il fait nuit, pour monter expier son crime sur l'échafaud. Son comportement automatique rappelle un sujet vivant dans l'ombre d'un rêve, à la façon d'un somnambule. Il est cependant incapable de parler son Désir 3(145). Hawthorne a deviné que la parole pouvait être la guérison de ce trouble d'origine psychosomatique.

«A bodily disease which we look upon as a whole and entire within itself may, after all, be but a symptom of some ailment in the spiritual part (...)

a sickness, a sore place, if we may call it, in your spirit hath immediately its appropriate manifestation in your bodily frame.» 3(136)

Le médecin profitera du sommeil de son patient pour tenter de l'ausculter. Le Pasteur se réveillera. La cure exige le consentement du patient pour éliminer les symptômes qui le font souffrir. Dimmesdale se croyant victime d'une longue maladie organique considère que c'est un châtement imposé par le destin. En fait, il maintient une frustration dont il tire les bénéfices secondaires.

Lors d'une rencontre dans la forêt, Hester tentera de libérer Dimmesdale du désir de vengeance de son médecin, en révélant le secret. C'est un pasteur métamorphosé qui reviendra dans la ville «the same minister returned not from the forest» 3(217). Hawthorne a l'intuition de l'efficacité du souvenir réactivé. Libéré par le langage, Dimmesdale pourra enfin être lui-même et proclamer publiquement sa paternité. Mais l'auteur le fera mourir. La vérité du sujet ne peut se découvrir que dans ses paroles, mais parler son Désir fait peur et Hawthorne ne peut imaginer un personnage qui admet son Désir qu'en le faisant disparaître.

The Scarlet Letter montre que l'homme est déterminé par des forces inconscientes dont il n'a pas la maîtrise. Hawthorne a l'intuition d'une méthode qui contrairement à la confession, ne débouche pas sur le pardon des fautes, mais vise à supprimer un symptôme situé entre le psychique et le somatique, en déculpabilisant le sujet par la parole. Comme le montrera Lacan dans *Le séminaire sur la lettre volée*⁵ le statut des personnages change en fonction de leur relation à la lettre.

«(...) il reste que cette lettre est le symbole d'un pacte, et que, même si sa destinataire n'assume pas ce pacte, l'existence de la lettre la situe dans une channe symbolique étrangère à celle qui constitue sa foi.» 6(38)

La lettre circule: c'est le signifiant. Ce qui est important c'est qu'on nous la donne; quand on nous la donne, nous devenons coupable et quelque soit la nature du Désir, c'est un Désir reçu: l'inscription du désir Autre en Moi.

Cependant, Hawthorne reste au niveau de la représentation et bâtit un scénario imaginaire, en utilisant une lettre, métaphore de la parole, qui porte et masque son Désir.

Il n'y a pas de prise de conscience analytique mais poussé par les forces socio-historiques de son époque, l'écrivain anticipe sans théoriser jusqu'au bout les découvertes de Freud concernant l'inconscient.

⁵ Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits*, «Le séminaire sur la lettre volée», Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1966.

«The Neglected Technique of the Witticism»: A Philosophical Inquiry

EDMOND WRIGHT (*)

Lacan recommended the addition of poetics to Freud's list (Freud, 1926, 246) of those disciplines needful for the student of psychoanalysis to study, and in particular a specific aspect, «the neglected technique of the witticism» (Lacan, 1977a, 76). Is this merely a continuation of Freud's own emphasis on hidden meanings in dreams and slips of the tongue? Not so. Lacan's own parodic evocation of Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* reminds us that truth is something bound up with fiction, riddles and lies:

Whether you flee me in fraud or entrap me in error, I will reach you in the mistake against which you have no refuge. (Lacan, 1977a, 122)

It is indeed in the «most grotesque nonsense of the joke» where truth shows herself. Erasmus's Folly herself said of the rhetoricians:

They owe much to folly, for often what can't be refuted by argument can be parried by laughter, unless anyone supposes that raising a laugh by witticisms according to plan has nothing to do with folly. (Erasmus, 1976 [1509], 147)

On the contrary, it may have little to do with folly. Might there be a plan, a technique, that is common to species such as witticisms?

riddle: it is through you that I communicate (Lacan, 1977a, 122)

Alexander solved a riddle when he cut the Gordian Knot, for King Gordius's prophecy, as he tied the knot, was that whoever should release the chariot would become ruler over all Asia. The question was what the tying of the complex knot really communicated. What was going on when the knot was tied? The answer will be at the end of the story.

For Lacan a knot is tied between Imaginary, Symbolic and Real. Imaginary is the Order of mirror-images, fixed identifications. It is the region of the delusions of permanence, themselves enduring enough to have effects in the Real, a region where the subject prefers to suppose that his *gestalts* are guaranteed by the recognition of the Other, demands that meet with no failure. But Lacan insists that the subject is the creation of the Symbolic, that the order of language reaches down unseen within that very creation, establishing the unconscious as the site where the body's needs are inevitably alienated, and the gap

(*) 3 Boathouse Court, Trafalgar Road, Cambridge CB4 1DU, England.

is being, the *manque-à-être*, comes into being. For language cannot encompass the Real, within the body or outside it: it «murders» the thing, the entity, be it subject or object, Lacan here borrowing Hegel's metaphor for the banishment of the concrete from the universal, the production of a Symbolic absence from a Real presence. A radical otherness remains at the heart of any identification that escapes the conscious self, including that of its own self-recognition; this otherness is the unconceptualized flux of experience, hiding itself within subject and object, and irrupting in the Trauma. The truth of the Real emerges in puns, errors and «misapprehensions» (Lacan, 1977a, 122); the Real is only characterizable within the Symbolic as inaccessible, unattainable, lying impossibly at the infinite end of an asymptote, forcing language always «to say something quite other than what it says» (Lacan, 1977a, 156). Truth necessarily partakes of the fictive; it cannot be equated with any of the three orders alone. When a subject at the mercy of a narcissistic identification rigidifies the Symbolic, whether that subject is in a minority or a majority, it is led to nonsense, to paradox, to being a Cretan Liar, unable to see that «I am lying» can be meaningful (Lacan, 1977b, 139). There is something «laughable» in the fact that the Real has already «cast its dice» (Lacan, 1988, 220).

Philosophers are often self-confessedly at an impasse, flummoxed by paradox, sometimes producing inconsequence without knowing it. Edmund Husserl, for instance, in his *Experience and Judgement* (1973), was drawn to the riddle situation, clearly wishing to tidy up such inconsequence. He was challenged by the fact that someone could be passing a shopwindow and be momentarily at a loss as to whether a figure standing within it was a man or a mannequin:

They [two «apprehensions» imposed on the same «sense data»] stand in mutual conflict; each one has in a certain way its own force, each is motivated, almost summoned by the preceding perceptual situation and its intentional content. But demand is opposed to demand (Husserl, 1973, 92)

The riddle of demand in this situation fascinated him and he returned to it, trying to get some clarity by comparing it to what he considered was not a riddle situation:

Each ego-act has its theme; and the theme of a doubt, like that of a question, is either a problematic singularity, whose disjunctively opposed members then remain extrathematic, as when I merely ask, «Is this a wooden mannequin?» ... or the theme is the whole problematic disjunction, as in the question «Is this a mannequin or a man?» (307)

In Husserl's view there are thus two questions: one in which no illusion is present («Is the mannequin made of wood?»); the other in which illusion is present («Is it a man or a mannequin?»). For Husserl there is a single «theme» in the first (Mannequin) or a double one in the second (Man or Mannequin?). It is the purpose of this article to show that both cases are equally problematic and in the same way. For Speaker and Hearer to converge on the predication («... is wooden») of a mutually agreed logical subject («The mannequin...») is open to a riddle analysis in the same way as in the case acknowledged to be illusory.

Had Husserl as philosopher really examined what it was that produced the confusion of entities Man and Mannequin, he would have been able to begin the analysis of «intersubjective logic». Lacan, as psychoanalyst, could not avoid bearing witness to the fact that subjects and objects are split, that entities are not unities.

At the core of the witticism is an entity that is not a unity. The following playground joke will illustrate this.

A: Knock, knock!

B: Who's there?

A: Amos.

B: Amos who?

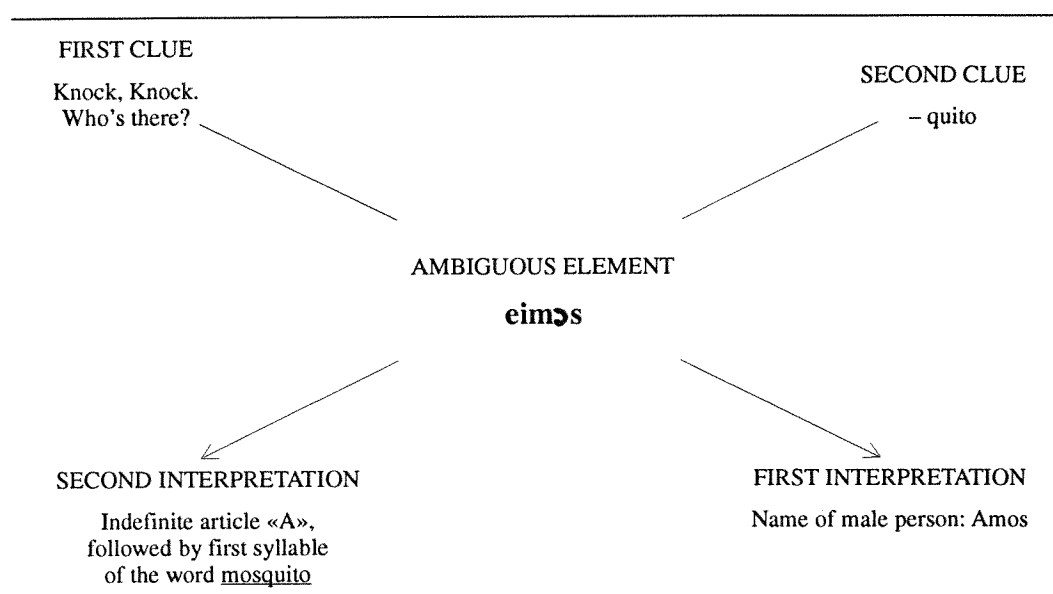
A: A mosquito.

Notice a first philosophical and psychoanalytical point, that the ambiguous element changed from being one entity, the name «Amos», to one-and-a-half entities, the indefinite article and the first syllable of another word. There is no preservation of entityhood. The presupposed fixed identity is only illusory; that is why in the following diagram the ambiguous element is in phonetic script. Strictly speaking it should not even be expressed in phonemes, themselves entities, because it is obvious that a joke could play on a shift between two languages that used different phonemes, or between a word and a non-verbal noise. In a joke there is no logical requirement that the initial division has to be preserved. Jokers can cross Saussurean boundaries with impunity. Thus Lacan:

The Real is ready to overwhelm with its upheavals what the «Reality Principle» has built within it under the name of the external world (Lacan, 1966, 388).

A diagram (Figure 1) will illustrate how the ambiguity of the above joke is created, revealing two clues, namely, the «preceding perceptual situations and intentional contents» (Husserl), that induce the rival interpretations.

FIGURE 1



The arrows symbolize the power of the clue, the indicator of intentional context, to transform what is heard. It suggests the appropriate interpretation either by a reminder of a relevance already established in the past or by some hint of an entirely new one.¹

A further point: the Speaker already knows all five positions in the diagram, aware of the double meaning of /eim ɔ s/, and of both sets of clues to those meanings. The Hearer's interpretation is moved from one diagonal to the other by the Second Clue.

In this first example the order of presentation was First Clue, Ambiguous Element,

¹ The joke is enriched by the fact that «A mosquito» can be read metaphorically, suggesting that the person at the door, or the teller of the joke, is someone who will tease and annoy the listener. The literal meaning of «mosquito» has all the familiar past uses as the first clue; the whole of the joke up to the last line, together with the actual joke situation, are the second clue, giving the rival meanings «mosquito» and «person deliberately out to tease and annoy». A similar five-position diagram could therefore be drawn for it.

Second Clue. In others the two rival contextual clues are presented first and the Ambiguous Element follows. For example,

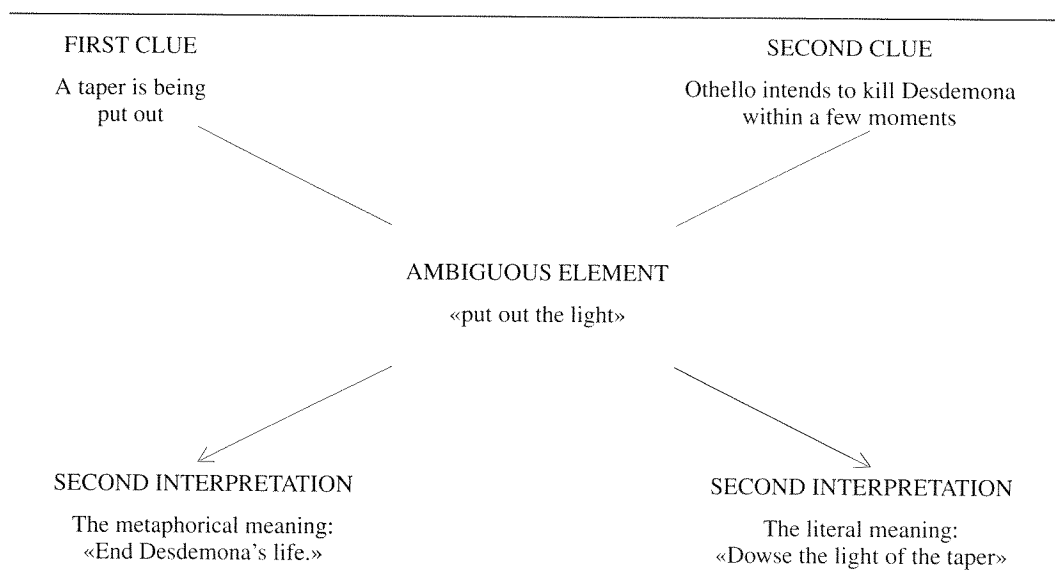
What did the chimney-sweeper say when he was asked when he liked his work?
It suits me.

The First Clue is *chimney-sweeper* turning the ambiguous element into «soots», which also has a powerful metaphorical suggestion that the work is demeaning and alienating. The Second Clue is the whole of the first sentence, since its theme is the chimney-sweeper's view of the suitability of the work, which gives the interpretation «suits».

In these jokes the two rival meanings were different in their affective charge, one unpleasant (*mosquito*, *soots*), the other by contrast harmless (a name [*Amos*], *work being amenable to the worker*). Pleasure is here gained from the saving of psychical energy required for repression (Freud, 1976 [1916], 167). As Freud points out, in jokes there is movement from anxiety to security, from *fort* to *da* — the child's game with the cotton-reel in which he enacts the disappearance and reappearance of his mother or himself (Freud, 1920, 9).

In a tragic situation, on the other hand, we have the Reverse of the Joke; the shift is in the opposite direction, the psychical cost of acknowledging the «wit» of the two interpretations being too great. Thus Othello, on entering the bedroom with the intention of killing his wife, puts out the taper he is carrying with the words, «Put out the light, and then put out the light.»² If this is analysed in the manner above the result is as follows (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2



The move here is from a harmless affective charge (the extinguishing of the taper) to an unpleasant one (the extinguishing of a life).

When Husserl considered the case of the Man or the Mannequin, he never asked himself how an affective charge might influence choice of interpretation. If he had, he might not have fallen into inconsequence. The way in which he did offers a promising trace for the present argument. The title of his book *Experience and Judgement* gives its focus: he wishes to explore the labyrinthine relations between them, to interrelate the *hyle* — the sensory

² William Shakespeare, *Othello*, V, ii, 7.

flux — to the concept. He thinks the answer can be found by going back «to the relation between the act of judgement and life-experience in the wholly concrete sense» (Husserl, 1973, 59). The *hyle* is in Husserl's view «pre-predicative», existing in its initial state as free of conceptual selection as the experience of a new-born child. The problem is not only how that experience relates to the material of the world, but also how it becomes objectified, how we can come to recognize together with another what we call «an entity» in the world around us, whether «it» be classified as «object» or «other» or «self». Husserl acknowledged that we return again and again to the *hyle* (the sounds, the feels, the smells, the warms, the colds, the shapes of colour) in order to confirm or adjust our objectifications. We seek, he writes, «new determinations of the same thing» (32), a clear commitment to the separate existence of an identity. He repeats the same belief in the logical separateness of entities many times, speaking, for example, of «natural things... that maintain themselves as objectively stable entities» (65), and the world as «a totality of existents» (137). What is significant here is his use of a plural, his view that there are given countable things. He believes that a «self-same thing» remains during the changes that occur to it, and this he names the «pure determinable *X*» (Husserl, 1962, 337-340).

Yet elsewhere he is insistent that experience is an «open horizon» (32), that for each observer there is the opportunity to discover more from it than has been known before. But if experience is an open horizon, if the sensory can surprise us with new determinations, this is no guarantee that entityhood is preserved: the word «determinable», read as «able to be determined», does not necessarily imply «apt for determining». To allow the drawing of new boundaries for entities contradicts his earlier claim that «the self-same thing» remains.

Husserl's dilemma is enacted in the following story of two people not realizing that they are not looking at the self-same thing at the very moment they are identifying it. They are contemplating a cloud at sunrise. One says to the other «Look at that beautiful cloud!» The other agrees. The fact that the first sees clearly and the other is short-sighted is concealed in the interchange, for the actual case is that the cloud thins out at the edges into delicate tracery spreading out into the sky. The first (let us call him Sharp) with his good eyesight was admiring that tracery; the second (let us call him Short), being short-sighted, was admiring the tint of the cloud. However, since in both cases pleasure was attendant, the mismatch remained hidden from them both. They believe, with Husserl, that they have «referred to the same entity, the same natural thing».

The same pair now turn to their task, which is that of soldiers on the watch for missiles. Short is the one responsible for the final aiming of the anti-missile system. Now Sharp calls to Short «There's a missile at the edge of the cloud in the right!» But where Short looks for the edge of his cloud-entity is quite different from where Sharp takes the edge of his cloud-entity to be: Short misses the target. End of Short and Sharp. Thus there was *méconnaissance* in their confident co-referring which did not become salient until there was a change in the context. Selections are only viable, and never final. The example brings out the relevance of human desire and fear to the selection being made from the *hyle*.

The intersubjective logic of this dialogue and its outcome in praxis is precisely that of the Reverse of the Joke (as in the example from *Othello*). There is an Ambiguous Element, and, just as in the case of «Amos/A mosquito», there is no secure match between the entityhood selected by one interpretation and that of the other (Figure 3).³

Each body has a different perspective on the flux of experience. First, as in the case with Sharp and Short, bodies differ as to the character of their sensory access: some have greater ranges of response; some have different degrees of fidelity to the input, distinguishing what others cannot. Second, they differ as to their intentional perspective: where one person

³ For the theory of perception that underlies the present argument, see Wright, 1990; for epistemological implications, see Wright, 1992a; for relevance to the philosophy of science, see Wright, 1992b.

```
graph TD; A[AMBIGUOUS ELEMENT  
Two regions of water-vapour  
for which the visual images of  
the two observers were non-matching  
in shape and edge-quality] --> B[FIRST CLUE  
«Look at that beautiful cloud!»]; A --> C[SECOND CLUE  
The failure to guide the  
anti-missile missile and  
the consequent explosion]; A --> D[SECOND INTERPRETATION  
Two different overlapping  
regions of water-vapour  
(i.e. two clouds)]; A --> E[SECOND INTERPRETATION  
A single cloud];
```

FIRST CLUE

«Look at that beautiful cloud!»

SECOND CLUE

The failure to guide the anti-missile missile and the consequent explosion

AMBIGUOUS ELEMENT

Two regions of water-vapour for which the visual images of the two observers were non-matching in shape and edge-quality

SECOND INTERPRETATION

Two different overlapping regions of water-vapour (i.e. two clouds)

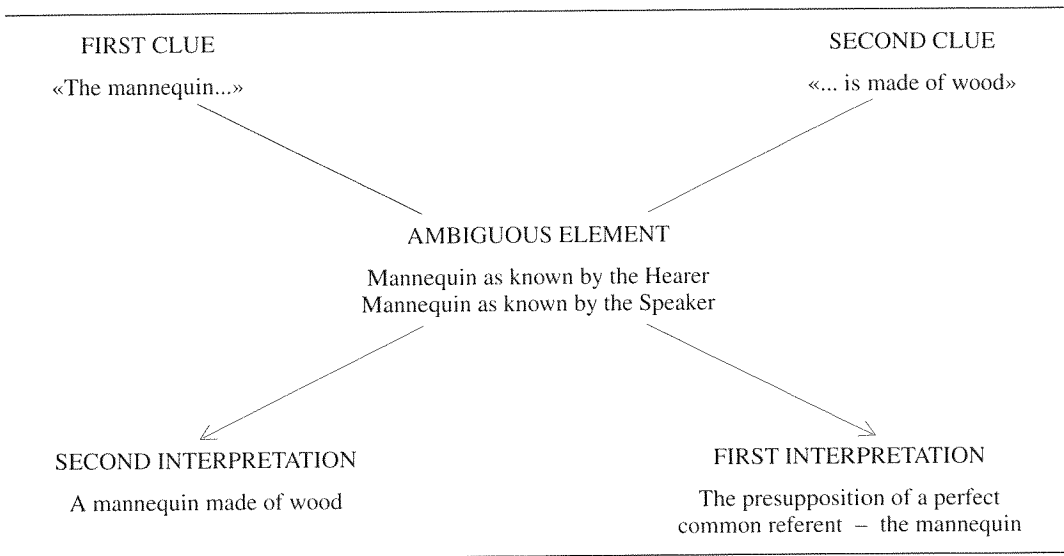
SECOND INTERPRETATION

A single cloud

Language provides the means by which this co-ordination is endlessly adjusted, an adjustment that is brought about by way of the Statement. An informative statement begins with a co-reference which is hypothetically taken to be pure. Consider a situation in which a Hearer is aware that a Speaker is about to tell him something about a mannequin about which he already knows something. In the statement with which the Speaker responds, «The mannequin is made of wood», what happens is as follows: first, both Speaker and Hearer presuppose a common reference in «The mannequin», which establishes the Logical Subject of the Statement; then, with the Logical Predicate («... is made of wood»), the Speaker openly subverts that presupposition. The intentional perspective of the Hearer is changed: his desire is altered; just as in the Joke or the Reverse Joke, the affective charge moves hopefully from something harmless to something threatening or vice versa (Figure 4).

⁴ Kojève might have found here what he called «the revelation of the Real by Speech» (Kojève 1969 [1947], 171), though he added that for Hegel it was a «progressive revelation», a qualification we should not be ready to agree to, since the notion of a human purpose, the direction of a desire, indeed, the very formation of an ego is as problematic as that of any other entity: the consequence is that any «progress» in the ensuring of the continuing satisfaction of a desire cannot be guaranteed, for «the ego» concerned may no longer identify itself with the original demand, which is as much as to say, a part of the former ego.

FIGURE 4



The presupposition of a common referent is essential as a method in order that the Hearer's concept of the referent can be changed; his selection can then be moved about on the Real so that a better purchase can be obtained. The Real is the ontological base upon which is projected the tentative mutual hypotheses of things.

The Logical Subject and Logical Predicate of a Statement cannot be equated with the grammatical subject and predicate. This can be readily seen with the example above, for imagine that the Hearer had asked «What is it that is made of wood?» In that case, the assumption of a common referent, the logical subject, is a something made of wood,⁵ and the adjustment of it, the predicate, is its being a mannequin.

The logical subject enacts the reassuringly secure synchronic perfection of a representative portion of *la langue* in order to change it with the diachronic *parole* of the logical predicate. All speakers are Cretan Liars, changing the language even as they speak it.⁶ A security

⁵ This would be referring in Keith Donnellan's «attributive» sense (Donnellan, 1966), when a reference is made in the situation where one knows of the existence of a referent but does not know of its actual instantiation (as in «Smith's murderer must be insane», in a case where he know that a murderer exists but do not know who he or she actually is). According to the present analysis, this is an attribution imagined by both interlocutors as belonging to an entity unknown but taken to exist: it is not difficult for them to perform this dramatic feat when they already imagine pure co-references on whatever «entities» they have observed together, including themselves. Incidentally, it was an Oxford logician, John Cook Wilson (1926, 123-126), who was the first to insist on a distinction between logical and grammatical subjects in the Statement, and attributed the failure to recognize this to traditional logic's ignoring of context. His view of the logical subject chimes in with the view here, that it is the entity as conceived by the Hearer *before* he has heard the predicate. He insisted that knowledge was there to be known before anyone achieved it, but within the present theory that would become the acknowledgement that our entity-selections are indeed selected from viscosities in the Real, though there can be no final perfect selection. The logical subject predicate can move radically away from the grammatical subject and predicate: take the case in which the Hearer had asked «The mannequin is made of what?» or, a more surprising example, «Which mannequin is made of wood?» (to which the answer would be «The mannequin», that is, one that was already salient out of a group of them to both speakers; here intonation marks the logical predicate, which is only the indefinite article before the grammatical subject-word).

⁶ The linguist Alan Gardiner (1944, 209) points out in an early debate on Saussure, the characteristics of a living ox alter the definition of «boeuf» at the moment it is referred to by two speakers, making

of match is projected between «the world of words» and «the world of things» (Lacan, 1977a [1966], 65) with the sole intention of improving that match.⁷ Speakers have to project the existing deliverances of «truth» in order to allow language to perform its real function, that of updating the Hearer's concept and thus improve his subsequent action.⁸ This sidesteps the illusion of fixity. The child playing «fort/da» was enacting the pattern of all communication.⁹ He was learning that the faith that brings a hopeful mastery in not one that guarantees perfect freedom from slavery; or that the Father's «spoken word» and the Son's «word of speaking» (Merleau-Ponty, 1970, 197)¹⁰ must be kept in illusory pre-established harmony so that each can be Master in turn by breaking that harmony. We make the Thing to murder it, write the Letter to purloin it, polish the Looking-Glass to go through it. Husserl's «determinable *X*» is nothing but the method we use to effect a mutual convergence upon the shifting flux of the Real, a hypothetical narcissism in which individual subjects imaginize their identity. This is Folly's «plan» and Lacan's insight, that we need the ironic notion of the entity in the mirror to begin the process of obtaining a provisional hold upon the Real. The Imaginary has an invaluable use, however dire the consequences of its misrecognitions. Without it the Symbolic could not function.

However, this is not a warrant for believing that, when current «reality» is adjusted, the Real will inevitably smile — that is why Lacan spoke of the «grimace of the Real» (Lacan, 1990, 6). The joke can be a pathetic or tragic one. The relief of laughter cannot always ease the pain of castration. Malvolio fled with «I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you!» and Alceste with «Trahi de toutes parts, accablé d'injustices/Je vais sortir d'un gouffre où triomphent les vices.»¹¹ Lacan departs from Hegel here in rejecting any guarantee of an optimistic outcome to the dialectic. The idealized Absence of the Logical Subject may or may not be happily adjusted by the idealized Presence of the Logical Predicate: this performative Truth is not always «felicitous».

a new, even if infinitesimal, contribution to *la langue*; this is to see the contribution the Real makes to the Symbolic without taking note of the intentional perspectives of the speakers. For how endeavouring to maintain a perfect rigidity in the Symbolic Order produces the paradoxes, see Wright, 1979.

⁷ A question is then a «fort» wanting a «da». It is an indication to a possible Speaker that one believes that one needs one's concept updating. Questions therefore contain as far as possible directions to the Speaker as to what feature needs updating: if it is the time something occurred, then we ask «When did the tyre go flat?»; if it is the manner in which it occurred, we ask «How did it happen?» and so on. We also indicate the level of the assurance of our concept, for where we are fairly sure what the updating will be, we say «It did go flat, didn't it?» If we think that it didn't, we say «It didn't go flat, did it?».

⁸ The «as if/*als ob*» can be traced, via Vaihinger (1924) to Kant's notion of heuristic fictions.

⁹ The *fort/da* was a game. Games can be defined by the Joke pattern also. To quote from an earlier article: «Wittgenstein contrasted chess and tennis, yet they are similar in precisely this riddle feature. In tennis, don't we particularly applaud how that well-placed lob was neatly transformed by means of its very placement as a lob in that very spot into an even more dangerous backhand? Is not the force and the direction of the ball «purloined»? What kind of ball control delights the crowd in soccer? Surely when the brilliant centring shot by one of the attacking side is transformed into a header, say, which adapts the very energy of the shot to its own purposes to make it a pass to an attacking forward of the defending side. In judo isn't the trick to use your antagonist's effort to make him defeat himself? In Patience doesn't the Zest lie in the reading of the right gestalt from the random selection that appears? And here one's only competitor is chance, as it is for that child bouncing the ball against the wall that Wittgenstein mentions. He also cited «Ring-a-ring o'roses»: we need not quote the presumed origin in the rosy rash that heralded one's catching the plague — «Atishoo! Atishooo!/We all fall down» — in order to find rival interpretations (Wright, 1981-82, 473-474). This is no family-resemblance: the Game, like the Story, has the structure of the Joke. It is worthwhile for a parallel here reading Antony Wilden on strategy (Wilden, 1987).

¹⁰ Merleau-Ponty compares the «word in the speaking» to «a wave» that, in re-iterating itself, «hurtles beyond its own limits» (Merleau-Ponty, 1970 [1945], 197).

¹¹ William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, V, i, 377; Moliere, *Le Misanthrope*, V, iv, 135-136 («Betrayed on all sides, burdened with iniquities, I am going to get out of an abyss in which the vices triumph»).

Why are philosophers deaf to such claims as those of Lacan that «it is only with speech that there are things which are which are — which are true or false, that is to say, which are — and things which are not» (Lacan, 1988, 228), and that «the paths of truth are in essence the paths of error» (263)? Recognizing that without faith in the Symbolic Order there would be no communication, they mistakenly turn the needful exhortation to project it into a false demand that it be believed in. The Laws of Thought that have to be enacted to engage our differing concepts are dangerously transformed (as a result of who knows what psychological or ideological pressures) into props for received opinions of what constitute the favoured «referents». Naturally we must maintain that «*X* is *X*», «*X* is either *B* or not-*B*» and «*X* is not not-*X*» so that projections will coincide enough to effect the necessary adjustments. But it is equally true that we cannot wholly rely on any of the references so achieved, for such rigidity would block the way to the utterance of every statement. In Lacan's words, we would not be able to make it signify *something quite other* than what it says' (Lacan, 1977a [1966], 155), which is what we have to do every time we wish to inform somebody of something. The next time a philosopher gives the counsel that «all indiscernibles must be identical for both of us», or that «natural kinds» are parts of the enduring furniture of the world, or that we must cleave to «the Principle of Charity», which is to acknowledge that speakers generally agree on «what is the case», one responds would be to say that, exactly, these all must be *taken for granted*, which is as much as to say we shall never in truth grant them at all. These philosophers may be granted the commonsensical notion that any entity agreed on exists, but not the philosophical notion is that it is exactly the same portion of the Real that is agreed on. Recognition, whether of a self or an object, can never reach its goal.

Their rigidity is thus well captured in Lacan's phrase «formal stagnation»:

Now this formal stagnation is akin to the most general structure of human knowledge: that which constitutes the ego and its objects with attributes of permanence, identity and substantiality, in short, with entities or «things» that are very different from the *Gestalten* that experience enables us to isolate in the shifting field, stretched in accordance with the lines of animal desire. (Lacan, 1977a, 17)

As Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen has said, such formal stagnation is a narcissistic refusal of the oedipal dialectic (Borch-Jacobsen, 1991, 32-35). The Joke reveals the pattern of that dialectic because it shows how the father may be imitated in every statement, in every identification. One can neither take «Reality» in the notion «Reality Principle» to mean what the *père-version* makes of the «world of things», since Desire in one subject can correct the identifications made by the Other. Nor can «Pleasure Principle» be taken as that which inevitably runs counter to a Reality Principle, since it may have been an access of *jouissance* that enforced a new and valuable interpretation.

This digression on the philosophers can best be concluded with Dame Folly's dismissal of them:

Though ignorant even of themselves and sometimes not able to see the ditch or stone lying in their path, either because most of them are half-blind or their minds are far away, they still boast that they can see ideas, universals, separate forms, prime matters, quiddities, ecceties, things which are all so insubstantial that I doubt if even Lynceus could see them. (Erasmus, 151-152)¹²

To believe that there are Real objects and Real subjects is to turn a necessary faith into a superstition. It is to remain at a mirror-stage for all entities, at the mercy of the unconscious.

¹² Lynceus was an Argonaut had preternaturally sharp eyesight.

Existence and objectivity logically come apart: Sharp's «cloud» exists and Short's «cloud» exists, but they are not the same entity, even though Short and Sharp have to call them the same entity to speak at all. All objects and all subjects are such superimposed, but never matching, clouds. *Credo quia absurdum* is the dictum to be adopted with regard to subjects and objects. It is the very habit of taking the referent to be single that will reveal that it is not. The danger for the subject lies in turning what is no more than a practical procedure for achieving co-ordination into a complacent belief. It is tempting for him to believe that his Desire, is exactly the same as that of the Other, or, in other words, that he is wholly recognized by the Other.

Such narcissistic security ignores the throws of the dice that the Real may have already «laughably» cast down (Lacan, 1988, 220). The «sliding-away» (*glissement*) from that security «conceals what is the true secret of the ludic, namely, the most radical diversity constituted by repetition in itself» (Lacan, 1977b [1973], 61) The endless adjustment of the Symbolic upon the Real is a mutual performative act that must take on the ludic mask of the True in order to find the temporary *points de capiton*. The danger that cannot be escaped is that, having grown into history, the subject's viscosity settles into moulds that slow down its capacity for change, till its congelations become part of the Real themselves, the source of the Trauma. Lacan insisted that the illusions of the Imaginary can have effects in the Real. The temptation to turn that ludic performance of the constative, the play of the truth, into something eternal then becomes relentless. The mask may then grow on to the face, from the outside in, as in Othello's case, or from the inside out, as in Antony's. This of course contradicts the naive enactment of the (inescapable) Symbolic Order, that the faith is that all will obtain the Phallus, fill up the lack, clinging to their *objet a* as earnest of that fulfilment. Subjects are indeed constituted and constituting (Lauer, 1967, 171), but the degree to which they and the Symbolic Order succeed in their respective constituting is another matter: *méconnaissance* can never turn into a pure *connaissance*, however pursued. Lacan traces Hamlet's tragedy to his desire to make the Symbolic Order constitute his whole identity and thereby banish death, but the idealization at the core of the Symbolic has to be seen to be an idealization that can only be acted, never believed. There are two key ironies in the play: that Hamlet was skilled at punning; and that, though a good actor able to advise other actors, he could not take his own advice.

And now for the end of the story. Those who had patiently tried to loosen the bark ropes of the Gordian Knot were trapped inside a riddle. They had heard King Gordius say, as he tied the knot, that whoever should free the chariot should rule over the whole of Asia. They assumed, seeing the knot being tied (First Clue) that «Whoever frees the chariot...» could only be by the untying of the knot itself, that the knot was the riddle they had been set. Knots are material riddles, presenting Ambiguous Elements: which of those tight loops will effect release and which will but further tighten the knot? But Alexander, as Master, perceived that the purpose of a knot was to tie up the chariot, and hence the loops of the knot were not Ambiguous Elements at all, that the Ambiguous Element was actually the very instruction of King Gordius, «Whoever frees the chariot...» The Second Clue was then clear: to cut the knot.¹³ The Gordian Knot was a riddle within a riddle, as language is, since it is enacted by those who are riddles themselves.

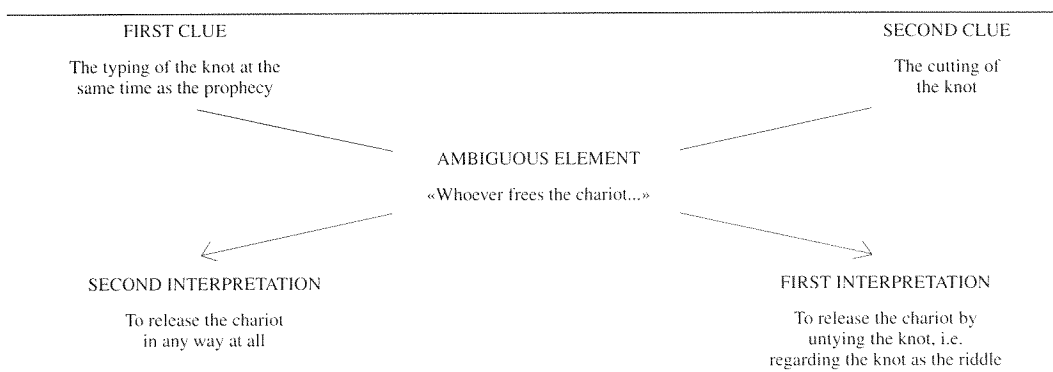
«In this matter of the visible», says Lacan (1977b, 93), «everything is a trap». The Borromean Knot that ties Real, Imaginary and Symbolic can be cut through when we least expect it.

REFERENCES

- Austin, J.L. (1970). A plea for excuses. In *Philosophical Papers* (James O. Urmson & Geoffrey J. Warnock, Eds.), pp: 175-204, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Borch-Jacobsen, M. (1991). *Lacan: The Absolute Master*, trans. Douglas Brick, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- Donnellan, K.S. (1966). Reference and definite descriptions. *Philosophical Review*, 75: 281-304.
- Erasmus, D. (1976 [1509]). *Praise of Folly*, trans. Betty Radice. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Freud, S. (1976 [1916]). *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, S.E. vol. 8. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Freud, S. (1920). *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. S.E. vol. 18: 3-66.
- Freud, S. (1926). The question of lay analysis. S.E. vol. 20: 179-260.
- Gardiner, A.H. (1944). De Saussure's analysis of the «signe linguistique». *Acta Linguistica*, 3: 107-110.
- Husserl, E. (1962 [1913]). *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson. New York: Collier MacMillan.
- Husserl, E. (1973 [1939]). *Experience and Judgement: Investigations in the Genealogy of Logic*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Kojève, A. (1969 [1947]). *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of the Spirit* (Allan Bloom, Ed.), trans. James H. Nicholls, Jr., Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Lacan, J. (1966). *Écrits*. Paris: Seuil.
- Lacan, J. (1977a [1966]). *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan. London: Tavistock Publications.
- Lacan, J. (1977b [1973]). *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* (Jacques-Alain Miller, Ed.), trans. Alan Sheridan, London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis.
- Lacan, J. (1988 [1978]). *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954-1955*, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lacan, J. (1990 [1974]). *Télévision* (Joan Copjec, Ed.), trans. Denis Hillier, Rosalind Kraus & Annette Michelson, New York: W. W. Norton & Co.
- Lauer, Q. (1967). The Other explained intentionally. In *Phenomenology: The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and its Interpretation* (Joseph J. Kockelmans, Ed.), pp: 167-182, Garden City, New York: Doubleday.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1970 [1945]). *The Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Vaihinger, H. (1924). *The Philosophy of «As If»*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Trubner.
- Wilden, A. (1987). *Man and Woman, War and Peace: The Strategist's Companion*. London: Routledge.
- Wilson, J.C. (1926). *Statement and Inference*, 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wright, E. (1979). Logic as an intention-matching system: A solution to the paradoxes. *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 10: 164-171.
- Wright, E. (1981-82). Derrida, Searle, contexts, games, riddles. *New Literary History*, 13: 463-477.
- Wright, E. (1990). New representationalism. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 20: 65-92.
- Wright, E. (1992a). The entity fallacy in epistemology. *Philosophy*, 259(67): 33-50.
- Wright, E. (1992b). Gestalt-Switching: Hanson, Aronson and Harré. *Philosophy of Science*, 3(59): 480-86.

¹³ This is the diagram for Alexander's solution:



Don Juan et les Femmes

HAN VERHOEFF (*)

De toutes les comédies de Molière c'est surtout *Don Juan* qui attire aujourd'hui l'attention des critiques. Ces derniers temps la comédie a fait l'objet d'analyses nombreuses et variées. Il semble pourtant qu'avec ses exégètes modernes Don Juan n'ait retrouvé ni son centre d'intérêt ni son allure mythique. Au lieu de concentrer l'analyse sur les splendeurs de sa carrière amoureuse, on s'est arrêté à des aspects secondaires.

Après la vision romantique selon laquelle Don Juan est celui qui cherche l'amour absolu, impossible, il serait selon la critique plus moderne, non pas un séducteur, mais un impie (Jean Rousset), un artiste (Julia Kristeva), un homme qui ne paye pas ses dettes (Sarah Kofman), qui s'engage «performativement» par des promesses (Shoshana Felman) et un homme qui ne joue pas le jeu du contrat et de l'échange (Michel Serres). A ces interprétations s'oppose l'analyse ni romantique ni moderne de Kierkegaard qui est centrée sur l'érotisme de Don Juan et sa tabouisation dans le monde chrétien, mais il parle de Mozart et de sa musique, et non de Molière...¹

Il paraît qu'on ait négligé l'évidence: Don Juan est en premier lieu un homme à femmes, un séducteur qui réussit. Son attrait érotique est irrésistible, il est un conquérant qui se meut victorieusement dans le domaine combien périlleux de la confrontation entre les hommes et les femmes. On croirait donc qu'emprisonné par des préoccupations anachroniques et — qui sait? — désireux d'éviter par déplacement les complications de la rencontre entre les sexes, on aurait manqué les réalités de la comédie de Molière.

Mais les choses ne sont pas si simples. Il se trouve que la plupart des thèmes secondaires énumérés ici ont été introduits par Molière lui-même. Dans sa comédie le récit des amours proprement dits n'occupe qu'un nombre restreint de scènes et, en plus, les succès de Don Juan, situés plutôt dans le passé, attirent moins l'attention que ses déboires. Faut-il donc suivre M. Serres pour qui,

le prince classique est un diable à trois têtes, un personnage à trois conduites: homme à femmes, il séduit; homme à idées, il discourt; homme d'argent, il

(*) Universiteit van Amsterdam, Vakgroep Frans-Roemmens, Spuistraat 134, 1012 VB Amsterdam, Nederlands.

¹ J. Rousset, *Le mythe de Don Juan*, Paris: Colin, 1978. J. Kristeva, *Histoires d'amour*, Paris: Denoël, 1983. S. Kofman, «L'art de ne pas payer ses dettes», in *Don Juan ou le refus de la dette* (S. Kofman & J.-Y. Masson, Eds.), Paris: Galilée, 1991. S. Felman, *Le scandale du corps parlant, Don Juan avec Austin ou la séduction en deux langues*, Paris: Le Seuil, 1980. M. Serres, *Hermès I. La communication*, Paris: Minuit, 1968. S. Kierkegaard, «Les étapes érotiques spontanées ou l'érotisme musical», in *Ou bien... ou bien*, Paris: Gallimard, 1943.

diffère sa dette. Ce troisième homme est le révélateur des trois premiers. (p. 234)

Je crois pourtant que pour rendre compte du mythe, ou au moins de l'allure mythique du héros, il est nécessaire d'envisager tout d'abord les rapports du séducteur avec «ses» femmes et de chercher le secret de ses succès avant d'examiner ses échecs. Je suis ainsi l'exemple de Kierkegaard, qui opposait le personnage de Don Juan, dont le libretto peint les aventures plutôt dérisoires, à la grande figure mythique dont le pouvoir érotique s'est incarné dans la musique. Et pour ce qui est de Molière, on peut trouver, non seulement dans *Dom Juan*, mais encore dans ses autres pièces, assez d'appuis pour interroger un thème voisin, central lui aussi, qui est la lutte entre les sexes.

Nous verrons s'il est possible de rattacher et même de subordonner les thèmes relevés par les critiques au centre du mythe tel qu'il est présenté dans la comédie. En fait, les démêlés du héros avec les nobles, son père et les frères d'Elvire, sont le prolongement direct de ses méfaits amoureux. Don Juan ne remplit pas ses obligations sociales comme il ne tient pas ses serments amoureux. De plus, on peut voir — cet aspect sera développé plus loin — des analogies entre son traitement d'Elvire et celui de son frère, comme son attitude envers le père. On pourrait mettre ces confrontations, ou plutôt leur impasse, sous le signe de l'abandon. La rencontre du héros avec M. Dimanche a encore son parallèle amoureux. Sans le contenter, il séduit son créancier, comme il a séduit Charlotte et Mathurine.

Séduction, abandon, ces thèmes ne rappellent pas seulement les grands moments de la lutte amoureuse, mais encore son enjeu. Il est possible de rattacher ces moments aux notions plus générales du contrat et de l'échange. Une des tâches essentielles de la société est de régler les rapports entre les hommes et les femmes. Le mariage, contrat social et aussi sacrement religieux, est l'institution qui pourvoit à cette nécessité. Or — et c'est là l'enjeu de la pièce comme du mythe — le scandale du comportement de Don Juan, comportement a-social et impie qui trouve sa punition à la fin, consiste dans le fait qu'il pêche contre cette institution socio-religieuse du mariage.

Avec ce méfait — et la coïncidence est significative — Don Juan se trouve pécher encore contre les lois de la comédie qui, «machine matrimoniale» selon l'heureuse formule de M. Deguy,² organise au dénouement l'union des amoureux en vue d'un mariage. Pour provoquer le rire, la comédie doit créer une atmosphère de connivence qui trouve sa consécration dans cette conclusion heureuse. Or, il se trouve que l'activité iconoclaste de Don Juan bouleverse encore cette finalité de la comédie. Au lieu de couronner l'action au dénouement, le mariage scandaleusement multiplié et rabaissé au niveau d'un fait divers, se situe dans la préhistoire et n'est rappelé dans le texte que par les allusions d'un valet aux exploits cyniques de cet «épouseur du genre humain» (II,4).

Une inspection rapide des comédies de Molière nous apprend que le mariage a pour fonction principale de fixer la condition incertaine de la femme. En comédie, la femme inconnue, sans attaches sociales ou familiales, intrigue et inquiète. La tension causée par le statut de la femme inconnue, orpheline souvent, thème fréquent chez Molière, tout en stimulant l'intérêt de la pièce, doit être résolue à la fin. Or, le dénouement de ses comédies, si souvent taxé d'invraisemblable, consiste à donner enfin à la femme l'identité qui permettra de la fixer, intervention heureuse qui sera couronnée par le mariage.

Dans la comédie classique la préoccupation du mariage va de pair avec une certaine ambivalence envers l'enlèvement de la femme.³ Projeté souvent, il n'est effectué que rarement et alors l'auteur se précipite pour corriger au plus vite cette terrible irrégularité. Agnès sortant de la maison d'Arnolphe et se confiant à Horace sera immédiatement rendue à son tuteur et on devine que la hâte de marier au plus vite la femme voilée de *l'Ecole des*

² M. Deguy, *La machine matrimoniale ou Marivaux*, Paris: Gallimard, 1981.

³ Le scandale de la femme enlevée, voilà l'enjeu de *La Place Royale* de Corneille et de *La Mère confidente* de Marivaux.

maris ne reflète pas uniquement celle du vieux barbon Sganarelle, mais encore celle de son auteur et sans doute de son public.

La femme vagabonde inquiète comme la femme inconnue et les courts moments de cette liberté de la femme, fascinants, constituent les hauts moments de l'intrigue de ces comédies. Dans *Dom Juan*, une des terribles conséquences du comportement iconoclaste du héros est de créer justement ce scandale de la femme vagabonde. L'état d'abandon d'Elvire, femme irrégulièrement mariée et délaissée, marque le début de la pièce comme sa fin.

Séduction et abandon, ces deux moments de la confrontation amoureuse, marquent, au-delà de *Dom Juan*, les autres comédies de Molière. La séduction est l'obstacle majeur qui fait trébucher le plus grand intrigant de son théâtre: séduit par Elmire au point d'oublier toutes ses stratégies et ses succès déjà remportés, Tartuffe tend vers le seul bien que son adorateur, Orgon, ne peut lui donner. Peur de la séduction et celle de l'abandon par la femme, ces deux peurs sont à la base de la hantise du cocuage et elles marquent les impuissantes stratégies des barbons. Et, fatalité tragique et comique à la fois, la peur masculine est justifiée! A Sganarelle, à Arnolphe et à Alceste, ce barbon en herbe, arrive exactement la catastrophe qu'ils avaient redoutée et contre laquelle ils s'étaient en vain défendus. On est ensorcelé par le charme féminin, et puis c'est le néant de l'abandon, l'absolue déréliction. Comme on voit, dans tous les cas le danger provient de la femme. La supériorité féminine en amour se voit encore dans la symétrie des deux Ecoles, *l'Ecole des maris* et *l'Ecole des femmes*. A l'évolution métamorphose des femmes, à la fois élèves et maîtresses de l'amour, s'oppose invariablement l'étonnement des hommes, de tous les hommes, des amants aussi bien que des barbons. Un des grands moments de l'abandon se trouve dans la confrontation finale d'Agnès et d'Arnolphe. Après avoir séduit Arnolphe au point de lui faire renier tous ses principes, elle l'abandonne à sa misère et à sa colère impuissante avec toute l'indifférence d'une femme supérieure qui ne daigne même pas haïr son ancien tuteur.

Or, ce sont ces deux activités, ces deux «spécialités» féminines que nous retrouvons chez Don Juan. Nous assistons ainsi — c'est un des effets du mythe et, ajoutons-le tout de suite, une de ses intentions! — à un renversement: les armes proprement féminines qui inquiétaient les hommes sont maintenant tournées contre la femme. Don Juan, c'est un de ses secrets, a hérité les pouvoirs de la femme: comme elles, il sait séduire et abandonner, avec tout le charme et toute l'indifférence requis.

Dans la comédie le pouvoir de la femme est grand, et nous savons depuis Paul Bénichou que Molière a salué ce pouvoir avec une évidente sympathie. Mais ce pouvoir s'exerce indirectement, clandestinement. La femme n'est jamais *sujet* de l'action et le point de vue réside auprès des hommes. Nous voyons Célimène par les yeux d'Alceste et l'initiative et l'inventivité d'Agnès sont comme escamotées par des récits masculins.

Dans *Dom Juan* ces deux aspects de la présentation marquent la disposition des scènes. Le point de vue, situé auprès de Sganarelle, est masculin et ses regards fascinés restent fixés sur son maître dont il ne percera jamais le mystère, qualité qui relie le héros une fois de plus aux femmes. Comme elles, Don Juan est l'Autre dans la pièce qui lui est consacrée.

Si l'on fait abstraction de la partialité de Molière, de son *féminisme*, ses comédies sont bien de leur temps. La peur du cocuage est un reflet de la vision anxieuse des hommes dans ce monde chrétien hostile à la femme. Et le mythe date de ce temps-là, on y trouve, transposés, annexés par le héros, beaucoup de traits «démoniaques» attribués non seulement à la sensualité en général tabouisée dans le monde chrétien,⁴ mais plus en particulier à la femme redoutable. Je cite quelques remarques de Jean Delumeau, qui a consacré une étude à «la peur en Occident»:⁵

⁴ Selon Kierkegaard, la sensualité, dépouillée de son complément psychique, est élevée au niveau d'un principe opposé aux valeurs chrétiennes.

⁵ J. Delumeau, *La Peur en Occident*, Paris: Fayard, 1978.

Dans l'inconscient de l'homme la femme suscite l'inquiétude, non seulement parce qu'elle est le juge de sa sexualité, mais encore parce qu'il l'imagine volontiers insatiable, comparable à un feu qu'il faut sans cesse alimenter, dévorante comme la mante religieuse. (p. 308)

Ou encore il se représente Eve comme un océan sur lequel son frêle navire flotte avec précarité, comme un gouffre qui l'aspire, un lac profond, un puits sans fond. Le vide est la manifestation femelle de la perdition. (p.308)

Produit de ce temps-là, le mythe que nous étudions dans sa version moliéresque représente les hantises masculines. Création du rêve, du fantasme des hommes, Don Juan est une figure, on dirait une machine de guerre, qui est dirigée contre la femme redoutable. Et tout en combattant les femmes, il leur emprunte leurs propres armes, les traits néfastes que les hommes projettent sur les femmes: leur avidité «insatiable», «dévorante» et encore le vide de leur indifférence. Ce héros est *fascinant* et cela, paradoxalement, en premier lieu pour les hommes, à cause de la fascination qu'il est censé exercer triomphalement sur la femme.

A la base de ses exploits on trouve une nouvelle qualité féminine: le narcissisme. Dans son *Pour introduire au narcissisme*,⁶ Freud distingue deux types d'amour. Le premier, l'amour par étayage, amour d'objet (Objektliebe), qui serait surtout celui des hommes, mène à l'appauvrissement du moi, au profit de l'autre, de l'objet. Le second type d'amour, qui est attribué surtout à la femme, et qui s'impose pendant sa puberté, prend comme idéal le moi. Il se trouve que le narcissisme féminin qui rappelle le charme de petits enfants et encore de chats et de certains grands animaux de proie, qui sont les uns comme les autres si étrangement indifférents à l'homme, exerce une grande force d'attraction sur l'homme, parce qu'il lui rappelle de façon presque inquiétante un stade antérieur de son propre développement.

Nous voilà devant une nouvelle vision de l'amour et de la femme — vision qui est encore celle d'un homme! — qui vient corroborer les aspects du mythe et de la comédie que nous venons d'examiner. Narcissisme et indifférence, voilà encore des traits féminins que Don Juan a pris à ses adversaires. En fait, l'amour du héros ne mène pas à l'aliénation du «Verliebtheit», ce type d'amour masculin qui surestime la femme. Don Juan, lui, sait exactement ce qu'il veut, il n'aime pas les femmes malgré lui, il les aime comme soi-même, comme émanations de soi, de son propre désir, de sa créativité jouisseuse.

Dans son désir, Don Juan est homme et femme à la fois, il combine l'élan et le ravissement. D'un côté, il aime à réduire, à combattre, «à forcer pied à pied toutes les petites résistances qu'elle nous oppose», et de l'autre, il se montre, ouvert voire perméable au charme de ses amours: «toutes les belles ont droit de nous charmer et [...] pour moi, la beauté me ravit partout où je la trouve, et je cède facilement à cette douce violence dont elle nous entraîne» (I,2) — passivité, réceptivité qui ne le fait éprouver que plus intensément les joies du désir.

Mais ce désir, encore une fois, n'est pas aliénant: par l'intermédiaire de l'objet, l'indispensable stimulant, il se reporte à soi, à son élan. Arrêté par la nouvelle beauté de Charlotte, ce n'est pas à elle, c'est à Sganarelle, à tant d'égards son double, qu'il s'adresse pour détailler ses charmes, ou peut-être plus exactement, pour détailler sa joie qu'il éprouve à leur propos:

Ah! n'ayez point de honte d'entendre dire vos vérités. Sganarelle, qu'en dis-tu? Peut-on rien voir de plus agréable? Tournez-vous un peu, s'il vous plaît. Ah! que cette taille est jolie! [...] Ouvrez vos yeux entièrement. Ah! qu'ils sont beaux! [...] Pour moi, je suis ravi, et je n'ai jamais vu une si charmante personne (II,2).

⁶ In *La vie sexuelle*, Paris: PUF, 1969; *G.W.* tome X.

Ces lignes ne constituent pas une séduction proprement dite. Don Juan ne s'oublie pas dans son désir pour autrui, il reporte tout à soi, à son propre désir et ce mouvement marque son narcissisme. Mais son discours à certains égards solipsiste est effectif quand même, il est «séduisant». Comme Freud l'a rappelé, on est sensible au narcissisme d'autrui. Ainsi, chez Don Juan, la séduction signifie contagion. Don Juan contamine les autres par son exemple. Le narcissisme féminin, dont il a l'apanage, il le fait jouer auprès de la femme qu'il séduit en s'adressant moins à elle qu'à sa beauté, ou plus exactement à la conception qu'elle en a :

Vous ne m'êtes point obligée de tout ce que je dis, et ce n'est qu'à votre beauté que vous en êtes redevable (II,2).

De ce dédoublement narcissique, Shoshana Felman a donné la description suivante :

Le piège de la séduction consiste, de la sorte, à produire une *illusion référentielle* par un énoncé qui est — par excellence — sui-référentiel : l'illusion d'un engagement réel ou hors-linguistique créée par une énonciation qui ne se réfère qu'à elle-même. De même que le discours séducteur exploite, à travers l'auto-référence des verbes performatifs la capacité du langage de se réfléchir lui-même, il exploite également, de façon parallèle, l'auto-référence du désir narcissique de l'interlocuteur, et la capacité de celui-ci de produire une illusion réflexive spéculaire : le séducteur tend aux femmes le miroir narcissique idéalisant de leur propre désir d'elles-mêmes (op. cit., p. 39-40).

Le dialogue amène donc une double «production» narcissique. Seulement le parallélisme entre les deux mouvements me semble encore plus étroit. Ce qui est en cause est moins une construction langagière d'une part et une illusion réflexive d'autre part. Don Juan est narcissique comme Charlotte, et son texte consiste moins à dire «performativement» des promesses — Kierkegaard a déjà souligné la pauvreté de ce stratagème — qu'à célébrer son désir. Doublement narcissique, il exhibe sa joie de vivre, de désirer. Il faudrait se garder en effet de se faire une idée trop activiste de Don Juan. Comme son exemple le montre, pour séduire, il faut plutôt *être* que faire. Son langage est plus lyrique que stratégique.

Par un chemin différent, je me rapproche de l'analyse de Kierkegaard, qui, lui, insiste sur le caractère musical, c'est-à-dire, non langagier, voire non conscient de l'expression érotique dans *Don Giovanni*, tandis que moi, je m'occupe de la version littéraire du mythe. Mais les chemins des deux analyses ne divergent pas tout à fait. Premièrement, même chez Mozart, la création donjuanesque n'est pas purement musicale : il s'agit d'un opéra qui comprend un texte qui influe sur l'interprétation. Et pour ce qui est de Molière, nous venons de constater qu'au moment de la confrontation amoureuse le langage de Don Juan, paradoxalement, n'est pas stratégique, pas instrumental. Séduire signifie moins créer que confirmer, jouir d'une situation déjà existante et, arrivé à ce stade, le désir du héros, pour employer un terme musical, «se chante» :

Enfin je m'en vais être le plus heureux de tous les hommes, et je ne changerais pas mon bonheur à toutes les choses du monde. Que de plaisirs quand vous serez ma femme ! (II, 3).

Mais, on l'a dit, ce langage quasi-intransitif, ce «chant» est communicatif. L'amour narcissique résonne et fait résonner le narcissisme de l'autre. Tout en séduisant, ce n'est au fond pas le héros qui agit : il se fait exemple, spectacle, miroir, invite, pour que l'autre agisse. S'il séduit, c'est qu'il induit en tentation.

Et envers Charlotte, ce séducteur est moins *sujet* que *médiateur*, au sens girardien du terme :⁷ il se présente comme intermédiaire entre Charlotte et sa beauté. Ce ne sont

⁷ Voir R. Girard, *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque*, Paris : Grasset, 1978.

pas en premier lieu ses promesses à lui qui doivent lier Charlotte; son succès et son bonheur, elle les doit à sa beauté et c'est ce lien *between me and me*, entre Charlotte et (la jouissance de) sa beauté qui est assuré par les gestes et les regards autant que par les paroles de ce séducteur en feu.

Par la contagion de l'exemple, Don Juan, ironiquement, crée chez la femme une faiblesse qui est typiquement masculine: «die Überschätzung des Weibes»: entraînée par la plénitude du désir donjuanesque, Charlotte va se surestimer elle-même. Et c'est ainsi que la parole de Don Juan, «ne voulez-vous pas consentir à être ma femme?» (II,2) représente moins l'énonciation performative d'une promesse qu'elle ne présente une image. *Ma femme*: ces mots montrent à Charlotte, comme dans un miroir sa propre image embellie par le désir joyeusement exhibé de son admirateur. Et c'est encore avec cette image narcissique qu'elle affronte son fiancé Pierrot: «Si tu m'aimes, ne dois-tu pas être bien aise que je devienne Madame?» (II,3).

Pendant la cour qu'il lui fait, Don Juan dit à Charlotte:

Quand on est faite comme vous on doit être à couvert de toutes ces sortes de craintes; vous n'avez point l'air, croyez-moi, d'une personne qu'on abuse (II,2).

Parlant de l'air de Charlotte, le héros parle de lui-même, de l'air, de la mine de quelqu'un qui est heureux en amour et, plus généralement, de cette atmosphère de joie, de désir, de connivence et d'oubli qui rend tout possible. Et c'est sans doute de cela dont parle Sganarelle au début de la pièce:

Quoi que puisse dire Aristote et toute la Philosophie, il n'est rien d'égal au tabac: c'est la passion des honnêtes gens, et qui vit sans tabac n'est pas digne de vivre. Non seulement il réjouit et purge les cerveaux humains, mais encore il instruit les âmes à la vertu, et l'on apprend avec lui à devenir honnête homme. Ne voyez-vous pas bien, dès qu'on en prend, de quelle manière obligeante on en use avec tout le monde, et comme on est ravi d'en donner à droite et à gauche, partout où l'on se trouve? On n'attend pas même qu'on en demande, et l'on court au-devant du souhait des gens: tant il est vrai que le tabac inspire des sentiments d'honneur et de vertu à tous ceux qui en prennent (I,1).

Discourant sur les vertus du tabac, Sganarelle parle de son maître et son boniment annonce tous les boniments à venir. N'est-ce pas le héros qui «réjouit» les femmes et qui «purgé» leurs cerveaux de toutes les pesanteurs de la conscience et qui crée cette atmosphère où tous les participants du jeu amoureux «cour[ent] au-devant du souhait des gens»?⁸ Seulement il ne faut pas, bien entendu, être aveugle à l'emploi ironique des termes «honneur» et «vertu», ni oublier que le produit du tabac, la fumée, est encore plus éphémère que cet autre symbole de l'amour, la rose...

Assez paradoxalement, ce séducteur volage est constant, du moins dans ses procédés. Son comportement avec les femmes ne diffère pas sensiblement de celui envers les hommes — seulement le cœur n'y est plus. Ici comme là, Don Juan n'agit pas, mais invite l'autre à agir. Comme l'a bien observé J. Guicharnaud, qui a excellemment éclairé cet aspect, ses «questions en creux [créent] des vides dans lesquels vient basculer son interlocuteur.»⁹ Par son silence il invite Sganarelle à discourir jusqu'au moment où, embrouillé par sa propre tirade, il se laisse tomber. Il amène Don Carlos à le défendre contre son frère et, comme

⁸ Mon interprétation s'oppose à celle de M. Serres: «D'où vient qu'être méchant homme, fût-on grand seigneur, consiste à mépriser le tabac, je veux dire ne vouloir pas se plier à sa loi, à l'obligation et l'obligance de l'échange et du don»(p. 235). Il est clair que M. Serres ne compte qu'avec la fin, mais nous n'en sommes pas encore là. Et puis, Don Juan n'est pas anti-tabac, comme il n'est pas anti-mariage, bien au contraire: ce sont les piliers de son système stratégique!

⁹ J. Guicharnaud, *Molière, une aventure théâtrale*, Paris: Gallimard, 1963, p. 194.

l'a bien vu Guicharnaud: «par son silence, il fait que ce procès est moins le sien que celui de ses accusateurs (p. 268). Il ne jure pas lui-même, mais invite le Pauvre à jurer. On a fait grand cas du défi qu'il portait à la société,¹⁰ mais il est vraiment trop indifférent pour faire un bon révolutionnaire et à propos de son «deux et deux font quatre...», Guicharnaud s'est demandé avec raison si «la pensée forte ne serait pas tout simplement une justification *a posteriori* et paresseuse de l'abandon total au pur amour de soi» (p. 260).

Revenons à ses amours. On peut relier de même la séduction à son autre activité maîtresse, l'abandon. Avec l'abandon, nous abordons l'autre hantise masculine représentée chez Molière. C'est le sort des barbons, c'est encore le sort d'Alceste, ce barbon jeune et plus sympathique, et c'est peut-être par son abandon d'Alceste, péché grave, que Célimène, traitée par ailleurs avec sympathie, sera démasquée par les hommes avant d'être rejetée finalement par le héros de la pièce.

Don Juan, lui, n'abandonne pas, si l'on peut dire, activement. Il ne rejette pas, il ne repousse pas; il ne fait rien d'autre que cesser, et la femme qui, comme on le dit si bien, s'est exécutée, il la laisse tomber. Devant Elvire qui l'assaille d'invectives, il se borne à dire à Sganarelle de répondre pour lui. Quant à son père qui le maudit, il l'invite à s'asseoir. Coincé entre Charlotte et Mathurine, il se contente de les renvoyer dos à dos et lorsqu'elles s'unissent contre lui, il s'enfuit.

Mais dans l'abandon comme dans la séduction, son comportement est efficace. Don Juan est cruel par omission. Il ne paye pas de sa personne, à l'engagement de l'autre il n'oppose ni sympathie, ni haine, ni même colère. On pourrait peut-être penser à Mme de Merteuil écrivant à Mme de Tourvel la lettre de rupture de Valmont: «On s'ennuie de tout, mon Ange...» Seulement constatons que Don Juan possède par nature ce que Mme de Merteuil avec sa nonchalance étudiée essaie d'imiter: l'indifférence qui tue.

Don Juan agit — ou n'agit pas — comme la femme contre la femme, et réalise par là la revanche fantasmée par l'homme dont la vision est déterminée par les hantises pré-oedipiennes. Et le parallélisme entre Don Juan et les femmes constitue encore une des ironies de la pièce. Don Juan abandonne des femmes qui ont déjà abandonné elles aussi: Elvire, le couvent et Charlotte, son fiancé. Et encore, argument suprême aux yeux d'un masculinisme défensif: en abandonnant les femmes, il devance leur abandon à elles.

Mais pour que règne la fascination, ce moment de grande intensité, il faut l'immobilité et la concentration, vertus classiques d'ailleurs. L'être fascinant est immobile pour captiver sa victime immobilisée de même. Mais la pièce n'est pas très classique: le moment unique aura des prolongements et l'unité de lieu ne sera pas observée. L'être fasciné finit par regarder autour de lui et découvre qu'il n'est pas seul. Et puis, il n'y a pas que des femmes, mais des hommes aussi. Le monde bouge et contraint le héros à bouger aussi. Don Juan, ainsi, ne fait pas que poursuivre, il est poursuivi, il n'est plus placé devant son amoureuse, il se trouve *entre* plusieurs feux.

Mais la rupture entre les deux temps n'est pas absolue. Avec la rencontre au début avec Charlotte et Mathurine, Don Juan est déjà en difficultés. Cette posture du héros placé entre deux femmes expose, visualise son secret qui est la multiplicité cachée sous le couvert de l'unité. La femme aimée et le mariage, ces deux atouts du séducteur, perdent leur prestige lorsqu'ils s'avèrent plusieurs. Don Juan perd son mystère et, forcé de se défendre, d'en appeler aux croyances d'autrui, il perd aussi sa musique.

Mais il n'a pas perdu tous ses pouvoirs. Il séduit Don Carlos comme sa soeur et dans sa flatteuse parole à M. Dimanche, «je suis votre serviteur et de plus votre débiteur» (IV,3), les mots, *votre débiteur* possèdent la même vertu que ceux de *ma femme* dits à Charlotte; finalement, par l'étalage de son remords hypocrite il rend son père heureux comme une femme amoureuse: «Je ne me sens pas [de bonheur]» (V,1).

¹⁰ Voir, *Le défi. Analyses et réflexions sur «Don Juan» de Molière*, Paris: Ellipses, 1981.

Il semble pourtant que l'introduction soudaine du thème de l'hypocrisie fausse irrémédiablement la vérité du personnage. Ici Molière semble mériter les critiques de Kierkegaard qui lui reproche de s'éloigner trop loin du mythe en créant un Don Juan tacticien et charlatan qui, dépouillé de sa nature démoniaque, serait réduit au niveau d'un homme ordinaire.¹¹ Il semble pourtant qu'on peut retrouver encore ici, à travers ses contradictions et ses métamorphoses mêmes, l'unité du personnage fidèle à lui-même.

Tout d'abord, l'hypocrisie n'est pas un moyen de conquête, comme chez Tartuffe, et il n'en use pas envers les femmes. Le héros ne change pas de style. L'hypocrisie n'est pour lui qu'une arme défensive. Poursuivi par les autres, il fait ce qu'il a toujours fait, il se dérobe. Pourtant quelque chose a changé en effet. Parlant longuement et avec envie de l'hypocrisie et de ses dessous mystérieux et criminels, ce grand narcissique sort de lui-même et perd de son mystère. Ce maître de la fascination se montre fasciné lui-même. A vrai dire, ce n'est pas la première fois que cela lui arrive. Pendant la période de ses conquêtes le spectacle d'un couple heureux l'avait déjà troublé :

Jamais je n'ai vu deux personnes être si contents l'un de l'autre, et faire éclater plus d'amour. La tendresse visible de leurs mutuelles ardeurs me donna de l'émotion; j'en fus frappé au coeur et mon amour commença par la jalousie (I,2).

Dans l'un et l'autre cas Don Juan se tient à l'essentiel, la fascination. Seulement, de ce mouvement, il n'est plus le sujet, mais l'objet.

Il reste pourtant que l'introduction du thème de l'hypocrisie semble trahir encore des préoccupations plus personnelles chez Molière et que la fascination du héros à propos de ce thème inquiétant est partagée par son auteur. Tout se passe comme si Molière mène une attaque directe, personnelle contre la cabale des dévots, sortie qui risque d'impliquer son héros dans les activités criminelles qu'il vient de décrire avec tant de précision. Je n'ai pas l'intention d'analyser après tant d'autres les relations difficiles entre Molière et le parti religieux; je voudrais me borner à élucider quelques aspects, quelques symptômes des relations ambivalentielles entre Molière et son personnage. Guicharnaud a suggéré que cette figure provenant du mythe échappait à son auteur et même qu'à la fin il lui a donné des traits antipathiques, «comme exaspéré par la résistance de Don Juan à se laisser entraîner dans la diminution comique» (p. 333).

Sans vouloir aller jusque-là, je voudrais signaler certains paradoxes dans le traitement du mythe par Molière. Don Juan est irrésistible auprès des femmes, mais ses aventures finissent par des échecs. Les rapports avec les femmes ne constituent qu'une partie restreinte de ses activités. Don Juan est acculé à la défensive devant un nombre toujours grandissant d'ennemis mais, malgré leur supériorité, ils sont étrangement impuissants. Les nombreux échecs n'ont pas entamé la stature du personnage. Malgré son obstination, il n'est pas un maniaque; il n'est ni un barbon ni un fat ni un bouffon comme son double, Sganarelle. Nous l'avons vu, malgré tous ses déplacements et tous ses déboires, il ne se contredit pas. Il n'est pas ridiculisé, mais c'est lui au contraire qui par son indifférence on dirait victorieuse rend ridicules tous les autres, sauf peut-être — et l'exception serait significative — les femmes. La punition finale est confiée à l'intervention de la statue du commandeur, dont le meurtre accompli par le héros, situé dans la préhistoire, n'est mentionné qu'en passant. Malgré cette apparition épisodique d'un Père, on pourrait voir dans ce dénouement préparé par deux figures féminines, Elvire et un «spectre en femme voilée», un retour du refoulé féminin. Brûlant lui-même comme il avait fait brûler les femmes d'amour, Don Juan n'est pas tué par les armes, il est englouti.

¹¹ Cf. A. Adam, *Histoire de la littérature française au XVIIème siècle*, Paris: Del Duca, 1962, tome III, pp. 335-336: «Comment concilier le Don Juan piaffant et gai du 1er acte, et le sinistre hypocrite de la fin?»

Chez Molière, l'abandon — il est le fait des femmes et il frappe les hommes — pèse lourd.

Don Juan, ce grand seigneur méchant homme est très différent de son auteur, mais, comme pour les autres hommes, cette figure mythique a sans doute rempli pour lui la fonction d'une revanche contre la femme. Mais, infligeant aux femmes ce qu'elles infligent aux hommes, ce héros vengeur fait comme elles, se rend coupable comme elles du péché de l'abandon. Ce lien paradoxal entre auteur et héros est la contrepartie de celui qui marque la création des barbons. Sans vouloir postuler une causalité directe, Charles Mauron¹² a bien montré combien les barbons chez Molière sont des créations en profondeur. Bénéficiant des multiples apports de l'inconscient du moi créateur, ils sont pourtant invariablement les objets du rire.

Don Juan et les barbons, les deux créations sont complémentaires. On dirait qu'avec les barbons Molière, profondément, se peint lui-même avec ses hantises, mais en s'en distanciant par le rire, tandis qu'avec Don Juan, grand conquérant, il peint l'autre, mais sans le réduire par le rire.

Or, les deux créations participent du même complexe de la séduction et de l'abandon, complexe masculin «obsédant» qui tient à l'amour et à la femme.

¹² Ch. Mauron, «L'évolution créatrice de Molière», in *Des Métaphores obsédantes au mythe personnel*, Paris: Corti, 1963.

Maldoror, Mother and Child

HENK HILLENAAR (*)

Each new generation of readers of *Les Chants de Maldoror* discovers in its own way how this book is a real meteor hurtling through the literary sky of the nineteenth century. Written by a twenty year old adolescent who was destined to die at twenty-five, it constitutes probably the most revolutionary text of its time. Who, before the «Comte de Lautréamont», wrote with such originality on the «crimes and monstrosities of the Creator of the Universe», a god whose wrong-doings and metamorphosis resemble those of the Ancients' Jupiter? Who, before 1855, expressed so candidly his erotic tastes, which were far from orthodox? And who, in particular, handled with such freedom the metaphor, creating for instance the richest and most surprising literary bestiary in French literature? All the surrealists and, after them, the avant-gardistes of our century have recognised their master in this adolescent writer.

Bewildered by so much boldness and brilliance, the commentators on Lautréamont's work like to speak about the «obscurity» of these poems, and about a «secret», a key which has been lost for ever. In this connection, one is used to quote Maurice Blanchot's beautiful study on *Lautreamont et Sade*, telling us that there is a «secret crime [...] concealed from every direct experience» (1956: 142-143) in this poem, a «hidden and inaccessible remembrance» (154). Had it not been hidden, this remembrance would have delivered the key to those readers who are lost among the surplus of ideas and images in the *Chants*. Actually, knowing the risks and dangers of interpreting the *Chants de Maldoror*, more than one critic or commentator has chosen the easiest way by repeating general truths, commonplaces or even by forbidding every search for such a key. That is also the trend of the very last study on Lautréamont, its author, Sylvain-Christian David, fearing at each moment to be a «trapped critic», one who «only exposes to his readers a disguised story of his own misery» (1992: 245). David declares even, but with not enough irony: «I will not have the effrontery to believe one single word of what I am putting forward here myself» (233).

Nevertheless everybody agrees that in Lautréamont's *Chants* there is a predominating concern for lucidity and clarity. Therefore some of these ever-changing interpretations must after all be relevant. For instance, since Michel Pierssens showed us, in his highly detailed analysis of the *Chants*, that «their central laboratory [is] the enigma of good and evil»

(*) Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Faculteit der Letteren, Oude Kijk in't Jatstraat 26, Postbus 716, 9700 AS Groningen, The Netherlands.

(1984: 201), it does not seem possible to still ignore that fact, so fundamental, which should figure in any interpretation of the text.¹

We for our part will try here to go more deeply into a central aspect of Lautréamont's work, which hitherto has been too often neglected by other commentators, even by Bachelard and Blanchot: the relation between mother and son. Scarcely dissimulated, this relation is a thread — perhaps even *the* thread — for the reader who enters this labyrinth of young Ducasse's fantasies. We do not know the origin of most of these fantasies. Information, however, about one essential fact of his childhood, has come to us. The future poet lost his mother in December 1847, when he was only one year and eight months old. Whatever maternal care the family may have given the young orphan, nearly every line in *Les Chants de Maldoror* seems to tell us how much this loss afflicted him. It might even clarify some aspects of his homosexuality, and certainly explains many of the preoccupations with what he experienced as his «internal evil».

Even if one takes into account the authors irony and his taste for parody, the images of mother and child, cradle and tomb, and of a traumatised sexuality where there is place for any perversion in relation to the mother — the father staying in the background — are too frequent, too obsessive and too visible to be ignored or merely mentioned incidentally, as in the case of most critics. On the contrary, this «family romance», so omnipresent in the text, should also have its place in each commentary on it.

In our analysis of the first Song of Maldoror we would like to show how much the imaginary world and writing of Lautréamont are characterized by the traces of the very special story he lived with his mother. She was a maid of the family Ducasse and had married Isidore's father only a few months before the birth of their child. She died when Isidore was still in the cradle. Mystery surrounds this dramatical episode. Madame Ducasse's name aroused scandal. Even suicide was suggested. Sooner or later, the life of his mother must have aroused the curiosity of her son, who certainly has been given a more or less truthful account of what had happened. This is what the reader experiences from the very first lines² of this long prose poem.

In that first strophe, the *Chants* are actually introduced to the reader as the report of a confrontation between son and mother. The «timid reader» is indeed recommended to behave like a «son who respectfully turns away from the august contemplation of the maternal face», that is, not to read this work, lest he should go under in it... For the poem — the maternal face — turns out to be also, according to these first verses, «desolated swamps» and «unexplored moorlands» which are to be «penetrated»: as if the face of the mother reminded the author of other parts of her body, in particular the vagina which will return several times in the rest of Lautréamont's poem³.

As a matter of fact, the separation with the mother is immediately followed by her return, the author comparing the retreat of this same timid reader with the flight of cranes headed by the oldest and «most reasonable» of them. This bird, both female and phallic, is the only one that enjoys «the privilege of showing her tail to the other cranes who are inferior to her in intelligence», and who makes them take «a more philosophical way». Lautréamont surely knew about the connotation of «trumpet» that was attached to the French word for crane: «grue». However this meaning was not so widespread in the nineteenth century. Actually this supplementary irony does not change anything in the fact that the crane is presented like some ideal mother, an ancestor of «three generations». She is living

¹ And why had we to wait until 1987, the year of Bruno Guitard's study on Lautréamont, to finally hear someone speaking about «the homosexuel tenderness» of the author, which is so striking in the *Chants* — as much for the ironical eye as for the non-ironical — and which should get a place in every comment of the text?

² Cf. H. Hillenaar 1988, where attention is called to the idea that we develop in this article.

³ Cf., for instance: II,15; II,16; III,2; III,5.

in the air, the space the author's prefers, as it offers to its inhabitants, like the ocean does to his population, yet another dimension of liberty, something that the horrifying inhabitants of the earth do not have. Lautréamont's bestiary is very much inspired by this contrast between the terrestrial animals and those that live in freedom, in the air or in the sea. The crane becomes thus rapidly a «clever captain» who «be it to port, be it to starboard» maneuvers his ship.

Thus the terrestrial mother, who afterwards will prove to be vicious and hardly reliable, is from the very first page also presented by her double, a sublime being, living in the air or in the depths of the sea. Conspicuous in this first description of her is the geometrical way of moving she has adopted. The author tells us about «an angle of cranes as far as the eye can reach» going towards «a determined point» of the horizon. The animal that leads the flight navigates with «rigorous logic [...] the angular point of the geometrical figure» that the birds form together.

Mathematics play, as every reader knows, a central part in the *Chants de Maldoror*. For the author they constitute an ideal world, the best of all he can imagine, surpassing even the beloved world of animals. As a product of mere reason, mathematics allow the author to keep his distance from the earth, and all its obscurity and passionate, deathly confusion. The lyrical strophe that Lautréamont later devotes (II, 10) to mathematics establishes a link, just as Descartes does in his *Discours de la Méthode*, with the childhood of the author, and especially his life with his mother: «Mathematics! algebra! geometrics! magnificent Trinity! Lightening triangle [...] you attracted me towards your proud breast, like a blessed son. And I came with haste, my hands clasped on your white bosom». Appearing in this first strophe of the *Chants*, mathematics become the ideal of the beginning that has been called by Freud «father of prehistory» (1960, XIII, 258-259), an internal authority which, in spite of its name, cannot exist without being accompanied in the imagination of the child by a maternal figure. Thanks to this first ideal in the interior world of the child, he is able to separate from the mother, to identify with something or someone else than the mother, and to start seeing the infinite series of metamorphoses he is offered. To those «severe mathematics» which at first sight seem to refer exclusively to the father, Lautréamont prefers to ascribe mostly maternal qualities. However, studied «in the very cradle», they guarantee also a departure from maternal ground: «The one who knows you and likes you does not want any longer the goods of the earth [...] and, carried on your sombre wings, he only wants to rise».

The *Chants de Maldoror*, where irrationality seems to reign, are above all an anthem in honour of human reason. Thirst for unity and identity, finding in «holy mathematics» its symbol, constitutes from the beginning until the end the horizon of the hero. Mathematics dictate his movements. Initially we see the triangular shape of the birds flight, which become, after many other configurations, the parabola described by Melvyn's body in the final scene of the *Chants*. Mathematics allow the author to declare, during his manifold metamorphosis and not without some naïveté: «If I exist, I am not someone else. I do not admit in myself such an equivocal plurality» (V, 3).

One should also notice that this first geometrical figure in the *Chants* — «it is perhaps a triangle, but its third side is not visible» — announces a programme. In this sentence, the triangle as pre-eminent Oedipal figure seems to be totally recognised and then rejected by the author. The third side — the father — is reduced by him to a «perhaps», which leaves to the mother the most important part of the author's imaginary world. We assist at the same process that occurs in Proust's writing forty years later. The Oedipal forces are no longer applied on their own level where they should cope with reality, frustration and castration, but used to resolve the problems of mother and child.

This programme is confirmed during the second strophe, where hate is invoked and where the reader meets for the first time the father figure, in the person of «the Eternal».

He radiates «cursed conscience» to which the author opposes the «red emanations» — balsam, perfume, incense — of hate experienced by the reader-shark, whose nostrils are «like angels». The sea and the sky meet here once again in the metaphorical world of the author. Throughout the *Chants* he will not stop letting roles and identities, times and places interchange. His seduction of the reader is brought to a climax in the thirteenth strophe of the second *Chant* — «I was looking for a soul that resembled me» — where the shark turns out to be a female animal with whom the author has intercourse in «a long, chaste and hideous copulation». This happens on an «nuptial couch» that reminds the author of «the cradle». Therefore he concludes: «I was facing my first love». The tormented desire of that timeless love is transparent to the reader of such episodes, which are rather frequent in the *Chants de Maldoror*. After the union with the shark there will be, for instance, another with a female flea, followed by the giving birth of the spider. The father does not play any part in those scenes, and certainly never as a rival or guardian of his son. When he makes his occasional appearances, he asks more for criticism than for admiration.

God, who is also a prey to ignominy and humiliation, the strangest animal in the bestiary of Ducasse, is nearly never presented as a father. Except for a few places, where the Almighty of the Bible reappears on the scene, God is the enemy, not so much because of some obscure Oedipal jealousy but as representing everything a decent being should not be. This universe of the child («listen to the thoughts of my childhood» (II, 12)) to which Lautréamont introduces us is nearly exclusively maternal. Only the mother image inspires love and repugnance. Measuring up to her in his activity as a writer, he tries to achieve his autonomy.

The first lines of the third strophe make us understand that she must also have been a fine mother: «Maldoror was good during his first years when he had a happy life» (I, 3). After the supplication of the first strophe and the invocation of the second, the third gives us the main theme of the *Chants*: the existence of evil in Maldoror, and more in particular his tendency towards what we nowadays call «sadism». His wish to harm those he loves is stronger than his own will.⁴ What strikes the reader is that the first sadistic fantasy of Maldoror — like all those that follow — concerns «a little child with a rose-coloured face». Is this the same child he just mentioned, who «had a happy life» when he was young? Why should he then punish the little child that survives in himself? Is it not because, obscurely, he is burdened by implication in another evil? Apparently the pain and rage provoked by the death of the mother has been directed by the child towards himself. Interiorising these feelings could be for him a way to recover something of the original unity that once had existed between mother and child.

However it may be, «Maldoror's ethics», the issue of good and evil which one feels all through this long poem, seems to be linked with an old traumatism of which we know the principal actors. Mother and son are present, in a long series of metamorphosis, throughout all the strophes. What brings them together is above all their relationship with death. «The human heart, we read, would prefer to have death as a mother rather than remorse as a son» (II, 15). Sometimes the mother wishes the death of her own son (II, 9). She even attempts to kill him, with the help of his wife, because he refused to share his bed with his mother (IV, 3). In a play of displacement and condensation the author identifies at times with the son, then with the mother. In the fantasy of the relation between mother and son, positive or negative, the life instinct and the death instinct seem to converge. Everything else originates from these two, especially the question of good and evil that so torments the author.

After having announced that henceforth he is going to be the singer of the Evil he

⁴ The «I» of the beginning is replaced during this strophe by the «he» of Maldoror, but the differentiation of these two pronouns becomes so insignificant, we can ignore it.

discovered in himself and in «all human beings», Lautréamont adopts in the following strophes the tone of a apocalyptic visionary. Misery and desolation are everywhere. The repeated «I saw» and «I saw them» give its rhythm to the fifth strophe. Once again, men who «shake their robust fists at heaven» remind the author of «the child behaving already perversely against his mother». In the sixth, the sado-masochistic fantasies come back at full tilt. The victim, still a child, changes during the scene into an adolescent. However, it is very difficult, as it was also noticed by Maurice Blanchot, to make out who is the victim and who the executioner. Their tears mingle, as the author changes places and roles all the time. Moreover, for our purpose it is interesting to see how the mother interferes in this scene, since tears are also dropping from the eyes of «the one who loves most». According to the author, however, his «palate prefers the taste of a child's tears». That is because a child «knowing no evil, does not yet betray, while the woman who loves, sooner or later does betray».

In this context we also find the first of the numerous passages that deal directly, without parody, with the homosexual preferences of the poet, or of Maldoror. «Adolescent, [...] I want us to be merged for eternity; forming with you one being, my mouth bonded to your mouth». Homosexual love in Lautréamont's writing brings us always back to a pre-oedipal world. There is no searching for another human being, idealised or not. The author is much more driven by what he calls further on «rebellion against the clitoris of the impure mother» (III, 5). Behind every two adolescents we feel the presence of the original couple of mother and child: «You have done evil to a human being and you are loved by the same being: that is the greatest conceivable happiness.» A last image in this chain of associations shows us a tomb, one of the many tombs that figure in the *Chants de Maldoror*. This «big tomb with the old face» makes the author recall his mother's tomb which is never totally out of young Isidore's mind.⁵

The tomb reappears immediately in the next strophe, this time, however, occupied by «an adolescent who died of consumption and of guilt, you know why». It is not necessary for our purpose to know the identity of this adolescent. Is he the narrator himself or one of his lovers? Later, the fantasy takes an unexpected turning when «a beautiful naked woman lies down at his feet» and when a glowworm with a sort of paternal authority orders him to kill this «prostitute». As a matter of fact, the reaction of the narrator resembles the one of Oedipus: he kills this father figure and joins the prostitute. Does he dream of having another father?⁶ After all, the father who has shown himself unable to retain «the wife who loves most», is also an abandoned and weak creature. Or could it be that Isidore Ducasse remembers being born only four months after the marriage of his parents? Can he not be considered, according to the prevailing standards of his time and his environment, a result of prostitution? However it may be, he rejects the insignificant paternal authority, choosing once more the side of the sublimated mother. She abandons the earth and its bestiary to become, we may suppose, the female of the shark. This image haunts the author, who dreams that she is henceforth hiding her sadness in the depths of the sea.

The eighth strophe has got something of a black novel. Again the mother is found to possess the key of the mystery. This time the central figure is a dog. In the second edition of his poem Lautréamont describes him as «the cemetery's friend». The dog becomes

⁵ A friend of Isidore Ducasse tells us the following story, of a kind one does not invent: finding one day a carrion with an insufferable smell around it, the young man asked him «a bizarre question»:

— Do human corpses stink like carrions of animals?

Without realising the harm I was doing him, I replied:

— You may be sure of that!

— So, mother, she also?...» (Caradec, 1975, 51).

⁶ Elsewhere in the *Chants*, we meet an old sailor coming home after thirteen months of absence. He finds his wife who just gave birth to the child of someone else. He kills the unfaithful woman (V, 2).

here an animal of death «barking like a child crying from hunger» or screaming like «a woman in labour pains». Behind him a woman is hidden whom the author first addresses as «my mother», and later as «the dead one». He remembers her telling him about her unquenchable thirst for infinitude, which she shares with the dogs, and also with her son. That is why she recommended him «with her vitreous eyes» to «contemplate this spectacle which is rather sublime». As it happens often in this long poem, cruelty and tenderness are here inextricably mingled. We recognise the product of a narcissic universe. The author finds his pleasure in refusing castration and all the limits it imposes upon life. Not surprisingly, the adolescent poet gives to the objects around him a very uncertain, indifferenciated position as children do. At times they are embraced or even eaten up, then they are expelled or «killed», their own value never being recognised.

The «thirst for infinitude», that he learned from his mother and that easily degenerates into thirst of death, is in the eyes of Lautréamont the most outstanding feature of mankind. It makes him dream of this very unusual family romance: «I would rather have liked to be the son of the shark's female, whose hunger is akin to the tempest, and of the tiger, known because of his cruelty: I would not have been so evil».

Then follows one of the best known Songs, the big and beautiful anthem in honour of the ocean, which the «Montvidéen» (inhabitant of Montevideo) has crossed three times. Even here we rediscover the thread of our exploration, though it is concealed in a series of luxurious and exuberant themes. Even here the love between mother and son, between son and lover, haunts the text. The ocean, «primary bosom of metamorphoses» (Blanchot 1963, 104) is in the material world what mathematics are in the spiritual, the screen on which the author may give free rein to his imagination. It resembles also the original space that was mentioned here, called by Freud «father — and mother — of pre-history» (1960, XIII, 258-259).

The view of the ocean first awakens a longing for his friend, his double, Dazet, «whose soul is inseparable of mine». Jesus-Christ, the Saviour, was the Son of Man, but Dazet as the poet's saviour, is «the most beautiful son of woman». Why are you not with me, he exclaims, your breast against my breast [...] contemplating this spectacle I adore?» Dazet's presence and the wish that stems from it «to hurt the one he loves», gives us a plausible explanation of the first image, which is certainly unexpected, that has been suggested to the poet by the cartography of the ocean: the vision of a ship boy's wounded back. He reminds us immediately after this of a still older story, referring to «the rough beginnings of man when he first meets sorrow that will never abandon him». This sorrow that has everything to do with the face of the mother (I, 1) and the way she cruelly abandoned her child, finds again its relief in the love of «the grave face of mathematics». This time, however, the attempt to escape the past does not succeed. One moment later, we very unexpectedly see a funeral passing on the screen of the «old ocean», to which nobody pays any attention. Who else could they be burying here but «the woman who loves most»?

The first of the images with which we are then confronted is the maternal whale. Then the poet sings of «all the different kinds of fishes» living in the ocean that «did not swear fraternity to each other». In the meanwhile he is still irresistably drawn back to the same family romance: the «fertile breasts» of the ocean and above all to «those many parents, so ungrateful to their Creator and abandoning the fruit of their miserable union».

The ocean with its bitter waters, profound as the human heart, becomes the place where the poet locates his primitive scene. The parents return with different faces, but are now united, simultaneously seductive and threatening, the mother figure as always stronger than that of the father. So the dear and hideous ocean gathers in its immensity «the reflection of the philosopher» and also «the love of the woman». He is a «patriarch who observes» but with his «enormous jaws» he even more resembles a mother who devours her own children. Although a «big bachelor», he very well knows about «voluptuous movements

up and down, soft emanations and waves of spume, dying one after another». The author goes again through this «somber mystery» of a copulation in which claws and bosom are tangled and confused. He shares this drama with his «brothers», of whom rather paradoxically the ocean turns out to be the most important: «Answer me, ocean, would you like to be my brother [...] hideous ocean, that I am the only to understand»? Why should we be amazed if the last question that this «malaimé» asks the ocean, mirror of all his emotions and scene of all his fantasies, concerns again the issue of good and evil: «Tell me, please, if you are really the home of the prince of darkness. Tell me, tell me, ocean».

Nonetheless, mother and son are not yet through with one other. In the eleventh strophe the family romance, implicit as it was until now, becomes explicit. Lautréamont invents a dialogue between a young boy, his parents and Maldoror, who as a new «Erlkönig» snatches the child away from his family. However, unlike the situation in Goethe's poem, the mother is very present here and, even more remarkably, she dies at the same time as her child. Even here, the everpresent parody in the *Chants* does not diminish their seriousness. The contrary would more likely be true. Does Isidore Ducasse not live again, in a barely disguised way, through the drama of his mother's death? Does not the death wish, or rather the wish to meet the dead mother, inspire this scenario? The son, Edouard, an obedient child at the beginning of the scene, hands a pair of scissors (of reality? violence? castration? death?...) to his mother. A moment later, he reverts to the world of dreams, of childhood, which actually turns out to be also the world of death, where his mother is accompanying him. They leave the father, who can only talk, to his impotence, his insignificance. About the criminal, Maldoror, we are informed that he is suffering of «madness which goes back to his childhood», his parents having died of sorrow. It is also possible, we are told, that «love has brought him into this condition».

Thus death invades more and more this first *Chant*. The author takes us now to a cemetery where, as a horrible sequel to the preceding scene, «adolescents [...] find their pleasure in violating the corpses of beautiful women who just have died».⁷

As a French Hamlet, Maldoror has a conversation with a gravedigger, the man who turns over the maternal earth «that first nourishes us to give us later a comfortable bed, protected against the wind of the winter». The gravedigger talks to him about «women in chains, dragging their winding-sheets». Even more remarkable is the presence of an animal that symbolizes the mother who sacrifices herself for her child, «the savage pelican who decides to give his breast to be devoured by her young». When the digger looks at Maldoror, he finds him «sadder than the feelings aroused by a child in his cradle». That strange image may also become clear in the light of the fantasy-memory of the child abandoned in his cradle. So we should not be astonished when Maldoror, having himself dug a tomb, makes the other man the very strange but logical request to do to him what a mother does to her child every evening: «And now, undress me and put me into it». In this statement, all the themes of love and death, mother and lover, come together in a new constellation.

Thanks to the dialogue, or rather the two monologues, Maldoror's and Dazet's, that form the second last scene of this first *Chant*, we begin to understand what was the friendship between the two boys, one being six years older than the other. Once more the mother fantasy seems to inspire the scenario, the meeting of the two friends being introduced by a description that at first sight appears rather queer, namely that of a dead dog. However, we know that the dog is the animal the mother prefers. We recognise her shadow. A long series of displacements and metamorphoses are evolving in the mother-child relationship. The narrator identifies with both roles, Dazet usually becoming the child that is loved, wounded and abandoned, whereas Maldoror likes to play the part of the mother, inspiring both love and hate. However, Dazet sometimes displays qualities that evoke the mother.

⁷ This remark has been added to the text in the second edition which contains other changes.

The boy, with the «soft» and «profound» glance of his eyes is for the narrator 'the first human being that makes «his body tremble» since the time «he was sucking the dry breasts of the woman that is called a mother». And as if all this were not yet enough, Dazet has got «a face that is more than human, sad as the universe and beautiful like suicide», the suicide that aroused so much speculation when the mother of Isidore Ducasse died (Caradec 1975, 37-45). Just as she does, Dazet makes him «think of infinity and, at the same time, of weakness»...

The reader understands why Maldoror wants that this «angel», Dazet, should continue to be his comfort. However, the words he addresses to his friend seem to reach further, to the mother. «Stay... oh, stay some time more on this earth. Close your white wings [...] If you leave, let us leave together.» The fantasy of the preceding strophe, the joint death of mother and son, returns, scarcely altered. Apparently all that the young substitute for the mother still has to do, is also to die. «He is going to die, knowing that you did not love him.» At this very moment reappears the same unaccompanied funeral procession as in the beginning. The infernal circle is closed by the terrible accusation addressed to so many human beings whose mothers died in childbirth: «You are the reason of my death.»

Love and loving friendship exist at the heart of the *Chants*. They seem to be haunted by the remembrance of the body that gave birth to the author, then became inaccessible. Of this mother he has only left a «locket that contains her photograph» (VI, 4). The longing for the mother is often reversed, the object of desire becoming a child or an adolescent. They remain, accessible but disappointing, always ready to play a part in the never-ending scenario of love and abandonment that has been created in the poet's body, his mind and his heart. The *Chants de Maldoror* seem not only an exorcism of the torment endured by a «malaimé», but also a celebration of the lost object, the body this tender and cruel work means to restore.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bachelard, G. (1956). *Lautréamont*. Paris: Corti.
 Blanchot, M. (1963). *Lautréamont et Sade*. Paris: Minuit.
 Bouché, C. (1974). *Lautréamont. Du lieu commun à la parodie*. Paris: Larousse.
 Caradec, F. (1975). *Isidore Ducasse, comte de Lautréamont*. Paris: Gallimard.
 David, S.-Ch. (1992). *Isidore Lautréamont*. Paris: Seghers.
 Ducasse, I. (1868/1869). *Les Chants de Maldoror*. (Edition GF — Flammarion, 1990).
 Fédy, Ph., Paris, A., Poiron, J. & Rochon, L. (1972). *Quatre lectures de Lautréamont*. Paris: Nizet.
 Freud, S. (1960). *Gesammelte Werke* FT10 VII et XIII. Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag.
 Genonceaux, L., Gourmont, R. de, Jaloux, E., Breton, A., Soupault, Ph., Gracq, J., Caillois, R., Blanchot, M. (1969). Préfaces aux Chants de Maldoror. In *Lautréamont, Oeuvres Complètes*, Paris: Corti.
 Hillenaar, H. (1988). Maldoror, mal de mère, ou les animaux dans les Chants de Maldoror. I *CRIN*, Groningen: PU Groningen.
 Kristeva, J. (1983). *Histoires d'amour*. Paris: Denoël.
 Pierssens, M. (1984). *Lautréamont. Ethique à Maldoror*. Lille: PU Lille.
 Pleyne, M. (1967). *Lautréamont par lui-même*. Paris: Seuil.
 Sollers, Ph. (1968). La science de Lautréamont. In *Logiques*, Paris: Seuil.

The Archaic Mother in the Late Novels of E. M. Forster

SUE FINKELSTEIN (*)

With incredible fortitude Forster managed his impressive literary output in spite of intense suffering throughout most of his life from what Winnicott has called «primitive anxieties», or anxieties about «going on being». His serious personality problems were the residue of events in his early life including maternal depression, loss of his father before his second birthday, doting overvaluing attention from a variety of women including his great aunt Marianne Thornton to whom he was «the Important One», overprotection coupled with maternal contempt for being «delicate» and perhaps most damaging of all, maternal withdrawal of affection when he was angry followed by icy-cold refusal to yield to his frantic efforts to reestablish affectionate responsiveness. (Furbank, p. 15)

He lived with his mother until her death and wrote to her every day he was away from home. He had bouts of severe depression and severe anxiety about separation and loss; his self-esteem was very fragile; and he was given to insistent, driven sexual preoccupation expressed sometimes by writing homoerotic stories and sometimes in action with men of a lower social class. This driven sexual activity appears to have been in response to self fragmentation, especially at times of isolation or loss. In India his isolation drove him to desperate sexual enactments, and after his mother's death he consoled himself by cultivating erotic fantasies.

Forster was in an impossible position relative to his mother: Interpersonally, she was the center of his life; intrapsychically, his internal representation of her and of what he had to be to satisfy her and not to lose her was the center of his self. This dilemma and his life-long efforts to solve it, while not so conscious as that created by his sexuality, also found expression in his work. It is this perception which informs my reading of his novels.

THE EARLY NOVELS: SINS AGAINST EROS AND PALLAS ATHENE

[T]he vast armies of the benighted... have yielded to the only enemy that matters — the enemy within.... They have sinned against Eros; and against Pallas Athene,... and those allied deities will be avenged.

(*) 2960 Coleridge Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44118, USA.

While Forster does refer to the enemy as «within» he is dealing in these early essentially satiric novels with an enemy that wormed its way in from outside. The antagonist is anti-libidinal prudery, hypocrisy, mindless conventionality, religious, social and sexual snobbery. It is embodied primarily in women. Sometimes they are merely conventionally silly lovable women like Mrs. Honeychurch, and sometimes they are malevolent and sadistic women like Mrs. Herriton or Mrs. Failing and especially Agnes Pembroke the «Medusa in Arcady», but their influence pervades the lives of the protagonists whose doomed struggle to survive and to free themselves comprises the action of these novels. Only Lucy and George in *A Room with a View* are able to escape the universal defeat. Forster studies how these women achieve their power: manipulation, «diplomacy» control by guilt and outright lies and deception. Thus do women implant in their victims the enmity to Eros and Pallas Athene that destroys their spirits or keeps them in paralyzed bondage. Understanding and exposing the awesome power of these ladies has obvious personal relevance for Forster.

TRANSITIONAL WORK

The locus of the problem in *Maurice* is more internal than in the earlier novels; it is not primarily the inhumanity and sterility of the pillars of society that have set themselves in opposition to Eros and Pallas Athene; it is primarily painful alternations between the agony of abandonment and the «muddle» and «bewilderment» that come from embeddedness in a life with women. Mrs. Hall is «too idle to scheme» yet Maurice returns to Cambridge «thinking and even speaking like his mother and Ada... The mist would lower again, he felt sure, and with an unhapppy sigh he pulled Durham's head against his knee, as though it was a talisman for clear living» (57). As for Clive, «the mental vagueness induced by his marriage» (244) was brought about not so much by the manipulation of women as by the same problem that produced Maurice's «mist». The permeability to women of boundaries, the threat of passive submission and merger with them and the loss of self as the alternative to abandonment and emptiness is the problem. The solution is passionate love between men outside the bounds of society. Forster banishes women from the wildwood to which he and Alec retreat to save themselves.

Short of repairing to the wildwood outside the bounds of convention and class Maurice makes some experiments at establishing himself as a person who has his own identity and boundaries and who is worthy of respect. He observes that in his family he could play the suburban tyrant as long as he had the love of Clyde, but after Clive abandoned him, he found that his emptiness and despair impelled his mother and sisters to delight in thwarting and slighting him and rendered him unable to protect himself. Conversely, he found to his surprise that his indifference to her opinion of him caused Mrs. Durham to respect him. Just as in his own relationship with his mother, Forster sees indifference as inducing respect and neediness as eliciting contempt. Indifference to the love of the (m)other functioned as an artificial boundary that lasted as long as the sense of being the beloved of someone else. Without it, the insistent need not to be abandoned made the self as permeable as ever. The insolubility of this dilemma within the bounds of heterosexual bourgeois society makes it no less internal, ie intrapsychic. And it is the predominantly internal locus of the problem that makes *Maurice* a transitional work between his early satiric novels and the two great ones with which he ended his career as a novelist.

LATE NOVELS: «PANIC AND EMPTINESS»

Howards End turns even further inward from bourgeois sterility as the enemy to the

problem of loss of rootedness in the Old Ways: loss of permanence and of constancy. It was an issue that plagued Forster in a realistic way involving the loss of Rooksnest, the charming house on which *Howards End* is modelled, but also in a deeper more internal way as well. His personal need for constancy, for sameness, as related to his internal lack of fully developed object constancy which left him forever clinging to his mother in fear of abandonment and in hope of her love but also forever unconsciously enraged at his enslavement. As we have seen, the novels can be read as successive attempts to struggle with this issue. In *Howards End* Mrs Wilcox together with Miss Avery represents Forster's image of what has been lost. She is the archaic mother in whose omniscient mind all is known without words, and by whose hand all is healed. *Howards End* is her spirit, and its loss is the loss for all of civilization of permanence, of being rooted in an unchanging place.

Margaret is the spiritual heir of *Howards End* as Mrs. Wilcox intended, able to revere the archaic mother and keep faith with her without loss of self. While she sometimes has the uneasy sense of being only a part of Mrs. Wilcox's mind, she does not on that account suffer uncertainty as to what she stands for or paralysis about acting on it. In *Howards End* she is able to make a refuge for Henry's broken spirit and a home for Helen and her child. At times she is even able to hope that its stability can represent not only preservation of past stability, but hope for the future as well. «This craze for motion has only set in during the last hundred years. It may be followed by a civilization that won't be in movement, because it will rest on the earth. All the signs are against it now, but I can't help hoping, and very early in the morning in the garden I feel that our house is the future as well as the past.» (268)

Margaret seems to represent Forster's ideal for himself: Not only does she have «a profound vivacity, a continual and sincere reponse to all that she encountered in her path through life» (6), but she also has independence enough to resist «thinking conjugally», the tendency that besets married couples inside the «glass shade» that settles on them. She can call Henry on his obliviousness to the consequences and moral implications of his personal relations, and she can even decide to leave him on that account, but she continues to love him with a constancy that he and the other London characters do not have.

Henry Wilcox has never learned to say «I». He does not proceed from his own center, about which through inattention he knows nothing. He can cheerily shake off friends at a moment's notice; his is the inconstant object of the London commercial world of flux in which Forster has embedded a metaphor for his own internal struggle for permanence. Even Helen Schlegel whose credo is «personal relations» does not escape the London blight: «Leonard seemed not a man, but a cause... Helen forgot people. They were husks that enclosed her emotion» (246). Margaret is the only character in *Howards End* truly able to «connect».

Only connect! That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its height. Live in fragments no longer. Only connect, and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation that is life to neither, will die. (147)

That seems to me to have been the whole of Forster's sermon as well. Unlike the motherless Margaret, Forster remained unable to leave the mother to whom he was enslaved to achieve an independent self that could connect. Instead he idealized her in *Howards End* into the longed-for archaic mother. His pessimism may well have derived from increasing hopelessness about connecting and the regressive threat of being overwhelmed by the strength of his longings for merger with the archaic mother.

«It was as if the splendour of life might boil over and waste to steam and froth. In its dissolution one heard the terrible, ominous note, and a goblin, with increased malignity, walked quietly over the universe from end to end. Panic and empires! Panic and emptiness! (25)

«London's creeping... And London is only part of something else, I'm afraid. Life's going to be melted down, all over the world.» (268)

Howards End is a passionate cry of longing for permanence, for the archaic mother to make one whole; in it Forster senses the possibility of internal dissolution, the «melting down» of the self. And in *A Passage to India*, the last novel he could bring himself to write, he peers into the abyss of that terrifying possibility.

A Passage to India is thick with mother images which apply to the land and the country itself:

... the high places of Dravidia have been land since land began.... They are older than anything in the world. No water has ever covered them, and the sun who has watched them for countless aeons may still discern in their outlines forms that were his before our globe was torn from his bosom. If flesh of the sun's flesh is to be touched anywhere, it is here, among the incredible antiquity of these hills. (135-6)

How can the mind take hold of such a country? Generations of invaders have tried, but they remain in exile. The important towns they build are only retreats, their quarrels the malaise of men who cannot find their way home. India knows of their trouble. She knows of the whole world's trouble, to its uttermost depth. She calls «come» through her hundred mouths... But come to what? She has never defined. She is not a promise, only an appeal. (150)

India, the most ancient mother of all, knows of all the world's trouble, but she offers no home and like Forster's mother no promise, to those who seek. She offers only homelessness to those who like him lose themselves in her undefined vastness. And the Marabar Caves are an even more complex image of the archaic mother, womb-like in their shape and in the mysterious darkness of their interior, but exquisitely sexual as well:

They are dark caves.... There is little to see, and no eye to see it, until the visitor arrives for his five minutes, and strikes a match. Immediately another flame rises in the depths of the rock and moves towards the surface like an imprisoned spirit: the walls of the circular chamber have been most marvellously polished. The two flames approach and strive to unite, but cannot, because one of them breathes air, the other stone. A mirror inlaid with lovely colours divides the lovers, delicate stars of pink and grey interpose, exquisite nebulae, shadings fainter than the tail of a comet or the midday moon, all the evanescent life of the granite, only here visible. Fists and fingers thrust above the advancing soil — here at last is their skin, finer than any covering acquired by the animals, smoother than windless water, more voluptuous than love. The radiance increases, the flames touch one another, kiss, expire. The cave is dark again, like all the caves. (137)

It is to this enigmatic womb-like image evocative of sex and death that all the characters are related, and it is the array of their responses to it that comprise the fabric of the novel. The Anglo-Indians see the Marabar Hills simply as a landmark, a thing on the horizon. Aziz, oblivious of their meaning, naively uses them as a stage for pleasing the English ladies and incorporating them into his grandiose fantasy of being a Mogul emperor. Godbole is the Hindu Forster refers to as «Ancient Night» (81); his spirituality is related to their mystery but he resists describing them. Exposure to the mystery of the caves is fateful for the English visitors.

But not all of them: Fielding prefers to «travel light». It is as though the threat of

enslavement could be banished by living as a stranger with no binding ties, no commitments such as might compromise one's judgement into «thinking conjugally» or one's ability to be allied impartially with all parties among bitterly warring factions. «'I shall not really be intimate with this fellow', Fielding thought, and then 'nor with anyone.' ...And he had to confess that he didn't mind.... Experience... helped him towards clarity, but clarity prevented him from experiencing something else.» (127) The mysterious force of the Marabar Caves, for instance. They leave him completely unmoved.

Not so the two English women. Adela Quested, the rational, principled girl who wants to «know India» but who is impervious to its spirituality, is quite undone by the Marabar Caves. She enters worried about having decided to marry Ronny in spite of her reservations after «... one of the thrills so frequent in the animal kingdom passed between them...» (94) She suddenly realizes she doesn't love him. She becomes subtly aware of Aziz's attractiveness and flees the cave in a panic having developed a paranoid delusion that Aziz tried to assault her. What happens to Miss Quested in the Marabar Caves is that she projects onto Aziz the sexual impulses which she cannot accept in herself and the Cave echoes them back to her. She collapses and not until she recovers the image of Mrs. Moore at the trial does she recover her ability to sort out the events from her projection.

In depicting Mrs. Moore's encounter with India Forster transports to a terrain far vaster than she can encompass an archaic mother figure rooted in the English soil from which Mrs. Wilcox derived her power and her permanence. She is like Mrs. Wilcox in her intuitive connection with people and places and her respect for them but instead of giving permanence as does Mrs Wilcox in England, Mrs. Moore in India is transmuted into a Hindu goddess «*Esmiess Esmoor*». (250)

She gradually loses that background of belief that sustains all endeavor, whether practical and worldly or artistic and spiritual. It is a phenomenon of age, as Forster sees it. It is a kind of resignation that prompts her to wish to lay down her burdens and «[t]o be one with the universe» (231). But it is greatly augmented by her encounter with the Hindu view that abolishes distinctions between same and other, which serenely inhabits a world in which everything and its opposite are conceived of as included in «my Lord» (198).

Through Mrs. Moore's encounter with the Marabar Caves Foster peers into the abyss of complete loss of meaning, utter chaos and fragmentation, shattering of the structures of her thought and belief, of her way of construing herself and her world.

What had spoken to her in that scoured-out cavity of the granite? What dwelt in the first of the caves? Something very old and very small. Before time, it was before space also. Something snub-nosed, incapable of generosity — the undying worm itself. Since hearing its voice, she had not entertained one large thought, she was actually envious of Adela. All this fuss over a frightened girl! Nothing had happened, «and if it had», she found herself thinking with the cynicism of a withered priestess, «if it had, there are worse evils than love». The unspeakable attempt presented itself to her as love: in a cave, in a church — Boum, it amounts to the same. Visions are supposed to entail profundity, but — Wait till you get one, dear reader! The abyss also may also be petty, the serpent of eternity made of maggots... (231)

Forster's loneliness and his lack of intimate ties in the palace of the Maharaja of Dewas seems to have threatened his self-cohesion. His resort first to compulsive masturbation and then to very driven sexual encounters with servants of the Maharaja attests to his desperately fragmented state. (Furbank, EMF, V.2, 82-86)

I believe that the abyss Forster peered into at the Marabar Caves was the regressive pull of his longings for merger with the mother defended against by his compulsive sexual activity. The highly sexualized image of the cave/womb seems to have expressed his unconscious

fantasies of merger with the all powerful archaic mother, even as it stimulated mortal fear of passive submission and loss of self. This fear of passive submission to the archaic mother is the motivation to which Anna Freud attributes homosexual object choice on the part of some men, and Forster seems to fit her category. Both were implied in his longings: the danger of merger and the danger of passive submission; both threatened dissolution of the self.

Anne Wyatt-Brown attributes Forster's inability to produce any more novels after *A Passage to India* to fear of punishment for incestuous wishes and to the emergence into consciousness of his hostility toward his mother for her enslavement of him. She sees these conflicts as responsible for a writer's block that began after he wrote *Howards End* and that persisted through the difficult ten-year interval required for completion of *A Passage to India*. While I also see in Forster's life and work both these issues, I would add a third more primitive one, viz: threat of regressive merger and self-fragmentation. I think that this is the abyss into which he peered and from which he was forced to retreat.

REFERENCES

- Forster, E.M. (1905). *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. New York: Vintage Books, 1992.
- Forster, E.M. (1907). *The Longest Journey*. New York: Vintage Books, 1962.
- Forster, E.M. (1910). *Howard's End*. New York: Bantam Books, 1985.
- Forster, E.M. (1914). *Maurice*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1987.
- Forster, E.M. (1924). *A Passage to India*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984.
- Forster, E.M. (1923). *A Room with a View*. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.
- Forster, E.M. (1956). *Marianne Thornton: A Domestic Biography, 1797-1887*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.
- Freud, A. (1952). Studies in Passivity. In *The Writings of Anna Freud*, Vol. IV, pp: 245-259, New York: International Universities Press, 1968.
- Furbank, P.N. (1977). *E. M. Forster: A Life*. New York: Harcour Brace Jovanovich.
- Winnicott, D.W. (1962). Ego Integration in Child Development. In *The maturational Process and the Facilitating Environment*. New York: International Universities Press, 1965.
- Wyatt-Brown, A.M. (1983). A Buried Life: E. M. Forster's Struggle with Creativity. *Journal of Modern Literature*, 1(10): 109-124.
- Wyatt-Brown, A.M. (1983). Howards End: Celibacy and Stalemate. *The Psychohistory Review*, 1(12): 26-33.

Wives and Mothers in *Jude the Obscure*

STEVEN V. DANIELS (*)

«His desire absorbed him, and left no part of him to weigh its practicability.»

Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*, 134.

In an otherwise notably sensible discussion of *Jude the Obscure*, Michael Millgate — who probably knows as much about Hardy and his works as anybody — oddly interjects, «If it seems excessive to suggest that in calling Jude ‘The Obscure’ Hardy may have had in mind an ironic allusion to such titles as Oedipus ‘the King’, it is at least conceivable that in writing Jude he had the career of Oedipus very much in mind» (7). Millgate’s first suggestion does, as he himself allows, seem excessive; the second seems equally unwarranted, especially since it is supported by no more than a paragraph of cursory likening of the novel’s self-conscious patterning and the play’s inexorable movement of plot. Oedipus’s is anything but a «tragedy of unfulfilled aims», Hardy’s phrase for Jude’s story — and perhaps Sue’s — and a phrase that especially catches the eye as the title of a reprinted version of Millgate’s chapter. No, good sense and good manners at least would have Oedipus’s story stand as the supreme tragedy of unaimed at fulfilments. Psychoanalysis has, of course, in its unmannerly fashion, taught us to be suspicious of whether any fulfilments — not only Oedipus’s — are completely innocent of having been aimed at. It might also lead us to wonder about Hardy’s characterization of his novel. It is appropriate to regard *Jude the Obscure* as a «tragedy of unfulfilled aims» and to see *Oedipus the King* as its obverse. It may be equally appropriate, though, to see the tragedy in both in terms of the fulfilment of unconscious aims, incestuous in their nature. Is it «at least conceivable» that this is what Millgate had «very much [somewhere] in mind» in linking the two texts?

My best means of affirming that not all of Jude’s aims go unfulfilled is to turn again to Millgate’s discussion. A few pages after the previous observation, in a commentary on the novel’s many betrayals, he writes, «As the book proceeds, it becomes increasingly clear not merely that Christminster [Hardy’s version of Oxford] is impregnable to such as Jude, but that the values the college walls protect are themselves hypocritical and debased» (11). This Millgate seems to see as the novel’s most formidable betrayal. «Dominating the whole novel is the sense of Christminster’s betrayal of Jude, his efforts, and his ambitions»,

(*) Southern Methodist University, English Department, Dallas, Texas 75275-0435, USA.

he states, bringing to its culmination a list that begins with and leaves far behind what he refers to as Jude's own «self-dramatising» claims about his merely «technical» betrayal of Sue (11). I'll return to Jude's self-accusation of being Sue's «seducer», his judgment that he should have left her «intact» (418); for now, though, I'd like to underline two points. First, that there is, in the distribution of burden between Christminster's betrayal of Jude and Jude's merely «technical» betrayal of Sue, a real question as to which weighs more heavily in Jude's tragedy, as to which if otherwise would provide greater relief. Second, Millgate's observation about Christminster's being «impregnable to such as Jude» ought, I think, to remind us that not all walls — without comment as to the values they protect — are so resistant to Jude's ardor. Christine Brooke-Rose recognizes the analogy between Christminster's walls and the physical and emotional barriers Sue sets up between herself and Jude (27), but stops short of considering the difference in the way each ultimately responds to Jude's applications for admission. Arabella and Sue in fact prove impregnable in an antithetical sense. Apart from Jude's three children, questionable enough in their different ways, pregnancy figures ominously in the novel, first in the self-serving deception Arabella employs to capture Jude in Part First and last, toward the end, in Sue's self-deceiving honesty to little Jude, figuratively at least the product of that earlier false pregnancy and here bewildered about why people bring children into an unresponsive world. The first of these pregnancies signals a fulfilment, if only for the time being, for Arabella; the second bears witness to Jude's own fulfilment of one of his aims, and that arguably the foremost among them. The consequences of Christminster's impregnability—at least momentarily a source of salutary insight for Jude, when he recognizes the superior vitality of town over gown (168) — even at their worst pale beside the consequences of the antithetical impregnability of the two women in Jude's life.

There is even more of the family than there initially appears to be in this novel of multiple marriages and the death of children. It does appear — assertively if not particularly convincingly — in the family curse that reputedly haunts the Fawleys: «The Fawleys were not made for wedlock», Jude's great-aunt tells him; «There's sommat in our blood that won't take kindly to the notion of being bound to do what we do readily enough if not bound» (116). This, of course, hardly explains the disaster that befalls Jude and Sue despite the scrupulous avoidance of marriage in their relationship with one another; it, does, though, provide one of three reasons Jude enumerates and ultimately fails to heed for, as the text oddly puts it, thinking of Sue «quite in a family way» (137) in order to avoid «intimate acquaintance» (145). (This is not the text's only verbal disjunction of sexuality and intimacy.) The first of these reasons is, quoting again, «that he was married, and it would be wrong. The second was that they were cousins. It was not well for cousins to fall in love even when circumstances seemed to favor the passion.» Either the laxness is mine in not, until Jude reminds me, thinking of relations between these two cousins as potentially incestuous or it is Jude's — no, Hardy's — in so thoroughly dropping the issue having once raised it. Concern shifts garrulously to the institution of marriage, as if in a nervous diversion of attention from a real source of anxiety. (As in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, where a terrible secret again acts as a restraint on passion, incest would be a simpler and more palatable explanation of motives than those officially provided.) There is in fact no legal question of incest here; but it would seem, having earlier raised the issue of consanguinity in his own mind, that Jude would return to it when, in a spirit of insistent self-accusation, he later blames himself for having, as he puts it, «seduced» Sue. Perhaps the book intimates and then ignores — or represses — these matters in order to intimate and then evade implications of symbolic incest that soon emphatically develop. For while the novel is choreographed as a «quadrille» (Hardy's term, in *The Life of Thomas Hardy*, 273), it also is organized triangularly.

By the time Jude fulfills his foremost aim and desire, Sue, his beloved, has been (as she again will be) the wife of his first mentor, model, and rival. Phillotson may be, as

Jude says, too old for her; but it is partly because of that circumstance that Sue, whom Jude rescues from a loveless marriage, is so obviously a wife to Jude's figurative father. There is no doubt, I think, within this fantasy, that, first and last, the son is the mother's true love despite the marital bond. And insofar as parental sexual relations are acknowledged at all, they are regarded as a hideous penance. Spoken through Arabella at Jude's funeral at the end, the vindictiveness is, nonetheless, that of the abandoned son: «She's never found peace since she left his [Jude's] arms, and never will again», the novel ends, «till she's as he is now» (491).

In the midst of the novel's overdeterminations, another fantasy, more powerful, more pervasive, more troubling, crosses this one. If Jude has two «wives» in the novel, one actual (Arabella, whom he marries twice) and the other preferred (Sue, whom he lives with and never marries), Jude also has two «mothers», toward whom he stands in the same relation. There are, of course, two Judes, father and son, though the belated naming of the son is another matter that appears to be established in the novel mainly in order to be obscured. Though given his father's name, «the apt nickname [Little Time] stuck to him.» Still, the oddly parallel relations the two Judes have with the two women in their lives suggest some blurring of boundaries in their conception. Freud writes of such a blurring of boundaries in relation to certain male fantasies: «The son shows his gratitude [for having been given life] by wishing to have by his mother a son who is like himself; in other words, in the rescue-phantasy he is completely identifying himself with his father. All his instincts, those of tenderness, gratitude, lustfulness, defiance and independence, find satisfaction in the single wish to be *his own father*» (173). Though «the apt nickname stuck to him», «he was», according to the text, «formally turned into 'Jude'» (367).

Each Jude is, to be specific, abandoned by both women: Arabella ends her first marriage to Jude by abruptly (and mercifully) leaving him; and later, to avoid personal inconvenience, sends her son away to his father. Sue sends Jude away from their home when she ends their non-marriage, a circumstance that follows on the consequences of her emotional, and, as young Jude apparently believes, actual abandonment of him. For both Judes, it is Sue's abandonment, emotional or physical or both, that is by far the more devastating: each, by his own lights, responds suicidally, with Jude on his death bed reciting words from Job [«Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived»] that he had earlier feared that «the boy — my boy, perhaps, will find himself saying before long!» (485, 341). On the other hand, it is the boy who achieves his father's childhood wish never to grow up (57).

The radical differences between Sue and Arabella, no less than their similarities of role, make me suspect that it's really these two women who are, as Phillotson says of Sue and Jude, «one person split in two» (293), with, however, complementarity rather than compatibility as the measure of their relatedness. (Sue and Jude's compatibility, like the accuracy of Phillotson's frequent judgments of them, is, in any case, relentlessly put in question by the novel.) Despite some recent feminist efforts to make Sue less bewildering than she is, her character is not forged in the crucible of historical observation and insight — she is not, despite some disingenuousness in Hardy's «Postscript» to the novel, «the first delineation in fiction of the woman who was coming into notice in her thousands every year — the woman of the feminist movement» (42), as Hardy claims to have been told that she was; rather, her character is forged in fantasy and in diametric contrast with Arabella's. «We long ago discovered», Freud writes, «that what, in the conscious, is found split into a pair of opposites often occurs in the unconscious as a unity» (170).

Christminster is for Jude a desired «Alma Mater», with himself as her «beloved son in whom she shall be well-pleased» (80). Soon after his arrival, it reveals to him its duplicity: «What at night had been perfect and ideal was by day,» he discovers, «the more or less defective real»; and «Necessary meditations on the actual including the mean bread-and-

cheese question, dissipated the phantasmal for a while» (130). The division in Christminster, itself a division of apprehension within Jude, is the division embodied and expressed in Arabella and Sue. Arabella is, from her first intrusion into Jude's life, «a complete and substantial female animal — no more, no less» (81); Sue, as Jude sees her, is «[a] spirit, [a] disembodied creature, [a] dear, sweet, tantalizing phantom — hardly flesh at all» (309). What is at stake here and in any number of other contrasts between the earthly Arabella and the ethereal Sue is not only a contrast between characters who have an independent existence of their own, but also an enactment of contrasting desires.

In categories reminiscent of those Freud discusses in his first two «Contributions to the Psychology of Love», with Arabella, Jude has sex without love; with Sue, at least until the «seduction», he has love without sex, thereafter, sex as a concession and finally as an admitted mistake. For some men, Freud writes,

The sensual current that has remained active seeks only objects which do not recall the incestuous figures forbidden to it; if someone makes an impression that might lead to a high psychological estimation of her, this impression does not find an issue in any sensual excitation but in affection which has no erotic effect. The whole sphere of love in such people remains divided in the two directions personified in art as sacred and profane (or animal) love. Where they love they do not desire and where they desire they cannot love. (182-83)

Jude is both more and less fortunate than these men. His «sensual excitation» for Arabella is wholly without feelings of tenderness; erotically effectual, it nonetheless leaves him with feelings of self-contempt. He arrives easily at a «midnight contiguity» with Arabella when a chance encounter brings them together, but he also arrives easily at «a sense of degradation at his revived experiences with her» (244). On the other hand, neither he nor Sue can, with even that degree of success, direct his response to her into similarly — that is, obversely — divided channels; his high estimation of her does not, that is, block «sensual excitation». «To be sure she was almost an ideality to him still. Perhaps to know her would be to cure himself of this unexpected and unauthorized passion. A voice whispered that, though he desired to know her, he did not desire to be cured» (146). For Freud's subjects, division, with its degrees of psychic impotence, is a defensive safeguard against incestuous wishes; in Jude's story, it is a psychic aim in conflict with a more powerful desire. The ambivalence of Jude's desire — the failure of psychic splitting — is perhaps most painfully manifested in the peculiarities of a passage that comes close to reversing the meaning of some of Freud's terms and to evoking, with regard to «tender wishes» and «free and fearless» «intercourse», antithetical meanings of its own:

Still Sue was his own kin, and the fact of his having a wife, even though she was not in evidence in this hemisphere, might be a help in one sense. It would put all thought of a tender wish on his part out of Sue's mind, and make her intercourse with him free and fearless. It was with some heartache that he saw how little he cared for the freedom and fearlessness that would result in her from such knowledge. (140)

Neither Jude nor Hardy seems to be aware of the oscillations of meaning, the affirmations and denials, in this peculiarly charged passage. It is the textual moment-as Jude (certainly) and Hardy (probably) do not recognize — when antitheses of tenderness and sexuality most merge and repel one another.

Jude's effort to return to the mother who abandoned him in early childhood — he attempts, like her, to drown himself — is a pathetic, almost ludicrous failure; his effort to find a responsive parent in either Nature or Civilization only reenforces his orphanhood in the world. Ultimately, then, in the midst of these other failures, the story of his desire,

of his «yearning... to find something to anchor on» (65), becomes the story of his inability to resist seduction by one woman and his inability to resist «seduction» of another. The first causes him self-contempt and castration [he last appears as Arabella's «shorn Samson» (457)]; the second, the blackmail of Sue into sexual acquiescence, leads, he seems to claim, to guilt and pain and tragic death. «My God, how selfish I was! Perhaps — perhaps I spoilt one of the highest and purest loves that ever existed between man and woman» (430). And he dies knowing — and showing in his suicidal visit to Sue — that, if he could, he would fulfill this unconsciously incestuous aim again.

D. H. Lawrence, one of whose titles my own is intended to evoke, while no friend to Sue, blames Jude more vigorously than any other critic for forcing the sexual issue and thereby violating his beloved. His view is at the opposite extreme from Millgate's observations about Jude's merely «technical» betrayal of Sue. He also writes, with iconoclastic bravado, but also with poignant intimations of the incest taboo, of Hardy's work in general:

This is the tragedy of Hardy, always the same: ... it is nothing more metaphysical than the division of a man against himself in such a way: first, that he is a member of the community, and must, upon his honour, in no way move to disintegrate the community either in its moral or its practical form; second, that the convention of the community is a prison to his natural, individual desire, a desire that compels him, whether he feel justified or not, to break the bounds of the community, lands him outside the pale, there to stand alone.... (21)

It remains unclear, I am aware, whether the fantasies whose presence I've been claiming are Jude's or Hardy's or, in my opening comments, Michael Millgate's, in his likening of *Jude the Obscure* and *Oedipus the King*, or, in my final intimations of incest, Lawrence's, in the passage just cited. Furthermore, though it would be reassuring, it would not, I believe, be psychoanalytically sound to exempt myself from considerations of unconscious aim. Hardy himself remarks at the end of his «Postscript» to *Jude the Obscure*, in a sense his last word on the novel, «And no doubt there can be more in a book than the author consciously puts there, which will help either to its profit or to its disadvantage as the case may be» (43). Hardy's statement does not, however, make clear whose unconscious, in the collaboration that constitutes reading, supplies what the author has not consciously included, whose unconscious aims, that is, interpretation may fulfill.

WORKS CITED

- Freud, S. (1953-74). A Special Type of Choice of Object by Men. In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Edited and translated by James Strachey et al. 24 vols., vol XI. London: Hogarth.
- Freud, S. (1953-74). On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love. In *The Standard Edition XI*.
- Hardy, F.E. (1962). *The Life of Thomas Hardy*. New York: St. Martin's.
- Hardy, Th. (1978). *Jude the Obscure*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Lawrence, D.H. (1985). *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Millgate, M. (1987). The Tragedy of Unfulfilled Aims. In *Thomas Hardy's Jude the Obscure* (Harold Bloom, Ed.), New York: Chelsea House.

Günter Kunert's *Mann über Bord*: A Short Story as Family Romance (*)

WALTER SCHÖNAU (**)

MAN OVER BOARD

The wind was not very strong. At one roll of the ship, the sailor, intoxicated and dancing thoughtlessly, lost his balance and fell off the deck. The man at the rudder saw his fall and immediately gave the alarm. The captain ordered a boat to be lowered onto the slightly choppy water, to save the sailor, who was drifting away slowly.

The crew put their backs into it, and after only a few strokes they reached the sailor crying for help. They threw him a lifebelt, to which he clung. In the pitching and tossing boat, someone stood up in the bow to fish the floating man out of the water, but then the rescuer himself lost his grip and fell into the flood, while an unexpectedly high wave washed under the boat from the side and tossed it over. The captain gave the order that the steamer should make its way towards the swimming and crying men. Hardly had they begun, however, when a shock shattered the ship, which already tilted sideways, deadly tired, its steel body torn open by a jagged coral reef, which had hidden itself just below the surface. As usual, the captain went down with the mortally wounded ship.

He did not remain the only victim: sharks came closer and devoured whomever they could. Some of the sailors made it to the lifeboats, only to die of thirst on the vast mass of salt liquid a few days later. The sailor, however, who had fallen off the steamer, got caught, unharmed, in a drift which carried him to an island, on whose beach it threw the exhausted man; here he was found, looked after, celebrated as the sole survivor of the catastrophe, which he himself described as a boiler explosion, which had hurled him through the air, so that he could see from above how the heap of rubble went down with all hands.

On this island the sole survivor could live quite well off this story. Pity and the elation they felt at knowing someone with a fate like his nourished him. To the people it seemed, however, that his mind must have suffered; whenever a foreigner appeared, the shipwrecked man disappeared, paling and shaking and filled with a fear which nobody could explain: a constant mystery and therefore a constant topic of conversation for the long hours of the siesta.

(*) A former German version of this paper appeared in *Literatur und politische Aktualität*. Festschrift für Gerd Labrousse. Ed. by E. Ibsch and F. van Ingen. Amsterdam/Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1993.

(**) Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, German Department, P.O. Box 716, 9700 AS Groningen, Netherlands.

This story, which is the first in Kunert's collection *Daydreams*, can be understood as an implied allegory which does not formulate its meaning, or as a form of modern parable after the example of Kafka. There is much in the text that suggests that the story is not told for its own sake, but points to something beyond itself, wants to exemplify something general. Stories about ships are known to tend toward the allegorical.

The model-like nature of the narrated events lends the text the character of a «worst case scenario», an experiment in ideas after Dürrenmatt's adage that a story has been thought through to its end only when it has taken its worst possible turn. For what baffles us at first is the odd narrative structure of the story, with its falling line and unforeseeable chain of catastrophes in the first part. The one-sidedness of Dürrenmatt's proposition is then demonstrated by the rising line, the rescue of the sailor and his strategy for survival on the island, in the second part, as well as by the inconclusive ending with which the story closes, in a state of suspension.

The traditional pattern underlying a story with motives such as a shipwreck, the miraculous deliverance of the sole survivor and his subsequent island existence, can historically be understood as a literary form which is cognate with the Robinsonade. Strictly speaking, however, the story is not the traditional Robinsonade it appears to be, simply because the island is not uninhabited. One might think of the episode of Odysseus with the Phaeacians as an early prefiguration of our story which also uses the idea of an extraordinary existence associated with living on an island (cf. Frenzel 1976, 383).

The course of the narration is structured by three peripeties: the fall of the sailor, the fall of the rescuer, and the rescue of the sailor. According to Kunert, the genre of the short story fascinates

because of the peripety which determines the flow of the narration, the amazing turn which the reader could not have expected and which for a brief moment snatches him away from the alleged laws of his own existence to make him aware of the undreamt-of and richer possibilities of what we call life

(*Kurze Betrachtung der Kurzgeschichte*, in *Warum schreiben?* 1976, 212f.).

The specific effect of the story must lie in the paradoxicalness of the fact that all rescue attempts fail due to unforeseen circumstances, while the sailor is not saved by human intervention, but by «coincidence». Not the man who has fallen overboard, but the operation «man overboard» causes disaster. Not surprisingly, this is also the title of the story. An essay in a later edition of *Daydreams* (1972) bears the title «Paradox as Principle»; in this story the paradox is clearly the main structural principle.

Following Karl Hotz (1984), one might also understand this text as a *Denkbild* after Ernst Bloch and Walter Benjamin, that is, as a short narrative text which aims at a shock of recognition by connecting fantasy and intellect. But what recognition does the text mediate, then? A discussion of this question would have to deal with the fundamental opposition coincidence/fate, as well as with the moral concepts of guilt/innocence and lying/truthfulness which can be found in the text. I am afraid that such a discussion would lead to the interpretation that all guilt on this earth will always avenge itself in some way, which would satisfy our need for justice but not our hermeneutic conscience. And did the author himself not warn us against such interpretations?

Parable, allegory, symbol — whenever we work out their meaning to the fullest, we immediately feel very contented about the achievement of our intellect, so that we forget what meaning we have really worked out. The subject which we have grasped completely disappears in us never to be considered again. Where something of the mystery remains, [...] our interest also remains, our curiosity, our being disturbed.

(*Diesseits des Erinnerns* [On This Side of Remembering], 1982, 80).

Perhaps we should also ask ourselves why, in spite of the obvious moral implications of the story, the narrator himself does not moralize, but invites us to psychologize by presenting the genesis of the neurotic symptom of xenophobia as a kind of case history which ends with a «mystery» whose solution is left to the reader, who, by the way, has been given the appropriate tools to solve this mystery.

If we assume that after these first considerations we still have this feeling of «being disturbed», then this would in fact correspond to the intention of the author; or to put it differently, our reception would remain perfectly adequate, but as interpreters we would be giving up too early if we were to leave it at that. Let us try, then, to approach the text and its mystery from a different perspective.

I would first like to focus your attention on a seemingly irrelevant formal detail, namely the description of the ship in the second paragraph. The ship is said to be «tilted sideways», being «deadly tired», with its «steel body torn open» and being thus «mortally wounded». Here the narrator stylizes for the first time, by using anthropomorphic metaphors to present the ship as a living being. He actually humanizes the ship and thus presents the shipwreck as the act of dying. The main question of my interpretation is as follows: what is the function of this embellishment, these subjective extras given to us by the narrator, which seem unnecessary to the fable as such and are given no explanation or correspondence in the rest of the text? The answer that we are dealing with an aesthetic function, in the sense that the narrator's report is embellished with a number of metaphors, is hardly satisfying, since it does not explain why the whole of the text is not stylized in this way, and perhaps most importantly: why these particular metaphors were chosen and not any others.

Of course, the metaphorical description of a ship as a living being is not at all unusual, on the contrary. Myth, folklore, linguistic usage and cultural tradition testify to depth psychology's own interpretation that the ship often represents a feminine symbol. It is therefore only consistent to represent the shipwreck as the death of a woman, as happens in this story. But does this representation of a deadly tired, mortally wounded being not appear remarkably isolated, without any correspondence with other elements of the text? When we concentrate only on the superficial structure of the text, our consideration will indeed not lead us anywhere in particular. When we approach the text from a psychoanalytical perspective, however, we may be able to find a structural coherence which not only gives the anthropomorphization meaning and purpose, but also shows it to be a visible element of a hidden but ramified deep structure. The humanization of the ship then appears as the umbilicus of the daydream, as the seam between the superficial and deep structures of the text.

We must elaborate a bit on this point. The psychology of literature positions literature at the end of the genetic range play/daydream/literature and understands literature first and foremost as the product of fantasy. Psychoanalysis has yielded some valuable insights into the origin, contents and function of fantasizing. On the basis of clinical experience, it has recognized the existence and importance of unconscious fantasies. These unconscious fantasies, which originate in early childhood as compensatory functions in crises and conflicts, relate to typical experiences in processes of individualization and socialization. Their original contents are, for example, birth, the experience of the symbiotic phase, the differentiation between subject and object, the body image, early object relations to the father, mother and the brothers and sisters. These early fantasies have largely become unconscious and present a kind of repertory of prototypical patterns of fantasy, which structures later fantasies as a matrix of primal scenes. They are suppressed, for the most part, but not «killed off». They look for opportunities to manifest themselves, albeit in masked and distorted forms. Because these fantasies often concern dangerous and forbidden desires, they cannot present themselves to consciousness openly and in their original form. This is taken care of by the instance of censorship, whose task as an agent of suppression it is to maintain a certain

measure of psychological balance. Whatever part of these fantasies reaches consciousness, as symptom, dream or daydream, for example, must always be understood as a compromise between the original impulse, the desire informing the fantasy and its suppression.

The way that literature is rooted in the daydream and the correspondence in content and function between the two are part of the foundations of the psychology of literature. In our case, the author Günter Kunert has consciously thematized the analogy by calling his collection *Daydreams*. The third story of the collection is even called «Daydreams», and we may therefore understand this story as a kind of programme for the entire collection. It deals with our inclination to escape the boredom of our limited existence by hypothetically identifying with others. It ends with the point, however, that we will then inevitably also experience the limitations of the other's existence. In private daydreams the principle of lust reigns supreme. It serves the gratification of desires as compensation for the listlessness of failure which reality more often than not presents us with. The literary daydream, the daydream pretending to be «sophisticated», may disguise the fact that it originates in the antisocial, amoral and intimate privacy of the daydream, but it cannot and will not deny this origin completely. In his *Stockholmer Rede* (1978), Kunert mentions this disguise of the original as one of the most important structuring principles of his writing:

Masking in order to show, disguising in order to present the bodiless figure, to «shape» it. And for us authors ourselves in this process: masking oneself in order to save one's face.

(*Diesseits des Erinnerns*, [On this Side of Remembering], 1982, 84).

The fantastic (in its chaining of coincidences) rather improbable sequence of events which the sailor who has fallen overboard triggers off, may now be read as a kind of daydream, even though at first sight the egoistical, ambitious or erotic desires which the daydream quasi-satisfies are not clearly present in the story. In the second part, however, which presents the sailor as the beneficiary of fate, the hero of all daydreams, «His majesty, the ego» (Freud, GW VII, 220) can be easily recognized: by his virtual immunity, which he shares with so many heroes of the trivial literature and movies which set out to gratify such desires — but not with the captain and his mates from the ship, who all perish tragically.

When an author calls one of his prose collections *Daydreams*, he gives his readers a recommendation as to which approach to his texts he finds adequate and upon which model he has shaped these constructs of fantasy. The reader may expect a much greater use of imaginative powers and a greater proximity to latent desires than in other kinds of texts. The reader also knows that literary daydreams may have been shaped after the model of private fantasies and desires, but that they must to a certain extent also be «collective daydreams» if they are to be received appropriately.

Even though they are consciously crafted, and though they are, unlike dreams which occur at night, constructs of fantasy, daydreams also hide prototypical fantasy material originating in early childhood. Put differently, they too are structured on unconscious patterns, they too have deep structures. This is even more true of the literary daydream. Psychoanalytic interpretation attempts to understand the interaction between the manifest text layer and the unconscious patterns of the latent fantasy content. As we look for the contours of the fantasies which the text hides in its unconscious substratum, we may start from the symbolical equation of the ship with a woman. In this respect, cultural tradition and psychoanalytical interpretation agree (cf. Freud, GW II/III. 359). This interpretational move is guided by the consideration that the most conspicuous features, irregularities, inconsistencies and discontinuities in the manifest structure of the text can often be understood as indicating the proximity of unconscious fantasies, as signs of interference between the two text layers. It is often in the places where the so-called secondary revision by the author, that is, the transformation

of fantasy into a socially acceptable piece of work, has remained incomplete, that repressed material — which will always attempt to emerge — becomes visible.

If we assume correctly that the main character represents the daydreaming ego — which the text and its context give us ample reason for, since Kunert treats daydreams as phases of identification in the title story of his collection — then we must ask ourselves what is the nature of the relationship between the sailor and the woman who is symbolically represented by the ship. Here we have no recourse to cultural tradition, but must rely on the psychoanalytical interpretation of symbols, which tells us that the fall into the water, which triggers off the events in the story and provides it with a title, must be understood as a birth (cf. Freud, GW II/III, 404/8; XIII, 181/3). This meaning of the jump or fall into the water may not seem immediately plausible. Perhaps we would sooner accept the reversed idea, the emergence from the water, as a symbolic image for the emergence from the amniotic fluid. We need only remind ourselves of the mythical representations of the births of heroes such as Adonis, Osiris, Bacchus and also Moses in the Old Testament to realize the plausibility of this view. However, the mechanisms of the unconscious, that is the masking techniques which authors use in their work, also include representation by opposite, the reversal of a certain idea. The interpretation of dreams offers ample proof for this phenomenon (cf. Freud, GW II/III, 331/5, 341/4). This principle of transformation into the opposite, which is also the basis of the technique of telling jokes, underlies many of Kunert's prose texts and poems, as I have shown elsewhere (Schönau, 1982). We might also remember that the falling overboard of the sailor in fact represents a Freudian parapraxis, a symptomatic act whose unconscious motivation we can only guess. If we now understand the fall into the water as a masking reversal, and if we in turn reverse this disguise, we reach the following assumption: if the ship represents a woman and the fall into the water a birth, then, on the level of unconscious fantasy, the ship represents the mother. It is a mother ship.

If we stick with this context of the fantasy world of early childhood, we have good grounds for interpreting the captain, the authority figure who is in control of the ship and its crew, as an image of the father. Naturally, we may then interpret the crew of the ship, who also fall into the water, as representations of the brothers and sisters. That would complete the original constellation of early infant object relations and open up the possibility of grounding the daydream story in a prototypical fantasy of anger which concerns the death-wish which the firstborn child harbours against the brothers and sisters who pushed him out of his prominent position, as well as against the parents, who have to answer for this injustice (cf. Freud, GW II/III, 259/69). If we substitute the *post hoc* of the manifest text layer for a *propter hoc* in the level of fantasy, that is, if we assume a causal connection between the sequence of events on the basis of the intentionality of the fantasy, or, to put it differently, if we substitute the actorial perspective for the authorial perspective, then the idea emerges that the Ego wishes death on his brothers, sisters and parents, because so many rivals of the firstborn child also claim their parents' favours. Impersonal fate, which determines the life of the sailor, then becomes an active and omnipotent magical curse, a death sentence. «The language of symbolism», Freud wrote (GW XII, 182), «knows no grammar, it is an extreme instance of infinitive language, the active and passive voice are represented in the same image.»

This will perhaps become more plausible when we look at the second part of the story, which reads as if the rescued Ego fantasizes an improved version of his youth, without brothers and sisters, but with other, well-intentioned parental figures: again this begins with an image of birth, albeit masked to a lesser extent, as the sailor emerges as the only

survivor from the water in which his rivals must die of thirst. The fact that he finds a good substitute for his parents on the island is borne out by phrases such as the ones which intimate that he is «looked after», and that pity and the elation he feels at knowing something about his fate «nourish» him.

If we thus assume that everything which is suffered passively in the manifest content of the story, represents daydream-like gratification of desires in the latent substratum, then our story also shows the contours of another typical fantasy of early childhood: the idea that one is not really the child of these parents, who cause so much disappointment, but of better parents, a fantasy which occurs in many myths and legends, and also in narrative literature, as Marthe Robert has shown (1972), and which Freud, with intentional humour, has called a family romance (Freud, *GW VII*, 227/31, *XVI*, 109/11). Marthe Robert has also drawn attention to the latent oedipal rebellion which the Robinson figure shares with our sailor (1972, 83): Robinson Crusoe goes on board because he wants to leave his parents' house forever, and right from the beginning, his journey is doomed by the guilt of breaking away from home. The shipwreck and his island existence are thus consequences of his flight. Kunert's story, incidentally, is a radical revenge on his parents, who «as usual» (this phrase would be an unmotivated cynicism if it were not interpreted as an expression of aggression towards the parents) sink together, so that the sailor can start again from the beginning on the island. The objection that the deep structure of fantasy which I have sketched is irrelevant to the interpretation of the text because it has no immediately obvious connection with it, I would counter by asking questions about the function of the anthropomorphic metaphors in the presentation of the ship. I feel that such questions can only be answered in an approach which is informed by the insights of psychology. The functionalism of the literary form corresponds to the determinism of the psychoanalytical approach: just as the latter does not acknowledge unmotivated acts (and from this deduces its theory of the so-called Freudian slips), so does the former not tolerate blind motives and text elements which have no function. «Blind» coincidence in the world of the narrative has, as we know, always been intended and arranged by the author.

Now to our final point, the mysterious xenophobia of the survivor which cannot be explained by the islanders and therefore always remains a «continuous topic of conversation», that question about the reason for the survivor's xenophobia, which we as readers are able to answer, namely, that it is a symptom of a sham existence, but which the author, because he changes perspective and narrates the episode from the point of view of the islanders, does not answer. This literary strategy presupposes the interpretational activity of the reader in the sense that it creates an empty space, a motivation gap in the texture of the story, which the reader must fill in for himself if he is to understand the story properly. It is the very place where all reception of the text must tend towards interpretation.

The sailor, who apparently denies his share of the responsibility for the catastrophe by lying about the turbine explosion, cannot be sure whether there are any other witnesses of the shipwreck. Any foreigner could shed some light on the events on board ship. This explains his fear of foreigners, who are able to expose him and disturb his blissful island existence. How does this ending, which thematizes guilt as social anxiety, correspond to the deep structure? It is the masked suggestion of punishment for the (fantasized) death-wish against the parents and brothers and sisters. It is a reaction against the grandiose triumph of the Ego, it is the demand for retribution of the Superego, which would not have tolerated such a radical fantasy if it did in the end not include some kind of punishment.

In the manifest text, the responsible perpetrator has become an innocently guilty person, whom one can at best accuse of callousness, and a certain negligence, perhaps, the consequences of which he could not have foreseen. The sailor should appear as nothing more than the trigger of the shipwreck, not as its cause. The narrator goes to great lengths to emphasize the relatively harmless mistake of the sailor and to euphemize the danger of the situation:

the wind was not very strong, the water was only *slightly choppy*, the sailor drifted away *slowly*, he was reached after *only a few* strokes. The often practised operation «man overboard» proceeds in an orderly way at first and the catastrophe only starts when another sailor falls into the water. The high wave was *unexpected*, the coral reef was *hidden* under the surface. All of this must surely suppress the original narcissistic anger against all members of the family. The story thus appears as a compromise, as a negotiation between the archaic and violent instincts of the Id and the strict moral demands of the Superego.

We have tried to interpret the text on both its manifest and latent levels and have arrived at the following correspondences between the narrative phases on the one hand and the fantasy elements on the other:

I 1. Man overboard	2. Shipwreck	3. Death of the crew
1. Birth of Ego	2. Death of parents	3. Death of brothers and sisters
II 1. Rescue of sailor	2. Island existence	3. Xenophobia
1. Rebirth	2. Family romance	3. Punishment

According to a «rational» interpretation a main theme will appear at the end that constitutes the unity of the work. In this case the main theme is the sense of guilt and responsibility in connection with an enormous catastrophe, which though it was triggered by negligence, was unwanted and unforeseeable. Such interpretative considerations also divert our attention from the associations which work preconsciously or unconsciously and form a texture which yields a main fantasy that represents death-wishes within the «family romance». Both layers presuppose each other.

How did we proceed? We have made connections between the images of the text and the ideas from the repertory of prototypical fantasies, that corpus of images and their order of occurrence which psychoanalytical research of clinical experience has given us. We have tried to illuminate the course of unconscious associations, and we translated emotionally charged moments of fantasy into a discursive language of concepts in order to make them intersubjectively verifiable. We did all this, however, claiming to describe not only an intellectual construction, but also a psychological reality which also determines the reception of the text, but which, as an unconscious dimension, goes beyond our powers of direct observation.

Here we finally encounter the problem of the acceptance of psychoanalytical interpretation, which claims to be able to make statements about the reader's experience which the reader himself cannot directly and spontaneously comprehend. It is up to the reader whether he is sympathetic to such unconscious processes, and whether he is willing to look deeper into the sense of «being disturbed» about which Kunert speaks, in order to understand it in its deepest roots.

LITERATURE

- Benjamin, W. (1972). Denkbilder. In *Gesammelte Schriften*, IV, 1 (R. Rexroth, Ed.), pp: 305-438, Frankf.a.M.: Suhrkamp.
- Frenzel, E. (1976). Das erwünschte und verwünschte Inseldasein. In *E.F.: Motive der Weltliteratur* (E. Frenzel, Ed.), pp: 383-401, Stuttgart: Kröner.
- Freud, S. (1900). Die Traumdeutung. *Gesammelte Werke* II/III. Frankf.a.M.: Fischer, 1961.
- Freud, S. (1909). Der Familienroman der Neurotiker. *Gesammelte Werke* VII. Frankf.a.M.: Fischer, 1955.
- Freud, S. (1922). Traum und Telepathie. *Gesammelte Werke* XIII. Frankf.a.M.: Fischer, 1963.
- Freud, S. (1939). Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion. *Gesammelte Werke* XVI. Frankf.a.M.: Fischer, 1961.
- Hotz, K. (1984). Die Denkbilder des Günter Kunert. *Praxis Deutsch*, 11: 54-60.
- Kunert, G. (1964). *Tagträume*. Munich: Hanser.
- Kunert, G. (1972). *Tagträume in Berlin und andernorts*. Munich: Hanser.
- Kunert, G. (1976). *Warum schreiben? Notizen zur Literatur*. Munich: Hanser.

- Kunert, G. (1978). Stockholmer Rede 1978. In *Diesseits des Erinnerns*, Aufsätze, pp: 77-84, Munich: Hanser.
- Robert. M. (1972). *Roman des origines et origines du roman*. Paris: Gallimard. English trans. by S. Rabinovitch, *Origins of the Novel*, Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980.
- Schönau, W. (1981). Günter Kunerts Tagträume. Zum Motiv der Versteinerung und dem Mechanismus der Umkehrung. In *Freiburger literaturpsychologische Gespräche* Bd 1. (J. Cremerius, Ed.), pp: 131-148, Frankf.a.M./Bern: Lang.

Romeo, a Lover Inhibited Lover by Childhood Trauma

MARVIN B. KRIMS (*)

I intend to explore Romeo as a man doomed to his tragic fate by childhood trauma.¹ I shall try to show that it is his need to relive this childhood trauma that determines Romeo's fate and prevents him from avoiding the feud by «putting Juliet on his horse and making for Mantua» (Mahood 1957, p. 57).

I first explore Romeo's words, *before he meets Juliet*, for indications of anxiety caused by childhood trauma and then examine his metaphors as possible indicators suggesting the nature of the trauma.

Finally, I read the «tomb scene» as a reliving of the trauma with Juliet.

ROMEO BEFORE HE MEETS JULIET (ACT I, SCENE 1)

As the play opens, Romeo's friends and family are concerned about his sadness. A friend, Benvolio, asks him: «What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?» (I, i, 1.163). At first, Romeo is cryptic, evasive: «Not having that which, having, makes them short» (1.164.) — and then he reveals what he believes to be the cause of his unhappiness: «Out of her favor where I am in love» (1.167). Romeo is in love with a woman who rejects him. He tells Benvolio that this woman — Rosaline — is not only uninterested in him, she has no interest in romance with anyone: «She hath foresworn to love» he says «and in that vow/ Do I live dead to tell it now» (1.223). In addition, she is a Capulet! But despite his clear knowledge of Rosaline's vow of chastity and her lineage, Romeo remains hopelessly in love with her. He could hardly have chosen a less available woman.

Romeo seems to consider Rosaline the entire cause of his misery. It is as if his happiness were entirely in her hands and he accepts his love for her as if it were inevitable — «star-cross'd» in the words of the chorus. But it is his *choice* of an unavailable woman that causes his unhappiness — not Rosaline herself. Romeo never asks himself a crucial question: With the many women available to the heir of an aristocratic family, why does he pursue a woman like Rosaline? And if he fell in love with her before he knew of her vows and lineage, why does he not give her up, grieve the loss, and move on to a more available

(*) 184 Ward Street, Newton Centre, Massachusetts 02159, USA

¹ All references are to Riverside Shakespeare, 1974.

woman? Instead he feels helpless about his situation, and is unable to heed Benvolio's advice to «forget to think of her» (l.225) and «examine other beauties» (l.228).

Romeo's perception of himself as a helpless victim, completely dependent on the will of another is the perception of a child. Accordingly, this perception could represent a repressed, but dynamically active, memory from childhood. Accordingly, his attachment to Rosaline can be interpreted as an enactment of this repressed memory.

According to this construction then, Romeo's perception of Rosaline as the cause of his unhappiness is not *entirely* wrong; it is merely anachronistic. The perception has its origin in childhood, when he (like everyone) was relatively helpless, his fate truly dependent on the will of another. In those early years, a trauma occurred, perhaps a rejection by a woman, and he defended himself from the pain by repressing the memory. The repressed now returns in his «choice» of a woman, Rosaline, who rejects him and with whom he thus repeats the trauma in displaced form.

ROMEO'S METAPHORS AS POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF EARLY TRAUMA

Romeo, still talking with Benvolio about Rosaline, begins a verse (l. 171) with his longing for her when suddenly they encounter the scene of a brawl between the feuding families:

Alas that love, whose view is muffled still,
Should without eyes see pathways to his will!
Shall we dine? O me, what fray was here?
Yet tell me not for I have heard it all:
Here's much to do with hate, but more with love.
Why then, O brawling love! O loving hate!
O anything, of nothing first create!
O heavy lightness, serious vanity,
Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms,
Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health,
Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!
This love feel I, that feel no love in this.
I, i, l.171-182.

After his expressing his longing («Alas that love, whose view is muffled still, should without eyes see pathways to his will»), Romeo reacts to the sight of the brawl. Overwhelmed by what he sees, he heaps oxymoron upon oxymoron. He is responding to what is arguably the ultimate paradox: love creates hate. Importantly for this reading, he ends the verse with: «This love feel I, that feel no love in this» (l.182). His thoughts revert back to exactly where they had been at the beginning of the verse: his unrequited love for Rosaline. And Romeo remains preoccupied with Rosaline throughout the remainder of the scene, never speaking of the brawl again despite his intense reaction to the sight of it. It is as if the brawl, and his cascade of oxymora in reaction to it, were merely transient interruptions in this ongoing preoccupation. But Romeo's words in reaction to the brawl, *situated in the midst of a verse beginning and ending with his difficulties with love*, are analogous to free associations. Accordingly, his words here in reaction to the brawl can be read as commentary on his problem with love.

His «Yet tell me not for I have heard it all» indicates the scene is all too familiar to him. His flood of hyperbolic metaphors follow. This overwrought reaction to a rather tame brawl (at least by Elizabethan stage standards) seems somewhat excessive, so perhaps Romeo is overreacting. His feeling of having heard it all before then might therefore be an experience of *deja entendu* or *deja vu*. Accordingly, Romeo *has* experienced this before

— long before — in childhood but he has repressed the memories. These repressed memories (and the painful affects connected with them) are mobilized by the sight of the brawl and express themselves in Romeo's *choice* of metaphors.

Then, his «Here's much to do with hate, but more with love» (l. 175) becomes the confusion of a child uncertain what he is seeing: Is this hate or love? This seems to be about people hating and hurting each other and yet it is somehow more about love. Why then it is somehow both: a fusion of loving and hating, a confusion loving and hurting (l. 176): «Why then, O brawling love! O loving hate!»

This imagery seems to overwhelm him and he tries to deny the reality of what he sees: «O anything, of nothing first create!» (l. 177) He is telling himself that he is imagining the whole thing, creating a phantasy out of nothing at all. He is responding like a child caught in a traumatic situation who must then deny the reality of what is happening.

But this defensive denial does not contain the anxiety and Romeo continues (l. 178): «O heavy lightness, serious vanity.» Is this a danger situation, a pleasurable frivolity? Somehow both at once? And what is that «Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms?» (l. 179) Is it separate people fused together? One misshapen form? It is both: a chimera of separate people who have somehow lost their separateness and blended into one chaotic form.

The fusion of loving and hating, the confusion of pleasure with danger, the separate forms blended into a misshapen chaos — located in a verse beginning and ending with love — suggests that Romeo might be unconsciously reexperiencing the feelings and perceptions — and misperceptions — of a young child exposed to adult love-making.²

Accordingly, his «still-waking sleep, that is not what it is» (l. 181) might refer to the drowsy young child whose reality testing is impaired and who is not sure about what he sees. «O heavy lightness, serious vanity» and «feather of lead» (l.180) would also refer to Romeo's infantile confusion about the physical aspects of copulation: Is it a crushing burden or a lightness wickedly borne?

His oxymoron of «cold fire» (l. 180) then becomes a reference to the passion of the copulating couple («fire») and his own feelings as he watches, excluded from the exciting process («cold»).

This combination of overwhelming stimulation and rejection occurring early in childhood mobilized hate («hate» is repeated twice in the verse). He projected this hate onto the love-making couple, turning the loving into a fusion of brawling love and loving hate. This caused him to misperceive loving as hurting, a misperception which now causes Romeo to avoid love by attaching himself to the chaste Rosaline.

ROMEO WITH JULIET IN THE TOMB

Before he meets Juliet, Romeo's trauma expresses itself in his attachment to a chaste woman and he only agrees to go to the Capulet's feast because *she* will be there. But as soon as Juliet appears, Romeo's anxiety about love seems to vanish and he instantly falls in love. This immediate substitution of Juliet for Rosaline without an interval of mourning is another indication that his attachment to Rosaline was based on his inner need, not love.

But in loving Juliet, Romeo has merely changed women without changing himself and therefore the trauma of the primal scene remains with him and will find a way to express itself. Since he now loves a woman who returns his love, the trauma is not expressing itself as it had with Rosaline. Instead, the site for expression of the trauma has shifted and is displaced onto the feud between the families. Now Romeo will live out the repressed

² Other possible trauma, such as child abuse, may be inferred here but the words seem to me more consistent with primal scene exposure, a far more common occurrence than abuse.

memories of the primal scene within the context of the violence of Verona. Since he no longer needs a rejecting woman with whom to relive the trauma, the displacement frees Romeo for love with Juliet. He will, of course, pay a heavy price for his «freedom».

THE TOMB SCENE (V, iii)

Possible derivatives from the primal scene can be observed throughout the text but appear with particular clarity in the tomb scene with the «dead» Juliet:

O my love! my wife
Death, that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:
Thou art not yet conquer'd; beauty's ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
And death's pale flag is not advanced there.

.....

Ah, dear Juliet,
Why are thou yet so fair? Shall I believe
That unsubstantial Death is amorous,
And that the lean abhorred monster keeps
Thee here in dark to be his paramour?
For fear of that, I still will stay with thee;
And never from this palace of dim night
Depart again: here, here will I remain
With worms that are thy chambermaids;

V, iii, 1.91-109.

Romeo «worms that are thy chambermaids», (l. 109) converts the tomb into a bed-chamber, the scene of his childhood trauma. Death is Juliet's lover now (l. 104-105): «... the lean abhorred monster keeps/ Thee here in dark to be his paramour.» «Unsubstantial Death is amorous» (l. 103); he has «suck'd the honey of [Juliet's] breath» (l. 92). Yet Juliet lives in death — «beauty's ensign yet/ Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks» (l. 94-95). Breathlessly, Juliet waits for Death to «advance his pale flag» (l. 96).

Romeo here is not only the distraught, grief-stricken husband but also the traumatized child. To the traumatized child, Juliet is not dead; she has abandoned him for a rival, Death. Romeo is reliving the trauma of the primal scene. This reliving compels him to «everlasting rest» with Juliet, instead of finding another life — and another wife — in Mantua.

Romeo has returned to the primal scene for the last time. He is determined to frustrate his rival, Death, and join Juliet forever (l. 106-108): «For fear of that, I still will stay with thee;/ And never from this palace of dim night/ Depart again.» He is again the jealous child trying in vain to stop the adults from making love. He now turns his fury against himself:

.....O, here
Will I set up my everlasting rest,
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
From this world worried flesh. Eyes look your last.
Arms take your last embrace! and lips, O you
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
A dateless bargain to engrossing death!
Come bitter conduct, come, unsavory guide!
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on

The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary bark!
 Here's to my love! O, true apothecary!
 Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.
 (l. 109 -120)

Romeo's suicide represents the final act of the primal scene. His «Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on/ The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary bark!» (l. 117-118) is a representation of coitus, misunderstood by the child as an act of violence.³ Thus, the fury and guilt of the traumatized child finds final expression in an act of self-destruction.

With his suicide, Romeo enacts his oxymora in reaction to the brawl in Act I: he and Juliet are together in «still-waking sleep», now and forever a «misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms». Romeo has completed reliving the primal scene.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SUGGESTED READINGS

- Cox, M. (1976). Adolescent Process in *Romeo and Juliet*. *Psychoana. Quart. or Rev.*, 63: 379-389.
- Dalsimer, K. (1986). Middle adolescence. In *Female Adolescence: Psychoanalytic Reflections on Literature*, Yale: Yale University Press.
- Kahn, C. (1981). Coming of Age: Marriage and Manhood in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Taming of the Shrew*. In *Man's Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare*, Berkley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.
- Kernberg, O. (1980). Adolescent Sexuality in Light of Group Process. *Psychana. Quart.* XLIX: 27-47.
- Kristeva, J. (1987). *Romeo and Juliet: Love-Hate in a Couple*. In *Tales of Love*, trans. Leon Rudiez, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Mahood, M. (1957). *Shakespeare's Wordplay*. London: Mathuen and Co.
- Rabkin, N. (1967). *Shakespeare and the Common Understanding*. New York: Free Press.
- Rothenberg, A. (1973). Infantile Phantasies in Shakespearean Metaphor: The Fear of Being Smothered. *Psychoana. Rev.*, 60: 205-222.
- Rothenberg, A. (1973-74). Infantile Phantasies in Shakespearean Metaphor: Scoptophilia and Fears of Ocular Rape and Castration. *Psychoana. Rev.*, 60: 533-556.
- Shapiro, S. (1964). *Romeo and Juliet: Reversals, Contraries, Transformations and Ambivalence*. *Coll. English*, 25: 498-501.
- Whittier, G. (1989). The Sonnet's Body and the Body Sonnetized in *Romeo and Juliet*. *Shak. Quart.*, 40: 27-41.

³ His death also could be a representation of orgasm, a common metaphor in Early Modern England.

Creativity and Homosexuality: Strategies of Psychic Survival in Schiller and Goethe

OLGA NESSELER (*)
THOMAS NESSELER (*)

In memoriam Frederick Wyatt

I.

UNTERTHÄNIGSTES PRO MEMORIA

an die Consistorialrath Körnerische weibliche Waschdeputation
in Loschwiz eingereicht von einem niedergeschlagenen Trauerspieldichter

Bittschrift

Dumm ist mein Kopf und schwer wie Blei,
die Tobaksdose ledig
Mein Magen leer — der Himmel sei
dem Trauerspiele gnädig.

Ich kraze mit dem Federkiel
auf den gewalkten Lumpen;
Wer kann Empfindung und Gefühl
aus hohlem Herzen pumpen?

Feur soll ich gießen aufs Papier
mit angefrornem Finger? —
O Phöbus, haßest du Geschmier,
so wärm auch deine Sänger.

Die Wäsche klatscht vor meiner Thür,
es scharrt die Küchenzofe —

(*) Universität Freiburg, Deutsches Seminar II, Werthmannplatz, D-79085 Freiburg, Germany.

und mich — mich ruft das Flügelthier
nach König Philipps Hofe.

Ich steige mutig auf das Roß;
in wenigen Sekunden
sehe ich Madrid — am Königsschloß
hab ich es angebunden.

Ich eile durch die Galerie
und — siehe da! — belausche
die junge Fürstin Eboli
in süßem Liebesrausche.

Jetzt sinkt sie an des Prinzen Brust,
mit wonnevollem Schauer,
in ihren Augen Götterlust,
doch in den seinen, Trauer.

Schon ruft das schöne Weib Triumph
schon hör ich — Tod und Hölle!
Was hör ich? — einen naßen Strumpf
geworfen in die Welle.

Und weg ist Traum und Feerey,
Prinzessin, Gott befohlen!
Der Teufel soll die Dichterei
beim Hemderwaschen hohlen.

gegeben
in unserm jammervollen
Lager ohnweit dem Keller.

F. Schiller
Haus- und Wirthschafts Dichter

Schiller wrote this poem at a perilous moment in his life. The fleeing poet formulated it as a petition addressed to the laundry personnel of the Körner household in which he took refuge and found support

On September 22, 1782, Schiller left behind his home town and everything else that was secure and familiar to him. By doing so he hoped that he could freely follow his vocation for writing. The experiences he had during this voluntary «exile» shaped his personality and triggered emotions which decisively influenced his literary production not only during that time, but also later. Obviously, his mood during the flight gave him those impulses which shaped the tone and basic idea of *Don Carlos*.

His psychic state was marked by a fundamental ambivalence and feelings of guilt: he wanted to get away from the many years of compulsion of bowing to the commands of his father and Carl-Eugen, the Duke of Württemberg. On the one hand, he wanted to be creative and write; but on the other hand, he also desired love and recognition from his two fathers. In order to achieve this he would have had to be obedient rather than resistant. He chose freedom, thus satisfying only one side of his ambivalent emotions. Therefore, the other side of his ambivalence — the need for love and recognition from

his fathers — caused feelings of guilt. The inner conflict between both sides of this ambivalence found its expression in Schiller's entire literary production.¹

We want to examine how this ambivalence functions in relevant situations in the author's life, how it refers to and reinforces early conflicts and psychic structures of his childhood. We shall begin by describing Schiller's later psychic and physical state and tracing its relation to his childhood in order finally to show how past and present in his life story come together in *Don Carlos*.

On September 24, two days after his flight, Schiller was no longer under direct pressure from the Duke. He appealed to him in a letter:

The misfortune of a vassal and a son can never be a matter of indifference to a most gracious earl and father. I have found a terrible way to move the heart of my most gracious Lord because he forbade me the natural way by severe punishment. (NA 23, 41)²
[...] I have no further prospects if Your Grace should refuse me the favour to *let me be an author* with your permission. (NA 23, 42)

The end of this letter gives the impression that Schiller left his home a long time ago and now would like to return:

I am impatiently looking forward to your most gracious answer with the trembling hope of returning from a strange country to my Lord and my native country. I am longing desperately for this answer with deepest submission and all the emotions of a son towards his angry father [...] (NA 23, 43)

Like a lost son, Schiller addresses the Duke and begs for his understanding and forgiveness so that he can return home filled with remorse.

He went away in order to be able to freely follow his creative bent. But the situation in which he found himself in did not offer him the latitude he needed. Debts, hunger, isolation, and the lack of recognition in his immediate environment did not allow him to develop his creative ideas. On October 6 or 7, 1782, he wrote a letter from Frankfurt to the director of a theatre in Mannheim, von Dalberg, and described his situation:

As soon as I tell you *I am fleeing* you will know my whole destiny. But still the worst has not been told. I am lacking the necessary means to fight my misfortune. [...]

Since my present situation is obvious from what I told you, I consider it superfluous to torture your Excellency with a *compelling presentation* of my misery. Speedy help is all I can now think of and desire. (NA 23, 43)

In recent years, psychoanalytic research has tried to consider and describe the psychic consequences of public violence.³ People living under dictatorial governments often experience persecution

¹ Already in his first drama, «Die Räuber» (*The Robbers*), Schiller distributes the different emotions and modes of behaviour resulting from his own ambivalence among his protagonists Karl and Franz Moor. Karl loves his father, but leaves him; Franz is the scheming villain, living with his father and pretending to love and care for him. Similar structures occur in «Kabale und Liebe» (*Intrigue and Love*) and «Die Braut von Messina» (*The Bride From Messina*): In the former Ferdinand's relationship toward Luise vacillates between obedience toward his father and love toward his wife; in the latter a similar distribution and projection of ambivalent emotions can be observed in the two brothers who both love their stepsister.

² All translations from German in this article are by the authors.

³ As an example we would like to mention Gillian Straker (Straker et al. 1987, 144 f.; Straker, 1992, 3 ff.), who has described the psychic consequences of the policy of the apartheid for the black population in South Africa as well as the possibilities of psychotherapeutic treatment under the conditions of state violence. See also her lecture on «Problems in the Treatment of Youth in a Context of Violence» which Straker gave on June 15, 1992, at the Freiburg «Institut für Psychotraumatologie» (Nessler 1992, 15).

and flight in everyday life. The structures of feudal rule under which Schiller lived are undoubtedly comparable to those of a modern dictatorship. During the months following his flight from Stuttgart the poet found himself in a psychic situation that in modern psychoanalysis is called a «flight trauma»: paranoid fears, which turn outer circumstances into inner realities, are reinforced and an increasing distrust against the environment arouses an intensive need for security, friendship, closeness, warmth and trust, but is counteracted by the increasing isolation of the self-imposed exile.

Don Carlos, which Schiller began to compose at this time, is a literary treatment of this traumatic situation. The conflict between father and son, the persecution of both his heroes by superior social authorities, the close, warm friendship between Carlos and Posa, the distrust and pathos that express their fear and at the same time limit it, are all elements in the drama that preconsciously originate from the current situation in Schiller's life. In the artistic rendering of his actual experiences, Schiller repeatedly reacts creatively to an extreme outer threat that plunges him into a depressive mood.⁴

The case of Schiller illustrates the general psychoanalytic principle that real-life crises of the author awaken early unconscious conflicts and traumata which themselves provide the ultimate impulse for his creativity. This dynamic of the creative process resembles the work of mourning, which is a central aspect in both psychoanalytic theory and therapy; the subject finds in the present the impulse for psychically working through the past (Freud 1908e, 174).

At the age of twenty-three years, Schiller decided to flee from his home town in order to launch a new existence elsewhere. He began an endless flight from figures of authority and unconsciously stepped back into an early phase of his childhood in which he must have felt threatened by the presence of his father. This early anxiety was then re-aroused by his flight and influenced his actions, thoughts, and emotions. An examination of his psychic development reveals to what degree the situation of the author was unconsciously marked by his early experiences at the time he wrote *Don Carlos*.

When Schiller was born in 1759, his father had already left home to fight in the Seven Years War. He grew up alone with his mother and his older sister Christophine until, one day, the father suddenly returned home from the war and destroyed the unity between the mother and both children.⁵ Schiller's mother had had a hard time alone with her children; Christophine remembered this time and attributed the lifelong predisposition of the poet to illness to the grief and sorrow of his mother during the time she bore and nourished her son (Lahnstein 1981, 20).

In this earliest period in Schiller's childhood we can recognize structures which formed his psychic disposition. He must have experienced an unusually long phase of primary narcissistic merger with his mother because apart from Christophine no third object was present to disturb this unity. But this extended dyad with the omnipotent figure of the mother, is also likely to have activated fears of engulfment and self-destruction as well as splitting mechanisms in Schiller.

The reconstruction we are proposing from biographical events suggests not only that

⁴ As early as in Rank 1912 has pointed out that the actual reason for the creation of *Don Carlos* is not to be sought in its historical-political content, but in the conflict between Carlos and Philipp over the stepmother. Rank observes the unconscious incest fantasies of the author within the drama and finds in them the key to the creative production of the poet. However, Rank's psychoanalytic interpretation can only reveal the level of the genital fantasy because he did not have at his disposal the instruments of modern theories of narcissism and the clinical research that underlies them. The present interpretation of the text tries to describe unconscious structures the genesis of which is to be found in a much earlier phase of the author's psychic development.

⁵ Whether the destructive behaviour of Caspar Schiller can be ascribed to a war trauma cannot be determined owing to the lack of sources.

the poet experienced an extended dyad that triggered fears of engulfment and self-destruction, but also the psychic process occurring during this rapprochement phase were reinforced by the sudden appearance of the father.

In all likelihood we have here the deepest cause for Schiller's depressive disposition which finds later literary expression in *Don Carlos*. In that drama recur psychic elaborations of behaviour patterns resulting from the interaction with his mother; they not only define his life, but also the creative process and the work of art.

In *Don Carlos*, the author's depressive disposition not only colours the depiction of all the characters, it also shapes the dramatic chain of action and its outcome: from the beginning of the drama, Carlos is described as lonely and abandoned by the rest of the world; this fate follows him throughout the entire drama. He himself deserts his friend Posa by refusing to participate any further in their common political plans.

In the course of the drama, one intrigue follows another, so that each character has to fend for himself. The collective downfall is symbolized by the fire of the Inquisition, which hints at isolation and absolute negation in death (Hegel 1807, 112).⁶ In death, individuality can be restored fantasmatically, hence also the unconsciously desired condition of a primary narcissistic unity. But Schiller's literary creation of the death fantasy is to be understood in a double sense: not only the negatives, but also the positive experiences with the primary object which develop out of the desire for the lost early unity recur in it.

The protagonist in *Don Carlos* serves as an example for such an ambivalence. Carlos is always presented as oscillating between two extreme inner attitudes: he tries to believe in a secure, early object and lets himself be seduced by this belief, but in the end the drama shows that he cannot rely on this object. The supposedly secure object reveals itself to be an illusion and produces disappointment.

Another trauma in Schiller is obviously caused by the sudden return of his father. As mentioned above, he left for the Seven Years War (1756-1763) one month before Schiller's birth. His father personifies that educational authority in which social and moral claims converge: he transmits to his children that strict Protestant and pietistic ethos which Schiller obviously internalized and which shaped his rigid superego. The «instrumentum causa» was the stick, with which Schiller was beaten. It is simultaneously feared and respected because it enforced the inscription of the father's laws in his children; it is the symbol of the father's phallic might that is conveyed to the children on the level of action and behaviour.

During the phase of triangulation, Schiller probably identified not with the feared father, but rather with the gracious and all-suffering mother. But this mother imago includes feminine-masochistic inclinations and ways of behaviour: she not only endured the choleric and tyrannical father, but also internalized «his» laws and behaves toward the children accordingly. Schiller's substantial identification with his mother reinforces additionally his passive-feminine attitude toward his father and arouses fears of castration. Obviously, his genital development toward manhood was inhibited by these fears of castration and punishment for his sexual claims on his mother and sister, and consequently led to latent homosexual feelings.⁷

However, homosexual feelings could not have been caused by the process of identification with his mother alone, but also by the unconscious attempt to be reconciled with his father in order indirectly to gain the desired possession of his mother. In this way, Schiller unconsciously took over the feminine position, and while doing so he reawakened and revalued experiences

⁶ A more detailed consideration of this passage can be found in our interpretation (Nessler & Nessler 1994).

⁷ In the chapter on anal-sadomasochistic complications, I have described (Nessler & Nessler, 1994) in detail how homoerotic and homosexual inclinations can develop in a boy. The theoretically condensed statements made here will spare the reader unnecessary repetitions.

from the early dyad. The mother whom he then experienced as phallic⁸ now possesses the desired and overpowering phallus of his father; the fantasmatic unity with his mother means, according to Oedipal desires, at once the absorption of the paternal phallus and merging with it.

In order to avoid the threatening merging with a fantasmatic object that is neither definitely masculine nor definitely feminine, Schiller tries unconsciously to re-establish the former unity with the primary object and therefore remains latently homosexual in his fixation. This latent homosexual factor in his sexual identity is manifested in Schiller's first choice of a profession: he wanted to become a priest.⁹ As a priest he would have been subject to the omnipotence of God the Father and at the same time represented his laws to the outer world. By joining the group of devout Christians he would have satisfied his need for both primary unity and the forbidding paternal phallus (Freud 1921c, 88 f.).¹⁰ Simultaneously, he would have unconsciously satisfied his feminine-masochistic tendency by his identification with God's son, which arose from his identification with his mother during the Oedipal phase of his development.

Nonetheless, he did not become a priest. Just as his father had behaved in a threatening, despotic, and «castrating» way in the narrow family environment and thereby failed to protect his small, three-year-old son from the early, primary, maternal object, so he again proved incapable of protecting his son from social arbitrariness. Unfortunately, this latter failure happened to coincide with the time when Schiller reached puberty. Unfortunately, because puberty is a phase in life in which a correction of «basic faults» (Balint) and psychic complexes from early childhood is still possible.¹¹

Instead of meeting Schiller's adolescent needs, his father banished him to the Karlsschule, which had been founded by the sovereign Carl-Eugen in order to train an elite cadre of loyal civil servants. The fourteen-year-old boy had to leave his family, give up his plans of becoming a priest, and attend a school where he was confronted with a merciless barrack routine.

In such a routine, every manifestation of individuality is threatened and punished. The student becomes part of the collectivity that is educated by teachers according to the will of the sovereign. The psychological basis for the educational method practised here, is group psychology as described by Freud. The psychic structures upon which an upbringing is founded correspond with those within the primal horde.

Consequently, Schiller's work begins in many respects with the splitting of his idea about women and with homoerotic tendencies. In *Don Carlos*, Elisabeth is idolized by the protagonist while Eboli is humiliated; homoerotic and homosexual inclinations bring together not only the two protagonists, but also the other male characters in the drama.

The material circumstances of the Karlsschule solidified in Schiller those intra-psychic structures which are expressed in the «identity themes» (N. Holland) of his works. Every friendship between the young poet and his schoolmates was characterized by latent homosexual desires if not overt homosexual acts. Such desires find expression among other ways in

⁸ Cf. the chapter «Orale Verschmelzungsbedürfnisse: Die Phantasie der abwesenden Mutter», in Nesslerer and Nesslerer 1994.

⁹ To what extent this is connected with the author's identification with his mother is shown impressively in the example of the poet Jean Paul by Pietzcker 1983, 87 f.

¹⁰ Freud saw in the latent, destination inhibited homosexuality the original bond of artificial masses as for instance represented by the army and the church.

¹¹ The psychoanalytical proficient reader may at this time speculate that if Caspar Schiller had behaved differently, Friedrich Schiller might probably not have become such a famous poet, but maybe a luckier man. However, since such thoughts can only be speculative and since they do not meet my epistemological interests, I do not want to pursue this matter any further, but simply to provide stimulus for thought.

an ideal of friendship that is also documented in the letters Schiller and his friends wrote to each other. At the end of one letter to Scharffenstein Schiller exclaims:

Sangir liebte seinen Selim zärtlich	Sangir loved his Selim tenderly
Wie Du mich mein Scharffenstein	As You loved me my Scharffenstein
Selim liebte seinen Sangir zärtlich	Selim loved his Sangir tenderly
Wie ich Dich mein lieber Scharffenstein	As I did You my beloved Scharffenstein
Schiller (NA 23, 6)	

In the Karlsschule, the poet actively transformed the suppression of his emotional needs and experiences by using writing as a kind of «internal emigration». *Don Carlos*, however, was written by Schiller in a state of real emigration, on his flight from the omnipotent father Carl-Eugen.

Schiller appeared firmly resolved to make a profession of his obsession; he regarded his work as a natural, charismatic vocation and accepted the responsibility imposed on him by his readers. He wanted to transmit moral values to his recipients by pillorying, by informing them about the hypocrisy in political-clerical power structures. Undoubtedly, Friedrich Schiller was a political poet; he fought with his pen and tried to cut to the quick those of whom he became a victim in the end.

In his literary creations Schiller found company for his suffering; in the solitude of Bauerbach in which he composed *Don Carlos* he had his hero «Carlos instead of a woman, a girl-friend, a lover», as he wrote in a letter to his friend Reinwald. Carlos, and also the drama itself, serves as a kind of vicarious satisfaction for his most secret desires. In his hero, he created an alterego that he «carried with him always and everywhere» (same letter to Reinwald) and on to which he projected all those characteristics of other literary figures whom he admired and longed to possess himself.

Carlos is persecuted in his own court as Schiller felt, and actually was, persecuted by the sovereign in Stuttgart and Mannheim. Reality gave fantasy free rein because fantasy was partially confirmed by reality. Schiller's real-life situation and the circumstances in which he — voluntarily or unvoluntarily — found himself caused exactly that persecution mania which had established itself in his psyche already in his early childhood. This persecution mania had its genesis in the latent homoerotic and homosexual inclinations and desires that had developed as a defence against his fears of castration. Carlos is for Schiller in part an unconscious object of identification which to balance with he creates the complementary character of the Marquis Posa. Like Carlos, Posa «spiritualizes the poet's pulse» and serves his friend as a homosexually related object for the dramatic characters just as *Don Carlos* consoles Schiller by replacing a woman.

The difference between the characters Carlos and Posa is that the Marquis rather corresponds to the author's later, more mature partial ego. In Carlos, we have the hotheaded, vivacious youth, a successor to Karl Moor; in the Marquis, we have rather the experienced man of the world who can control himself and others.

Carlos and Posa are equally confronted with Philipp's paternal authority. This can be interpreted as an unconscious elaboration of the author's ambivalent attitudes toward his father-figures. Schiller splits up his paternal configuration and projects different father imagos on to the father-figures in *Don Carlos*; in depicting on their ways of behaviour and relationships to their sons, he can elaborate his own relationship with his fathers.

The orphan Carlos, who is a more youthful son imago, seeks in Philipp rather a mother than a father, whereas Posa, being the mature, adolescent idealist, finds in him a personality against whom he wants to measure himself as a man and philosopher. Both son-figures are shown in rivalry with the father for the mother, Queen Elizabeth. The poet projects on to her that imago of his own idealized asexual mother which boys form during the

phase of Oedipal development. Her counterpart, the Princess Eboli, corresponds to the sexualized, evil, engulfing mother imago which is humiliated in the whore fantasy.

Nonetheless this picture of an early, evil, engulfing and castrating mother reaches its literary climax in the male figures of Alba and the Grand Inquisitor: army and church are not only paradigms for the latent homosexual bonds holding together their loyal masses, but also expressions of the threatening, engulfing mother imago in which the boys' homoerotic and homosexual tendency finds its genesis. The homosexual love which the author attributes fantasmatically to both friends is structurally connected with fear and submission.

The ambivalent emotions inherent in this homosexual inclination are also expressed by Carlos when he promises Posa that he will never tolerate relationships of dominance and submission between the two of them:

Wer von uns wird der *Gläubiger* des andern,
Und wer der *Schuldner* seyn? — Du schweigst? Du *zitterst*
Vor der Versuchung? Nicht gewisser bist
Du deiner selbst? (DC 408)

The allure and temptation of an everlasting alliance make his friend shiver and feel unsure. This motif reminds us of Eve's seduction of Adam with the apple and demonstrates on the unconscious level of fantasy how sexualized Carlos' proposition actually is.

Like a bridal pair reaching for each other's hands shortly before the ceremony, Posa and Carlos give each other their hands before confirming their bond of friendship:

MARQUIS. *Hier meine Hand.*
KARLOS. *Der Meinige?*
MARQUIS. *Auf ewig*
Und in des Worts verwegenster Bedeutung.
KARLOS. *So treu und warm, wie heute dem Infanten,*
Auch dermaleinst dem König zugethan?
MARQUIS. *Das schwör' ich Ihnen.* (408)

Carlos and Posa vow eternal loyalty in life and death like a bridal pair at the altar:

KARLOS. Dann auch, wenn der Wurm
Der Schmeicheley mein unbewachtes Herz
Umklammerte — wenn dieses Auge Thränen
Verlernte, die es sonst geweint — dieß Ohr
Dem Flehen sich verriegelte, willst du [Posa],
Ein schreckenloser Hüter meiner Tugend,
Mich kräftig fassen, meinen Genius
Bei seinem großen Namen rufen?
MARQUIS. *Ja.*
KARLOS. Und jetzt noch eine Bitte! *Nenn mich Du!*
[...] *Willst du*
Mein Bruder seyn?
MARQUIS. *Dein Bruder!*
KARLOS. Jetzt zum König.
Ich fürchte nichts mehr — *Arm in Arm mit dir,*
So fordr' ich mein Jahrhundert in die Schranken. (408 f.)

II.

A literary elaboration of homosexual fantasies can be observed not only in Schiller's

Don Carlos. Goethe in his last novel *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre oder die Entsagenden* also repeatedly portrays unconscious homoerotic desires. One example occurs in the episode about his hero Wilhelm with the fisher-boy Adolf. Here, however, the homosexual experience of love is combined with feelings of loss, helplessness and passivity: Wilhelm's friend drowns while catching crayfish in the river (WJ 269 f.).

Goethe closely links this experience which Wilhelm had in his youth with a set of surgical instruments. These had already saved his life in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* after he was seriously wounded by robbers (LJ 226 f.). In the course of Wilhelm Meister's further experiences, this set enables him at last to transform his experiences of helplessness and passivity into power and activity. The surgeon's lancet thus becomes a fetish, in the way Freud defined it, which the hero carries with him in remembrance of some unexpectedly positive experiences.

In this context, the aspect of rescuing fantasies receives a central meaning: with the help of the set of surgical instruments Wilhelm saves not only his own life, but also that of his son in the last chapter of the novel (WJ 459). By unconsciously approximating the manifest motif of rescuing to a birth fantasy — the unconscious body is dragged from the river — the author enacts not only Wilhelm Meister's and Felix's rescue, but also a concealed self-rescue of the hero. This thesis can be proved by reference to the meaning of the «Plastische Anatomie» because Goethe creates with his literary characters in this field no longer only a *self-rescue*, but also a hidden *self-creation*: in a way similar to the Castor and Pollux scene between Wilhelm and Felix in the end of the novel (WJ 459), Goethe unconsciously combines the motif of rescuing a person with the themes of birth and creation. While in company of emigrants, Wilhelm commemorates his years of apprenticeship as a future surgeon:

Ein sehr schönes Mädchen, verwirrt durch unglückliche Liebe, hatte den Tod im Wasser gesucht und gefunden; die Anatomie bemächtigte sich derselbigen; [...] Die obern Behörden, die soeben das Gesetz geschärft hatten, durften keine Ausnahme bewilligen; auch eilte man, so schnell als möglich die Beute zu benutzen und zur Benutzung zu verteilen.

Wilhelm, der als nächster Aspirant gleichfalls berufen wurde, fand vor dem Sitze, den man ihm anwies, auf einem saubern Brette, reinlich zugedeckt, eine bedenkliche Aufgabe; denn als er die Hülle wegnahm, lag der schönste weibliche Arm zu erblicken, der sich wohl jemals um den Hals eines Jünglings geschlungen hatte. Er hielt sein Besteck in der Hand und getraute sich nicht, es zu eröffnen; er stand und getraute nicht niederzusitzen. Der Widerwille, dieses herrliche Naturerzeugnis noch weiter zu entstellen, stritt mit der Anforderung, welche der wissensbegierige Mann an sich zu machen hat und welcher sämtliche Umhersitzende Genüge leisteten. (WJ 324)

As in the story about the fisher-boy Adolf who drowns in the river while diving for crayfish, the beautiful girl dies in the water. Now, Goethe is no longer interested in a surgeon saving lives with his instruments. He is interested rather in the instruments becoming a means for anatomically dissecting that which actually causes in Wilhelm a reluctance to misuse this wonderful natural product any longer (WJ 324).

Before examining the altered rescue motif of this passage in detail, we would like to consider again the fact that the girl was killed through the elemental force of the water. Exactly with regard to the talent of the fetish with feminine characteristics and to the author's unconscious birth fantasy in the last chapter of the novel when Felix's life is rescued by Wilhelm Meister's surgical knowledge, we, while reading the just quoted passage, gained the impression that the motif of «death in the water» Goethe intentionally reverses the

fundamental fact that phylogenetically and ontogenetically the emergence of all life on earth is only possible because of the element of water.

Like many other mammals, the human embryo too finds its way into the world of objects after living through a prenatal state within the maternal amniotic sac, the water of which provides protection, warmth and nutrition.¹² Since men can neither bear children in their abdomen nor give birth to them, many suffer mainly during the pregnancy of their wives from an unconscious jealousy. This envy can become an important psychological impulse which compensates for the lack of the experience of a pregnancy by creative work. In this sense, the products of their own creative work function as psychologically over-determined «substitute children» with which they try to neutralize this lack. In Goethe's biography, too, there are hints that Christiane Vulpius' pregnancies were for him periods of highly artistic creativity (Eissler 1963, 907, 1504).¹³

In order to overcome the narcissistic offence of the own inability to give birth, there often remains only the retreat into the anal sphere: the creative act of anal working is an attempt to overcome the limits of one's own sex because the «fruits of labour» demonstrate fantasmatically as products the adapted female potency of the man.

The reason for mentioning this typically male fantasy of greatness here and now is that while reading the chapter on «Plastische Anatomie» we gained the impression that Goethe deals in exactly these passages literally with his own unconscious birth envy against women. Wilhelm's memory of the arm of the beautiful girl depicts just that key experience which made him turn away from the destructive dissection of conventional anatomy and turn towards the productive reconstruction of anatomic models. This way toward «Plastische Anatomie» is opened up to him by a sculptor whose student Wilhelm Meister finally becomes:

Wilhelm trat hinein und hatte freilich zu erstaunen, als er, statt wie in den vorigen Nachbildung lebender Gestalten zu sehen, hier die Wände durchaus mit anatomischen Zergliederungen ausgestattet fand; sie mochten in Wachs oder sonstiger Masse verfertigt sein, genug, sie hatten durchaus das frische, farbige Ansehen erst fertig gewordener Präparate. «Hier, mein Freund», sagte der Künstler, «hier sehen Sie schätzenswerte Surrogate für jene Bemühungen, die wir, mit dem Widerwillen der Welt, zu unzeitigen Augenblicken mit Ekel oft und großer Sorgfalt dem Verderben oder einem widerwärtigen Aufbewahren vorbereiten. Ich muß dieses Geschäft im tiefsten Geheimnis betreiben, denn Sie haben gewiß oft schon Männer vom Fach mit Geringschätzung davon reden hören. Ich lasse mich nicht irremachen und bereite etwas vor, welches in der Folge gewiß von großer Einwirkung sein wird. [...] Doch lassen Sie uns nicht viel Worte machen! Sie sollen in kurzem erfahren, daß Aufbauen mehr belehrt als Einreißen, Verbinden mehr als Trennen, Totes beleben mehr als das Getötete noch weiter töten; kurz also, wollen Sie mein Schüler sein?» Und auf Bejahung legte der Wissende dem Gaste das Knochenskelett eines weiblichen Armes vor, in der Stellung, wie sie jenen vor kurzem vor sich gesehen hatten. (WJ 326 f.)

Our reference to the anal sphere and its function in the production of substitute children

¹² Exactly for the development of mammals, amniotic sac and fluid are indispensable importance for the prenatal state because provide for protection, warmth and nutrition. The psychoanalytic theory of «primary narcissism» originated from this fact.

¹³ Cf. also our (Nesslerer & Nesslerer, 1994) discourse on the connection between male artistic creativity and pregnancy. In this context, we can also take an example from the field of pictorial arts: The creation of the etching «La Minotaure» (Goeppert & Goeppert, 1987, 7 f.) was essentially influenced by the fact that Pablo Picasso's lover Marie-Térèse Walther was pregnant at this time and that this pregnancy triggered a fundamental life crisis in the painter.

by true work is supported by this very passage: Goethe's statement that the «schätzenswerte[n] Surrogate» which have been developed «mit dem Widerwillen der Welt, zu unzeitigen Augenblicken mit Ekel oft und großer Sorgfalt», so that this «Geschäft» must be done «im tiefsten Geheimnis» because «Männer vom Fach» talk about it «mit Geringschätzung», points at an unconscious level of the text dealing with the anal and homosexual field. Freud (1905d, 137) proved that precisely in our culture polymorphously perverse and homoerotic sexual habits are subject to merciless demands for suppression. The norm is heterosexual, genital intercourse between man and woman. Therefore, the suppressed desires are often railroaded into daydreams, night dreams or, very much hidden, into the world of arts. Goethe's literary fantasy seems to be a small but still important chance for him to present what he had to suppress because of cultural constraints and demands as well as socializing authorities and mechanisms.

In this respect, the relation between analty and male homosexuality is very important because these represent for Goethe the essential pillars of his fantasies of omnipotency and greatness: by producing human bodies as dead anatomic models with the help of the «Plastische Anatomie», male characters become symbolically not only potent and fertile women, but at the same time also potent men procreating through their ideas. In his case study «Aus der Geschichte einer infantilen Neurose» (Freud 1918b, 125 f.), in which he describes the course of the «wolfman's» disease, Freud establishes a close relation between anal-eroticism, identification with the mother and the castration complex: in identifying with his mother, the son tries to dodge the father's castration threat by offering his father himself homosexually to his father and thus taking over the position of the wife whose exclusive relationship to his father he anyhow envies, too. As Freud stated, only the anal zone can serve as «Organ, an dem sich die Identifizierung mit dem Weibe, die passiv homosexuelle Einstellung zum Manne äußern konnte» (Freud 1918b, 193). In this context, the excrements gain a multiple meaning:

Indem die Kotsäule die erogene Darmschleimhaut reizt, spielt sie die Rolle eines aktiven Organs für dieselbe, benimmt sie sich wie der Penis gegen die Vaginalschleimhaut und wird gleichsam zum Vorläufer desselben in der Epoche der Kloake. Das Hergeben des Kotes zu Gunsten (aus Liebe zu) einer anderen Person wird seinerseits zum Vorbild der Kastration, es ist der erste Fall des Verzichts auf ein Stück des eigenen Körpers, um die Gunst eines geliebten Anderen zu gewinnen. Die sonst narzißtische Liebe zu seinem Penis entbehrt also nicht eines Beitrages von seiten der Analerotik. Der Kot, das Kind, der Penis ergeben also eine Einheit, einen unbewußten Begriff — *sit venia verbo* —, den des vom Körper abtrennbaren Kleinen. (Freud 1918b, 198)

If we try to interpret Freud's description in greater detail, we could say that one important function of anal products is the attempt to cope with the father's castration threat. Therefore, Goethe's fantasy of greatness not only bespeaks his narcissistic desire to be as potent as father and mother together, but also the little «Oedipus'» longing to overcome anxiety for the be loved penis, which is an existential fear greatly influencing the structure of the male psyche, by calming his angry father with anal gifts.

This fantasy particularly might be an answer of the question why Goethe repeatedly elaborates on father and son, teacher and student episodes in his «Wanderjahre». Apart from the chapter on «Plastische Anatomie» and the relationship between Wilhelm and Felix, we just have to think of the story of St. Joseph II. or the pedagogic province in order to become aware of the repetition and the central status of this aspect in the context of «Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre». In the chapter on the «Plastische Anatomie», Goethe writes about Wilhelm Meister's further educational development:

Nun tat unser Freund sein Bestes und erwarb sich den Beifall des Anleitenden. Dabei war es ihm angenehm, sich zu erproben, wie stark oder schwach die

Erinnerung sei, und er fand zu vergnüglicher Überraschung, daß sie durch die Tat wieder hervorgerufen werde; er gewann Leidenschaft für diese Arbeit und ersuchte den Meister, in seine Wohnung aufgenommen zu werden. Hier nun arbeitete er unablässig; auch waren die Knochen und Knöchelchen des Armes in kurzer Zeit gar schicklich verbunden. [...]

Alles, wozu der Mensch sich ernstlich einläßt, ist ein Unendliches; nur durch wetteifernde Tätigkeit weiß er sich dagegen zu helfen; auch kam Wilhelm bald über den Zustand vom Gefühl seines Unvermögens, welches immer eine Art von Verzweiflung ist, hinaus und fand sich behaglich bei der Arbeit. «Es freut mich», sagte der Meister, «daß Sie sich in diese Verfahrungsart zu schicken wissen und daß Sie mir ein Zeugnis geben, wie fruchtbar eine solche Methode sei, wenn sie auch von den Meistern des Fachs nicht anerkannt wird. Es muß eine Schule geben, und diese wird sich vorzüglich mit Überlieferung beschäftigen; was bisher geschehen ist, soll auch künftig geschehen, das ist gut und mag und soll so sein. (WJ 327 f.)

In this passage it is easily recognizable in which position toward his teacher and master Goethe puts the student: Wilhelm is presented in the role of a little, dependent child who, «in seine [des Lehrers] Wohnung aufgenommen», not only experiences protection and consolation, but also receives a theoretical education and practical training in order to become psychologically boosted by being freed from the feeling of inability through words of praise. In this way, the (male) master is forced into the role of an omnipotent parental figure because he gives his student maternal protection and consolation as well as paternal philosophy and handicraft skill.

One characteristic feature of Goethe's presentation of this relationship is its reciprocity because the master expects from his student that he as the teacher's representatives will show the world «wie furchtbar eine solche Methode [die 'Plastische Anatomie'] sei, wenn sie auch von den Meistern des Faches nicht anerkannt wird.»

In addition, the student will not only be for his master a witness to their common deeds, but also — and this is another demand of the teacher — build a school which mainly concentrates on tradition. In most cases, this desire to donate a tradition and a school is connected with the deeply concealed wish to live on in the children who are one's descendants after one's death in order to defy the offending fact of death and mutability of human existence. By founding a school, the achievements of the teacher and master can be handed down from generation to generation and thus be preserved.

Before concentrating on another aspect of the teacher-student relationship dealing with the underlying idea of education, we would like briefly to consider again the latent homosexual and anal-erotic tendencies which are important for the relationship between father and son:

Der Meister hatte einen schönen Sturz eines antiken Jünglings in eine bildsame Masse abgegossen und suchte nun mit Einsicht die ideelle Gestalt von der Epiderm zu entblößen und das schöne Lebendige in ein reales Muskelpräparat zu verwandeln. «Auch hier finden sich Mittel und Zweck so nahe beisammen, und ich will gern gestehen, daß ich über den Mitteln den Zweck vernachlässigt habe, doch nicht ganz mit eigener Schuld; der Mensch ohne Hülle ist eigentlich der Mensch, der Bildhauer steht unmittelbar an der Seite der Elohim, als sie den unförmlichen, widerwärtigen Ton zu dem herrlichsten Gebilde umzuschaffen wußten; [...]» (WJ 329)

What is striking in this passage is the fact that the master does not reproduce just some kind of body for his anatomic studies and least of all that of a woman, but rather the «Sturz eines antiken Jünglings». At the same time, he identifies his work with the creation

myth of the Old Testament because the sculptor stands «unmittelbar an der Seite der Elohim, als sie den unförmlichen, widerwärtigen Ton zu dem herrlichen Gebilde umzuschaffen wußten.» Considering the unconscious desires and fantasies underlying the manifest text, one could interpret this in the following way: a creative person, meaning the sculptor reproducing and creating a male torso with his hands is, like God, capable of forming human images or, in Goethe's words «kreative Gebilde», by anal work with «widerwärtige[m] Ton.» In this way, anality as a condition for creative work becomes an important medium for actualizing exactly that fantasy of greatness the sense of which is to make a mortal human being as omnipotent as the almighty patriarchal God in heaven. Certainly, the anal-erotic component of this fantasy is also linked with a homosexual desire: the image of the male, creative God can only be a man or youth.

Nevertheless, anyhow, the product created with the sculptor's own hands has an essential defect: it will always remain dead matter. Its imperfection is symbolically reflected in the fact that the sculptor is only capable of partially creating a human being rather than a whole living body. This literary fantasy already reveals the unconscious knowledge of its literary creator Goethe who knows about the finite nature and imperfection of such anal works: like Prometheus¹⁴, their creator hopes, to gain eternity and become like God through them, nevertheless his one's own products will always stay just human, resp. male «Stück-Werk» which cannot stand any comparison with children born of women. Therefore, Goethe tells his reader already in the half-sentence which follows his reflection on the similarity between a creatively working man and God and about his sorrow resulting from his recognition of the very limited male ability to give birth to children:

[...] solche göttliche Gedanken muß er hegen, dem Reinen ist alles rein, warum nicht die unmittelbare Absicht Gottes in der Natur? Aber vom Jahrhundert kann man dies nicht verlangen, ohne Feigenblätter und Tierfelle kommt es nicht aus, und das ist noch viel zu wenig. Kaum hatte ich etwas gelernt, so verlangten sie von mir würdige Männer in Schlafröcken und weiten Ärmeln und zahllosen Falten; [...] (WJ 329)

In this passage, too, it becomes obvious in which disguises unconscious fantasies and desires can occur in the manifest arrangement of a literary text. While reading, we asked ourselves how Goethe elaborated in his novel the psychic tensions that developed from offence and sorrow. Reading the chapter on «Plastische Anatomie» further on, we find that the author offers to the reader — as an apparently solution of the problem — the plan of emigrating into the «New World» in order to establish in America the newly developed anatomic techniques for the welfare of mankind (WJ 330). Nevertheless, there is still another possible interpretation. Let us return to that passage in which Wilhelm Meister starts to tell about his training for becoming a surgeon:

Die Unterhaltungen waren daher so belehrend als ergötzlich, denn die Freunde gaben sich wechselseitig Rechenschaft vom Gange des bisherigen Lernens und Tuns, woraus eine Bildung entstanden war, die sie wechselseitig erstaunen machte, dergestalt, daß sie sich untereinander erst selbst wieder mußten kennen lernen. (WJ 322)

As we reflected on the meaning of the term «education»: the concept of education as forming a person recalls the verb «bilden» («to form»), the concrete sensual processing of materials or things the way children try to portray their world with plastic material. In this sense, the concept denotes not only the acquisition of the world through imitation and portrayal,

¹⁴ Especially Pietzcker 1985, 24 f., points out the relation between anality and creative fantasy at the example of Goethe's ode «Prometheus».

but at the same time self-realization through creative work. With regard to the relationship between teacher and student, another connotation becomes relevant because the student is decisively influenced and changed by his teacher in the course of the educational process. Consequently, education can also mean being formed by another person: the student is to the teacher exactly that plastic mass with the help of which he can realize himself, by passing on his ideas and knowledge. To exaggerate this idea, one could say that the master tries to create his own image in the person of his student: Wilhelm «Schüler» (disciple) becomes Wilhelm «Meister» (master). At this point we would like to recall us of the meaning of the «Plastische Anatomie» in the context of Goethe's unconscious fantasy of his hero's self-rescue and self-creation in order to ascribe the protagonist's anatomic modelling attempts another function: that of an unconscious self-rescue fantasy of its literary creator.

In a way similar to Wilhelm Meister being «formed» by his teacher, the nameless sculptor, through the passing-on and handing-down of his knowledge and skill and trying to protect this knowledge in a school of plastic anatomy from falling into oblivion, the literarily creative author Goethe, too, forms his fantasies, desires and fears into an artful novel. For this reason, the «Wanderjahre» of his hero Wilhelm Meister are also a concealed *self-production* and *self-creation* of the author who succeeds in working on his fantasies in the literary form of the novel without totally succumbing to the regression necessary for the creative process. The self-rescuing attempts of the literary characters in the «Wanderjahre» novel reveal the hidden self-rescuing attempts of its literary creator who perhaps, when reading his work again, would have got to know himself again just like Wilhelm Meister and his friends from the «Bund der Auswanderer», the emigrants' covenant.

Kein Augustisch Alter blühte,
Keines Medizäers Güte
Lächelte der deutschen Kunst,
Sie ward nicht gepflegt vom Ruhme,
Sie entfaltete die Blume
Nicht am Strahl der Fürstengunst.

Von dem größten deutschen Sohne,
Von des großen Friedrichs Throne
Gieng sie schutzlos, ungeehrt.
Rühmend darfs der Deutsche sagen,
Höher darf das Herz ihm schlagen,
Selbst erschuf er sich den Werth. (NA 2/II, 408)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Eissler, K.R. (1963). *Goethe. Eine psychoanalytische Studie 1775-1786*. 2 Vol. Basel, Frankfurt/M. 1983 (Vol. 1), 1985 (Vol. 2).
- Freud, S. (1905d). Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie. In *Sigmund Freud Studienausgabe* (Alexander Mitscherlich et al., Eds.), Frankfurt/M. 1969 ff, Vol. 5, 37 ff. (St.A.)
- Freud, S. (1908e). Der Dichter und das Phantasieren. *St. A.*, Vol. 10, 169 ff.
- Freud, S. (1918b). Aus der Geschichte einer infantilen Neurose. *St. A.*, Vol. 7, 125 ff.
- Freud, S. (1921c). Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse. *St. A.*, Vol. 9, 61 ff.
- Goethe, J.W. (1965). Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre. In *Goethes Werke* (Erich Trunz, Ed.), Vol. 7, 6th edition, Hamburg: Hamburger Ausgabe. (LJ)
- Goethe, J.W. (1981). Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre oder Die Entsagenden. In *Goethes Werke* (Erich Trunz, Ed.), Vol. 8, 10th edition, München: Hamburger Ausgabe. (WJ)
- Goeppert, S. & Goeppert-Frank, H.C. (1987). *Die Minotauromachie von Pablo Picasso*, Genf: Patrick Cramer.

- Hegel, G.W.F. (1807). Phänomenologie des Geistes. In *Gesammelte Werke* (Wolfgang Bonsiepen & Reinhard Heede, Eds.), Vol. 9, Hamburg, 1980.
- Lahnstein, P. (1981). *Schillers Leben*. Biographie, München 1990.
- Nessler, O. & Nessler, Th. (1994). *Auf des Messers Schneide. Zur Funktionsbestimmung literarischer Kreativität bei Schiller und Goethe. Eine psychoanalytische Studie*. Würzburg: Königshäusen & Neumann.
- Nessler, Th. (1992). Die menschliche Seele vergißt nicht. Gillian Straker-Psychotherapie unter der Apartheid. *Badische Zeitung*, 165: 15.
- Pietzcker, C. (1983). *Einführung in die Psychoanalyse des literarischen Kunstwerks*. Würzburg: Königshäusen & Neumann.
- Pietzcker, C. (1985). Goethes Prometheus-Ode. In *Trauma, Wunsch und Abwehr. Psychoanalytische Studien zu Goethe, Jean Paul, Brecht, zur Atomliteratur und zur literarischen Form* (Pietzcker, Ed.), Würzburg: Königshäusen & Neumann.
- Rank, O. (1912). *Das Inzest-Motiv in Dichtung und Sage*. Wien, 1926 (2nd edition).
- Schiller, F. (1956). Briefe 1772-1785. In *Schillers Werke* (Walter Müller-Seidel, Ed.), Weimar: Nationalausgabe Vol. 23. (NA)
- Schiller, F. (1974). Don Carlos-Infant von Spanien. Ein dramatisches Gedicht. (Theater von Schiller. Erster Band). In *Schillers Werke* (Paul Böckmann & Gerhard Kluge, Eds.), Weimar: Nationalausgabe Vol. 7/I.
- Schiller, F. (1983). Gedichte in der Reihenfolge ihres Erscheinens 1799-1805, der geplanten Ausgabe letzter Hand aus dem Nachlaß. In *Schillers Werke* (Norbert Oellers, Ed.), Weimar: Nationalausgabe Vol. 2/II.
- Straker, G. et al. (1987/1990). Seelische Dauerbelastung als traumatisches Syndrom-Möglichkeiten des einmaligen therapeutischen Gesprächs. *Psyche* 2: 144 ff.
- Straker, G. (1992). *Interacting with Trauma in Contexts of Continuing Traumatic Stress*. Typoskript. Johannesburg.

Anger . . . and Anger : From Freud to Feminism

KATHLEEN WOODWARD (*)

«I had early discovered... that passions often lead to sorrows.»

Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*

«The streets of London have their map; but our passions are uncharted.»

Virginia Woolf, *Jacob's Room*

In this essay I plot a line of development in Freud's thought about the strong emotions, with anger as my focal point. By «strong emotions» I mean those such as fear, hate, triumph, jealousy, horror, greed, and *l'amour fou*, most of which could also be referred to as the «passions» but not all (disgust and shame are examples of strong emotions that we would not term passions). In their intensity, duration, and focus, the strong emotions differ from what I call the quiet emotions (nostalgia, sadness, and tranquility, for example), the chafing emotions (annoyance, irritation), and the expansive emotions (oceanic feeling, amusement, sympathy).¹

The passages I've chosen with the strong emotion of anger in view are drawn from *Studies on Hysteria* (1893), *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), «The Moses of Michelangelo» (1914), and *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930). I've selected them in great part because, with the exception of *Civilization and Its Discontents*, they focus on what could be termed «professional» relations between people rather than on erotic wishes, for so long now familiar to us in Freud. The path traced through these four texts leads from feminized hysterical anger to grandiose annihilating anger, from frozen wrath to guilt. It defines a trajectory of emotional development in Freud's work culminating in the containment of the drive of aggressivity (and anger, its emotional representative) by guilt, the quintessential Freudian emotion.

I hope I will not be understood as suggesting that Freud did not value the emotions. On the contrary, as he asserted clearly in «Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*» (1907), the emotions are the only valuable things in psychic life.² But in general for Freud,

(*) University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Center for Twentieth Century Studies, College of Letters and Science, Curtin Hall, P.O. Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201, USA.

¹ I borrow the term the «expansive emotions» from Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*.

² As Freud states it in «Delusions and Dreams», «We remain on the surface so long as we are

the strong emotions are explosive, volatile, dangerous (or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that Freud was ambivalent about the strong emotions — certainly it would be more «Freudian» to phrase it this way). Thus at every one of these four points we will see that one of Freud's major themes is the mechanism which *inhibits* the expression of the strong emotions. In each case it is different: in the first three texts I discuss, Freud considers in turn the inhibition of anger by repression, suppression (the dream-work), and self-control. Ultimately Freud will conclude in *Civilization and Its Discontents* that fire must be fought with fire, emotion with emotion. In the final analysis, then, the controlling emotion — Freud's passion for guilt — is a chilling and paralyzing one.

I'm drawn to this subject by my general interest in theories and discourses of the emotions, but more specifically by what I hope may seem only at first to bear a rather far-flung relation to Freud — the value placed on the emotion of anger in recent feminist writing in the United States. Anger is the contemporary feminist emotion of choice. I'm fascinated by this discursive emphasis on anger. It is indisputably one of the prime examples of the general redistribution of the emotions in terms of gender taking place in contemporary culture. Anger, long associated with men, is being appropriated by women. (Another prime example is grief, an emotion historically linked predominately with women, now being put passionately into discourse by men.³) What is entailed by this feminist valorization of anger? At whom or what should it be directed? What tone or shape should it take? What assumptions about anger are contained in this work? What are the limits of anger? I will take the opportunity to address at least some of these questions at the end of this essay. By returning to Freud I intend to provide a contrasting perspective from which to do so. My project in this essay, then, is to understand more clearly the bases of both discourses of anger — Freudian and feminist — through their differences, and ultimately to test the limitations of each of them through the other.

So: what, I wondered, did Freud have to say about anger? I turned to the Index of the *Standard Edition*. Under «anger» I was startled to find virtually no entries. The Index did refer me to *Studies on Hysteria* but all of the references were to sections authored by Breuer with the single exception of one attributed to the two of them. This short passage from the «Preliminary Communication» I will consider in a moment. First, however, I want to insist on a distinction between anger and aggressivity, a distinction signalled by the Index itself: under «aggressiveness» there are many entries (this may be in part a result of scholars traditionally not being interested in the emotions). Anger is an *emotion*, what in Western culture we understand as an interiorized affective state (other cultures, as anthropologists point out, conceive of emotion as something that exists *between* people, not as something *in* individuals).⁴ Aggressivity is a *drive* — to action, to behavior. In his work as a whole Freud placed much more emphasis on a theory of the drives than he did on the emotions. In fact he devoted remarkably little attention to the emotions in comparison, say, to Melanie Klein, whose work is a veritable theoretical atlas of the strong emotions of psychoanalysis. What, then, is the relationship between emotion and aggressivity? Certainly the two are linked but not indissolubly so. We can imagine aggression that does not proceed from feelings of anger or rage or hate. Likewise we can imagine angry feelings that do not eventuate

dealing only with the memories and ideas. What is alone of value in mental life is rather the feelings. No mental forces are significant unless they possess the characteristic of arousing feelings» (48-49).

³ I discuss this phenomenon in the context of psychoanalytic theories of mourning in «Grief-Work in Contemporary Cultural Criticism».

⁴ Recent work in anthropology also takes anger as its focal point. See Michelle Z. Rosaldo who, with Renato Rosaldo, studied the Ilongots of the Philippines. The Ilongots conceptualize anger in altogether different ways from Freud: although anger could be hidden, it was not a disturbing energy which could be repressed, buried in the unconscious. In addition, the Ilongots can be «paid» for «anger» and can simply «forget» an anger (144).

in aggressive behavior toward others; indeed Freud astutely theorized the conversion of aggressivity toward others into self-aggressivity — in the form of an emotion. With these brief observations in mind I turn to *Studies on Hysteria*.

1. Feminized Hysterical Anger. Hysteria is associated of course overwhelmingly with women and with the repression of sexual desire, which I understand more precisely as a drive than as an emotion. But in *Studies on Hysteria* Freud does report one case that deals explicitly with the repression of the emotion of anger. I call it the case of the hysterical employee. It is, as we will see, a case that has a distinctly contemporary flavor. Given the traditional understanding of anger as a male emotion, it should not surprise us that this hysterical patient is not a woman but a man. He is furious at his employer who has mistreated him physically and at the legal justice system which has accorded him no redress. What is the outcome of his repression of anger? It erupts hysterically in the guise of «a frenzy of rage» as if its repression had compressed it into a denser, more volatile force. I quote the entire passage devoted to the scenario:

... an employee who had become a hysteric as a result of being ill-treated by his superior, suffered from attacks in which he collapsed and fell into a frenzy of rage, but without uttering a word or giving any sign of a hallucination. It was possible to provoke an attack under hypnosis, and the patient then revealed that he was living through the scene in which his employer had abused him in the street and hit him with a stick. A few days later the patient came back and complained of having had another attack of the same kind. On this occasion it turned out under hypnosis that he had been re-living the scene to which the actual onset of the illness was related: the scene in the law-court when he failed to obtain satisfaction for his maltreatment. (*S.E.* 2: 14)

For Freud and Breuer this case is an illustration of an hysterical attack that consists only of «motor phenomena» (that is, it does not exhibit a hallucinatory phase). Like other forms of hysteria, the root or precipitating cause is a memory of a psychical trauma, a memory that has been repressed. But of what is the memory? An event? An emotion? A desire?

Although Freud does not say anything more about this case (certainly he does not pretend to adjudicate it), we can assume that he understands it as he does other cases of hysteria: the person afflicted with hysteria must remember and rehearse either his desire or affect (to repeat: I am here associating desire with a drive, affect with an emotion). The psychical trauma, signalled by the symptom of hysterical rage, must be «disposed of by abreaction or by associative thought-activity» (*S.E.* 2: 15).

But on second thought, is there not a significant difference between this case of hysterical anger and a case of hysterical erotic desire? In the latter instance, Freud counsels the assumption and acceptance of sexual desire, which is the manifestation of what he will later understand as the libidinal drive. In effect he approves it. In the case of the hysterical employee, on the other hand, it appears to be the emotion itself — his anger at the legal justice system and at his employer — which is the precipitating factor of the illness. Repressed anger, in other words, may not be a mere symptom of the illness but its very root. Thus it is the anger itself which should be «abreacted», released as it were into the air.

In his essay «The Unconscious» (1915), Freud explains the relation between memory, representation, and emotion this way: «affects and emotions correspond to processes of discharge, the final manifestations of which are perceived as feelings», while «ideas are cathexes — basically of memory-traces» (178). James Hillman, glossing this passage in *Emotion*, offers the following analogy which captures perfectly Freud's view of anger as a violent and destructive emotion: «let us conceive of these 'cathexes — ultimately of memory-

traces' as bombs. The bombs 'exist' in the unconscious, but the affect as the quantitative explosive potential of the bombs» (53).

Hysteria in this altogether unusual case is not associated with the private sphere (the familiar Freudian bedroom). Rather it is set in the public sphere (the workplace, courts of law), which in the nineteenth century was the confirmed province of men. Furthermore its unexpected scenario underscores the unequal power relations of men — in this situation, of employer-employee. Freud of course does not address the issue of power. He does not politicize the emotion of anger. But if in general men have the cultural «right» to express their anger, this particular man — an employee — evidently did not. He did not experience «satisfaction» in his anger. Instead his hysterical anger feminizes him.⁵

Today we would likely consider this case in terms of harassment, which turns precisely on the analyzing pivot of unequal power relations with a «superior» or «dominant» taking advantage of a «subordinate». *Acting* on the emotion would be part of the therapy. We would look to the courts for «satisfaction», for redress that was not forthcoming in the nineteenth century. But therapy, not legal action, was Freud's then-innovative answer, therapy to exorcise the anger. Psychic repression was the mechanism which Freud theorized had concealed this anger in the first place; as he wrote in «The Unconscious», «to suppress the development of affect is the true aim of repression and... its work is incomplete if this aim is not achieved» (178). Therapy in the form of hypnosis would release it. The patient would be purged of his anger which was, in effect, attacking him. Thus in this context anger is understood as a debilitating emotion. In *Studies on Hysteria* both the psychic mechanism of repression and the corresponding treatment of hypnosis have as their goal the effacement or catharsis of the self-destructive emotion of anger. As we know, Freud was soon to reject hypnosis as ineffective.

2. Grandiose Annihilating Anger. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud explores another psychic mechanism which inhibits the emotions — the dream-work. It serves to *suppress* and *dilute* the emotions, thereby allowing them to be staged in the dream. If in the case of the hysterical employee the diagnostic complement of repression is hypnosis, here the diagnostic complement of the dream-work is the analysis of the dream mass into its dream-thoughts. But within the context of my emphasis on anger, the term «dream-passions» would seem a far more appropriate term than «dream-thoughts». For Freud's conviction is that analysis will ultimately allow the strong emotions to present themselves and that, as a result, they will be resolved into a calming order.

One dream in particular is relevant here. In the important section on «Affects in Dreams» Freud analyzes at quite some length the «emotional storm» released by what we have come to refer to as the «*Non Vixit*» dream. I quote it in full:

I had gone to Brücke's laboratory at night, and, in response to a gentle knock on the door, I opened it to (the late) Professor Fleischl, who came in with a number of strangers and, after exchanging a few words, sat down at his table.... My friend Fl. [Fliess] had come to Vienna unobtrusively in July. I met him in the street in conversation with my (deceased) friend P., and went with them to some place where they sat opposite each other as though they were at a small table. I sat in front at its narrow end. Fl. spoke about his sister and said that in three quarters of an hour she was dead, and added some such words as «that was the threshold». As P. failed to understand him, Fl. turned to me and asked me how much I had told P. about his affairs.

⁵ As Elizabeth Spelman observes, in women «anything resembling anger is likely to be redescribed as hysteria or rage instead» (264).

Whereupon, overcome by strange emotions, I tried to explain to Fl. that P. (could not understand anything at all, of course, because he) was not alive. But what I actually said — and I myself noticed the mistake — was, «NON VIXIT». I then gave P. a piercing look. Under my gaze he turned pale; his form grew indistinct and his eyes a sickly blue — and finally he melted away. I was highly delighted at this and I now realized that Ernst Fleischl, too, had been no more than an apparition, a «revenant»; and it seemed to me quite possible that people of that kind only existed as long as one liked and could be got rid of if someone else wished it. (S.E. 5: 421)

About this angry dream I want to make three points. First, Freud's fantasy in the «*Non Vixit*» dream — it is surely grandiose — is that his anger is itself a lethal weapon. Related to this is his implication that the dream-work, which serves to suppress (not repress) affect in the first place, may ultimately work to magnify it.

To me the most memorable aspect of the «*Non Vixit*» dream is the «scene of annihilation» (520) where Freud «acts» on his anger, exterminating his friend with a wounding glance, causing him as if in some bizarre science fiction film to liquefy and finally to evaporate into nothing, leaving no bodily trace. This Freud analyzes as a reversal of the very same treatment he had once received from his employer-teacher Brücke who had chastised him for his renowned tardiness as an assistant in his lab.⁶ Here, then, the anger of the professor provokes the anger of the student. Elsewhere in *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud vividly describes this event, which so clearly had a mortifying effect on his self-esteem:

One morning he turned up punctually at the hour of opening and awaited my arrival. His words were brief and to the point. But it was not they that mattered. What overwhelmed me were the terrible blue eyes with which he looked at me and by which I was reduced to nothing.... No one who can remember the great man's eyes, which retained their striking beauty even in his old age, and who has ever seen him in anger, will find it difficult to picture the young sinner's emotions. (422)

In the case of the hysterical employee, the anger of his employer (who, as we recall, beat his subordinate with a stick) provoked the employee's anger. The employee took his grievance to the courts where, however, he found no «satisfaction» (S.E. 2: 14). The result is that the employee turned the anger against himself, making himself physically sick. In the case of the «*Non Vixit*» dream, anger also calls forth anger. But here the comparison ends. The anger is wildly out of proportion. Freud *was* late. Moreover, anger is vented in fantasy which does result in satisfaction and delight. What an amazing phenomenon is the dream!

Indeed the grandiose fantasy of the dream is that anger is itself a firearm, that Freud's anger is so powerful the mere expression of it constitutes murderous aggression. An emotion is converted into a physical force in fantasy. Freud succeeds in destroying his friend with a laser-like look of piercing anger. To his shame. And to his anxiety. For might he not expect retaliation in an endless escalation of anger and action?

In his discussion of the «*Non Vixit*» dream Freud repeatedly refers to the «raging» of the emotions that accompany it. To my mind the high degree of its emotional intensity

⁶ I take a dream Freud reports earlier in *The Interpretation of Dreams* as an elementary version of the «*Non Vixit*» dream. The text of the dream runs as follows: «His father was scolding him for coming home so late». What the dream conceals through the reversal of affect is that the son is angry at the father. The dynamic of the Oedipus complex is at its familiar work: «the original wording must have been that *he* was angry with his *father*, and that in his view his father always came home too *early* (i.e. too soon). He would have preferred it if his father had not come home *at all*, and this was the same thing as a death-wish against his father» (S.E. 4: 328).

is its most striking feature — especially given Freud's argument in this section of *The Interpretation of Dreams* that the dream-work serves to weaken or dilute the emotions, to bring «about a suppression of affects» (467). As he puts it elsewhere in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, «the purpose for which the censorship exercises its office and brings about the distortion of dreams» is «in order to prevent the generation of anxieties and other forms of distressing affect» (267). The dream-work itself must therefore possess great power, as is underscored in Freud's vivid description of it: «the whole mass of these dream-thoughts is brought under the pressure of the dream-work, and its elements are turned about, broken into fragments and jammed together — almost like pack-ice» (312). Freud pictures the resulting dream as a dense, cold mass of different elements that have been fused together. When I read this passage I think of the dream-work in terms of my high school atomic physics, of fission and fusion, the particles of the dream-thoughts being smashed together with a force inconceivable in terms of the weights and measures, the pulleys and levers, of everyday life. Imagine, then, the force in turn required to separate these elements, a force equivalent to that of an atom smasher. More, imagine the emotional storm that would then be released.

Secondly, given that the emotional world of the «*Non Vixit*» dream is far more complicated than that of the case of the hysterical employee which revolves around the single emotion of anger, how does Freud explain his anger which was, he tells us, «strange»? What accounts for his overwhelming sense of emotional strangeness? In part it may be due to the eerie feeling of uncanniness arising from the altogether peculiar situation of addressing a person who is in fact — dead. But more fundamentally, I think, what struck Freud as «strange» was the complex of *contradictory* strong emotions released by the dream.

In his analysis of the dream mass, Freud focuses on the different categories of emotions — what he calls the «various qualities» of affect — that accompanied it at two nodal points: «hostile and distressing» feelings when he «annihilated» his friend and enemy with two words and a piercing look, and feelings of «delight» and «satisfaction» at the end of the dream when he realized not only that such people could be eliminated whenever one (he) wanted but even more pleasurably, that such aggressivity was justified (480). Thus what may have been particularly troubling to Freud was the presence of contradictory emotions with regard to the same person. As we know, this emotional knot would come to be one of Freud's decisive contributions to a theory of strong attachments — that they are characterized by binary emotions, with love and hate being the primary pair.

We should not be surprised to learn, therefore, that later in his analysis of the «*Non Vixit*» dream Freud traces the roots of the pattern of his present-day intense emotional relationships to his colleagues and friends back to the *emotional world* of his early childhood, to his relationship with his nephew John who was a year older than he was, his «senior» and «superior» (483). As Freud observes earlier in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, «Until the end of my third year we had been inseparable. We had loved and fought with each other; and this childhood relationship... had a determining influence on all my subsequent relations with contemporaries» (424). In relation to the «*Non Vixit*» dream one childhood memory (or fantasy) in particular of his nephew returns to Freud — when Freud, not yet even two years old, is interrogated by his father for hitting his playmate. Freud's defense? «I hit him 'cos he hit me» (484). Notice that retaliation against a «superior» is at issue, one of Freud's dominant fantasies. In his discussion of the «*Non Vixit*» dream Freud concluded, «My emotional life has always insisted that I should have an intimate friend and a hated enemy» (483). Thus in adulthood the personal intersects (or perhaps more accurately, infects) the professional, upping the ante of emotional engagement. We should not fail to note that the site of the first part of the dream is Brücke's laboratory where Freud had worked and that all of the major figures in the dream are men. Here again anger is gendered male.

Thirdly, given Freud's emphasis on the intensity of the emotions (in particular his annihilating anger), it is peculiar to me that nowhere in his analysis does he name the

emotion of guilt which will become so central to his thought later on. Instead he repeatedly uses the word «reproach» (the reproach of others and self-reproach). With reproach we seem to find ourselves in a novel of manners rather than in a tragedy or a romance of passion. Reproach is one of the chafing emotions, not one of the strong emotions or quiet emotions. Reproach implies disapproval, rebuke, reproof. Thus it is primarily a social emotion. And as a social emotion, it is altogether in keeping with Freud's emphasis on shame in his analysis of the «*Non Vixit*» dream.⁷ For shame implies an external, observing other as opposed to guilt, which implies an internalized, observing other (although Freud does mention self-reproach, he does not identify it as guilt which, as we will see, he will ultimately come to associate with an action that is *not* taken, only fantasized). Thus in the short history of the emotions that I am sketching here, guilt seems to emerge later than shame in the development of Freud's thought. Or, we might speculate that the emotion of guilt was too distressing for Freud at this point in his life, that in the «*Non Vixit*» dream it could only escape the censorship of the dream-work under the guise of shame.

3. «Frozen Wrath». In *Studies on Hysteria* we encounter a hysterical man whose frenzied attacks of rage physically mimic his anger, reducing him to a feminized position. His rage and his body are out-of-control. Repression is ultimately an ineffective mechanism for containing anger. In the «*Non Vixit*» dream, the dream-work (which is, like repression, an unconscious process) serves both to suppress and stage that anger. If the anger is out of proportion to the event which prompted the dream, nonetheless the phenomenon of the dream allows the safe and satisfying expression of aggressive fantasies entailed by anger. Furthermore, the phenomenon of analysis puts those emotions into perspective. In my third text, «The Moses of Michelangelo», Freud considers an altogether different mechanism for the control of anger, one that is conscious, indeed self-conscious.

The relay between the affect of anger and destructive action is Freud's subject in «The Moses of Michelangelo». As his analytic point of departure he takes his own powerful reaction of «intellectual bewilderment» (also a preferred Freudian emotion) on repeated viewings of Michelangelo's sculpture of Moses. Freud comes to the conclusion that Michelangelo brilliantly rewrote the scriptural history of anger embodied by Moses. Similarly, we may read Freud's essay as a rewriting of his own evolving thought on the emotion of anger — and in particular its containment.

It is a question of reading for the plot, of the timing of action and emotion. As Freud remarks, the seated figure of Moses is traditionally understood to be represented in a state of anger incipient to ruinous behavior, that he is on the verge of bounding up and hurling down the Tables of the Law, demolishing them in a single furious gesture. Freud, however, reads the plot differently. He advances Moses and his audience in time. He concludes that Moses has already half-risen in his rage, only to stop his angry action and return to a state of wrathful immobility, or «frozen wrath» (*S.E.* 13: 229). The heat of passion is chilled to the sculptural bone. Moses resists the temptation to act on «rage and indignation», which would have been «an indulgence of his feelings» and would have entailed the annihilation of the Law. He «controlled his anger», «he kept his passion in check» (229-30).

For Freud the statue expresses «the passage of a violent gust of passion visible in the signs left behind it in the ensuing calm» (236). It is precisely this tension between the quietude of Moses's exterior aspect and the interior storm of his rage that arrested Freud's

⁷ Here is Freud in *Totem and Taboo* on the «social emotions»: «We may describe as 'social' the emotions which are determined by showing consideration for another person without taking him as a sexual object» (*S.E.* 13: 72). In *Violent Emotions* Suzanne Retzinger, a communications scholar, argues that shame is the primary social emotion. By this she means that shame is concerned above all with the survival of a relationship. In her study of quarrels of married couples, she concludes that it is in fact *shame* that incites anger rather than anger responding *tout court* to anger.

eye. How does Freud explain the ability of Moses to contain his anger? For Freud it is a matter of character, of the attachment of Moses to a higher cause to which he has consciously pledged himself. It is, in other words, a matter of self-discipline. Thus for Freud, Moses is a figure of heroic restraint, all the more noble for his wrath and the powerful self-control that countervails it. The implication is that Moses's control of his anger, rather than his indulgence of it, allows him to fulfill his responsibilities as a leader to his religious community. At this point I suspect I hardly need draw attention to the fact that the nobility of frozen wrath is gendered male.

4. Guilt. In his dedication to a higher cause and in his prodigious self-control, Freud's Moses is larger than human, an incarnation of a mental and moral ideal, a figure who upholds the Law of the land. Few could be expected to succeed in following his example. I turn, then, to my fourth and final Freudian text, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, in which Freud theorizes a different mechanism to counter aggressivity. Here, to be sure, Freud does not directly address anger as an emotion. Instead he deals with the drive of aggressivity to which he believed all human beings are subject and which he regarded as the greatest impediment to civilization. (As I read human history and today's papers filled with the fighting in Bosnia and hate crimes in Germany, nothing would seem to be more indisputable.)

That there is a clear connection between anger and aggressivity is suggested by the infamous prehistorical fable of the primal origin of guilt that Freud offers in *Totem and Taboo* (1913) and to which he returns in *Civilization and Its Discontents*. It is a scenario of power, sexual desire, and the strong, indeed primal emotions. Freud, as we recall, hypothesizes that civilization began when the sons of the despotic father (he had denied them sexual access to women) banded together in hatred and killed him — and ate his body.

What can restrain the drive to aggressivity, particularly when it is inflamed by the strong, divisive emotions? In *Civilization and Its Discontents* Freud argues that so powerful is the drive to aggressivity that the sense of guilt emerges to counter its force. Indeed the drive to aggressivity, when introjected, becomes guilt; there is a kind of mathematical principle of conversion between drives and emotions at work. Guilt is thus for Freud arguably the most important achievement of civilization.

Much of *Civilization and Its Discontents* is devoted to a consideration of the etiology and origin of guilt on the levels of the individual and of the group. I will not rehearse the complex trajectory of Freud's argument, which is in any case well-known. Here I will instead confine myself to three points, hoping to gain in clarity what I may lose in simplification. First, in Freud's world the emotion of guilt is not understood as a technology of control or a disciplinary technique in the Foucauldian sense, imposed by an historically specific set of discourses and institutions. Rather for Freud the regulating emotion of guilt emerges inevitably from a primal psychology of the emotions, from the tension or ambivalence between hate and love, the emotional representatives of the two basic drives — the drive to aggressivity (power) and the libidinal drive (sexual desire). In Freud's view guilt is both genetic and structural to the human psyche from the moment of the constitution of civilization (that is, the founding moment of the sons revolting against the father). If love and hate are the two primary emotions, guilt is a secondary emotion, entailing self-consciousness. Guilt is the third term, unsettling and oppressive yet paradoxically also stabilizing. Like a point on a nuclear thermostat, guilt works homeostatically to maintain a fluctuating equilibrium between love and hate, to regulate the temperature, to keep things cool.

Secondly, we should note that the pre-historical paradigm on which Freud bases his theory of the constitution of civilization (out of hatred) and the emergence of guilt (out of love) is gendered male. The sons, who fiercely love the father as much as they hate him, internalize the father as their superego, turning aggressivity — and anger — against themselves.

Thirdly, for Freud the sense of guilt is produced from hostile feelings that are *not*

acted upon (Freud ultimately reserves the term «remorse» for the emotion one experiences after one has committed an act of aggression). Concomitantly the sense of guilt is, startlingly, often unconscious. It is what I call a disabling emotion. Guilt is simultaneously an inhibition of aggressivity and an exacting, gnawing punishment for aggression in fantasy. I find this a stunning conclusion: an emotion is itself a self-punishment for what has *not* taken place. Guilt inhibits the development of anger — before it even exists. Thus if for Freud the sense of guilt is «the most important problem in the development of civilization», in the final analysis it may also represent a crippling, enervating limit to it (*S.E.* 21: 134). In Freud's etiology of guilt, we find implicit a catastrophe theory of the emotions — and of civilization. If the sense of guilt is at first stabilizing, at a certain limit it may become radically de-stabilizing. This is because Freud theorizes that the larger the group or community, the more intense the guilt, the greater its quotient.⁸ We are presented with a dismaying future, one in which the burden of guilt (which inhibits the expression of anger) grows heavier and heavier, a future which we may have come close to realizing today as transnational corporate structures and communication networks circle the globe, drawing everyone more tightly together. The sense of guilt may become so onerous, Freud suggests, as to be intolerable, not only for the individual but for civilization as a whole, rendering culture neurotic, crippled. As he writes in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, «the price we pay for our advance in civilization is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt» (134). But if Freud theorizes the «fatal inevitability» of guilt (132), we may conclude that at its limit condition guilt carries with it an inevitable fatality, manifesting itself as «a tormenting uneasiness, a kind of anxiety» on the level of the individual and a «*malaise*» on the level of society or civilization as a whole (135).

At its limit condition then, guilt, the emotion which makes possible the survival and development of civilization, may devolve into anxiety, which is, according to Freud, perhaps the most fundamental and primitive of all the emotions.⁹ As he points out, «the sense of guilt is at bottom nothing else but a topographical variety of anxiety» (*S.E.* 21: 135). Thus if Freud is ambivalent about the strong emotions, he is equally ambivalent about guilt.

The trajectory I've traced in Freud's thought about anger finds its endpoint in guilt, an emotion which, as I read Freud, is highly individualizing and isolating. Guilt turns us back on ourselves. Guilt separates us from one another. Guilt inhibits us from anger and aggressive action — and in the final analysis not just from action but also from pleasure. (I am thinking here in particular of Freud's somber text «A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis» which he published six years after *Civilization and Its Discontents* in 1936 when he was eighty years old. In it Freud broods on guilt as a paralyzing impediment to a past pleasure. He also presents guilt as casting a long shadow into the dubious future as a fateful emotion: in Freud's view of the emotions they «belong» not just to the past, but also to the future.¹⁰)

If Freudian guilt is isolating and individualizing, feminist anger is conceived in precisely the opposite terms. It is presented as an emotion which will not only be the basis for a group but will also politicize the group, as an emotion furthermore that is created in a

⁸ Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents*: «What began in relation to the father is completed in relation to the group. If civilization is a necessary course of development from the family to humanity as a whole, then — as a result of the inborn conflict arising from ambivalence, of the eternal struggle between the trends of love and death — there is inextricably bound up with it an increase in the sense of guilt, which will perhaps reach heights that the individual finds hard to tolerate» (*S.E.* 21: 133).

⁹ As Freud argues in «The Uncanny» (1919), «every effect belonging to an emotional impulse, whatever its kind, is transformed, if it is repressed, into anxiety» (*S.E.* 17: 241).

¹⁰ See the chapter on «Reading Freud» in my *Aging and Its Discontents* for a discussion of «Acropolis», aging, and guilt.

group, as an emotion that is enabling of action, not inhibiting of it. In Freud anger is gendered as male but Freud does not unambiguously approve it. The weight of his work is on containing and regulating violent anger, on de-authorizing male anger. Conversely the work of feminists appropriates male anger, using it to establish the authority with which to challenge patriarchal culture. Thus in this discursive circulation of anger in Freud and feminism, we find anger being redistributed in terms of gender. In the rest of this essay I turn to anger as the quintessential contemporary feminist emotion, drawing on a selection of essays that have been published in the last fifteen years in the United States by feminist literary critics and philosophers. The essays by literary critics Jane Marcus, Carolyn Heilbrun, and Brenda Silver all focus on Virginia Woolf. The three by philosophers Naomi Scheman, Elizabeth Spelman, and Alison Jagger revolve in great part around the relation of emotion to epistemology, and make the case for the cognitive dimension of the emotions.

Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1928) is the founding text of feminist literary criticism in the United States. It was published just two years before *Civilization and Its Discontents* when Woolf was forty-six. One of its most remarkable passages is a scene which dramatizes and analyzes feminist anger. The setting is the British Museum where the author has gone one weathery afternoon to do research for her upcoming lecture on «Women and Fiction» (which is, of course, the subject of *A Room*). While reading the hypothetical *Mental, Moral, and Physical Inferiority of the Female Sex* by Professor Von X, she finds herself, like an unruly student, absent-mindedly, «unconsciously», drawing a picture of him, a picture that reveals to her both his anger *and* hers:

A very elementary exercise in psychology, not to be dignified by the name of psycho-analysis, showed me, on looking at my notebook, that the sketch of the angry professor had been made in anger. Anger had snatched my pencil while I dreamt. But what was anger doing there? Interest, confusion, amusement, boredom — all these emotions I could trace and name as they succeeded each other throughout the morning. Had anger, the black snake, been lurking among them? Yes, said the sketch, anger had. It referred me unmistakably to the one book, to the one phrase, which had roused the demon; it was the professor's statement about the mental, moral and physical inferiority of women. My heart had leapt. My cheeks had burnt. I had flushed with anger. There was nothing specially remarkable, however foolish, in that. One does not like to be told that one is naturally the inferior of a little man.... One has certain foolish vanities. It is only human nature, I reflected, and began drawing cart-wheels and circles over the angry professor's face till he looked like a burning bush or a flaming comet — anyhow, an apparition without human semblance or significance. The professor was nothing now but a faggot burning on the top of Hampstead Heath. Soon my own anger was explained and done with; but curiosity remained. How explain the anger of the professors? (40-41)

Woolf astutely concludes that the anger of the professors is a self-offensive mechanism (the phrase is mine) adopted by those in power (men); anger is used as a weapon to fortify their position, to create others as inferior. In a chain reaction her anger is provoked by his: «I had been angry because he was angry», she concludes.

I am reminded here of the «*Non Vixit*» dream: Freud's anger at his angry professor results in his wishful dream of annihilating his friend and colleague with a lethal glance of anger. As we saw, Freud traces his aggressive impulses back to his early childhood. Similarly, Woolf defaces «her» professor in daydreaming fantasy, doodling, doodling... until he goes up in flames. Her analysis of anger, however, is not psychological but political. What Freud did not take into account in the case of the hysterical employee — abusive,

unequal relations of power — Woolf places at the center of her analysis of gender relations; at the root of the matter is the injustice at the heart of patriarchy. We can understand her anger as an instance of what Jagger calls «outlaw» emotions, emotions experienced by those who are oppressed and who thus have what Jagger argues is an «epistemological privilege» with regard to the authority or appropriateness of their emotions. I can not take up the argument for «epistemological privilege» in this essay. I turn instead to the tone of Woolf's anger, which is in fact the subject of Silver's essay.

Woolf presents her anger as light, even charming. She writes in ironic tones leavened with a deft touch of melodramatic self-humor. Her anger is altogether palatable. «Had anger, the black snake, been lurking among them?» she writes. «Soon my own anger was explained and done; but curiosity remained.» Woolf leaves her anger behind, she tells us (although I do not completely believe her). She casts it off to pursue thought «dispassionately».

Actually I have exaggerated. Woolf's anger is not so easily swallowed by everyone. The three literary critics I've mentioned strongly disapprove of what they take to be this «feminine» expression of anger. They prefer the flatout anger of Woolf's *Three Guineas*, a political tract on the economic and social position of women and war which was published in 1938. For Marcus, the Woolf of *Three Guineas* is, wonderfully, in «a towering rage»; she relishes the image of Woolf as «an angry old woman», a «witch, making war, not love, untying the knots of social convention, encouraging the open expression of hostilities» (123, 135). (Old? Woolf was only fifty-nine at the time, but that is another subject). For Heilbrun, her own early preference for *A Room of One's Own* over *Three Guineas* is a cause for shame. She revels in Woolf's «unladylike» tone in *Three Guineas*, the text where finally Woolf «was able to indulge the glorious release of letting her anger rip» (241). Heilbrun sees this as an achievement all the more impressive because «like all women», she says, Woolf «had to fight a deep fear of anger in herself» (241). For both Heilbrun and Marcus, the Woolf of *Three Guineas* finally allows anger to drive her art, her writing. Marcus especially is impassioned on this point. Although she acknowledges that thought must accompany anger in the making of art, her own rhetoric belies her preference for anger. Marcus: «we must finally acknowledge that it was anger that impelled her art, and intellect that combed out the snarls, dissolved the blood clots, and unclogged the great sewer of the imagination, anger» (138).

Silver shows how the issue of the authority of feminist anger has driven the reception of *Three Guineas* ever since it was published, for many years impeding the serious consideration of its ideas (Woolf is *too* angry, many readers concluded). But with the emergence of essays by Marcus, Heilbrun, and others, Silver argues, anger, *expressed angrily*, has been recuperated. Flatout anger has been established as «righteous» and «prophetic» — in short, as unambiguously and purely political. Woolf's anger is no longer heard as «neurotic, morbid, or shrill» (need I add «hysterical?»), but as the expression of «an ethical or moral stance» (361). Silver accepts Scheman's argument that from this perspective the expression of anger itself is a political act. Scheman: from a feminist point of view, anger is «moved away from guilt, neurosis, or depression, and into the purview of cognition, external behavior, social relations, and politics. To become angry, to recognize that one has been angry, to change what counts as being angry becomes a political act» (362).

It would be inaccurate to say that Freud regarded the strong emotions as «irrational», although as we have seen, he did view anger and aggressivity as disruptive to the fragile ties binding civilization together. He firmly believed, as he wrote in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, that «instinctual passions are stronger than reasonable interests» (112). Feminist philosophers reject the view of anger as «irrational». They argue for the cognitive dimension of the emotions in general, using anger as their prime example and the relation between oppressor and oppressed as their paradigm. As Spelman puts it, «there is a politics of emotion: the systematic denial of anger can be seen in a mechanism of subordination,

and the existence and expression of anger as an act of insubordination» (270). For Spelman, anger — as opposed to rage which is anger in excess — has «clarity of vision» (271).

In contradistinction to Freud's emphasis on anger and aggressivity as disruptive to social bonds, here anger is the basis for a political (action) group (however vaguely defined). On this point Scheman's reflections are especially challenging, persuasively so, to the Freudian discourse of the emotions. She argues that in the social context of, for example, a consciousness raising group, the «discovery of anger can often occur not from focussing on one's feeling but from a political redescription of one's situation» (77). Thus from a feminist perspective, it is not the Freudian case that emotions are located inside us, repressed, as if they were highly idiosyncratic personal property only waiting to be discovered. Rather they are created in the group. Moreover they can be created *retrospectively*, as it were. A woman may, for example, retroactively identify as anger her emotional state in the past even though she did not feel anger then. In this view it is not the Freudian case that she had *repressed* her anger and it is only now coming to the surface. Rather the emotion is being projected from the present into the past. Emotions from a feminist perspective are thus *conscious* social constructions.

One of the most thought provoking questions posed by Freud about the emotions is: how are they transmitted? (In *Totem and Taboo* he assumes that guilt is an «emotional heritage» that is experienced long after the primal act of parricide has been committed. But how?) One of the answers I would give to this question today is that emotions are transmitted through discourse. The feminist essays to which I've referred constitute a significant case in point. They are intended to create a politicized community out of their readers. They are the scholarly equivalent of the consciousness raising group. Anger is generated, sustained, and strengthened through discourse — or at least that is the goal. But on further thought, I suspect that really is not the goal - that commitment to feminist principles of analysis is. For can emotion be located *in* discourse? Nothing would seem more impossible. Thus it is the word «anger» and not necessarily the emotion to which it refers that in fact constellates the group. Scholarly feminist «anger» is a discursive site around which persons cluster who have similar if not the same objectives. Thus feminist literary criticism looks back through its mothers (Woolf) and constructs its own discursive tradition: a literature of anger. Marcus is explicit on this point: in her essay she moves from the anger of Virginia Woolf when she was older, to the anger of the middle-aged Adrienne Rich in her poem «The Phenomenology of Anger» to — this is Marcus's challenge — the anger of the young («Why wait until old age...? Out with it. No more burying our wrath» [153]). What is the relation of writing to feminist «anger»? Often writing is itself the action.

In *Civilization and Its Discontents* Freud perceptively observes that «a feeling can only be a source of energy if it is itself the expression of a strong need» (72). Women have so long been identified with the emotions, albeit not with anger, that I find it fascinating an emotion should be the basis for a rallying cry for solidarity, even if — or more accurately precisely because — that emotion has long been identified as the forbidden fruit (or snake, to allude to Woolf). In the case of women it is clear that there is a strong need to resist patriarchal injustice. To do so we have needed to assert our cultural right to anger. But what are the consequences of flatout anger? This is the question to which Freud in great part devoted himself and which he answered with great wisdom in *Civilization and Its Discontents*. This is also the very question that (to my knowledge at least) is not entertained at any length in this feminist work. To my mind this is the question to which we need to turn today, especially since certain styles of anger are being advised as *better*. Silver too concludes that today «feminist criticism stands in a problematic relationship to the authority of anger that infused its early rhetoric and vision» (367). She ends by saying that «there is no one feminist anger, and no one appropriate to its end», that «all these angers, all these voices are necessary to feminist critique today» (370). After her astute

inquiry into anger and her careful scholarship from an historical perspective, this conclusion strikes me as too cautious. What does Silver give as examples of problematic effects of feminist anger? That the convention of scholarly discourse inhibits it. That male literary critics are still critical of it. That feminists of color critique white middle class feminists for it. I would rather call these effects, not serious consequences. Interestingly enough, they are confined largely to discourse.

I have two major objections to the advocacy of anger, particularly as it assumes the form of the angry expression of anger. One objection is primarily theoretical, the other primarily practical and historical. If Freud's theory of the emotions is limited in his insistence on the psychological interiorization of the emotions, if he does not recognize the cognitive or political value of emotions, nonetheless his work provides us with ways in which to understand the limits we have reached today in theorizing the emotion of anger from a feminist perspective.

As we recall, in his analysis of the «*Non Vixit*» dream Freud was concerned to dissect the complex of «strange emotions» that accompanied it, separating out the different emotions from one another, isolating them, identifying them, as if they were precipitants in a chemical experiment. What he discovered was not only the diverse emotions of anger and shame, triumph and anxiety but also that in life, as opposed to analysis, the emotions are bound indissolubly together, that they exist in compound form. For Freud, ultimately there is no such thing as pure anger or pure shame. In his homeostatic view of the strong emotions, a (strong) hostile emotion will be accompanied by its antidote. The converse also holds: a (strong) positive emotion, like love, will be accompanied by its opposite. For Freud our strong emotions are ambivalent, our motives mixed.

That we should interrogate our wishes for their unconscious components is so fundamental to Freud as to be unnecessary to relearn it here. I need hardly add that this is a perspective that is lacking in the feminist work I have been surveying.¹¹ I consider this a significant shortcoming but that is not my point. My point is that anger as a «political» emotion does not exist in a pure form. Emotions come in clusters.¹²

Scheman uses the word «confused» to describe something similar but in the final analysis quite different. «If we are confused about our emotions», she writes, «those emotions themselves are confused» (179). Her argument here is that the confusion is a sign of a pre-political state, that we must identify these emotions, name them, as a way of understanding

¹¹ I borrow the term «clusters» from Carol Tavis.

¹² It is present in other feminist work. In much feminist pedagogy, anger has also been the emotion of choice. In *Gendered Subjects: The Dynamics of Feminist Teaching*, edited by Margo Cully and Catherine Portugues, we are brought back to a fundamentally psychoanalytic view of the strong emotions. Cully, in her essay «Anger and Authority in the Introductory Women's Studies Classroom», asserts that «Anger is a challenging and necessary part of life in the feminist classroom» (216). And in their introduction, the editors of the volume note that the model of the psychoanalytic family helps them to understand why in the feminist classroom there are «outbreaks of temper, tears, denunciation and divisiveness, notions that courses must offer total salvation or else fail, strong feelings of vulnerability, awareness that students/teacher love or hate student/teachers, that students/teachers see or reject themselves/their sisters/mothers/fathers in the course of content or interactions in the classroom» (15). But if the model helped clarify a certain aspect of a pedagogical situation, it also worked to produce this volatile, adversarial pedagogical world. The model constricts us to a hothouse vision of a two-generational family when the academy houses many and far flung generations, which is to say that it itself embodies or is witness to a multilayered historicity. Moreover, in its emphasis on the strong emotions, the psychoanalytic model implicitly restricts us to certain forms of feeling — ambivalent and ultimately oppositional emotions. Taken to its extreme, the psychoanalytic model produces the concept of a «poisonous pedagogy» (I am here using the phrase coined by the psychoanalyst Alice Miller) — or of «pedagogic violence» (here I am referring to a provocative essay by Lynn Worsham), with anger as the privileged emotion: emotion is linked to the domain of the personal, to woman, and through feminism to the political, with the classroom being the space for the drama.

our position. With this I agree. Her implication, if not explicitly drawn conclusion, however, is that in resolving the confusion, one emotion — anger — will ultimately emerge with the clarity of clearly drawn lines. The scenario she offers is that of a nonfeminist becoming politicized in a consciousness raising group. Thus in this scenario, out of confusion the emotion of guilt appears first; guilt is then interpreted as a «cover for those other feelings, notably feelings of anger» (177). In this scenario, pre-politicized guilt must disappear to allow a politicized anger to appear. I do not disagree with the pragmatic value of this strategy — for that is what it is. But I am insisting that a pure and righteous politicized anger will be accompanied by other emotions as well — precisely because the emotion of anger will no doubt be an «action».

This brings me to my second objection. In the essays to which I have been referring the paradigm of oppressor-oppressed is key. It is argued that oppression can be identified by anger, and that it should be responded to by anger. But what happens then? We need to advance the scenario ahead in time, interrogating the consequences of letting one's anger rip (Heilbrun). We must focus on the longer view, on the «plot» of anger, looking ahead in time as did Freud in «The Moses of Michelangelo». Anger as an «outlaw» emotion (Jagger) is appropriate when associated with the position of the oppressed. But as we grow older, relations of authority almost inevitably shift. For feminists in the academy, power relations have undergone an indisputable sea change in the last fifteen years. Many women who entered the academy under the banner of the politics of anger find themselves today in positions of authority, responsible to many others. The title of a recent talk by Scheman — «On Waking Up One Morning and Finding That We Are Them» — gestures toward this phenomenon. For this generation, which is my generation, «righteous», habit-forming anger, once understood as a «right», can take on the shape of abusive arrogance. «Anger» may be appropriate as a tool of politicization but after this inaugurated point in time flatout anger is a blunt instrument. Expressions of anger in public discourse (in essays, in debate) can have very different consequences from expressions of anger in the close quarters of the classroom, for example, where flatout anger can produce a flashpoint, escalating personal conflict. Thus we need an historical perspective on the uses of anger. If the assertion of the authority of anger in the academic community (the humanities in particular) has had enabling consequences at a certain point in time, that time has largely passed. The paradigm of oppressor-oppressed, once so useful to feminism, is producing serious consequences of its own in terms of generational politics within feminism. With this paradigm in hand, younger women in the academy, for example, analyze their position in relation to older women «in power» as that of the oppressed, their anger authorized by their «epistemological privilege» of being a student or an assistant professor. Nevermind that the general paradigm of oppressor-oppressed is inappropriate in this case. Certainly from this perspective «anger» senselessly divides women from one another, creating smaller, oppositional groups. This is indeed a serious consequence of the politics of the authority of anger.

I want to end with a question that has been tugging at my mind now for several months. It is a question I cannot answer but can only pose. We speak approvingly of self-reflexive thought, of thought that turns back on itself, interrogating its foundations, its principles, its implications, its consequences. Is there an analogy to self-reflexive thought in the domain of the strong emotions? For Freud anger is inhibited, or regulated, by guilt; in *Civilization and Its Discontents* he offers a homeostatic view of the strong emotions. In Freud's view, passions lead often to sorrows. But this system operates unconsciously. It is not consciously self-reflexive. One of the important contributions of feminist thought is the theorization of the cognitive dimension of the emotions. Here we come close, I think, to considering the emotions in a self-reflexive way. But the long-term consequences of the feminist passion for anger, to allude to the epigraph from Virginia Woolf with which I opened this essay, remain «uncharted».

WORKS CITED

- Freud, S. (1893). *Studies on Hysteria*. With Joseph Breuer. *S.E.* 2: 1-309.
- Freud, S. (1900). *The Interpretation of Dreams*. *S.E.* 4-5: xi-338, 339-627.
- Freud, S. (1907). Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*. 1907. *S.E.* 9: 7-93.
- Freud, S. (1910). *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*. *S.E.* 11: 63-137.
- Freud, S. (1913). *Totem and Taboo*. *S.E.* 17: 1-161.
- Freud, S. (1914). The Moses of Michelangelo. *S.E.* 13: 211-36.
- Freud, S. (1919). The «Uncanny». *S.E.* 17: 218-56.
- Freud, S. (1930). *Civilization and Its Discontents*. *S.E.* 21: 64-145.
- Freud, S. (1953-74). *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Trans. and ed. James Strachey. 24 vols. London: Hogarth and Inst. of Psycho-Analysis.
- Heilbrun, C.G. (1983). Virginia Woolf in Her Fifties. In *Virginia Woolf: A Feminist Slant* (Jane Marcus, Ed.), pp: 236-53, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Hillman, J. (1960). *Emotion: A Comprehensive Phenomenology of Theories and Their Meanings for Therapy*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1992.
- Jagger, A.M. (1989). Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Philosophy. In *Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing* (Alison M. Jagger & Susan R. Bordo, Eds.), pp: 145-71, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Marcus, J. (1978). Art and Anger: Elizabeth Robins and Virginia Woolf. In *Art and Anger: Reading Like a Woman*, pp: 122-54, Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press.
- Miller, A. (1980). *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence*. Trans. Hildegard and Hunter Hannum. London: Virago, 1987.
- Retzinger, S.R. (1991). *Violent Emotions: Shame and Rage in Marital Quarrels*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Rosaldo, M.Z. (1984). Toward an Anthropology of Self and Feeling. In *Cultural Theory* (Richard A. Shweder & Robert A. Levine, Eds.), New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Rosaldo, R. (1989). *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*. Boston: Beacon.
- Scheman, N. (1980). Anger and the Politics of Naming. In *Women and Language in Literature and Society* (Sally McConnell-Ginet, Ruth Borker & Nelly Furman, Eds.), pp: 174-87, New York: Praeger.
- Scheman, N. (1993). On Waking Up One Morning and Discovering That We Are They. Center for Twentieth Century Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. April 1993.
- Spelman, E.V. (1989). Anger and Insubordination. In *Women, Knowledge, and Reality: Explorations in Feminist Philosophy* (Ann Garry & Marilyn Pearsall, Eds.), pp: 263-73, Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Silver, B.R. (1991). The Authority of Anger: Three Guineas as a Case Study. *Signs* 2(16): 340-70.
- Tavris, C. (1989). *Anger: The Misunderstood Emotion*. Rev. ed. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Wharton, E. (1905). *The House of Mirth*. New York: NAL, 1964.
- Woodward, K. (1991). *Aging and Its Discontents: Freud and Other Fictions*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Woodward, K. (1992). Grief-Work in Contemporary American Cultural Criticism. *Discourse* 2(15): 94-112.
- Woolf, V. (1992). *A Room of One's Own*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Worsham, L. (1992). Emotion and Pedagogic Violence. *Discourse* 2(15): 119-48.

Angel on the Loose: Sentimentality as Disguised Aggression in *The Old Curiosity Shop*

RICHARD A. CURRIE (*)

A minority voice in the critical discussion of Nell's characterization in *The Old Curiosity Shop* argues that hidden feelings of rage may be detected in the «angel in the house». Lorelee MacPike, for example, argues that Nell experiences murderous daydreams in which she imagines the death by suicide of her grandfather (*Dostoevsky's Dickens: A Study of Influence*). Expanding upon Joseph Gold's observation that Nell's refusal to speak the words «I love you» when her grandfather asks her to, MacPike contends further that Nell represses negative feelings. Dostoevsky's Nellie in *The Insulted and the Injured*, moreover, with her ability to endure suffering without verbal complaint MacPike continues, is based upon Dickens' Nell who seems to have a positive relish for death and destruction. More recently, Garrett Stewart suggested that Nell's characterization, though inconsistent, exhibits «spiritual masochism» and that «arrows of self-affliction» are part of the psychoanalytic fever that characterizes her relationship with grandfather. No sentimental angel, Nell, in Stewart's reading becomes an example of «angelic self-abnegation».

I would like to build on the idea that Nell does not embody «sacred tears» by exploring elements of hidden rage that MacPike and Stewart do not perhaps sufficiently emphasize.¹ The minority voice needs to be more widely heard. The sweet, quiet, allegedly sentimental facade long celebrated for Nell is actually a defense against the expression of aggression. Omitted in the discussion of Nell's hidden rage is an account of the motive for her anger and how that anger came to be repressed. Also neglected is a psychological explanation of how Nell protects grandfather from her anger. Dickens, in short, provides in Nell his

(*) The College of Staten Island, Department of English, 2800 Victory Boulevard, Staten Island, New York 10314, USA.

¹ The phrase is Fred Kaplan's from *Sacred Tears: Sentimentality in Victorian Literature*. Along with other critics of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Kaplan argues that Nell's story is designed to evoke tears in its readers. But unlike Steven Marcus, Michael Slater, Harry Stone, Kaplan argues that the tears, while sentimental, are not a morbid, distasteful blemish that fatally mars the work for a modern sensibility. Rather tears promote the emotional well-being of their readers because tears put people in touch with their feelings, or as Kaplan calls them, the moral sentiments. Marcus (*Dickens: From Pickwick to Dombey*) Slater (*Dickens and Women*) and Alexander Welsh (*The City of Dickens*) are the best examples of the criticism that Nell is a sentimental creature with only iconic value.

first novelistic example of what modern psychoanalysis calls the narcissistic defense, or the dynamic of the child directing its anger at itself for fear of losing the love of the object (usually parental) that provoked it.² The first of the King Lear heroines, Nell employs what Steven Marcus and Michael Slater call mythic love in order to silence the anger that they feel for the important emotional figures in their lives.³ Nell's angry feelings are expressed as attacks upon the self when she is alone and in «mournful fancies» as well as dreams. This is a pattern that Dickens would develop further with Florence Dombey and Amy Dorrit.

Nell's anger is hidden because she has learned to hide her feelings in reaction to the neglect of her needs perpetrated by her grandfather. The grandfather recognizes this failure when he comments that he has not prepared her well for life, specifically citing the fact that Nell has led an isolated existence. Nell also comments about her repressed emotional nature in a conversation with Mrs. Quilp. She says that she has kept to herself her grandfather's unhappiness and his mysterious disappearances during the night, and admits that «I am not quite well» (97). The indication of illness in connection with hidden feeling makes clear that the repression of angry feeling is what Dickens represents with Nell.

Nell's hidden anger is evident in three remarkable fantasies in chapter nine. Called «mournful fancies» that come «flocking on her mind in crowds», Nell sits alone in her house at her window and, much like the way Taylor Stoehr in *The Dreamer's Stance* says Dickens projected himself into his characters, she projects her angry feelings onto people and subjects in the streets below. As Nell wonders whether the «rooms below were as lonesome as hers», she focuses on «a crooked stack of chimneys» and fantasizes «ugly faces... frowning at her and trying to peer into her room» (120). Nell's fantasy projects anger in two ways. She fantasizes that the faces are frowning at her; the frowning suggests that she disapproves of herself in some fashion. Her feelings find a physical object that is then turned against herself.

The peering of the faces that Nell's imagination has created, moreover, reinforces Nell's feeling that she disapproves of herself, or that she has done something wrong that she wants to hide and that the ugly faces are looking for. Neither is true. Outwardly Nell has been the obedient Victorian daughter who has dutifully remained in her house at night. But her thoughts are hostile ones and they have found an outlet through projection. Similar to the way that D. W. Winnicott and Hyman Spotnitz argue hidden anger is expressed in self-attack, Nell's imagination has transformed the peering faces into punitive judges who find her wanting. (Winnicott, «Primitive Emotional Development»; Spotnitz «The Narcissistic Defense».)⁴

MacPike calls Nell's second angry fantasy a daydream, and she is right that it is murderous.

² As set forth by Hyman Spotnitz, modern psychoanalysis argues that the narcissistic defense is established in the first two years of life of the child in response to an environment that denies it the expression of all its feelings, especially anger. It is a pre-oedipal phenomenon that involves issues of self-esteem. Spotnitz's concept is outlined in «The Narcissistic Defense» (*Psychotherapy of Pre-Oedipal Conditions*) and *Modern Psychoanalysis of the Schizophrenic Patient*, Second Edition.

³ Paul Schlicke (*Dickens and Popular Entertainment*) contends that William Macready's production of Shakespeare's *King Lear* in 1838 which restored the death of Cordelia to the play's action shaped Dickens' conception of Nell as a long suffering daughter who remains loyal to the maddened king, her father. I contend that Dickens' resentment of the neglect that he suffered from his parents, particularly his mother, before the Warrens' Blacking Warehouse incident fired his imagination and enabled him to create passive-aggressive figures like Nell whose anger is hidden. Fred Kaplan (*Dickens: A Biography*) and Albert Hutter («Reconstructive Autobiography: The Experience at Warren Blacking's», *Dickens Studies Annual*) document the case for Dickens' resentment at parental neglect beginning at about age six.

⁴ Spotnitz stresses the hidden anger contained in Narcissus' apparent infatuation with the image (himself) that he sees in «Narcissism: An Introduction». Behind the self-absorption is neglect of need, the earliest form of aggression available to a child. Winnicott sees protection of the object by the child from anger towards the parent that she hides.

The narrator's remark in the opening paragraph of chapter nine that Nell «has a constant fear of in some way committing or injuring the old man» provides the aggressive context for a grisly fantasy (119). Moving her lock from the streets into her room with «a new train of fears and speculations», Nell fantasizes grandfather's death either by suicide or «sudden illness» and imagines «his blood... creeping, creeping, on the ground to her own bed-room door» (119-120).

When Nell fantasizes her grandfather's suicide or thinks that he would suddenly die she is expressing a desire to see her grandfather dead. Nell's «new train of fears and speculations» are not the feelings of an innocent girl solicitous for grandfather's welfare. Rather they are examples of the repressed anger Nell harbors for her grandfather who has abandoned her while he goes out and pursues his vain dream of making her rich through gambling. The solitude Nell must endure produces loneliness and she is angry about that, even to the point of fantasizing his death.

In the third fantasy Nell returns to her room and again fantasizes that the chimney stacks are ugly faces. They appear to her as «hideous,... visible by some strange light» and, as the narrator points out, they «often mingle with her dreams» (121). The aggressive elements in the fantasy are the «hideous faces» that Nell thinks inhabit her house, and that she dreams about them is a clear reference, in psychoanalytic terms, to the fact that Nell harbors feelings of rage. Investing the faces with a strange light deepens the aggressive quality of the faces that Nell has conjured up as her companions. It is a frightful fantasy, scarcely what an angel experiences in her house.

Nell's nightmares about Quilp reveal rage. Sleeping in Mrs. Jarley's waxworks, Nell is «constantly haunted by a vision of [Quilp's] ugly face and stunted figure» (279). She dreams that Quilp is «somehow connected with the waxwork, or is waxwork himself, or was Mrs. Jarley and waxwork too, or was himself, Mrs. Jarley, wax-work, and a barrel organ all in one, and yet not exactly any of them either» (279). Catherine Bernard argues that Dickens, like Freud, believed dreams to be the thoughts of the dreamer. When Nell dreams of Quilp becoming part of the waxwork and multiplying himself her own feelings are expressed. And the narrator points out that Nell's feelings are aggressive ones, for she «tortured herself with imagining a resemblance in some one or other of their death-like faces, to the dwarf...» (289).

But Nell's feelings about Quilp are also sexual, and recent criticism of *The Old Curiosity Shop* has renewed the case for sexual experience in Nell's characterization. Laurie Langbauer argues that Dickens' «harping [on Nell's] status as child rather than young woman [seems an] excessive, over determined denial» that reveals the sexuality Dickens consciously wants to deny her. Meredith Skura suggests that Quilp's lust for Nell is not all of his own feverish imagination.

Nell's dreams about Quilp reveal one of the fears associated with female sexuality in a patriarchal society. The several dwarves appear to inhabit the clothes of the waxwork figures and come alive «with their great glassy eyes» (289). «Grim stillness and silence» characterize the dwarves' movements in the waxworks (289). The elements are frightening and perhaps they suggest rape — not an unlikely catalyst of the dream given Quilp's pursuit and sexual overtures to Nell and especially considering how the dwarves stand over her bed as if they were about to assault her. Rage against the self is also indicated when the narrator notes that Nell «tortured herself» with dreams about Quilp.

Nell's fancies about Miss Edwards, the young girl at Miss Monflather's school who befriends her, provide another example of her hidden rage. What begins as Nell's attempt to comfort herself «in her affliction» with her grandfather by evoking memories of the «sweet young girl» turns into a hopeless, gloomy fancy in which Nell criticizes herself. In chapter 32 Nell laments that she has no friends like Miss Edwards «to whom to tell her griefs». She is yoked to her grandfather and is not free to hear Miss Edwards' voice

which she is sure would make her happy. Nell says is humble and too poor. She wishes she «were something better». She dares not speak to Miss Edwards for fear of not being accepted. Despite the fact that Miss Edwards sought to help Nell (by picking up her handkerchief) and that clearly the young woman is not above her in social class, Nell nevertheless feels there is a vast distance between them. She believes that Miss Edwards would not remember her and Nell will not approach her.

The comments are indications of a character who cannot express her anger except in criticizing herself. As Freud argues in his discussion of melancholiacs in «Mourning and Melancholia», «if one listens patiently to the many and various self-accusations» one understands «that often the most violent of them... fit[s] someone else, some person whom [the speaker loves], has loved or ought to love» (159). The criticisms of the self, Freud continues, are really «reproaches against a loved object which have been shifted onto the [speaker's] ego» (158). Nell really wants to criticize her grandfather but instead she assaults herself.

And indeed in the paragraph proceeding Nell's self-criticism she rehearses the difficulties that her grandfather has caused her: «All her old sorrows had come back upon her, augmented by new fears and doubts; by day they were ever present to her mind; by night they hovered round her pillow, and haunted her in dreams» (341). Instead of then voicing her complaints about her grandfather Nell thinks of Miss Edwards and begins the litany of self-attack.

It is in death that Nell seeks worth and value. Implicit in such an assumption is a denial of self-worth in this life, and, as twentieth century commentators like Michael Steig have noted, Nell is suicidal. Suicide, of course, is the ultimate form of rage against the self.

The suicide motif is first suggested in Nell's enjoyment of graveyards and ruined buildings. In chapter 17 she experiences a «curious kind of pleasure in lingering among [the] houses of the dead» and reads the inscriptions of the people who were buried with «increasing interest» (187). Later Nell is thoughtfully impressed by an old woman who has found tending the grave of her husband for fifty five years to be «a solemn pleasure» (188). She and Trent come across Todlin and Short, producers of the Punch and Judy show, in a cemetery. Near another churchyard cemetery in chapter 46, Nell shows a «fascination» for abandoned houses when her attention is riveted by «two small dwellings... empty and desolate... fast hastening to decay» (440). When she sees the house that the schoolmaster provides for her and her grandfather, Nell gleefully clasps her hands and remarks «a place to... learn to die in» (482). While working in her garden, Nell tends only the graves of young children suggesting, as the narrator points out, Nell's «unconscious sympathy» with dying youth (505). In chapter 53 Nell sits among the silent tombs in the church where her body will later rest and reflects, «What if the spot awakened thoughts of death! Die who would, it would still go on happily as ever. It would be no pain to sleep amidst them» (494). These are the actions of a suicide who believes her life is worthless.

Fantasy, nightmare, self-attack and a brooding about death are the elements of hidden rage in Dickens's characterization of «the angel in the house». Together they suggest that Nell has an inner life that is wayward and that she is not a religious icon or a sentimental figure. Angel on the loose is a more apt description.

WORKS CITED

- Bernard, C. (1985). Dickens and Victorian Dream Theory. In *Victorian Science and Victorian Values: Literary Perspectives* (James Paradis & Thomas Postlewait, Eds.), New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Dickens, Ch. (1972). *The Old Curiosity Shop*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Freud, S. (1959). Mourning and Melancholia. *Collected Papers*, IV. New York: Basic Books, 152-170.

- Freud, S. (1959). On Narcissism: An Introduction. *Collected Papers*, IV. New York: Basic Books, 30-39.
- Gold, J. (1972). *Charles Dickens: Radical Moralist*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Hutter, A. (1977). Reconstructive Autobiography: The Experience at Warren's Blacking. *Dickens Studies Annual*, 6: 1-14.
- Kaplan, F. (1987). *Sacred Tears: Sentimentality in Victorian Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kaplan, F. (1988). *Dickens: A Biography*. New York: William Morrow.
- Langbauer, L. (1986). Dickens' Streetwalkers: Women and the Form of Romance. *ELH*, 411-431.
- MacPike, L. (1981). *Dostoevsky's Dickens: A Study of Literary Influence*. London: George Prior.
- Manheim, L. (1965). Floras and Doras: The Women in Dickens' Novels. *Texas Studies in Language and Literature*, 7: 181-200.
- Marcus, S. (1965). *Dickens: From Pickwick to Dombey*. New York: Basic Books.
- Schlicke, P. (1985). *Dickens and Popular Entertainment*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Skura, M. (1984). *The Literary Use of the Psychoanalytic Process*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Stewart, G. (1974). *Dickens and the Trials of the Imagination*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Slater, M. (1983). *Dickens and Women*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Spotnitz, H. (1976). The Narcissistic Defense. *Psychotherapy of Pre-Oedipal Conditions*, pp: 100-110, New-York: Jason Aronson.
- Steig, M. (1976). Dickens' Characters and Psychoanalytic Criticism. *Hartford Studies in Literature*, 8: 38-45.
- Stoehr, T. (1965). *Dickens: The Dreamer's Stance*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Stoehr, T. (1985). *Modern Psychoanalysis of the Schizophrenic Patient: Theory of the Technique*, Second Edition. New York: Human Science Press.
- Stone, H. (1979). *Dickens and the Invisible World: Fairy Tales, Fantasy and Novel Making*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Welsh, A. (1971). *The City of Dickens*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1975). Primitive Emotional Development. *From Pediatrics to Psychoanalysis*, pp: 145-156, New York: Basic Books.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1976). The Myths of Narcissus. *Psychotherapy of Pre-Oedipal Conditions*, pp: 93-100, New York: Jason Aronson.

The Choice of a Sexual Identity: Alchemy and Gender in an Episode from Casanova's *Mémoires*

NANCY BLAKE (*)

Right after his reputation as a great lover, Casanova would have liked to be remembered for his manipulation of the eighteenth century's counter-enlightenment fascination with alchemy. The episode I purpose to look at is one in which Casanova plays his favorite role, that of magician. For quite some time, the adventurer has been living and traveling in style supported by a very wealthy and elderly Marquise, Madame d'Urfé, who has spent the greater part of her life studying occultism and has taken Casanova as her teacher.

A word about age here: Casanova gives his own age as 38, but says he looked 10 years younger. He gives Madame d'Urfé's age as 75. It is true that he is talking to his young mistress Marcoline at the time. The specialists who have established the notes to our edition of the *Mémoires* have taken the trouble to determine that Madame d'Urfé was actually 57 at the time of this incident. We will see in a moment that age is not without relevance here.

During her youth Madame d'Urfé gave in to all sorts of excesses and was the mistress of the Regent, Philippe d'Orléans, during that period of political and moral turpitude, the Regency, which prepared the way for the French revolution. When Casanova comes to know her the Marquise is past the age of galantry; her consuming passion is no longer the pleasures of the flesh, but esoteric knowledge. In her studies, however, Madame d'Urfé has encountered her limits; she is convinced that her desire for cabalistic knowledge is thwarted by her gender and that in order to attain true enlightenment she must be transformed into a man. She looks to Casanova to aide her in the magical operations necessary for her sex change.

Together, Casanova and the Marquise imagine a scenario in which she will be impregnated by an otherworldly being and die giving birth to a male child into whose body her spirit will pass. At first Casanova does not assign himself the role of genitor. It is a bit surprising in fact that the great lover feels the need to delegate that role to another in this case. His choice is also a surprising one: he presents his secretary Passano, a man who has already

(*) University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Program in Comparative Literature, 2070 Foreign Languages Building, 707 South Mathews Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801, USA.

tried to swindle him several times, as a prestigious head of the Rosecrucian order, sent to perform the operation of regeneration upon the body of the marquise.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, Casanova discovers just in the nick of time that Passano is grievously ill with an unmentionable disease. Now Casanova will have no choice but to perform the operation himself.

It is important to note the way Casanova excuses his behavior toward Madame d'Urfé: «...in the last analysis, it was her own mind which fooled her, since her error was identified to her existence. I naturally gave preference to myself, because between oneself and a stranger, one always chooses oneself and because I knew that in profiting by the folly of this extremely rich lady I was really harming no one and doing myself a great deal of good.» (v. 9, ch. III, p. 45, my translation).

Casanova takes for granted that the Marquise is quite mad. In his relationship with her, although there is a good deal of affection between them, he never supposes he can cure her folly. In fact he says, «her error was identified to her existence». In fact, as we will see, he himself identifies with her error. Madame d'Urfé wants to change sexes, to be reborn as a baby boy, and thus, as male, have the possibility of attaining enlightenment in the occult sciences. But also, through this regeneration, the elderly woman will have a new life. The magical sex change is also the route to immortality.

What, in fact, does Casanova tell us here about the structure of madness? We know that for the psychotic the phallic mother possesses everything, and therefore all the organs, and both sexes. This is the status that Madame d'Urfé seems to be aiming for. And what about Casanova?

Madame d'Urfé's cabalistic name is Sémiramis. «Having engaged to regenerate my good Sémiramis, I was intent on not exposing myself to making a bad impression. The Marquise was beautiful, but old. It might happen that I would find myself without means. At the age of thirty-eight I had begun to find that I was often subject to this fatal misfortune.» (p. 55)

Because Casanova has reason to fear impotence, he has recourse to Marcoline, a Venitian woman, whose amorous abilities are beyond question.: «I was well acquainted with her powers and I could have no doubts about her potency.»

Moreover, because Madame d'Urfé is constantly supposing that nonhuman creatures must intervene in her magical rituals, Casanova will have Marcoline play the part of mermaid and assist him in «regenerating» the Marquise. One of Casanova's favorite activities consists in dressing his mistresses. He loves to shop for clothes as well as to engage dress-makers to sew the costumes he has designed for the women in his life. Casanova always insists upon the pleasure of the women when they receive these clothes and it is easy to believe him, but he never stops to ponder his own obvious enjoyment of this dressing the other.

In this case the costume designed for the mermaid is a strange one. Casanova never explains his motivation in dressing Marcoline as a jockey. This is not the first time in the *Mémoires* that Casanova describes his pleasure in cross-dressing. It is never however a matter of really disguising Marcoline as a man. In spite of her masculine costume, he says, no one who saw her would have doubted her femininity. Why should a mermaid be a cross-dresser? The doubt, even if it is a false one, as to sexual identity, must have some bearing on the sex change to be carried out on the person of the Marquise.

The Marquise's folly takes on a typical note as she proceeds with a confusion of generations. «Tomorrow, my dear Galtinarde, you will be my spouse and my father! Ask the initiated to explain that enigma.» The confusion of sexes which forms the center of interest in this episode seems to be accented by the confusion of generations which is a constant theme in the *Mémoires*, where Casanova often encounters women from his past in the guise of their daughters twenty years later. In fact the message of Casanova seems to be that none of us has a fixed identity. We are all place holders.

After the operation Casanova performs on her, the Marquise is supposed to be pregnant with a male child which will be herself. She insists however that she already feels like a male since she has fallen in love with the mermaid and wants Casanova to ask the oracle if she could be the mermaid's lover in fourteen or fifteen years.

Casanova insists however that his own role in the magical sexual operation depends upon the effect of the doubling of the partner: «Sémiramis had been beautiful, but she was then what I am now, and without the mermaid, the operation would have been a failure.»

However, it does not seem to surprise Casanova that the Marquise is also and in much the same way excited by the presence of the cross-dressed mermaid. The magical operation demanded three sexual relations, but Casanova confesses to having faked orgasm the second and third time, fooling both Madame d'Urfé and the mermaid. At first glance this confession would seem to spell the failure of the phallic personage Casanova is generally supposed to incarnate. In fact what we see here is actually an identification to the feminine position. As Lacan demonstrates in the «Seminar on the Purloined Letter», the feminine is not a matter of content but of place. Moreover it is not so much the positive power of the feminine, the ability to reproduce for example, which triggers fantasy, but rather the ability to create infinite illusion. For Casanova, in much the same way, the feminine position permits faked orgasm, permits doubt and therefore endless possibility. The feminine of Lacan's letter and of Casanova's magical operation is infinite value as long as it is not questioned.

In spite of Casanova's faking orgasm, the oracle which is consulted insists that «the word of the Sun has entered the soul of the marquise and she will give birth at the beginning of February to another self with the sex of the creator...».

The marquise believes that she will give birth to herself in the body of a man, «regenerated». And Casanova adds: «Perhaps the reader thinks that, as a gentleman, I should have told this woman the truth, if so I pity him, for that would have been impossible, and I confess that even if I could have done so, I would not have, because to bring her to reason would have meant rendering her miserable, for, with her mentality, she had a need of fantasy.»

If the Marquise feeds on fantasy, what about Casanova? He knows the operation can not succeed, yet he tells his partner, through the oracle, that she is pregnant.

Next Casanova goes to the theater, the place he always feels most at home, with Marcoline and talks to two sisters, one of which, he tells us, will later marry a prince. This is the pretext for an aside on nobility. Casanova tells us that the girl eventually married a Medini, but that the genealogies of the Italian nobility confuse Medini with Medici, a mistake Casanova labels «innocent». «This sort of lie», he notes, «has its origin in the silly pride of the nobility which really imagines itself of a higher nature than the rest of humanity. We have to excuse them for that, since things have only the value we give them.»

According to Casanova, there are no absolutes, only variables, «things have only the value we give them» and what is true of an aristocratic identity, is also true of a sexual identity.

«She was what I am today.» Says Casanova of the Marquise d'Urfé. The Casanova, of the *Mémoires* is the secretary of his younger self, the same, yet so other. Thus, the Marquise and Casanova are one and the same. They have in common a desire for forbidden knowledge. Both have lead the life of the libertine and are feeling the effects of age. In his attempt to bring about a change of sex for Madame d'Urfé, Casanova identifies to the feminine position.

In his «Seminaire on the Purloined Letter», Lacan shows how the possession of the phallic letter is inextricably linked to the passive, powerless feminine position. Perhaps the clearest illustration of this paradoxical statement is to be found in the case of the best-known cross-dresser of classical psychoanalytic literature, Freud's President Schreber. «I had a feeling which, thinking about it later when fully awake, struck me as highly peculiar. It was the idea that it really must be rather pleasant to be a woman succumbing to intercourse. This idea was so foreign to my whole nature that I may say I would have rejected it with

indignation if fully awake: from what I have experienced since I cannot exclude the possibility that some external influences were at work to implant this idea in me.» (*Memoirs of my Nervous Illness*, trans. Macalpin and Hunter, 1988, p. 63.)

What Casanova and Schreber have in common is that both appear to be simply the seat of a phenomenon over which they have no control. On the one hand it is as though, in order to facilitate the sex change of the marquise, Casanova himself had to take on the feminine identity Madame d'Urfé was renouncing. But, as Schreber noted, assuming the place of the woman, cause of desire of the Other, puts the Other in danger of confronting a lack. If God needs me, He is not God.

On the other hand the position of Casanova, between two women, is one that is often repeated in the *Mémoires*. Many times the women are sisters, sometimes mother and daughter. This doubling of the female partner is underlined in the sort of coda in which Casanova takes Marcoline to the theater as a sort of reward for her behavior in the scene with Madame d'Urfé and there meets the two sisters who are the pretext for his remarks on aristocracy, appearances and reality.

Later after leaving town with Marcoline the ex-mermaid, Casanova is forced by a break-down of his carriage to spend the night at a country mansion and there Marcoline seduces the Countess, at whom Casanova never has a chance to get a good look. As he bids the two women good night, Casanova tells the Countess that is cannot guarantee the sex of the person she is admitting to her bed. The Countess responds «she could only gain by an error.»

By reading the sex change operation on Madame d'Urfé in the light of this next episode we can come closer to an understanding of the question of the value attached to gender: Firstly, What is the nature of the Phallus? It is evident that its possession is always delegated to another, just as desire is always the desire of the other. (*Le désir c'est le désir de l'autre*)

Second, The object of need, precursor of the object of desire, can not be taken from the other/Other without violence, a violence which would put the existence of the other/Other in danger and which is therefore unthinkable.

We have just seen that Casanova puts no faith in the inherent value of family name, knowing all too well that paternity is questionable, at best. Yet he will never question monarchy and is completely without understanding of the French revolution when it comes about. The value of the letter is infinite as long as it is not doubted.

In the realm of the Real, without the Symbolic, no division can be effectuated between object and Other. The Other must remain whole, can not be divided.

The conflict is thus between incorporating the object and thus killing the Other and becoming the Other. This is the explanation of the feminine superego of the psychotic as illustrated by Freud's reading of the *Memoirs* of President Schreber.

In conclusion we can note that here, as elsewhere in Casanova's *Mémoires*, everything happens in the realm of duality. For the orphan, the nomadic adventurer that Casanova plays, there is a glaring absence of the third term, of what Lacan defined as the *Nom-du-Père*, and which Freud called the first mythic identification: the incorporation of the Father.

To gain some perspective in the analysis of the structure Casanova is illustrating for us, we should remember that for the psychotic, gender is a real question. It is undecidable. Schreber does not know if he is male or female; he certainly has no choice in the matter.

Casanova, however, is not psychotic, but perverse. Just as he knows he is not a magician, he knows he is not a woman, but he enjoys the pretense and gets satisfaction from the hesitation of others. Paradoxically, but only in appearance, Casanova shows us that seduction is not a matter of action, but of reserve.

In the final analysis, for the perverse structure, (but to what extent do any of us escape perversion?) the phallus is not identified to a gender. Phallic potency is trans-sexual. And that is the message of this curious episode from the *Mémoires* of Casanova.

(Homo-)Sexuality and (Post-)Analytic Theory: Lesbian and Gay Male Subjectivity as a Site of Cultural Struggle

WILLIAM J. SPURLIN (*)

The debates surrounding multiculturalism and the revision and reformulation of the literary canon, indeed the entire notion of canonicity itself as an ideological construct, have helped to some degree to widen, politicize, and perhaps democratize the study of literature and culture. Recent work in gender studies, queer theory, ethnic studies, and other areas has helped to create spaces of theoretical inquiry into broader cultural relations and hegemonic practices that privilege certain bodies of knowledge and discourses over others, such as particular canons of literature, «standard» languages, certain sexual practices, and other forms of *cultural reproduction* that function in the interest of dominant social groups. Work in these areas has also helped us to understand that what is proffered as «literary» and what is dismissed as «popular» culture with regard to texts, for instance, does not point to any inherent literary value (or lack thereof) in the texts concerned, but, rather, are social and political judgments. Culturally and pedagogically this privileging excludes others and places them in positions of «lack» because it does not acknowledge alternative forms of expression and lived experience that also name the world (*cultural production*).

In this sense, it may be helpful to think of «literature» more broadly, by questioning the literary/non-literary binary and asking how canonicity is tied to hierarchies and systems of power, in order to truly incorporate rather than patronize the cultural practices of minorities that may not fall under the rubric of Western canonical literature and white, masculinist, heterosexist, and Eurocentric ways of constructing the world. If we judge the «literariness» of the cultural expressions of non-white races, women, lesbians and gay men, and writers of the Third World according to how well they fit Western patriarchal notions of literature and culture, we need to ask to what extent we are setting up relations of discursive and cultural indenture. At the same time, while these cultural debates have had some positive political effects in changing our assumptions about literature and culture, many multicultural projects remain informed by a weak, essentialized view of race, gender, social class, sexuality, and other ways in which subjects are socially positioned.

In this essay, I have chosen to specifically address lesbian and gay male (or queer) subjectivity as a site of cultural struggle through examining queer cultural studies and post-

(*) Columbia University, New York, New York 10027, USA.

modern critical theory as well as psychoanalytic and post-analytic discourses on homosexuality. While indeed these may seem to be strange bed-fellows at first, I believe that there may be productive spaces for discussion and debate between these areas as queer studies in particular and post-modern cultural critique in general have helped to transform the cultural status quo to some extent but have neither significantly nor sufficiently addressed how their projects (re-) inscribe patriarchal models of literature and reading which invoke and sustain hierarchical world views and therefore form new sites of oppression. In a similar vein, while historically psychoanalysis has not sufficiently interrogated the relation between «objective» clinical evidence and the cultural and social assumptions that operate in the interpretation of clinical data with respect to homosexuality, and, especially in the United States, has helped to proliferate the lesbian and gay male subject as pathological, as flawed or incomplete in psychosexual development,¹ I have nonetheless found Freud, Lacan, and some post-analytic theorists especially helpful in problematizing an essential queer subjectivity, evident in some forms of lesbian and gay activism and politics, and in renegotiating lesbian and gay male subjectivity as a site of agency, resistance, and cultural struggle. In other words, how can post-modern theories of cultural critique and queer theory shed light on interpretation in psychoanalysis as not free from ambiguity, contingency, and the struggle to name? On the other hand, how can psychoanalytic and post-analytic theory be useful in critiquing an essential, transcendent, fixed notion of queer identity coming from gay and lesbian cultural and political practices?

Much work on lesbian and gay studies and activism seems divided on how to go about defining a distinctive lesbian and gay identity and culture or whether one can or should attempt to define these at all. The question that frequently arises is whether gays of both genders exist as a distinct political group together or separately in similar ways as to how ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities have claimed such status, only this time the more or less common difference is the intimation and experience of gay desire. It seems that queer cultural theorists and activists are often caught between identifying gay culture as a site of *assimilation* or as one of *separatism*. Frank Browning, in his new book *The Culture of Desire: Paradox and Perversity in Gay Lives Today*, indicates, as I think others have before him, that under assimilationist paradigms, lesbians and gay men wish ultimately to be viewed as others are so that gay culture exists more or less as a transitional arrangement of refuge against the hatred of the majority culture; assimilationists believe, then, that through the adaptation of heterosexual mores, lesbian and gay men will eventually find the liberty they seek (9, 214). Separatist perspectives, on the other hand, argue vehemently against assimilationist models and postulate that being queer intimates not so much an aesthetic or culture of identities, but an *entrée* into a world of forbidden transgressive desire that challenges overtly heterosexual conventions of marriage in favor of more radical explorations of pleasure and spirituality (Browning 9). The separatists generally believe that under assimilationist models, lesbians and gay men are co-opted by hegemonic ways of thinking about pleasure, desire, and the body (tied to heterosexual marriage and monogamy) which may, at the same time, be sexually repressive for them.

I think that there may be some value and certainly serious difficulties with each perspective in and of itself. While I value assimilationist refusals to essentialize a distinct lesbian or gay male identity based on difference alone, which runs the risk of dis-embodiment of the queer subject from the social (or, in the Lacanian sense, from the structures of the symbolic), such a description of queer culture or model of queer politics runs another risk of eliding cultural/sexual differences (in trying to be like everyone else) to the point of losing any

¹ See especially Edmund Bergler's *Homosexuality: Disease or Way of Life* and Irving Bieber, et al., *Homosexuality: A Psychoanalytic Study of Male Homosexuals*, the latter of which denies Kinsey's findings regarding homosexual experiences among American males.

distinctive social or cultural space altogether. At the same time, we need to critically examine our relationship to patriarchy as gay men and women and our reliance on heterosexual models for acceptance and approval as many of these have worked against us, pressuring us to regulate, domesticate, and even renounce (silence) our sexualities.² On the other hand, while separatists have fought hard to preserve what they consider to be fundamental differences in queer identity, and because they rightly point out that gay men and women are admitted to patriarchy as long as they sequester their difference and conduct a sexless public life that offers no model or inspiration to other adults or children, I am still not convinced that the separatists are not complicit in patriarchal and hegemonic ways of thinking, despite their attempts to subvert them, as they actively try to construct a totalizing, and perhaps more positive, queer identity based on difference alone, leaving the heterosexual/homosexual opposition in tact. It seems to me that a move away from culturally hegemonic impulses must also involve a similar move away from hegemonic ways of thinking that reinforce hierarchical views of the world and categories and oppositions that close and codify.

Foucault has helped us to think differently about this problem as he has argued that though sexuality is tied to power and knowledge, it must not be thought of as a kind of natural given which *power* tries to hold in check, or as an obscure domain which *knowledge* tries to gradually uncover (*History of Sexuality* 105). In a later interview «Sexual Choice, Sexual Act», Foucault clarifies this in the context of lesbian and gay male sexuality in noting that sexual behavior is not merely «a superimposition of, on the one hand, desires which derive from natural instincts (knowledge), and, on the other hand, of permissive or restrictive laws which tell us what we should or shouldn't do (power)» (287; parentheses mine). Taken in themselves, power and knowledge as inherent parts of any discourse on sexuality are not useful; rather, it is more productive to consider how knowledge and power operate *relationally* in specific conceptual frameworks of sexuality at specific historical moments, as contingencies in

a great surface network in which the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures,... *the formation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances*, are linked to one another, in accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power. (*History of Sexuality* 105-106; emphasis added)

For queer cultural politics, then, it seems that it would be difficult to only focus on revising laws that prohibit certain sexual acts, or to uncover a core essence of knowledge about lesbian and gay male desire; though these are to some extent necessary, they are not sufficient because we need to study sexuality contextually within shifting social relations of power and knowledge. Not only can shifts in knowledge and power as they relate to the deployment of sexuality be seen historically as Foucault discusses in *The History of Sexuality*, but as they operate in contemporary political discourses on sexuality as well. Certainly one can see how power and knowledge nonetheless function, but operate differently, in assimilationist and separatist paradigms.³

² In the United States, we saw this at work as a political device during the 1992 Republican National Convention, where gays and lesbians were (re-)presented, mostly by the religious right, as dangerous to the preservation of «traditional family values» and as a threat to public hygiene and morality. Assimilationist strategies that do not consider how patriarchal ideology may work against them is problematic in any multicultural project.

³ These relations of power and knowledge, of course, also work in heterosexual frameworks. Browning notes, for example, that phallic penetration of women by men is linked to social positions of power and subordination; the act of being penetrated, he says, requires some release of power over the self. Even when feminists criticize marriage as an instrument to reduce women to the status of disposable property, and argue that the terms by which one enters the life and body of another should reflect common values of equity, mutuality, and personal autonomy (86-87), the point is that the relations of power are still operative though (re-)negotiated.

Returning to the critique I launched at the beginning of this essay questioning the literary as being innate to certain texts and arguing that it is instead socially and culturally constructed, it becomes difficult to speak of the subjectivities and cultural practices of lesbians and gay men (or any other minority group) without addressing how subjectivity operates socially and politically in relation to patriarchal structures. At the same time, in considering the relationship of psychoanalysis to cultural studies, specifically to queer studies and post-modern theory, it is important to examine and critique the «naturalness» of heterosexuality to psychosexual development and sexual practices, and the notion that heterosexuality is object-related and more developmentally advanced than homosexuality. Perhaps we can think about heterosexuality not as natural to the human condition but as a politically and culturally constructed category dependent on homosexuality. Otherwise, it remains difficult to argue against homosexuality as flawed or as incomplete (lack) as long as the norm of «natural» heterosexuality remains as given. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick points out in *Epistemology of the Closet*, «homosexual» as a category has failed to disintegrate under the pressure of deconstructive exposure, not because of its meaningfulness to those it defines, but because of its indispensability to those who define themselves against it (83). This should also lead us to think about the supposed naturalness of the heterosexual/homosexual split.

It is also worth considering how heterosexuality as a norm in the context of psychological health is linked to cultural reproduction, to the interests of dominant social groups, and how alternative strategies employed by queer cultural workers may or may not inscribe similar methodologies in constructing alternative understandings of queer desire. Freud has been helpful in problematizing a notion of an essential gay/lesbian subject in contradistinction to the legal and medical discourses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that preceded, co-existed, and later followed Freud's development of psychoanalysis as a discipline and clinical practice, discourses which pathologized lesbian and gay male subject as inverted «other,» and which still inscribe some contemporary medical and legal discourses on homosexuality with regard to AIDS. On the other hand, as Foucault notes that while discourses on homosexuality and subsequent social controls were being proliferated in the nineteenth century, the formation of a counter-discourse of resistance was made possible. He writes that «homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or 'naturalness' be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified» (*History of Sexuality* 101). Freud was responding to contemporaneous medical discourses that pathologized homosexuals and to counter-discourses of gay men and women, both of which aimed to create and sustain an essential queer subjectivity and which re-inscribed patriarchal models in doing so. My reading of Freud places him much more on par with post-modern theoretical understandings of subjectivity though there are, of course, problems and shortcomings with Freud, such as his undertheorizing of general bisexual disposition, the primacy of the phallus in his theoretical writings, and a consequent lack of serious attention to lesbian sexuality.⁴

In much of Freud's writing, though, one is struck by his attention to variation, ambiguity, contingency, and difference in his descriptions of homosexuality. He has eloquently argued that homosexuality is found in «people whose efficiency is unimpaired, and who are indeed distinguished by specially high intellectual development and ethical culture» (*Three Essays*

⁴ Regarding bisexuality, however, I would contend that Freud was more speculative of a general bisexual disposition rather than claiming it as a universal trait. In his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, his discussions of bisexuality, greatly influenced by Wilhelm Fliess, are contextualized in arguments against the naturalness of heterosexuality and a fixed heterosexual object choice in heterosexuals. He specifically speculates in *Three Essays* that future research may produce a direct confirmation of the presumption of bisexuality (13n). I see his task as more oriented toward breaking down the heterosexual/homosexual opposition.

on the *Theory of Sexuality* 5; hereafter cited as *Three Essays*). Most interesting, Freud has rigorously critiqued homosexuality as degenerate, the basis for which he believes is the result of limited clinical evidence generalized and imposed on lesbians and gay men as a distinct population. It seems to me that Freud was very much aware of how appropriations of gay people as a distinct group defined largely in opposition to their heterosexual counterparts, which may in certain contexts be politically enabling, can be reappropriated for the political (and medical/clinical) ends of a contradictory homophobic ideology. Finally, Freud is skeptical and uncertain of heterosexuality prescribed as the *natural* human norm which he saw instead as unelucidated and not self-evident (*Three Essays* 12n). This «naturalism» is often explained even today by its link to biological reproduction, but as Kenneth Lewes points out, in modern sexual practices, sex has little to do with procreation among heterosexuals and is more strongly linked to pleasure and the possibility of intimacy (93).

Beyond Freud's detailed attention to tentativeness and contingency, and his attempt to break down the heterosexual/homosexual split, it is interesting to note that in mentioning sexual practices involving the anus as a site of sexual pleasure (and cultural repression), which he stipulates is not limited to sexual intercourse between men, Freud points out that it is disgust as a social force that has led to a restriction of the sexual aim and stamps sexual acts centered on or around the anus as perversions.⁵ Freud is marking the contingencies of (sexual) value and the *cultural* bases of what is labelled as perverse, unlike many of his followers, who cited clinical «evidence» as indicative of perversion especially in the 1940s and 1950s in the United States. He adds that while disgust interferes with the libidinal overvaluation of the sexual object (here the anus), the sexual instinct in its strength enjoys overriding this disgust (*Three Essays* 18). This stance quite remarkably informs overt political expressions in the contemporary lesbian and gay activism of such groups as ACT UP and Queer Nation whose «kiss-ins» and other deliberate methods of «flaunting» queer desire respond to patriarchal «disgust» at gay sexual practices. It seems to me that Freud saw the potential of queer subjectivity as a site of resistance and struggle.

Most important to my argument, however, is that Freud resisted describing gay subjectivity in essentialist terms. In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* he writes:

[p]sycho-analytic research is most decidedly opposed to any attempt at separating off homosexuals from the rest of [hu]mankind as a group of special character. By studying sexual excitations other than those that are manifestly displayed, it has found that all human beings are capable of making a homosexual object-choice and have in fact made one in their unconscious. (11n)

This led Freud to question a *necessary* or *natural* link between sexual instinct and object choice. Similarly, in *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*, Freud writes that

[h]omosexual men, who have in our time taken vigorous action against restrictions imposed by law on their sexual activity, are fond of representing themselves, through their theoretical spokesmen, as being from the outset a *distinct sexual species*.... Much as one would be glad on grounds of humanity to endorse their claims, one must treat their theories with some reserve, for they have been advanced without regard for the psychical genesis of homosexuality. (48-49; emphasis added)

Though Freud did not fully expand on the implications and possibilities for lesbian and gay male sexuality as a site of struggle and resistance (which I will attempt to do), and despite his rather patronizing tone in the *Leonardo* passage above, his work on homosexuality

⁵ Similarly, much contemporary discourse on AIDS has remedicalized sexual practices between men involving the anus as unhealthy, unnatural behavior.

does, I believe, play an important role in situating gay subjects in socio-political structures and in resisting an essential gay identity, both of which are highly relevant to problems in contemporary discourses on queer subjectivity. Discursive and methodological moves that argue for an essential, separate gay identity not only reinforce the heterosexual/homosexual split, but serve both the ideologies of homophobic and gay and lesbian activism alike. As Jeffrey Weeks in *Against Nature* points out, the establishment of homosexuality as a separate category goes hand in hand with its repression (30).

Furthermore, to consider gay identity and meaning as culturally and historically constructed, affected by and affecting knowledge and power as they are inscribed in a complex network of such institutional practices as pedagogy, law, medicine, theology, and the military, not only situates subjectivity socially, but helps us to see gay sexuality not as exclusively or naturally linked to the body, to the drives, to the unconscious, or to specific erotic phantasies and practices, but as a subject position in relation to others, as a political position, a way of situating oneself in relation to discursive practices (as in the activities of reading and writing) and in relation to the world (as a social, political, and cultural praxis). Lesbian theory has been most helpful here perhaps because of its disagreements with some strands of feminism that tend to totalize feminine subjectivity and do not account for the diversity of gendered experience. Lillian Faderman in *Surpassing the Love of Men* wishes to avoid further essentializations by critiquing the reduction of lesbian subjectivity to erotic practices alone in noting that «[w]omen who identify themselves as lesbians generally do not view lesbianism as a sexual phenomenon first and foremost» (142). Rather, it is tied to relations between women outside of patriarchal structures, outside of the primacy of the phallus.

This brings me precisely to my next point and relates to a concern I have been expressing throughout this essay concerning the re-inscription of hegemonic modes of thinking in theorizing queer subjectivity. Not only is this an important site for theoretical inquiry beginning with the heterosexual/homosexual split kept in place by essentialist notions of a queer subject, but has other social and political implications for differences *within* lesbian and gay male identities. In essentialist/separatist models there is an implicit assumption that gay men and lesbians are alike, a homogenizing impulse that tends to place under erasure differences in race, gender, social class, geographic location, and other positions from which lesbians and gay men speak. The work of Faderman, Marilyn Farwell, and other lesbian theorists are helping to change imbalances and inequities in gender as historically and presently substantially more research and representations of queer desire focus on gay men (as most recently seen in new scientific studies proposing the biological origins of homosexuality). Situating lesbian and gay male subjectivity in socio-political spheres, which are historically contingent, not only allows us as subjects and as gay men or lesbians to theorize our relation to hegemonic ideologies and discursive practices, thereby calling into question, perhaps unmasking, their privileged position, but also creates new spaces for cultural *production* and theorizing differences within queer identity so as to prevent its reduction to a white, masculinist, middle class, and Western phenomenon.

Closely related to this in terms of sexual practices, many lesbians and gay men who ascribe to more or less to assimilationist perspectives, as well as many heterosexuals who claim to accept gay men and women as long as they do not «flaunt» their sexuality, are highly critical of what they consider to be «deviant» or «kinky» sexual practices especially among gay people. Important theoretical issues need to be elucidated in response to this. First of all, Lacan has asked us to consider what are socially labelled as «perverse» sexual expressions neither as aberrations nor as atypicalities according to natural criteria, but as profound experiences exposing human desire in its entirety as the desire of the other (221). For Lacan, then, alternative forms of sexual practice have analytic value as a site of investigation to elucidate desire and imaginary intersubjective relations. Also, what is posited as «transgressive» in sexual practices often returns us to the idea of disgust and is cultural rather than an

inherent feature of a particular sexual practice. It is precisely in response to these social stigmas and the patriarchal regulation of the body that these practices thrive; we can think of them not as deviant acts that must be «straightened» up, which would limit the full range of sexual expressions among lesbians and gay men, but as potential sites of *cultural resistance* to hegemonic ways of thinking about the body and sexuality. We should also bear in mind that «mainstream» sexual practices are really unthinkable once we are outside the realm of heterosexual erotic practices. Certainly I do not mean to imply the reduction of all forms of sexuality to relativity and irresponsibility in the name of pluralism as there are legal boundaries to be respected concerning sexual relations between adults and children, and ethical ones to be negotiated concerning the non-consensual infliction of pain on one's partner, etc. But the S & M relationship in gay male sexuality, for example, because it is simultaneously codified and open, raises important theoretical and cultural questions concerning power relations and asks us to re-think the opposition between dominance and submission in sexual practices (to what extent these are dialogical rather than oppositional; to what extent each partner controls and submits to the will of the other, etc.) and whether these roles are specifically and necessarily gendered. Though many heterosexual and gay men accept, indeed privilege, gender-specific behavior that patriarchal roles demand, S & M sexual practices serve as a potential site for the parodying and deconstruction of machismo as distinctions between slave and master, control and submission, masculine and feminine are blurred. Along these lines, the leather dress code and S & M paraphernalia (bondage instruments, chains, cock rings, etc.) are signs that broaden our conception of textuality and bodies of knowledge (here knowledge of the body through the body), that, in their relation to sexuality as culturally and politically constructed, are worthy of *reading*.

While Freud and Lacan have been useful in critiquing an essential queer subjectivity in homophobic and homophobic agendas alike, which enables one to situate queer subjectivity socially and theorize it as a site of agency and resistance, this is not to suggest that psychoanalysis after Freud, particularly its development in the United States, is exonerated from the role it played as a privileged discourse in validating social prejudice toward lesbians and gay men through representing them as disturbed, falling back on a pathologizing tendency which Freud tried to question and resist, and for failing to account for the relation between the clinical and the cultural in an effort to claim the empiricism of its findings. Further, because of its lack of serious attention to lesbian sexuality, because it centers around the Oedipal conflict and its resolution, and because it has feminized gay men, psychoanalytic discourse remains phallogcentrically organized.

A complementary question to ask is what is the relationship of psychoanalysis to hegemonic structures? Félix Guattari, who was analyzed by Lacan in his analytic training has said that

[p]sychoanalysis transforms and deforms the unconscious by forcing it to pass through the grid of its system of inscription and representation. For psychoanalysis, the unconscious is always *already there*, genetically programmed, structured, and finalized on objectives of conformity to social norms. (59)

In November 1992, I attended a rather provocative lecture at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute by Dr. Merton Gill, who, in quoting Derrida, Bakhtin, and other critical theorists, argued brilliantly that clinical data, interpretation, and the positing of «realities» in analysis are constructions informed by the desires, anxieties, phantasies, and conscious and unconscious memories the analysand and analyst bring to the psychoanalytic situation. While I was on the edge of my seat with excitement during this lecture, the response of the audience, comprised mostly of practicing analysts and other clinicians, ranged from the somewhat skeptical to the hostile. While Gill's work was being honored that evening for a long career as a controversial analytic scholar, I think it needs to be taken further in terms of investigation and self-reflexively, perhaps in interdisciplinary contexts, as to the ways in which psychoanalysis

as a clinical practice and as a form of knowledge is implicated in Western modes of thinking, the ways it may be Eurocentrically inscribed, and how it may function in cross-cultural situations (particularly in light of the Oedipal conflict). If we accept the decentering authority of the analyst, how might the analysand potentially intervene and affect psychoanalysis as a form of knowledge and as a cultural praxis? Most important, is psychoanalysis as a theory and a practice a form of cultural reproduction with hegemonic tendencies or a form of cultural production that helps transform ways of seeing and understanding the world and the subject's position(s) in it?

Finally, what can queer cultural studies contribute to a much larger multicultural project? Merely constructing a distinct canon of gay and lesbian literature is unproductive because it simultaneously creates a new margin and a new center and assumes that a stable, fixed gay/lesbian identity is an inherent feature of these texts to simply be uncovered by the reader in the act of reading. Neither should the agenda of queer cultural studies be to only challenge the status quo, situating itself in pure opposition to patriarchy, as this is not new and maintains current social hierarchies. Perhaps cultural texts, and indeed identities, could be read as having a more or less contingent relation to «gayness,» based not on knowledge of an essential gay/lesbian subjectivity, and constructed neither as serving nor challenging dominant cultural expressions, but as sites to radically interrogate, (re-)negotiate, and re-map strategies of cultural knowledge and power as they pertain to the politics of sexuality and to the politics of difference, not only to contest dominant forms of knowledge and power, but to help us linger over any «queerness» as a site of resistance and as a strategy for cultural production.

WORKS CITED

- Bergler, E. (1956). *Homosexuality: Disease or Way of Life*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Bieber, I. et al. (1962). *Homosexuality: A Psychoanalytic Study of Male Homosexuals*. New York: Basic Books.
- Browning, F. (1993). *The Culture of Desire: Paradox and Perversity in Gay Lives Today*. New York: Crown Publishers.
- Faderman, L. (1981). *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present*. London: Junction Books.
- Farwell, M.R. (1990). Heterosexual Plots and Lesbian Subtexts: Toward a Theory of Lesbian Narrative Space. In *Lesbian Texts and Contexts: Radical Revisions* (Karla Jay & Joanne Glasgow, Eds.), pp: 91-103, New York: New York UP.
- Foucault, M. (1978). *The History of Sexuality*. Volume I: *An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1988). Sexual Choice, Sexual Act: Foucault and Homosexuality. In *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings of Michel Foucault* (Lawrence D. Kritzman, Ed.), pp: 286-303, Trans. Alan Sheridan et al., New York: Routledge.
- Freud, S. (1962). *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: Basic Books.
- Freud, S. (1964). *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*. Trans. Alan Tyson. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Gill, M.M. (1992). Current Trends in Psychoanalysis. Heinz Hartmann Award Lecture, The New York Psychoanalytic Society, November 10.
- Guattari, F. (1979). A Liberation of Desire (Trans. George Stambolian). In *Homosexualities and French Literature: Cultural Contexts/Critical Texts* (George Stambolian & Elaine Marks, Eds.), pp: 56-69, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Lacan, J. (1988). *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*. Book I: *Freud's Papers on Technique 1953-1954*. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, Trans. John Forrester, New York: W.W. Norton, 1991.
- Lewes, K. (1988). *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Male Homosexuality*. New York: Meridian.
- Sedgwick, E.K. (1990). *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Weeks, J. (1991). *Against Nature: Essays on History, Sexuality and Identity*. London: Rivers Oram Press.

«That's true. Negros stink.» Masochism and the Function of the Black Woman in Klaus Mann's *Mephisto*

CARLOTTA VON MALTZAN (*)

1. INTRODUCTION

Klaus Mann's novel *Mephisto* (1936) begins with the *Prologue 1936*. Like Goethe's prologue to *Faust* Mann's prologue sets the framework within which the novel is to be read. Here, a detailed description of the guests at the ball honouring the 43rd birthday of the prime minister exposes the ball as a hypocritical, fascist spectacle. As if directing a camera, the narrator leads the reader's eye from the various guests to the four most powerful representatives of the fascist regime. One of them is the actor and manager of the Berlin State Theatre of that time, Hendrik Höfgen. He becomes the focus of interest through the last sentence of this introductory chapter, when a friend who has known him since his beginnings as an actor remarks, «What a career he's made for himself since then!»¹

This prologue and the subtitle of the original German novel *Roman einer Karriere* (novel of a career)² — indicate that the novel is concerned with two themes: the portrayal of fascism and Höfgen's career. The latter consists of three stages. In the first, he rises to become the best actor of the Hamburg Arts Theatre through his portrayal of Mephistopheles in *Faust*. From success in provincial theatre Höfgen moves to Berlin, where he makes a new start in the metropolis of theatre. In this second stage he achieves his goal of becoming the country's best actor. These first two stages of Höfgen's professional development take place during the period from 1926 to the seizure of power by Hitler in 1933. The final stage of Höfgen's career (1933 to 1936) sees him rise from ordinary actor to manager of the Berlin State Theatre, a position that installs him within the fascist power structure.

Klaus Mann intended Hendrik Höfgen to seem ruled by «ambition, vanity, addiction

(*) University of Witwatersrand, Department of Modern Languages & Literatures, German Studies, Private Bag 3, WITS 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa.

¹ Klaus Mann 1983: 18. Translated from the German by Robin Smyth. In the following all quotations indicated by the use of parentheses in the text refer to this edition of Klaus Mann's novel in English. This paper was originally written in German. I would like to acknowledge the valuable input by Gary van Wyk in the English translation.

² This subtitle is omitted from the English translation by Robin Smyth. See n. 1.

to fame and the urge to exercise influence».³ He also characterises Hendrik Höfgen by his masochistic relationship with the black woman dancer and prostitute Juliette, a relationship to which an entire chapter is devoted. To date analyses of Klaus Mann's novel have ignored the significance of this relationship.⁴ It is argued here that this relationship is crucial to an understanding of the novel because analysis reveals that Höfgen displays the characteristics of sexual masochism in his relationship with Juliette. Furthermore two central themes of the novel, namely the development of Höfgen's career and his alliance to fascist power are also articulated through concepts of masochism, and more particularly by Höfgen's dissolution into moral masochism. Höfgen's relationship with Juliette functions as an indicator of Höfgen's movement from sexual masochism into moral masochism, from the private sphere into the public sphere, from a personal relationship to relations of power within authoritarian structures in which he becomes a fellow traveller.

2. HÖFGEN'S MASOCHISTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH JULIETTE

Freud in *The Economic Problem of Masochism* (1984a) distinguishes three types of masochism: erotogenic, feminine and moral masochism. Höfgen, in his relationship with Juliette, is clearly a feminine or sexual masochist.⁵ «Being gagged, bound, painfully beaten, whipped, in some way maltreated, forced into unconditional obedience, dirtied and debased» (Freud 1984a: 416) — such are the manifest contents of the fantasies and performances of sexual masochists. They are performed either as ends in themselves, or as promoters of potency and performance in other sexual acts. For Freud, masochistic relationships are characterised by desires to be subjugated and humiliated, to suffer physical pain and to undergo a ceremony of punishment. All these aspects are captured in what is possibly the most succinct description of the relationship between Höfgen and Juliette in *Mephisto*:

The black girl was the «teacher», the monitress [dominatix] and ruler; the pale man stood before her as the «pupil», obedient and groveling, who accepted with equal submissiveness constant punishment and scant, grudging praise. (1983: 50)

Gilles Deleuze in *Coldness and Cruelty* emphasises the contractual nature of entering and maintaining masochistic relationships. The masochist draws up a contract with his castigator whom he (sic) as educator, must first persuade to play her (sic) role (Deleuze 1989: 20-23).⁶ The contract stipulates the exact «rules of the game» to which both partners must adhere. The contract between Höfgen and Juliette is drawn up when Juliette agrees to accept payment for giving Höfgen dancing lessons at fixed intervals and according to

³ My translation of German original, «Ehrgeiz, Eitelkeit, Ruhmsucht, Wirkungstrieb» (Mann 1976: 384).

⁴ One exception is Alexander von Bormann (1987: 68f) who at least mentioned the importance of this masochistic relationship.

⁵ The sexist implications of the term «feminine» masochism used by Freud are contentious. His term is now generally replaced by the term «sexual» masochism.

⁶ Amongst the contractual clauses is the precondition that the masochist will select his castigator according to specific criteria in that «he does of course require a special 'nature' in the woman torturer» (Deleuze 1989: 41). As could be expected, this would not be a woman with a sadist nature, because the masochist could then no longer carry out his educative project and could not mould her nature according to his purposes. With «a special 'nature'» (1989: 41) Deleuze refers to a «certain 'essence' of masochism embodied in the nature of a woman who renounces her own subjective masochism» (Deleuze 1989: 43). Besides the role of prescriptive and descriptive language Deleuze also mentions the importance of the fetish that refers to the crucial processes of negation and suspension which are essential to masochism.

a set ritual. Thereby Juliette becomes Höfgen's master in terms of the master/slave dialectic.

For Höfgen the masochistic relationship with Juliette is a precondition for his career. Often enough he assures Juliette that,

When the public likes me a little — when I have success — I owe it all to you. To see you, to touch you, Princess Tebab, acts on me like a miracle cure; it's so wonderful — a refreshment like no other I've ever tasted. (1983: 55)

From this masochistic relationship Höfgen derives the strength to fulfill his burning desire for success. For Höfgen Juliette thus fulfills a function that can be exactly defined since she «in a terrible way was precisely what he needed.» (1983: 45) Not without reason does he repeatedly refer to her as «the dark source of [his] strength» (1983: 261). Juliette's beatings, her outfit — green boots of supple patent leather, a grey fur jacket, cheap gold-plated bangles and, above all, a red riding crop that she got as a gift from Hendrik — all serve to set the scene that always drives him to ecstasy, a performance that achieves in fantasy that success which does not yet exist in reality. Under the rule of Juliette's whip he must dance in his «shorts of shiny black satin such as little boys had to wear at gym classes» (1983: 52). Juliette shows her teeth and moves her eyes grimly and «this was exactly what he expected and demanded from her».⁷ Juliette's wild facial expressions evoke the fantasy of a horrible, bloodthirsty god of the jungle «who with his bared teeth and rolling eyes cries out for human sacrifice».⁸ This sacrifice is delivered to him by his slaves. After they have completed their dance of ecstasy, after their roar has turned into a moan of joy, they sink to the ground before the feet of the black god.

For Höfgen the fantasy of the blood-thirsty god of the jungle evoked by Juliette's lashing whip results in agony — an agony «that could also be read as joy in the abstracted smile of his pale, compressed lips and glazed eyes» (1983: 52). This fantasy is interesting in two ways. Reik (1983: 74) in *Aus Leiden Freuden* emphasising the importance of fantasy in all forms of masochism states that it is «not always clear with whom the fantasising person identifies himself. Most certainly with the victim, the passive person of the scene, but also with the active brutal figure».⁹ In terms of this Höfgen firstly identifies himself with the dancing slaves who prostrate themselves before the black god as he does before Juliette. The act of submission in the masochistic scene with Juliette is repeated in imagination. The subjugation therefore becomes a twofold source of relish reflected in Höfgen's absent-minded smile.¹⁰ Secondly, this fantasy eventually brings Höfgen to identify himself with the horrible god of the jungle. Within Höfgen this identification reinforces another association, for the actor on stage is as god to his captive audience. «He only felt a true sense of security when he stood somewhat elevated, facing a crowd that only existed to honour him, to admire him, to give him applause»¹¹ — here Höfgen is god, audience is slave.

⁷ My translation was provided here in preference to the inadequate official translation. German original, «genau das war das Mienenspiel, das er jetzt von ihr erwartete und verlangte» (1981: 69).

⁸ My translation. See n. 7. German original, «und was er fordert mit seinem Zähneblecken und Augenrollen, das sind Menschenopfer» (1981: 69).

⁹ My translation of the German original: «[Es ist] nicht immer deutlich, mit wem sich der Phantasierende identifiziert. Gewiß mit dem Opfer, der passiven Person der Szene, aber auch mit der aktiven grausamen Gestalt.» (Reik 1983: 74)

¹⁰ It is interesting to note that the fantasy of the god of the jungle can be traced back to a «heterocosmic impulse» (Silverman 1992: 209) that relocates the fantasising subject in another time and place altogether. Kaja Silverman (1992: 198) describes the heterocosmic impulse as «the desire to remake the world in another image altogether, to forge a different cultural order». This tendency can also be found in the Moloch and Aztec scenarios traced in one of Theodor Reik's patients, as Kaja Silverman (1992: 209) points out.

¹¹ My translation. See n.7. German original, «Wahrhaft geborgen fand er sich nur auf einem erhöhten Platz, gegenüber einer Menge, die nur existierte, um ihm zu huldigen, ihn zu bewundern, ihm Beifall zu spenden» (1981: 122).

Therefore the fantasy of the strange blood-thirsty, black god evoked by Juliette's whip has two functions: on the one hand it serves to increase pleasure within the masochistic scene; on the other it reinforces Höfgen's self-confidence as an actor.¹²

The masochistic relationship is thus a precondition for Höfgen's professional success. However, the moment this masochistic relationship were to come under the spotlight of public attention, it would no longer serve, but rather harm Höfgen. This is often evident in *Mephisto*, for example, when Höfgen, on his way to a rendezvous with Juliette in his apartment meets his landlady Frau Consul Mönkeberg. Her spiteful allusion to his relationship with Juliette causes Höfgen to feel «the flush mounting in his cheeks» and to go «bright red» (1983: 46). Juliette's repeated threats to ridicule him on stage always make Höfgen panic. For the same reason he stops her whipping him in his face for «he could under no circumstances afford»¹³ a bloody scar from his forehead down to his chin. Not only his social position but also his career would be threatened by such an exposure. One of the essential conditions for maintaining a masochistic relationship is, therefore, that it needs to be restricted to the private sphere only, and needs to be hidden from the scrutiny of the public eye.

The need for privacy is heightened by the fact that Höfgen chooses a *black* prostitute as his dominatrix. As prostitute and black woman Juliette is a social outcast on two counts. So too she is doubly Other.¹⁴ Her position as outcast, however, makes her all the more desirable for Höfgen. Firstly, he as masochist, is also an outcast of sorts and this provides an affinity with Juliette. Secondly, being black, Juliette symbolises the Exotic and therefore becomes a forbidden object,¹⁵ further highlighting her desirability.¹⁶ Thirdly, as a prostitute, Juliette can be effectively controlled. Juliette's profession as prostitute lends an interesting twist to the masochistic contract. Höfgen pays her to act as dominatrix and assume control. Yet, according to the clauses of the masochistic contract, reinforced by the normal position of a prostitute's client, Höfgen «calls the shots». In this constellation it becomes clear that every masochistic relationship is always a relation of power. It is not the man who is the slave and the woman who is in a position of dominance, as it seemed at first. Rather it is the man who keeps a tight rein on the relationship. It is the man who determines the rules of the masochistic enactment. He is both director and actor in his own play.¹⁷ Later in the novel, this situation assumes further relevance in relation to Höfgen's alliance with representatives of fascist power.

3. HÖFGEN'S ALLIANCE WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF FASCIST POWER

The first two stages of Höfgen's career, his advancement in Hamburg and his advancement

¹² Furthermore Juliette, whose face evokes the image of the black god, functions to evoke desires Höfgen would not experience without her. She also functions as Höfgen's *alter ego* in the sense explored by René Girard in his discussion on the mimetic nature of desire in his *Deceit, Desire and the Novel. Self and Other in Literary Structure* (1984). See Carlotta von Maltzan (1991: 161f).

¹³ My translation. See n. 7. German original, «[...] keinesfalls leisten durfte» (1981: 70).

¹⁴ When depicting the character Juliette, Klaus Mann referred to a typical literary canon of the 19th and 20th centuries, as Sander Gilman (1985a: 76-108) shows in his paper *The Hottentot and the Prostitute*.

¹⁵ From Girard's (1984: 1-52) discussion on the mimetic nature of desire Juliette can be viewed as a forbidden object. As such she presents a far larger obstacle to the fulfillment of Höfgen's desires than many other women would. It should be emphasised that it is precisely the difficulty of overcoming the obstacle that, according to Girard, determines the masochist's object choice.

¹⁶ It is no coincidence that Höfgen, in his marriage with Barbara, is impotent. In every respect, in her outward appearance as well as in her social position, she is the absolute opposite of Juliette. And this is the reason why she is «useless» for Höfgen, although he does realise that this relationship could, to a certain extent, lead him to enjoy a good reputation.

¹⁷ Deleuze (1989: 55f.) specifically focuses his attention on the «theatrical quality» of a masochistic scene.

in Berlin during the Weimar Republic, were greatly underpinned by Juliette. It could even be stated that his career was only made possible through his relationship with Juliette. This relationship had to be kept increasingly secret. In Berlin as opposed to Hamburg, Höfgen steals across town to Juliette «dressed like a murderer revisiting the scene of his crime — scarf drawn up over his chin, hat pulled down over his eyes» (1983: 141). Nonetheless Juliette remains his «bewitching barbarian, a handsome wild animal in whose untamed strength he refreshed himself» (1983: 150). However the third stage of Höfgen's career, after Hitler's seizure of power, forces Höfgen into a new alliance with the representatives of fascist power. The new contract is a public one, sealed with a handshake between Höfgen and the fat prime minister of the fascist regime. The moment occurs during the interval of a performance of *Faust*. Höfgen is called to the prime minister's box and under the voyeuristic gaze of the audience seals his very own pact with the devil. The text comments on the public spectacle of this contract between Höfgen and totalitarian power by describing it as «an entrancing pantomime entitled 'The Actor bewitches the Prince'» (1983: 180). This new alliance forces Höfgen to end his relationship with Juliette if he does not want to put his career at risk. For if one of his numerous opponents in the new regime ever discovered «that he had a liaison with a Negress and, into the bargain, was being beaten by her, he would be lost. A Negress — that was at least as bad as a Jew» (1983: 193).

By discarding Juliette in favour of an alliance with the representatives of fascist power Höfgen does not simply give up his masochism. Rather he merely substitutes the position of sexual masochism with the position of moral masochism. A comparison of Höfgen's relationships with Juliette and with the fascist regime reveals similarities between the two relations. However, it can be noted that there are also essential differences between the two relationships, differences by means of which characteristic features of fascism as well as of a fascist individual can be highlighted. Both relations, if for different reasons, are essential for Höfgen's career and for his desire for recognition and success. There are two important similarities between the relationships. Firstly, in both instances the relationship is characterised by an act of submission: in the case of sexual masochism to the rule of the black woman; in the case of moral masochism to the rule of fascist power. Secondly, Höfgen enters into a contractual relation with the fascist power, believing that this contract — like that concluded with Juliette — is established on his terms. His assumption appears to be confirmed by the fact that certain actions on his part, which he believes to be subversive of the fascist regime and may therefore later serve as justifications for his actions — as personal «insurance policies» — seem to succeed. He manages to secure the release of a colleague, the communist Otto Ulrichs, from a concentration camp. Also he employs a half-Jewish secretary and stages plays which would normally have been censored. Only when Otto Ulrichs is arrested a second time and eventually murdered does Höfgen realise that he has misrecognised his role and powers in his new alliance with the fascist regime.

Unlike the contractual relationship with Juliette, in the contract with the fascist regime Höfgen has neither chosen the partner, nor controls the relationship. Another difference is that the contract with Juliette is limited exclusively to the private sphere. This essential difference leads to a significant shift in the position of the individual within society. While his relationship with Juliette positions Höfgen as a social outcast in pre-fascist Germany, his fascist contract effects his complete integration into the ruling fascist social and political structures. The absolute subsumation of the private sphere into the fascist public sphere is forced by the fact of Juliette's blackness. This racial fact forces Höfgen to choose between his contracts with the fascist regime and that with Juliette. On the one hand the lack of choice exposes the hierarchical nature of fascist power structures in which any form of difference is eradicated. On the other hand it becomes clear that any kind of participation in these structures does not allow for the existence of a private sphere or permits a position in which the individual can disregard the nature of fascist power. It is therefore shown

in *Mephisto* that the total rejection of the private sphere and disregard for the rights of the individual are features of fascism. It is also made clear that any form of participation in fascist structures always implies a decision for fascism: to be against fascism is not considered to be a position. It is precisely when Höfgen does not recognise this exclusivity that his moral masochism moves into the foreground.

At the start of his fascist phase Höfgen thinks that he can manipulate the fascists and thus determine his degree of involvement. This becomes evident in his explanation to Otto Ulrichs, «But we must insinuate ourselves into the lion's den [...] If we stay outside we can only shout insults without achieving anything. But I'm right inside. And I'm getting things done» (1983: 191). This strategy fails. After Otto Ulrich's murder Höfgen has to admit that through his participation in the fascist power structure he has become «the monkey of power, a clown to entertain murderers» (1983: 254). He cannot be actor and director; the play is directed by those in power. Here he is no longer ultimate master, but slave. Furthermore, after the successful premiere of *Hamlet*, Höfgen is visited by a friend of Otto Ulrichs who warns Höfgen that the regime may not last long and that Höfgen will later be held responsible for his actions. He gets a tremendous fright and falls into a tirade of self-pity. «He thought of all he had gone through» (1983: 261). By moving his own suffering into the centre, Höfgen displays a behaviour typical of the moral masochist. According to Freud (1984: 416), moral masochism, seen as the «most important form assumed by masochism», becomes a norm. Moral masochism differs from sexual masochism in that it no longer needs to «emanate from the loved person» (Freud 1984: 420) and no longer needs to be endured at the loved person's command. It rather is

The suffering itself [...] what matters; whether it is decreed by someone who is loved or by someone who is indifferent is of no importance. It may even be caused by impersonal powers or by circumstances; the true masochist always turns his cheek whenever he has a chance of receiving a blow. (Freud 1984: 420)

After Freud Reik showed that the masochist needs a «witness to his sufferings and humiliations».¹⁸ The masochist's audience, however, can either be real or imagined. Reik termed this characteristic feature of masochism as the demonstrative character of masochism. Only by virtue of its demonstrative character does suffering assume its essential importance within masochism. In *Mephisto* this demonstrative character can be traced, in Höfgen's sexual masochism, in the fantasy of the god of the jungle. Later this demonstrative character becomes blatantly obvious in Höfgen's behaviour at the moment of the handshake in the costume of Mephistopheles. Similarly, in *Hamlet*, Höfgen suffers the display of the hands he so hates while deriving masochistic pleasure from this act. Only when an imagined or real witness is present does Höfgen experience pleasure in suffering.¹⁹ It should be emphasised, however, that Höfgen behaves as a masochist only towards his superiors in the fascist power structure. His humiliation and subjugation is not visible to the public eye. Seeing him as part of the power structure, the public treats him with admiration, respect and occasionally even fear, since «everyone was frightened at the thought of Hendrik's private spy network [which was] so perfectly organised» (1983: 242). The fact that Höfgen shows subjugation towards the fascist regime and is at the same time feared by others, exposes the clearly defined hierarchy of fascist society which is organised according to the principle of leader — followers. We thus find in Höfgen a personality that has been defined by

¹⁸ My translation of the German original, «Zeugen seiner Schmerzen und Erniedrigungen» (Reik 1983: 173).

¹⁹ Höfgen «truly suffered from this exhibition of his broad and all too ordinary hands» (1983: 256). A further example is that Höfgen allows himself to collapse only when his mother is present, because «there was no point in shedding tears that nobody would see» (1983: 260).

Adorno as an «authoritarian character»²⁰: by forming an alliance with the fascist power he can satisfy two seemingly contradictory desires, the desire for power and the desire for subjugation. Theodor Reik referred to this aspect of the masochistic personality structure:

It can be said that the more violent and brutal the individual's will to power once was in he who now finds himself powerless, the more obedient and submissive he will be towards the autocrat or leader who represents him. (1983: 229f)²¹

However, because Höfgen has doubts about the durability of his powerful position,²² he anticipates another defence, apart from his «insurance policies». He adopts the absurd position of underestimating the very self-importance for which he has sacrificed so much. He self-deprecatingly now claims to be «a perfectly ordinary actor» (1983: 263), a helpless and powerless pawn, passive in the welter of fascist forces. In this, Höfgen's character profile accords neatly with Reik's account above, and with Theodor Adorno's distinguishing characteristics for a particular kind of authoritarian character, one who «gladly identifies with the 'little people' or 'the average' without, however, showing any form of modesty» (Adorno 1973: 57).²³ Höfgen can, therefore, be classified as a typical fellow traveller who would vehemently disdain active participation in the fascist structures and all moral responsibility.

4. CONCLUSION

In Klaus Mann's *Mephisto* the structural function of masochism forms an integral part in the unfolding of the two themes that the *Prologue 1936* introduces. The masochistic relationship with Juliette which is exclusively located within the private sphere is a necessary precondition for Höfgen's early professional successes. However, once Höfgen has decided to align himself with the fascist power regime in order not to jeopardise his career, he is forced to sacrifice his relationship with Juliette. He thus exchanges a position of sexual masochism for a position of moral masochism. Not only does it become clear that fascism makes any differentiation between the private and the public sphere impossible, but it is implied that sexual masochism can only be constituted within the private sphere, whereas moral masochism is realised in public. Moral masochism becomes visible in the masochist's behaviour towards his superiors in the fascist power structure. The public, however, does not notice his masochism and perceives his behaviour to be a quest for power. Furthermore, masochism in the novel underscores central characteristics of «fellow travellers» such as Höfgen. They are the characteristics of a moral masochist, or in Adorno's terms, of an authoritarian character who, through participation in the fascist structures, conveniently unifies his will to power and his desire for submission.

²⁰ My translation of the German original, «autoritärer Charakter» (Adorno 1973: 57).

²¹ My translation of the German original, «Man kann sagen, je gewalttätiger und brutaler der Machtwille des einzelnen, dem kein Bestimmungsrecht mehr geblieben ist, einmal war, um so gefügiger und hingebungsvoller wird er sich dem Willen des Selbstherrschers oder Führers, der ihn vertritt, unterwerfen» (Reik 1983: 229f).

²² Höfgen's insecurity regarding the durability of his position of power is evident throughout his career in those actions he refers to as «Rückversicherungen» («insurances» [1983: 192]). Similarly Höfgen's belated attempt to withdraw into the safety of the private sphere by taking up yet another whipping-boy relationship with his second wife, Nicoletta, can also be understood as an «insurance». However, the text leaves no doubt that the relationship cannot be compared to his relationship with Juliette. The refreshing and renewing qualities are absent. Ultimately his relationship with Nicoletta is not «what he needed so desperately» (1983: 261).

²³ My translation of the German original, «[...] sich gern mit den 'kleinen Leuten' oder 'dem Durchschnitt' [identifiziert], ohne doch zugleich Bescheidenheit zu zeigen» (Adorno 1973: 57).

The differentiation that the novel makes between Höfgen's sexual and his moral masochism corresponds with the differentiation made between Höfgen's career in the pre-fascist Germany and in the fascist Germany. It is in the clear separation of these phases of his career that the function of the black woman Juliette lies. On the narrative level she demarcates both the various stages of Höfgen's career, and his transition from sexual to moral masochism. This transition is signaled upon Juliette's disappearance from the plot in the novel. It is therefore not surprising that Höfgen happily joins in the light-hearted laughter when his adversary, Caesar von Muck, says, «That's true. Negros stink.» (1983: 242)

REFERENCES

- Adorno, Th.W. (1973). *Studien zum autoritären Charakter*. Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp.
- Bormann, A. von (1987). Das Werk als Auftrag. Formsemantische Hinweise zu Klaus Manns Romanen. *Text und Kritik*, 93/94: 62-72.
- Deleuze, G. (1989). *Masochism. Coldness and Cruelty*. New York: Zone Books.
- Freud, S. (1984a). *The Economic Problem of Masochism*. Freud 1984b: 409-426.
- Freud, S. (1984b). *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*. London: Penguin Group.
- Gilman, S. (1985a). *The Hottentot and the Prostitute: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality*. Gilman 1985b: 76-108.
- Gilman, S. (1985b). *Difference and Pathology. Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness*. Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press.
- Girard, R. (1984). *Deceit, Desire and the Novel. Self and Other in Literary Structure*. Baltimore/London: John Hopkins University Press.
- Maltzan, C. von (1991). Schwarze Herrin und weißer Sklave. Sexualität und Wunschverhalten in Klaus Manns *Mephisto*. *Acta Germanica*, Beiheft 2: 151-166.
- Mann, K. (1976). *Der Wendepunkt. Ein Lebensbericht*. München: Edition Spangenberg im Ellermann Verlag.
- Mann, K. (1981). *Mephisto. Roman einer Karriere*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt.
- Mann, K. (1983). *Mephisto*. Translated from the German by Robin Smyth. London: Penguin Group.
- Reik, Th. (1983). *Aus Leiden Freuden. Masochismus und Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt/M: Fischer.
- Silverman K. (1992). *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*. New York/London: Routledge.

Matric Fetishism

ANGELA MOORJANI (*)

Fetishism is a form of mourning which, like all forms of mourning, entails the difficulty of letting go of what was once loved and then lost. This difficulty of detaching oneself from the lost object is complicated by the loss of self that any loss of other implies. Unlike the usual progression of mourning in which the lost object is ultimately given up and the fractured self healed, fetishistic grief is an unfinished grief, with the lost object replaced in fantasy by a fetish sign — a memorial to the lost object — screening its loss. In the process, the self divides itself from itself, one part affirming the continuing presence of the lost object in the guise of the fetish surrogate, the other part acknowledging its loss.¹

In the extensive literature on fetishism — and I am here speaking of adult fetishism — dating from the end of the nineteenth century, when the perversion was first named, much is made of (1) the gender of the agent in this ritual drama of bereavement; (2) the nature of the lost object and its fetish substitutes; (3) the origin of the fixation. Although until recently, the agent was taken to be male, the female fetishist has now joined the cast.² There has been little wavering, though, about the nature of the lost object which remains the phallus missing from the female anatomy. As for the etiology of the disorder, in a number of footnotes added over the years to his 1905 *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Freud adduces several possible scenarios: repressed coprophilic pleasures, a symbolic connection of thought to sexual experiences in childhood, and the phallic mother fantasy. In a 1920 footnote, Freud maintains that the fetish is a screen for an occulted phase of sexual development: «The fetish, like a ‘screen-memory’, represents this phase and is thus a remnant and precipitate of it» (*S.E.* 7:154, n.2).

By the time of his «Fetishism» essay of 1927, Freud has decided that the fetish bears the trace of early sexual fantasies about the phallic mother. The catalogue of fetishist and misogynist practices involving this fantasy and the sexual fixation on phallic substitutes — eyes, limbs, shoes, dolls, and so forth — which are abundantly documented in clinical case histories, literature, and art, bear out the validity of the Freudian insight. My question is what if the phallic fetish were but a screen for a still more archaic fetish-object? What if there is a different type of (adult) fetish which harks back to a prephallic phase of development?

(*) The University of Maryland, Baltimore, Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics, 5401 Wilkens Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21228, USA.

¹ For a much longer discussion of fetishism, see Moorjani, «Fetishism, Gender Masquerade, and the Mother-Father Fantasy».

² For recent overviews of the literature on fetishism, see Apter, and Apter and Pietz.

On uncovering the preoedipal phase behind the oedipal phase in the 1931 essay «Female Sexuality», Freud admitted that this discovery put the centrality of Oedipus in question. Similarly, the uncovering of a «matric» fetishism, for that is what I propose to call it, raises questions about the centrality of the phallus.³ Why matric fetishism remained unnamed so long has to do with the social and symbolic power attached to the phallus. The discourse on fetishism is as fixated on the phallus as the perversion it is attempting to circumscribe.

My uncovering of matric fetishism came from my studies of mourning in the literature and art of disintegration which, from a Kleinian perspective, involves the repetition of early loss. Of special significance is the «combined parent» fantasy, which Klein hypothesizes as occurring in the middle of the first year, and which is an alternative to Freud's exclusively «phallic mother» figure (Klein, «Some Theoretical Conclusions», 78-79). In identifying with this mother-father form, children — male and female — imagine their own bodies are as complete and powerful as this imaginary composite. It follows that on learning that each parent is partially gendered and therefore missing a prominent attribute of one of the two genders, a fate children share in identifying with one or the other parent, children must detach themselves from the parts they once imagined to be where they are not.

Since children identify first with the mother, or more accurately, with maternal part-objects, the male child must first face his lack of matric attributes before grappling with threats to his phallic maleness; the female child must first struggle with the threat of losing her matric powers before confronting the lack of the phallus. As a consequence, the male lack and envy of the matrix and the female anxiety of losing the matrix, which are the components of matric fetishism, precede and are screened by the later male castration anxiety and female lack and envy of the phallus, the components of phallic fetishism.

It is those who refuse to mourn and give up the combined parent and who disavow their own partially gendered state who will turn to the artful substitutes and masquerades of fetishism, annexing the lost parts either to their own bodies as in transvestism or metamorphosing others into matric men and phallic women. In this manner matric fetishists, whether men or women, attempt to alleviate their dread of maleness and anxiety of being only partially gendered as a male (i.e. lacking the matrix or female procreative powers). Phallic fetishists, whether men or women, grapple with their fear of femaleness or being only partially gendered as a woman (i.e., lacking the phallus). Either way, fetishists at once overvalue what they have lost or fear to lose in fantasy and devalue and fear the gendered body which is lacking the fetishized part, the male body without breasts and womb, the female body without a penis.

In gender masquerade, the male phallic fetishist, dreading the loss of the phallus and fearing femaleness, will engage in macho displays of phallic power, exaggerating masculinity through dress, demeanor, and actions. «Homeovestism» is what George Zavitzianos has termed such same-sex masquerade on the model of «transvestism». The fetishist in macho masquerade is fixated on phallic fetishes which he uses, moreover, to phallicize women. According to my hypothesis, though, male phallic fetishism screens a hidden matric fetishism, the secret rage at not being a woman as well as a man, of not having female procreative powers, those objects of great envy dating back to the first identification with the mother and to fantasies of polysexual wholeness. Beneath the masculinity mask lurks the wish to be a woman. Lacan goes so far as to state that all virile displays appear feminine, and

³ The word *matrix*, «womb», which is derived from the Latin *mater*, refers to a fantasized construct, not an anatomical part. The same distinction, of course, applies to the words *phallus* (construct) and *penis* (part of the male anatomy). The terms *matric* and *phallic* include the power, both generative and social/symbolic, that accrues to the mother and the father.

I discuss the infantile prephallic fetish at some length in my postscript to this paper. Although a number of theorists have drawn attention to a matric fetish at the oral stage of development, I have found none that did not phallicize the fetish at the adult level, maintaining with Freud that adult fetishes are a defense against phallic castration anxiety. This is the partial view I am contesting.

to the contrary, all feminine displays appear masculine (695, 825). So that a cross-dressed man occults a macho wish just as much as a macho masquerade conceals the wish to be a woman.

Female phallic fetishists, on the other hand, who rage at not having a penis and envy what they lack, turn themselves into phallic women by means of male masquerade or fixate on fetishes substituting for the missing phallus. Concealed beneath their male masquerade, though, is the more archaic dread of losing their female procreative powers, a dread manifested in exaggerated masquerades of femininity, or feminine homeovestism. Here too, then, the feminine mask conceals the phallic woman, as Joan Riviere also pointed out, and the phallic woman masquerade occults a femininity wish.

Parallel to phallic fetishists, matric fetishists are obsessed by fetish-objects substituting for the matrix — skin, fabric, stuffed objects, and so on — and with the figure of the matric man combining maleness and femaleness.

Surely, once thought through this way, the parallels between phallic and matric versions of fetishism appear obvious. Male fetishism, although previously termed only phallic, has its matric shadow variant. Female fetishism, long thought not to exist, comes with phallic and matric facets. Both genders grasp at ways of disavowing the gender division demanded of them by oscillating between phallic and matric fantasies of completeness and denial of loss. Yet, even though the fantasies, anxieties, envies, rivalries, and masquerades within masquerades that accompany both female and male versions of phallic and matric fetishisms have been amply chronicled in psychoanalytic literature, the view has prevailed that there is only one type of (adult) fetishism and one type of fetishist, phallic and male.

What is there to be gained by identifying matric fetishism and thereby redoubling gender anxieties, rivalries, and envies within phallic fetishism? Surely, uncovering a matric form of fetishism serves to further our understanding of the fragileness of gender identity and to question the fetishistic reign of the phallic signifier, with the accompanying dread and devaluation of women.

No doubt that in the artistic imaginary, artistic making is closely associated with the procreative powers of the imaginary mother-father. This composite specter haunts many artists and writers who work at freeing themselves from the repetitive force of fetishistic rivalry.⁴ Here, too, the oedipal rivalry with male creators, of which much has been made, is only a partial fixation occulting the more archaic rivalry with female creativity. Male parturition in Genesis, Eve formed from Adam's rib, Athena springing fully armed from the head of Zeus, or Pygmalion outdoing nature by the perfection of his fetish statue, in these often retold tales, each featuring a male giving birth to an adult female, the fetishistic rivalry with female procreative powers is all too apparent. From late classical times into the twentieth century it was dogma that men's artistic creativity is an improvement upon the natural procreative powers of women. Wilhelm Stekel — in 1923 — held in all seriousness that women fetishists are exceptions because, lacking the creative capacity of men, they are incapable of inventing fetish surrogates (2: 341). In a more recent example, George Steiner — in 1989 — holds that the experience of giving birth precludes rivalry with the male creator-god, which he considers constitutive of artistic production, thus excluding women from artistic creativity (203-08). I can imagine no clearer illustration of phallic fetishism's rivalry with men screening matric fetishism's rivalry with women.

I first became aware of matric fetishism through my reading of H.D.'s (Hilda Doolittle's) work, for in both her *Tribute to Freud* and her poetry of the forties the figure of the womanly father or of a pregnant male god recurs with some frequency. Of course not only phallic goddesses but matric gods, such as H.D. imagines, are found in religious iconography and mythic/mystic thought. The most compelling, perhaps, are the bearded and breasted

⁴ For numerous examples of the mother-father phantasm haunting the artistic and literary imaginary in the shape of the phallic mother or matric father, see Moorjani, *The Aesthetics of Loss and Lessness*.

phallic sculptures found in African and Oceanic art, some of which enwomb smaller figures within their rounded bellies. Fixating in the manner of matric fetishism on what men lack instead of what women lack and aware of Melanie Klein's combined parent fantasy, H.D., however, prefers to distance herself from the mother-father phantom. Rejecting fetish masquerades, like a number of other modernist writers and artists, she ultimately ties her poetic activity to gender indeterminacy.

Samuel Beckett's *Molloy* is another example of a dual matric and phallic text staging the struggle to defetishize writing. The 1951 novel features a writer who has split himself in two, the mother-identified Molloy who narrates the first part, and the father-identified Moran, who narrates the second part. The two-in-one gendered text posits a matric male persona seeking in vain to give birth into death to a self through words. The writing persona's womb-tomb fantasy expands into ferocious travesties of matric and phallic gender myths which the text ultimately seeks to undo. *Molloy* thus illustrates the perennial artistic rivalry with mother-father generativity and Beckett's determination — like H.D.'s — to free writing from fetishistic masquerades.

As a third example of matric fetishism, I would like to point to Hélène Cixous's concept of *écriture féminine* (feminine writing), which she associates with matric generativity and a cosmic female libido — sea, earth, sounds, rhythms, odors, body, matter — and sets against a long tradition of phallic writing (Cixous 162-80). Male writers who in the manner of Beckett explore their unconscious where their femaleness has taken refuge — Cixous mentions Kleist, Shakespeare, and Genet — are not excluded from the practice of *écriture féminine*. I suggest that «feminine writing» is a type of matric writing, the equivalent in language of female homeovestism and male transvestism fetishizing the matrix.

I have spoken of fetishism as an unfinished form of mourning for attributes of gender thought to exist in fantasy but lost on constricting a polysexual image into one gender identity excluding by definition the other. Some do mourn these early losses and give up the lost parts, others, though, refusing to mourn, become fetishists. What I have tried to prove is that the fixation on the phallus and phallic masquerades are but a screen for a prior fixation on matric procreative powers. The question I would like to leave you with is what if one were no longer to limit gender identity to one or the other gender, but as radical feminists have suggested, ungender discourse, aim for gender indeterminacy, so that one has to be neither a man, nor a woman, nor an androgynous in-between, but can shift along a gender continuum?⁵ I see no other way to move beyond fetishism and its perennial putdowns of otherness.

POSTSCRIPT

Many conference proceedings include a transcription of the discussion following a paper's presentation. In the spirit of such ongoing dialogue, I would like to reply to an issue raised in the discussion period following my paper. Peter Rudnytsky stated that my paper contributed nothing new and referred me to the theories associating Winnicott's transitional object to fetishism and to Robert Stoller's work on sex and gender. It came as a surprise to a number of the 30-some people attending the session who later spoke to me about my paper, and, of course, to me that the existence of an (adult) matric fetishism and the link I establish between the Kleinian mother-father fantasy and the mourning for a lost polysexuality had been conceptualized decades earlier — as Professor Rudnytsky maintained — without finding their way into subsequent theoretical elaborations of fetishism. Before submitting my paper and postscript for publication in the proceedings, I am sending a copy to Professor Rudnytsky to give him the opportunity to respond.

⁵ See Wittig and Butler.

In the intent of clarifying my position, I think it is important to compare closely my hypothesis with Stoller's theories and the transitional object/fetish controversy. Despite his book's subtitle, *On the Development of Masculinity and Femininity*, the subject of Stoller's 1968 *Sex and Gender* is largely male transsexualism and transvestism. Male transsexuals, Stoller finds, although anatomically male, believe they are women, *not* men, and experience no feeling of loss for their masculine identity. He emphasizes that they are therefore not fetishists. Male transvestites, on the other hand, know they are men and value their phallic identity which they seek to protect under their feminine fetishistic disguise (*Sex and Gender* ch. 16, 176-93). Defining «transvestism» as fetishistic cross-dressing in which the act of masquerade involves erotic excitement (*Sex and Gender* 177; *Observing* 136), Stoller makes the surprising declaration that there are no female transvestites and only a relatively small number of female transsexuals (*Sex and Gender* ch. 17, 194-205), an opinion he moderates only slightly in the 1985 *Observing the Erotic Imagination*, in which he describes transvestism in women as «so rare it is almost nonexistent» (135). Or rather, given the many years the dominant discourse on fetishism largely excluded women as agents, Stoller's view, based as it is on the small number of female transvestites to be found in psychoanalytic literature, is not surprising, but surely no longer admissible.⁶

When Stoller uncovers material that I have classified under matric fetishism, he clings to the orthodox Freudian definition of phallic fetishism or «latent homosexuality». Or alternatively, he tends to deny any fetishistic function to clearly matric phenomena.⁷ Accordingly, he interprets the experience of inner emptiness that haunts several of the mothers of his male transsexual patients as phallic castration anxiety and penis envy against which these mothers defend themselves by turning their sons into phallic substitutes (*Sex and Gender* ch. 9, 115-25). Stoller, though, explores another possibility. Suggesting that the feeling of emptiness in the mother is based on a sense of deprivation from her own mother, he finds that the son «was used as a transitional object, keeping her [his mother] from having to separate from her own mother» (*Sex and Gender* 115) and keeping him as a part of her own body (124). This alternative to his phallic explanation is not further theorized but instead subsumed under penis envy: «As a result of the barren, frustrating, perfunctory care given her by her mother, not having a penis and not having the attributes of masculinity caused a sense of emptiness, and, much more painful, resulted in intense penis envy» (115). My interpretation, of course, is diametrically opposed. With Melanie Klein and more recently Louise Kaplan, I hold that female castration anxiety, as exemplified by the dread of inner emptiness, is not about a missing penis but about a woman's anxiety about her own childbearing capacities and female genitals (Klein, «Infantile Anxiety» 217-18; Kaplan 88).⁸ Just as phallic castration anxiety involves the devaluation of femaleness and the phallic woman fantasy, so does matric castration anxiety involve the devaluation of maleness and the matric man fetish. It could be said that the mothers of the transsexuals Stoller describes feminize their

⁶ At the end of Stoller's chapter 17, «Female (versus Male) Transvestism», I found the following note from a previous reader of the copy of *Sex and Gender* I was consulting: «Disagree. I consider myself to be a female transvestite, and have no reason to believe that I am that unique».

In general, I am providing chapter numbers and page numbers for those readers who might wish to consult a translation of *Sex and Gender*. It is interesting to note that the French title, *Recherches sur l'identité sexuelle à partir du transsexualisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), makes clear Stoller's emphasis on (male) transsexualism.

⁷ In his chapter on female gender identity (ch. 6), Stoller does disagree with the Freudian position on this particular subject. With Horney, Klein, Ernest Jones, and others, he argues against Freud's view that a feminine gender identity is secondary and a defense against the child's realization that she lacks a penis. Stoller does not, however, discuss or see the implications of this primary feminine gender identity for a female castration anxiety. In *Observing the Erotic Imagination*, he states unequivocally, «Fetishizing is the norm for males, not for females» (35).

⁸ Astonishingly enough, Kaplan also continues to hypothesize that fetishism is mostly male and phallic.

sons in defense against their matric castration anxiety just as phallic fetishists, in defense against their phallic castration anxiety, phallicize women.

Similarly, in a chapter on the role women play in turning men into transvestites, Stoller emphasizes that certain men-hating women encourage men to dress up as women because they envy men and take their revenge by feminizing them (*Sex and Gender* ch. 18, 206-17). He does not relate the activity to fetishism, whereas I suggest that matric fetishists because of their matric castration anxiety either turn themselves into matric men, as in the case of male transvestites, or turn others into matric men, as in the case of the women Stoller describes in relation to male transsexuals and transvestites. The need of matric fetishists for the matric man mirrors the need of phallic fetishists for the phallic woman. Stoller sees only the later. For him, male transvestites transform themselves into phallic women (*Sex and Gender* ch. 16, 177-88), not matric men, as I would have it, who wish to replace their lost matric identity with a fetish masquerade.⁹

Two more examples from Stoller: When, in an aside, he mentions the male wish to give birth and have breasts like women, instead of recognizing it, as many have before him, as the equivalent of the female wish for the penis, Stoller — most likely basing his interpretation on Freud's reading of the Schreber case — classifies the male wish as «latent homosexuality» (*Sex and Gender* ch. 5, 40).¹⁰ Further, when Stoller hypothesizes that male creativity is tied to an identification with the mother by the unconscious desire to have a child, on the one hand, and by the fear of death associated with separation anxiety, on the other, his discussion is based on the clinical case histories of several of his male transsexual analysands (*Sex and Gender* ch. 10, 126-30). (He does not discuss female creativity.) Omitted therefore is any paternal or mother-father identification or relation to fetishism. The point of my paper is that it is the mother-father phantasm that precipitates matric and phallic fetishism in artistic activity for both men and women. An additional example of such a mother-father figure in art came to my attention while in Amsterdam for the conference: at the Stedelijk Museum, a lovely 1913 painting by Marc Chagall, entitled *Pregnant Woman*, depicts a figure whose head is half female and half male pointing to a child in its womb. Next to it hangs a self-portrait of the artist of the same year.

Generally, then, in *Sex and Gender*, in a striking instance of the power of a disciplinary discourse to exclude what it does not sanction, Stoller minimizes the agency of women in fetishistic activity, tries to fit matric material into the classic conception of the phallic fetish, or denies its relation to fetishism. (For a single exception related to the infantile fetish/substitute object, see below.) I fail to see how he could be said to have theorized a matric fetishism.

The fetish/transitional object debate is bound up with the controversy about the existence of an infantile fetish dating back to the time of Freud's 1927 «Fetishism» article. In 1928 Josef Friedjung published a note describing the case of a 16-month-old child who refused to go to sleep or eat in the absence of his mother, unless he held in his hands or draped

⁹ One of the few mentions I have found in psychoanalytic literature of a «matric father» appears in Sandor Lorand's 1939 «Rôle of the Female Penis Phantasy in Male Character Formation». Lorand speaks of male patients who «endow women with a phallus in order to avoid castration anxiety; they also attribute to men a female genital (or at least decidedly feminine traits) and for the same purpose» (171). Lorand explains this «motherly» or «vaginal» father strictly in terms of phallic castration anxiety.

¹⁰ For an overview of the psychoanalysts who early on recognized the importance of the envy of the mother's procreative powers in men as the equivalent of penis envy in women, see Bettelheim (31, 56-57). To his list of well-known theorists, including Mary Chadwick, Georg Groddeck, Melanie Klein, Erich Neumann, and Theodor Reik, one might add Karen Horney and Maria Torok. There are more, of course, but not Stoller. Bettelheim suggests that psychoanalysis has largely repressed male womb envy. For a recent reenforcement of this repression and the denial of other aspects of matric castration anxiety, see Green.

over his face either a a stocking, bodice, or nightgown his mother had worn. Such fetishistic behavior was first noticed several months earlier, perhaps as early as at the time of the baby's weaning at nine months. In a postscript, Friedjung writes that when, in July 1927, he told Freud about this unusual case, Freud answered that it had been demonstrated that for adults the fetish object is a substitute for the mother's missing phallus and functions as a defense against castration anxiety, and nothing else. If it could be proven that the child had seen his mother's nude body and had been able to observe that she lacked a penis, Freud was willing to accept the existence of this infantile fetish. Freud therefore agreed that an infantile possession, which Winnicott later termed a «transitional object», could be considered a fetish as long as it is understood to be a surrogate for the maternal phallus.

In his often quoted article of 1946, Wulff discusses both the Friedjung material and a number of similar cases of prephallic attachment to a blanket or a cloth bib. Unlike Freud, Wulff argues that there is a structural difference between such infantile fetishes and an adult phallic fetishism. At the oral stage, the infantile fetish, owing to its odor, warmth, and tactile qualities, is a substitute for the mother's breast and the mother's body. Wulff, however, restricts this matric (oral) fetishism to infantile fetishism, while continuing to hold to a phallic adult fetishism.

Winnicott, in 1953, recognizes that the clinical examples presented by Wulff correspond to what he is theorizing under the terms «transitional object» and «transitional phenomena», which, of course, like Wulff, he views as matric, standing as they do for the breast or the mother at a time when the child is working through the pangs of separation anxiety. Winnicott, however, rejects Wulff's designation of these objects as fetishes, maintaining instead that a transitional object may or may not develop into an adult fetish object, which once again he considers as uniquely phallic. Winnicott prefers to restrict the word *fetish* «to describe the object that is employed on account of a *delusion* of the maternal phallus» (96).

Both Wulff and Winnicott, then, agree that the infantile prephallic fetish (Wulff) or the transitional object (Winnicott), which is exclusively matric, differs fundamentally from the adult fetish, which is exclusively phallic.

In his «Fetishism» article, also of 1953, Bak expands the realm of possible objects for which the fetish may substitute. Depending on the developmental stage to which it refers, a fetish may either separately or in condensed fashion stand for the mother's breast, odor, or skin; the buttocks or fecal matter; or the female phallus. He hypothesizes a biphasic fetishism, the first related to prephallic separation anxiety and a weak ego, the second to phallic castration anxiety. Maintaining that prephallic meanings may appear in condensed form in the adult phallic fetish, Bak nevertheless subsumes the matric components under phallic castration anxiety.

Neither Wulff nor Bak, both holding to the existence of an infantile matric fetishism, admits a non-phallic adult fetishism. Similarly, Greenacre, who distinguishes between the transitional object and the infantile fetish, finds that the latter may substitute for matric or phallic part-objects and may lead to an adult fetishism, which she perceives to be phallic «in most adult situations» (451). Agreeing with Bak that cloth is a substitute for the mother's skin, Stoller concludes: «If this is so, then the transvestite, the fetishist, the adult transsexual, or a boy like Lance [a transsexual] not only facilitates the repeated process of identifying with his mother by trying to appear like a woman, but he may also be trying to recapture the primitive sensuality of having her skin applied to his» (*Sex and Gender* ch. 9, 124). In this one instance, Stoller agrees with the theorists who speak of a non-phallic infantile fetish which may reappear in adult fetishism. In their chapter on the infantile fetish in the 1981 *Infantile Origins of Sexual Identity* (ch. 10), Roiphe and Galenson, on the other hand, while granting that the infantile fetish is partially related to the anxiety of object loss and bodily disintegration, go on to maintain with Freud that the preoedipal fetish is already a defense against phallic castration anxiety. Although admitting the existence

of an infantile fetish, Roiphe and Galeñson designate it as phallic from the start for male and female children. Winnicott, on the other hand, refuses to grant any other type of fetishism than an adult phallic fetishism.

These examples underscore that, loyal to Freud, these theorists find that castration anxiety and its defense through fetishism is phallic for adult males and females, even though some, but not all, hypothesize a matric or partially matric fetishism in infancy, based largely on separation anxiety, traces of which may appear in the adult phallic fetish. This is a far cry from the adult matric fetishism I have been theorizing as a defense against *matric* castration anxiety, which is based on unfinished mourning of a mother-father unity.

Before concluding, I would like to draw attention to a little known 1939 article «Some Observations on the Ego Development of the Fetishist», by Sylvia Payne, of which I was unaware while developing my hypothesis. Payne anticipates a striking number of views put forward by later theorists: Bak's link between fetishism and the weakness of ego development and the condensed traces of sexual development he finds in the adult fetish; Greenacre's association of a disturbed body image and fetishism; and my own hypothesis that the adult fetish harks back to the Kleinian mother-father fantasy. Of the mackintosh fetish belonging to an analysand she calls Mr. A, she writes that «it was symbolic of part objects and also of a combined parent imago» (167). Payne's emphasis is on the adult fetish as a defense against the reirruption of infantile aggressiveness associated with sexual fantasies. She does not speak, however, of a mourned polysexuality in relation to the mother-father fantasy nor discuss the implications of her views for a possibly matric fetishism.

I would like to emphasize, as I do in the body of my paper and as I did during the discussion period, that I recognize the many aspects of matric fetishism that have been identified in psychoanalytic literature over the years, and I am pleased with any new examples that come to my attention. What I wish to contest is the uniquely phallic interpretation these phenomena have received by most theorists or by the refusal to theorize them as part of (adult) fetishism. My hypothesis of an adult matric fetishism gathers and builds on the powerful but scattered clinical material and partial theorizations provided by generations of psychoanalytic thinkers, which I have extended by my own research on the fantasies related to the mother-father phantasm in literature and art.

And finally, unlike some psychoanalysts who believe their task is to reinforce either the masculine or feminine gender identities of their fetishist analysands, my view is that fetishism, which I deplore because of the anxieties, bodily mutilations, and the women-hating and man-hating dimensions that accompany it, is best set aside by permitting a fluid definition of gender, not limited to the masculine or feminine either/or.

WORKS CITED

- Apter, E. (1991). *Feminizing the Fetish: Psychoanalysis and Narrative Obsession in Turn-of-the-Century France*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Apter, E. & Pietz, W. eds. (1993). *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Bak, R. C. (1953). Fetishism. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 1: 285-98.
- Beckett, S. (1951). *Molloy*. Paris: Minuit.
- Bettelheim, B. (1962). *Symbolic Wounds: Puberty Rites and the Envious Male* (Rev. ed.). New York: Collier.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Cixous, H. (1975). «Sorties». *La Jeune Née*. By Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément. Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions.
- Freud, S. (1953-74). *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (Ed. and trans. James Strachey), 24 vols., London: Hogarth.

- Freud, S. (1905). *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, vol. 7.
- Freud, S. (1927). «Fetishism», vol. 21.
- Freud, S. (1931). «Female Sexuality», vol. 21.
- Friedjung, J. K. (1928). Wäsche-Fetischismus bei einem Einjährigen. *Zeitschrift für Psychoanalytische Pädagogik*, 2, 25-26: 235-36.
- Green, A. (1990). *Le Complexe de Castration*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, Que sais-je.
- Greenacre, Ph. (1970). The Transitional Object and the Fetish with Special Reference to the Role of Illusion. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 51: 447-56.
- Doolittle, H. (1944-46). «Trilogy». *Collected Poems 1912-1944* (Louis L. Martz, Ed.), New York: New Directions, 1986.
- Doolittle, H. (1956, 1974). *Tribute to Freud: Writing on the Wall. Advent*. New York: New Directions, 1984.
- Horney, K. (1933). The Denial of the Vagina: A Contribution to the Problem of the Genital Anxieties Specific to Women. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 14: 57-70.
- Kaplan, L. J. (1991). *Female Perversions: The Temptations of Emma Bovary*. New York: Doubleday-Anchor.
- Klein, M. (1929). «Infantile Anxiety Situations Reflected in a Work of Art and in the Creative Impulse». *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works, 1921-1945*. London: Hogarth, 1975.
- Klein, M. (1952). «Some Theoretical Conclusions Regarding the Emotional Life of the Infant». *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works, 1946-1963*. New York: Delacorte, 1975.
- Lacan, J. (1966). *Ecrits*. Paris: Seuil.
- Lorand, S. (1939). Rôle of the Female Penis Phantasy in Male Character Formation. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 20: 171-82.
- Moorjani, A. (1992). *The Aesthetics of Loss and Lessness*. Language, Discourse, Society. London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's.
- Moorjani, A. (1994). Fetishism, Gender Masquerade, and the Mother-Father Fantasy. In *Psychoanalysis, Feminism and the Future of Gender* (Joseph H. Smith & Afaf M. Mahfouz, Eds.), pp: 22-41, Psychiatry and the Humanities. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Payne, S. M. (1939). Some Observations on the Ego Development of the Fetishist. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 20: 161-70.
- Riviere, J. (1929). Womanliness as a Masquerade. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 10. Rept. in *Formations of Fantasy* (Victor Burgin, James Donald & Cora Kaplan, Eds.), pp: 35-44, New York: Methuen, 1986.
- Roiphe, H. & Galenson, E. (1981). *Infantile Origins of Sexual Identity*. New York: International Universities Press.
- Steiner, G. (1989). *Real Presences: Is There Anything in What We Say?* London: Faber; Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Stekel, W. (1923). *Sexual Aberrations: The Phenomena of Fetishism in Relation to Sex* (Trans. Samuel Parker). 2 vols. New York: Liveright, 1971.
- Stoller, R. J. (1968). *Sex and Gender: On the Development of Masculinity and Femininity*. New York: Science House.
- Stoller, R. J. (1985). *Observing the Erotic Imagination*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Torok, M. (1964). La Signification de l'«envie du pénis» chez la femme. In *Recherches psychanalytiques nouvelles sur la sexualité féminine* (Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel. et. al., eds.), pp: 181-219, Paris: Payot.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1953). Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena: A Study of the First Not-Me Possession. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 34: 89-97.
- Wittig, M. (1992). *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*. Boston: Beacon.
- Wulff, M. (1946). Fetishism and Object Choice in Early Childhood. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 15: 450-71.
- Zavitzianos, G. (1972). Homeovestism: Perverse Form of Behaviour Involving Wearing Clothes of the Same Sex. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 53: 471-77.

Sade, L'Espace et la Subjectivité

FREDERICO PEREIRA (*)

Sade et la pensée perverse, l'espace et la subjectivité. Un auteur et deux types d'intérêt: anthropologique et psychologique, les deux avec des incidences à l'horizon de la clinique.

Ici, c'est le rapport de la pensée à la perversion qui nous interroge — là où vont se loger des préoccupations bien sûr fondamentales (toujours fondamentales) car en elles circule la problématique de la spécificité de l'humain et se présente ce que si le sépare du «monde animal»: la possibilité de rendre autonome le désir — autonome par rapport à l'immédiateté de son objet — et la capacité de sur ce mouvement d'autonomisation exercer le raisonnement et la méditation.

Exercice de la contradiction, de la dialectique du penser et du désirer, puisque le moment possible de la perversion signale aussi l'émergence du spécifique humain, en même temps qu'il paraît désocialiser le désir et réaliser une approximation vertigineuse de la Nature dans la mesure exacte et contradictoire où il introduit la Loi, c'est à dire, ses «dérivés» qui dans la Phénoménologie de la Spiritualité sont désignés *grosso modo* par le mot culture.

L'entrecroisement de la Nature et de la Culture dans la logique répétitive de la Perversion s'articule d'ailleurs à un ordonner de concepts sur la subjectivité, comme on verra si d'autres réflexions enracinées dans la dialectique hégélienne du désir et de la conscience viennent s'ajouter à celles qui, en premier lieu, viennent à l'esprit.

Choisir Sade pour réfléchir sur ces questions n'est pas évidemment un fruit du hasard: c'est que Sade pense et pense et pense sur un Désir qui indéfiniment se constitue comme une insulte contre la raison, et mène celle-ci à voir dans la Mort le critère dernier de la liberté absolue et du sujet intégral. Mort, évidemment, comme négativité et non pas comme perte absolue ou vide du ne-pas-être-là.

Sade utilise la terminologie pensable de la Vie et de la Mort pour désigner l'univers non pensable du Désir et celui, tellement complexe, de la liberté et de la subjectivité.

Comme d'ailleurs l'a fait le Hegel de la Phénoménologie: «La terreur de la mort est l'intuition de l'essence négative de la liberté» — et Freud, lui-même, qui finit par voir dans la Mort l'essence ultime du désir.

Mais pour capturer une telle essence, Sade affronte la répétition, la reproduction de la reproduction, et constitue un univers qui est le *summum* de la monotonie, de la prévisibilité, de la linéarité — ainsi paraît-il.

Cependant, à y voir de près, on découvre une spirale: au dessous de la surface de

(*) Instituto Superior de Psicologia Aplicada, Rua Jardim do Tabaco, 44, 1100 Lisboa, Portugal.

la répétition il y a une pensée qui pense, et, parce qu'elle pense, se développe, se complète — justement: se spiralise.

C'est vrai que dans la stratégie Sadéenne il y a quelque chose qui évoque la lutte corps à corps contre la folie. Le répéter chez Sade c'est le répéter du Logos, la concaténation de mots, l'*explication*, l'explication au sens latin d'*explicatio*, sens polymorphe où on découvre au-delà du sens courant, le sens de *dédoubler*, *dérouler*, un manuscrit, aussi bien que celui curieux, d'*étendre une ligne de bataille*, *élargir l'espace des troupes*.

Les troupes du Logos contre l'attraction par les coupures de la syntaxe dans la folie, la coupure des mots à l'intérieur des mots, la coupure de la morphologie comme l'a signalé le Bion des *Second Thoughts*. L'attaque contre la pensée verbale c'est l'expression dans le verbe de l'attaque contre l'appareil perceptif: l'explosion — enfllement du Logos c'est l'expression surcompensée de la tendance folle vers la fragmentation sensorielle et verbale.

Ainsi, de Sade on pourrait dire qu'il est un *fou raté*.

Mais à examiner la chose de plus près, on peut aussi penser qu'il ne s'agit pas de folie: l'évolution Sadéenne ne va pas dans le sens de la fragmentation, mais dans le sens de la conscience pour soi en soi, dans la direction de la Raison finalement libre du Désir, c'est à dire de la conscience libre de l'incomplétude, soit la conscience pure au delà de la conscience malheureuse qui est tout conscience ouverte à la faille originaire.

Voilà en quoi il y a une spiralisation de la pensée chez Sade, et non pas un répéter rudimentaire. Avidité de la complétude, voilà aussi ce qui anime la *pensée perverse*.

Et il faut bien le dire: *la pensée perverse n'est pas la pensée des pervers, ni une pensée sur la pensée des pervers*. Car les pervers justement, «ne pensent pas». Ils agissent, montrant, fabricant indéfiniment des scénarios, scènes extatiques au double sens d'apparente extase et au sens Sartrien d'ek-stase: projection en dehors de soi, *suspension*, *objectivation réifiante*.

La *pensée perverse* c'est de tout cela l'opposé: c'est une pensée dont l'objet est plus et autre chose que les représentations qui sont ses fondements réguliers. Il ne s'agit pas de dire que A est B, de développer des jugements prédictifs, mais de prendre pour objet ce qui n'a pas d'objet: la copule «est», et de la *répéter* en y introduisant compréhensibilité.

Il ne s'agit pas de penser sur les choses et les états du monde, mais de penser et penser et penser pour assurer une sécurité pour l'espace de la pensée, pour construire même un espace de pensée. C'est d'ailleurs une des obsessions Sadéennes, celle de l'espace: espace discursif, espace logique, espace du désir, l'espace Sadeen et au même temps ces trois espaces: espace où l'on *discours* sur le désir, espace où l'on *ordonne* le Désir, espace *homologue* du désir. Comme l'a bien signalé Beatrice Didier, des images d'horizontalité prolifèrent, en rapport avec les deux premiers espaces; des images de verticalité quand c'est du dernier qu'il s'agit. *Description exhaustive* dans les deux premiers cas:

(...) «nous allons peindre cette retraite non comme elle était autre fois mais dans l'état d'embellissement et de solitude encore plus parfaite où les soins des 4 amis l'avaient mise.» (...)

Quatre amis qui sont les quatre scélérats des 120 journées, et qui, à Sibling, organisent le contexte de leurs aventures:

(...) «il fallait, pour y parvenir, arriver d'abord à Bâle; on y passait le Rhin, au-delà duquel la route se retrécissait au point qu'il fallait quitter les voitures...».

Des détails suivent et ensuite c'est la description du château, de l'entrée, des appartements, des couloirs. Et, de nouveau:

«Qu'on observe que je vais peindre les appartements non tels qu'ils pouvaient être autre fois mais comme ils venaient d'être arrangés et distribués relativement

au plan projeté. De la galerie on pénétrait dans un très joli salon à manger, guarni d'armoires en forme de tours», etc., etc., etc.

De ce salon on passait dans un salon destiné aux assemblées où les narrations allaient avoir lieu, et dont suit la description détaillée suivie à son tour de la description des chambres, des cuisines, et ainsi successivement. *Espace d'écrit, espace fermé:*

«(...) il fallait (...) faire murer toutes les portes par lesquelles on pénétrait à l'intérieur et s'enfermer absolument dans cette place comme dans une citadelle assiégée sans laisser la plus petite issue, soit à l'ennemi soit au déserteur.»

L'espace de l'action devient à *première vue*, un *scenario pervers*, bien défini et identifié. Il n'y a pas de regard externe, pas de contamination. Il y a seul le regard interne, fantasmatique: la scène sadéenne s'offre ainsi, en premier lieu, à la *vue*. *Mais* la puissance suprême consiste à la faire passer ensuite par l'*Ouïe*:

«Il est reçu, parmi les véritables libertins, que les sensations communiquées par l'organe de l'ouïe sont celles qui flattent davantage et dont les impressions sont les plus vives.»

Cela montre bien comment dans la scène sadéenne jouent deux espaces: *l'un visuel, immédiat; l'autre auditif, dérivé*. Ces deux espaces sont l'un par rapport à l'autre dans une double relation antisymétrique d'emboîtement: au plan descriptif, l'espace visuel contient l'espace auditif, mais dans un plan d'un plus profond ordonnancement de choses, c'est l'espace auditif qui entoure l'espace visuel et lui donne sens, raison d'être, légitimité.

Et comme c'est dans l'espace visuel que l'action perverse se déroule, il y a une organisation spatiale où l'espace immédiat du visible contient l'espace immédiat de l'action qui contient l'espace de la Narration — organisation spatiale qui contraste avec cette autre plus en profondeur, où c'est l'Espace de la Narration qui contient l'Espace de l'Action qui contient l'Espace Visuel.

A cette double organisation horizontale de l'espace s'ajoute cette autre, verticale: l'espace n'est plus entièrement descriptible, domesticable, par le Logos. L'espace est maintenant l'image du Désir.

«Vous devinez l'étendue de ce lieu: il est immense»,

dit Sade à propos du château de Sibbling. Espace non pas de contention, espace fini, mais maintenant espace infini, indéscriptible, comme infini est le désir du libertin — espace inextricable comme tout désir: des vastes salons, des passages étroits, des escaliers, des couloirs: un plan, comme le signale encore Beatrice Didier, qui défie toute représentation.

Espace Visuel, Espace de l'Action, Espace de la Narration, Espace du Désir — l'espace sadéen est encore *point d'application du désir*: l'image du château se dédouble en étranges inversions chez Minsky: les tables, les chaises, les meubles sont constitués par des corps des femmes en étranges positions: *dans* la limite, *sur* la limite, le point d'achèvement de cet imaginaire arriverait grand les pierres qui constituent le château se transformeraient en corps. *C'est vrai que les pierres ne pensent pas: mais chez Sade, à la fin, où s'attendrait à ce qu'elles désirent...*

La forteresse sadéenne est donc un organisme où il y a un centre, lieu de puissance, et une périphérie constitué par des successifs «à propos» pour la *jouissance*. L'espace où s'exerce la Raison, le Logos et le Désir est ainsi isomorphe de la Raison, du Logos et du Désir — et simultanément leur point d'incidence.

On trouve donc chez Sade une théorie de l'espace, une théorie de la déformation de l'espace et une théorie de ses dédoublements.

Espace de projection, pourrait-on dire, espace constitué *dans et par* la projection. Cependant,

s'il en était seulement ainsi, cet espace serait un espace chaud, mobile, riche: or l'espace sadeen est un espace glacé, fermé et matriciel, un espace de la répétition, ou, en quelque sorte et pour employer le mot de Sami Ali, un espace du *banal* en forme de paradoxe.

En fait, et à y réfléchir de plus près, ce n'est pas la pierre qui devient corps/désir par un mouvement projectif constitutif du réel, mais c'est le corps qui se projette en pierre, selon pièce de mobilier. La projection sadéenne est une projection *autre, glacée, reductrice, qui aspire à rendre pensable l'impensable du désir par son refroidissement*, à créer des relations d'emboîtement non pas par l'unique construction d'enveloppes, mais par la réduction partielle de l'indomesticabilité de la jouissance et de l'excitation sensorielle et pulsionnelle.

Réduit le Désir, la méditation raisonnée devient possible.

Et dans ces espaces clôtés, quels raisonnements vont se développer?

Raisonnements sur la Loi et le Sujet, *en premier lieu*. Si Sade est un moraliste — et il peut bien l'être comme la lecture de Klossowsky le montre — si Sade est un moraliste c'est «dans la mesure où à l'expérience de la loi morale aucune intuition n'offre d'objet phénoménal» — dit Lacan. Sade se lie ainsi à la raison pratique kantienne et fonde la possibilité du Sujet sur le néant de l'intuition phénoménale.

Raisonnements sur Dieu, la Nature, le sujet déterminé et le Sujet Absolu, *en second lieu*.

Ces raisonnements s'organisent en trois moments fondamentaux.

Le premier moment, est sans doute celui de la négation de Dieu. Mais nier Dieu, c'est se placer «face à», c'est être somme toute *objet* en face d'un *Etre Transcendant* maintenu existant par l'act même par lequel il est nié.

Il faut déplacer la position du sujet: abandonner son affirmation par la négation de Dieu et dans cet abandon, c'est bien sûr la Nature qui est rencontrée:

«Créé par la Nature avec des goûts très vifs, des passions très fortes; uniquement mis au monde pour m'y livrer et les satisfaire...»

Or, alors, comme dit Dolmancé:

«la meurtre n'est pas une destruction; celui qui le commet ne fait que varier les formes».

D'entièrement déterminé par Dieu, le sujet devient totalement déterminé par la Nature: *il la sert...* en faisant varier les formes.

La Subjectivité n'est toujours pas absolue, et elle se maintient nécessairement malheureuse, c'est à dire, non pas coupable, certes, mais encore *déterminée*. C'est ce que constate Curval, qui développe l'idée de l'impossibilité de crime. Mais ce même Curval énonce le principe du dépassement dialectique de cette subjectivité malheureuse:

«Je me suis toujours plaint de la Nature, qui me donnant le désir de la dépasser ne me donnait pas les moyens de le faire. Combien de fois ai-je désiré attaquer le soleil, en priver l'Univers ou m'en servir pour embrasser le monde...»

Mais c'est Juliette qui définit les positions où le malheur du sujet déterminé peut être dépassé:

«imbécile que j'étais: avant de nous séparer j'étais encore liée à la Nature, mais les nouveaux systèmes que j'ai développés m'en ont éloigné.»

Quels «nouveaux systèmes»? *Celui du désir comme pure négativité — sans raison ni excuse*. Ni la nature, ni le plaisir peuvent déterminer le Désir et avec lui le Sujet. Plus: *le désir est découvert comme transcendant la somme de ses contenus. Signifiant absolu*, pourrait-on dire.

Désir pur moteur, négativité originaire, c'est lui, en même temps, qu'il s'agit d'intégrer

aux infinies totalisations de la Raison dans un mouvement infini d'*impossible* capture du Désir par le Logos.

Mais — enfer! — *à se dire dans le Logos ce Désir s'aliène à nouveau*, se perd et avec sa perte se perd la Subjectivité, qu'en même temps se cherche.

Le Désir comme négativité et avec lui le Sujet ne sont possibles que dans la *solitude radicale*: c'est que la pensée perverse nourrit l'illusion de son entière transcendance: jamais en face d'une transcendance autre, jamais objet d'un regard autre, cela veut dire, finalement, que *la pensée perverse n'a de scène ni de scénario*: elle se réalise dans un espace *vide* qui est condition de tous les espaces. Les libertins — a-t-on dit — *se croisent*, mais ne se *rencontrent* jamais.

La pensée libertine est une pensée dont les contenus — les objets — sont toujours à dépasser, à nier. Mais ce mouvement de perpétuelle négation n'est pas le signe même que les objets de pensée sont transcendants par rapport au sujet qui pense — aussi bien que transcendants par rapport à l'espace vide où ils prennent corps?

Ainsi, à cet impasse dialectique, une seule solution s'offre: *la négation de la négation*: le sujet se constitue dans l'espace de la *pure négativité*: là où il n'a pas d'objets.

A l'*espace vide* s'associe donc l'*apathie libertine*: le sujet advenant là où il n'est plus. Voilà en quoi la pensée perverse, finalement, est bien perverse...

Cherchant à atteindre un but qui, une fois atteint, la fait disparaître en tant que pensée, l'objet par excellence de la pensée perverse c'est le *non-être* plein de *non-choses* dans l'*absolue absence de signes ou d'images*.

On pourrait alors peut-être dire que le sens ultime du langage sadeen est le *silence* car à la fin il n'y a plus un autre à qui adresser la parole.

Et là est la grandeur de Sade et certainement sa misère.

«Le vrai libertin aime jusqu'aux reproches que lui méritent ses exécrables procédés. N'en a-t'on pas vu qui aiment jusqu'au supplices que la vengeance humaine leur préparaient, qui les subissaient en les désirant, qui regardaient l'échafaud comme un trône de gloire où ils eussent été bien fâchés de ne pas pénir avec la même courage qui les avaient animés dans l'exécable exercice de leur forfaits?»

Voilà l'homme au dernière degré de la corruption réfléchie.

The Percy and Adams Families: Graveyard Representations of Chronic Depression

BERTRAM WYATT-BROWN (*)

At the center of the peaceful cemetery of St. James Episcopal Church in Greenville, Mississippi stands a bronze figure of a knight bearing the inscription «Patriot». The figure marks the grave of Senator LeRoy Percy, who died in 1929. Sometime in the early 1930s the monument was erected at the behest of the Senator's son, William Alexander Percy, adoptive father of the novelist, Walker Percy, and attorney, poet, and author of a classic southern memoir, *Lanterns on the Levee* (1941). At the time, the Greenville intellectual had been unusually restless and wretched. In 1929 he had not only lost his father, whom he worshipped, but also his mother Camille and a favorite cousin, LeRoy Pratt Percy, the novelist Walker Percy's father. His choice of artist had been excellent; Hoffman had a facility for interpreting the dynamics of human movement. In this case, a sense of kinetic energy lies beneath the tension of the muscles in the knight's face and in his frozen stance. Gratified by the result, Percy thought it expressed his sense of the world's injustice. Under the leadership of the racist demagogue James K. Vardaman, in 1911 Senator LeRoy Percy, an arch conservative, suffered humiliating defeat for reelection. Still smarting, in 1922 the Senator won belated retribution when he and his son Will narrowly beat the Ku Klux Klan in a local election that caught national attention. But the triumph seemed transitory, Will Percy grieved. Southern chivalry was dead and sense of civic obligation vanished. «The good die when they should live, the evil live when they should die; heroes perish and cowards escape», Will Percy lamented. The statue was meant to convey these thoughts to the pensive onlooker.

A specialist in bronze, Malvina Hoffman became the heir to the tradition of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, who had created the famous, shrouded figure of «Grief», as it is called, in the Rock Creek Cemetery of the national capital. In 1888 Henry Adams had commissioned the statue to memorialize the grave of his wife, «Clover» Hooper, who had killed herself in 1885. Like Will Percy, Adams would be best known for an autobiography: *The Education of Henry Adams* (1906) that mourns the passing of an era of familial greatness. Saint-Gaudens should, the patron ordered, design a figure emblematic of contemplation — gaunt, anonymous, timeless, cryptic. It was Adam's private challenge to a money-grubbing world, a biographer has said. The grieving husband detected a hidden intractability or defiance

(*) University of Florida, Department of History, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, 4131 Turlington Hall, Gainesville, FL 32611-2036, USA.

in the face that gratified him, but the resistance seems, in fact, passive and doubting. Having no other model available at his Manhattan studio, Saint-Gaudens had thrown a blanket over an Italian immigrant boy's head and shoulders. The result conveyed an hermaphroditic quality. Saint-Gaudens might even be said to have erased the female sex altogether, a curious gesture for honoring a beloved wife. In reply to a baffled friend Adams declared that the sculptor «wanted to exclude sex and sink it in the idea of humanity. The figure is sexless.»¹ Adams considered the statue an expression of his sorrow, even self-pity, not of his wife's character, but it was also to signify the enigma and uncertainty of human existence.²

Although both artistic pieces represent melancholy, Hoffman's creation is far from being abstract, sexless, and timeless. It is masculine and martial. The knight's thick, mailed hands rest on an unsheathed broadsword. In contrast to the lean and passive Saint-Gaudens statue, Senator LeRoy Percy's protector is stocky, concrete, oddly short. Although the battle is over and the specter of defeat hangs heavy, the mood is anything but submissive. Rage is gathering beneath the immobile features. Defiance sets the jaw. In having his father represented by so grim a pose, Will Percy wanted no sign of androgyny to cast doubt on family manhood. Despite his love of classical culture, he chose no Greek motif, no slim Ganymede, no knight of the Gabriel Rossetti school, with long, rolled locks and sensuous mouth, to guard the grave. Instead, he had the New York sculptor create a barbaric figure, North European gothic like the earls of Northumberland — the noble House of Percy.

These two representations in bronze may symbolize key elements in the Percy and Adams families and the sectional cultures to which they made such remarkable contributions. Both families, in European societies, would have gained titles or at least have been accorded the sobriquet of aristocratic, but in America monuments of stone — or of printed words — would have to suffice. Yet, in a sense the significance of the two clans is not comparable despite the power they both exercised in separate domains. Members of the Adams family twice occupied the White House, sat in Congress and in cabinets, represented the United States in Petersburg and London, taught at Harvard University, presided over national corporations and railroads, and wrote works of fiction, history and biography that still earn the respect of scholars and remain in print for general readership. For three generations early in American history they were at the vortex of policy-making, refusing always to stoop to the low arts of the politician, a matter of considerable pride but also of doubtful utility. Although in Walker Percy, the family produced a figure of national rather than purely regional or local reputation, his predecessors on the genealogical tree, four southern nineteenth-century female writers of fiction and poetry produced only one bestseller among the twenty works they published, and none of the publications deserves a late resurrection.³ All in all, the contribution of the Percys was proportionately small, but location and opportunity more than differences in intelligence or shrewdness separated the trajectories of family careers.

Despite these disparities, much can be learned about the sense of identity that families can create by exploring these two extraordinary lines and showing how that collective image may be shaped by internal factors of emotional legacies and external ones of regional influences. The most salient feature that draws together the Percys and Adamses is a common problem of melancholia, a handicap but also the very source of creativity, imagination, and philosophical

¹ Quotations, Ernest Samuels, *Henry Adams*, Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1989, 279-280.

² Malvina Hoffman, *Yesterday is Tomorrow: A Personal History*, New York: Crown Publishers, 1965, 115-29, 376 (inaccurate date); Patricia O'Toole, *The Five of Hearts Club: An Intimate Portrait of Henry Adams and His Friends, 1880-1918*, New York: Crown Publishers, 1990, 165-66; R. P. Blackmur, *Henry Adams*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980, 339-43.

³ The four writers were: Catherine Ann Warfield, the most prolific of them all and author of the popular gothic *The Household of Bouverie*; her sister Eleanor Percy Lee, who co-authored with Catherine two books of poetry; Sarah Ann Dorsey, their niece; and Kate Lee Ferguson, daughter of Eleanor Percy Lee. Their lives spanned the years 1817 to 1878.

exploration. After briefly demonstrating how the annals of Percys and Adamses were marked by problems of genetic depression, other commonalities — and subtle differences based on regional variation — will emerge as well.

Unlike the Adamses, the Percys inhabited a relatively underpopulated and understudied region of the country, where, until the latter half of the nineteenth century, most of them led private lives. Also unlike the Calvinistic Adamses, they did not preserve family documents in a systematic way, wrote nothing introspective about their transgressions for the edification of themselves and descendants. Each generation of Percys had to reinvent itself, for history, it seemed, periodically wiped the slate clean. When disappearance, early death, or suicide removed fathers, their sons and daughters had to become *sui generis*. In contrast, the Adamses knew exactly who they were. They came from plain stock, ordinary farmers, who left England in the 1630s, though even at the start. One Henry Adams, yeoman, like the roguish Charles Percy, married into wealth on this side of the Atlantic — and stayed married.⁴ But no less important for the establishment of their rank in society, the Adamses could depend upon a sturdy cultural order in the environs of Boston and Cambridge. They always lived at the centers of national power — Boston and Washington — with lengthy sojourns in the capitals of Europe. The Percys remained in the backwater of the Lower South. But many of them, made rich from slaveholding and cotton planting, were quite at home in Europe, spoke French fluently, and had a refinement of taste equal to that of the Adamses. They had to reside far from their habitat to gain a college education — at Princeton, Harvard, the University of Virginia, or closer to home, the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee. The early nineteenth century women in the clan attended Madame Sigoigne's or Madame Grelaud's French-speaking academies in Philadelphia.⁵

Yet, the Percy family's origins were obscure, even troubling, particularly if compared with the Adamses, easily traceable back to the seventeenth century in Massachusetts. The first American Percy was an eighteenth-century rogue, an intellectual of sorts, and a self-promoting Irishman with pretensions to nobility. After arriving out of the mists of the Caribbean in 1775 to settle in British West Florida, Charles claimed to have been an officer in the King's Army, though no record of his regiment or rank has ever appeared. He also named his first plantation, «Northumberland House», a reference to the enormous palace on the Strand where the dukes of Northumberland resided when in London.⁶

Charles Percy's pretensions to gentility were designed to hide the fact that sometime in the 1770s he had left one wife, Margaret, in London, when in 1780 he married his third wife Susan Collins in what had recently become Spanish Louisiana. (The second wife, a Miss Burroughs, on an island in the Bermuda, had conveniently died after learning that Charles had a living spouse and even more conveniently had left no offspring to run him to ground later.) Nemesis, however, arrived in 1790 at Northumberland House in the form of a handsome twenty-eight-year-old lieutenant in the Royal Navy. Five years after his mother Margaret's death in the stews of London, Lieutenant Robert Percy crossed the Atlantic and confronted his old man, who was much discomfited. Upon retirement from

⁴ Edward Chalfant, *Both Sides of the Ocean: A Biography of Henry Adams, His First Life, 1838-1862*, Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1982, 34.

⁵ See Lewis Baker, *The Percys of Mississippi*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982. See also Princeton Alumni Subject Files, for Thomas George Percy and Thomas George Ellis, Princeton University Archives; Samuel Brown to John Williams Walker, 29 June 1821, John Williams Walker MSS, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery; Samuel Brown to Orlando Brown, 19 June 1822, Samuel and Orlando Brown MSS, Filson Club, Louisville; Lucy Leigh Bowie, «Madame Grelaud's French School», *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 39 June 1944: 141-48.

⁶ See John Hereford Percy, *The Percys of Louisiana and Mississippi, 1776-1943*, Baton Rouge, 1943, 5; Sargent Prentiss Knut to Mary D. Butler Dana, 14 March 1913, Duncan Longcope and Mellie L. Johansen Letters, Cornhill Farm, Lee, Massachusetts (private collection, hereafter Longcope-Johansen Collection).

the service in 1803, Robert settled his Scottish wife and family on a large plantation near St. Francisville, Spanish Louisiana, within a score of miles of his half-brothers and sisters to the north. As a result two Percy families lived side by side, the «illegitimate» descendants of Susan Collins being the chief concern here.⁷

Charles Percy did not live to witness the curious turn of fate that brought his two families into such proximity. Afflicted with a psychotic episode of depression, in 1794, he had tied an iron kettle to his neck and plunged into the creek which ran near «Northumberland House». Will Percy, Walker, his ward, and other family members rather enjoyed the problematic character of their progenitor. After gleefully reporting the manner of his death, Will Percy concluded in *Lanterns on the Levee*, «He was not exactly a credit to anybody, but, as ancestors go, he had his points.» In fashioning the character of Dr. Tom More, a mad, saturnine, and charming lothario, in *Love in the Ruins* and *The Thanatos Syndrome*, Walker Percy borrowed something from this suicidal ancestor in whom he took considerable interest.⁸

The family thought Susan and Charles's only surviving son, Thomas George, rather humdrum by comparison. During the years that John Adams at Braintree was corresponding with Thomas Jefferson at Monticello and his son John Quincy Adams struggled in Washington with the Jacksonian majority in Congress, Thomas George Percy was merely raising cotton on his large plantation near Huntsville, Alabama. He left political ambitions to his best friend and brother-in-law, Senator John Williams Walker of Alabama, whose patronym would figure in the Christian names of the Percy family for a hundred and fifty years thereafter. Will Percy remarked, Squire Thomas Percy «cut no great figure in the world. He isn't a demanding ancestor.»⁹ One of Squire Percy's sons, William Alexander of Greenville, Mississippi, made the law a family vocation, as it was for some of the Adamses (notably John, John Quincy, and Charles Francis). After service in the Confederate Army as a colonel, the «Gray Eagle of the Valley», as this Percy was dubbed for his heroic exploits in the Shenandoah, was elected Speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives at a crucial moment in Reconstruction history.¹⁰

Early death inhibited the family's opportunity for more than local prominence, the average age being thirty-nine from the eighteenth century to 1942, when Will Percy died at fifty-seven. A number of male descendants of Charles Percy died in their early thirties.¹¹ Still more important, the Percys had no grand beginnings, as the Adamses had, with the American Revolution as the stage for their progenitor's contribution to the new Republic. By the time the Percys' political moment had come in 1865, the world they inhabited had

⁷ See, for instance, Percy to Percy, 7 May 1792, and an undated, unsigned document located in the Longcope-Johansen Collection and Robert Dow to Robert Percy, 27 July 1804, in the John Hereford Papers owned by Dr. O. M. Thompson and William Wright, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

⁸ Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee*, 40; Francis Pousset to Governor Gayoso de Lemos, 31 January 1794, Book C, p. 95, Spanish Records, Adams County Courthouse, Natchez, Mississippi; Robert Dow to Robert Percy, 12 February 1794, in Percy, *Percy Family*, 50; Walker Percy, *Love in the Ruins: The Adventures of A Bad Catholic at a Time Near the End of the World*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971; and *Lancelot*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977.

⁹ Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee*, 271; Hugh C. Bailey, *John Williams Walker: A Study in the Political, Social and Cultural Life of the Old Southwest*, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1964.

¹⁰ William Alexander Percy, Alumni Office Records, Princeton University Archives, and *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi*, 1891, 2 vols., reprint ed., 1978, 2: 582; *Jackson Clarion-Ledger* [?], 26 October 1930, newspaper clipping, William Alexander Percy Subject File, Mississippi Department of History and Archives (hereafter MDAH); *Greenville Times*, 12 December 1874 (quotation), 2 January 1875, 17 March 1875, 18, 1884; James Wilford Garner, *Reconstruction in Mississippi*, 1901, reprint ed., Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968, 311.

¹¹ Percy, *Percy Family*, 65, 66; *Nashville Presbyterian Record*, 16 December 1848, and other papers among the genealogical records in the Charles Brown Percy Papers, I-A-5, Tennessee Historical Society, Tennessee State Archives Bldg., Nashville (hereafter TSA); See Thomas George Ellis (Charles Percy's grandson), tombstone, Routh Cemetery, Homochitto Street, Natchez.

crashed in ruins. Former slaves ruled in their places, and the recapturing of old seats of power meant no advancement to national prominence but simply a chance to rule over tenants and undeveloped wastelands. Even so, according to his many political friends, the brilliant attorney William Alexander Percy might have climbed the ladder to prominence, capable of winning a seat in a Democratic cabinet, had fate not cut him short with death in 1888 at the age of fifty-three. The American male Percys, like the earls of Northumberland, were seldom destined to live a full span, owing to their inherited predisposition to ill-health.¹²

More serious than a poor record of mortality, however, was the circumstance of melancholia. That, however, was not necessarily an obstacle to political prominence. Abraham Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, Alexander Stephens, Davis's Vice-President of the Confederacy, Robert Toombs, his one-time Secretary of State, and others struggled with episodes of melancholia, and its ravages could be seen in their poor health, bouts of insomnia, and foul temper. Only Lincoln was able to master the last manifestation in self-deprecating humor.¹³

Depression can be completely debilitating. So it was in the case of the Gray Eagle's brother, LeRoy Pope Percy, a doctor without a regular practice who in 1882 overdosed himself with laudanum. Will Percy, later attributed his great uncle's suicide to the loss of a niece, twenty-three and newly married, whom he had been privately treating at Eureka Springs, Arkansas. She died the day after her uncle killed himself. The next generation was also ill-fated. In 1917, Walker Percy, the Senator's brother and the nephew of the suicidal physician, placed a shotgun against his chest and fired. His son and law partner, LeRoy Pratt, ran to the gun-room, but it was too late. On July 9, 1929, LeRoy followed his father's example, blasting himself with a shotgun charge under the chin.¹⁴ Thus, from 1794 to 1929 every generation of the family included one male suicide, save that of squire Thomas George Percy.

Female members of the family suffered from the illness as well. Although Thomas George Percy was the only son who had been spared, his sister Sarah lost her reason and had to be admitted to the Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia in 1819. Her tragedy, when she was thirty-nine, was the result of a post-partum depression whose onset came simultaneously with the birth of her second child in a second marriage. She remained under close supervision in the hospital until 1831 when Colonel Nathaniel Ware, her reclusive husband, had her discharged and placed in the hands of Sarah's eldest son. She died in 1836 at his plantation house in Natchez, never having recovered her mind. Sarah Ware's eldest daughter, Mary Jane Ellis LaRoche, was likewise afflicted with melancholia immediately after the birth of a son, Percy LaRoche; she died of consumption in 1844 under the care of a Philadelphia physician.¹⁵

¹² «Death of Col. W. A. Percy», *Greenville Times*, 21 January 1888, clipping in LeRoy Percy Family MSS, MDAH; Nannie Armstrong Percy to Ladie Armstrong, 1 January 1888, Armstrong Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (hereafter SHC). On Northumbrian mortality, see ill-health, see Edward Barrington De Fonblanque, *Annals of the House of Percy*, (2 vols.; London: Freemantle, 1887), 2: 487.

¹³ See Lynda Lasswell Crist and Mary Seaton Dix, eds., *The Papers of Jefferson Davis, 1856-1860*, 6 Vols., Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989, 6: 196n6; William C. Davis, *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour*, New York: Harper and Collins, 1991. Paul D. Escott, *After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate Nationalism*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978, 260-63, (quotation) 262; Howard I. Kushner, *Self-Destruction in the Promised Land: A Psychocultural Biology of Suicide*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1989, 141.

¹⁴ Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee*, 345; *Greenville Times* (Miss.), 30 June 1882; *Birmingham News*, 9 February 1917, 9 July 1929, *Birmingham Age-Herald*, 9 February 1917, 9 July 1929.

¹⁵ Sarah Percy Ware, tombstone, Routh Cemetery, Homochitto Street, Natchez; Percy, *Percy Family*, 65-66; *Nashville Presbyterian Record*, 16 December 1848, and other papers among the genealogical records in the Percy Papers, 1-A-5, TSA; Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee*, 272-73; *Greenville Times*, 30 June 1882.

The Adamses were almost as well acquainted with the illness as the Percys. Alcoholism often is a factor in the disease, and both families had difficulties along these lines. Two of John Quincy Adams's brothers and one of his three sons were alcoholics. Despite his artistic and literary talent, another son, George Washington Adams, also a heavy drinker and frequently in debt, sank under the weight of John Quincy Adams's expectations for him to rise, possibly, to the Presidency himself, and, at the same time witness the humiliating defeat that President Adams had experienced in the election of 1828. In spring 1829 George Adams also learned that he had made a serving girl pregnant. Bearing these travails, he threw himself into the waters of New York harbor.¹⁶ In his anguish, the surviving father felt «deserted by all mankind». He kept rehearsing a phrase from a favorite French opera, *Richard Coeur de Leon*: «O, Richard! O mon Roi! L'Univers t'abandonne.» Charles Francis was the only one of the former President's sons left to carry on the family line and its traditions.¹⁷

The same pattern could be found in the Percy family. John Walker Percy, brother of the Gray Eagle and LeRoy Pope, was reputed to have alcoholic problems. Heavy drinking may have been a factor in the early death in 1912 of William Armstrong Percy of Memphis, Senator LeRoy and Walker's eldest brother. Jay Tolson explains in his recent biography of the novelist Walker Percy, that his father LeRoy's «drinks before dinner may have exacerbated his bad moods».¹⁸

The demon of depression did not choose between the achievers and those of mediocre talent in either family. The condition induces feelings of inanition and worthlessness no matter how substantial the reality of success might be. The Adamses made no secret of their inner despair and the «painful greatness» that weighed upon their shoulders. «The history of my family», lamented Charles Francis Adams, «is not a pleasant one to remember. It is one of the great triumphs in the world but deep groans within, one of extraordinary brilliancy and deep corroding mortification.» Although President John Adams apparently never was driven to attempt suicide — Abigail would never have permitted it — he sometimes fell into what a biographer called «a dark tide of paranoia» that rendered him «depressed, hostile, and suspicious».¹⁹

Such a cast of mind resembled that of Senator LeRoy Percy after his election defeat in 1911. The senator developed a credo of Ciceronian honor, hard though it was to maintain. He turned reclusive and despairing after his wife Camille's death in 1929 and died himself several weeks later. Will Percy took his father's defeat as if he had himself been the loser, just as George Washington Adams had felt the world collapsing when his father lost in 1828 to the Jacksonians.²⁰ Like his own father John, John Quincy Adams also struggled for control of his volatile feelings, fearful that, as he put it, «I have not enough of the Stoic in my Soul.» According to Paul Nagel, Charles Francis Adams, Lincoln's representative at the Court of St. James, struggled from time to time with «loss of memory, lethargy, and depression». The American minister could make one feel, Carl Schurz remarked, «as though the temperature of the room had dropped several degrees.»²¹

¹⁶ Earl N. Herbert, *The Force So Much Closer Home: Henry Adams and the Adams Family*, New York, 1977, 4 (quotation). John Quincy Adams had just vacated the White House when the tragedy took place. Chalfant, *Both Sides of the Ocean*, 35-39. Samuel Flagg Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Union*, New York: Knopf, 1956, 178-81, takes the father's part and condemns the emotionally disturbed young man on purely moral grounds.

¹⁷ Nagel, *Descent from Greatness*, 5; Chalfant, *Both Sides of the Ocean*, 38-39.

¹⁸ William Armstrong Percy, III, interview with author, July 22, 1989, Boston; Tolson, *Pilgrim in the Ruins*, 44.

¹⁹ Paul C. Nagel, *Descent from Glory: Four Generations of the John Adams Family*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1983, 3, 5, 18; Page Smith, *John Adams*, Vol. 2 Garden City: Doubleday, 1962, 2: 1006 (quotation), 736, 822, 867.

²⁰ Interview with Mrs. A. K. Stokes, in William Charles Sallis, «A Study of the Life and Times of LeRoy Percy», M. S. Thesis, Mississippi State College, 1957, 166; Baker, *Percys of Mississippi*, 148-49.

The cold Adams demeanor, so in keeping with the Calvinistic heritage of New England, was not to be found among the Percys, a sociable breed, who hid their despondency behind the mask of conviviality, mint juleps on the porch, good cigars, hunting trips, and visits in the 1880s to the mulatto Eliza Compton's house in Greenville for champagne parties lasting into the midnight hours. Will Percy, by contrast to the dour Adamses of Quincy and Washington, had a presence that at once commanded special notice. Walker Percy recalled that his guardian radiated «that mysterious quality we call charm, for lack of a better word, in such high degree that what comes to mind is not that usual assemblage of features and habits which make up our memories of people but rather a quality, a temper, a set of mouth, a look through the eye.»²²

Will Percy was not as cheerful as his graciousness suggested. Beneath his wit and careful regard for others a deep sorrow lodged that bordered on hopelessness. He was concerned that he could never become the man he thought his father was or the kind of man his father would admire. From Will's perspective the formidable Delta attorney and senator «was kin to Hotspur and blood-brother to Richard Coeur de Lion». One could tell Will Percy's unhappy state of mind by the eyes, Walker Percy remembered. «They were beautiful and terrible eyes, eyes to be careful around. Yet now, when I try to remember them, I cannot see them otherwise than as shadowed by sadness.»²³

People challenged by depression are attracted to those with similar difficulties. Walker Percy's troubled father, attorney LeRoy Pratt married a woman of great charm, beauty, and intelligence, but Martha Susan Phinizy also revealed hints of melancholia after her husband's death in 1929. Her accidental death in 1932 involved feelings she little understood. She and the boys had joined Will Percy, her husband's first cousin once removed, in Greenville in autumn 1931. Gifted and determined as an instructor of family lore and values, Will Percy monopolized her sons — without indicating any interest in her as a woman. Her situation was anomalous. On April 2, the Saturday before Easter Sunday, she and her youngest son Phinizy, age ten, plunged over a railless bridge into a rain-swollen creek. As the car began to sink, she clutched at her son, making it impossible for him to wriggle out of the back window. She finally let him go; he escaped, swam to shore, and ran for help, but by the time it arrived she had drowned.²⁴

Tragedy of a similar nature also had struck Henry Adams. Henry Adams's wife Marian Hooper, known as «Clover», had an artistic temperament and showed great skill as a photographer. Like the Percys, the Hooper family had to cope with serious mental problems of a genetic character. Adams had been warned about the perils of marriage into that family. His brother Charles Francis Adams, Jr., had exclaimed on hearing of the engagement, «Heavens! — no — they're all crazy as coots. She'll kill herself, just like her aunt!» The aunt in question had fatally dosed herself with arsenic at the age of twenty-eight. Another aunt, Caroline Sturgis, who became fascinated with psychic phenomena, was thought, perhaps unfairly, to be mentally unstable. Aunt Carrie had deeply resented her brothers' education at Harvard when, according to the custom of the day, she was denied such intellectual stimulation, a complaint that Clover Hooper never voiced but must have felt. Two years after Clover's

²¹ Nagel, *Descent from Glory*, 99, 284; Carl Schurz quoted in Ernest Samuels, *The Young Henry Adams*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948, 331n.

²² Entries for 9 August, 23 December 1904, Henry Waring Ball 1885-1935, Diary, p. 57, MDAH; Walker Percy, «Introduction» to Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee*, vii-viii.

²³ Percy, «Introduction» to Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee*, (quotation) viii, 57 (quotation).

²⁴ Interview by author with Mrs. Charles (Donie) Allison, Birmingham, 7 August 1988; Tolson, *Pilgrim in the Ruins*, 47, 48, 98; Percy, «Introduction» to Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee*, viii, ix, and 333; entry for 7 April 1931, 3 April 1932, Harry Ball Diary, MDAH; Malone, «William Alexander Percy», 33; *Greenville Delta Democrat-Times*, 2 April 1932.

death, her sister, whose mind was said to have been as brilliant as hers, took her own life under the wheels of a locomotive in 1887.²⁵

Indeed, Boston, like Greenville, Mississippi, seemed to have a disproportionate share of mentally unstable residents among its upper ranks. Hearing that yet another Boston matron had committed herself to the sanatorium at Somerville, Clover Adams once remarked to a friend, «The insane asylum seems to be the goal of every good and conscientious Bostonian, babies and insanity the two leading topics. So and so has a baby. She becomes insane and goes to Somerville, baby grows up and promptly retires to Somerville.» The reference to infants was not casual. She and Henry were childless. When she encountered the loss of her father, her misery and sense of worthlessness reached a climax. Like most suicides, including LeRoy Pratt Percy, she briefly presented an outward appearance of serenity and improved health. On December 6, 1885, the kind of cold and gloomy day she always dreaded, Clover swallowed a phial of potassium cyanide, a chemical used in her photographic work. Henry reached her almost at once, but it was still too late for any rescue to succeed.²⁶

Suicide was both a cause and an effect of the depression that ran in the two families. When Senator LeRoy Percy died on Christmas Eve, 1929, after giving up on life and refusing to eat, Will Percy fell into a deep despondency, as if he were somehow responsible for his dispirited father's death. A few years later, Will had finally reconciled himself to the loss of the individual who meant most to him in life perhaps because he could never win LeRoy Percy's unqualified approval. The Senator had always considered his son a disappointment — effeminate in manner and unlikely ever to produce heirs. Will Percy repressed the pain that knowledge of LeRoy's disapproval constantly gave him. Grieving for himself as well as his parent, he remarked to a friend that gradually one learns «to endure the dark and the solitude with an incredible sort of dignity.»²⁷

Henry Adams reacted similarly to the loss of the Clover, who had come to mean more to him than anyone else. «I am weary of the world's cackle and bustle, and the dreary recurrence of small talk», Henry lamented. Gradually, like Will Percy, he recovered. Yet close to the end of his life he wryly recorded, «Thank God, I never was cheerful. I come from the happy stock of the Mathers, who, as you remember, passed sweet mornings reflecting the goodness of God and the damnation of infants.» Following a stroke, Henry Adams twice tried to fling himself from his sickroom window.²⁸

Henry Adams had little of the amiability and good humor that Will Percy possessed but with regard to inner feelings, they shared much in common. Neither could break the habit of self-deprecation or overcome the episodes of despondency that began in their earliest years. Henry Adams remembered his childhood as a time of learning his deficiencies. He did not grow at the pace of his elder brothers; he was no good in fist-fights. «The habit

²⁵ Eugenia Kaledin, *The Education of Mrs. Henry Adams*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981, 45-50, 225, 239, 240; Charles Francis Adams, Jr., quoted in O'Toole, *The Five of Hearts*, 15, 16; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical Crusade against Slavery*, Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University Press, 1969, 301.

²⁶ Quoted in Ernest Samuels, *Henry Adams: The Middle Years*, Cambridge: Beltram Press, 1965, 272; Kaledin, *The Education of Mrs. Henry Adams*, 222; O'Toole, *The Five of Hearts*, 157; Henry Adams to Henry Osborn Taylor, 15 February, 1915, in R. P. Blackmur, *Henry Adams* (Veronica A. Makowsky, Ed.), pp: 323-24, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovarovich, 1980.

²⁷ Janet Dana Longcope to William Alexander Percy, 19, 29 December and n.d. [c. November-December, 1929], Percy Family MSS, MDAH; William Alexander Percy to Sarah Kilpatrick, 2 June 1932, in Billups Phinizy Spalding, «William Alexander Percy: His Philosophy of Life as Reflected in His Poetry», M. A. thesis, University of Georgia, 1957, 109.

²⁸ Quoted in Samuels, *Henry Adams*, 222; Henry Adams to Elizabeth Cameron, 20 December 1914, in *Letters of Henry Adams*, vol. 6 (J. C. Levenson, Ernest Samuels et al., Eds.), Cambridge, 1988, 6:672; Nagel, *Descent from Glory*, 229, 280, 360.

of doubt; of distrusting his own judgment» and «the horror of ennui» were common to most New Englanders of his time, he recalled, but he experienced these feelings with greater acuteness. «His brothers were the type; he was the variation», he put his thoughts and feelings in the distant third person. Likewise, Will Percy remembered sadness as a constant companion in childhood. Nain, his sixteen-year-old black nurse, used to sing a song that made him «feel so lost and lonely that tears would seep between my lids», until Nain would ask, «What's de madder Peeps? Whut you cryin' fur?» These and other memories meant little in themselves, but they suggested that a sense of abandonment from parents, preoccupied and subject to times of gloom themselves, affected the familial environment.²⁹

In young manhood, matters did not necessarily improve. At several points in his early life Henry Adams contemplated suicide in a despondency over career. Like Will Percy he loved his parents but felt them distant and alien. Each time he pulled himself together and then after the last bout of worry after the Civil War embarked on literary and scholarly pursuits, and settled down in the late 1860s in Washington with Marian Hooper, his Boston bride, whom he deeply loved. He had overcome his sense of unworthiness in comparison with his accomplished father, but he remained in the shadow of the great name of Adams. Even when he published the *Education* late in life, he asserted to Charles Milnes Gaskell that «the volume is due to piety on account of my father and John Hay». To Henry James its appearance was «a mere shield of protection in the grave».³⁰ Both remarks reflected an inner mood and were not, as might appear, signs of false pride or sly modesty to garner praise. That was the way he genuinely felt, although a fierce sense of privacy and reticence was involved as well. The first publication of the *Education* in 1906 was restricted to a hundred copies, solely for friends.³¹ For Will Percy the shackles that the past placed upon his life were even more inhibiting than what Henry Adams faced and eventually surmounted. Percy never did. He looked upon his forbears, especially the Gray Eagle and his own father LeRoy as demi-gods whom he could never dare to match. He feared his father's contempt, but in fact what haunted him most was his own sense of shame. He could not name his secret nature of which he was deeply conscious. Those in the South with homoerotic leanings had to be extremely circumspect. For instance, in 1895, a case of premeditated murder erupted out of a male sexual encounter. T. Dabney Marshall, a well-born young legislator from Vicksburg, made advances upon his hotel roommate, R. M. Dinkins. Feeling the whiplash of gossip at the state Democratic convention, meeting in Jackson, Marshall gathered some kinsmen, accosted Dinkins at a train depot, and shot him dead with two bullets. When arrested, Marshall pleaded justified homicide: «The man had done me an irreparable wrong», leaving him no «honorable way out of it».³²

In the Southern masses of whites, an interest in artistic things and a loose-wristed manner were invitations to mockery and social ostracism. Although somewhat immune because of his family's standing, Will Percy felt the sting of «redneck» comments as he walked to his law office.³³ A brief, typed, undated sketch in the Percy Family papers revealed his feelings sometimes before the first World War, after Percy had returned from Harvard

²⁹ Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, New York: Vintage Books, 1990, 12; Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee*, 27. See Felix Brown, «Bereavement and Lack of a Parent in Childhood», in *Foundations of Child Psychiatry* (E. Miller, Ed.), pp: 435-55, London: Pergamon Press, 1968; Sigmund Freud, «Mourning and Melancholia (1917)», in *Collected Papers of Sigmund Freud*, 21 vols. (Ernest Jones, Ed.), 4: 152-70, London: Hogarth Press, 1948.

³⁰ Chalfant, *Both Sides of the Ocean*, 25, 32-33, 53-54, 103-04, 399-400 Adams to Charles Milnes Gaskell, 10 May 1907, in *Letters of Henry Adams* (J.C. Levenson, E. Samuels et al., Eds.), 6:63; Adams to Henry James, 6 May 1908, *ibid.*, 6: 136.

³¹ See «Editor's Preface», in Eugenia Kaledin, *The Education of Mrs. Henry Adams*, 5.

³² See *Greenwood (Mississippi) Enterprise*, 16 August 1895.

³³ Interview by author with Leon Koury, 10 February 1993, Greenville.

Law School to join his father's law firm, and had taken residence once more in his parents' house. «It was the fifth autumn», he begins. «For the first time there was a definite chill in the air. Snow had begun to fall earlier in the afternoon, but it had soon turned from snow to rain. 'The fifth autumn is upon me,' I said. At that time, five years ago», he continues, «I knew nothing of what was taking place. My father and mother looked at me strangely. My mother gave thanks to God that I was untouched by sin, but she would stop in the midst of her words and weep bitterly. My father said, 'It is in the spring that the seed is eager, is it not?' But my mother would cover his lips with her hands. 'Do not speak', she would say, 'We do not know what we may be saying.'» He used to walk for hours, Will Percy explains, a solitary figure under the autumnal trees, whose «brown leaves had fallen in slow spirals». He watched «the dark movement of the river» before returning late at night to «hear my mother crying out in her sleep and my father in his room pacing the floor». He would go to his own room, move his chair to the window, pull a bathrobe about his shoulders, «and smoke cigarettes». He confessed, «Sometimes I would sit that way all night. 'The fifth autumn is upon me,' I said, 'And I have not forgotten. It will always be so. When the first snow falls and the first chill creeps into the air my peace will be broken: Spring, that destroys the sleep of others, is to me a release from pain. But always in autumn I shall be stricken and confused with memory.'»³⁴ Will Percy never published the piece.

For the Adamses, the very opposite outlook prevailed. Exposure of their commonplace books, diaries and correspondence was a matter of conscience and duty — indeed, of «family honor», as one scholar has called it. As early as 1840 Charles Francis Adams declared that private family letters should be published in order «to transmit to posterity the details for a narration in as complete a form as will in all probability ever be attained by the imperfect faculties of man.» The southern habit of reticence was a subtext, it might be said, to the venerable themes of honor and depression to be found at every turn in the Percys' history. In Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*, the Herald asks, «Whence came this gloom of melancholy upon thy spirit?» The Chorus replies: «For a long time I have considered silence a medicine for harm.» The ancient mode was far from effective, as the play reveals.³⁵

As if to fill the void, the Percys adopted the language and themes of legend with which to invest the family's identity. Will Percy was convinced that Charles Percy was indeed «the lost heir of the earls of Northumberland», although he put the matter in print in the form of a question. Will's uncle «Willie» Armstrong Percy of Memphis tried to prove a connection with Bishop Thomas Percy, a famous collector of folk poetry in the eighteenth century and to Thomas Percy, leader of the infamous Gunpowder Plot of 1605. «This cheerfully disposed old gentleman», the Memphis attorney conjectured in 1904, «was descended from the 4th Earl of Northumberland». In 1907, LeRoy Percy, Will's father, boasted to a cousin, «We claim back to the Northumberland Percys». When in 1917 the *Birmingham News* announced the death of Walker Percy at his own hand, the editor noted that the attorney «came of the old English Hot-spur Percy blood, and there flowed in his veins the finest traditions of the old Virginia gentlemen. He had the truest of pride, and was the embodiment of honor in all his relations.» No doubt Will Percy was flattered when, as late as 1938, Jonathan Daniels referred to him as «the true last of the great family of Hotspurs». These fancies afforded Walker Percy in his novels the chance to identify the family with the Arthurian Legends of Sir Percival, the alchemy of «the Wizard Earl», ninth in the line, and above all, with the unruly Harry Hotspur, son of the First

³⁴ «The Fifth Autumn», in Percy Family MSS, MDAH.

³⁵ Charles Francis Adams quoted in Herbert, *The Force So Much Closer Home*, 13; Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, in *Aeschylus*, trans. Herbert Weir Smyth, vol. 2 of *The Loeb Classical Library*, (G. P. Goold, Ed.), 1926, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983, 2: 49 (l. 547-48).

Earl of Northumberland.³⁶ Ambiguity of lineage was a distinctively southern — particularly southwestern — feature, whereas the Adamses and other New Englanders could ascertain from the meticulous court records who their ancestors were. Partially because of his ambivalent family heritage, Walker Percy could not accept uncritically either the ethic of a smug New South suburban enclave like Covington or that of the racially bigoted Old South to be found in the hamlets nearby. By contrast the Adamses never lost faith in the unbroken customs of an austere gentility and like most Bostonians assumed the superiority of their city and region, even when they lived far away.³⁷

Will Percy found that while he could celebrate the past and its connections with dim and noble times lost in the mists of history, it was also emotionally draining. He idolized his father and made him the centerpiece of *Lanterns on the Levee*. The subtitle is *The Recollections of a Planter's Son*. «It was hard having such a dazzling father», Will Percy said of the Senator, «no wonder I longed to be a hermit.... He was the fairest thinker and the wisest, he could laugh like the Elizabethans, he could brood and pity till sweat covered his brow and you could feel him bleed inside.» In a similar vein, «he stood alone», Henry Adams wrote of his father, Charles Francis Adams. «He had no master — hardly even his father.» For Henry Adams, as for Will Percy, the father exhibited «perfect poise» and «intuitive self-adjustment», bravery, honesty. Each was above the ordinary foibles of mankind.³⁸

Both sons, who despaired of ever matching their parents' accomplishments, focussed their frustration on the political realm and wrote their own jeremiads. The common and central message of *The Education of Henry Adams* and *Lanterns on the Levee* was the moral decline of their respective regions, and by extension, of America as a whole.³⁹ Each work, however, conveyed this message in the idiom of its own sectional culture.

The concept of the southern hero had a social function in a biracial society where order was thought to depend more upon men in full command than upon institutions and law. The moral center of southern culture thus lay in the heroic figures of the southern martial romance. For this reason, William Gilmore Simms and even such post-Civil War writers as John Esten Cooke, Thomas Nelson Page, and Thomas Dixon of the cavalier school were not creating artificial melodramas for their own sake. Through fiction, they prescribed a way to judge the world. There was a close connection between southern fiction and the way people actually thought and perceived themselves and their ethical and social aspirations. Walker Percy developed a much more critical approach to the traditional heroic model than his cousin Will was capable of, but he could not entirely escape the combined influence of regional standards and personal longings for a father's praise and acceptance. In *Lancelot*, Percy's most difficult and impressively Dostoevskian novel, the honor-bound hero of the old romantic style becomes a Faustian antihero. Nevertheless, the work conveys the southern traditional scheme of things as an authorial criticism of a soulless modern order. Percy used the half-crazed Father Smith in *The Thanatos Syndrome*, his last novel, to the same purpose. The messenger may be flawed, Walker Percy implies, but the message of American waywardness that he wishes the reader to receive is projected through the lens of a stern moral order — obsolete though that code of honor might have become.⁴⁰

³⁶ William Armstrong Percy to Mrs. William Butler Duncan, 18 December 1904 (quotation), Longcope-Johansen Collection; Percy to William L. Percy, 25 April 1907, Percy Family MSS, MDAH; Birmingham News, 9 February 1917 (quotation); Jonathan Daniels, *A Southerner Discovers the South*, New York: MacMillan Company, 1938, 175.

³⁷ Samuels, *Henry Adams*, 274-75.

³⁸ See Richard L. King, «Mourning and Melancholia: Will Percy and the Southern Tradition», *Virginia Quarterly Review*, 53, Spring, 1977: 260; Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee*, 57 (quotation); William Merrill Decker, *The Literary Vocation of Henry Adams* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990, 26 (quotation).

³⁹ King, «Mourning and Melancholia: Will Percy and the Southern Tradition», 256.

Although Walker Percy was eager to assert themes attuned to the general conditions of Western man, the novelist, like his guardian Will Percy, was very much involved in the traditions of the Old South, particularly the allegiance to classical Stoicism that Will Percy had taught him to respect if not follow. In his essays and interviews, and in his novels, *The Moviegoer*, *The Last Gentleman* and *Lancelot*, Walker Percy stressed the South's long adherence to the models of proper conduct that the Stoics provided. «The Southern gentleman», he wrote in *Commonweal*, «did live in a Christian edifice, but he lived there in the strange fashion» of one «who will neither go inside nor put it entirely behind him but stands forever grumbling on the porch... How like him to go into Chancellorsville or the Argonne with Epictetus in his pocket; how unlike him to have had the Psalms.»⁴¹

Actually, from a historical perspective Walker Percy underestimated the strong Protestant strain which was fast eroding eighteenth-century classicism, a pessimism about the future that mirrored the melancholy felt within the life of the family itself. The Stoic ethic was being kept alive through the love-hate relationship of the modern southern artist — Faulkner, Allen Tate, Caroline Gordon, and others. And on a personal level, it was still a vital part of Walker Percy's ongoing dialogue with his guardian. As Jan Gretlund, the literary critic, has noted, «From the start, the novelist defined his fiction in relation to his uncle's [sic, Will Percy's] ideas, as if he were having a crucial argument with him and he is still arguing with him.»⁴² Like Will Percy, Walker could not escape the influence of a father figure, nor could he shake off the family heritage of despair.

A yearning for liberation came to the latterday Percys and others of the Faulkner generation after the old order collapsed amid the savagery of the First World War. Just as depression sometimes led to suicide in this highly gifted family, ambition sometimes killed the spirit and even the body when pursued without respite and perhaps without prudence. The «consuming unsleeping appeaseless thirst for glory» of which William Faulkner wrote and, indeed, personally experienced as an artist, was itself a means to gain immortality on earth and conquer the feelings of nothingness that were the consequence of a mordant self-accusatory stance. For centuries in human history, life offered little else but extremities of wealth, vitality, and power on the one hand and penury, helplessness, and marginality on the other. There was seldom much sense of a comfortable middle ground.

Even before Walker Percy gave voice to the emptiness of value and meaning in the modern world, his Percy forbears and numerous others in the upper ranks of southern life had reasons for gloom and even fury. Because so many experienced the multiple burdens of losing the Civil War, loved ones, and wealth, the South's devotion to the Lost Cause Legend actually was part of a collective mourning process. The monuments erected in bronze or stone, the Confederate Veterans Day rallies, the poems to banners furled and tattered, the recitation of battle stories that postwar politicians uttered to stir constituents — all were rituals that helped the South deal with the problem of demoralization. How else could one continue to believe in the same God who apparently had forsaken the cause and region? But the southerners' mourning lacked its natural outcome — that is, the moment when finally grief and anger are purged so that survivors may go on with their lives. Out of

⁴⁰ See Michael Kreyling, *Figures of the Hero in Southern Narrative*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987; Percy, *Lancelot* and *The Thanatos Syndrome*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1987; William Rodney Allen, «Father Smith's Confession in *The Thanatos Syndrome*», in *Walker Percy: Novelist and Philosopher* (Jan Nordby Gretlund & Karl Heinz Westarp, Eds.), pp: 195-96, Jackson, Miss.: University of Mississippi Press, 1991, 195-96.

⁴¹ Walker Percy, «Stoicism in the South», *Commonweal*, 64, July, 6, 1956: 343.

⁴² See Jan Gretlund, «On the Porch with Marcus Aurelius: Walker Percy's Stoicism», in *Walker Percy* (Gretlund & Westarp, Eds.), pp: 74-83; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, «God and Honor in the Old South», *Southern Review*, 25, April, 1989: 283.

such unstable materials sprang the South's need for legends of brooding knights, cavaliers, gentlemen, bloody action, and honorable, defeated aspirations.

These were not factors that the Adamses had to face. They were on the winning side, their wealth undisturbed, their homes unravaged. Moreover, they could live tranquil lives, without the slightest reason to expect a challenge from another member of their social class. At Harvard, New Englanders, wrote Adams, could slip noiselessly to the floor in their inebriation, but the Virginians, observed Adams, «became quarrelsome and dangerous. When a Virginian had brooded a few days over an imaginary grief and substantial whiskey, none of his northern friends could be sure that he might not be waiting, round the corner, with a knife or pistol.»⁴³

The Percy clan of the Deep South shared and invoked a regional tradition of violence and heroism in which despair and ambition, denial and self-evocation came together with sometimes tragic results. Depression stimulates counter-measures, especially at moments of crisis. Will Percy expressed these feelings when describing his participation as a decorated hero in the First World War. Fighting in the trenches of France, Percy wrote in *Lanterns on the Levee*, «had meaning, and daily life hasn't: it was part of a common endeavor, and daily life is lonely and isolated.»⁴⁴ In the case of the Percys, depression goaded them to make an imprint upon history, to defend community interests as personally conceived, to gain power over men and money, not in the genteel manner of the Adamses in the North but in the frontier mode of the truculent South.

For Will Percy, World War I provided an opportunity to reach the heights of military bravery that his ancestors allegedly had attained but his father never had experienced. Nevertheless, for the worshipping son to see his father come home after bird-hunting, looking «so heroic and gay, smelling warmish of feathers and corduroy and dogs» was a grander sight to him than his own homecoming in 1919, wearing a Croix de Guerre with a gold and silver star on his chest. The senator and Camille were filled «with pride and thanksgiving», but for the returning veteran their pleasure «was embarrassing». Will declared, «I have never before or since felt so incapable of emotion, so dead inside.» Other battle-scarred soldiers mourned with him: «It's over, the only great thing you were ever part of. It's over, the only heroic thing we all did together. What can you do now? Nothing, nothing.»⁴⁵ To survive when so many had fallen was itself a source of anguish, but the memory of the comradeship would endure.

Walker Percy once reported sarcastically to the critic Wilfred Sheed, «You know, a Southerner never saw a war he didn't like!», including the vicious one in Vietnam.⁴⁶ It was a matter of permanent regret for Walker Percy that as a resident at Bellevue Hospital in New York he had contracted tuberculosis in 1942 and was possibly destined to die in a safe and antiseptic sanatorium rather than in a foxhole. His two brothers served with distinction, returning with decorations as marks of their valor. With respect to the glories of warfare, the southerner was more attuned than other Americans to the rest of the world. The founding New Englanders had not come from the bleak, conservative Borderlands but from the East of England, and John Adams and his descendants reflected the stolid values of that district. None of the Adamses of the nineteenth century served in uniform. In fact, Henry Adams's wartime depression stemmed in part from a sense of guilt that he served as his father's secretary at the American ministry in London and not in the army.

No wartime service was possible for Walker, LeRoy, and William Armstrong Percy,

⁴³ Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 58.

⁴⁴ Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee*, 223.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, 58, 223.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Jay Tolson, *Pilgrim in the Ruins: A Life of Walker Percy*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992, 339.

but all three brothers, sons of the Gray Eagle, made political struggle a battle-like affair. During LeRoy's tumultuous campaign to defend his senatorial seat against Vardaman in 1911, they, as well as LeRoy's son Will, carried concealed firearms, which they were more than prepared to use if need arose. In fact, as an aid to his brother's faltering campaign, the novelist Walker Percy's grandfather plotted at a hotel restaurant in Lauderdale Springs, Mississippi, with young Will Percy and his own teenage son LeRoy Pratt, to tempt the Vardamanite campaign leader, Theodore Bilbo, into reaching for a gun as an excuse to gun him down. Bilbo, however, refused to respond when called a slimy son of a bitch and other epithets. He continued eating his breakfast cereal as if spooning it down required his undistracted attention. On December 7, 1941, remembering his World War I experiences, Will Percy rejoiced that the United States would have to war against Japan and Germany and envied his adopted sons' chance to fight. In Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer*, Aunt Emily Cutrer repeats a constant refrain on Will Percy's lips: «In this world goodness is destined to be defeated. But a man must go down fighting. That is the victory. To do anything less is to be less than a man.»⁴⁷

Because Walker Percy's father, attorney LeRoy Pratt Percy, had taken up the dangerous new experiment of flying, he was ordered to serve as an instructor at American bases, and, much to his frustration, he never reached the front in World War I. Reportedly, in the 1920s, LeRoy Percy and another Birmingham attorney, Will Denson, each of them a crack shot, prepared to fight it out over a courtroom dispute before they both realized that neither one of them would survive a shoot-out. With mutual agreement and a shake of hands, they canceled their private duel.⁴⁸ The era of Percy violence came to close when LeRoy Pratt Percy shot himself in the attic of his house in Birmingham. All the violence thereafter would appear only in fictional form through the pen of Walker Percy.

Violence may have occupied one end of the Percys' axis, but a quest for spiritual assurance resided at the other, a pursuit that also engaged the Adamses. Given the mordant temperament of the two clans, a search for an anchor of faith to weather the storms within and outside their minds would seem natural. In this respect, regional culture affected both families. The Percy founder (whom Will Percy liked to call Don Carlos) had been Roman Catholic. Perhaps it was only a matter of convenience during the Spanish occupation, for Charles Percy boasted of his standing with Governor Gayoso De Lemos of Natchez. Yet, a number of Don Carlos's descendants with a literary cast of mind converted to Catholicism or married Catholic partners. Camille Bourges Percy, Will Percy's mother, who came from French parentage, reared him in her faith. In fact, until he went to Sewanee for college, he was so devout that it worried his parents who feared he might embrace celibacy and join the priesthood. At the University of the South, an Episcopal school, Will lost his faith completely. For the last time he returned from mass in Winchester, some twelve miles away, «mournful and unregretful, knowing thenceforth I should breathe a starker and a colder air, with no place to go when I was tired.»⁴⁹ After Will Percy's death but while his memory was still very much alive, Walker, however, picked up the discarded religious standard and carried it to the end of his life.

The loss of Christian belief, however, scarcely meant a lessening of Will Percy's passion for moral certainty. He fastened his hopes upon the austere code of honor that the Emperor Marcus Aurelius had adumbrated in his Stoic «meditations». His father LeRoy had adopted that credo as solace for his own defeats. «I guess a man's job is to make the world a

⁴⁷ See Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee*, 149-59; Walker Percy, *The Moviegoer*, 1961, reprint edition, New York: Noonday Press, 1963, 26, 54.

⁴⁸ Tolson, *Pilgrim in the Ruins*, 34-35, and LeRoy Pratt Percy to LeRoy Percy, February 17, 18 May 1923, Percy Family MSS, MDAH.

⁴⁹ Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee*, 78-79, 88, 95 (quotation).

better place to live in, so far as he is able — always remembering the result will be infinitesimal — and to attend to his own soul.»⁵⁰ That was the Stoic message which the senator conveyed to his son, and Will Percy then passed along as the ultimate voice of wisdom to his ward, Walker Percy.

Like Henry Adams, who was also an agnostic, but out of the Protestant rather than Catholic tradition, Will Percy was nevertheless fascinated with religious issues. Like Adams, he, along with so many of the Victorian era, was intrigued with the medieval Age of Faith, having themselves timorously entered the Age of Doubt, Rationalism, and Darwinian Science. Will Percy's poems celebrated holy men, notably St. Francis, but also Mary Magdalene, and Mary, mother of God.⁵¹ The most impressive and simplest of his verses, written in 1924, was called «His Peace». In it, Percy had dwelt upon a consequence of divine grace that Walker Percy would many years later make a theme in his novels: the solitariness and affliction that the Christian pilgrim experiences even when equipped with the favor of grace. In «His Peace», the poet invokes the story of the ordinary «fisher-folk» whose lives had been reshaped by the peace of God, a benediction that also had destroyed them. The apostles had proclaimed the good news but in their martyrdom discovered, as all Christians would, that «The peace of God, it is no peace,/ But strife closed in the sod.» Yet, despite the attendant agony, the poet entreats his fellow believers to «pray for but one thing,/ The marvelous peace of God.»⁵²

When Walker Percy contemplated his religious yearnings in the 1940s and converted to Catholicism, he was fulfilling a mission — completing what Will Percy had failed to do, even on his deathbed — return to a faith that offered structure, ritual, and doctrine as antidote to the sin of anomie and self-dissolution, both grievous sins against the Holy Spirit. In Will's opinion there was no rest in life, no freedom from pain, only temporary moments of companionship and rapture. Such had been his own experience, and indeed, the experience of a family, always striving for perfection, for honor, for justice. That was what mattered — the heroic struggle in behalf of a noble cause. In Will's judgment, redemption ends in a bleak prospect, in the «sod», not in heaven.

These concepts would scarcely have been alien to the thoughts of Henry Adams, as Will Percy discovered. Janet Dana Longcope, a distant cousin from the Royal Navy Lieutenant Robert Percy side of the line, lived near Henry Adams in Washington and often sat by the side of his sickbed. In 1919, as a long and close friend, she advised the returning war veteran Will Percy, whose spirits were especially low at the time, to read Adams's *Mont-St. Michel and Chartres*, a copy of which she forwarded to him. Adams, «an old, old man», she remarked to her cousin, «could have written Ecclesiastes there was such a taste of ashes in his philosophy». Her choice was appropriate. Cousin Will found an affinity with the melancholy Yankee, with Adams's laments for the decline of aristocracy and the rise of modern vulgarity, tastelessness, and shallow materialism — all of which Percy would later echo with a southern accent in *Lanterns on the Levee*.⁵³

The two statues, a description of which opened this essay, not only reveal something of the character of the two families but also the regional cultures in which they were at home. The Saint-Gaudens statue has a peculiarly abstract though evocative character. It is neither Christian nor pagan, neither modern nor ancient. The statue's donor wisely observed

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, 75.

⁵¹ William Alexander Percy, *Collected Poems*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943, 213, 250.

⁵² *The Hymnal of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, New York: Church Pension Fund, 1940, No. 437; see also Percy, *Collected Poems*, 212; I am indebted to the Rev. Heather Cook of Bedford, New York, for the reference.

⁵³ Janet Longcope to Percy, 8 April 1919, Percy Family MSS, MDAH.

in *The Education of Henry Adams*, «The interest of the figure was not in its meaning, but in the response of the observer.» Adams noticed that clergymen visiting the cemetery were outraged and passionately denounced to their companions «the figure of despair, of atheism, of denial». With a certain perversity or bitterness Adams, however, said it represented «the Peace of God», a phrase that Will Percy would have appreciated.⁵⁴ In view of his own and his intellectual wife Clover's agnosticism, there may have been little difference between the one interpretation and the other. Yankee society had turned away from the God of their Puritan forefathers, but as an abstraction «Grief» exemplified the disembodied, Platonic, and coldly rational disposition of the Unitarian and Transcendental legacy. There is no hint of sexuality, no sign of tension between the glorious past of Adamses and their political impotence in the age of democracy. But its somber beauty is as moving as a Mahler symphony.

In contrast, «Patriot» signified the romantic, honor-obsessed, and patriarchal character of the South. Will Percy meant it to symbolize the martial values to which he had dedicated himself in World War I but also the meaning of his father's life. At the close of *Lanterns on the Levee*, he moves among the graves of his forbears and contemporaries in the Greenville cemetery. The memorialist imagines «the long wall of a rampart sombre with sunset, a dusty road at its base». Above the fortress he sees «the glorious high gods, Death and the rest», while below on the highway move the «tribes of men, tired, bent, hurt, and stumbling, each man alone». With Hoffman's bronze in mind, he then has the statue speak as «the High God», who challenges the traveler with the words, «'Who are you?' The pilgrim I know should be able to straighten his shoulders, to stand his tallest, and to answer defiantly, 'I am your son.'»⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 329; Henry Adams to R. W. Gilder, 14 October 1895, in *The Letters of Mrs. Henry Adams 1865-1883* (Ward Thoron, Ed.), p: 458, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1936.

⁵⁵ Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee*, 348.

Ambition and Evasion in Styron's *Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Madness*

DONALD VANOUSE (*)

In his memoir of a suicidal depression which he experienced beginning in the summer of 1985, William Styron presents an informed but severely guarded narrative in which the sources of his illness and the nature of his healing remain contradictory. From the somewhat grandiose quotation from Milton's *Paradise Lost* which provides his title, through the numerous references to the literature of depression, Styron insists that he is sharing his awareness of an ancient and profoundly painful psychological experience.

The book begins in Paris in the summer of 1985 when Styron was awarded the Prix Mondial Cino del Duca. This professional success might have provided a time of celebration, but Styron experienced a deep anxiety and a collapse of his self-esteem. As Alvarez says of Cesare Pavese, who committed suicide a month after receiving the prestigious Strega Prize, «It is as though those... rewards belonged to some inner part of him from which he felt himself irredeemably alienated» (127). For Styron, the award festivities in Paris became a painful farce in which he insulted members of the prize committee and found himself crawling on the floor of a restaurant in search of the \$25,000 award check. He quickly returned to the U.S.A. where he continued to treat his affective disorder with antidepressant drugs and psychotherapy, but by December he had sunk to «a despair beyond despair» (63). He had begun to plot an escape from his pain through suicide.

The memoir points beyond the details of this suicidal depression, however. It indicates the Styron's reluctance to acknowledge significant issues in his psychological history, and even his unwillingness to explore the preoccupation with suicidal depression which is expressed in his fictional works.

Styron's narrative of his illness is buttressed by quotations from literary works, comments on the lives of artists afflicted with suicidal depression, and allusions to medical and psychiatric reference works. Like the hypochondriac narrator of *Sophie's Choice* who anxiously asserts his familiarity with the *Merck Manual of Diagnosis and Therapy* (41), for example, Styron implies technical equality with his doctors by citing the *Physicians' Desk Reference* (49) and *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association* (53).

In fact, Styron's escape from his suicidal depression appears to be independent of his doctors and their therapies. The attempts at treatment by Dr. Gold, his Yale-trained psychiatrist, are mocked and rebuked. The drugs Gold prescribes do not achieve the desired

(*) State University of New York, Department of English, Oswego, N.Y. 13126, USA.

results and his efforts at psychotherapy are dismissed as «platitudes» comparable to the words of the priest in *Madam Bovary* (56). In the hospital, Styron is enraged by Group Therapy which he finds to be abusive in its demands for self-exposure. He describes the group therapist as «an odiously smug young shrink with a spade shaped dark beard» and he adds a parenthetical mockery in German: (*der junge Freud?*) (73). Finally, Styron asserts that the hospital's Art Therapy is silly and pretentious: a form of «organized Infantilism» (74-5).

Interestingly enough, Freud's «Mourning and Melancholia» (1917) is never mentioned, even though Styron acknowledges an «incomplete mourning» (79-81) for his mother who died when he was thirteen years old. It seems likely that this omission of Freud's work is an expression of Styron's hostility toward psychoanalysis. In *Sophie's Choice*, for example, Stingo the narrator, describes meeting a group of Jewish students in the «cradle year of psychoanalysis in post-war America» (152). The students' conversation was filled with psychoanalytic jargon and sexually explicit banter. Stingo recalls his desperate, callow desire for a sexually-active woman, and his belief that he had found one in Leslie Lapidus, a Sara Lawrence student who was in psychoanalysis. She startled the middle class Southern boy by using idioms such as «fantastic fucking» (156). After a night of frenzied kisses and frustrated groping, however, Stingo concludes that he had been «cruelly swindled at Leslie's hands by the egregious Doktor Freud» (216). Stingo, the author's self-portrait in the novel is said to become ill as a result of this psychoanalysis-provoked «swindle». He experiences «a bout of the flu combined with a deep psychic despondency» (217).

At another point in the novel when Sophie encounters William Faulkner's rich, turbulent prose, she observes, «It's very plain that he was never psychoanalyzed» (157). According to these instances, psychoanalysis threatens to deny Stingo sexual and artistic fulfillment. Such anxieties may help to explain why Styron takes the term «incomplete mourning» from a social historian, Howard I. Kushner, rather than directly from Freud. In addition, however, Styron finds it significant that Kushner traces *both* the depressions and the political ambitions of Abraham Lincoln to his incomplete mourning after Nancy Hanks death. Styron, perhaps, aspires to see himself as such a «Lincoln of our literature.» He observes that his own «incomplete mourning» after the death of his mother may have contributed to his literary efforts to «vanquish death» through work «honored by posterity» (80-1). This statement about his efforts to «vanquish death» through his writing occurs late in the memoir. It suggests what Anthony Storrs calls the «quest for external sources of self-esteem» to «compensate for... inner emptiness» (8). It also suggests a narcissistic category of depression which Julia Kristeva identifies as distinct from that of classic psychoanalytic theory: «mourning not an Object Object but the Thing» (13). In her note, Kristeva observes that this «would involve inscriptions earlier than the fourth year of life» (263). Styron's memoir includes only one image of «infantile dread» (56) which seems to refer to approximately this period. He recollects, «me, age four and a half, tagging through a market after my long-suffering wife (emphasis added); not for an instant could I let out of my sight the endlessly patient soul who had become nanny, mommy, comforter, priestess and, most important, confidante... whose wisdom far exceeded that of Dr. Gold (57). Here the wife appears to take the place of the pre-object, the maternal Thing. Kristeva argues that, to such a narcissistic depressive, artistic beauty is an assertion of omnipotence:

In the place of death and so as not to die of the other's death, I bring forth — or at least I rate highly — an artifice, an ideal a «beyond» that my psyche produces in order to take up a position outside itself — *ek-stasis*. How beautiful to be able to replace all perishable psychic values» (99).

Styron himself states that his illness was «unipolar» rather than «manic-depressive», but there are indications that alcohol and music and even «lascivious daydreams» about the techniques of suicide (53) provide him with ecstasies which parallel this desire to vanquish

death through the omnipotence of art. Music, in particular, appears to provide Styron with such a defense against death. Brahms «Alto Rhapsody» enables him to escape from planning his suicide, for example, by providing an encounter with memories that he «could never abandon» (67). He is able to flee from his home to the protective security of the hospital. We later learn that he had a memory of hearing the «Alto Rhapsody» sung by his mother (81), so hearing it again was a symbolic verification of art's victory over death. The «Alto Rhapsody» is, of course, a sombre «wedding song» which Brahms composed for the marriage of Julie Schuman, a young woman for whom he had an unrequited love. The celebratory melancholy of the «Alto Rhapsody» provided an elegant artifice for acknowledging and protecting Styron from his «incomplete mourning» for his mother. Alcohol seems to have provided him with a similar euphoric defenses against his «demons» (40, 43). Furthermore, Styron's use of alcohol seems to indicate the nature of his hopes for psychopharmacology.

In fact, most of Styron's memoir is given over to discussions of the biochemistry of depression. He wants and expects medical science to provide a «swiftly acting agent» (55). At one point, he states with unqualified certainty that «the [depressive] madness results from an aberrant biochemical process» (47). In «Mourning and Melancholia», of course, Freud himself had asked «whether an impoverishment of ego-libido directly due to toxins may not be able to produce certain forms of the disease» (253). In *Black Sun* similarly, Kristeva refers to the «promising but still imprecise field in which one studies the exact effects of antidepressants [tricyclics, etc.] or thymic stabilizers [lithium carbonates]» (10). Styron flatly asserts that there are three biochemical causes of depression: «a depletion of the chemicals norepinephrine, and serotonin and the increase of a hormone, cortisol» (47). These, he states, are the biochemical causes of depression. He wants the pharmacopia of science to provide an antidote, the psychiatric equivalent of an antibiotic.

Nevertheless, a page later, other chemical issues in his depression are introduced. He observes, no doubt from his handbook, that the tranquillizer, Halcion, is one of the «benzodiazepine family» (including Ativan and Valium) which may «precipitate... a major depression» (49). Two years before his suicidal depression, Styron notes, he had been given a prescription for Ativan as, what he calls «a bedtime aid» (49). This rather childish and evasive terminology is not that of the medical reference volumes, and Styron fails to identify the nature of the insomnia which caused him to take the drug. Kristeva makes a gnomic reference to such medication as an analogue to suicide: «sleeping pills that I take in smaller or greater quantities in the dark hope of meeting... no one, unless it be my imaginary wholeness, increased with my death that accomplishes me» (29). It seems very possible that Styron's insomnia was an early symptom of the suicidal depression which is the topic of this book.

Styron's decision to make Ativan, then, is not explained. He does acknowledge, however, that «At the time of which I am speaking [the time of his suicidal depression] I was no longer taking Ativan but had become addicted to Halcion» (49). Styron does not specify the particular behavior of this addiction. All we know is that he had developed a dependency upon a powerful sleeping pill.

Twenty pages later, in a structural loop typical of the rendering of time in this memoir, Styron returns to a discussion of Halcion. After having ascribed his «cure» in the hospital to «seclusion and time» (69), he notes that a staff psychiatrist at the hospital had taken him off his 75 mg dose of Halcion («three times the standard dose») as soon as he arrived. The psychiatrist changed his prescription to Dalmane, which was, he states, «equally effective». Styron does not identify the Dalmane dosage or the results. Furthermore, the reader is somewhat confused. How *effective* can the new drug be? Halcion did not seem to ease his insomnia. In fact, he had, twenty pages earlier, defined his relationship to Halcion as an «addiction», and he had identified sleep-problems as a major element in his suicidal depression. Styron blandly observes, however, that «Soon after the switch [from Halcion], my suicidal notions dwindled then disappeared» (71). He concludes by observing that «suicidal

obsessions» are known side-effects of Halcion, and he notes that the drug «has been categorically banned in the Netherlands» (71). Was Styron's depression made suicidal by the Halcion addiction he developed in treating his insomnia? This question is not asked in the memoir. Styron's *Darkness Visible* was first presented at a symposium on affective disorders at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Perhaps he did not wish to disoblige his audience.

Styron notes with apparent surprise that three of his fictional characters committed suicide (78). He suggests that his renderings of these «heroines lurch[ing] down pathways toward doom» (79) show his unconscious awareness of the elements of suicidal depression. This is an interesting suggestion, but there is much more to be said about suicidal depression in *Lie Down in Darkness* and *Sophie's Choice*. Styron fails to acknowledge that these books are saturated in suicide. The whole of *Lie Down in Darkness*, for example, is an attempt to explain the corpse which is to arrive in Port Warwick on the train from New York. Furthermore, in a *New York Times Book Review* interview in 1982, Styron acknowledged that the Loftis family in *Lie Down in Darkness* is «a mirror of the family life I myself put up with» (Kakutani, 26). In the memoir *Darkness Visible*, he does not admit that his own «wicked stepmother» and alcoholic father provided the pattern for the dysfunctional family which impels his heroine toward her doom. In *The New York Times*, he was explicit: Peyton's «torment» was «a projection of my own sense of alienation». And he adds (somewhat prematurely). «The book was a form of self-psychoanalysis which freed me of any need to go to a shrink» (26). Again, we should note the anxious, abusive language for psychiatry.

Sophie's Choice is even more deeply saturated with references to suicide than *Lie Down in Darkness*. The novel seems to indicate a need to rebuild the aesthetic barriers achieved in the earlier novel by reiterating the story of the suicide of Peyton Loftis (here, called Maria Hunt) whom the narrator, Stingo, «had loved beyond hope» (262). The novel includes numerous instances of despair (such as Stingo's response to rejection by Leslie Lapidus) and even a list of Nazi leaders who committed suicide (390). The title character, Sophie, describes a blasphemous cutting of her wrists in a church (102); she also attempts to drown herself at Cony Island (443), and she describes an impulse to hurl herself and her children out the window of their apartment in Cracow (580). Finally, she gets off the train she has been taking to Virginia with Stingo, and she returns to a suicide pact with her Jewish lover, Nathan Landau. In an earlier, perhaps parallel passage, Sophie recalls that she once tried to protect herself from the Nazis by inventing a fictitious sister who committed suicide after being raped by a Jew (338). Late in the novel, Stingo himself asserts that he had «resolv[ed] to commit suicide» (620) if he could not get an erection in his attempt at love-making with Sophie.

Styron does not seem to notice that the suicidal «heroines» in these novels are objects of desire for his autobiographical narrators (See: Stingo's dreams of his mother and Maria, *Sophie's Choice* 52-4). In these terms, it appears quite pertinent that the heroine-objects have in some way rejected the narrator's desires before they «choose» their deaths. Furthermore, in the intensity of his focusing upon the suicides of Peyton Loftis and Sophie Zowistowska, these novels appear to express the «murderous impulse» toward the Object which Freud finds as the solution to the «riddle» of melancholia suicide: «No neurotic harbors thoughts of suicide which he has not turned back upon himself from murderous impulses against others» (252). The heroines appear to be representatives of the mother whose death has not been properly mourned because of conflicted emotions which cannot be acknowledged.

Styron's comments on his wife, Rose, to whom he dedicated *Darkness Visible* appear to be similarly conflicted. Earlier, I examined a passage in which he depicts Rose as nanny, goddess and counsellor. In other places he insists that she gave him sensitive and supportive care. Nevertheless, when he decides to enter the hospital, he explains that he needed a «transfer out of the all too familiar surroundings of home where all is anxiety and discord»

(69). No instances of such discord appear in the memoir. Only in two uses of a variation upon his wife's name, «rosy» (13, 74), do we seem to glimpse his disdain for her optimistic and cheerful qualities. Freud observes that the circuitous punishments of the melancholic include «taking revenge on the original object and... tormenting their loved one through their illness» (251).

Styron's memoir also proposes a possible genetic source of his suicidal depression. His father, Styron says, «battled the gorgon [depression] for much of his lifetime and [he] had been hospitalized in my boyhood after a despondent spiraling downward that I saw in retrospect greatly resembled mine» (79). One wonders if the resemblance he finds between these «descents into the maelstrom» included the issue of grief after the mother's death, but there is no discussion of mourning in this one brief paragraph concerning the father's depression. Furthermore, there is no indication of the father's possible alcoholism.

Styron's *Darkness Visible* verifies his return from an emotional abyss, but it also reveals what may be a professional strategy of evasion. This tangled narrative blurs the possible role of Halcion, evades the emotional conflicts of «incomplete mourning» for his mother, and suppresses issues which have appeared in *The New York Times* interview and in other writings. Anthony Storr observes that a writer can use his writing to «face unpleasant truths» and «re-experience the bitter pain of his bereavement» (8). It is clear that William Styron has used the writing of his memoir to express altruistic purposes like those in his writings on tobacco addiction (*Quiet Dust*, 55-9) and capital punishment (*Quiet Dust*, 109-54). It appears less certain that he has moved closer to acknowledging the emotional issues which appear to underlie his recurrent depression.

WORKS CITED

- Alvarez, A. (1971). *The Savage God: A Study of Suicide*. New York: Random House.
- Freud, S. (1917). Mourning and Melancholia. *Standard Edition*, XIV. London: Hogarth.
- Kakutani, M. (1982). William Styron on His Life and Work. *The New York Times Book Review*, Dec. 12, 3-26.
- Kristeva, J. (1989). *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (trans. Leon S. Rudiez). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Storr, A. (1992). Writers and Recurrent Depression. In *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference on Literature and Psychoanalysis* (F. Pereira, Ed.), pp: 3-14, Lisbon: Instituto Superior de Psicologia Aplicada.
- Styron, W. (1951). *Lie Down in Darkness*. New York: Bobbs-Merrell.
- Styron, W. (1979). *Sophie's Choice*. New York: Bantam Ed., 1980.
- Styron, W. (1982). *This Quiet Dust And Other Writings*. New York: Random House.
- Styron, W. (1990). *Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Madness*. New York: Random House.

The Good Person of Szechwan: Discourse of a Masquerade

ELIZABETH WRIGHT (*)

Brecht is known for his radical re-thinking of the theatre in the light of Marxist thought. He has succeeded in providing a methodology for a materialist critique by deliberately making ideology appear in the theatrical discourse.¹ Political society is to recognise itself as a production rather than as a mimetic representation, but the question is who controls the production. According to Marxism it is the capitalist machine, but according to feminism it is the patriarchal one that is responsible for oppressing at least half of society, namely women. Brecht's presentation of women has not won him much acclaim from feminists.² In his work the social positions of both men and women are seen as externally determined — often the exploiting male and the exploited female — while internalised ideals or anti-ideals of femininity and masculinity are reproduced without any distancing devices. There are, on the one hand, a variety of «good», politically correct, mother-figures (Grushe, «the Mother», Shen Te), and, on the other, a selection of a-social rebels (Baal, Azdak, Yang Sun) who, in order to maintain their place at the margins of society, conduct themselves aggressively in relation to women.

Brecht's «good person» (*der gute Mensch*) is masculine in German, *Mensch* being the generic term for humankind, but nevertheless it can and here does represent a woman. The woman, Shen Te, masquerades as a man at critical moments in the plot: unable to fulfill the Imaginary mandate of being «the good person» in the Symbolic, Shen Te produces a «male» half, Shui Ta, to perform the phallic function of exercising reason and control. «Imaginary», «Symbolic» and «Real» are Jacques Lacan's «orders» (replacing Freud's «agencies»), modes of positioning the individual in relation to language and the material.³ For Lacan, however, the term «individual», in popular parlance synonymous with «ego», is

(*) Girton College, Cambridge, CB3 0JG, England.

¹ See Terry Eagleton, «Brecht and Rhetoric», *New Literary History*, 16 (1984-85): 633-38.

² See Lara Lennox, «Women in Brecht's Work», *New German Critique*, 14 (1978): 83-96; see also Ann Hermann, «Travesty and Transgression: Transvestism in Shakespeare, Brecht, and Churchill», in *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, pp: 294-315, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990, pp. 302-8.

³ For definitions and explications of the three orders see the «Translator's Note» in Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, translated by Alan Sheridan (London: The Hogarth Press, 1977, pp. 279-280) and Malcolm Bowie, *Lacan* (London: Fontana/Collins, 1991, Chapter 4).

a precarious concept, since the ego is an Imaginary narcissistic, albeit necessary construction. The crucial feature of the Lacanian subject is that it is alienated by virtue of its very entrance into language, a system which both joins and divides. As soon as the subject is caught in the defining network of the signifier it is divided between fixed identifications and actual being. Access into the Symbolic inevitably produces a split in the subject between the *moi*, the misrecognising consciousness, and the *Je*, which only symptomatically appears in the gaps of consciousness. For Lacan alienation is a structural condition of subjectivity *per se*. The splitting of subjectivity produces the sexual division and bestows symbolic gender.

In a celebrated article Joan Riviere sets out that womanliness is a cover-up to conform with social constructions of femininity, a masquerade, whereby the woman as a category does not exist except by miming and parodying that which is expected of her.⁴ Joan Riviere's patient used womanliness as a mask to hide the possession of masculinity. In Freud-Lacanian theory both sexes repudiate femininity, both have a masculine relation to the mother, seeking to be the phallus that she wants/lacks. Womanliness is a «feint» or «cover-up»: «there is no absolute femininity beneath the veil, only a set of ontologically tenuous codes that normatively induct the feminine subject into the social practice of «being» woman through mimesis and parroting».⁵ As a woman, then, Shen Te is already implicated in a masquerade: she is the «good woman» wanting to live up to being «an Angel to the slums»⁶ (p. 106), thereby placating her suitors and the father-gods, who respectively derive economic and moral advantage therefrom. The appearance of her male half, Shui Ta, is a defence against the failure of this masquerade, thus reversing the strategy of Riviere's patient, whose «feminine» impersonation (coquetry) came to the rescue of her «masculine» one (success and achievement).

Shen Te is the split into the good exploited female and bad exploiting male. In her first masquerade, as Shen Te, she is attractive for her very helplessness and innocence, while as Shui Ta, her second masquerade, she is attractive for her power. Divided by her masquerades, she occupies the hysterical position in that she performs (both in the sense of functioning in and acting out) the historically specified form of symbolic identification. On the whole Brecht's female characters are shown as admirable to the extent to which they develop their «womanliness» into a form of political strength — there is a long list of motherly figures, apart from «the Mother», which includes Katrin, Grushe, Frau Sarti (in *Galileo*). But Shen Te starts her masquerade with a handicap: as a prostitute she masquerades as a fantasy object. Although for Brecht her profession «demonstrates» economic necessity («Let me admit: I sell myself in order to live», p. 10), for the gods, to whom she makes this admission and who cautiously pay her for their overnight lodging, she is a lure and forbidden source of (obscene) enjoyment: «But please let nobody know that we paid. It might be misinterpreted» (p. 11).

These considerations are necessary in dealing with Brecht's presentation of a person, who would be (essentially) good, were it not for the prevailing economic conditions: «I should certainly like to be, but how am I to pay my rent?» (p. 10). Her doubts rest on

⁴ See Joan Riviere, «Womanliness as Masquerade», in *Formations of Fantasy* (Victor Burgin, James Donald & Cora Kaplan, Eds.), pp: 35-44, London and New York: Methuen, 1986; first published in *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 10 (1929). For the relation between Riviere's notion of «masquerade» and Lacan's theory of sexual difference see Stephen Heath, «Joan Riviere and the Masquerade», in Burgin et al. above, and Ellie Ragland-Sullivan, «The Sexual Masquerade: A Lacanian Theory of Sexual Difference», in *Lacan and the Subject of Language* (Ellie Ragland-Sullivan & Mark Bracher, Eds.), pp: 49-80, New York and London: Routledge, 1991.

⁵ Emily Apter, «Masquerade», in *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary* (Elizabeth Wright, Ed.), p. 243, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992.

⁶ *The Good person of Szechwan*, trans. John Willett, *Collected Plays* (John Willett & Ralph Mannheim, Eds.) p. 106, London: Methuen, 1985; original work *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan*, Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1948. All quotations are from the translation and are referred to by page number only.

the fact that she is a prostitute, albeit with the traditional topos of having a heart of gold. For Brecht her ego is thus not alienated by its very constitution, since a self is presumed outside or before an alienation is produced because «something is wrong with this world of yours»: «To be good while yet surviving/Split me like lightning into two people» (p. 105). The question posed by the play is, however, not what is good or what is bad, but of whether it is possible to be good in the world as it is at present. To this end the playwright stages an «experiment» which probes the prevailing state of the world and investigates the complaints of its inhabitants that it is impossible to be «good». In this essay I would like to conduct my own experiment: to what extent is Brecht too speaking from an Imaginary position in the Symbolic Order while being spoken by it, believing that he is launching his attack from a stable position, while himself not being immune to the Symbolic's alienating effects?

The plot of the play runs as follows:⁷ Three gods arrive in the capital of Szechwan, a province in China, looking for lodging, having descended from the clouds in legendary fashion. They have heard rumours that it is impossible to be good in the world as it is and have therefore come to see whether there are any good people left; if this is the case, the world can stay as it is. The waterseller Wang, anxious to propitiate them, engages on a thankless search for a willing host. In triumph and relief he produces Shen Te, the local prostitute, who is willing to accommodate them, though she has to forgo a client and will lose the means to pay her rent. On leaving her lodgings the gods, after some misgivings regarding their status, bestow a generous sum of money on her. As a good person Shen Te opens a tobacconist's shop with the money thus acquired, doling out free bowls of rice and cigarettes to all who appear. By the end of the day her business is already near ruin: a homeless family of eight is using her premises as a free lodging house, while at the same time cynically suggesting that she invent a tough cousin as the true owner of the shop. Shui Ta, the cousin, duly turns up next morning and, with the help of the local police, briefly gives the family their marching orders. Shen Te/Shui Ta now function as split off from each other: whenever Shen Te runs into financial trouble through a generous impulse, Shui Ta turns up with a tough solution. This is particularly the case when Shen Te falls in love with the unemployed pilot Yang Sun: she borrows money to help him to a job as a pilot in Peking, only to find that, when there is not enough money for two, he plans to leave her behind. The agreed marriage ceremony does not take place, but he retains a portion of the money and goes off. Meanwhile Shen Te, hopelessly in debt and now with child, is determined to survive, even though this means accepting a cheque from Shun Fu, the barber, as rich as he is infatuated. To everyone's surprise and alarm, Shen Te disappears and Shui Ta returns and starts a business. Soon the owner of a thriving tobacco factory, he employs the now penniless Yang Sun, who rapidly works himself up by a series of ruthless ploys. He becomes increasingly puzzled by Shen Te's absence. It is through his accusations that Shui Ta is brought to trial, charged with the murder of the missing Shen Te. During the trial, Shen Te is praised for her goodness and Shui Ta arraigned for his misdeeds. When Shen Te/Shui Ta sees that the judges are the three gods she takes off her mask and accounts for the necessity of her masquerade and split. Her appeal to the gods for help is in vain: barely conceding the occasional use of the masquerade, the triad ascends with «three cheers, and one cheer more/ For the good person of Szechwan» (p. 108). In the epilogue an actor transfers Shen Te's appeal for help to the audience: something has to change, but who or what should it be?

The experiment begins with the gods searching for a good person. The usual attempt

⁷ For Brecht the plot is exceeded by what he calls the *Fabel*, a term not easily translated, since it designates not only what is narrated but how; see Elizabeth Wright, *Postmodern Brecht: A Re-Presentation*, London: Routledge, 1989, p. 28.

to establish an ethical system is thus reversed: instead of a subject in search of an ego-ideal (a father, a god, the rational, the good), the gods are looking for ideal ego — a self-confirming mirror-image — in order to justify their existence. Far from representing the Law, the gods show themselves to be dependent on Imaginary ideals. The institution of the Law, the police, is in fact corrupt and morally bankrupt, unlike the ineffectual gods who are at least conscious of their roles as ego-ideal, in that they are anxious not to claim their rights of enjoyment as paid-up lodgers of the prostitute. The police by contrast accept the cigars offered by Shui Ta as a bribe; enjoyment is here shown as attendant upon power. The transaction is the same as the boy taking the cakes, since the cigars are not paid for, but the boy is hauled off as a thief. Because Shui Ta and the police control the sources of enjoyment, the same economic rule can be broken, rendering the Law duplicitous and obscene.

Brecht is clear in his exposure of the bourgeois capitalist order and its gods who go along with it.⁸ As a prostitute Shen Te is on the lowest rung of the ladder in that she herself is the commodity. With the financial backing from the gods she attains petit-bourgeois status as a shop-owner, a rung above the workers, while the previous shop-owners, alienated from their own class, sink to the *Lumpenproletariat*, the refuse of all classes. Through Shen Te, Brecht demonstrates that a successful business in the capitalist world depends on taking rather than giving. To balance the giving of the «good» person, a «bad» person is needed to take it back, just as in *Puntilla* the «drunk» generous side of the landowner is a trade-off for the «sober» mean side.

What is missing from this analysis is an examination of the material conditions of gender behaviour outside its relation to class. The prostitute Shen Te is forced to sell her body for money: an early version of the play was called *Die Ware Liebe*, «commodity love», to resonate with the notion of «Die Wahre Liebe», «true love».⁹ To get the newly impoverished Shen Te, out of this double-bind, the police officer advises Shui Ta to find a rich suitor, the barber Shu Fu — in other words, to sanctify the sale of herself by entering into a marriage contract with a single willing buyer: «you can't earn your living by love, or it becomes immoral earnings... respectability means, not with the man who can play, but with the man one loves... all you need to do is to find a husband for her» (p. 30). So far, so good. Brecht has made the same point in *The Threepenny Opera*: bourgeois marriage is a form of legalised prostitution. What is omitted from this critique is the relation of class oppression to sexual repression. Albeit by dint of omission, the play also «demonstrates» that the advantages accruing to men from the subordination of women are not merely confined to class: neither «cousin» Shui Ta (were he a «full» presence), nor lover Yang Sun, nor protector Shu Fu, not to speak of the gods, are likely to offer any support for Shen Te's child. Producing children is a form of unpaid production for which Brecht has supplied no estrangement effect, unless it be supplied by the audience's response in the theatre to 1) Shen Te's anticipatory maternal enjoyment and 2) her Imaginary staging of the male hero's arrival:

The world awaits him in secret. In the cities they have heard the rumour:
someone is coming now with whom we must reckon. *She presents her small
son to the audience:*

An airman! Salute a new conqueror
Of unknown mountains, inaccessible countries! One
Carrying letters from man to man

⁸ For what immediately follows I am indebted to Jan Knopf, *Brecht-Handbuch. Theater. Eine Ästhetik der Widersprüche* (Stuttgart: Meltzer, 1980, p. 204-08). For a useful source-book of commentaries, documents and reviews of the play see *Brechts «Guter Mensch von Sezuan»* (Jan Knopf, Ed.), Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1982.

⁹ Knopf, 1980, p. 201.

Across the wastes where no man yet has trod!
*She begins to walk up and down, leading her small son by the hand. Come
my son, inspect your world.*

For Brecht Shen Te's great moment is not as the odd couple — soft philanthropist/hard entrepreneur — rent apart, but as «The Mother» of future combatants, the proletarian woman who can produce the vanguard of the revolution and whose motherhood will extend to protecting him like «a tiger, a savage beast» (p. 77). Her male child is to be the romantic traveller and Imaginary coloniser of the earth's waste places, the possible Utopian inheritor of a future undivided existence, carrying the insignia of the Symbolic — the Letter destined to arrive, unsubvertible communication from «man to man». Here the text displays a set of values and interests in common with traditional bourgeois modes of thought, in particular a general representation of humanity that is blatantly masculine. To historicise Shen Te's discourse of the maternal will surely be a challenge for a future producer of this piece, a politico-theatrical response to «what sort of measures you would recommend» (p. 109).

It is hardly surprising, then, that feminists feel that Marxism regards itself as a form of Master-knowledge, one that «takes the position of the subject, the knower, and its radical «partner», such as feminism, is assigned the role of subject of knowledge». ¹⁰ Being locked in «dichotomous thinking», Marxism tends to prioritise the first term on the basis of the logical paradigm A/not-A, where A affirms and not-A negates. ¹¹ With the Shen Te/Shui Ta dichotomy Brecht has merely reversed this in making Shen Te represent the affirmative — «she can't refuse» (p. 7), or «say no» (p. 14) (the negative pole of power), whereas Shui Ta specialises in the negative (the positive role). This opposition is soon sublated into a new greater dichotomy of active male professional conquerer-son and passive female proletarian mother, «demonstrating» the assumption that while the division of classes is a fact of history, the division of sexes is a fact of nature: women just *are* mothers, while men are (high) flyers.

Shen Te is placed in a subordinate position by a number of different systems and not just by a single mechanism — that of a woman with property within capitalism and its market economy. Her oppression is economic as a prostitute, psychic as a romantic beloved, social as a pregnant mother. There is here an ensemble of social practices that mutually reinforce one another. Moreover, the various reactions to her in each of these positions ally with each other to disempower her in specifically concrete ways. Where in her «masculine» masquerade Shen Te is immediately accepted as a shop/factory owner, in her «feminine» masquerade she is repeatedly called to account. Shui Ta as a man inspires confidence without further credentials for being «sharp as a knife» (p. 16) and for his «decisive action» (p. 29), while Shen Te as «Angel of the slums» is used and exploited both by her fellow citizens and her lover. The gods, the Other, desire her to «freely follow the impulses of her gentle heart» (p. 22) and Shen Te's desire accords with this, declaring that «to love, honour and cherish a husband would be very pleasant» (p. 10). As rejected lover she weeps, but as mother she vows to be «a tiger, a savage beast/To all others if need be. And It need be» (p. 77), which means further «masculine masquerade». It is not that Brecht is unaware of the sexist behaviour of Shen Te's lover (YANG SUN: «You want to appeal to her reason! She hasn't any reason!», (p. 53), but that he sees this sexist behaviour primarily as economically determined, rather than discursively constructed, an effect of capitalist rather than gender oppression.

In developing the concept of hegemony beyond that of rule or master-principle. Antonio Gramsci defined it as a complex contingent interrelationship of various groups and institutions

¹⁰ Mia Campioni and Elizabeth Gross, «Love's labour's lost: Marxism and Feminism», in *A Reader in Feminist Knowledge* (Sneja Gunew, Ed.), pp: 336-397, London and New York: Routledge, p. 371.

¹¹ *Idem*, pp: 372-73.

within civil society, an ensemble of social practices in collusion, mutually reinforcing one another by making compromise alliances with a range of social forces in order to form a bloc. This bloc, in institutions, cultural relations, and ideas, establishes a basis of consent for the existing order, a fabric difficult to tear, since its parts are mutually supportive in practical and ideological ways. At its simplest it is the strategic organisation of consent, *either* for the status quo *or* for progressive change.¹² Where Brecht mainly sees a single mechanism oppressing the worker, Gramsci's model of society can take account of the interrelationship between a number of systems, such as gender and class. The post-Marxist Ernesto Laclau reads Gramsci's Marxism as a break with the dichotomous thinking eighteenth-century rationalism: «Hegemony exists when that which would have been a rational succession of stages is interrupted by a contingency that cannot be subsumed under the logical categories of Marxist theory».¹³ This *contingency* shows itself both in inescapable antagonisms that cannot be foreseen and in the resistance of the social to a transparent analysis,¹⁴ effects that Brecht's texts are not immune to. In the present case, there is the example of the gratuitous assault by the wealthy barber Shu Fu on the poor water-seller Wang, laming his hand with the curling tongs (p. 41) — a moment of pure antagonism, an excess — which Brecht turns into a crude economic dilemma (the more serious the injury, the greater the chance of compensation for the water-seller — in thus trying to collude with the system Wang becomes a card-carrying member of the *Lumpenproletariat*).

According to Laclau, the true nature of the hegemonic relationship cannot be conceived consciously: the task and the agent move together but without a fully rational understanding presiding over them. Negativity and opaqueness are parts of the social that cannot be overcome by a final *Aufhebung*, a dialectical resolution, into a supposed positivity and transparency, and this, Laclau considers, is comparable with the Lacanian notion of a constitutive *lack*.¹⁵ One cannot accede to an identity without a division being imposed, making two: for Lacan, Real (material) lack, the unsymbolisable remains of the living body and its experiences, is the inevitable consequence of the loss of the primal object — the mother — and an inescapable part of the constitution of the subject. Both the Imaginary (from the viewpoint of the subject) and the Symbolic (from the viewpoint of society) operate as if there were no lack, the Imaginary by a fantasy of plenitude (e.g. Shen Te's romantic love and maternal joy), the Symbolic by appearing to promise fulfilment (the gods as perceived by Wang and Shen Te). But at least two songs in the play admit the bankruptcy in the Symbolic: in «The Song of the Smoke», lack (*Mangel*, translated as «hunger») features as lack of hope (pp. 19-20), while «The Song of Green Cheese» («Das Lied vom Sankt Nimmerleinstag» — «Never-Never-Day») declares through five stanzas that only «when the moon is green cheese» will the earth become a paradise (pp. 68-69). In these songs the lack in the Other is of course figured as an anti-myth, as a challenge to bourgeois inertia and complacency. The message comes across loud and clear in the case of the water-seller Wang, trying to sell water in the rain:

I sell water. Who would taste it?
— Who would want it in this weather?
All my labour has been wasted (p. 90)

Wang is at the mercy of nature, because the division of labour within the capitalist

¹² See «Hegemony», in *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* (Tom Bottomore, Ed.), pp: 201-203, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985; see also Ernest Laclau, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, London and New York: Verso, 1985, Chapter 5, pp. 93-148, pp. 134-145.

¹³ Ernesto Laclau, «Psychoanalysis and Marxism», in *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, pp: 93-96, London and New York: Verso, 1990, p. 95.

¹⁴ See Slavoj Žižek, «Beyond Discourse-Analysis», Appendix in Laclau, 1990 (see preceding note).

¹⁵ Laclau, 1990, p. 5.

system has specified a role that can become futile at a moment's notice, a kind of built-in redundancy. These specifically economic contradictions leave the more radical elements of social antagonism unacknowledged, but the barber's unprovoked attack could be taken as an unconscious recognition that the Symbolic itself is structured around lack, where the water-seller is the symptom of lack in both the subject (his own poverty) and the Other (the Symbolic's empty (dry) space). Brecht, however, prefers to perceive lack as principally in the capitalist system, rather than in the Real of the subject, that portion of being that falls outside the Imaginary and Symbolic, «the traumatic kernel the symbolization of which always fails».¹⁶ Shen Te cannot find a signifier which is her own, she cannot say it «all» (p. 108), she cannot represent herself in the Symbolic as either «good» or «bad», her sobbing a testimony to the failure of either Shen Te or Shui Ta to fill the lack with words (p. 92).

But the Other cannot fully symbolise itself either. The gods themselves «know» this:

«No matter: one pays one's debts. One cannot afford even the appearance of irregularity. The letter of the law has first to be fulfilled; then its spirit.»
(p. 39)

Hence their looking for an ideal ego to refurbish their tarnished dream of plenitude.¹⁷ They decide «to settle on Shen Te» (p. 98), who «is strong, healthy and well-built, and can endure much» (p. 106), and who can reconfirm their own status as ego-ideal, as being in the place from which she wants to be observed, for as gods they can only function by virtue of those who perform their adoration of them.

But Shen Te breaks apart through trying to carry out the mandate of the gods: she can neither be the «good person» producing Imaginary plenitude, nor can she stop trying to fill out the void in the Symbolic, the lack in the Other. When her second masquerade fails, her hysterical position comes to the fore, for she resists the specified Symbolic identification of «good person»: «But do you not understand that I am not the wicked person whose many crimes you heard described?» (p. 106). She perceives that in order to survive she must sustain a dual masquerade, spoken by the Symbolic when called upon to help, speaking from the Imaginary when in love: «goodness to others/And to myself could not both be achieved./To serve both self and others I found too hard» (p. 105). Shen Te is a hysterical subject by the end of the play, asking — Why me? Why do I have this mandate? What does the Other want of me?

So what of Brecht's experiment? Brecht exposes elements which he sees as holding a system in place, showing up their ideological function at a given moment in history. The gods, for instance, are presumed into experience by the disempowered, such as Wang and Shen Te, while the barber Shu Fu and the airman Yang Sun attempt to beat the system on its own terms. Brecht's project in «historicising» the events is to show how the actions of the individuals derive their meaning from their social and political relations at a specific moment in history. The apparently exotic context sharpens the incongruity of the persistence of these outmoded forms: the estrangement effect of the masks, far from pointing up universal elements of human nature, foregrounds the artificiality of the attitudes adopted. In one performance of this play the masks were dispensed with, the actors slyly pulling at the sides of their eyes, saying «Look, we're Chinese». The characters are made to enact their

¹⁶ See Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor*, London and New York: Verso, 1991, pp. 197-209.

¹⁷ There is a distinction to be made between «ideal ego», the (unconscious) narcissistic formation, originating in the mirror phase, tied to the Imaginary, and «ego-ideal», the coalescing of narcissism and collective ideals. It is the difference of how one sees oneself and how one wants to be seen. The gods would like Shen Te, as «ideal ego» (good person), to re-establish them as «ego-ideal» (worth looking up to). For a more detailed elucidation of these concepts see *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, J. Laplanche and J-B. Pontalis, London: The Hogarth Press, 1973, pp. 144-45, 201-2.

roles in order to disrupt their identification with the capitalist Other, showing in their speech and bodily movements (Wang prostrating himself before the gods, the policeman smugly accepting the cigars) the automatism of these performances. By this gestic means Brecht believes he has been able to historicise the discourse of the body.

Speaking as he is from an Imaginary position in the Symbolic, yet believing himself to be a stable subject, Brecht has failed to acknowledge the constitutive nature of lack. The historicised discourse thus turns into a hystericised one, in that the antagonisms show within the characters as well as between them: the short-lived romance between Shen Te and Yang Sun (depending on her «womanly» masquerade) testifies to the impossibility of the sexual relation (Lacan).¹⁸ The hystericised discourse shows that Brecht is not immune to being spoken by the Symbolic, at a level of ambiguity beyond that of the duplicity of capitalism.

¹⁸ See Jacques Lacan, *Encore: Le Séminaire XX*, 1972-3, Paris: Seuil, 1975; for a translation of the two central chapters, «God and the Jouissance of Woman» and «A Love Letter», see *Feminine sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne* (Juliet Mitchell & Jacqueline Rose, Eds.) pp: 137-161, London: MacMillan, 1982, trans. Jacqueline Rose.

Les Composantes de la Théâtralité (*)

YVES THORET (**)

Le mot de «théâtralité» ne nous est pas aussi familier que celui de «musicalité» ou de «figurabilité». Le théâtre est un art qui fait intervenir de multiples contributions à la représentation et il est très difficile de faire la part de ce qui revient au texte, aux éléments de la mise en scène, au jeu des acteurs, aux réactions du public, à la réputation de ce spectacle, etc... pour expliquer notre satisfaction d'avoir assisté à une représentation théâtrale.

Pour Jean Duvignaud, la recherche de l'essence du théâtre implique un type de connaissance qui cherche à définir *les composantes de l'acte théâtral* et vise une «théâtralité qui constitue sans doute l'idéal vers lequel tend toute création artistique et plus encore, toute critique.»¹

Si on s'attache, dans un premier temps, à rassembler quelques définitions de la théâtralité, on pourra constater leur imprécision.

Pour le dictionnaire Robert, la théâtralité est la «conformité d'une oeuvre (dramatique musicale, etc...) aux exigences fondamentales de la construction théâtrale».

Dans le grand dictionnaire Larousse Encyclopédique, ce mot comporte deux définitions. La première correspond à la recherche d'une spécificité, d'une essence du théâtre: «conformité d'une oeuvre dramatique, plastique ou musicale aux exigences du théâtre considéré en son essence.» La seconde définition oppose texte et moyens scéniques: «qualité d'une pièce qui tient son efficacité plus de moyens spécifiquement scéniques que de sa forme littéraire.»

1. DU TEXTE AU JEU THEATRAL

1.1. Roland Barthes, entre le texte et la scène

Quand Roland Barthes utilise ce mot en 1954, il lui donne déjà une double signification. D'une part, ce terme lui permet d'évoquer la métamorphose de l'acteur en personnage qui constitue l'essence du théâtre: «la théâtralité la plus secrète et aussi la plus troublante, celle qui met l'acteur au centre du prodige théâtral et constitue le théâtre comme le lieu d'une ultra-incarnation...»² D'autre part, dans le même texte, Barthes donne à ce concept

(*) Ce texte est un chapitre de l'ouvrage *La Théâtralité, étude freudienne*, Paris: éditions Dunod, 1993, coll. «Psychismes».

(**) Centre de Recherches et d'Etudes Freudiennes, 53 Avenue Anatole France, 78300 Poissy, France.

¹ J. Duvignaud, *Les ombres collectives, sociologie du théâtre*, Paris: P.U.F., 1973, p. 39, souligné par moi.

² R. Barthes, «Le théâtre de Baudelaire (1954)», *Essais critiques*, Paris: Seuil, 1964, pp. 41-47.

un contenu plus restrictif; il désigne les éléments proprement scéniques qui constituent la *performance scénique*: «Qu'est-ce-que la théâtralité? C'est le théâtre moins le texte, c'est une épaisseur de signes et de sensations qui s'édifie sur la scène à partir de l'argument écrit, c'est cette sorte de perception oecuménique des artifices sensuels, gestes, tons, distances, substances, lumières, qui submerge le texte sous la plénitude de son langage extérieur.»

Faut-il voir là une réaction contre ce que certains ont appelé l'impérialisme du texte au théâtre? Roland Barthes essaie de dépasser cette opposition entre *théâtre écrit* et *théâtre joué* quand il ajoute: «Naturellement, la théâtralité doit être présente dès le premier germe écrit d'une oeuvre, elle est donnée de création, non de réalisation. Il n'y a pas de grand théâtre sans théâtralité dévorante, chez Eschyle, chez Shakespeare, chez Brecht, le texte écrit est d'avance emporté par l'extériorité des corps, des objets, des situations; la parole fuse aussitôt en substances.»

Toute réflexion sur la théâtralité montre qu'elle se distingue du texte tout en étant virtuellement présente dans les ressorts dramatiques propres à l'écriture théâtrale. Le théâtre écrit se distingue du théâtre joué mais ils ont des caractères communs. Il existe toujours entre eux une continuité.

1.2. Michel Bernard, la voix de l'acteur

Dans une réflexion philosophique approfondie sur l'expressivité du corps, Michel Bernard se démarque du clivage opposant le texte au jeu de l'acteur. Il situe la théâtralité dans le rapport réciproque et ambigu qui relie langage et corps, signe et parole. Certes, la réplique énoncée par le comédien redouble le texte composé par l'auteur mais elle s'en différencie également; le spectateur qui connaît le texte pourra percevoir la parole de l'acteur comme un message qui confirme sa connaissance de l'oeuvre ou, au contraire, elle le surprend par une intonation ou une interprétation nouvelle. La voix de l'acteur permet au spectateur de distinguer le corps du langage mais elle établit aussi une connivence entre eux; elle réalise tantôt une séparation tantôt une fusion entre la forme de l'expression et la forme du contenu.

Michel Bernard place la théâtralité au coeur de ces opérations paradoxales: «la théâtralité, à nos yeux, est, en effet, ce qui, dans un même mouvement, double et différencie corporellement le langage jusqu'à le contredire et creuse, dualise, spécularise le corps...» «(...) La théâtralité est inscrite structurellement dans l'interférence vocale du corps et du langage et *a fortiori* des corps entre eux.»³ Notons que Michel Corvin insiste sur la dialectique présence/absence. «La théâtralité se définit par trois faits: elle est présence (l'adresse); elle ne vit que d'absence (ce qu'elle figure n'existe pas); et pourtant elle fait en sorte que cette absence soit présence; elle est à la fois une marque, un manque et un masque.»⁴

1.3. Nicolas Evreinov, l'instinct de théâtralité

Le mot théâtralité fut inventé par un dramaturge russe, Nicolas Evreinov. Il publia en 1908 une *Apologie de la théâtralité*.⁵ Dans cet ouvrage, il affirme que l'instinct de théâtralité (qui se dit en russe *teatralnost*), le besoin universel pour l'homme de jouer à être un autre que lui-même, le besoin de transfiguration, est aussi puissant que la faim ou l'instinct sexuel.

Cet auteur insiste sur la nécessité d'étudier le théâtre en tant que tel et il écrira en 1917 un essai intitulé *Le théâtre pour soi*. Il est convaincu que les religions sont nées de

³ M. Bernard, *L'expressivité du corps. Recherches sur les fondements de la théâtralité*, Paris: La recherche en danse/Editions Chiron, 1976, pp. 316-318 et 388-392.

⁴ M. Corvin, article «Théâtralité», *Dictionnaire encyclopédique du théâtre*, Paris: Bordas, 1991, pp. 820-821.

⁵ G. Abensour, «Actualité d'Evreinov», numéro intitulé «Nicolas Evreinov, l'apôtre russe de la théâtralité», *Revue des Etudes Slaves*, 1981, tome 53, fasc. I, pp. 7-9.

la théâtralisation des questions essentielles auxquelles l'homme s'est trouvé confronté. Pour Evreinov, l'homme a un besoin impérieux de théâtraliser et de ritualiser les grandes énigmes de l'existence, les fondements de la religion ou les grands moments de l'histoire; ainsi, il représentera lui-même la révolution d'octobre dans sa pièce, *La prise du palais d'hiver*. Il écrira aussi des parodies (*La fiancée africaine*, par exemple), une comédie (*La mort joyeuse*) et une pièce légère, *La comédie du bonheur*, qui sera montée en France par Charles Dullin.

2. ROMAN JAKOBSON, LITTERARITE ET THEATRALITE

Comme l'a remarqué Josette Féral, les travaux d'Evreinov sur la théâtralité sont contemporains des recherches de l'Ecole de Prague sur la poésie et la littérature.⁶

Roman Jakobson précise que les membres de l'Ecole de Prague voulaient définir l'essence de la littérature, le caractère spécifique qui permet d'attribuer à un texte la qualité d'une oeuvre littéraire, ce qu'il appelle la *littérarité* (en russe, *literaturnost*). Il la définit ainsi: «la transformation d'un acte verbal en oeuvre et le système des procédés effectuant cette transformation.»⁷

Je trouve intéressant de rapprocher les concepts de littérarité et de théâtralité. Dans les deux cas, une activité utilisant le langage va ou non devenir une oeuvre d'art, en fonction d'une qualité esthétique spécifique. Jakobson définit la littérarité de deux façons: comme la *qualité artistique* de certains actes verbaux, et comme les *mécanismes* à l'oeuvre dans cette accession au domaine esthétique et littéraire.

De la même manière que Jakobson pour la littérature distinguait soigneusement les éléments (un acte verbal) du résultat (une oeuvre littéraire), je souhaite différencier *les composantes d'une représentation* (texte, performance scénique et réponse du public) de son résultat, *l'oeuvre théâtrale* à travers laquelle s'exprime la théâtralité. Je propose d'admettre que la théâtralité est ce qui permet la transformation d'une représentation scénique en une oeuvre d'art, une oeuvre véritablement théâtrale.

3. LA REPONSE DU SPECTATEUR, LA SPECTATURE

La représentation d'une pièce de théâtre nécessite plusieurs conditions, un lieu, un temps, une action spécifiques. Le lieu, *un théâtre*, un espace officiellement reconnu pour avoir la fonction d'y présenter des représentations théâtrales. Le temps, prévu et fixé pour encadrer le moment de la représentation, est *le temps de la séance*. Cet espace-temps permet *la rencontre entre l'acteur et le spectateur* où *le jeu théâtral*, métamorphose de l'acteur en un personnage, peut advenir, en application de la convention théâtrale.

Pierre Laville, par exemple, insiste sur *l'événement partagé* que constitue la représentation. Pour lui, la théâtralité est ce qui aboutit à «la quintessence de vie» de la représentation théâtrale sur une scène. Le texte n'est qu'une des composantes de cet événement: «une mise en représentation théâtrale suppose un *théâtre*, c'est-à-dire un *lieu réel* où le spectateur rencontre l'acteur. Le texte théâtral, tant qu'il est texte publié, n'est pas du théâtre. Il n'est que générateur de *cet instant* précis et unique où l'acteur et le public *se rencontrent* dans un lieu et un temps donné.»⁸

Un troisième élément doit nécessairement s'ajouter au texte et à la performance scénique,

⁶ J. Féral, «La théâtralité, recherche sur la spécificité du langage théâtral», *Poétique*, septembre 1988, 75: pp. 347-361. Cet article m'a été fort utile pour étudier la théâtralité, notion que l'auteur décrit comme lexicalement peu définie, étymologiquement peu claire.

⁷ R. Jakobson, *Une vie dans le langage*, Paris: Minuit, 1984, p. 128.

⁸ P. Laville & F. Gouptry, «Conversation devant de jeunes boulevards», *Roman*, juin 1987, 19: pp. 52-61, p. 54. Souligné par moi.

la rencontre entre l'acteur et le spectateur et plus précisément, *l'effet produit sur le public par le spectacle*. C'est le propre d'un texte dramatique, écrit pour être joué, constitué de dialogues, de «donner les rythmes, les accélérations et les ralentissements nécessaires pour tenir un spectateur et jouer avec lui».⁹

L'effet de l'oeuvre d'art sur le récepteur est l'aboutissement de toute forme d'art mais au théâtre, cet échange entre artiste et spectateur est instantané, simultané et surtout, interactif. La réaction propre du spectateur intervient dans l'événement que constitue la représentation théâtrale. Le texte et la performance scénique génèrent cette réaction mais, plus encore, cette réponse du spectateur fait partie de l'événement artistique, en tant que tel.

Rappelons que, pour Freud, la motion active de la pulsion de regarder n'est pas l'exhibitionnisme mais le voyeurisme.¹⁰ Ce qui fait la magie du théâtre, c'est ce mouvement qui implique dans le spectacle la réponse du spectateur. Pour André Green, c'est cet aspect-là du spectacle que l'approche psychanalytique du théâtre doit privilégier: «le projet d'une lecture psychanalytique sers la recherche des ressorts émotionnels qui font du spectacle *une matrice affective* dans laquelle le spectateur se voit impliqué et se sent non seulement sollicité mais *accueilli comme si elle lui était destinée*».¹¹

Norman Holland étudie la littérature d'un point de vue psychanalytique en centrant son attention sur *la réponse du lecteur* au texte qui lui est donné à lire.¹² Je souhaite étendre cette démarche au spectacle de théâtre. Je souhaite concentrer mon attention sur l'effet produit par le spectacle sur le spectateur.

Le théâtre fait jouer l'acteur pour, au bout de compte, jouer avec le spectateur. Il y a là un aspect spécifique de l'art dramatique. Non seulement le spectateur doit être *présent* avec les artistes qui réalisent la performance mais il se noue une *interaction* ludique complexe avec lui; c'est cette action spectatrice que la théâtralité doit inclure dans sa définition. Au même titre que l'on définit la lecture comme «l'action de lire», je propose d'appeler la participation du spectateur à la représentation théâtrale, *la spectature*.

Si le public ne réagit pas, il n'y a pas de théâtralité, quelles que soient les qualités du texte et de la performance scénique.

Nous aboutissons ainsi à désigner trois composantes de la théâtralité, le texte, la performance scénique et la spectature.

4. IL N'EST DE THEATRALITE QUE PAR RAPPORT AU THEATRE

Où fixer les limites du concept de théâtralité? Peut-elle déborder du cadre de la représentation théâtrale, au sens strict, et s'inscrire dans la vie quotidienne? Peut-on dire, par exemple, qu'une audience du tribunal ou une réunion politique sont du théâtre? Peut-on impunément étendre le caractère «théâtral» à toute situation, à une relation thérapeutique, par exemple?

Les auteurs adoptent sur ce point des positions très différentes. Nicolas Evreinov considère la théâtralité, cette «volonté de théâtre», enracinée en tout homme, comme la force qui le pousse à transformer les apparences de la nature, de lui-même et d'autrui pour privilégier les représentations, les simulacres, les travestissements et, bien sûr, les symbolisations. Pour

⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 59.

¹⁰ S. Freud, *Sur la Psychanalyse, cinq conférences* (1910), Paris: Gallimard, 1991, p. 96; G.W., tome VIII, p. 46.

¹¹ A. Green, *Un oeil en trop, le complexe d'Oedipe dans la tragédie*, Paris: Minuit, 1969, p. 29. Souligné par moi.

¹² «Nous puisons dans le trésor qu'une oeuvre littéraire nous offre ce dont nous avons besoin pour recréer nos processus psychologiques caractéristiques.» N. Holland, «Psychanalyse et lecture», *Etudes littéraires*, Québec, Canada, Décembre 1978, pp. 491-517; texte tiré de l'ouvrage de N. Holland, *Five readers reading*, New Haven et Londres: Yale University Press, 1975.

cet auteur, l'instinct de *teatralnost* préexiste à toute recherche d'effet artistique ou esthétique.¹³ C'est pourquoi, selon lui, la théâtralité peut se manifester aussi dans la vie quotidienne. Mais, à se diffuser ainsi dans la vie de tous les jours, la théâtralité ne va-t-elle pas perdre son caractère spécifique de théâtralité scénique?

Une position radicalement différente consiste à considérer la théâtralité comme l'expression spécifique de la représentation théâtrale. Ainsi, pour J.M. Piemme, «la théâtralité serait ce que le théâtre est seul à pouvoir produire, ce que les autres arts ne donnent pas, ne peuvent pas produire».¹⁴

On note une convergence frappante entre l'instinct de théâtralité, la volonté de théâtre décrite par Evreinov et «l'impulsion, la poussée (*Drang*) à se donner en spectacle, à participer à l'exhibition artistique et théâtrale» décrite par Freud comme motion *passive* du plaisir de regarder (*Schaulust*).¹⁵

Pour pouvoir fixer le contenu et les limites du concept de théâtralité, il convient au préalable de définir ce qu'on entend par «*théâtre*». Nous avons tendance à accorder à ce terme une signification illimitée, *car nous confondons assimilation et comparaison*. Dès qu'une scène de la vie publique prend une certaine dimension spectaculaire, nous avons tendance à dire que «c'est du théâtre». Ce faisant, nous prenons le risque de voir en toute situation spectaculaire une expression théâtrale, et dès lors, de retirer à cette référence ses caractères spécifiques. Il convient d'être très précis sur ce point. Il n'est de théâtralité que par rapport au théâtre. Je souscris à la définition limitative du théâtre que donne Henri Gouhier: «un spectacle qui a pour principe et pour fin une oeuvre théâtrale.»¹⁶

Jean Gillibert, de par sa double expérience de psychanalyste et d'homme de théâtre, nous rappelle qu'il faut maintenir une stricte distinction entre représentation théâtrale et séance de psychothérapie. «Le jeu de rôles est une illusion qui n'est même pas de théâtralité. Le théâtre a peu à voir avec cela et le psychodrame ne tient pas ses forces du théâtre, contrairement à ce qu'on pense conventionnellement».¹⁷

Le même auteur se montre très critique par rapport aux recherches visant à confronter théâtre et psychanalyse: «on a exagéré la métaphore théâtrale avec la psychanalyse et plus particulièrement avec le psychodrame. On fait de 'tout' théâtre! Les rapports de Freud au théâtre lui sont personnels; les rapports de la psychanalyse avec le théâtre demandent autre chose que de métaphoriser, à l'excès, la représentation, l'Autre-scène, la figurabilité, l'aptitude à la mise en scène, etc...»¹⁸

Il me semble important de réserver le terme de «*théâtre*» à un spectacle se déroulant dans un lieu désigné comme tel, dans l'espace de temps d'une représentation et en présence d'un public auquel il est destiné.

Le concept de théâtre étant clairement défini, la théâtralité peut s'appliquer à d'autres types de situations, en sachant qu'il s'agit d'une *comparaison* de ces événements avec une représentation théâtrale, non d'une assimilation de ces manifestations à un spectacle.

Il existe de nombreuses recherches récentes sur la sémiologie du théâtre. On peut citer, pour une première approche du sujet, les travaux d'André Helbo, Anne Ubersfeld, Tadeusz Kowzan et Marco de Marinis.¹⁹

¹³Cité par J. Féral, *op. cit.*, p. 360.

¹⁴*Ibidem*, p. 360.

¹⁵ «... der Drang zur kunstlerischen und schauspielerischen Schaustellung», in S. Freud, *op. cit.*, G.W., VIII, p. 46.

¹⁶ H. Gouhier, «article Théâtre, théâtralité», *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, vol. 15, 1976, pp. 1063-65.

¹⁷ J. Gillibert, *Le psychodrame de la psychanalyse*, Paris: Editions du Champ Vallon, 1985, p. 159.

¹⁸*Ibidem*, p. 10.

¹⁹ A. Helbo, *Sémiologie de la représentation, théâtre, télévision, bande dessinée*, Bruxelles: Ed. Complexe, 1975; A. Ubersfeld, *L'école du spectateur, lire le théâtre*, vol. II, Paris: Editions Sociales, 1981; M. De Marinis, *Semiotica del teatro*, Milan: Editore Bompiani, 1982; T. Kowzan, *Sémiologie*

Me centrant sur l'approche psychanalytique du théâtre, je n'ai pas rendu compte de ces textes auxquels je renvoie le lecteur désireux d'approfondir l'étude sémiologique du théâtre.

5. PROPOSITION D'UNE DEFINITION DE LA THEATRALITE

Pour certains auteurs, ce concept ne peut se définir, c'est un «concept tacite».²⁰

Comment peut-on utiliser un mot doté de tant de significations différentes? Pour aboutir à une définition opératoire de la théâtralité, il convient de préciser la qualité principale qui va constituer son mouvement le plus spécifique. Pour ma part, je choisis de privilégier la dimension esthétique, la qualité qui permet la transformation d'une représentation scénique en oeuvre d'art, en représentation théâtrale.

Cela implique de réserver l'adjectif «théâtral» aux représentations scéniques qui atteignent un niveau suffisant de qualité artistique.

Dans un second temps, on peut inclure dans cette définition les trois matériaux principaux de la théâtralité: le texte, la performance et la spectature.

La synthèse de ces réflexions et le primat du caractère artistique du théâtre sur toute autre considération me conduisent à proposer la définition suivante de la théâtralité dans le cadre de ma recherche:

La théâtralité désigne la qualité qui permet, à l'aide d'effets et de mécanismes divers, la transformation d'une représentation scénique, associant texte, performance et spectature, en une oeuvre théâtrale.

du théâtre, Paris: Nathan, 1992; ces ouvrages contiennent une bibliographie détaillée; celle qui est indiquée dans l'ouvrage de T. Kowzan est la plus récente. Singalons l'ouvrage de G. Behanna, *Théâtrality: a study of convention in the theater and in social life*, New York: Harper and Row, 1973.

²⁰ M. Polanyi, *The tacit dimension*, New York: Garden City, 1987, p. 4, cité par J. Baillon, «D'une entreprise de théâtralité», *Théâtre/Public*, 18-19 janvier 1975, pp. 109-122.

John Huston's *Freud*

NORMAN N. HOLLAND (*)

To see, to really see, this movie¹ about the discovery and undoing of repressions, you need to do a little repressing yourself. You need to put out of your mind all the wonderful gossip that surrounds the film: Huston getting Sartre to write the script, then meeting him at the station on horseback in full hunting regalia; Sartre suggesting Marilyn Monroe for the part of Freud's key patient; Huston trying to hypnotize Sartre; Huston's fights with Montgomery Clift (Freud); Clift's sicknesses and drunkenness; the movie's lackluster performance at the box office, and so on, and so on.²

To see the movie for itself, we can begin with the symbolism set out in Huston's prologue: light and dark. As Huston says in his own voice, The unconscious is a darkness, «almost as black as hell itself». This is the story of a man venturing into that dangerous, dark place.

Freud's intellectual quest, enacted in that cliché of the horror movies, forms the dominant and over-arching structure of the movie. It begins with his work for Meynert and his studies with Charcot. Once these preliminaries are over, however, the film divides that single quest into two parallel journeys down to the unconscious. One is the treatment of Cecily Körtner, first by Breuer, then by Freud. The other is Freud's self-analysis.

Huston marks this dualism in the structure of the second half by a contrast in the lighting. Darkness is associated with Freud's unconscious. In the early part of the movie, we get his dark dreams (shot on high-contrast film stock) and his walks at night as he tries to puzzle out his findings.

By contrast, the scenes with Cecily are resolutely high key. Her white dresses and her blond hair glow in a sunlit room. The only dark spots in these scenes are Breuer and Freud's tailcoats or — more ominously — the figure of her mother dressed in widow's black, knitting like Madame Defarge. Indeed, that was why Huston chose Susannah York for the part. Her wholesome, blond, English look was supposed to make her repugnant scenes of brothels and incest acceptable to 1962's audiences and censors.

In the lighter scenes Cecily's discoveries at first reveal her to have satisfied her oedipal

(*) University of Florida, Department of English, 4221 Turlington Hall, Gainesville, FL 32611, USA.

¹ *Freud*. Retitled on second release: *Freud: The Secret Passion*. 1962. Director: John Huston. Scenario: Charles Kaufman, Wolfgang Reinhardt. Photography: Douglas Slocombe. Art Director: Stephen Grimes. Music: Jerry Goldsmith. Editing: Ralph Kemplen. Cast: Montgomery Clift (Freud), Larry Parks (Breuer), Susannah York (Cecily Körtner), Eileen Herlie (Frau Körtner), David McCallum (Carl von Schlosser), Eric Portman (Meynert). 158 min.

² For these hijinks, see Holland, «How to See John Huston's *Freud*». In *John Huston* (Stephen Cooper, Ed.), in press (G. K. Hall).

wishes. Her father seduced her, and her illness comes from punishing herself. By contrast, in the dark scenes, Freud's self-analysis reveals that he suffers from guilt for his *ungratified* oedipal wishes, his death-wishes toward his father. It is as though he got the suffering, dark side of the oedipal deal, Cecily the pleasurable.

Gradually, however, her dreams and flashbacks become darker, culminating in her actual visit to Red Tower Street (the red-light district frequented by her father). There she tries to commit suicide by jumping into the river — imaged as complete blackness. Freud prevents her, confesses his own oedipal guilt, and their next scene together takes place in the ordinary lighting of earlier scenes with Martha or Breuer.

It is as though Huston worked out in the lighting Cecily's transformation from unnaturally cheery denials and repressions through the darkness of Huston's version of the unconscious to what Freud dryly promised his patients, «common unhappiness».³ Here it is symbolized by the normal gray scale.

In this context, the film frame itself becomes an image for consciousness. Hence (as pointed out by Richard T. Jameson in his fine 1980 essay on Huston),⁴ a certain movement recurs in this film. Freud himself and other people or objects flow into the film frame or fall out of it, as when Cecily fails to walk after Breuer's failed cure and slumps to the floor or when Charcot's male patient collapses, slipping down out of the frame.

Body movement is key. Throughout this film, Huston as a film director faced the problem of rendering an intellectual quest, one that wants to be told in *words*, in *images* suited to film. He solved it by a metaphorical structure that runs all through our literature, from the *Odyssey* to *Star Trek: The mind is a body moving through space*.

Huston renders Freud's (and Cecily's) explorations of self and childhood as physical movements from one place to another. For Freud the journey culminates when he remembers his childhood train trip from Freiburg to Vienna. For Cecily it ends when she rushes into Red Tower Street, overwhelmed with her knowledge of her own sexual desires for her father.

The over-arching plot, Freud's intellectual discoveries, Huston also renders as movement. When Freud and Breuer are sharing insights, they confer outdoors, moving in an open carriage. When Breuer (or Freud) resists the new theories, they pace back and forth in their studies. They are, as we say, «blocked». Conversely, when Freud successfully puzzles through such issues as repression and infantile sexuality, he does so in his dark night-time walks.

A key symptom leads Freud to his final discoveries in the film. He faints, unable to pass through the cemetery gate to his father's grave. That gate repeats the gate outside which he had earlier stood when he learned that his patient, Carl von Schlosser, had died, his oedipal wishes forever buried. It parallels the arches under which Freud walked when he pondered the mechanism of repression. All these gates, doors, and arches are what Jameson calls «yonic arches» through which Freud passes on his way to discovery.⁵

In this metaphorical structure, one can enact discovery, the passage from one state of mind to another, as the passage from one space to another. The discoverer moves through a gate or door with (Freudianly) sexual overtones as an erect human figure passes through the yonic arch. Constantly, in this film, characters are moving or trying to move in this fashion.

The first human image in the diegetic film is the arrogant Meynert, the man who *knows* it all, striding through a door. The last is Freud, finally passing through the cemetery gates to stand with his hand on his father's erect tombstone. The first and last images of the whole film make a bracketing statement of the image. These are the gloppy shapes that the camera *penetrates* as Huston voices over the image the theme of the film: Freud's «journey into the unconscious».

³ Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, «Studies on Hysteria», 1893-95, *Standard Edition*, 2: 1-305, 305.

⁴ Richard T. Jameson, «John Huston», *Film Comment*, May 1980, 25-56.

⁵ Jameson, «John Huston», 51.

There also follows from this metaphorical mind-as-body principle an interest in the physical bodies of the characters. We begin with the black-coated bodies of Meynert's medical students contrasted to the half-naked, white-garbed body of the patient spurned by Meynert. He holds a flame to her eye. Freud pushes a pin through her leg. We go on to the tormented bodies of Charcot's hysterics, then the naked chest of the man on whom Freud first tries hypnosis in the basement of the Vienna hospital. This series of images culminates in Freud's memory of seeing his mother nude to the waist, and longing for her «warm body».

Mostly, however, a cover-up morality prevails in Vienna, as when Freud rejects Breuer's offer to give him a physical exam. (It was to be, Martha and Breuer planned, a mental exam.) The intense pictures of bodies abate to a preoccupation with faces: Breuer's, Meynert's, but most of all Freud's and Cecily's, seen in extreme close-up. In fact, according to Stuart Kaminsky, «The percentage of close-ups in *Freud* is greater than in any other Huston film and almost any commercial narrative.»⁶

The substitution of face for body, body for mind, movement through space for movement in thought — there is a pattern of substitutions running throughout *Freud*. Or to use the technical term, *displacement*. We begin by thinking someone or something is important, then shift to something else. We *substitute*.

Richard T. Jameson was the first to point to this pattern of displacement or substitution in *Freud*. «Freud, as quester, ... stepping obliquely into frame to lead the narrative toward the respective stages of clarification and resolution.»⁷ Jameson goes on to point to a variety of such «exchanges». Moving into the film frame, Freud substitutes himself for Meynert with the first hysteric patient, Freud substitutes himself for Breuer in the treatment of Cecily Körtner, Freud substitutes himself for Carl von Schlosser in the role of oedipal criminal, and so on.

The pattern, however, is even more pervasive than Jameson indicates. It occurs not only in various into-frame movements or episodes, but all through the dialogue and plot. For a sample, consider just the prologue and the first five scenes.

The film begins with a series of galaxy-like figures over which the credits appear. As each credit succeeds the previous one, each shape is replaced by another.

The opening scene of the narrative movie: Meynert strides in, leading his medical students on rounds. Freud has admitted a hysteric patient, but Meynert angrily dismisses the very idea of hysteria. «Hysteria is another name for lying.» (Displacement). Meynert «disproves» the patient's hysteria by holding a match before her eyes, making her pupils contract. Freud counters with another experiment. (Displacement). Freud takes Meynert's place in the film frame, and Meynert stalks off with his entourage. In the movement as a whole the scene starts with the dominant figure of Meynert, but by the end Freud is our center of interest.

In the next scene, Freud, frustrated at Meynert's dismissal of his ideas, turns to his mother. (Displacement). So is their decision that Freud should follow his instincts and substitute Charcot for Meynert. Throughout the movie, Freud replaces disappointing fathers (Meynert, Breuer, even his own father) with his mother.

The next scene shows the train station. Freud is leaving for Paris. As the family clusters around him, we hear a voice. «A day and a night and a day. Sigi cried the whole way home. The train frightened him.» (Again, substitution). His mother is recalling another train trip, the one that gave rise to Freud's oedipus complex.

Freud's father now gives him a watch that has been passed down from father to son. (Displacement). Freud gets on board, but when the train whistle blows, he jumps nervously and drops the watch. We do not need an analyst to tell us the watch substitutes for his

⁶ Stuart Kaminsky, *John Huston, Maker of Magic*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978, p. 140.

⁷ Jameson, «John Huston», p. 51.

father as the object of his unconscious hostility, nor that the elderly gentleman who comments, «An unfortunate accident», is also a father-substitute.

The next scene is the long (8½ minute) demonstration in Charcot's clinic. Charcot argues that mind can affect body, and body mind. He is thus spelling out the narrative and metaphorical core of the film. Charcot's assistants hypnotize two patients, then they turn the patients over to Charcot. (Displacement). By hypnosis, he removes the paralysis from the woman's legs, then stops the shaking of the male patient. Then, by hypnosis, he makes each patient take the place of the other. The woman shakes, the man is paralyzed! Overtly, Charcot replaces body with mind. He has shown psychic causation instead of the physical lesions asserted by Meynert. More subtly, we are seeing a whole cluster of the substitutions that make up this movie.

The scene abruptly shifts to the wedding of Freud and Martha. «She is as beautiful almost as my own Amalia was on her wedding day», says old Jakob. (Displacement).

In brief, my point is that this pattern of substitution or displacement pervades the film, permeating shot after shot, scene after scene, and especially, in this very intellectual film, line after line of the dialogue.

Moreover, it isn't just the structure of individual scenes. Major plot developments hinge on this pattern in which one thing takes the place of another. Indeed, the whole intellectual movement of the film shows that apparent body illnesses, hysterias, are really illnesses of the mind. Charcot and Freud's psychic determinism replaces Meynert's claim of physical causation.

On the emotional side, the film shows a sequence of fathers: Jakob Freud, Meynert, Charcot, Breuer, Herr Körtner. In the end, Freud can do without his father, can be his own father, and that is the ultimate emotional displacement in the film.

On the intellectual side, as psychoanalysis develops, free association replaces hypnosis, another major displacement. When Cecily progresses, symptom replaces symptom. Her therapy consists in tracing back her substitutions to the core figures of father and mother.

Then, when Freud begins his self-analysis, he, in effect, takes Cecily's place as patient. When he does, we find a succession of trains like the succession of fathers. The first train we see, to Paris, echoes in later trains: the train in his dream after his father's death, the toy train he holds as he asks his mother about the trip from Freiburg to Vienna, and finally the train journey from Freiburg to Vienna which is the core of his oedipus complex. And, of course, the essence of the oedipus complex is the son taking the father's place, *the* big displacement in early psychoanalysis.

Similarly, in the language of the film, Jameson points out, a key dialogue with Martha spells out this theme of substitution. Cecily has taken to sending boutonnieres to Freud as she had to Breuer, and Martha sarcastically asks, «Is she in love with you too now?»

Freud: Her attachments are also symptoms.... Before me it was Breuer.... Maybe we are both reflections of someone else's image, an original love which for some reason she's repressed. I wonder.

Martha: Falling in love a symptom?... I thought love was something between a man and a woman who were meant for each other. What about us? Are we only reflections of others in our past?

Freud: It may be you bear a likeness to some image in my heart, some forgotten image.

He then kisses her in the same position, Jameson notes, in which Carl von Schlosser kissed the dressmaker's dummy that represented *his* mother.

Huston spells out this pattern of substitutions another way in the voice-overs at the beginning and end of the film. Notice that the film uses Huston's own voice. He echoes a claim made several times by Freud.⁸

Huston says that Freud is the author of one of the «three great changes in man's idea of himself, three major blows dealt us in our *vanity*». First there was Copernicus, then Darwin, then Freud (each displacing the other, incidentally).

«Before Copernicus we thought we were the center of the universe.» But after Copernicus, we know we inhabit one planet among many.

«Before Charles Darwin man believed he was a species unto himself, separate and apart from the animal kingdom.» Here, too, we lose singularity. We are subject to «laws no different for us than for any other form of animal life.»

Finally, Freud. «Before Sigmund Freud, man believed that what he said and did were the products of his conscious *will alone*. But the great psychologist demonstrated the existence of another part of our mind...» Again, we move from «will alone» to more than one part of the mind.

The three illusions rested on the idea that mankind is something singular. All three disillusionments replace *singularity* by *plurality*.

Freud wrote of three blows to human narcissism or self-love. His word was *Eigenliebe*. Huston's word is *vanity*,⁹ and by «vanity», I think Huston means something somewhat different from Freud's self-love. I think he means that we have to give up the idea that there is anything *unique* in us, in our humanness or our individuality. Huston's three blows all involve *replacement* of man's *singular* position in the cosmos, animal kingdom, or mind.

My point is that, by using this pattern of displacements, the film embodies what I think of as its own special vision of Freud's discoveries. The film develops a particular conception of psychoanalysis, namely, that psychoanalysis shows us the unconscious *substitutions* that rule our lives. *Anything in our conscious everyday life may be a substitute for some highly charged event in the unconscious past*. We have to abandon the illusion that there is but one unique satisfaction of our desires. Nothing is singular, everything is plural. Human beings are interchangeable parts, and so are the things they desire or love. We have to substitute. We have to displace. We have to accept other satisfactions, willy-nilly, for what we value as personally central. All that we think most important is a displacement from something we do not know.

In Huston's vision, psychoanalysis is the discovery and thereby the undoing of those displacements to find the original object. Then finally, you are free or as free as humans can be.

⁸ «A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-Analysis» (1917), *Standard Edition* 17: 135-144, 140-42. «The Resistances to Psycho-Analysis» (1925), *Standard Edition* 19: 213-224, 221. «Lecture XVIII: Fixation to Traumas — The Unconscious», *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1917), Part III, *Standard Edition* 16: 243-463, 284-85.

⁹ It is a sufficiently odd choice to have led to an amusing «Freudian slip» by two of the more astute commentators on the film. Krin and Glen Gabbard misheard Huston's closing voice-over, «In them [the words 'Know thyself'], lies the single hope of victory over man's oldest enemy, his vanity». They report this as «man's oldest enemy, his *family*». There is a Freudian truth in that, to be sure! *Psychiatry and the Cinema: A Dual Perspective*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, 115.

Home and the Superego: The *Risky Business* of Being *Home Alone*

ANDREW GORDON (*)
HERNAN VERA (**)

«The more we reflect on the tyranny of the home, the less surprising it is that the young wish to be free of its scrutiny and control.»

Mary Douglas, *The Idea of a Home*, 283

Risky Business (1983) and *Home Alone* (1990) are strikingly similar popular films, family comedies about the tribulations created by the fulfillment of a child's wish to eliminate the family. Both deal with a developmental dilemma: *Risky Business* on an oedipal level and *Home Alone* on a pre-oedipal one. *Risky Business* has the aura of an adolescent wet dream and *Home Alone* of a fairy tale. In both movies, the family conveniently vanishes and the son is left home alone, presented with the temptations of a newfound freedom which he promptly abuses, and then with seemingly overwhelming problems which he solves through ingenuity and risk-taking. Both are fantasies of the wise child in which adults are unsympathetic (*Risky Business*) or incompetent (*Home Alone*) and the child becomes the real adult. «I can't be a wimp. I'm the man of the house», the eight-year-old hero of *Home Alone* tells himself.

If we can consider the superego as the internalized voice of the parents and of the culture, then both young protagonists are in revolt against the superego. In both films, we see the paradox of the child hero trashing his home in order to defend it. The two films present a rebellion against superego, home, and family not as an assault but as a defense of superego, home, and family. Thus in both *Risky Business* and *Home Alone*, the child heroes are reckless and lawless and break all the rules, yet the audience is intended to admire them as typical, all-American kids. Joel Goodsen in *Risky Business* is a «good son», a defender of free enterprise (the «risky business» of capitalism) even if it degrades the home through prostitution, and Kevin McCallister in *Home Alone* is a defender of law and order and the home, fending off burglars singlehandedly even as he wrecks the

(*) University of Florida, Department of English, 4008 TUR, Gainesville, FL 32611-2036, USA.

(**) University of Florida, Department of Sociology, 3219 TUR, Gainesville, FL 32611, USA.

house with his booby traps and sings the burglars with a blowtorch and other elaborate torture devices.

As we will argue in our conclusion, both films can also be seen as representative of the divided societal superego of America in the 1980s.

1. CHILDISH REBELLION IN *RISKY BUSINESS* AND *HOME ALONE*

On the surface, *Risky Business*, a teenage sex comedy, seems dissimilar to *Home Alone*, a family comedy with many resemblances to a television sitcom. The R-rated *Risky Business* has a seventeen-year-old hero and is intended for a high school or adult audience; PG-rated *Home Alone* has an eight-year-old hero and is targeted for young children and families. *Risky Business* seems to satirize the American upper-middle class, who are seen as repressed and materialistic; *Home Alone* reaffirms the values of that same class.

Nevertheless, the films are fundamentally similar. Both plots are variations on the premise of «while the cat's away»: the amount of mischief a white boy from an exclusive suburb can get into while his parents are out of town for a few days. Both are comedies about boys flexing their muscles for the first time. The best remembered images from the films tell the story: Joel (Tom Cruise) in his parents' living room, dressed in his underpants, wearing dark glasses, and playing air guitar to rock music (ironically, mimicked by Ron Reagan, the President's son, on *Saturday Night Live*); Kevin (Macauley Culkin) in his parents' bathroom, shrieking as he slaps on aftershave. These are children playing the role of adult. Both grow up using highly unconventional means. By the end, each child is transfigured: Joel has lost his virginity, gained autonomy and self-confidence, and been accepted to the Ivy League School of his choice; Kevin has saved the home from burglars, overcome his fears and helplessness, and is reconciled with his family.

The central element the films have in common is the fantasy of destroying the home in order to save it, a rebellion or revolt which is paradoxically seen as a defense of the family. In a psychoanalytic sense, the protagonists rebel against the superego in the name of the superego; that is, they allow the desires of the id to go on a rampage but are able to rationalize this behavior as necessary to protect the household. Joel gradually allows the outside world of sexuality, risk, and chaos to enter his family's home, reluctantly at first, but finally wholeheartedly, so that the climax is the bordello orgy inside the home that Joel orchestrates. His justification is that this is the quickest way to earn the money to repair his father's Porsche, wrecked when he let it fall into a lake. Kevin, however, fights against the entry of outside chaos into his home, so that the climax is his pitched battle to expel the burglars. His rationalization is that he is the man of the house now and must repel invaders (he never calls the police).

Both films enact childish wish fulfillments with many dreamlike elements. *Risky Business* opens with Joel recounting his dream about sexual temptation in the home and a test at school, and the rest of the film seems to recapitulate the dream conflict, complete with dreamlike sex scenes (Ansen, Gelmis). *Home Alone* has a fairy-tale structure: because he feels unloved, a boy makes a bedtime wish that his family disappear and awakens the next morning to find that his wish has come true. Like a fairy-tale child, Kevin must fight off the ogres and is aided by a wise old man. Then his Christmas wish is fulfilled — that the original wish be undone — and his family returns on Christmas morning, loving him more than before. Several critics have compared the film to another perennial American Christmas family movie, the fantasy *It's a Wonderful Life* (Bernard, Martin and Porter 295).

2. *RISKY BUSINESS*: ANDY HARDY BECOMES A PIMP

Risky Business is a slick variation on the teenage «hormone» comedy about a young

man's sexual initiation (see Doherty, *Teenagers and Teenpics*). A rite-of-passage film told tongue in cheek, with satiric exaggeration, it is a cynical film for a corrupt, cynical age, distinguished from many others of its genre by its clever script and direction, superior acting, sophisticated visuals, and highly stylized eroticism. Reviewers saw it as a cross between an arty social commentary film and a teenage sexploitation flick, a blend of *The Graduate* (1967) and *Porky's* (1981) — in other words, as a movie that sends mixed messages (Asahina, Benson, Denby, Gelmis, Newman).

- In the opening scene, Joel faces a conflict between his raging hormones and his desire for a secure future through academic and career success. In the end, he finds that there is no contradiction between his sexual desires and his financial ambitions, that, indeed, sex is good business. Prostitution, he discovers, is the highest form of capitalism. In the course of a few days, Joel is transformed from a naive, virginal adolescent into an experienced panderer: Andy Hardy as pimp.

And, paradoxically, he is rewarded for his illicit enterprise: the Princeton interviewer is so impressed by Joel's daring and initiative in turning his home into a whorehouse that he recommends Joel be admitted to Princeton. Ironically, unleashing his lust and greed secures Joel's future.

Joel and Kevin are both anxious, alienated boys, uncomfortable within their own households, who are suddenly left home alone. In the opening scene of *Risky Business*, Joel recounts a recurrent nightmare. He enters the house next door without permission and finds apparently no one home. But in an upstairs bathroom he spies a beautiful girl, a total stranger, taking a shower. She invites him to join her, but when he opens the shower door, he finds himself instead in a classroom where he is supposed to be taking his college boards. But he has arrived too late to complete the test. He says, «I just made a terrible mistake. I'll never get to college.»

In the scenes that follow Joel's anxiety dream, we see that he is a cleancut, obedient, and repressed teenager, a «good son», as his patronym implies. His parents, introduced satirically through subjective camera, from Joel's point of view, are unaffectionate, fussy perfectionists. The subjective camera also renders Joel invisible in this scene and suggests his maginalization within the family. His parents demand of Joel performance and conformity. Their relations with him are *instrumental*, consisting primarily of comments, requests, and demands, rather than *expressive* of feelings, thoughts, and ideas. The family doesn't sit down to eat together, nor do they touch. His mother urges him to take the SAT again so he can do better; his father lectures him about not touching the stereo, saying, «My house, my rules». The music the father plays is bland Muzak. The house is expensively furnished, neat, and sterile. The father is symbolized by the stereo and the Porsche (which Joel is forbidden to drive); his mother, by the station wagon and an expensive Steuben glass egg on the mantel. Joel is like another of their household possessions. We are meant to dislike these parents, so that we can sympathize when Joel later rebels and deceives them.

His repeated nightmare suggests that Joel feels burdened by their high expectations and his lack of freedom. One critic writes that «you feel for him the way you felt for the strangulated Benjamin in *The Graduate*» (Benson). His chief anxiety is that the slightest misstep at this crucial stage (his senior year in high school) would mean disaster and lifelong failure. But as the dream reveals, he also desperately desires to make a mistake; in fact, he will soon make a whole series of huge, progressively escalating mistakes. Indulging in «risky business» is his way of retaliating against his parents and his internalized parental wishes: the superego.

The neighbor's house in the dream really symbolizes his own house, a familiar place where he feels he does not belong. The desire to have sex in the house with a strange, beautiful woman represents his desire to rebel against his parents, which he later acts out by inviting the prostitute Lana into his home. In his life, as in the dream, asserting his

sexuality threatens him with the punishment of failing to get into college and of displeasing his parents. Joel's solution to the dilemma, which did not occur to him in the nightmare, is to turn sex into a moneymaking proposition, thus simultaneously fulfilling his two previously incompatible desires for sex and for success, satisfying both himself and his parents. Joel is rewarded for acting out his rebellion, becoming transformed from an anxious, alienated boy into a confident, sexually experienced, and financially successful young man who has found his place in his family and in society.

Joel and his teenage friends admit they are cynical and materialistic. They are all white, upper-middle class, and exclusively focused on success, money, and sex. The film constantly juxtaposes notions of business with those of sex, foreshadowing the later introduction of prostitution. For example, early in the movie, Joel attends a meeting at his high school of the «Future Enterprisers Club»; in the following scene, a boy comes over to borrow Joel's bedroom for an assignation with his girlfriend. Joel tries to study business but is distracted by the sounds of intercourse in the room above.

Joel's liberation is aided by two people: first is his friend Miles, a foil who is looser than the uptight Joel and pushes him to act on his desires, telling him, «Sometimes you just gotta say, 'What the fuck'.» Joel at the beginning is anally repressed, caught in a bind between the poles of holding on and letting go (Erikson, *Childhood and Society* 82-83). Because he has been holding on so tightly, when he does finally let go, it is to the extreme. Later, Joel far outstrips Miles in his willingness to take risks, and Miles is revealed as a conformist and hypocrite.

Joel's second helper is the teenage prostitute Lana (beautifully played by Rebecca De Mornay), who becomes his lover, his substitute mother, his mentor, and his business partner, the madam to Joel's pimp. Through Lana, Joel becomes a man.

The cool and calculating Lana is not only a sex object but also tough, independent, smart, knowledgeable, experienced, unsentimental, and totally materialistic. She is stonger and wiser than Joel, and she tutors him in both sex and business even as she uses and manipulates him. He is crazy about her body and also admires her mind: «It was great the way her mind worked: no guilt, no doubt, no fear.» Lana, in other words, is not only the perfect prostitute but also the perfect *capitalist*. In this film, there is a cynical equivalence between the two.

In the scene in which Joel loses his virginity (the central scene in the movie), Lana suddenly appears in his living room. She has invaded, entering the house without knocking. As she begins to undress, she speaks, the only dialogue in the scene: «Are you ready for me, Ralph?» (Joel had given this as his name over the phone.) When they embrace, the doors blow open and autumn leaves blow into the house, suggesting a breakdown of the barriers between inside and outside. Lana is a powerful force of nature that will take over both Joel and the house.

Joel's making love with a prostitute in the family home is represented as a deliberate transgression and an assertion of autonomy. The act is the logical climax of a series of transgressions: drinking, playing loud rock music on his father's stereo, jumping on the furniture, allowing his friends to use the house for sex, and driving his father's Porsche without his permission. The scene relies on the myth of doing it «the first time»: the act is represented as monumental, amazing, transformative, a transition into manhood. Their sex is portrayed wordlessly, in a stylized, dreamlike manner. It is glamorous and erotic, yet punctuated with ironic shots redolent with symbolism: baby pictures, and, to close the scene, a shot of the American flag on late-night TV. The pan across Joel's baby and boyhood pictures reinforces the notion of his passage into adulthood. The shot of the flag raising on TV suggests the passage of time — they have been doing it all night long — but also symbolizes both erection and patriotism, as if his loss of virginity has suddenly granted him both manhood and citizenship. Joel and Lana make love all over the downstairs,

which seems more daring than using the more private upstairs bedrooms. Joel is deliberately violating taboos and desecrating the house; by extension, he is attacking his parents. Never in the movie do we witness love-making in a bedroom — it is always in the public spaces of the house and, later, on a train. If the bedrooms represent the id, then the living room represents the superego.

After he desecrates the house, the next move in Joel's rebellion is to trash his father's car. The family owns two cars, a station wagon and a Porsche, one domestic and the other an expensive, sporty car, one associated with his mother and with security and safety, the other with his father and with wealth, prestige, speed, and risk. Joel is insured only for the station wagon.

The Porsche equals his father's position or the paternal phallus. When Joel ignores his father's restriction and drives the forbidden Porsche, he is usurping his father's position: it's an oedipal move. The accidental dumping of the car in the lake demonstrates his immaturity; he is as yet unable to successfully handle all that power. It is only in dealing with the consequences of that disaster that Joel begins to develop maturity and true autonomy.

Needing to quickly raise the thousands of dollars to repair the car before his parents return, Joel panics and turns to Lana, agreeing to her proposition that she and her friends use his house one night for «business». The film encourages us to suspend our ethical judgments of Joel's actions. He is presented as driven by circumstances, left with no other choice, a naive, innocent high-school boy — not a greedy, conniving pimp. Everything he does is easy to justify or explain: he is only acting to placate his parents. But in trying to conceal the effects of his rebellion (the damaged car) he allows himself to indulge in a far greater transgression, until things escalate out of his control.

The night of the bordello orgy, in which Joel introduces his friends to Lana's friends, is one of the high points of the film. The family home undergoes an amazing overnight transformation into a cathouse: young men are lining up outside rooms all over the place, spare beds are being rolled back and forth, and even couches commandeered for business. Joel complains, «Some of the girls are wearing my mother's clothing. I just don't want to spend the rest of my life in analysis.»

In the midst of this wild orgy, the Princeton interviewer arrives. It is obvious what is going on — the hookers proposition him — but he maintains his aplomb and proceeds with the interview. Joel, sporting the black Ray-Ban shades that have become part of his pimp uniform, is beyond caring and tells the man, «One thing I've learned: sometimes you just have to say, 'What the fuck.'»

The next morning, however, Joel is not so nonchalant when he discovers that Guido, Lana's «manager», has stolen all the furniture because Joel was cutting into his livelihood. In a last-minute maneuver, Joel must surrender the remainder of his illicit earnings to buy back the furniture before his parents return from the airport. The action seems an appropriate punishment for his misconduct; moreover, Joel is now instantly transformed from desecrator to defender of his home.

The last item returned is his mother's precious crystal egg, which they fling at him; Joel sprints to catch it before it falls and shatters. He has not only degraded her house, her furniture, her bedroom, and her clothing but also risked the prized Steuben egg, which symbolizes her (cold) personality and her femininity. Nevertheless, once again, Joel is not seen as risking the egg but as protecting it. Earlier, Lana had maintained power over Joel by holding the egg hostage. When his parents return, they notice nothing amiss — except that his mother chides him because there is a crack in her egg. His father says, «This is so damned irresponsible. I am very disappointed in you.» We recognize the irony: an almost invisible crack in the egg is the least of his misdeeds.

But when word soon arrives that Joel has been accepted to Princeton, even his terrible

crime of cracking the egg is forgiven. Now he won't have to attend the local University of Illinois, which the family associates with failure.

Although we are meant to admire Joel, he is never a real rebel: just compare the ending of this film with the ending of *The Graduate* (1967), the film about adolescent rebellion and rite of passage to which many reviewers compared it. In the sixteen years since young Benjamin Braddock (played by Dustin Hoffman) defied Mr. and Mrs. Robinson, times had changed: Benjamin escapes from corruption but Joel escapes *into* corruption. Compared to Benjamin, Joel is too anxious to cover his tracks when he breaks the rules and too eager to succeed on the cynical, materialistic terms of his parents and his friends. We are supposed to despise them and admire him, but there is really little choice between them; it is merely a difference of lifestyle — uptight yuppie versus swinging yuppie — not of values. The film unleashes the forces of the id to support the superego. In *Risky Business*, unlike *The Graduate*, the parental and societal superego triumphs.

3. *HOME ALONE*: THE CHILD AS CRIMINAL

Kevin in *Home Alone* begins the film as anxious and alienated as Joel. And, like Joel, he too rebels and turns into a criminal, only to be returned at the end to the bosom of his family.

The opening shot of *Home Alone* is of a large, suburban mansion (as in *Risky Business*, the movie is set in an expensive suburb near Chicago). There is snow on the ground, the trees and bushes are glittering with lights, and every room of the house is lit. We hear the voices of the people inside, everyone talking at once. The image evokes Christmastime, family warmth and togetherness. We move into the front hallway of the house, which is flooded with relatives busily preparing for a flight to Paris the next day. But we don't see much warmth or closeness in this family: tense, hyperactive, preoccupied individuals scurry up and down the stairs. The only touching we see is aggressive: the parents grab Kevin to make him obey and Kevin fights with his brother.

As nerves fray in this crowded house at holidaytime, Kevin believes that all the hostility is being dumped on him. He gets pushed far down the pecking order by the appearance of all his cousins; he feels as if his home has been invaded. He's not allowed to watch a movie with the big kids, he can't get his parents' attention, no one will help him pack his bag, his older siblings and cousins dismiss him as an irritating, helpless little pest, and he is told he will have to share a bed with a bedwetting younger cousin. He has a tantrum, yelling, «This house is so full of people. When I grow up, I'm living alone!» They ignore him.

Kevin's frustrations climax when he gets no dinner because his older brother Buzz, a loutish teen who despises Kevin, has finished the only plain cheese pizza. Mocked by Buzz, Kevin attacks him physically, setting off a chain of chaos in the kitchen. Then there is silence as everyone glares at Kevin until they all begin denouncing the pariah. His mother sends him to bed early, without his supper; he is left alone in the attic. Feeling that he is being treated like an outcast or criminal within his own home, Kevin announces to his mother, «I don't want any family! Families suck!» And he wishes that they might all disappear forever.

Our opinion of his behavior in the opening sequence is mixed: although we can sympathize with Kevin's feeling of being neglected, frustrated, harassed, unloved, and cruelly mistreated, we can also sympathize with his parents' exasperation at having to cope with his misbehavior in a tense, crowded household during a busy holiday season. The audience is supposed to like Kevin and view him as a comic hero but also to like his parents, who are decent if ineffectual; we desire and expect that Kevin will mend his ways, learn the importance of family, and be reconciled with them at the end. Later, when he misses his family, he

regrets that he had behaved so badly at Christmastime, when children are traditionally supposed to be extra good: «I've been kind of a pain.»

In truth, Kevin is the sort of difficult child parents dislike dealing with: demanding, self-centered, and defiant. He's a manipulator, who, when he can't get what he wants from his mother, leaps on her bed. Asked to leave, he declares, «Hang up the phone and make me, why don't you?» If he can't get attention, he will provoke it, but he doesn't like the negative repercussions when he is provocative. He proclaims his helplessness, refusing to pack his suitcase and demanding that someone do it for him, but he doesn't like it when he is labeled incompetent. He is highly verbal and expressive; he throws tantrums and stages scenes. His relatives may call him an idiot and a little jerk, but he is arrogant and also calls his uncle a jerk and his mother a dummy (in fact, except for Kevin's parents, the entire McCallister clan is given to insults and namecalling). Finally, Kevin acts out his rage when he physically assaults Buzz. Granted, this is the climax of a day full of frustration, and Kevin was provoked by his brother, but the incident shows his impulsiveness and his style of aggression. Kevin rages against his family because of what he perceives as their unfairness, but when he acts out that anger, he is punished.

We can sympathize with Kevin primarily because he is a little boy and because his misbehavior is a reaction to and defense against the fact that he is systematically ostracized within his family. His marginalization is represented by his exile to the attic (a place to store discards) and his accidental exclusion from the Paris trip. His being left behind is presented as a comic oversight; actually, it represents a serious flaw in the family structure. No one notices Kevin's missing until the plane has been aloft a while; the McCallisters really wanted to ditch him. Like Joel, Kevin is marginalized, the victim of a major imbalance within the family.

In this opening sequence, Kevin is linked with two angry, alienated men, both of them criminals without families. The first is the burglar Harry, who has come to the house disguised as a policeman, intending to case the joint for holiday pickings. Harry, who will later become Kevin's chief antagonist, winks at the boy with his gold tooth, as if establishing a bond between them. The second is «Old Man Marley», a white-bearded neighbor who lives alone and keeps to himself. The boys watch from a bedroom window as old Marley (the name is straight out of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*) shovels snow off his walk. They are horrified and fascinated, believing wild rumors that he is «the South Bend Shovel Slayer» who «murdered his whole family and half the people on the block with a snow shovel.» Later, Kevin will befriend this hermit, finding in him a kindred soul: although neither is a murderer, they both quarrelled with their families and wished them away, paying the price in loneliness. In a sentimental twist, Kevin helps the old man reconcile with his family at Christmastime, and Marley helps Kevin by using his shovel, not to murder a family, but to clobber the criminals. One can regard Harry and Marley as projections of Kevin's own anger against his family, and of his alienation and feelings of criminality. In addition, they stand for the split aspects of the father — Harry the bad parent and Marley the good — in this cinematic fairy tale. We see that things are not what they appear: Harry the cop is actually Harry the burglar and Marley the killer is actually Marley the kind old protector of children. Kevin too is not what he first appears to be: this pesky little brat is later revealed to have all the Boy Scout virtues. He longs to be accepted in the family and to be given a chance to prove his competence.

Nevertheless, Kevin shows a lot of his typical aggression when he is home alone, although it is funnier when directed against safe targets — an annoying pizza delivery boy, a pair of bumbling burglars — rather than against his own family. In fact, this is an odd sort of holiday film: in allowing us to identify with a child, the story combines Christmas sentiment with incredible violence in the comic but cruel mayhem Kevin inflicts on the burglars. Admittedly, great filmic clowns such as Chaplin blend sentiment with slapstick, but the mix in *Home*

Alone strikes us as incongruous because the sadism of the violence seems disproportionate. But evidently millions of viewers had no problem going from laughing as Kevin fries burglars with a blowtorch to crying as Kevin is reunited with his mother and the rest of his family on Christmas day. The burglars are comic villains, kid haters, stupid and mean, and the horrific violence is ludicrous cartoon violence, like the little, clever Tweety bird foiling big and stupid Sylvester the cat, or the Roadrunner outwitting Wile E. Coyote. Nevertheless, there is something disturbing and dehumanizing in seeing cartoon violence carried out against human actors. One reviewer complained that this scene resembled «*Straw Dogs* redone by The Three Stooges» (Rainer). The sequel was even more violent.

The audience's enjoyment of the sadistic aggression in the film — both the burglars' aggression and Kevin's — implies that, like *Risky Business*, *Home Alone* succeeds because it provides a release for the id. The subversion of the superego begins in the opening scene, in which a burglar posing as a policeman stands in the entrance hallway of the house. The burglars Harry and Marvin are figures of calculating, illegitimate desires and pure id aggression. They are self-centered and have boundless desires: they want everything for themselves, sole possession of the house, and they will stop at nothing to get it. Says Harry, «Ever since I laid eyes on that house, I wanted it.» But Kevin too wants the house exclusively to himself and will stop at nothing; in that respect, he is just like the crooks. There is both an identification and a competition between Kevin and these housebreakers. Just as, in *Risky Business*, Joel identifies with and competes with Guido the pimp, and yet is still perceived by the audience as a well-meaning kid doing the best that he can, so in *Home Alone*, Kevin is in his own way as crooked as the burglars, but we are meant to see him as wearing a halo.

The similarity between Kevin and the criminals is underscored by his ransacking the house, engaging in forbidden activities (looking at *Playboy*, enjoying a violent gangster movie), and stealing his brother's money. After he is chased by a policeman for inadvertently shoplifting a toothbrush (frightened by old man Marley, he fled the store), he says to himself, «I'm a criminal.» (This accounts for his never phoning the police for help.) The similarity between the boy and the crooks is further enhanced by the burglars' childish banter: they constantly bicker and insult each other, just like the McCallister kids. Marvin, Harry's inept sidekick, is particularly stupid and infantile. He steals toys and likes to leave the sink clogged and the water running in the homes they break into. That's the team's calling card, he announces proudly: «We're the wet bandits.» Marvin resembles Kevin's bedwetting little cousin.

In other words, this pair of burglars are overdetermined figures who symbolize Kevin's criminality, the bad father, and his obnoxious siblings and cousins as well, fighting him for possession of the house and position within the family. They invade the house, just as his relatives did; in fighting them off, Kevin is fighting his family as well. Kevin's glee in punishing the burglars lies in the fact that he is taking revenge against the adult world and against his family, but doing it all in the name of the home. Before the final battle begins, he says to himself, «This is my house. I have to defend it.» To put it another way, both Kevin and the audience can enjoy the ensuing violence because the aggression of the id is released in the name of the superego.

4. *RISKY BUSINESS* AND *HOME ALONE* AS 1980s FILMS

The 1980s in America were a time when the rich got richer and the poor got poorer. Both politically and culturally, *Risky Business* and *Home Alone* are representative of the Reagan-Bush era (the former appeared during Reagan's first term and the latter during Bush's term in office), when rich, ruling-class Americans imagined themselves to be the

lords of the earth: «Masters of the Universe», as Sherman McCoy, the protagonist of Tom Wolfe's 1987 novel *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, puts it. Like Sherman, Joel and Kevin are rich kids thumbing their noses at the world; unlike Sherman, they triumph.

Both films concern unusually affluent families living in large, expensive homes in the suburbs of Chicago. Both the Goodsens in *Risky Business* and the McCallisters in *Home Alone* own houses loaded with electronic gadgets, art objects, and two cars in the garage, and take expensive vacations. Yet these professional families living in million-dollar mansions are presented as if they were typical middle-class Americans. (The same strategy was used in presenting the wealthy black family the Huxtables on the *Bill Cosby Show*, the top-rated television sitcom for most of the 1980s.) Neither family faces serious hardships or financial difficulties (they can buy their way out of most problems), merely temporary comic confusion.

By presenting rich white families as if they were average Americans, *Risky Business* and *Home Alone* disguise some real problems of Americans in the 1980s. The evasion also extends to the plot of both pictures: *Risky Business* makes light of a teenager's involvement with a teen prostitute, whereas the real fears of Americans during the decade involved rising incidents of child sexual abuse, teenage pregnancy, and venereal disease; *Home Alone* creates comedy out of a youngster accidentally left at home while his well-to-do family vacations in Paris, whereas the more pressing concerns in the 1980s U.S. were with expensive and inadequate child care, the neglected, latchkey child, or the homeless child.

The 1980s was also a period of increasing concern about the future: for the first time since WW II, the American middle class feared downward mobility, and began to worry that their children might do worse than they had (Barbara Ehrenreich, *Fear of Falling*). This fear is expressed in such films as *Risky Business* and *Back to the Future* (1985). Seventeen-year-old Joel says, «I don't want to make a mistake, jeopardize my future», and seventeen-year-old Marty McFly in *Back to the Future* sees his middle-class family sliding into downward mobility and worries, «What if I've got no future?» Both films arouse and then overcome that anxiety: Joel gets into Princeton, and Marty, through time travel, assures a better (i.e., yuppie) future for himself and his family.

Taking the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) has become a crucial rite of passage for contemporary high school students, determining whether they will be admitted into the college of their choice or into any college at all. The importance attached to this gatekeeping ritual, especially in a time of economic downturn and downward mobility, is reflected by the anxiety involving standardized test results that teenagers show in recent films such as *Stand and Deliver* (1988), *Boyz n the Hood* (1991), the made-for-television movie *How I Got into College* (1989), and *Risky Business*.

In both *Risky Business* and *Home Alone*, a role reversal takes place, and children rule. The triumph of the wise child or of a conspiracy of children against adults forms the basis of the plot of many popular films of the 1980s, beginning with *E.T.* (1982). John Hughes succeeded with this formula in such films as *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, about a rich teenager who plays hooky and outwits all the grownups (a favorite film of Dan Quayle), and, of course, *Home Alone*. The success of Hughes' formula prompted imitations, such as the lame comedy, *Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead* (1991).

Home Alone is one of many comedies, mostly about kids and teenagers, cranked out in the 1980s by the enormously prolific writer-director-producer Hughes. Other popular successes in his oeuvre include *Sixteen Candles* (1984), *The Breakfast Club* (1985), *Ferris Bueller* (1986), *Planes, Trains, and Automobiles* (1987), and *Uncle Buck* (1989). Hughes is a deft writer who has evolved a comfortable formula that usually succeeds with young audiences and families: he puts recognizable, sympathetic protagonists — often anguished kids and teenagers from dysfunctional families — into comic, frequently farcical situations, and then finishes off with a happy, sentimental ending and a pat moral. He writes feature-

length sitcoms. One reviewer says of Hughes, «Part of his secret may be that he is a feel-good fantasist who nevertheless acknowledges that even the most affluent household often resembles a war zone» (Ansen). Hughes at his best is a realist capable of penetrating social commentary, as in *The Breakfast Club*, but more often he takes the low road, offering slapstick and sentiment — a mix guaranteed to entertain everyone and offend no one.

Home Alone, written and produced by Hughes but directed by Chris Columbus, was an unexpected breakaway hit, perhaps because it perfected the formula, had a Christmas holiday tie-in, and offered the charming child actor Macauley Culkin in his first starring role. Critics agreed that the movie «keys into children's fears and fantasies on a basic level» (Moore) and that Kevin is a quintessential 1980s youngster, «Media Kid, a sort of boundlessly resourceful pre-teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle» (Denby). To date, the film has grossed \$507 million worldwide, making it the third-highest moneymaker in film history, after *Star Wars* (1977) and *E.T.*, two other movies for the child and family audience.

Home Alone is also related to the spate of age-reversal comedies of the late 1980s and early 1990s, in which an adult and a child switch bodies (*Like Father, Like Son* [1987], *Vice Versa* [1988], *18 Again* [1988], *Dream a Little Dream* [1989]), a boy turns overnight into a full-grown man (*Big* [1988]), or a middleaged man rediscovers his «inner child» (*Hook* [1991]). This cycle of films, all released within a four-year period, might be seen as expressions of the era's desire to escape back into the innocence of childhood and to remain forever young, as the perpetually boyish, grinning Reagan seemed to promise. This is the period of the child-man and of the «Peter Pan syndrome». The titles of two other popular films of the period perhaps tell part of the story: *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids* (1989) and *Honey, I Blew Up the Kid* (1992). Even as the government showed a shrinking concern for the real needs of children, Americans expressed increasing concern with the needs of their «inner child», which blew up like the gigantic infant in the film.

It is also the period in which Macauley Culkin of *Home Alone* becomes the most popular child star since Shirley Temple in the 1930s. For all their appearance of affluence, the 1980s may well have a lot in common with the Depression years of the 1930s.

5. CONCLUSION: HOME AND THE SUPEREGO IN REAGAN-BUSH AMERICA

In a review of *Risky Business*, David Denby wrote,

The Hollywood of 1983 is overflowing with liberal filmmakers trying to adapt themselves to a conservative period in American life. Shuffling ideologies and values like second-rate cardsharps, these directors are turning out movies that are confused — even schizoid.

Denby found *Risky Business* to be one of this new breed of 1980s Hollywood pictures, «so confused, so strange, and so openly corrupt» (Denby 62).

Risky Business lightly satirizes but also seems to epitomize 1980s American values concerning home, family, sex, and business, especially the Reagan-era motto that «Greed is good.» One reviewer wrote, «critics who have called *Risky Business* this generation's version of *The Graduate* apparently think it skewers the relationship between capitalism and sex. It doesn't. Like the exploitation genre it tries to rise above, *Risky Business* ultimately endorses its purported target» (Asahina). As Denby notes, «Thus, the hero becomes a man and a successful businessman at the same time; he surmounts his sex and career anxieties by turning himself into a pimp. This is presented, without irony or a hint of criticism, as a triumph of free enterprise» (Denby 62). Andrew Sarris also finds *Risky Business* corrupt, if charming, a movie whose message reduces to: «Long live wealth, success, status, and the best lay that money can buy» (Sarris).

Among the most representative Americans of the 1980s were Donald Trump and Madonna, representing, respectively, the art of the deal and sex as commerce. In *Risky Business*, Joel, an aspiring high school Trump, meets his Madonna in the form of Lana, a teenage prostitute. Joel and Lana become both sexual and business partners as they discover their shared lust for commerce. *Risky Business* substitutes irony and cynicism for social criticism and ends by acquiescing to and propping up a corrupt system. What takes place in the film is not a real rebellion but a kind of fake «Reagan Revolution», a rebellion in the name of a reactionary *status quo*.

One reviewer wrote, «The fabulously successful *Home Alone* combines sadism, sentimentality, and kiddie worship with almost frightening efficiency» (Denby 108). That could perhaps stand as well as an apt description of the Reagan-Bush regime, with its wars in Grenada, Panama, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Lebanon, Libya, and Iraq, and its backlash at home against women, minorities, homosexuals, and the poor; its sentimentality about «Morning in America» and «A Thousand Points of Light»; and its dumbing down of the American public.

The superego is not a monolith that remains constant over time; rather, it changes with the changing structure of our institutions. It is possible to consider a political leader as a kind of externalized superego for the society. Erik Erikson discusses the interplay between leaders and followers and suggests that a leader is «prototypical for his time» and also fulfills «specific needs in the lives of those who followed him» (*Dimensions* 14).

The societal superego represented in both these films is the punitive, corrupt, and reactionary one of the Reagan-Bush regime. This regime, while it publicly represented itself as a law-and-order administration, was actually one of the most lawless in American history. In a similar fashion, *Risky Business* and *Home Alone* feature a teenage pimp and an unsupervised eight-year-old as defenders of the home. Americans have always secretly believed in themselves as innocent children; both Reagan and Bush played into this ingenuousness and belief in the innate virtue of the American. Such beliefs seem to guarantee that Americans not only can do no wrong but also are free to punish wrongdoers. Thus *Home Alone* shows a child scourging criminals the same year that Bush savagely punished the Iraqis.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, the issue of «family values» has been hotly contested in the political, cultural and social scientific arenas. Such hypothetical values are a favorite product of the superego as conceptualized in these decades.

According to Christopher Lasch in *The Minimal Self*, in contemporary American society, the old political divisions of left and right, liberal and conservative have broken down and no longer accurately describe our ideological divisions. Lasch proposes a redefinition of the American political spectrum into three parties, along psychological lines: «the party of the ego», representing liberal rationalism; «the party of the superego», incorporating religious fundamentalism and the Republican right wing; and, «the party of narcissism», including countercultural, new age, gay and lesbian, yuppie, and feminist values (Lasch 197-208). *Risky Business* and *Home Alone*, then, could be said to represent «the party of the superego» crossed with «the party of narcissism». These two movies are a marvelous portrayal of the internal contradictions of the discourse on values in contemporary American society. In these films, the superego, the value of the home — in other words, «family values» — are reaffirmed only through their own destruction. Both children desecrate their homes in order to preserve them.

These are quintessential Reagan-Bush era films, reproducing the split structure of the societal superego of the period. The Reagan and Bush administrations presented themselves as staunch defenders of home and hearth, law and order, invoking family values while devastating millions of American families through neglect of the needs of women, children, minorities, and the poor. It is not by chance that these administrations were marked by the rising numbers of the homeless, who are now as much a staple in American cities as in Third World metropolises. Similarly, the young haves in *Risky Business* and *Home Alone*

defend their homes by trashing them. The superego in America in the 1980s, as these movies show, was fundamentally divided against itself: confused, even schizoid.

WORKS CITED

- Ansen, D. (1983). Review of *Risky Business*. *Newsweek*, 15 August, p. 64.
- Asahina, R. (1983). Review of *Risky Business*. *New Leader*, 19 September, p. 19.
- Benson, Sh. (1983). Review of *Risky Business*. *Los Angeles Times*, 5 August, Calendar, p. 1.
- Bernard, J. (1990). Review of *Home Alone*. *New York Post*, 16 November, p. 47.
- Denby, D. (1983). Review of *Risky Business*. *New York*, 22 August, p. 62.
- Denby, D. (1991). Review of *Home Alone*. *New York*, 25 January, p. 108.
- Doherty, Th. P. (1988). *Teenagers and Teenpics: The Juvenilization of American Movies in the 1950s*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Douglas, M. (1991). The Idea of a Home: A Kind of Space. *Social Research*, 1(58): 281-307.
- Erikson, E. (1963). *Childhood and Society*. Second Edition. NY: Norton.
- Erikson, E. (1974). *Dimensions of a New Identity: The 1973 Jefferson Lectures in the Humanities*. NY: Norton.
- Home Alone* (1990). Twentieth Century Fox. Executive Producers: Mark Levinson, Scott Rosenfelt, and Tarquin Gotch. Producer: John Hughes. Director: Chris Columbus. Screenplay: John Hughes. Music: John Williams. Cast: Macauley Culkin (Kevin); Joe Pesci (Harry); Daniel Stern (Marvin); Roberts Blossom (Marley); John Heard (Kevin's Father); Catherine O'Hara (Kevin's mother).
- Ehrenreich, B. (1989). *Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class*. NY: Pantheon.
- Gelmis, J. (1983). Review of *Risky Business*. *Newsday*, 5 August, Part II, p. 3.
- Lasch, Ch. (1984). *The Minimal Self: Psychic Survival in Troubled Times*. NY: Norton.
- Martin, M. & Porter, M. (1992). *Video Movie Guide 1993*. NY: Ballantine.
- Moore, S. (1990). Review of *Home Alone*. *New Statesman and Society*, 14 December, p. 30.
- Newman, K. (1984). Review of *Risky Business*. *Monthly Film Business*, February, p. 49.
- Rainer, P. (1990). Review of *Home Alone*. *Los Angeles Times*, 16 November, Calendar, p. 6.
- Risky Business* (1983). Warner Brothers. Director: Paul Brickman. Producers: Jon Avnet and Steve Tisch. Screenplay: Paul Brickman. Music: Tangerine Dream. Cast: Tom Cruise (Joel); Rebecca De Mornay (Lana); Bronson Pinchot (Barry); Joe Pantoliano (Guido); Curtis Armstrong (Miles); Nicholas Pryor (Joel's father); Janet Carroll (Joel's mother).
- Sarris, A. (1983). Review of *Risky Business*. *Village Voice*, 16 August, p. 49.

Romantic Relationships Between Psychotherapists and Patients in the Movies (*)

MARIA I. VERA (**)

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines six movies of the last decade that portray love relationships between psychotherapists and patients. These movies were selected because they illustrate beautifully the stereotypes of the therapist-patient relationship, and ethical issues regarding clinical practice. Two of the movies included here date back to 1983, *Lovesick* and *The Man who Loved Women*, while the last four were released in 1992, namely *The Prince of Tides*, *Final Analysis*, *Basic Instinct*, and *Whispers in the Dark*.

The fictional characterization of love relationships in the movies, is one important way in which expectations of patients about mental health professionals are built. Two examples from the author's clinical practice illustrate this point. A psychiatric resident who was attending a didactic seminar on group psychotherapy, emphatically stated that he was skeptical about what he could learn in the course because he did not believe in group therapy. When asked to explain his declaration, he told the class that he had seen many group therapy sessions in the Bob Newhart Show on television and found them to be a useless form of treatment.

In a separate incident, a man with a history of severe and recurrent depression who had not responded to medication, refused electro-convulsive therapy (ECT) as the treatment of choice for his illness because he feared injury of the kind McMurphy experienced in the acclaimed *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975). The efforts of the treatment team to convince him that ECT was no longer administered in that way, nor that it had the sequelae shown in the movie, failed completely. Although ECT was being considered as a last recourse, the fears created by the images of the movie were so strong that they could not be overcome.

These two examples suggest that the images, dilemmas, and values presented in the movies have an impact on the expectations of some therapists and patients regarding therapy. The history of the American cinema, suggests that the values and ideologies as well as the social, economic and political concerns prevalent during a particular period, influence the topics presented in the movies and the resolution of the story.

(*) The term psychotherapist or psychiatrist will be used interchangeably because the movies seldom make distinctions between the disciplines that conduct psychotherapy.

(**) University of Florida, Department of Psychiatry, Health Science Center, P.O. Box 100256, Gainesville, FL 32610-0256, USA.

CHARACTERIZATION OF THE ROMANTIC ROLE OF MALE AND FEMALE PSYCHOTHERAPISTS IN THE MOVIES

Gabbard and Gabbard (1990) identified nineteen films between 1935 and 1987 that showed female therapists falling in love with their male patients, and nine movies in which the male therapist falls in love with a female patient. Their work also noted during that during the same period, only two movies portray female therapists treating male patients effectively, while female patients appeared to be treated effectively by male therapists in thirty three films. Since this work was published, four major American movies deal with the romantic involvement between psychotherapists and patients. These movies are *Whispers in the Dark*, *Final Analysis*, *Basic Instinct*, and *The Prince of Tides*, all released in 1992. These movies, with the exception of *Final Analysis*, cast female therapists in a protagonist role. In none of these movies the therapeutic relationship is showed as being effective and helpful to the patients.

Schneider (1977) has pointed out that American films present the professional role of women as being secondary to their female role, and their professional role as marginal to the romantic role they play. However, in spite of presenting the professional role as subordinated to the essential female role, the female therapists in the movies are committed to their profession to the exclusion of intimate relationships or rearing children (Samuels, 1985). It has also been noted by Gabbard and Gabbard (1990) that virtually all female therapists are portrayed in the movies lacking a stable relationship with a male. They report that in their extensive review, they did find not a single film that showed a husband or a lover for a female therapist. The only romantic involvement that female psychotherapists have is with their patients. The above observations made of the movies in the past 50 years are applicable to *Lovesick* (1983) and *The Man who Loved Women* (1983), but are only partially true about the most recent series.

In *The Man Who Loved Women* (1983) Julie Andrews is cast as a competent analyst who is seriously interested in helping her male patient seeking cure from his addiction for women. During the therapy sessions he discusses the details of his obsessive pursuit of women, initially not regarding his analyst as a woman worth seducing. However, his reaction to his therapist changed dramatically during one therapy session when he noticed the reflection of her legs in a mirror. He immediately takes the initiative to pursue her. The female therapist, a widow, naively falls in love with her patient, even knowing that he is likely to develop the same infatuation for her that he had experienced for other women. Gullibly, she believes that his love for her would cure him of his addiction and decides to fall for his romantic pursuit.

In *Whispers in the Dark* (1992), Anabella Sciorra plays Dr. Ann Hecker a gullible psychotherapist who gets aroused by one of her patient's sexual fantasies and is deeply troubled by her patients' problems. She has difficulty in maintaining the boundaries between personal and professional activity, and distinguishing reality from what her patients disclose to her. Dr. Hecker is surrounded by untrustworthy men, including her mentor, and her current and former boyfriends. As a woman, she is vulnerable while still grieving her father's suicide.

In *Basic Instinct* (1992), Dr. Beth Garner, played by Jeanne Tripplehorn, is a female staff psychologist in the police department who is successfully treating Nick, a detective played by Michael Douglas, for alcoholism and cocaine abuse. She has an established therapeutic and sexual relationship with her patient and feels additionally pulled by the loyalty to the internal affairs unit in the police department. Her ethical standards are highly questionable as she reveals confidential material about his patients to his superiors. Dr. Barnard is an unstable woman with gender identity problems, a history of violent behavior, and ends up being the serial killer being sought by Nick.

In *The Prince of Tides* (1992), Dr. Lowenstein, played by Barbra Streissand, falls

in love and has an affair with her patient's brother, who eventually heals her as she heals him. However, unlike one of her famous predecessors, Dr. Peterson, played by Ingrid Bergman in *Spellbound* (1945), Streissand stays in the profession and his patient returns to his wife and family after the affair ended. Dr. Lowenstein is a transformation of the old female therapist role, because she is not the beginning professional of the 60s movies, she is competent and tough, and she is a sexual woman, with a husband and an adolescent child.

Female therapists in film treat mostly male patients, and their tools are love and brains, but primarily romantic and sexual love (Gabbard & Gabbard, 1987). Interestingly, as these authors note, the male patient ends up curing the female therapist and turning her into a «real woman». This happens in earlier films such as *Spellbound* (1945), *They Might Be Giants* (1971), *Zelig*, (1983), and *The Man Who Loved Women* (1983). In the more recent movies, the relationships of female psychotherapists with significant men are conflictive. This is the case of Dr. Ann Hecker and her boyfriend and her lover in *Whispers in the Dark*, and of Dr. Susan Lowenstein and her violinist husband in *Prince of Tides*. In *Basic Instinct*, Dr. Garner's lonely life seems to evolve around her patient Nick who has problems with alcohol, illicit drugs, a broken marriage and accidental killings in the line of duty. She has an intermittent affair with Nick, but otherwise she is isolated from other significant relationships.

Movies in the 80s and 90s do not portray male therapists in a favorable light either. They are shown as untrustworthy, selfish, and pursuing their own interests and goals. In *Lovesick* (1983), *Final Analysis* (1992), and *Whispers in the Dark* (1992), one can observe the portrayal of male therapists as ambitious, egotistical, and untrustworthy.

Richard Gere, playing Dr. Barr in *Final Analysis* is presented sympathetically, as competent, prominent, handsome, and victimized by attractive and deceptive females. As a professional he is naive, pompous, malicious, abusive, unethical in his behavior, and breaches the boundaries in the relationships with his patients. He goes as far as using his patients for his own goals, and his behavior contributes to the death of two people. When Heather, played by Kim Basinger, his patient's sister, with whom he is having an affair, is accused of smashing her husband's head with a dumbbell, Dr. Barr mounts a criminal defense of temporary insanity, and bargains for her to be committed to a hospital for the criminally insane rather than serving a prison sentence. Because he is infatuated with Heather, he conveniently places himself on her hospital evaluation committee. However, when he finds out that Heather has manipulated him, he has no hesitation in using one of his patients to verify her betrayal. Later, Dr. Barr is caught up in the murder of one of his patients, a young delinquent who was killed while doing him a favor. Fighting to clear himself, Dr. Barr wields his power and political connections to re-commit his ex-lover to the psychiatric facility.

Dr. Leo Green, played by Alan Alda, in *Whispers in the Dark* (1992) is presented initially as an ideal good father, but it turns out that he is not the inspiring judicious man a young professional would need as a guide during the formative years. He is a distressed mentor, with unresolved desires toward his ex-patient and trainee that eventually turn him into a murderer and a rather wretched villain. His criminal activities are portrayed as a direct result of countertransference for his ex-patient Dr. Hecker. He ends up being the criminal in the movie and he is punished for his villainy.

Male therapists in the movies, in contrast to their female counterparts, are shown as having other intimate relationships in their lives. Nonetheless, these contacts do not deter them from the romantic pursuit of their female patients. Their professional lives are depicted as successful, but ultimately they harm rather than cure their patients.

ETHICAL ISSUES IN THE MOVIES

From an ethical perspective, the relationship between the doctor and the patient is

considered a «sacred» trust deriving from the traditional attribution of priestly features to the physician role. This same characteristic has been attributed by Simon (1987) to the relationship between the patient and the psychotherapist. The legal tradition is that this relationship is a fiduciary one, with the implication that a professional who holds the trust of a client enjoys a distinct power advantage. Given the power differential that characterizes these relationships, manipulation and exploitation of the patient are more than distinctly possible when they are sexualized. It has been suggested that psychotherapy patients are most vulnerable to sexual exploitation due to the intimate nature of the exchange involved and the longevity of the relationship that typically develops between therapist and patient. The clinical literature strongly supports the notion that the sexual involvement between patients and therapists is a most flagrant form of abuse on the part of the therapist (Schoener, Milgrom, Gonsiorek, et al., 1989; Gabbard, 1989; Pope, 1988; Simon, 1991).

In the movies, female therapists, are portrayed as having sex with their patients more frequently than male therapists. Yet, in real life, the opposite is true. Reliable data on the incidence of these relationships are not available to this date because this information is seldom volunteered. However, available figures indicate that 7 to 10 percent of male and 1 to 3 percent of female therapists report having had sexual intercourse with one or more patients (Schoener, Milgrom, Gonsiorek et al., 1989; Burgess, 1986; Gabbard, 1989; Kardener, Fuller, & Mensch, 1973; Gartrell, Herman, Olarte, et al., 1986; Herman, Gartrell, Olarte, et al, 1987). The therapists who admit having had sex with patients are often repeat offenders with some surveys reporting over 50% of male therapists acknowledging involvement with more than one patient.

Gabbard and Gutheil (1993) argue that non-sexual boundary violations in the therapy situation may lead to sexual boundary violations. They cite for example, that deliberately failing to bill for services, scheduling extra-therapy meetings, treating outside the area of expertise, having dual relationships with patients, infantilizing the patient, or using medications improperly, may eventually result in romantic involvement given right circumstances. In the movies this violation of boundaries abound. *The Prince of Tides* (1992), is a story about a troubled man, played by Nick Nolte, whose twin sister Savannah has attempted suicide. Tom travels from South Carolina to New York to assist Dr. Lowenstein, his sister's psychiatrist, played by Barbra Streissand, in unraveling the family secrets and understand her suicidal behavior. During his conversations with the psychiatrist, he recreates his abusive childhood, and releases his own suppressed frustrations and pain.

If the notion of boundary violations proposed by Gabbard and Gutheil (1993), is applied to Dr. Lowenstein in *The Prince of Tides*, it is obvious that she goes out of her way to accommodate Tom in her very busy schedule, and she does it for free. It is not clear why a Park Avenue psychiatrist would treat a poor writer who most likely could not afford her fees. Further, she devotes long hours to her patients's brother to obtain information about her past. It is not explicit in the movie why Savannah becomes so important for Dr. Lowenstein, but it is remarkable that in the movie her treatment gets lost in the shuffle. Dr. Lowenstein's unremunerated sessions with Tom, which evolve into regular therapy and then into an affair, become the focus of the plot.

Dr. Lowenstein is a sad woman, in an unfulfilling marriage. As in previous plots, she needs healing as much as her patient. Thus, it is not surprising that she begins to use Tom to meet her own needs: to fight the loneliness and alienation from her husband and the helplessness about her rebellious son. She breaks the rules of having a dual relationship with Tom, invites him for dinner, asks him to coach her son in football, and ends up having an affair with him.

In their relationship there was a gradual violation of the non-sexual boundaries that characterize the professional relationship between therapists and patients. The trespassing of these barriers changed the nature of the relationship turning the therapeutic situation

into a friendship in which Dr. Lowenstein's needs became the focus of their relationship, and not her patient's. In *Basic Instinct* the therapeutic relationship between Dr. Garner and her patient Nick is complicated because both work in the same agency. It can be speculated that this dual connection may have fostered a romantic involvement.

THE PRESENCE OF A MENTOR IN MOVIES

The use of a mentor is a familiar recourse in movies where therapists fall in love with their patients. In *The Man who Loved Women* (1983), the psychiatrist played by Julie Andrews, consults her former training analyst, with whom she has a daughter-father relationship. Her mentor warns her of the dangers of falling in love with her patient, but when he realizes that she has become deeply involved with him, he suggests that she end therapy and become his lover. The film portrays this as a perfectly sensible option for the therapist, and disregards the serious ethical boundary violation it represents, not to mention the potential damage to the patient.

Lovesick (1983), is the story of Dr. Saul Benjamin, played by Dudley Moore, a successful Park Avenue psychoanalyst who falls in love with a young female patient named Cloe, played by Elizabeth McGovern. When his attraction for Cloe develops, he loses interests in his other patients, makes amorous overtures to Cloe during the therapy session and follows her when she leaves his office. Troubled by his feelings, he consults with his former training analyst. The mentor, played by John Houston, falls asleep in the middle of the consultation. When fellow analysts reprimand Dr. Benjamin for his behavior, they appear far more concerned with financial concerns and the possible harm to the profession than with the impact that the affair may have on the therapist or the patient. These mentors are portrayed as old-fashioned, greedy, rigid, and unsympathetic toward the therapist in love. Dr. Barr, in *Final Analysis* (1992) consults with a colleague about his romantic feelings toward his patient's sister. This colleague initially thinks that sleeping with the married sister of the patient is unethical, but when he sees Heather, a beautiful attractive young woman, he grants a tacit approval to the affair.

The therapist struggling with countertransference feelings, consults a mentor figure to obtain guidance regarding the management of the feelings toward the patient. Invariably, in all the movies reviewed, the mentor is a man, a former therapist, a colleague, or an ex training analyst. He consistently fails to convince the therapist to cease the romantic involvement with the patient. In most movies, the mentors are devoted to the consulting therapist, and although in principle they disapprove of the therapist's behavior, they eventually condone the romantic involvement. The role of the mentor is trivialized and mocked in the movies, and the public is left with the distinct message that the consultation with the mentor is of little value in preventing further involvement with the patient. Granted that in reality may be true sometimes, the consistent portrayal of an ineffective mentor raises concerns about the biases manifest in the movies.

IMPACT OF THE SEXUAL INVOLVEMENT ON THE PATIENT

The issue of whether the romantic involvement with their therapists actually damages patients has been strongly debated in the clinical literature. Some earlier writers have argued about the potential benefits of sexual relationships with patients (McCartney, 1966; Shepard, 1971), but to this date there is no credible evidence that this contact is in and of itself curative under any circumstance. However, it has been repeatedly documented by recent research that when the romance between psychotherapist and patient is pursued, the patient

may be harmed psychologically and in her other relationships (Pope, 1988; Roth & Lebowitz, 1988; Durre, 1980; Bouthoutsos et al., 1983; Feldman-Summers & Jones, 1984; Sonne et al., 1985)

The potential harm to patients having sexual contact with their therapists is not addressed directly in the movies, but several recent movies resolve their plot in such a way that patients suffer as a result of their involvement with their therapist. In *Lovesick* (1983), Dr. Benjamin makes a feeble attempt of ending the affair with his patient Cloe claiming that he is concerned about hurting her «eventually». When he presents his thought to Cloe, she became furious, she already had lost her therapist, and she would be harmed further, she said, by losing her lover. The argument seemed convincing enough to the therapist. The issue of harm to the patient is dropped and the movie ends suggesting that the lovers found happiness together.

In *Final Analysis* (1992), Dr. Barr's romantic and sexual involvement with Heather eventually led her to an involuntary commitment to a hospital for the criminally insane. In *Whispers in the Dark* (1992), the romantic feelings of Dr. Green for his ex-patient and pupil Dr. Hecker turned from obsessive love to murderous behavior. In *Basic Instinct* (1992), Dr. Garners's romance with Nick placed him in a near death situation.

In real life, sexual involvement between patients and psychotherapists do not normally result in murder or near death situations. However, as a rule patients, who become sexually involved with their therapists are harmed by the violation of trust and the breach of the therapeutic contract. Further, the patients have to deal with the emotional and social impact that a romantic affair may have in their love relationships.

IMPACT OF THE SEXUAL INVOLVEMENT ON THE PSYCHOTHERAPISTS

Adverse consequences for the therapist stemming from the sexual involvement with a patient are not shown in the movies. On the contrary, female therapists get cured from their unfulfilled lives and unhappiness; male therapies are successful in using their patients to obtain their own goals. This a gross misrepresentation of reality. Therapists who violate sexual boundaries in the therapy situation, are often denounced by their own patients, or colleagues to professional associations, or licensing boards. Depending on the severity of the offense, clinical practices may be restricted, and in some cases, the professional license is suspended. For some, sexual misconduct with a patient may constitute an ordeal in terms of psychological turmoil, limitations on clinical practice, ostracism by colleagues, financial catastrophe and, frequently, abandonment by the partner who feels betrayed by the affair. Further, in seven states in the United States, sexual involvement with a patient constitutes a felony, thus, offending therapists may also face criminal charges for their unethical behavior.

In the movies there is no mention of sanctions for the misconduct of the therapist from the professional community. Consultations with the colleagues and mentors regarding the unethical behavior of the therapist, are presented as a mock. In *Lovesick* the psychiatrist is displayed as a hero for defying the regulatory system and for having the courage to abandon his profession to pursue his love. Dr. Benjamin rejects restrictive norms and succeeds in doing so, finding total satisfaction in the relationship with his patient-lover.

Movies tend to portray romantic involvements between patients and psychotherapists as «curing», «healing», «liberating», and, in general, beneficial to both patient and therapist. Contrary to film mythology, these encounters are tremendously destructive for patients and therapists. Most patients suffer serious psychological damage as a result of becoming sexually involved with their psychotherapists. They may be harmed by the betrayal of trust, by psychological abandonment — usually when sex begins, therapy ends —, social isolation which results from the patient's shame and obsessive preoccupations with the therapist.

Those patients who decide to disclose the involvement are subject to disbelief, anger, rejection of others, and also may face the rigors of legal redress.

IMPACT OF THE MOVIES ON THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF PSYCHOTHERAPY AND PSYCHOTHERAPISTS

Gabbard and Gabbard (1985, 1987) and Irving Schneider (1987) have raised question whether the public may be affected in their views and biases by the images of mental health professionals portrayed in the movies. Controversy also exists among clinical practitioners about the degree to which movies affect the image of psychotherapists given the great variety of styles and approaches to psychotherapy. A study by Schill, Harsch and Ritter (1990) has formally addressed this issue.

These researchers studied 57 women and 57 men from an introductory psychology course at Southern Illinois University. They tested six assumptions that the public might make after seeing the movie *Lovesick*.

These researchers found that the subjects in the study had more erroneous beliefs about psychiatry after seeing this movie than before watching it. The subjects were more likely to believe after seeing the movie that an analyst's sexual feelings can be real love, that sexual relations between patient and analyst are not so damaging, that consulting with another professional is an ineffective procedure, that the mental health professionals prohibit sexual affairs because it looks bad for the profession, and that psychoanalytic principles of ethics that prohibit sexual involvement with patients are outmoded and repressive. After seeing the film, women also believed that it is more cruel for an analyst to terminate treatment than to continue the sexual affair.

CONCLUSIONS

It is not the intent of this paper to suggest that the movies should always present true to life portrayals of psychotherapists. The stories depicted in the movies are fictional accounts with the main goal of entertaining the audiences. However, the movies are a powerful media that strongly influences the shaping of expectations and views of the public. The question of whether romantic relationships between psychotherapists and patients in the movies are only distortions of the reality or true reflections of a professionals reality is hard to answer. It can be argued that these are not distortions, inasmuch as psychotherapists break ethical rules of practice. However, these relationships in the movies are distortions in the sense that they misrepresent the average, well motivated psychotherapists, with high ethical standards who appropriately deal with erotic feelings toward their patients. Audiences have no way of knowing if the psychotherapists characterized in the movies truly represent the profession or are merely fictional characters.

Regardless of the answer to the previous question, this author supports the notion that the public may develop erroneous beliefs about psychotherapy and its practitioners from watching movies. The findings of the study reported above, endorse the position proposed in the introduction. The fictional therapists portrayed in the movies are likely to influence the shaping of attitudes and expectations toward psychotherapists and psychotherapy. The systematic examination of movies may uncover cultural patterns that may be useful for practicing therapists to determine the expectations of therapy. Psychotherapists know that patients' expectations about the therapeutic relationship are important in the outcome of therapy. The establishment of what Erik Erikson calls a «therapeutic contract» can

be conceived of as a process of negotiation and mutual education between therapists and patients in order to establish realistic expectations of each other.

REFERENCES

- Bouthoutsos, J. (1986). *Sexual Intimacies between Therapists and Patients*. New York: Praeger.
- Bouthoutsos, J., Holroyd, H., Lerman, et al. (1983). Sexual intimacies between psychotherapists and patients. *Professional Psychology Research and Practice*, 14: 185-196.
- Burgess, A.W. & Hartman, C.R. (Eds.) (1986). *Sexual Exploitation of Patients by Health Professionals*. New York: Praeger.
- Durre, L. (1980). Comparing romantic and therapeutic relationships. In *On Love and Loving: Psychological Perspective on the Nature and Experience of Romantic Love* (K. S. Pope, Ed.), San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Feldman-Summers, S. & Jones, G. (1984). Psychological impacts of sexual contact between therapists or other health care practitioners and their clients. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 52: 1054-1061.
- Gabbard, G. (Ed.) (1989). *Sexual Exploitation in Professional Relationships*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.
- Gabbard, G.O. & Gabbard, K. (1985). Countertransference in the movies. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 72: 172-184.
- Gabbard, K. & Gabbard, G.O. (1987). *Psychiatry and the Cinema*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Gartrell N., Herman, J.J., Olarte, S. et al. (1986). Psychiatrist-patient sexual contact: Results of a national survey, I: Prevalence. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 143: 1126-1131.
- Gutheil, T.G. & Gabbard, G.O. (1993). The concept of boundaries in clinical practice: Theoretical and risk management dimensions. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 150: 188-196.
- Hankins, G. C., Vera, M. I., Barnard, G. W. & Herkov, M. J. Patient-therapist sexual involvement: A review of clinical and research data. Accepted for publication in *Bulletin of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*.
- Herman, J.L., Gartrell, N., Olarte, S.S., et al. (1987). Psychiatrist-patient sexual contact: Results of a national survey, II: Psychiatrist's attitudes. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 144: 164-169.
- Kardener, S.H., Fuller, M. & Mensch, I.N. (1973). A survey of physicians attitudes and practices regarding erotic and nonerotic contact with patients. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 130: 1077-1081.
- McCartney, J.L. (1966). Overt transference. *Journal of Sex Research* 2: 227-237.
- Pope, K.S (1988). How clients are harmed by sexual contact with mental health professionals: The syndrome and its development. *Journal of Counseling Development*, 67: 222-226.
- Pope, K.S., Schill, J.T., Harsch, J. & Ritter, K. (1990). Countertransference in the movies: Effects on beliefs about psychiatric treatment. *Psychological Reports*, 67: 399-402.
- Roth, S. & Lebowitz, L. (1988). The experience of sexual trauma. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 1: 79-107.
- Rutter, P. (1989). *Sex in the Forbidden Zone*. New York: Fawcett Crest.
- Samuels, L. (1985). Female psychotherapists as portrayed in film. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis*, 13: 367-368.
- Schneider, I. (1977). Images of the mind: Psychiatry in the commercial film. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 134: 613-620.
- Schneider, I. (1985). The psychiatrist in the movies: The first fifty years. In *Psychoanalytic study of the literature* (J. Reppen & M. Charney, Eds.), pp.: 53-67, Hillsdale, N.J.: Analytic Press.
- Schneider, I. (1987). The theory and practice of movie psychiatry. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 144: 996-1002.
- Schoener, G.R., Milgrom, J.H., Gonsiorek, J.C., Luepker, E.T., & Conroe, R.M. (1989). *Psychotherapists' Sexual Involvement With Clients: Intervention and Prevention*. Minneapolis: Walk-In Counseling Center.
- Shepard, M. (1971). *The Love Treatment: Sexual Intimacy Between Patients and Psychotherapists*. New York: Peter H. Wyden.
- Simon, R.I. (1987). The practice of psychotherapy: Legal liabilities of an «impossible» profession. *Review of Clinical Psychiatry and the Law* (Vol 2), Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.
- Simon, R.I. (1991). Psychological injury caused by boundary violation precursors to therapist-patient sex. *Psychiatric Annals*, 21: 614-619.
- Sonne, J., Meyer, B., Borys, D. & Marshall, V. (1985). Client's reactions to sexual intimacy in therapy. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 55: 183-189.

Ms. Sammler's Planet: Margaret Atwood, Saul Bellow and Joanna Russ. Rescue the Female Child's Story (*)

MARLEEN BARR (**)

Paradise, the film written and directed by Mary Agnes Donoghue, portrays a female child's power. Nine-year-old Billie Pike is more feisty than her new friend, Willard Young, who is one year her senior. Unlike Willard, Billie is not afraid to walk atop the railing of an extremely high observation tower. Her self-confident approach to the world towers over his. Willard does take the initiative to save a marriage, however. The second rescue in *Paradise* (a female artist helps Billie when she teaches her to respect herself and her talent) was almost edited out.¹ If the girl realizes her creative potential, unlike her powerless mother, the adult Billie might not be forced to attain security by marrying a man she does not love. The artist informs Billie that women do not have to sacrifice the power, creativity, and independent spirit which often characterizes girlhood.

Paradise shares something in common with feminist utopian literature. The film depicts Billie in terms of the SF trope Joanna Russ calls «the rescue of the female child». Russ states:

Puberty is an awakening into sexual adulthood for both sexes. According to Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*, it is also the time when the prison bars of «femininity», enforced by law and custom, shut the girl in for good.... Feminist utopias offer an alternative model of female puberty, one which allows the girl to move into a full and free adulthood.... The last thing (say the tales) that matter for the adolescent girl is that she be awakened by a kiss; what is crucial is that she be free.... The rescue of the female child speaks to an adolescence that is still the rule rather than the exception for women, one made painful by the closing in of sexist restrictions, sexual objectification, or even outright persecution. (Russ 80, 82)

This essay argues that Margaret Atwood and Saul Bellow rescue the female child's story.

(*) An earlier version of this essay has appeared in Marleen Barr, *Lost in Space: Probiny Feminist Science Fiction and Beyond*, University of North Carolina Press, 1993.

(**) Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Department of English, College of Arts and Sciences, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061-0112, USA.

¹ The film's producer, Patrick Palmer, provided this information when he addressed the Media Educators Association in New York City on September 14, 1991.

Atwood's *Cat's Eye* and Bellow's *Mr. Sammler's Planet* and *A Theft*, texts which note the absence of girls' stories from most fictional narratives, adhere to feminist SF's rescue of the female child trope.² *Cat's Eye* concerns a woman's retelling of her childhood tale. *A Theft*, and its predecessor *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, assert that the female child's story has been stolen.

Julia Kristeva's *Strangers To Ourselves* can link these three works to each other as well as to the feminist SF texts Russ discusses. Kristeva's discussion of Freud's definition of the uncanny provides a means to situate *Cat's Eye*, *Sammler*, and *A Theft* within the fantastic. She discusses placing the strange within the familiar, the *unheimlich* within the *heimlich*:

Thus, in the very word *heimlich*, the familiar and intimate are reversed into their opposites, brought together with the contrary meaning of «uncanny strangeness» harbored in *unheimlich*. Such an immanence of the strange within the familiar is considered as an etymological proof of the psychoanalytic hypothesis according to which «the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar»... Consequently therefore, that which *is* strangely uncanny would be that which *was* (the past tense is important) familiar and, under certain conditions (which ones?), emerges. (Kristeva 182-183; Freud 17: 220)

A woman's suppressed, untold childhood story is at once *heimlich* and *unheimlich* — simultaneously familiar, intimate, and uncannily strange. This story, a tale of the strange within the familiar, includes that which *is* as well as that which *was*. It also involves a frightening narrative journey back to the long familiar past which, under conditions of patriarchal repression, emerges in the present as an uncanny strangeness.

Hence, like some feminist SF authors, Atwood and Bellow unite feminism with the fantastic and call attention to stories patriarchy does not want to hear. While feminist SF authors envision alternatives to patriarchal social constructions, Atwood implies that the courage to articulate these alternatives emerges from the sense of self women form during childhood. She defies impediments which mitigate against women who wish to tell their childhood stories. Bellow is in sympathy with her defiance. *Cat's Eye*, *Sammler* and *A Theft*, like most feminist SF texts, are examples of feminist fabulation which critique patriarchal master narratives. Feminist SF writers discuss «that which *is*» in terms of what might be; Atwood and Bellow discuss «that which *was*» in terms of adult women who reclaim their strong childhood selves. These writers echo Emily Hancock's notion that «rediscovering the girl within appears to be the key to women's identity... the real fertilization of the female is held in coming back to the girl she is in the first place — rather than in the penetration of the male» (Hancock 16, 181). Feminist SF writers rescue the female child; Atwood and Bellow rescue the female child's stolen story.

In the manner of feminist SF, Atwood and Bellow, by linking women with the alien, communicate their concern about the nullification of female power. Feminist SF writers rescue daughters who reside on different planets; Atwood and Bellow define daughters' stories as Other in relation to patriarchal master narratives. Their definition implies that the adult woman functions as an alien in relation to her society. Separated from her childhood, she suffers from being a stranger who lacks a background known to her community. She is the powerless foreigner Kristeva describes: «Your speech has no past and will have no power over the future of the group: why should one listen to it? You do not have enough status — 'no social standing' — to make your speech useful... one will forget you in order

² C. J. Cherryh's *Rusalka* is a more recent work about rescuing the female child. *Rusalka* is the ghost of a murdered girl who seeks to exist by drawing life energy from living things. Her father and a young man who loves her attempt to bring her back to life.

to go on with serious matters» (Kristeva 20-21). The adult woman's silenced childhood story makes it impossible for her to wield sufficient power to construct feminist futures. Atwood and Bellow create textual correctives to the silencing which functions as a means for patriarchy to perpetuate itself.

It is not surprising that Atwood and Bellow create works which share the feminist SF writer's agenda. These mainstream writers, after all, are outside the United States culture which dominates North America. Atwood, a Canadian woman, and Bellow, a Canadian Jew, are respectively excluded from hegemonic patriarchal and Protestant culture. Atwood and Bellow, who position women as foreigners, are themselves the Other.³ Their experiences regarding juxtaposing the *heimlich* and the *unheimlich* allow them to emphasize a version of the uncanny involving the theft of women's childhood story and the effort to return it. I read *Cat's Eye* as an uncanny text which appropriately follows Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, a feminist dystopia. I interpret *Sammler* and *A Theft* as advocating the need to tell the female child's story. In other words, I position two novels written by Bellow as handmaids to *Cat's Eye*. When connecting these mainstream texts to feminist SF, I unite women's and men's stories in terms of a feminist agenda — and I retard efforts to marginalize feminist SF.

«WHAT 'FAMILIAR'? WHAT 'PAST'?» (KRISTEVA 183)

Kristeva states that «uncanniness occurs when the boundaries between *imagination* and *reality* are erased» (Kristeva 188). In *Cat's Eye*, Atwood erases these boundaries by evoking the uncanny female childhood story. *Cat's Eye*, instead of signaling Atwood's turn from the fantastic to the real, is an appropriate speculative follower to *The Handmaid's Tale*. Atwood's more recent novel contains an equivalent to the image of her handmaid attired in a red dress and white head covering: a painting of a woman clad in a black garment who mourns her lost childhood story. In this self-portrait (called «Unified Field Theory»), created by protagonist Elaine Risley, a woman named the «Virgin of Lost Things» is «dressed in black, with a black hood or veil covering her hair» (Atwood 430). She holds a large Cat's Eye marble with a blue center. The painting's background includes the lower half of the moon seen underneath a bridge. Its night sky is described in this way: «Star upon star, red, blue, yellow, and white, swirling nebulae, galaxy upon galaxy: the universe, in its incandescence and darkness» (Atwood 430). The simultaneous presence of light and dark characterizes the painted female figure as well as the universe: pinpoints of light shine on her black dress and her face is partly in shadow. The «Virgin of Lost Things» represents an adult woman's initiation into her lost childhood story, a story illuminated when a «strange light then shines on that obscurity that was in you» (Kristeva 21). The marble the Virgin holds, an object derived from her childhood, pictures a woman's whole life story (or, world) and addresses the darkness the painting includes. Because a cat sees more efficiently in the dark than a human, the Cat's Eye marble might bring to mind seeing differently.

Cat's Eye enables readers to see more efficiently in the dark of women's lost childhood story. This novel and «Unified Field Theory» concern women defining their lives as round, marble-like, spatial dimensions instead of straight lines. When regarding her experiences from this different perspective, a woman better admits the light which can illuminate her

³ The biographical information provided in the Penguin edition of *Mr. Sammler's Planet* and the Bantam edition of *Cat's Eye* emphasize that the authors spent a large amount of time living as foreigners. The Bantam edition states: «Throughout her life, Ms. Atwood has traveled extensively, living for periods of time in England, Germany, France, Italy, and the United States.» The Penguin edition states: «Bellow grew up and taught in the United States and has also lived in Paris and traveled extensively in Europe.»

entire life. She removes the shadow on her face which represents her eclipsed, attenuated life story. She can re-see her life as a complete rounded entity rather than as a partly illuminated moon. Instead of remaining totally dark and untold, women's uncanny childhood stories can function as incandescent bridges to the universe of powerful female adulthood. Or, in Hancock's words, «the task of a woman's lifetime boils down to reclaiming the authentic identity she'd embodied as a girl» (Hancock 2).

It is necessary to connect Elaine's paintings to her childhood experience in order to understand why the word «eminence» (Atwood 434) appropriately describes her artistic achievement. Two of Elaine's well-known paintings depict Mrs. Smeath, the mother of a childhood friend, and depend upon an exact memory of this woman. Elaine explains:

I know that in real life the bloomers on Mrs. Smeath are an intense indigo blue that took me weeks to get right, a blue that appears to radiate a dark and stifling light. I scan the first paragraph [of the Toronto newspaper]: «Eminent artist Elaine Risley returns to hometown Toronto this week for a long overdue retrospective». *Eminent*, the mausoleum word. I might as well climb into the marble slab right now and pull the bedsheet over my head (Atwood 242).

Here, again, a new way of seeing women's dark and uncanny childhood story emphasizes that story. Dark childhood memory illuminates both Elaine's art and adulthood, causes her adult story to resemble a round blue marble — not a linear marble slab which marks an adult woman's living death within patriarchal myths.

Cat's Eye begins with the information about lines and time Elaine's brother Stephen provides: «Time is not a line but a dimension, like the dimensions of space» (Atwood 3). Elaine's return to her hometown, Toronto, involves entering a new dimension, a SF landscape. When re-entering the space she inhabited as a child, Elaine re-sees her childhood — thwarts time's linear components. She describes this space's present form as a science fiction panorama: «Outside, the skyline has changed.... This is the sort of architecture you used to see only in science fiction comic books, and seeing it pasted flat against the monotone lake-sky I feel I've stepped not forward in time but sideways, into a universe of two dimensions» (Atwood 388). Against this background of SF architecture, a two dimensional universe accessed via stepping sideways in time consists of Elaine's adult present and childhood past. From this dual perspective, she rewrites her brother's words, causes them to refer to the childhood story she articulates as an adult.

Cat's Eye recasts Stephen's professional discourse; «Unified Field Theory» redraws the night sky Stephen describes. The painting sheds different light upon Stephen's notion that when

we gaze at the night sky... we are looking at fragments of the past. Not only in the sense that the stars as we see them are echoes of events that occurred light-years distant in time and space: everything up there and indeed everything down here is a fossil, a leftover from the first picoseconds of creation, when the universe crystallized out from the primal homogeneous plasma. In the first picosecond, conditions were scarcely imaginable. If we could travel in a time machine back toward this explosive moment, we would find ourselves in a universe replete with energies we do not understand and strangely behaving forces distorted beyond recognition. The farther back we probe, the more extreme these conditions become. Current experimental facilities can take us only a short way along this path. Beyond that point, theory is our only guide. After this he continues, in a language that sounds like English but is not, because I don't understand one word of it. (Atwood 352)

Atwood and Elaine redirect, according to SF imagery, the male gaze toward the night

sky Stephen describes. Elaine looks back at fragments of her past, her childhood. Like the stars, her adulthood and her art echo past events. Like a time machine, she travels back to childhood moments and locates the energies and strange forces of an uncanny, distorted childhood universe. Or, in Hancock's words, «the women in my study came fully into their own and became fully themselves only when they recaptured the girl they'd been in the first place» (Hancock 1). Feminist theorizing about women's childhood provides a guide for women who embark upon this path backward.

Elaine reconceives Stephen's pictures as well as his language. When he shows slides to illuminate his lecture, the «room darkens and the screen lights up, and there is the universe, or parts of it: the black void punctuated by galaxies and stars, white-hot, blue-hot, red» (Atwood 352). «Unified Field Theory», with its aforementioned «star upon star, red, blue, yellow, and white, swirling nebulae, galaxy upon galaxy... the universe in its incandescence and darkness» (Atwood 430), rerepresents the universe Stephen's slides portray. Elaine's own simultaneous psychological light and dark, drawn according to understanding the present in terms of the uncanny past, illuminates another part of the universe projected on the darkened room's lit screen. Her effort to locate her childhood friend Cordelia does not form the crux of this newly highlighted portion of the universe. It does not matter that Elaine never finds Cordelia in the present. Her own identity is most important.

Unlike Shakespeare's Cordelia, Elaine has neither sisters nor a need to rebel against her father. He is a forest-insect field researcher and professor who ensconces her within the natural world. (In the manner of Benn Crader, the botanist protagonist of Bellow's *More Die of Heartbreak*, Elaine's father is a good guy who eschews patriarchal science). It is Elaine's brother who functions as the nemesis located within her early childhood universe. Stephen, who has «the ears of the green-tinged, oval-headed aliens from outer space he draws with his colored pencils» (Atwood 22-23), is the male whose discourse alienates her. Elaine's response: she appropriates her brother's spoken and pictorial texts and uses them to articulate her own childhood story. Elaine, within her family, is most threatened by the brother, not the father. Stephen's death liberates Elaine from what Juliet Flower MacCannell describes as «what we have in the place of the patriarchy[,...] the Regime of the Brother» (MacCannell 30).⁴ Elaine assumes her brother's place in terms of her own artistic regime.

Plane hijackers kill Stephen precisely because he is male: «women and the children have all been allowed off [the plane], but he [Stephen] is not a woman or a child. Everyone left on the plane is a man» (Atwood 411). Backgrounded by the scene outside the plane — the «dun landscape alien as the moon» (Atwood 411) — the hijackers kill the alien story Elaine's brother tells. They murder his discourse, articulated in words Elaine does not understand, about a universe which, in relation to female childhood, appears as an alien landscape. The brother's story is silenced; the sister's story will continue. In Elaine's words, «What I thought about then [while identifying Stephen's body] was the space twin, the one who went on an interplanetary journey and returned in a week to find his brother ten years older. Now I will get older, I thought. And he will not» (Atwood 414). Elaine's story, a space twin of her brother's story, will progress on its own. Ending Stephen's male story makes space for women's art about women's whole self, a product of reclaiming

⁴ MacCannell states: «The time has come to subject the hidden superego to a radical critique: the society formed by it and which it forms is not one of the fathers, not one ruled by elders, but by sons. Unfortunately they have managed to act as sovereigns... rather than 'well-meaning' Oedipal patriarchs» (MacCannell 2). Her book analyzes «the occupation of the 'superegoic' position not by a neutral, third person, but by a 'He', the Brother, who must be recognized as such and whose tendency to exercise power without responsibility must be examined critically» (MacCannell 5). She also addresses «the suppression of the 'sister' who replaces the mother as the primary other woman whom the new 'man' must reject in order to become a man» (MacCannell 5). The adult Elaine, freed from the regime of the brother, searches for Cordelia, the childhood friend who is her «sister».

women's childhood story. As a child, Stephen used «red and yellow and orange» (Atwood 30) pencils to draw men's stories. These stories are about «wars involving explosions and tanks and spaceships. Young Elaine used these same colors to 'draw girls'» (Atwood 30). *Cat's Eye* reveals the picture young Elaine draws. This novel enables readers to peer behind the «Girls door» (Atwood 85) Elaine and her female friends use during school recess, a portal to the separate world girls inhabit. The vision behind the «Girls door» has nothing to do with writing the universe in the manner of young Stephen. He uses «pee» to form the words «Mars» and «Jupiter» in beach sand. (Atwood 72)

Elaine, who shares part of her childhood story with Stephen, can tell her own version in terms of herself. In other words, despite her memories of Stephen's numerous marbles, she focuses upon her own marble: «'Remember all those marbles Stephen used to collect?'... But this one was mine. I look into it, and see my life entire» (Atwood 420). Stephen and his childhood are not indelible. His urine-created youthful text quickly becomes blank sand. He buries his marbles and the treasure map which describes their location (Atwood 67). Dirt prematurely covers his grave. Elaine's painting called «Cat's Eye» is «a self-portrait» (Atwood 430) depicting adult and young versions of Elaine surrounded by three childhood friends. Their «faces [are] shadowed, against a field of snow» (Atwood 43). The picture, unlike Stephen, endures. It portrays shadowed uncanny female childhood's ability to empower female adulthood according to woman-centered terms.

Stephen teaches Elaine to see in the dark in terms of men's stories, in terms of war: «Stephen is teaching me to see in the dark, as commandos do... You can't use a flashlight; you have to stay still in the darkness, waiting until your eyes become accustomed to no light... now I can see in the dark» (Atwood 27). Elaine, however, chooses to see in the dark in her own way: «now it's full night, clear, moonless and filled with stars... Echoes of light, shining out of the midst of nothing. It's old light, and there's not much of it. But it's enough to see by» (Atwood 445). The eclipsed moon which pictures her shadowy childhood story disappears. It is erased by the light shining from her retold childhood story which was once defined as «nothing». Although this light is old, it is enough for her to see how her childhood applies to her adulthood. Elaine is not overshadowed by young Stephen's story. In the manner of a cat's eye, she has enough light to see into the uncanny childhood dark — differently.

«WHO IS THE HEPHEW? THE PHILOSOPHER'S OPPONENT OR HIS HIDDEN SELF?» (KRISTEVA 134): QUESTIONING THE QUESTIONS⁵

Kristeva's questions apply to the seemingly sole important aspect of *Mr. Sammler's Planet*: men's stories, the story of Artur Sammler's relationship with Elya Gruner, his nephew who financially supports him in America. *Sammler* is, of course, a precursor to the uncle/nephew tale related in *More Die of Heartbreak*. What is not so apparent is that *Sammler* anticipates the loss of the female child's story depicted in *A Theft*. The importance of the female child's story becomes clear, in regard to *Sammler*, after questioning Kristeva's question. Who is Sammler's nephew? This question should not be asked at the expense of another, more important, question: Who is Sammler's daughter? Is she Sammler's opponent or his hidden self? Who is this literally hidden self, this hidden daughter named Shula?

Although *Sammler* provides details about how Sammler emerges from a mass grave filled with Jewish victims of Nazism, the novel contains no such details about Shula's experience as a hidden child housed in a convent. Shula is «the opposite other», Sammler's «nocturnal double» who also «comes to the surface» (Kristeva 134). Even though readers see none

⁵ Kristeva refers to Denis Diderot's *Rameau's Nephew*, written in 1762.

of Shula's childhood in the nunnery, Bellow does not have «nunavit» (the name of a conference location in *The Handmaid's Tale*) in regard to recognizing the importance of her buried story. *Sammler* — which begins by describing a theft perpetrated by a black pickpocket and concerns a stolen manuscript called *The Future of the Moon* — like *Cat's Eye* and feminist SF, concerns the rescue of the female child.

Sammler who, in Shula's opinion, would benefit from reading *The Future of the Moon*, is an alien. He is advised to «speak like a prophet, like from another world» (Bellow Sammler 122). Sammler emerges from a mass grave in Poland and arrives in Manhattan as a refugee from the world of foreign living dead. He has «been inside death» (Bellow Sammler 273). Kristeva explains that the «fantasy of being buried alive induces the feeling of uncanny strangeness, accompanied by 'a certain lasciviousness' the phantasy, I mean, of intra-uterine existence» (Kristeva 185; Freud 244). Being buried alive is exceedingly strange and uncanny for Sammler — and his burial is no fantasy. His adult intra-uterine experience involves an inside relation to death. The previously buried Sammler shares the experience of his daughter who, as a woman denied opportunities to articulate her hidden childhood story about being a hidden child, suffers from a buried childhood. Sammler is no patriarch: «he never bestrode the world like a Colossus with armies and navies.... He was only an old Jew whom they had hacked at, shot at, but missed killing somehow» (Bellow Sammler 197). He survives the attempts to kill him and his story, a situation which does not apply to the narrative silencing Shula experiences.

Sammler states that he and Shula are «written-off»: «And I know now that humankind marks certain people for death. Against them there shuts a door. Shula and I have been in this written-off category» (Bellow Sammler 230). Bellow is an open-minded male author who, like Atwood and the feminist SF writers who focus upon the rescue of the female child, brings Montaigne's ideas about individual self-worth to women's childhood stories. Kristeva points out that «Montaigne expressed for the first time this major fact that we each have our own self, worthy of interest — deficient and amusing, blurred and nevertheless substantial, to the extent of transcending contingencies through the mere desire to know ourselves: 'If I study, I seek only the learning that treats the knowledge of myself'» (Kristeva 118-119; Montaigne 297). While Sammler's community stands ready to respect his war-time stories, Shula's story of being a hidden child is itself hidden. *Sammler* describes her efforts to transcend the contingency of being part of a human category called female, a group whose childhood story is routinely erased. While both Shula and Sammler have been in a position where their «speech has no past and will have no power over the future of the group» (Kristeva 20), unlike her father, Shula continues to suffer from this silencing.

However, although *Sammler* does not focus upon Shula's childhood, the story of «puberty in a Polish convent or what terror could do to the psyche of a young girl» (Bellow Sammler 132), the novel does convey the hope that women's childhood stories can survive. Women can follow the example of Sammler, a father who is no patriarch. If Sammler can dig himself out of a grave — transform a grave into a womb from which he emerges reborn — then women can pull their childhood stories out of the mass narrative grave in which patriarchy buries them. Women can regain their childhood stories by imitating the black pickpocket Sammler witnesses in the act of stealing. Women can take back their stories (and men's false stories about females), give birth to their stories anew. The silenced Shula twice behaves in this fashion: (1) she steals a manuscript about a man's story of the moon and (2) she solves the mystery about the location of Gruner's hidden money. These acts enable her to control narrative. She becomes a story thief, a pickpocket: «Then suddenly she too was like the Negro pickpocket» (Bellow Sammler 162). Although Shula thinks Sammler is analogous to Prospero (Bellow Sammler 115), she is Prospero herself. She is a controller of texts.

Shula and Sammler both experience a particular instance of the uncanny involving

the destruction of the self. Kristeva notes that, according to Freud, the «sense of strangeness belongs in the same category as depersonalization» (Kristeva 188; Freud «Uncanny»). She continues: «uncanniness... is a *destruction of the self* that may either *remain* as a psychotic symptom or fit in as an *opening* toward the new, as an attempt to tally with the incongruous» (Kristeva 188). Both Shula and Sammler allow the destruction of the self to become an opening toward the new. Sammler is reborn and begins a new life in America; Shula is no longer the victim of a silenced childhood story. Further, in the manner of Atwood, Bellow uses women's silenced uncanny childhood story (a particular destruction of the female self) to venture toward a new literary opening. Reconstructing women's uncanny childhood story signals a new feminist foray into the fantastic, a move undertaken by Atwood, Bellow, and feminist SF writers. This joining of female and male authors, and of marginalized and respected literary modes, depicts what Kristeva calls «the strange within the familiar» (Kristeva 183). A familiar white male canonized writer can share common ground with strange denigrated feminist SF writers.

Ironically, Shula, the foreign hidden child, is treated as familiar rather than strange. Both the community in *Sammler* and Sammler himself do not define her as a foreigner. Kristeva explains that foreigners attribute importance to their own biographies and resist acknowledging that those who are not foreign possess biographies: «the foreigner tends to think he is the only one to have a biography, that is, a life made up of ordeals — neither catastrophes nor adventures (although these might equally happen), but simply a life in which acts constitute events because they imply choice, surprises, breaks, adaptations, or cunning, but neither routine nor rest. In the eyes of the foreigner those who are not foreign have no life at all: barely do they exist, haughty or mediocre, but out of the running and thus almost already cadaverized» (Kristeva 7). While Sammler's acquaintances and family respect his ordeal, Shula's wartime story is judged to be neither useful nor serious. Her status as a woman takes precedence over her status as a refugee. Silencing women's childhood story is familiar and usual — not strange and uncanny. Her wartime narrative is «out of the running»; her time in the convent is as hidden as she was when residing there.

A game of hide and seek, the only description of Shula's childhood *Sammler* provides, seems to address the hiding and silencing of her story:

He [Sammler] and she had played hide-and-go-seek in London thirty-five years ago. He had been good at it, talking aloud to himself. «Is Shula in the broom closet? Let me see. Where can she be? She is not in the broom closet. How mystifying! Is she under the bed? No. My, what a clever little girl. How well she hides herself. She's simply disappeared.» While the child, just five years old, thrilling with game fever, positively white, crouched behind the brass scuttle where he pretended not to see her, her bottom near the floor, her large kinky head with the small red bow — a whole life there. Melancholy. Even if there hadn't been the war. However, theft! That was serious (Bellow Sammler 193).

In both *Sammler* and *A Theft*, theft involves not directing attention toward women's stories, stealing the importance of women's stories. Shula responds to this theft by becoming a thief herself.

Shula's decision to steal the moon manuscript, her transformation into a pickpocket who steals back her childhood story, is childish. She commits a crime to receive attention; her theft repositions her within her childhood story. This hidden child hides as an adult. «Sammler had not seen her for several days. Now a thief, she very likely was in hiding» (Bellow Sammler 126). She compensates for her ignored childhood story by speaking childhood language, recreating childhood events, becoming a child again (Bellow 195). She transforms

herself into a child before Sammler's eyes. He sees the black pickpocket as he «exhibited himself» (Bellow Sammler 121); he sees Shula exhibit her childhood self.

Shula and the pickpocket display what respectively has been stolen from them: the power of black manhood and the power women derive from their childhood story. Sammler, who reconstructs himself, witnesses other victims (blacks and women) who attempt to act in kind. Buried people reveal themselves to the man who has himself been buried. These people want to share Sammler's status as a foreigner whose story is respected. They want to be respected aliens. The pickpocket dresses as if he were a prince. Sammler imagines his daughter the thief dressed «in space shoes... coming up like a little demon body frame *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, making off with the treasure of a Hindu sage» (Bellow Sammler 114-115). According to his vision, she is shod like someone traveling to an unearthly environment. She emerges from a childhood story as a fantastic creature. She becomes an alien, a foreigner, whose story is finally valued after she steals a manuscript written by Govinda Lal, a respected alien Other. The father's fantasy coincides with the daughter's real desire.

Shula wants to tell her story, to name the silencing she experiences. While Lal, the Indian author of the moon manuscript, refers to «the Great Calcutta Killing» (Bellow Sammler 210), the name given to the 1947 fighting between Hindus and Moslems, there is no name given to the killing of women's childhood story. Lacking the grounding telling this story could provide, Shula is «a scavenger or magpie» (Bellow Sammler 161-162), «a trash-collector, treasure hunter» (Bellow Sammler 310). She fits Kristeva's description of a «lost origin, the impossibility to take root, a rummaging memory, the present in abeyance» (Kristeva 7). She rootlessly rummages through Manhattan while carrying diverse possessions in shopping bags. Unlike Sammler, she continues to experience a living death; her unnamed story remains buried in an unmarked grave. Elya Gruner's daughter Angela's notion that «everybody was born human» (Bellow Sammler 304) is in error. *Sammler* emphasizes that Nazis defined Jews as not being born human and hints that the same definition is often applied to blacks and women. Sammler's response involves hoping that when the human race moves «into space, away from earth», there might be «new conduct» (Bellow Sammler 284).

Shula, when she becomes a thief, calls for this new conduct beyond earth's boundaries. Lacking an audience for her past story, she describes present attention to herself by stealing Lal's story about the future. The first sentences of his *The Future of the Moon* reads, «How long... will this earth remain the only home of Man?» (Bellow Sammler 51). Shula questions this question by posing a different question: How long will this earth remain the home of only those who are defined as Man, as human? Or, more specifically, when will earth be defined as a place women and men can inhabit equally? She steals a man's version of the moon's future to articulate the hope that women's silencing on earth will not be repeated in space.

Sammler misinterprets her reason for stealing Lal's manuscript:

Only to dig a pit and cover it with brushwood, and when a man fell into it to lie flat on the ground and converse with him amorously. For Sammler now suspected that she had run away with *The Future of the Moon* in order to create this very opportunity, this meeting. Were he and Wells really secondary, then? Was it really done to provoke interest? (Bellow Sammler 207).

No trap to seduce a man, the pit Shula metaphorically digs evokes the mass grave which covered Sammler. She claws her way out of her buried childhood story. In order for her to unearth herself, Sammler (the father) and Wells (the male writer) must assume a secondary position in relation to the buried daughter's story. Shula steals Lal's manuscript to signal that, despite the power of male stories, women — such as Ms. Sammler — can write the future of women and space. *The Future of the Moon* is not necessarily a man's story.

Shula's pit exemplifies that — like blacks and whites, and Jews and Nazis — «the

sexes are like two different savage tribes» (Bellow Sammler 208). However, Shula's theft, in addition to enabling her to call attention to herself, is a gesture toward mitigating savagery. During World War Two, a gentile assists Sammler. During the war between the two sexes, a woman assists Sammler. Shula sincerely wants to help Sammler «in his intellectual cultural work» (Bellow Sammler 207). Even though men routinely silence women, she does not wish to silence men. *Sammler* is no sex role reversal revenge tale. Sammler, the uncle who is financially assisted by his nephew, lives with his niece Margotte. And, like Elaine Risely, Margotte speaks in the place of a male professor who has been killed in a plane. Sammler notices that Margotte begins «to impersonate» her deceased husband Arkin: «She had become the political theorist. She spoke in his name, as presumably he would have done, and there was no one to protect his ideas» (Bellow Sammler 16). Bellow is open to imagining women controlling men's texts. Even though readers know nothing about Margotte's childhood, even though Shula never delivers a Columbia University lecture about her life in the convent, Bellow is sympathetic toward Atwood's and feminist SF's attention to women's life stories.

Shula, not Elya Gruner's son Wallace, is the successful detective who locates the money Elya hides in his house. Wallace conducts his search for the money in terms of men's activities and stories. Sammler guesses that Wallace, who is «so mathematical, loved equations» and «had prepared a plumbing blueprint before taking up the wrench» (Bellow Sammler 232), damages the Gruner house's water pipe system. The result of Wallace's adherence to male behavior: he acts according to a parody of the patriarchal story, a ridiculous combination of Noah and god, the perpetrator of a flood he cannot control. Shula, on the other hand, succeeds when enacting a story involving nurturing. While serving coffee, she realizes that the money is hidden in a hassock (Bellow Sammler 308). Her generosity again becomes evident when she offers to share the money with her father (Bellow Sammler 310). Her behavior underscores that, in truth, Mr. Sammler shares the planet with his daughter and nieces. When Shula absconds with *The Future of the Moon*, she does not commit the most crucial theft *Sammler* describes: obliterating women's story, spreading the tale that earth's past, present, and future are best described by male heroes and male texts.

Shula solves the mystery about Gruner's money when she acts according to women's nurturing role; Sammler never writes the great man's story, the story of H. G. Wells. Nor does Gruner achieve greatness in the usual patriarchal manner. He is a great man because he assists the Sammler, not because he is a wealthy surgeon. Bellow, then, redefines the components of a great man's biography. He suggests a new male story about men who achieve greatness by behaving as feminine nurturers. Some of Bellow's male colleagues also write this new story. For example, the protagonist of Amos Oz's *To Know A Woman*, Yoel Ravid, shares much in common with Elya Gruner who achieves greatness as a nurturer, not as a successful member of a male dominated profession. Ravid becomes great as a hospital orderly, not as a master spy. Oz's title names Bellow's subtext. *Sammler* is, in part, about how to know a woman. Bellow's novel hints that, like the texts Sammler sees when readers first encounter him, patriarchal stories are «the wrong books, the wrong papers» (Bellow Sammler 3).

«THE INNER GIRL, LOST AND RECLAIMED» (HANCOCK 2)

Shula, the successful detective, is a hero of *Sammler*. Kristeva explains that the hero and the detective might share the same process: «the 'detective' and the 'hero' are (perhaps?) only two facets of the same process.... For the polyphonic mastery of writing consists in ceaselessly doing and undoing a jigsaw puzzle piece by piece» (Kristeva 33). *A Theft* is a detective story about how women ceaselessly do and undo patriarchal stories. It centers

upon women who piece together a puzzle about how to become the hero of their own childhood stories.

Or, in Hanooock's words, *A Theft* concerns «reclaiming the girl's sense of self as a subject... countering women's position as object... [a] feminine world that survives apart from the patriarchy's hierarchical devaluation of the female.... In the alliance between the girl within who possesses initiative and the woman who embodies mature generativity lies the creative force we need to become fully ourselves and shape this culture in the way it so desperately needs to be shaped» (Hanooock 192-193). *A Theft*, a mystery story, when portraying the alliance between a newly mature female (Gina Wegman) and a girl who possesses initiative (Lucy), speaks against the routine theft of women's childhood stories. Asking Lucy to act in a manner which emphasizes her sense of self as a subject allows Gina creatively and forcefully to direct the return of Clara Velde's ring.

Bellow's text, in contrast to Gina's behavior, stresses that patriarchal stories routinely do not treat young girls as subjects. Clara, in response to the lack of initiative her husband Wilder Velde's reading emphasizes, throws his paperback book out of their apartment's window. Bellow, in response to literature's silencing of women's childhood stories, throws this silencing out of *A Theft*. I would like to think that *A Theft*, a mystery first published in paperback, reflects Bellow's dissatisfaction with a system which calls paperback feminist SF «genre fiction» and tosses it out of the canon. At the start of *A Theft*, readers are unaware that Bellow creates a new story — a mystery whose solution involves discovering that a girl acts as a subject. Clara, early in the story, unknowingly articulates the solution to the mystery: «'There's a lot of woman in that child [Lucy]. A handsome powerful woman. Gina Wegman intuits the same about her'» (Bellow *A Theft* 48). This solution eludes Clara and readers until the conclusion of *A Theft*. Bellow's new story contains a new symbol: a ring which represents women's potential to act in their new stories, not women's role in the story of marriage. The opinion that «Teddy Regler should have married Clara» (Bellow *Theft* 51) does not form the crux of Clara's life.

When Bellow tosses out a particular patriarchal story, he imbues its replacement with humor. *A Theft* parodies stereotypes to reveal the theft of women's childhood stories. Bellow signals his departure from patriarchal stories in terms of another departure. Instead of again creating complex Jewish characters, he populates *A Theft* with *metagoyim*. The gentiles who exist as fusions of opposing stereotypes simplistically and humorously counter stereotypes. Clara Velde is an ultra sophisticated bumkin. Wilder Velde is tame, an ineffective wealthy male WASP who, instead of wielding power, acts as Clara's «fourth child» (Bellow *Theft* 91). Gina Wegman is an Italian Austrian, the personification of two incompatible extremes. Her lover, Frederic Vigneron, possesses a name which does not seem appropriately to belong to a «hood» from Harlem. Clara loves the charismatic Ithiel «Teddy» Regler who has been married to Etta Wolfenstein. This formerly married couple evokes the image of James Bond preferring a *yenta* named Etta to Pussy Galore.

Why does Bellow fuse stereotypes when creating these characters? «Gottschalk», the name of the private eye Clara hires to find Gina, provides a clue. *A Theft* announces that «Gottschalk was no Philip Marlowe in a Raymond Chandler story» (Bellow *Theft* 86). Gottschalk does not possess the chalk; Bellow erases the story of the heroic male detective, shifts emphasis to «children's finger-paints» (Bellow *Theft* 86). He stresses that the story of female artists — Elaine Risely is one such artist — is grounded in woman's lost childhood story. Gottschalk is no detective/hero. Instead, Gina and Lucy collaborate and assume this role. These young females illustrate Kristeva's aforementioned point that the detective and the hero are two facets of the same process. As the result of yet another incongruous union between two characters (Gina and Lucy) Gina, not detective Gottschalk, controls the text of the mystery.

A Theft questions patriarchal stories by forcing readers to ask questions. They must

consider why a Nobel laureate creates a text whose main symbol, the emerald ring Teddy gives to Clara, baldly announces itself as «major symbol» (Bellow Theft 93). Bellow's novella stresses that the ring's significance calls for interpretation: «Twice losing and recovering this ring is a sign, a message. It forces me [Clara] to interpret» (Bellow Theft 89). At this point in the narrative, Clara, like Bellow's readers, does not yet know that the ring symbolizes women's potential to recognize the importance of their childhood stories. Clara engages in very «unlaureate-like» interpretation while discussing the loss of the emerald ring with a psychiatrist named «Gladstone» [*italics mine*] (Bellow Theft 76). She states: «'You may be a stone, but you're not a gem'» (Bellow Theft 76). Bellow's forced symbols and interpretations, which smack of a mediocre undergraduate paper, make fun of and subvert the patriarchal stories which routinely take precedence over women's stories. They are at once serious and humorous. *A Theft* emphasizes that, instead of acting as interpreters who disregard patriarchal stories, many women construct their lives in terms of them. Due to these stories, many women toss themselves, not patriarchal texts, from windows. Women sometimes commit suicide after failing to adhere to love stories. For example, Clara twice tries to end her life because of her own unsuccessful love stories.

Bellow's mystery story, then, involves killing a story which kills women. When writing this new story, he resembles Carolyn Heilbrun, another eminent Jewish author who veers away from «respectable» literary ventures to create detective fiction about Protestants. Heilbrun and Bellow, themselves members of a marginal ethnic group, turn to detective fiction to widen margins. They reinvent WASPs and, when doing so, they reinvent womanhood; they allow women to become the detective/hero. Heilbrun states that she wrote her first detective stories because she «must have wanted, with extraordinary fervor, to create a space for» herself (Heilbrun 113). Bellow also turns to detective fiction to create a wider space for women's stories. After having articulated how men seize the day, he creates a text which mirrors Heilbrun's notion that women «seize upon their own stories, and... tell them with a directness that shocks as it enlightens» (Heilbrun 64). Heilbrun, in the guise of Amanda Cross, is a literary critic who writes genre fiction. Bellow, a man who is ensconced within the American literary canon, crosses over to the concerns of women. He creates a mystery plot — a story about unmasking women's childhood stories — which is itself a hidden mystery to be solved by readers.

By erasing the male mystery story (authored by someone such as Raymond Chandler), Bellow articulates the hidden story of the relationship between adult women's power and their childhood. He rewrites expectations associated with genre fiction, plays with mystery story codes, envisions allowing women's private eyes to regard childhood stories as a means to find clues about adult identity. In the manner of the returned stolen ring, Bellow returns women's complete life story. *A Theft* speaks to the theft of this life story. It takes issue with considering the female child's invisibility — Lucy's sisters' (Patsy and Selma) lack of participation in *A Theft*, for example — as natural. Heilbrun and Bellow both turn to mystery fiction and articulate similar conclusions about the importance of women's stories. Bellow, then, is currently a man in feminism. In the manner of feminist SF writers, he creates genre fiction (a mystery story) which is important to women's concerns.

More specifically, in the manner of James Tiptree's story, Bellow discusses the women men don't see.⁶ Readers indirectly learn that young Clara exchanges her powerful girlhood story for the story of female subservience: she types Teddy's notes and prepares his manuscript «to link herself with him» (Bellow Theft 20). Significantly, she notices a book in the Columbia University Library called *The Human Pair in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Bellow Theft 20). Clara's attention to Teddy's manuscript illustrates how the human pair's female component

⁶ See James Tiptree Jr., «The Women Men don't See», In *Warm Worlds and Otherwise*, New York: Random House, 1975.

is unequally treated in literature: women, who receive no credit for their efforts, labor to assist male writers who tell men's stories. Bellow does not try to correct this situation in terms of the human pair, the equal depiction of women and men in men's stories (such as Hardy's novels). Instead, he focuses upon the individual woman's potential, makes her draw upon her lost childhood story to become an interpreter — not the male writer's handmaid. Clara says, «It's conceivable that the world-spirit gets into mere girls and makes them its demon interpreters» (Bellow *A Theft* 21). Bellow advocates returning this stolen spirit, enabling women to become controlling interpreters.

The mystery in *A Theft* is solved when women act like Carolyn Heilbrun, the empowered interpreter who creates the female detective/hero. Bellow seems to imply that women such as Heilbrun and her protagonist Kate Fansler become strong and successful because they remember their childhood story. In *A Theft*, whose characters are created in terms of unlikely fusions, this story is revealed to be the combination of Gina's initiative to act as an author of life plots and Lucy's initiative to act according to the story Gina creates and makes real. Gina's and Lucy's collaboration causes them to function as a «human pair». In regard to women's childhood stories, this «human pair was also a rescue operation» (Bellow *Theft* 30).

Bellow casts this rescue operation in terms of respecting the female child's story and acknowledging that many men's stories have become exhausted. Teddy refers to one such exhausted male story: «'When the President has to go to Walter Reed Hospital for surgery and the papers are full of sketches of his bladder and his prostrate — I can remember the horrible drawings of Eisenhower's ileitis — then I'm glad there are no diagrams of my vitals in the press and the great public isn't staring at my anus'» (Bellow *A Theft* 54). The story Teddy describes was repeated when Ronald Reagan contracted colon cancer. Bellow suggests that repeated attention to a male leader's anus is an exhausted story. He further suggests that a culture which at once hides the childhood story of half of its population and spotlights a male leader's intestines needs, to paraphrase Hanooch, desperately to be shaped anew. Bellow critiques patriarchal stories, becomes their reviewer and complains about a culture which simultaneously directs an inappropriate public private eye at men's private parts and publicly erases women's private childhood lives. In other words, to solve the mystery in *A Theft*, readers must recognize a specific clue: Lucy's lack of participation in the text is just as problematical as Wilder Velde's lack of participation in the text.

Many clues placed in *A Theft* reveal that the fact of Lucy's hidden childhood presence should be jarring rather than normal. «Tell» (Bellow *Theft* 14, 79, 40, 100, 106) is one of Clara's «code words» (Bellow *Theft* 14) which she often uses to elicit information. *A Theft*, however, does not «tell» — reveal its code and solve its mystery — until its conclusion. The ring is returned «set on a handkerchief» (Bellow *A Theft* 83); the maid «had never taken so much as a handkerchief» (Bellow *Theft* 64). The handkerchief is certainly a clue. Bellow, in the manner of a woman flirtatiously and frequently dropping a handkerchief, provides clues about the mystery concerning the active involved female child. Clara mentions «the unforeseen usefulness of anomalies» (Bellow *Theft* 18). The story of little girls is an anomaly which does not fit within the patriarchal story. Men, such as Teddy, who «think about the Atlantic Alliance... Deterrence, theater nuclear forces» (Bellow *Theft* 44) do not think about little girls. Yet, although Lucy does not participate in the main action of *A Theft* until near its conclusion, according to Clara, «Lucy was the main thing» (Bellow *A Theft* 46). While Clara — and Bellow's text — ignore Lucy's sisters, Clara believes that «Lucy is the one with the brains. There's something *major* in Lucy» (Bellow *Theft* 47). Because of Gina's intervention, Lucy is given the chance to prove her mother right, to act as an unforeseen useful anomaly.

A Theft emphasizes that this chance is stolen from many girls — such as Patsy and Selma. Clara's friend Mrs. Wong reminds her that «You're thinking of three daughters»

(Bellow Theft 66). Bellow knows that his readers are not thinking of these daughters. Clara tells Gladstone, «There may be more somebodies than I've been able to see» (Bellow Theft 74). She provides a clue to her daughters' invisibility. She provides a clue to what Bellow wants his readers to observe: «There was a lot of woman in that small girl, already visible» (Bellow Theft 81). Like Atwood and feminist SF writers, Bellow is concerned about the adult woman who suffers after she loses the womanhood inscribed within her girlhood.

Clara asks, «Was there anybody who was somebody?» (Bellow Theft 98). *A Theft* answers by insisting that Lucy is somebody. Gina creates this answer when she gives the emerald ring «to Lucy! To a young child» (Bellow Theft 105). Gina becomes an author who positions Lucy as an active participant in the story. Clara explains: «I see how you [Gina] brought it all together through my own child. You gave her something significant to do, and she was equal to it.... That level of observation and control in a girl of ten... how do you suppose it feels to discover that?» (Bellow Theft 107). Readers, who can be expected not to recognize Lucy's potential role in *A Theft*, are themselves called upon to make a discovery. The story about the ring's return enacted by Gina and Lucy signals that *A Theft* is not a love story. The notion that «the ring stood for hope of Teddy Regler» (Bellow Theft 90) is a false clue. Gina and Lucy, instead, reveal that the ring symbolizes the silenced potential of girls — and the disadvantageous impact of this silencing upon adult woman. The mystery in *A Theft* is solved when readers understand that the ring's return signals hope for the return of the girl's childhood story, a stolen source of adult female power.

Gina asks, «'Which people are the lost people?'» (Bellow Theft 108). Her question is itself the answer, the solution to the mystery in *A Theft*. The lost people are Patsy and Selma, girls who do not participate in narratives. The lost people are adult women who, due to the loss of their childhood stories, cannot function as complete, powerful entities. Clara, who is not one of these lost women, becomes a successful executive who runs «a feminine household» (Bellow Theft 45). She uses her female power to create a multiethnic female community built upon love and trust. Clara tries to make her home a female utopia (inhabited by herself, her «invisible» husband — who does not count — her daughters, and her fairly-treated female employees) in which it is not necessary to safeguard her jewels. The return of the ring, then, coincides with depicting how feminist utopias might function in reality. Clara creates a woman's utopia in Manhattan; Lucy is the rescued female child who resides there.

At the conclusion of *A Theft*, Clara cries while running along Madison Avenue. She holds a handkerchief to her face with her ringed hand and acts like «one of those street people turned loose from an institution» (Bellow Theft 109). In other words, Clara's behavior emphasizes that the male text Clara throws from the window lands on the street; patriarchal stories about erasing the female child's potential are beginning to assume the position of the marginalized, homeless street person. Clara, Gina, and Lucy — females turned loose from the institution of patriarchal stories — behave according to feminist stories. Despite Clara's statement to the contrary (Bellow Theft 78), Gina does reenact aspects of Clara's life story. Gina has sex with a hoodlum from East Harlem; young Clara has sex with Clifford, a man who will later reside in Attica Prison. Gina, like Clara, is a strong woman who leaves home — become a foreigner — and experiences sexual escapades with unruly men before marrying a socially acceptable person.

Clara names the three life stages women such as herself experience: the kindly baby time, a monstrous brutish time, and the time of improved judgment derived from clues (Bellow Theft 105). Lucy, Gina, and Clara respectively reflect these three stages. The third becomes actualized when the female reader recognizes what Clara sees in Lucy: the daughter who represents an early version of the powerful adult female self. According to Clara, «there was a lot of power under this [Lucy's childhood] clumsiness» (Bellow Theft 47).

The return of the ring symbolizes the return of this power. Clara explains that, rather than trying to act as a hot red sexual ruby, it is better to be green like the inside of mountains where gems are mined (Bellow *Theft* 43). She thinks «of the inside of her own body» and concludes that she is «an infant mine» (Bellow *Theft* 43). She both mines the child within her and gives birth to three children. In addition, she realizes that the ring's symbolism pertains to her inside self, not to union with a man. She explains, «I do seem to have an idea who it is that's at the middle of me. There may not be more than one in a xillion, more's the pity, that do have. And my own child possibly one of these» (Bellow *Theft* 109). She solves the mystery; she knows that her childhood self is at the middle of her present adult power. She is one of the few women who manages to attain power from this realization. And Lucy has the potential to act in kind. Feminist insight rings true at the conclusion of *A Theft*.

Clara recognizes the uncanny strangeness of her childhood story and enjoys locating this story inside her present self. Kristeva seems to articulate Clara's self observation: «By recognizing *our* uncanny strangeness we shall neither suffer from it nor enjoy it from the outside. The foreigner is within me, hence we are all foreigners. If I am a foreigner, there are no foreigners» (Kristeva 192). Feminist SF is uncanny, strange, and positioned outside the canon. Reading *Cat's Eye*, *Sammiler*, and *A Theft* with feminist SF in mind reveals that the foreigner is within canonized female and male writers as well as within feminist SF writers. Feminist SF writers should share Atwood's and Bellow's license to articulate their strangeness while positioned inside the canon.

CONCLUSION: «I'M SORRY I HAVE TO GROW UP INTO A WOMAN»

Marshall Blonsky believes people are blind to the present and future because they are steeped in myths about a false nostalgia for a nonexistent past.⁷ The imaginary and theoretical texts I discuss explain women's present according to a recast version of Blonsky's point: women are blind to the full potential of their present and future because myths of nostalgia for the power they experienced as girls have been stolen from them. These myths of nostalgia are replaced by present mythologies: media images of impossible to obtain beauty standards⁸ and impossible to achieve balances between the personal and professional. It is necessary for women to erase these present mythologies, to stalk the makers of impossible female dreams, to embrace the nostalgia for their lost girlhood power.

I conclude by turning from fiction and theory to reality. I think of European women who spent their childhood in countries which do not adhere to western socialization practices. Women brought up as foreigners in relation to western culture view as uncanny and strange western culture's imperative that women bury the story of their childhood power. Three women who exemplify this point come to my mind: Hélène Cixous who grew up in Algeria, Doris Lessing who grew up in Rhodesia, and Beryl Markham who grew up in Kenya. These women might be able to attribute their successful creative adulthood to circumstances which prevented their childhood story of power from being stolen from them. A childhood spent as foreigners in relation to both African and European cultures placed them outside these cultures' destructive influence upon women's ability to be empowered by their childhood story.

A world populated by women such as Cixous, Lessing, and Markham would enable

⁷ Marshall Blonsky made this point in a lecture he presented at the New School on September 19, 1991. A more lengthy argument appears in his *American Mythologies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

⁸ See Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth How ages of Beauty Are Used Against Women*, New York: William Morrow, 1991.

people to step closer toward achieving paradise. Taking this step involves ceasing, in fiction and reality, to silence women's childhood stories. More specifically, this step involves realizing that *Paradise* ventures beyond the title of Janet Maslin's review of the film: «Reconciliation of a Grieving Couple by A Wise Boy» (Maslin C16). In addition to the grieving couple and the wise boy, *Paradise* pictures powerful female childhood, the «inner girl» (Hanooock 2) whose story becomes uncanny and strange to female adults. *Paradise* portrays the rescue of a female child by a wise female artist. Billie Pike, who lacks a strong mother and who loses her father and male friend, has the potential to become Elaine Risley.

Billie can paint a picture of her adulthood which is based upon her powerful girlhood. Her comment — «I'm sorry I have to grow up into a woman» — does not have to ring true. Her powerful girlhood self-conception can impact upon her adult years. If Billie's future is drawn from her childhood, it will not be necessary for her to steal a man's text about the future of the moon.

WORKS CITED

- Atwood, M. (1986). *The Handmaid's Tale*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Atwood, M. (1989). *Cat's Eye*. New York: Bantam.
- Bellow, S. (1969). *Mr. Sammler's Planet*. New York: Penguin, 1977.
- Bellow, S. (1987). *More Die of Heartbreak*. New York: William Morrow.
- Bellow, S. (1989). *A Theft*. New York: Penguin.
- Bradley, M.Z. (1976). *The Shattered Chain*. New York: DAW.
- Charnas, S.Mc. (1978). *Motherlines*. New York: Berkley.
- Diderot, D. (1956). *Rameau's Nephew and Other Works*. Trans. Jacques Barzun and Ralph H. Bawen. Garden City, New York: Doubleday.
- Freud, S. (1953-1974). The Uncanny. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* vol. 17 (James Strachey, Ed.), London: Hogarth Press, 220.
- Hancock, E. (1989). *The Girl Within*. New York: E. P. Dutton.
- Heilbrun, C.G. (1988). *Writing A Woman's Life*. New York: Ballantine.
- Kristeva, J. (1991). *Strangers to Ourselves*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press.
- MacCannell, J.F. (1991). *The Regime of the Brother After the Patriarchy*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Maslin, J. (1991). Reconciliation of a Grieving Couple by a Wise Boy. Rev. of *Paradise*. *The New York Times* 18 September 1991: C16.
- McIntyre, V. (1978). *Dreamsnake*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- Montaigne, M. de (1958). *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*. Trans. Donald M. Frame. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Oz, A. (1991). *To Know A Woman*. Trans. Nicholas de Lange. San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.
- Paradise* (1991). Dir. Mary Agnes Donoghue. Prod. Scott Kroopf and Patrick Palmer. With Thora Birch, Melanie Griffith, Don Johnson, and Elijah Wood. Touchstone Pictures.
- Russ, J. (1981). Recent Feminist Utopias. In *Future Females: A Critical Anthology* (Marleen Barr, Ed.), pp: 71-85, Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press.
- Russ, J. (1978). *The Two of Them*. New York: Berkley.

Body & Soul: Strategies of Masking and Unmasking in the Photographs of Geneviève Cadieux (*)

ANCA CRISTOFOVICI (**)

Feminist critique of photography has related the conventional view of its optical functioning — the single-point perspective of the apparatus — to the «fixed subject position». This view has been consequently seen as «implicated in issues of political, cultural and sexual domination» (Solomon-Godeau, 329). Interestingly enough, Lacan had used precisely the optical cone-vision model, in different refined variants, to visualize his theory of narcissism that acknowledges subject fixity as the enemy of change (Lacan 87-95; 100; 143).

Although unavoidably sensitive to the public image of women in photography, several art photographers today create a discourse that surpasses exclusivist gender distinctions. Photographers such as Geneviève Cadieux, Suzanne Lafont, Thomas Ruff or Craigie Horsfield focus on «fixed» representations in more general terms, thus disclaiming the whole tradition that interprets the photographic image in terms of a mimetic reproduction of the real. Photography as a *reconstruction* of the real has to constantly fight against its own condition and, on the way, to enrich its expressive possibilities while becoming more elusive. David Hockney's photocollages based on pluriocular perspective admirably epitomize the new horizons photography can open to a fresh perception of the real. (Hockney's formulation, «reverse perspective is about you», unambiguously calls attention to the active relationship between viewer and the photographic representation.)

The work of Canadian photographer Geneviève Cadieux incites to such fresh perception. Cadieux's photographs and installations initiate a dynamics of reflection and self-reflection which incorporates in a coherent vision differences in materials and forms of subject representation, gender distinction, the real and the imaginary, the physical and its sublimation.

Referring to the priorities in her work, Cadieux mentions that:

When an artist (particularly a woman artist) works with images of women, questions of sexuality, politics, voyeurism are discussed. However, as far as

(*) I would like to thank Catherine Bédard for her indispensable help with research material on Cadieux and Anca Bratu for her precious help with photographic reproduction. Photographs are reproduced from *Geneviève Cadieux. Canada: XLIV Biennale di Venezia* (Chantal Pontbriand, Ed.), Montreal: Parachute & Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, 1990.

(**) Université de Caen, Esplanade de la Paix, 14000 Caen, France.

I am concerned, the most important aspect of this installation [*The Shoe at Right Seems Much Too Large*] deals with concepts of vision, both ocular and extra-perceptible (Pontbriand, 82).

I would like to consider here the innovative photographic work of Geneviève Cadieux, more particularly the ways in which she challenges conventional views on representing the body. Cadieux's response to a culture hugely dominated by the «frenzy of the visible» differs from that of other art photographers, such as Cindy Sherman or Robert Mapplethorpe, whose work unequivocally addresses issues of gender or race. Instead of a manifestly critical visual discourse, Cadieux's work foregrounds the actual and powerful forms of energy implied in the photographic act.

MASKING THE BODY: SKIN, SCARS, PORES

Unlike Mapplethorpe's or Sherman's photographic subjects, that have a marked identity under a defined gaze — which is the point of their photographic discourse — most of Cadieux's photographic portraits or body representations are anonymous and, even when she incorporates old photographs in her own work, seem to be suspended in time and space. The large-format photographic images within the tri-dimensional multi-media installations are conceived as the site of an experience the viewer is invited to enter on condition of throwing overboard cultural and visual habits. Abstracting the photographed subject of its social parameters is a way of confronting the viewer with more intimate images of the self.

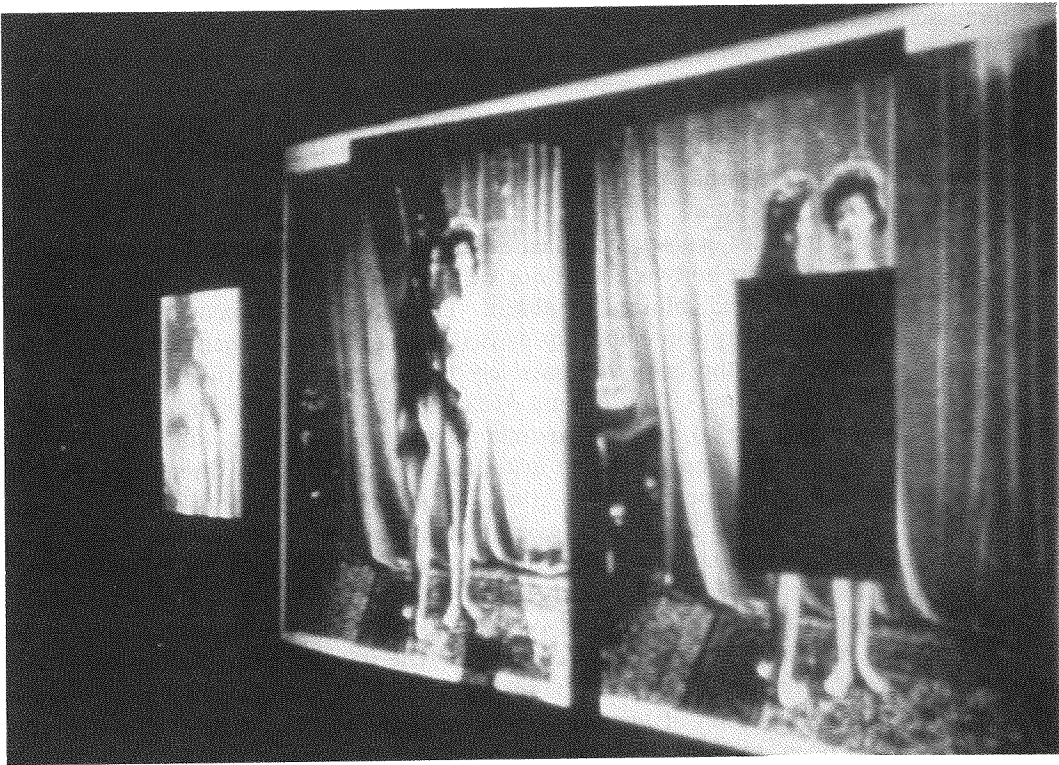
However, the signs of this intimacy paradoxically result from the distance Cadieux takes from «the body» as material of her photographic representations. This position is technically expressed by two apparently opposite procedures: emphasizing distance and dramatizing closeness. Both are translated into the physical space required for the display of the installations, which usually occupy more than an exhibition wall. The objective of the camera is not used to create imaginarily ideal anatomies but rather their negatives.

Denuding the represented subjects of their everyday life referents allows for the reconstruction of an alternative network of allusions unobtrusively woven within the image to hold the fantasmatic unity of the body. One of Cadieux's strategies of masking the body is quotation. Some of her photographic compositions contain indeed the memory of other images. She often uses as starting material old photographs, documentary photographs, or sometimes book illustration or literary reference: all fragments of an imaginary repertory only occasionally identified by the viewer. In «recycling» older images, Cadieux re-contextualizes them. This is a way of re-evaluating a discourse already codified within the image. Her photographic installation *Ravissement* [Ravishment] (1985) shows precisely how, with a whole repertory of old and new techniques at hand today, the photographer can shed new light on old images. This allows her to operate a shift in the photographed subjects' position and in the viewer's perception of them.

In *Ravissement*, for instance, Cadieux uses old photographs of women discovered and retouched by herself in a *mise-en-scène* of transparencies and superpositions, of light and shadow, of stasis and movement. Part of the piece is presented in a dark room where old black and white photographs of nude women are reframed through a series of illusionistic techniques reminding of the beginnings of photography and of cinema. Before entering the dark room the viewer stops in front of two photographic *tableaux* placed face to face, each of them containing the reflection of superposed portraits of women enraptured in an imaginary dialogue in time (does the title actually suggest the unescapable enchantment with images or the voyeuristic violation of the women's intimacy?) (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

Ravissement (partial view of the installation), 1985, projection (2,13 x 4,88 m), treated plexiglass sheet (60 x 50 cm), projector, black and white slide, tripod; photo: Geneviève Cadieux. Coll. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.



The photographs Cadieux incorporates in her work are usually anonymous so as to suggest the secret side of the subjects' history, precisely what remains the eternally invisible (and perpetually provocative) face of the photographic image. Cadieux does not figure a human body overtly mapped by social discourses with assigned meanings (Lacan's symbolic dimension imposing language as a mask on the body). Instead, she seems to envision it closer to a metaphoric parchment on which *different inscriptions* coexist in *various degrees of visibility*. These inscriptions can be effaced or worked up to engender new meanings. Effacing or tampering might turn out to be either intentional or the result of chance. Sometimes it is both, as in the diptych *La Blessure d'une cicatrice ou Les Anges* [A Scar's Wound or the Angels] (1987), which associates an enlargement of Saint-Exupéry's portrait of *Le Petit Prince* with a monumental reproduction of one of E. J. Bellocq's nudes. A turn-of-the-century photographer, Bellocq is known for his images of women in the New Orleans brothels. The mystery of the immortalized women's anonymity is enhanced by an unknown intervention on the film defacing the photographed subject. The «masking» of the nude woman's face with a nervous scratch is related to the second *tableau*: the Little Prince's erased facial traits, as in a copy found by Cadieux and reproduced in her composition along with Saint-Exupéry's caption: «Here is the best portrait that, later on, I was able to make of him.» Obliterations appear to be here equally significant inscriptions on the body, like silences or gaps of knowledge. Their reading is more complex than the mere unraveling of meanings assigned by social discourses. Representations are context dependent

in various ways. The appeal Cadieux makes to the repertory of images and techniques in the history of photography foregrounds this fact.

The body has also its own personal history displayed by Cadieux mostly in fragmented, exorbitantly enlarged shapes where traces of the body's past are dis-figured, rendered almost non-figurative or at least ambiguous through enlargement. Though indelible, these inscriptions are nondescript: the scar close-ups look rather like eyelids sealing a secret, as in *Trou de mémoire, la beauté inattendue* [Memory Gap, the Unexpected Beauty] (1988). They recall the photographs of Johns Coplans whose enlarged images of fragments of his old body are, in Sandra S. Phillips' phrase, testimonies of «how the body wears its history» (Yingling 27). The usual smoothness in representations of nude is ruffled in Cadieux's images by a kind of myopic objective that gets so close to its subject as if urged by a desire to see through the pores of the skin.

In her close-ups the artist exposes magnified facial expression and dramatizes the vacillating perception of emotions. The body is absent but we can feel its presence. In general, bodies in Cadieux's work are scared, blurred or absent. This is not a commentary on violence (which occupies indeed many contemporary artists' attention) but rather part of a desire to snatch the viewer from the habits of passively looking at images (Figure 2).

Hear Me With Your Eyes (1989) (Figure 3) illustrates some of the strategies Cadieux uses in activating the viewer to reframe possible interpretations of the image in terms of dramatized parameters of perception. The installation is made up of three large format close-ups situated in a U-shape exhibition room. From left to right the first image is a black and white portrait. The hazy paper grain and the lack of color relate the image to a particular reality collected as through a spectre. The central portrait is more dramatic. Color and the circular movement of the head participate to «the reality effect» of the image. However, this illusion is the result of the superposition of the sharp outlines of the three-quarter portrait and of the blurred profile. The third image is that of the black and white enlarged detail of the mouth/lips in the central portrait. The half open mouth substitutes the eye in this series of images where eyelids are closed over the unseen reason of suffering. Wide open, the eyes of the viewer have to make sense of these images whose very format intensifies their sense of actuality.

Interpretations of this work are shaped by the viewer's moving within the space of the installation and, as Régis Durand suggests, lending a body to the represented face (124). We can notice in this installation at least two directions exposing two different (yet complementary?) fantasies: one that reflects back on the reader and one that engulfs the reader.

The viewer passes an invisible threshold to enter the plastic space with the eyes most likely focused on the central portrait because of its position in the room and because of the impact created by its outstanding features. Following the movement of the head, the viewer's gaze (like the photographed subject's covered gaze) is directed towards the black and white portrait, that is towards what appears — merely due to technical details — to be an image situated in the past. In this logic of memory, from the viewer's point, the black and white portrait looks like an after-image of the colored portrait. The circular movement of the head directs the viewer's gaze and loops the loop on the lips blow-up that seems to have generated the two portraits like a summoning cry.

However, if we follow the opposite — more common — clock-wise direction, a different sense emerges. The viewer's eyes scan back and are trapped in the grotesque mouth detail. Rendered almost non-figurative by the enlargement, this image becomes the symbolic center of the composition combining *expression* (the lips) with *assimilation* (the mouth), *uttering* with *devouring*, and both with the power of *vision*, for, like an anamorphosis, from a certain point the image resembles a watchful eye.

The visually reconstructed voice in the composition is one muted by a reason outside the viewer's cone of vision. Yet we will notice that the reference in the title contributes

FIGURE 2

Hear Me With Your Eyes (details), triptych, I/III, 1989; I: black and white photographic enlargement; II: color photographic enlargement; III: black and white photographic enlargement; all mounted on wood screen, 2,49x3,10 m; photo: Louis Lussier. Coll. of Montréal Museum of Fine Arts.

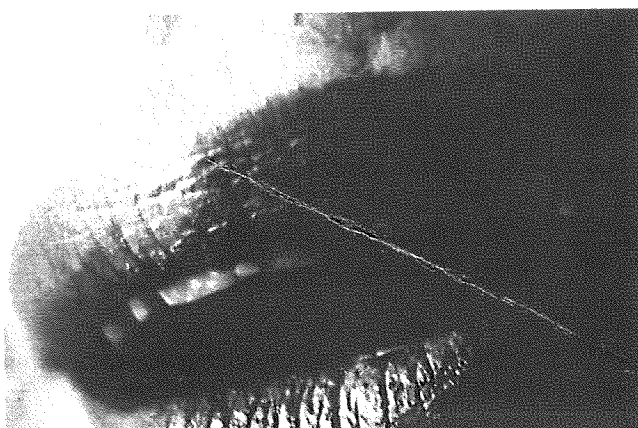
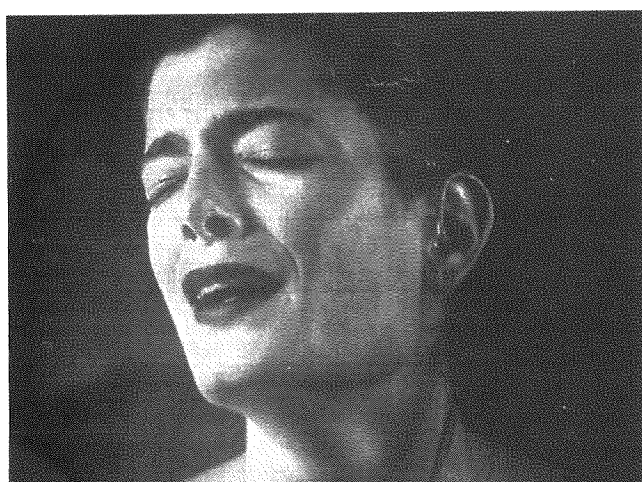
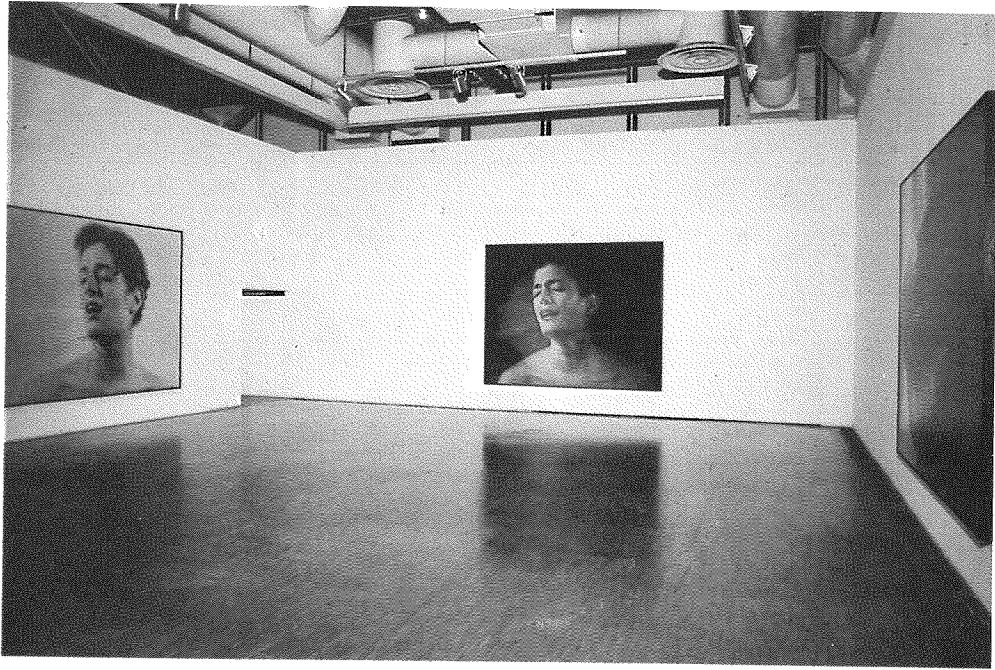


FIGURE 3
Hear Me With Your Eyes (View of the installation)



to the allusive strategies that build up the meaning of the work without being indispensable to its interpretation. The title refers to a line in a poem by Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz that combines different paradoxes:

Hear me with your eyes, now
that distant ears cannot attend,
and, in absent sighs,
Hear reproaches sobbing from
this pen.
And as you cannot hear a voice
so faint,
then hear me deaf,
for mute is my complaint.

This literary allusion situates the composition at the cross-roads of several «separations». In the poem of Sor Ines de la Cruz love divine is veiled under love human. Or is it the opposite? For, as we know, Juana Ines and Juan de la Cruz were concomitantly writing mystic love poems to conceal what at the time was the heresy of their love. The dramatic stance of the central portrait actually reminds of baroque paintings of ecstatic Juana de la Cruz and of strategies of representation that render vision corporeal.

UNMASKING THE BODY: AIR, SHADOWS, SPECTRES

Distance and the viewer's involvement are related to a particular conception of space

that transgresses photography's bidimensional condition. In Cadieux's installations the experience of space plays an important role. She also uses a wide range of materials and her large format photographs are printed on different supports: wood, metal, acrylic plastic sheets or plexiglass, glass sheets or burnished mirrors. Some of these supports are opaque, but very often they are transparent or reflexive. In using responsive materials, Cadieux alludes to the past of her own art, to the first forms of photography: light impressions on metal or glass. She also capitalizes on a very common experience all of us have had in front of works protected by glass against the damaging effect of light: the phenomenon of reflection that takes us into the work, that is part of us, a spectral part made of light particles. The viewer literally participates in the installation as *material* and *representation* and brings along an emotional charge that is a form of energy comparable to that of light contributing to the making of the photograph.

Cadieux uses the possibilities provided by mixed media to materialize the metaphoric implication of the viewer. Yet her discourse is situated, like photography itself, at the fringe of the literal and the metaphoric. Her flexibility in transgressing boundaries of different natures comes from a philosophy of interweaving opposites, of cross-breeding difference.

Echo (1989) (Figure 4) is an installation where Cadieux also uses more explicitly *reflection* and *illusion* to represent the enigma of the self. The installation is composed of a bronze casting of a male torso suspended at eye level several centimeters from a piece of parchment affixed to the wall. The contours of the parchment outgrow the bronze torso but correspond roughly to its shape. Both layers of «skin» peeled off an invisible body are reflected in a black cibachrome print hung opposite it in the exhibition space.

Echo uses very different and apparently incompatible materials and space itself as a material of the installation. It shows how incongruities can be related. It is also indicative of how — with emotional approach *and* distance — difference can be incorporated. Something else also bids the viewer's attention. *Echo* discloses qualities of the materials used in the composition other than the common perception we have of these materials. For, even if glossy, photography does not usually reflect back like a mirror and bronze is normally associated with solidity, endurance, toughness (the stuff men are made of). While this shadow of a torso with its rough contours displays more fragility than force. This force is transferred metaphorically to the parchment contours (animal skin?) that are evocative of the enduring memory inscribed on the body.

In some of her works (like *Séquence* or *Illusion*) Cadieux intervenes on the film with printing inks, which grants the photographs the tactile qualities of painting. At the same time, the sculptural display of her photographic images and use of different materials highlight photography's most challenging paradox: the tension between matter and spirit. In exposing the bodies the way she does and foregrounding the very body of photography in a variety of attitudes and combination of postures, Cadieux seems to defy the concern expressed by Walter Benjamin (and largely disseminated by postmodern critical discourse) over the future of photography in the age of mechanical reproduction. Paradoxically the very stress Cadieux lays on the material of her work seems to show that photography (like woman herself for that matter) is neither a question of «mechanical reproduction» nor a mere token of desire. Instead, she chooses to privilege a view on photography as a form of reflection which is not endless (like Wittgenstein's logical maze of infinite regression) but specifically defined and redefined in the display of the viewer's fantasies enacted within the parameters provided by the artist's vision (within the space/stage/room/closet that contain work and viewer). Working with the material of photography (the very emulsions of photography or the interventions on the film, like the mysterious scratches on Bellocq's photographs), reflecting on matter or making it literally reflexive is a way of embodying the shadows that constitute the symbolic substance of photography.

The spectral body, the effacing body, the intermittent flashes of a face seem to incarnate,

FIGURE 4

Echo (partial view), 1989, bronze (67 x 57 cm), parchment (93 x 68 cm); photo: Louis Lussier. Coll. of the artist.



fantasmatically, the soul not as «essence» of the subject but as an abiding interrogation. The techniques of mirroring and lighting used by Cadieux produce the intense effect of a half-material presence, an interstice, a layer packed with air (*pneuma*, etymologically the equivalent of air, breath, spirit). The soul is also represented in these works as a gap, an absence materialized in a trace, an after-image. It brings to surface mental images or resuscitates some detail placed somewhere in the mind in an imaginary field of vision, which is what photography normally does.

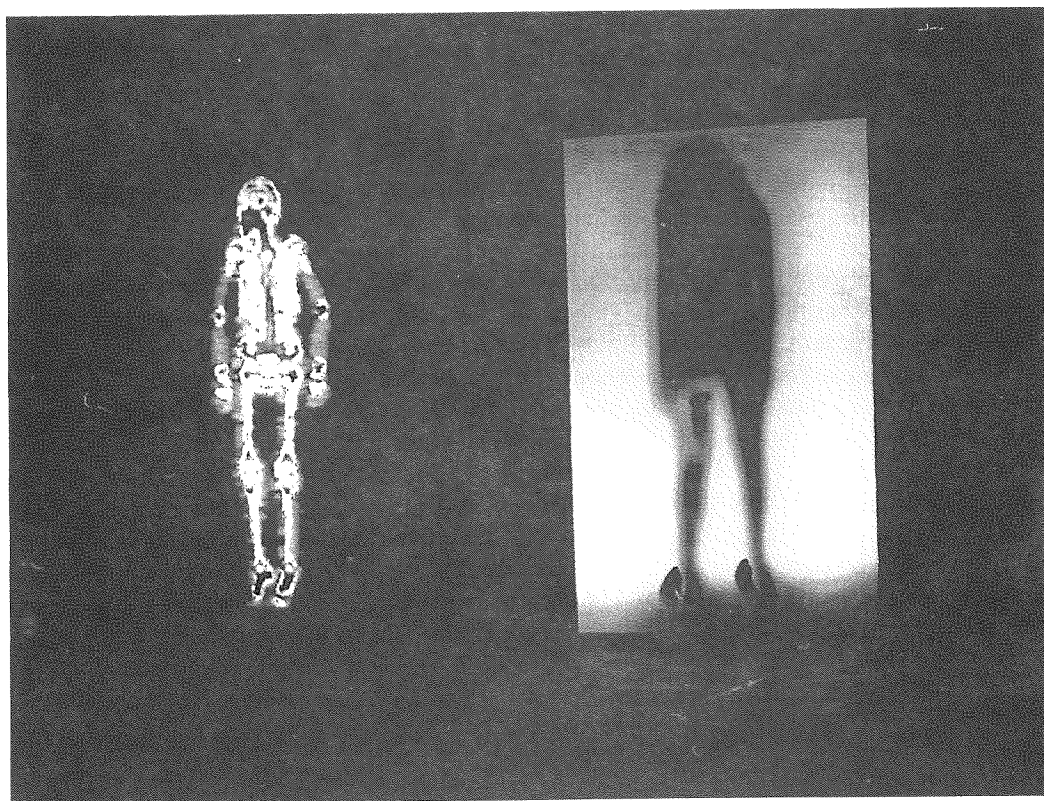
Whether this spectre (called soul by some, psyche by others) can be located or not has been a long date question. Does the soul inhabit the heart, the humours, the brain?

In her recent book significantly entitled *Les nouvelles maladies de l'âme* [the new soul illnesses], Julia Kristeva refers to this «irreducible enigma» in terms of a structure of sense (10). Winnicott's notion of «Self» (suggesting an «embodied soul») was also ultimately unknowable. In his posthumous *Human Nature* Winnicott emphasizes the difficulties of talking about the soul *per se* (other, than, probably in a poetic discourse). He relates the soul to the mind and brain function and acknowledges the fantasmatic nature of a specific location: «We indulge in a fantasy», he says, «that there is *a place*, which we call the mind» (53).

In representing bodies dissolving into light Cadieux makes a statement on the physical and its sublimation, a sublimation that has to be necessarily visible. Hence her focus on «concepts of vision, both *ocular* and *extra-perceptible*». In *The Shoe at Right Seems Much Too Large* (1986) (Figure 5), for instance, she exposes this desire to «embody vision» that

FIGURE 5

The Shoe at Right Seems Much Too Large (light boxes, partial view of the installation), 1986, wood, acrylic, display transparency, fluorescent lights, transformers, one box of 282x101x25,4 cm and another of 282x168x25,4 cm; photo: Louis Lussier. Coll. of the artist.



surpasses (by inclusion?) the dichotomy between body and soul (as quoted by Durand, her own phrasing is «redonner du corps à la vision», Durand 124). This work is made up of two elements: a framed gaze placed face to face with two light boxes that contain a radiography of a whole body and the projection of a blurred silhouette hovering over a pair of shoes. In the case of that particular installation Cadieux notes that while the

reflection of the eyes in the frame is sometimes visible on the two light boxes facing them, the images in the light-boxes do not appear reflected in the eyes. «Vision here», she points out, «is cut off from the reality of the body and soul.» In her concise and rather enigmatic comment on this one-sided mirroring effect, Cadieux seems to rebuke a dualist perspective. Distinctions are effaced or engendered in the process of vision. In *The Shoe at Right...* the X-ray and the silhouette might be seen as emanations of the represented viewer's power of vision. Contemplation is thus converted into an active process, it is made corporeal in the two representations of the body — one the image of a skeleton, the other that of a shadow — whose «presence» is enhanced by the power of light energy. Phantasms of the body are thus sublimated while the image of the body is phantomatically present. A process of displacement and substitution, at work in other installations, governs almost allegorically the readings of *The Shoe at Right...*

Does this mean that a prolonged moment's contemplation can dissolve the very body of the image, efface the scars and inscriptions and reach an otherwise unseen aura manifest here in the light sources that make the two silhouettes visible? Is this presence of energy the expression of an ultimate fantasy of the avatars of the soul in the technological era? These are questions that link the reflection on Cadieux's work to larger concerns in our culture today with what critics have considered as a «new holism» (Schwab 205) in the body and soul, body and mind dispute.

In her analysis of the contemporary soul afflictions Kristeva expresses a commonly acknowledged perception of a shift in the condition of postmodern man under the influence of media images. She points out that under the pressure of contemporary everyday life conditions we witness a spectacular diminution of inner life: «we no longer have the necessary time and the space to make ourselves a soul» («pour se faire une âme», 16). The invasion of images vehiculated by photography, cinema, video, television is made responsible for devouring the inner life that functions itself through representations (mental images) which cathect the subject's anxieties and desires. Hence, like other contemporary critics mostly of sociological orientation, Kristeva concludes dramatically: «Modern man is losing his soul». The disfunctioning of the imaginary inevitably occurs when the psyche has lost its guide-marks in the tide of induced image bulimia: «the dark-room is out of work» (16).

Cadieux seems to face such valid concerns with yielding propositions. By staging body&soul fantasies within a space that allows the viewer to be part of them she disclaims image fetishism while providing patterns of distilling images into our own imaginary such as those she often uses when working with already existing visual representations. Through yet another paradox, photography's very struggle to survive as an art form informed by new techniques provides a cure to the image-saturation/image-blindness disease. In order to intelligently defend ourselves of exhaustive and exhausting visualization Cadieux's work makes us *reflect* on images and strike the right balance between remembering and forgetting them, seeing and ignoring them, analysing or just letting them be: something the psyche itself does ... unknowingly.

WORKS CITED

- Durand, R. (1990). *La Part de l'ombre. Essais sur l'expérience photographique*. Paris: La Différence.
 Kristeva, J. (1993). *Les nouvelles maladies de l'âme*. Paris: Fayard.
 Lacan, J. (1975). *Le séminaire. Livre I: Les écrits techniques de Freud*. Paris: Seuil.
 Pontbriand, C. (1990). Geneviève Cadieux. In *Passages de l'image*. Paris: Editions du Centre Pompidou.
 Pontbriand, C. (1990). Language is a Skin. In *Geneviève Cadieux. Canada: XLIV Biennale di Venezia*. Montreal: Parachute & Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal.
 Schwab, G. (1989). Cyborgs and Cybernetic Intertexts: On Postmodern Phantasms of Body and Mind. In *Intertextuality in Contemporary American Fiction* (Patrick O'Donnell & Robert Con Davis, Eds.), Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

- Solomond-Godeau, A. (1992). Photography. In *Feminism and Psychoanalysis. A Critical Dictionary* (Elizabeth Wright, Ed.), Oxford: Blackwell.
- Winnicott, D.W. (1988). *Human Nature*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Yingling, T. (1990). How the Eye Is Caste: Robert Mapplethorpe and the Limits of Controversy. *Discourse*, 2(12): 3-28.

Oscar in the Fantastic Shakespearean Glass

DAVID POLLARD (*)

I

When asked by a friend during his university days what was his ambition in life, Oscar Wilde responded: «God knows! I won't be a dried up Oxford don, anyhow. I'll be a poet, a writer, a dramatist. Somehow or other, I'll be famous, and if not famous, I'll be notorious.»¹ Leaving Oxford in 1878 with this vague but disquieting design, Wilde set out to make himself as conspicuous as possible. Born Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde, he announced the goal of becoming known as «The Oscar» or «The Wilde» — names intended not so much to distinguish himself from others within a class as to proclaim him as a class in himself. Wilde therefore strove to establish what I will call a «looking» relationship with the fashionable world. To set off his flippant verbal paradoxes Wilde's dress became itself a paradox. Once, for instance, to illustrate literally his belief that one should fashion one's life into a work of art, Wilde showed up at the opening of an art gallery dressed in a coat shaped like a cello.² On another occasion, he startled friends and casual observers alike by appearing in public with a hair-style modelled from one he had seen on a bust of the emperor Nero. Gestures like these, not surprisingly, resulted quickly in the coveted celebrity. Wilde was putting his genius, as he would later say, into his life, and not into his works. Thus within months of his arrival in the capital, when he overheard a passerby say, «There goes that bloody fool, Oscar Wilde», Wilde could remark to his companion with a triumphant flourish: «It's extraordinary how soon one gets known in London.»³

Self-announcement through eye-arresting clothes and performative theatricality is the distinction which most characterizes Wilde's famous lecture tour of America in 1882. Photographs reveal the celebrated apostle of beauty dressed up to look as if he had wandered out of a road production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience* — an effect which was more or less what his promoter, W. F. Morse, had in mind. The photographs show Wilde with a wavy hair-style carefully coiffed to soften his harsh, angular jaw, dressed in exotic costume: cravat, velvet coat, knee breeches, and silk stockings. In this garb Wilde appeared all over America for his lectures on the decorative arts. On one occasion, the lecture at Harvard

(*) Nazareth College of Rochester, 4245 East Avenue, Rochester, New York 14618-3790, USA.

¹ Quoted in H. Montgomery Hyde, *Oscar Wilde*, New York: Da Capo Press, 1975, 38.

² For a drawing of the cello coat, see Richard Ellman, *Oscar Wilde*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988, between 44 and 45.

³ Quoted in Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde*, 109.

University, a number of undergraduate students decided to give the lecturer the ultimate send-up. Therefore they all dressed themselves to look like Oscar Wilde and marched into the auditorium in a body and took their seats in the front rows. Having been informed beforehand that this display of rebellious tribute was going to occur, Wilde appeared before his audience this time dressed in a suit of the most conservative cut. He then proceeded to lecture his Harvard devotees on the bizarreness of attire among American college students.

All of this behavior can be construed simply as Wilde's good-natured adaptation of the pose of the dandy in order to «get known», entertain audiences, and make money: in short, to achieve «recognition». But recognition is a complex thing. What did Londoners see in Wilde's appearances as an ambulatory tableau? In calling Wilde a fool, what did his observer recognize/misrecognize in him? And most especially, when the Harvard students saw the butt of their joke sartorially transformed and reflecting back to them an image of themselves, what self-recognition did they experience? Was it their own fundamentalist conformity? His underlying correspondent conservatism? Wilde (as described by biographer Richard Ellmann) is surely a transcendent example of what object-relations psychoanalysts Heinz Kohut and Ernest S. Wolf call the «mirror-hungry» personality: one who displays himself in order to be sustained by looking relationships with reliably mirroring others.⁴ When in his seminal essay «On Narcissism: An Introduction», Freud describes the narcissist as one who loves «(a) what he himself is, (b) what he himself was, (c) what he actually himself would like to be»,⁵ it is easy to imagine the psychoanalyst going on to exhibit Oscar Wilde for the exemplifying case history. What then did Wilde recognize/misrecognize about himself, if anything, when he contemplated a hall in Cambridge crowded with young taunting anamorphic reflectors?

Two scenes in his life catch the extremes of Wilde's looking/mirroring relationship with his public. On the night of February 20, 1892, at the St. James Theater in London, the enthusiastic audience was treated to a rare spectacle. The occasion was the premiere of *Lady Windermere's Fan*. After the final curtain Wilde walked indolently onstage, a lit cigarette drooping from his fingers, and addressed the audience:

I have enjoyed this evening immensely. The actors have given us a charming rendering of a delightful play, and your appreciation has been most intelligent. I congratulate you on the great success of your performance, which persuades me that you think almost as highly of the play as I do myself.⁶

Bathed in the glow of his own narcissistic aura, Wilde here celebrates the interactive nature of his notion of theater. He is at once playwright and member of the audience; observer and observed; and the applauder of his applauders, rejoicing in the valorization that comes from mutual recognition. Three years later, however, in the hour of his fall from grace, convicted on charges of homosexual practices, Wilde experienced a rather different audience response. He remembers a scene on the way to prison:

On November 13th 1895 I was brought down here from London. From two o'clock till half-past two on that day I had to stand on the centre platform of Clapham Junction in convict dress and handcuffed, for the world to look at... When people saw me they laughed. Each train as it came up swelled the audience. Nothing could exceed their amusement. That was of course before they knew who I was. As soon as they had been informed, they laughed

⁴ Heinz Kohut and Ernest S. Wolf, «The Disorders of the Self and Their Treatment», in *Essential Papers on Narcissism* (Andrew P. Morrison, Ed.), New York: New York University Press, 1986, 190.

⁵ S. Freud, «On Narcissism: An Introduction» (1914), in *Freud: General Psychological Theory* (Philip Rieff, Ed.), New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1963, 71.

⁶ Quoted in Hyde, *Oscar Wilde*, 137.

still more. For half an hour I stood there in the grey November rain surrounded by a jeering mob. For a year after that was done to me I wept every day at the same hour and for the same space of time.⁷

Wilde had achieved a fame and notoriety beyond the endeavors of his most improbable imagining. From the sartorial extravagance of the cello coat to the degradation of convict dress, Wilde had realized the widest possible range of performative roles, audiences, and looking and mirroring relationships. More than any author of his age, he was «recognized»: he was (in) the eye of a decade. Yet a character in a Wildean shortstory at one point ponders: «The world is a stage, but the play is badly cast.» In Reading Gaol, Cell 3.3, the new occupant now found (as the letter to Lord Alfred Douglas amply documents) the opportunity to consider whether the bad casting of his life did not extend most particularly to its central figure: that condensed, objectified, and observable thing, the «Oscar». In any event, on one occasion Wilde's wife Constance came to the prison and observed her husband unawares through the penal optics of a peephole. She wanted to look at him for a final time.⁸

II

More by far than with Goethe, Wilde's works stand as the fragments of a grand confession. In *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Gwendolen articulates a major premise of Wildean aesthetics: «I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read on the train.» For Wilde, an author writes about and finally for himself: thus the diary constitutes the exemplary type of all literature. The idea is that one records one's life in such a way as to turn it into something that he can observe with pleasurable detachment. Writing produces a mirror, a picture, a portrait of the hieratic self, called into being in order to focus the autoerotic gaze. And «to love oneself is the beginning of a life-long romance.»⁹ Therefore we are not surprised when Wilde claims the following preference regarding Benvenuto Cellini: «I must confess I like all memoirs... in Literature mere egotism is delightful... [that is why] the couchant nymphs that Cellini wrought in bronze... and the green and gold Perseus even... have not given [the world] more pleasure than has that autobiography in which the supreme scoundrel of the Renaissance relates the story of his splendor and his shame.»¹⁰ Reading therefore becomes for Wilde a corresponding scopophilic exercise, a moment of seeing by which we enter vicariously, sometimes complicitously, into those alternate (one might say «double») lives we are unresigned to not having. Wilde's *oeuvre* is populated with characters, like John Worthing and Algernon Moncrieff, who lead secret lives and have «doubles» as well, with whom they develop complex looking relationships. These, I think, can be interpreted as models for Wilde's understanding of the ideal binary between author and audience/reader: in other words, the transactions of art form a kind of anamorphic voyeurism. The following passage from Wilde's most substantial essay, «The Critic as Artist», puts these values succinctly and clearly:

...the highest criticism is... the record of one's soul. It is more fascinating than history, as it is concerned simply with oneself. It treats the work of art simply as a starting-point for a new creation... for the meaning of any beautiful created thing is, at least, as much in the soul of him who looks

⁷ *Selected Letters of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Rupert-Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 219.

⁸ For this episode, see Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde*, 516.

⁹ «Phrases and Philosophies for the Use of the Young», *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, intro. Vyvyan Holland (London: Collins, 1983), 1206.

¹⁰ «The Critic as Artist», in *The Artist as Critic: The Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde* (Richard Ellmann, ed.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982, 341.

at it, as it was in his soul who wrought it. Nay, it is rather the beholder who lends to the beautiful thing its myriad meanings, and makes it marvellous for us, and sets it in some new relation to the age, so that it becomes a vital portion of our lives, and a symbol of what we pray for, or perhaps of what, having prayed for, we fear we may receive.¹¹

It is in the light of his personal behavior, as I have have described it, in addition to his aesthetic position, I would suggest, that we are to approach the issue of Wilde's career-long preoccupation with the personality and works of Shakespeare.

References to Shakespeare run throughout Wilde's recorded conversations, letters, literary criticism, and fiction. Typically they reveal that Wilde was a hierarchal snob concerned with invoking Shakespeare as a way of achieving an unassailable ascendancy over others. For example, those inimical to his position are deemed to show «the rage of Caliban»; and «well-intentioned mediocrities» who attack Rossetti are the false friends of Prince Hamlet. The following statement about America illustrates Wilde's way of essentializing Shakespearean fiction into the metonym of a whole culture for the purpose of wittily persuading an English audience to recognize their own superiority:

The next thing particularly noticeable is that everybody seems in a hurry to catch a train. This is a state of things which is not favourable to poetry or romance. Had Romeo or Juliet been in a constant state of anxiety about trains, or had their minds been agitated by the question of return-tickets, Shakespeare could not have given us those lovely balcony scenes which are so full of poetry and pathos.¹²

Similarly, once at a social gathering of literary luminaries in Paris, Wilde one-upped an anti-English barb by Emile Zola with a cleverly multivalent *bon mot*: «I am Irish by birth and English by adoption so that I am condemned, as Monsieur Zola says, to speak the language of Shakespeare.»¹³ We notice the keen sense of cultural fragmentation and displacement conveyed with the wit. Finally, young Yeats was lucky enough to behold Wilde at a London soiree jubilant and speaking the language of Shakespeare: «Give me *The Winter's Tale*, 'Daffodils that come before the swallow dare' but not *King Lear*. What is *King Lear* but poor life staggering in the fog?»¹⁴ This is Wilde in Perdita's dialogue and mood of youthful abundance and Yeats records that he was overwhelmed by the performance.

In 1880 Wilde produced his first distinguished written reaction to Shakespeare in the sonnet «Portia: To Ellen Terry». The poem is addressed to the renowned actress as a compliment from an appreciative member of her audience:

I marvel not Bassanio was so bold
To peril all he had upon the lead
Or that proud Aragon bent low his head
Or that Morocco's fiery heart grew cold:
For in that gorgeous dress of beaten gold
Which is more golden than the golden sun
No woman Veronese looked upon
Was half so fair as thou whom I behold.
Yet fairer when with wisdom as your shield

¹¹ *The Artist as Critic*, 365 and 367-68.

¹² «Impressions of America», *The Artist as Critic*, 6.

¹³ Quoted in Vyvyan Holland, *Oscar Wilde* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988), 43.

¹⁴ *The Autobiography of William Butler Yeats* (1916) (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958), 87.

The sober-suited lawyer's gown you donned,
 And would not let the laws of Venice yield
 Antonio's heart to that accursed Jew —
 O Portia! take my heart: it is thy due:
 I think I will not quarrel with the Bond.¹⁵

In 1881 W. P. Frith unveiled his painting «A Private View» in which we see Oscar Wilde in a picture gallery, top-hatted, flower in lapel, with guidebook in hand, looking at the surrounding paintings with an expression of modified rapture. Many beholders, including prominently two ladies and a child with their backs to us, are looking idolatrously at the aesthete.¹⁶ Frith's painting with its layered optics — we gaze at others gazing at Wilde gazing at works of art which we cannot see — catches something essential about its subject. For Wilde, we recall, the critic is the privileged viewer who lends meaning and wonder to beautiful things. Now Wilde's sonnet is itself an act of performance criticism. In it the poet gazes with awe at Ellen Terry as an *objet d'art* (comparable to Veronese's models). Only he can see: we, of course, see the actress solely through his eyes. The sonnet, moreover, constitutes a new work of art — one which by virtue of its form (whose traditional subject is love) announces a libidinal cathexis. This is signified further by the fetishist definition which the clothes provide. Terry is fair in the «gorgeous» dress of gold; she is even «fairer» in the masculine gown of the lawyer. Wilde may be disclosing here perhaps more than he intends. In any case, predictably with Wilde, anamorphic shifts in identity are signalled by a change of attire. Also, clearly the two parties both play double parts. Ellen Terry is simultaneously herself and the androgynous Portia; and Wilde is both himself and by desire one of her suitors: that is, at once observer and would-be participant in the play's illusion. In fact, complicitously he does make the leap from the narrative frame of his work into that of Shakespeare's («O Portia! take my heart: it is thy due:/ I think I will not quarrel with the Bond»).

In 1883 Wilde published *The Duchess of Padua*. This is a pseudo-Elizabethan play in the manner of Shelley's *The Cenci*, an exercise in imitation and nostalgia. With this play Wilde tried direct rivalry with Shakespeare and failed miserably. 1885 saw a flurry of Shakespearean activity: Wilde wrote a handful of reviews of Shakespearean productions and brought out the first version of «The Truth of Masks». A landmark in the history of theater criticism, this essay picks up and extends in a remarkably sober way the values expressed in «Portia». Here Wilde argues in brilliant detail for the need for theater «archaeology» to recreate historical accuracy in costuming, seeing that Shakespeare appreciated «how important costume is as a means of producing certain dramatic effects.»¹⁷ «The whole of the Philosophy of Clothes», he goes on, «is to be found in Lear's scene with Edgar... [and Shakespeare] has as much delight in Caliban as he has in Ariel, in rags as he has in cloth of gold, and recognizes the artistic beauty of ugliness.»¹⁸ Again, as with himself and Ellen Terry, Wilde stresses the external, optical dimensions to characterization and thus the need for a successful revival of a Shakespeare play to focus and concentrate the gaze.

In 1886, now 32, married and with children, Wilde became friends with Robert Ross, seventeen. Both H. Montgomery Hyde and Richard Ellmann accept as true Ross's boast that it was he who first seduced his famous friend into homosexual practices. From this time we can trace an enlargement of Wilde's concept of the artist and a corresponding intensification of interest in Shakespeare. Wilde now makes a Nietzschean connection between

¹⁵ «Portia: To Ellen Terry», *The Complete Works*, intro. Vyvyan Holland, 778.

¹⁶ Frith's painting is reproduced in a black and white photograph in Vyvyan Holland, *Oscar Wilde*, 57.

¹⁷ «The Truth of Masks», *The Artist as Critic*, 409.

¹⁸ Idem, 415.

sexuality and art: «Aesthetics... are to Ethics in the sphere of conscious civilization, what, in the sphere of the external world, sexual is to natural selection. Ethics, like natural selection, make existence possible. Aesthetics, like sexual selection, make life lovely and wonderful, fill it with new forms, and give it progress, variety and change.»¹⁹ Consequently, beginning to see the Elizabethan author in a new light, with his young lover Wilde entertains the unlikely scheme of bringing out a new edition of the complete works thereby «rescuing Shakespeare from the Philistines.» Characteristically, Wilde looks on this project from the perspective of aristocratic dandyism — saving culture from its middle class Victorian degradation. In this spirit, in 1888 Wilde participated in the festivities which accompanied the unveiling of Lord Ronald Gower's Shakespeare monument at Stratford. Wilde wrote waggishly to Ross: «I have been speaking at Stratford about Shakespeare, but in spite of that enjoyed myself immensely. My reception was semi-royal, and the volunteers played God Save the Queen in my honor.»²⁰

In July 1889 *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* published the first version of Wilde's sensation-causing «The Portrait of Mr. W. H.». Cast as a work of fiction, this work presents itself ostensibly as a demonstration of connoisseurship on the subject of the autobiographical aspects of Shakespeare's sonnets. At one point late in the work, Wilde furnishes an anecdote which has unmistakable personal implications. He tells the story of a young Elizabethan who was unhappy in love and who happened to see a performance of «Love's Labour's Lost». At first struck by the falsity of the actors' feigned emotions, the young viewer soon realized that «this fanciful comedy of unreal romance» was actually showing to him the tragedy of *his* life: «Behind the bright and quickly-changing pageant of the stage, he saw himself as one sees one's image in a fantastic glass.»²¹ «There are few of us», adds Wilde coyly, «who have not felt something akin to this.» At this place Wilde strategically intrudes perhaps the most condensed formulation of his subjectivist epistemology and aesthetics: «Art, even art of the fullest scope and widest vision, can never show us the the external world. All that it shows us is our own soul.» «Consciousness», he continues, «is quite inadequate to explain the contents of personality. It is Art, and Art only, that reveals us to ourselves...»

Briefly, «The Portrait of Mr. W. H.» presents a multiplex, layered perspective through which the reader observes an unnamed narrator listening to a character named Erskine recount the attempts of his friend Cyril Graham to uncover the identity of Mr. W. H., the «only begetter» of Shakespeare's sonnets. Graham posits his whole existence on discovering in the sonnets the source of their inspiration. Therefore with the dedication of a manic Peeping Tom he scours Shakespeare's language and scrutinizes the puns and determines that W. H. must have been a boy-actor named Willie Hughes. Graham is so certain that he is right, but so frustrated by the lack of definitive extrinsic evidence, that furtively he commissions a forged portrait of Willie Hughes: a trope, of course, for Wilde's own fictional narrative. Then shockingly Graham commits suicide as an act of faith in the truth of his theory. The narrator is intrigued and takes up the search for Hughes in the plays. He reaches the bold conclusion that Shakespeare was so enamored of Hughes, a youth of seventeen, that the poet was moved to create for this boy-actor his great gallery of women characters: Juliet, Rosalind, Portia, and the rest. The narrator conjectures that the Dark Lady was «the profligate wife of some old and wealthy citizen» who vies with Shakespeare for the boy's affections. To round out the theory, Marlowe is confidently identified as the rival poet who briefly lures Willie away to play Gaveston, the «delicate minion» of

¹⁹ «The Critic as Artist» Part II, *The Artist as Critic*, 406.

²⁰ *Selected Letters of Oscar Wilde*, 74.

²¹ «The Portrait of Mr. W. H.», *The Artist as Critic*, 209. For an interesting study of the calculated indeterminacies in Wilde's sexual rhetoric in this text, see Lawrence Danson, «Oscar Wilde, W. H., and the Unspoken Name of Love», *ELH*, Volume 58, Number 4, Winter, 1991: 979-1000.

Edward II. The main point, though, is that Shakespeare marries Hughes («the visible incarnation of beauty») to his Muse and the offspring of this union are the wonderful female characters.

This theorizing opens up for Wilde an opportunity to intuit the psychosexuality of Shakespeare in relationship to the conventions of the Elizabethan stage. The narrator conjectures: «... if sex be an element of artistic creation, it might... be urged that the delightful combination of wit and romance which characterizes so many of Shakespeare's heroines was at least occasioned if it was not actually caused by the fact that the players of these parts were lads and young men, whose passionate purity, quick mobile fancy, and healthy freedom from sentimentality can hardly fail to have suggested a new and delightful type of girlhood or of womanhood.»²² The warmth of the prose indicates to me, at least, that here Wilde may be lighting upon his deepest debt to Shakespeare: not the discovery of any generic properties of comedy or tragedy which he might exploit but the inspiration for a new kind of heroine derived from the imaginative projection of his love for pretty young men onto the stage. For in the early 1890's Wilde starts producing the series of plays which are peopled, often dominated, by intelligent, often amusing, sometimes innocent, usually unscrupulous or amoral, adventuresses: Mrs. Erlynne in *Lady Windermere's Fan*; Mabel Chiltern in *An Ideal Husband*; Gwendolen and Cecily in *The Importance of Being Earnest*; Myrrhina in the fragment *La Sainte Courtisane*; and the titular heroine in *Salome*.

One notes that the age of Willie Hughes — seventeen — is identical to that of Robbie Ross when Wilde first became involved with him. It seems apparent that the reading of the sonnets and plays in «The Portrait of Mr. W.H.» encodes Wilde's appropriation of Shakespeare as his own precursor. We recall his remark: «... for the meaning of any beautiful created thing is, at least, as much in the soul of him who looks at it, as it was in his soul who wrought it... the beholder... sets it in some new relation to the age...» This version of «Shakespeare», it is implied, might well be a forgery like the portrait of Hughes; but Wilde the beholder is determined to align his authoritative subject as a mirror for the modern artist (specifically, himself). Wilde does not dare to state unequivocally that the national poet of England was a homosexual. But the obvious construction did not elude one dangerous reader. At the trial of 1895 the prosecuting attorney Sir Edward Carson probed for evidence of self-incrimination in Wilde's writings. At one dramatic moment, the shrewd Carson asked the leading question: «I believe you have written an article to show that Shakespeare's sonnets were suggestive of unnatural vice?» With an undulatingly ambiguous reply, Wilde answered: «On the contrary, I have written an article to show that they are not. I objected to such a perversion being put on Shakespeare.»²³ In private conversation with Frank Harris, however, Wilde was more forthright: «What you call vice, Frank, is not vice. It is as good to me as it was to Caesar, Alexander, Michelangelo, and Shakespeare.»²⁴

1891 was the crucial year in Wilde's life. In January he first met Lord Alfred Douglas («Bosie») the handsome, impossible son of the Marquis of Queensbury. In April appeared *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and the next month the collection of essays *Inventions*. The latter contains «Pencil Pen and Poison» a study of the strange case of Thomas Wainwright. What fascinates Wilde about Wainwright is that he managed to be a poet, a painter, and an art connoisseur while at the same time leading a hidden life of heinous crime. This man was a «forger of no mean or ordinary capabilities, and... a subtle and secret poisoner almost without rival in this or any age.»²⁵ Wilde's account glows with admiration for this «remarkable man». Marvelling how the quality of Wainwright's poetry improved under

²² «The Portrait of Mr. W. H.», 192.

²³ This exchange is quoted in H. Montgomery Hyde, *The Trials of Oscar Wilde* (New York: Dover Publications, 1962), 113.

²⁴ Quoted in Hyde, *The Trials of Oscar Wilde*, 312.

²⁵ «Pen Pencil and Poison», *The Artist as Critic*, 321.

the stimulus of committing crimes, Wilde pushes the envelope of his developing idea that art and concealed perversity or criminality are two deeply connected modes of self-expression. Wilde insists: «There is no essential incongruity between crime and culture... One can fancy an intense personality being created out of sin.»²⁶ Poised on these values is *The Picture of Dorian Gray* which, as the title indicates, has a tight intertextual relationship with the story about Mr W.H. and Shakespeare.

The Picture of Dorian Gray explores a central tenet of the decadent movement in the arts from Wagner's *Tannhaeuser* to Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*. The poet August von Platen put it this way: «Wer die Schoenheit angeschaut mit Augen,/ Ist dem Tode schon anheimgegeben» («He who has turned his eye on Beauty/ Has become already devoted to death»)²⁷ In Wilde's novel young Dorian Gray is led to discover the irresistible appeal of his own beauty by viewing the portrait painted of him by his friend Basil Hallward — «A look of joy came into his eyes, as if he had recognized himself for the first time... gazing at the shadow of his own loveliness.»²⁸ Simultaneously a new friend, Lord Henry Wotton, takes an interest in Dorian and lays before him his philosophy of pleasurable narcissism: «The aim of life is self-development. To realize one's nature perfectly — that is what each of us is here for... Live!... Be always searching for new sensations. Be afraid of nothing... A new Hedonism — that is what our century wants. You might be its visible symbol.» Thus schooled in body and soul, Dorian sets out to test the possibilities in his new self-awareness: his first adventure, a love affair with a Shakespearean actress Sibyl Vane. Wilde wrote to a friend how to decode the autobiographical subtext: «Basil Hallward is what I think I am: Lord Henry what the world thinks me: Dorian what I would like to be — in other ages perhaps.» In other words, among other things, Wilde's novel is but a long, rather baroque, attempt at exploratory self-examination.

Wilde, of course, derives the conceit of a painting described within the novel standing for the novel itself from «The Portrait of Mr. W. H.». He also derives the quadrangular relationships developed in the novel from the reading of Shakespeare's sonnets in that previous work. Basil Hallward takes the place of the anguished Shakespeare, in his art revealing more than he should about his passion for a young boy; Dorian is the vastly more elaborate version of Willie Hughes described in almost identical terms; the darkly cynical Lord Henry who steals the boy away is here the rival Marlowe; and the Dark Lady is transformed into the charming Sibyl Vane, who briefly deflects Dorian from his involvement with the two men. For the Sibyl episode Wilde retrieves the stance of the sonnet to Ellen Terry. As with the speaker of the poem Dorian falls in love with Sibyl because of her portrayal of Shakespearean heroines:

Harry, I do love her. She is everything to me in life. Night after night I go to see her play. One evening she is Rosalind, and the next evening she is Imogen. I have seen her die in the gloom of an Italian tomb, sucking the poison from her lover's lips. I have watched her wandering through the forest of Arden disguised as a pretty boy in hose and doublet and dainty cap. She has been mad, and has come into the presence of a guilty king, and given him rue to wear, and bitter herbs to taste of. She has been innocent, and the black hands of jealousy have crushed her reed-like throat. I have seen her in every age and in every costume.... Harry! why didn't you tell me that the only thing worth loving is an actress.

²⁶ Idem, 338-39.

²⁷ The quotation from Platen is taken from Thomas Mann's fascinating essay «Platen» included in his *Essays of Three Decades* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), 260. The translation is mine.

²⁸ Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, ed. Isobel Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 24-26. This and all subsequent quotations from Wilde's novel come from this text.

We recognize in this passage a rich epitome of Wildean values: the idea that life at its best is a theatrical performance in which the multiplication of roles and costumes evinces various aspects of a performer's personality (the truth of masks); the belief that love is the product of the gaze engendered and enhanced because distanced, by the transformative powers of illusion; the conviction that that distance ensures no violation of the narcissistic cellularity of the gazer; the recognition that in the eye of the beholder the beloved is a reified object («the only thing worth loving»); and, naturally, the centering of Shakespeare's works as the place where these discoveries and transactions most effectively can happen.

Unfortunately, Sibyl's love for Dorian takes a more traditional form. Once she realizes the genuineness of her passion for her «Prince Charming» she is unable to sustain her role in the make-believe; her acting talent deserts her and, now struck by her ordinariness, Dorian deserts her too («You have killed my love.») Sibyl Vane commits suicide; and when Dorian perceives that his guilty responsibility for this catastrophe has caused a grotesque alteration of expression in his portrait, we get a first inkling of the hardening of his narcissism. He misappropriates to himself the outcry of Othello over Desdemona's infidelity: «The pity of it! The pity of it!» After a brief interval, coldly Dorian takes up again the quest for new sensations, turning himself increasingly into what Wilde saw in the murderer Wainwright — an intense personality created out of sin. By forsaking the safety of Lord Henry's remote, specular detachment, however, Dorian loses control; he slowly descends into mysteriously hinted — at depravities, black-mail, drug taking, murder, and finally suicide. Wilde's anarchic decadent aesthetics, it is clear to see, coalesce with the cultural authority of conventional pieties («The wages of sin is death»).

It is almost as if Wilde had prescribed in the novel the arch of his own subsequent life. By 1897 Wilde had been behind bars for two years. By a curious inversion of Lord Henry and Dorian Gray's roles, Wilde had allowed himself to be persuaded by Alfred Lord Douglas to press charges against Douglas' father for libel. The Marquis of Queensbury had, seemingly recklessly, accused Wilde of sodomy; however, the Marquis was able to surprise Wilde by producing witnesses to attest to the latter's guilt and thereby turn the tables on him. Consequently, from Reading Gaol Wilde writes to Douglas the famous letter (*De Profundis*). What interests us is the persistence with which Wilde turns to Shakespeare for his ideal imaginary stage. Wilde invites «Bosie» to see their friendship as a reenactment of high drama: this time, *Hamlet*. Wilde asserts: «I was a man who stood in symbolic relations to the art and culture of my age.» Then deliberately retrieving Goethe's classic formulation, Wilde shapes Hamlet into a self-defining double. The prince is a dreamer who «keeps playing with action, as an artist plays with theory». «He makes himself the spy of his proper actions... Instead of trying to be the hero of his own history, he seeks to be the spectator of his own tragedy.»²⁹ Not surprisingly Douglas is cast as the treacherous friend who has simply misrecognized the superiority of the man he has bedeviled. Wilde explains Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to Douglas: «They are the little cups that can hold so much and no more.» But, Wilde insists, Douglas is much worse than Hamlet's friends; they intruded largely by chance — he, by conscious and selfish design. Thus does Wilde persist in his willful theatromania, sitting in prison as at a play, viewing himself as the main character in Shakespeare's greatest tragedy and providing the hostile commentary which sets the work «in some new relation to the age.»

²⁹ *Selected Letters*, 194. Goethe's pronouncement on the character of Hamlet which was echoed throughout the nineteenth century and which Wilde is recalling here goes as follows: «To me it is clear that Shakespeare meant... to represent the effects of a great action laid upon a soul unfit for the performance of it... There is an oak-tree planted in a costly jar, which should have borne only pleasant flowers in its bosom: the roots expand, the jar is shattered.» *The Romantics on Shakespeare*, ed. Jonathan Bate (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 306. With typical witty inversion Wilde transfers to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (and to Douglas) the metaphor of the inadequate container.

III

The relevant materials (most of them) have been assembled; something of Wilde's human and artistic personality has been configured into two recursive but inter-reflective loops; and the critic has tried to «look» at Wilde looking at Shakespeare. But what has he seen? Wilde himself perhaps would say «the object as in itself it really is not.»³⁰

At the distance of a hundred years there is something about Wilde's public career that reminds me of the Makart bouquet with peacock feathers which used to adorn tables in bourgeois homes in nineteenth-century Germany: a quaint relic of the questionable taste of a bygone age, which supplied a little color and protest to drab surroundings. At another, more serious, level, Wilde strikes me as an urgent figure, much like Schopenhauer and Baudelaire, aware of the monster boredom and in desperate search for some fantastical domain of stimulation in which to survive. «Poor, probable, uninteresting human life», he lamented.³¹ This figure (like Baudelaire) is somewhat prophetic of the modern. But there is another level, which we are beginning to take the measure of—the postmodern Wilde. Recently, Jonathan Dollimore has made a case for this figure being the spokesman for an «antiessentialist, transgressive aesthetic» which speaks to certain post-modernist concerns.³² And quite obviously, my own view is shaped and determined to a large degree by a psychoanalytic perspective.³³

Wilde said in conversation: «Between them Hugo and Shakespeare have exhausted every subject. Originality is no longer possible — even in sin. So there are no real emotions left — only extraordinary adjectives.»³⁴ This sounds like Bloomian belatedness and the anxiety of influence; but Wilde is more interesting than that. For Wilde, as for Schopenhauer, sex was the «focus of the will», and looking, the focus of sex. «Love», wrote Wilde with studied precision, «is an illusion». Clearly what Theophile Gautier said of himself could be equally said of Wilde: he was a man for whom the visible world existed. Therefore Wilde was drawn to «Shakespeare» because the man-and-his-works provided a kind of *pan-opticon* — a culturally authoritative instrument and a place for viewing-to which strategically he could return when articulating his aesthetics of scopophilia. Shakespeare the creator of great language, it hardly needs to be said, scarcely exists for him. After prison, when in exile on the continent, Wilde took an interest in Frank Harris's work on a biography of Shakespeare. He writes to Harris: «How is Shakespeare? He was a mist and you have made him marble.» To the end, it would appear, Wilde remained intrigued mainly with optical illusions.

³⁰ «The Critic as Artist», 369.

³¹ «The Decay of Lying», *The Artist as Critic*, 305.

³² See Jonathan Dollimore's challenging, if not always convincing, argument in «Different Desires: Subjectivity and Transgression in Wilde and Gide», *Genders*, Number 2, Summer 1988: 24-41. For an expanded version of Dollimore's argument, see his *Sexual Dissidence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 3-18; 64-73; and 75-78.

³³ For modeling for me the creative ways that the Lacanian concept of «the gaze» may be applied to literary texts, I wish to acknowledge a large and general debt to Barbara Freedman, *Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis, and Shakespearean Comedy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991). See also Jacques Lacan, «Of The Gaze as *Objet Petit a*», *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), 67-119. For illuminating commentary, see Jonathan Scott Lee, *Jacques Lacan* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990), 154-161; and Elizabeth Wright, *Psychoanalytic Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1984), 107-122. For a non-psychoanalytic exploration of the presence and meaning of sexual subject-matter as it runs throughout Wilde's writings, see Patricia Flanagan Behrendt's detailed study, *Oscar Wilde: Eros and Aesthetics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991).

³⁴ *The Wit and Humor of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Alvin Redman (New York: Dover Publications, 1959), 77.

De Greene à Green: *The Third Man*

FABIO TRONCARELLI (*)

Tout le monde connaît *The Third Man*: un conte de Graham Greene et un film de Carol Reed, dont le même Greene a revendiqué une paternité plus profonde que celle des auteurs du scénario. Il a dit à ce propos qu'il a «suggéré» presque toutes les modifications nécessaires pour la mise en scène du conte et que: «le film... représente la dernière version, la dernière manifestation, la plus perfectionnée du conte.»¹

Même si à notre avis le rôle psychologique et artistique de Carol Reed n'est pas aussi secondaire que Greene laisse entendre, nous considérerons, dans le but d'une analyse psychanalytique de cet écrivain, *The Third Man* comme un oeuvre de Greene à double face: un conte-film qui a fasciné les spectateurs-lecteurs depuis 1948. En effet le mécanisme de l'histoire est typiquement greenien; tout comme typiquement greenien sont les personnages, toujours les mêmes, à part quelque détail, dans le conte et dans le film. La narration en prose où les images n'ont pas besoin d'explication particulières et tout semble logique.² Mais l'enveloppe est souvent trompeuse.

Pourquoi, par exemple, Rollo (qui dans le film s'appelle Holley) tombe amoureux de la fiancée de son ami? Dans la situation du début du conte-film la fille est en proie à un profond deuil pour la mort de son amant. Ce deuil est trop récent et trop intense pour permettre l'amour. Rollo paraît aveugle et dans son obsession amoureuse il est prisonnier d'une sorte de coaction au coup de foudre, en dépit de toute réalité.

Et Anna, la fille, n'a rien à voir avec les émotions de Rollo? Dans son deuil est-elle séductrice?

Un autre problème est représenté par les relations entre Rollo et Harry, l'amant d'Anna. Les deux sont amis, des vieux amis. Mais entre eux il y a un conflit sous-jacent depuis les temps de l'école. Rollo souligne maintes fois qu'Harry c'était «mieux» que lui: plus

(*) Università degli Studi della Tuscia, Facoltà di Lingue e Letterature Straniere Moderne, Istituto di Scienze Umane e delle Arti, Paleografia Latina e Diplomatica, via San Camillo de Lellis, 01100 Viterbo, Italia.

¹ Graham Greene, *Il terzo uomo*, Milano, 1989, p. 9. Le mot «conte» a été remplacé par le mot «sujet» dans la tardive autobiographie de Greene *Vie di scampo*, Milano, 1991, pp. 122-23.

² La resumé de l'histoire est le suivant: Rollo, un écrivain raté (dans le film son nom c'est Holley) arrive à Vienne occupé par les Alliés dans l'après-guerre. Il a été appelé par son vieux ami Harry. Mais Harry est mort. Rollo connaît son ex-fiancée et avec elle cherche à découvrir s'il a été assassiné. Il tombe amoureux de la fille, mais elle, fidèle à la mémoire d'Harry, le refuse. À la fin de son enquête, Rollo découvre que Harry n'est pas mort et qu'il est devenu un criminel. Plein d'amertume, Rollo décide de collaborer avec la Police pour prendre Harry, mais Anna ne partage pas ses sentiments. Après une passionnante poursuite dans les égouts de Vienne, Harry est tué par Rollo.

adulte, plus habile, plus intelligent, tandis qu'il se sentait toujours ridicule. Mais Harry était aussi trop malin, trop intelligent: il pouvait être cynique et il sera très cynique et cruel dans le déroulement de l'histoire. Rollo est bouleversé par l'ambivalence de ses sentiments: quand il apprendra que son ami est en effet un criminel il sera divisé entre la rage et l'angoisse, entre la fidélité à l'amitié d'antan et l'horreur face au présent.

La balance penche en faveur de l'horreur et cela sera justifié avec une maladroite tentative de «sauver» Anna. La «chevalerie» couvre avec son noble manteau la haine inconsciente. On dirait que Rollo cherche la bonne occasion pour manifester son hostilité. Dans cette perspective, même l'acharnement de Rollo, son obstination inéluctable pour savoir la «vérité» sur son ami est suspecte. On dirait qu'il ne veut pas savoir si son ami a été assassiné, mais plutôt s'il y avait des raisons pour le faire.

En dépit de l'apparence, il y a quelque chose d'obscur, d'inexpliqué derrière la surface de ce conte-film dramatique, parfaitement bati. Pour dénouer les nombreux énigmes de *The Third Man*, je crois que ce soit nécessaire un long voyage, pareil à celui de Dante. Il faut descendre aux Enfers de la psyché des personnages pour remonter aux Paradis de la psyché de l'auteur. Notre compagnon de voyage, notre Virgile, sera naturellement Freud. Notre Béatrice, la dame fascinante qui représente l'Amour, l'Intelligence et la Sagesse est la psychanalyse contemporaine, divisée entre écoles différentes. La multiplicité de leurs visages, changeantes comme les visages de Béatrice, montrent combien la connaissance des individus est difficile et prismatique.

D'abord descendons aux Enfers. Ce territoire obscur est constitué par les sentiments contrastants des personnages du conte-film: ce qu'on pourrait appeler «structures psychologiques élémentaires» de l'oeuvre.

Greene nous a dit que la première manifestation de l'histoire de *The Third Man* était une phrase, qu'il a transcrit avec une sorte d'écriture automatique de son inconscient. «J'ai dit 'Adieux!' pour la dernière fois à Harry, il y a une semaine, quand son cercueil plongeait dans le terrain de ce Février glacial. Donc, je ne croyais pas à mes yeux quand je l'ai vu me frotter sans me reconnaître, parmi la foule des inconnus sur le Strand.»³

Selon moi cette phrase est une réminiscence d'un pas du *The Waste Land* d'Eliot:

Unreal city
under the brown fog of a winter dawn
a crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many
I had no thought death had undone so many...
There I saw one I knew and stopped him crying: 'Stetson!
You who where with me in the ships at Mylae!
That corpse you planted last year in your garden
has it begun to sprout? Will it blow this year?
Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?
O keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men
or with his nails he'll dig it up again...
(I, 60-63 at 69-75)

Tous les éléments de Greene sont déjà dans Eliot: la foule des inconnus près de la City (le Strand c'est très proche du London Bridge); le cadavre enseveli pendant l'hiver dans la terre froide et la glace; le rencontre avec un «revenant» du passé; l'atmosphère de cauchemar.

Le motif du «revenant» a une tradition ancienne dans la littérature: les vers d'Eliot (nous le savons à travers son témoignage directe) ont été inspirés par l'*Enfer* de Dante et une célèbre poésie de Baudelaire.⁴ L'horreur de l'homme du Moyen Age et l'horreur

³ Graham Greene, *Il terzo uomo*, p. 7; *Vie di scampo*, p. 121.

⁴ T. S. Eliot, *La terra desolata*, a cura di A. Serpieri, Milano, 1982, p. 82, n. 23.

de l'homme moderne face à la présence inquiétante du fantôme d'un passé qui n'est pas passé, de quelqu'un qui est toujours là, un cadavre dont on ne peut pas se débarrasser: voilà l'émotion qui pousse Greene à écrire *The Third Man*!

Cette sensation de n'être pas vraiment seul, d'être obsédé par la présence d'une absence, a une nuance hallucinatoire. Dans le *The Waste Land* il y a un autre passage dans lequel Eliot parle d'un mystérieux «troisième», un être invisible toujours présent entre deux personnes qui parlent.⁵ Il n'y a pas seulement le Moi et l'Autre: il y a un Sur-Autre, terrorisant, qui pourrait être homme ou femme, une hypothèque sur notre vie.

Si nous demandons à notre Virgile de nous éclairer à propos de ce «secret sharer», il nous parlera d'Hamlet et nous dira que nous sommes dans le cercle du Complexe d'Oedipe: comme Hamlet, l'homme moderne et, en particulier, Greene, est en proie au conflit entre dévotion filiale et agressivité à l'égard du père. Le fantôme qui revient est la manifestation hallucinatoire du refoulement.

En effet Virgile a raison: les relations entre les personnages de *The Third Man* peuvent être définies comme «oédiptiques». Rollo dit plusieurs fois, ouvertement, que Harry a été comme un père pour lui. Mais aussi le policier Calloway agit comme un père avec Rollo: un père sévère et dur, toujours prêt à donner des conseils, à intervenir et à diriger la vie d'un Autre. Il faut souligner, à propos de cela, que dans le film, Calloway est un moralisateur, avec plus de force que dans le conte: dans la page écrite il est surtout la Raison; dans le film il est aussi la Loi.

Donc, si les relations de Rollo avec Harry et Calloway sont pareilles à celles avec un Père (soit-il le Père Méchant ou le Père Sévère) il est naturel qu'Anna, maîtresse du Père Méchant, soit un objet de désir oédiptique. Rollo tombera amoureux de la fille, nécessairement, car Son destin est le destin d'Oedipe.

Notre Virgile nous dira aussi que Rollo et Anna partagent un même conflit entre le Désir et la Faute. En Rollo cela entraîne une perpétuelle oscillation entre la fidélité à l'amitié et l'agressivité. Le pauvre Rollo est toujours flottant, toujours angoissé: il se sent désespéré par la mort de l'ami, déçu de sa résurrection, coupable pour son hostilité. En somme: il est tourmenté et bouleversé par soi-même. Le conflit d'Anna est d'autre nature. Elle voudrait oublier son amant, s'abandonner à un nouveau amour, au niveau inconscient: mais son surmoi la reproche de cela. La fille souligne avec force qu'elle «ne veut pas» tombeur amoureuse encore une fois et que elle voudrait être «morte» comme Harry.⁶ Anna est en proie à la Mélancholie et au Deuil. Le Désir est défendu par l'inhibition mélancolique. Comme a dit Freud à propos du Deuil: «Le Moi peut se tuer... quand... il réussit à se traiter comme un objet, quand il peut diriger sur soi-même l'hostilité destinée à un objet...»⁷

C'est cela l'Enfer où se déroule le drame de *The Third Man*. Ici il y a seulement souffrance, seulement amertume. Je ne connais pas dans l'histoire du cinéma une scène où l'amour soit si cruellement étouffé comme celle où Rollo révèle avec douloureuse tendresse sa passion et Anna révèle être prisonnière de ses larmes.

Mais après l'amertume de l'Enfer, voilà le Purgatoire. Comme vous savez, dans le *Purgatoire* Virgile devient plus humain et rencontre des poètes, des «collègues» qui l'accompagnent lui et Dante.

Dans le *Purgatoire* Virgile devient plus humain et rencontrera des collègues qui font le même voyage. Je pense par exemple à Lacan et à sa célèbre théorie du Nom du Père. Dans *The Third Man* le nom du père est très important. Harry s'appelle Lime: et Lime signifie en anglais «boue», mais aussi «piège». La «piège» pleine de «boue» est représenté par Harry, un père qui est un faux-père: un père absent et mort quand son ami a besoin

⁵ T. S. Eliot, *La terra desolata*, p. 119, v. 359-65.

⁶ Graham Greene, *Il terzo uomo*, pp. 54-82.

⁷ Sigmund Freud, *Lutto e melanconia*, in *Opere*, 8, a cura di C. Musatti, Torino, 1989, p. 111.

de lui; présent et diaboliquement vivant, quand son ami et tout le monde cherchent de l'oublier et d'oublier ses crimes.

Le nom de Rollo (où de Holley) est aussi significatif: c'est un nom ridicule, comme Anna souligne avec cruauté. Même le pseudonyme de Rollo est une source de problèmes: il s'appelle (dans le conte, pas dans le film) Baxter, comme un célèbre écrivain, et tout le monde se trompe en le traitant comme son omonyme. Rollo n'a pas le droit à la dignité d'un Nom, ni au respect dû à l'identité. Il est subordonné à son ami: les autres le respectent uniquement à cause de son rapport à Harry. Anna l'appelle Harry; Calloway ne s'intéresse à lui que pour arriver à Harry. Seulement un policier très naïf et bonhomme connaît le romans de *cowboys* écrits par Rollo: et il est destiné à être assassiné par Harry Lime, le destructeur de l'identité de Rollo.

Le paradoxe est que Harry s'impose à son «fils spirituel» comme un maître, tandis qu'il est un criminel. Le Nom du Père de Rollo est un nom qu'on peut pas prononcer. Le fils est prisonnier d'une malédiction: il ne peut pas respecter son père. Donc il est condamné aux tourments de la séduction maternelle.

J'ai parlé de séduction. Apparemment Anna semble repousser les avances de Rollo: comment peut-on dire qu'elle est séductrice? Dominée par le Deuil, la fille ne peut pas être séductrice comme les autres: sa séduction est la séduction de l'absence, dont a parlé Julia Kristeva à propos des Vierges de Giovanni Bellini (*Congrès de Rome de l'IPSA*, 1989). Le froid détachement, le dédain d'Anna, masquent sa séduction. Elle invite Rollo en le repoussant. Elle dit «Jamais!», mais, dans son inconscient, cela veut dire «Peut-être». Surtout elle invite Rollo à prendre la place d'Harry, en l'appellant avec le nom de l'ami et en disant: «Je vous ai entendu venir et j'ai cru pour un moment que c'était Harry.»⁸ Le pauvre Rollo est toujours victime des autres. Il ne peut pas être libre: son ombre c'est l'ombre de son ami. Voilà un autre piège: la piège de la séduction spectrale!

Déprivé de son identité, Rollo a une réaction qu'on peut comprendre grâce à Winnicott et Erikson:⁹ il choisit une identité négative. Harry a appris à Rollo à s'évader des règles de la morale. Et bien, Rollo, en bon élève, suivra l'exemple du maître. Il trahira son ami. En le tuant il le transforme: Harry ne sera plus un «revenant» mais seulement un nom sur une pierre de tombeau.

Mais la libération à travers le parricide n'est pas heureuse. Rollo, effrayé et désorienté, a la sensation, ayant gagné, d'avoir perdu.

Le Purgatoire est fini: nous voilà en Paradis. Virgile nous laisse et Béatrice nous accueille. Et nous pouvons poser la dernière question: quel est le cœur de *The Third Man*? Nous avons parlé du Complexe d'Oedipe, du Deuil, du Nom du Père, de l'identité négative: mais nous n'avons pas encore compris pourquoi ces éléments différents forment un ensemble, cet ensemble dramatique. Leur combinaison n'est pas automatique. Nous sommes en face d'un archipel réunissant des îles différents. Quel est son nom?

Selon moi il y a un mot-clef: *gosthline*. Ce mot, introduit par Christopher Bollas, désigne une constellation psychique, comme le mot *borderline*. Avec une certaine approximation on peut traduire: vie fantomatique et vampirisme.¹⁰

Tous les personnages du *The Third Man*, à l'exception de Rollo, sont des spectres.

Harry, elusif, insaisissable, est toujours sur la frontière, entre le monde des vivants et le Royaume de la Mort. Cet homme au sourire énigmatique affirme que les morts ont une vie meilleure que celle des mortels.¹¹

⁸ Graham Greene, *Il terzo uomo*, p. 80.

⁹ D. Winnicott, La tendenza antisociale, in *Dalla pediatria alla psicoanalisi*, Firenze, 1985, pp. 364-381; E. Erikson, *Gioventù e crisi d'identità*, Roma, 1974, pp. 203-206.

¹⁰ C. Bollas, *Forze del destino*, Roma, 1991, pp. 127-154; *L'ombra dell'oggetto*, Roma, 1989, pp. 90-104.

¹¹ Graham Greene, *Il terzo uomo*, p. 141: «I morti sono morti felici. Non è che perdano un granché...»

Anna, ange gardien du Royaume du Deuil, est elle aussi une personnalité spectrale. La vie est repoussée, loin de son âme sculptée dans la glace. Et Calloway, l'allegorie de la Loi, est un homme dur et cynique, exactement comme Harry, dont il est un pendant symétrique: il a toujours raison et il n'a pas de pitié pour ceux qui sont hors la Loi. Son âme aussi est faite d'acier: rien à voir avec les mortels, si stupides avec leurs sentiments!

Mais ce qu'il y a de plus intéressant dans la vie fantomatique de tous est qu'ils se nourrissent comme des vampires de l'élan vital de Rollo. Le jeune écrivain est, sans doute, ridicule et naïf. Mais il est vivant: il souffre, il aime, il éprouve de la rage, il se sent coupable. Tandis que les autres sont impassibles, renfermés dans le pâle cercle de leur vie sans vie, dans la cuirasse qui couvre leur cœur comme la terre froide couvre les morts. Cette impassibilité se transforme rapidement en excitation et avidité chaque fois que l'unique vivant s'approche trop des spectres. Si Rollo demande quelque chose à quelqu'un, s'il donne aux autres ses sentiments comme des fleurs, alors les vampires, excités, se nourrissent immédiatement de l'offrande sacrée, comme les ombres de l'Hadès appelées par Ulysse.

Rollo, manipulé par Harry et Calloway, prisonnier dans un cage de séduction par Anna, est dépouillé de son identité et des ses sentiments: son amour, son abnegation, sa tendresse, sont les offrandes aux dieux cruels qui ont envahi son existence. S'il veut garder le souvenir de son ami, il doit étouffer sa dignité; s'il veut garder la présence de la femme aimée, il doit s'humilier, étouffer la déception, ses sentiments; la spontanéité, s'il veut l'estime du tuteur de la Loi, il doit étouffer l'amitié, la fidélité au passé.

Je crois que Rollo est victime de ce que Bollas a appelé «introjection extractive»: les autres comme des vampires sucent sa vitalité. Car les hommes peuvent tuer la partie vivante du *Self*, avec une opération pareille à celle, occasionnelle, du Deuil; et ils peuvent vivre comme des fantômes, dans la prison d'un *False-Self* cadavérique. Devenir des vampires d'âmes, emprisonnant les autres dans la même toile d'airain que les tient, au centre de laquelle il y a une énigme, un vide.

Naturellement on n'est pas obligés à tomber dans ce piège. Mais, hélas, quand on est fragile, blessés par l'ambiguïté d'Oedipe et de l'Amour inachevé, on devient proie du Vampire!

Il faut surtout souligner que cela est facilité à cause d'une trompe-l'oeil psychologique, qui est exactement ce dont a parlé Greene.

Bollas a dit à ce propos que les victimes de ce type de séduction: «tombent dans quelque chose de pareil à un échange de personne. Peut-être ils vivent une expérience que tous avons vécu: marcher dans une rue, dans la foule, et voir quelqu'un, loin... Lui! Un vieux ami d'enfance que nous n'avons pas rencontré pendant trente ans! Le cœur se met à battre. Nous marchons plus vite. Nous cherchons les mots pour cette rencontre spéciale. Mais, voilà, au moment de l'appeler avec son nom... Ce n'est pas lui! La même expérience qu'on éprouve si quelqu'un nous rappelle quelqu'un très aimé, quelqu'un qui est mort.»¹²

Revoir ceux qui sont morts... Ça perce le cœur! C'est justement ce que dit Dante, le même Dante qui a inspiré les vers d'Eliot cités au début. Il revoit à l'Enfer son vieux maître, Brunetto Latini, damné par sa sodomie et il dit avec douloureuse stupeur: cela *m'accora*, me perce le cœur.¹³

Voilà le mot pour définir la relation entre le Père Maudit et le Fils Désespéré: le cœur brisé. Comme Orphée, le mortel qui cherche l'amour d'une ombre, est destiné à être déchiré.

On peut se demander si dans cette souffrance il y a une nuance auto-biographique. Greene rappelle dans son *A sort of life* le regret pour la mort de son père. Il rêva longtemps qu'il était encore vivant et heureux. L'écrivain confesse qu'il avait toujours eu de la haine à l'égard du père et probablement il a toujours eu une sensation de culpabilité pour cette haine. Et il rêva de «résusciter» son père, comme s'il avait été victime de sa haine. D'ailleurs

¹² C. Bollas, *l'ombra*, p. 103.

¹³ Dante, *Comedia, Inferno*, XV, pp. 82-84

son père était un homme très éloigné du fils: il ne savait pas comprendre le côté bohémien des artistes¹⁴ et il avait une véritable terreur de la fragilité psychique du fils.¹⁵ Même la mère de Greene était très éloignée de son enfant: il n'avait pas la possibilité d'être «méchant», car, pour elle, il était parfait comme un idole.¹⁶

Je crois que Greene a vécu un amer conflit entre ses parties instinctuelles et la froide honnêteté des ses parents. Comme Rollo, il semble avoir été épuisé. Et comme Rollo il semble avoir toujours envoyé des messages qui n'étaient pas entendus, les cris de douleur d'un orphelin face à la tombe de la mère. Un mélange de rage, de souffrance d'apathie, d'amertume qu'on retrouve dans plusieurs personnages de ses histoires (il suffit de rappeler le cas de Raven dans *A gun for sale*). Ce que André Green a défini: le complexe de la Mère Morte.¹⁷

On pourrait s'arrêter ici. Mais il ne faut pas oublier que nous sommes arrivé au Paradis, le lieu de la rédemption. Même si dans l'oeuvre de Greene et en particulier dans *The Third Man* le mot «rédemption» semble hors-lieu, je crois qu'il soit possible de le prononcer, à mi-voix, ainsi comme l'a susurré l'auteur du conte. À la fin de l'histoire on suggère, en effet, que l'amour entre Rollo et Anna va naître. Un miracle, sans doute. Mais un miracle auquel Greene croit, qui se repète parfois, comme, par exemple, dans la fin de *Travels with my aunt*, où la Mère, le Père et le Fils sont reconciliés au rythme d'une valse lente. Je crois que cela est sous-entendu aussi dans le drame de *The Third Man*: il y a un rythme mystérieux caché dans le chaos, une harmonie secrète déguisée dans la disharmonie. Il faut faire attention au titre: *The Third Man*. Celui-là c'est Harry Lime, sans doute: nous arrivons à lui à travers une chaîne de témoignages qui forment un espèce de cercle. Mais la chaîne pourrait être renversée... Le *Third Man* pourrait être un Autre... Car, vous savez, le *Troisième Homme* c'est une ancienne danse allemande, dans laquelle les hommes sont disposés en cercle et une fille marche autour d'eux. Elle écarte, avec courtoisie, le premier et le deuxième et choisit le troisième. Ainsi Anna, suivant le rythme cosmique de l'harmonie céleste... où le rythme magique du *sitar* d'Anton Karas qu'on entend dans le film, peut écarter Harry et Calloway, le Peché et la Morale, et choisir Rollo, ridicule sur la terre comme l'albatros de Baudelaire, mais merveilleux dans le ciel bleu: choisir l'Art, ce Soleil mystérieux capable d'ennoblir les choses plus viles et de faire vivre encore les pauvres morts.

¹⁴ Graham Greene, *Una specie di vita*, Milano, 1973, pp. 28-29.

¹⁵ Idem, pp. 98-99.

¹⁶ Ibidem, pp. 19-20.

¹⁷ A. Green, *Narcisismo di vita e narcisismo di morte*, Roma, 1992, pp. 273-288.

Moses and Cain, from Saul to Paul

LÁSZLÓ HALÁSZ (*)

The Bible — which is not only a book, but a complete work of literature in which fiction and non-fiction are combined, provides us with some basic models whose psychological interpretations can be connected with the understanding of everyday human behavior. Historically, there are periods and societies in which disunity of self and sudden conversion are typical.

1

The first such basic model is Moses. Let me emphasize some salient features of his life as seen from this point of view.

A) Moses, who as a little Hebrew boy was found and adopted by the Pharaoh's daughter, in his youth murdered an Egyptian because the latter had struck a fellow Hebrew who had performing hard labour.

B) Moses was obliged to leave Egypt and some years later had a vision: «... the angel of the Lord appeared to him in the flame of a burning bush» (Exodus 3,2) and the Lord sent him to bring Israel out of Egypt. Moses attempted to evade the task, but in vain.

C) During the journey at night the Lord meant to kill Moses, but his wife was able to save him, «... cutting off her son's foreskin and touched him with it, saying 'You are my blood-bridegroom'» (Exodus 4,25).

D) When Moses approached his people's encampment in Sinai with the two tablets bearing the *Ten Commandments*, on which were the handiwork and the writing of God, he saw them dancing around a golden calf. In his anger he flung down the tablets and smashed them. «Then he took the calf they had made and burnt it; he ground it to powder, sprinkled it on water, and made the Israelites drink it» (Exodus 32,20). And he ordered each of the Levites who all rallied to him «... to kill his brother, his friend, his neighbour» (Exodus 32,27).

E) Following this mass murder, Moses asked the Lord to forgive his people; but later on they experienced the Lord's dreadful anger, with the rebels being swallowed up in flames by the earth. Afterwards Moses had to order another massacre against those of his people who had abandoned the Lord for Baal.

(*) Institute for Psychology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, H-1394 Budapest, P.O. Box 398, Hungary.

Moses covered an enormous distance. From being a murderer, he became a rescuer of his people and gave eternal belief and Law to them. He became the only man of God. He who had murdered could obtain the tablets on which were to be found the handiwork and writing of God; or if you wish, Moses's killing hands were directed by God to engrave on the tablet: «Thou shalt not kill». In this respect he exchanged his aggressive, wild self for a moral one regulated by the monotheistic idea. But we should not forget that Moses had avenged an injury suffered by another: his murderous act was not without justice. Even before establishing his religious-moral self, Moses was not a destructive man, insensitive to the lives of others. And his self was unified neither earlier nor later. Anger and the propensity to order massacres did not leave him, even during the time of his increasingly intimate co-operation with God. The basic substance of their contact was violence. This can be seen in God's acts against Moses, and Moses's and God's acts against their own people. This is as though Moses could have projected his own self's fundamental trait-cluster onto the imaginary (hallucinatory) Other in order to balance and complete himself in the repeated circulation of opposition and to achieve forgiveness.

Thus, God was Moses' Double, the personifier of his hostility towards himself, his people and the whole world. If we recognize this, we can see that he produced the typical symptoms of a paranoid state (see Rank, 1925). But we should not forget, as Kohlberg (1963) reminds us of this, that the typical paranoid considers himself completely innocent and to be someone who is accused unjustly. This was not the case with Moses, who made a sharp distinction between good and bad, rather like a frontal lobe epileptic (see Greaves, 1980).

Szondi (1973) points out that one can be put into a paroxysmal state by accumulated intense emotions (anger, hate, revenge). Then, an epileptiform state can follow. When one does not repress one's hostile drives or does not direct against oneself, one attacks, and perhaps even kills one's enemy, as Cain did with Abel. The process can be ended through compensation, exhibiting hyper-religious and hypermoral manifestations. In this way Moses is a kind of Cain, whose malevolent, hostile, intolerant, treacherous, lawbreaking, murderous lust after power was counterbalanced by a benevolent, tolerant, open-minded, law-abiding, and fair self. This duality appeared in his dual union with God.

The elements of elements, fire as a burning bush which is never consumed, as a column of fire showing the way out, and as a force which is a pertinent sign and symbol of the whole problem. It is worth recalling Bachelard's ideas (1949) that fire is both a guardian and a punitive angel and a vengeful God, good and bad; fire can contradict itself.

That is the way that a man of the Devil and a man of God contradict each other, not excluding but supporting each other, within the same person. This happened to Moses by conversion in a striking way. In critical situations, says Szondi, Moses changed suddenly and unconsciously. He became a man of God accompanied by anger, rage and hate, and turned in the opposite direction as the result of a fit.

Incidentally, even Charcot (see Greaves, 1980) emphasizes that someone suffering amnesia on account of an epileptic fit can have a new self, as though he has a mental state different from his earlier one. For us it is sufficient to suppose that Moses's (epileptiform) disposition meant a readiness for occasional (partial) dissociation and repression. And knowing the circumstances of his birth and childhood we do not need to be psychoanalysts to be aware of his early emotional polarization, and his strong ambivalence towards everyone who was close to him (i.e. primarily himself) as acceptable and rejected, pleasant and unpleasant.

Changing the subject somewhat, we can mention Rubin's famous double profiles. A square is divided up into two halves by a wavy line down its middle. When we concentrate on the right side we see it as a profile looking to the left. It is the figure and the other side is the ground. When we concentrate on the left side, figure and ground are reversed. Likewise, our actually dominant characteristics form a prevailing figure, and the others the ground. As the circle of characteristics increases or decreases, figure and ground alter.

And when tensions which depend on circumstances go beyond a given point, the pattern is strikingly reorganized. Figure becomes ground and vice versa.

In cases of conversion it is precisely this that happens. What a man considers invalid really functions as a ground in him. And ground — with some modification — exchanges its position with figure and so on. Moses is a typical case of this duality. He shows that there is no clear demarcation line between clean and unclean, healthy and unhealthy, good and bad, old and new. A human being is always transition; he is always a hybrid. He is the unity of figure and ground in terms of Gestalt psychology. Or, as a bipolar being, he is the unity of guilty man and tragic man in terms of Kohutian psychoanalysis (Kohut, 1977).

2

But in the Bible there can be found a totally different basic model where figure and ground cannot be reversed. I refer to the case of St Paul. Here are some salient points from his life:

A) Saul, a Jew from Tarsus seized men and women who had been baptized in the name of Jesus.

B) He was full of «... murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord. He went to the High Priest and applied for letters to the synagogues at Damascus authorizing him to arrest anyone he found (...) While he was still on the road and nearing Damascus, suddenly a light flashed from the sky all around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’ ‘Tell me, Lord’, he said, ‘who you are.’ The voice answered, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you have to do.’(...) He was blind for three days, and took no food or drink» (Acts 9,2-9).

C) «... Soon he was proclaiming Jesus publicly in the synagogues: ‘This’, he said, ‘is the Son of God.’ All who heard were astounded. ‘Is not this the man’, they said, ‘who was in Jerusalem trying to destroy those who invoke this name? Did he not come here for the sole purpose of arresting them and taking them to the chief priests? (...) When he reached Jerusalem he tried to join the body of disciples there; but they were all afraid of him, because they did not believe that he was really a convert» (Acts 9, 20-22, 26).

D) «Saul, also known Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit» (Acts 13, 9), started to evangelize. Even threats and danger to his life did not deter his faith and zeal. At the same time, he never concealed his past, his acts as Saul.

In spite of the radical change, however, *The Bible*, leaves us uncertain as to those respects, if any, Paul was still Saul. And our curiosity as to how the change occurred in him is satisfied still less. Incidentally, it is not enough for us if, based on Erikson’s suggestion (1958), we accept that Paul was an epileptic, and that the loss of his self, and then his rebirth, occurred on account of a fit.

It is possible to surmise that Saul changed the contents of his belief, the object of his attitude. As Saul he was bound to persecute the believers of the church of Jesus; he regarded them as evil. As Paul he was obliged to convert those who resisted the ideas of Jesus; these, too, he saw as evil. He would not have been suitable for his new mission if he had not preserved the same characteristics that had made him suited to his former task.

This portrayal is, however, superficial. In accordance with his Letter to the Romans, St Paul saw the contradictions of human nature clearly.

«We know that the law is spiritual; but I am not: I am unspiritual, the purchased

slave of sin. I do not even acknowledge my own actions as mine, for what I do is not what I want to do, but what I detest. But if what I do is against my will, it means that I agree with the law and hold it to be admirable. But as things are, it is no longer I who perform the action, but sin that lodges in me. For I know that nothing good lodges in me — in my unspiritual nature. I mean — for though the will to do good is there, the deed is not. The good which I want to do, I fail to do; but what I do is the wrong, which is against my will; and if what I do is against my will, clearly it is no longer I who am the agent, but sin that has its lodging in me» (Romans 7,14-20).

Paul, who contained Saul, was a problematic, conflict-ridden personality, even in his own eyes. His metamorphosis was enormously great. A Jew then a Christian, a soldier then an Apostle: the differences were colossal. It would have been a vain effort to diminish them. Even the miracle of belief and vocation encouraged him to sharpen them. Paul had no cause to deny that he had been Saul. He re-experienced his non-repressed conflicts. He was sensitive to self-examination. He converted himself again and again with each new act of evangelization.

Our bodies the purchased slaves of sin, and our self-deceived natures evading the law add up to an eternal threat. If Paul could not prevent them he overcame them through self-discipline, renunciation and resolution. The psychological dynamics, ego-strength and determination which established Paul as one of the Apostles even Saul the persecutor of Christians must have had. But the complexity of Saul's thinking, his view of himself and his world were inseparable from his experiences while on the way to Damascus.

His sudden, brief vision changed his life; it imprinted on his mind what he should do. He did not think of protesting and appealing. He did not have long for preparation either; just 72 hours. During this time he was blind and changed his name. Although he only modified the first letter, this was equal to a whole world. When he could see again, he looked at everything in a different way. That which had earlier seemed now it might seem to be an erring grope his way.

Even if change is a consequence of the power of a situation, one is nevertheless responsible for the position one gets into. It is possible to reconstruct Saul from Paul, and to explain through the disintegrated role of the gradually accumulated doubt how his inner readiness to change evolved.

This can be seen in *Saul*, a novel by the contemporary Hungarian writer: Miklós Mészöly. The reason d'être for the life of the Fanatical Jew Saul was his identification with his faith. But he is frustrated when he is unable to catch two fugitives, even after a long pursuit. During this he is ashamed of one of his men who was prepared to take a little child's money if in return for leaving him alone. His shame was even greater when, while chasing Christians, burst in upon a funeral feast. When he reaches the end of his tether, he sends his men and goes into the wilderness. There he despairingly prays: «Why am I afraid... what can people do against me... what can those who are traitors do? In the name of God I say I will destroy them root and branch... He will help me!»

At home he remembers some suspected people and untraceable persons. He recalls a dialogue with a rabbi who was executed:

- «I try to think of the Law.»
- «But if we have to think of it... can we understand it well?»
- «We cannot do better.»
- «Can we think anything else as being the Law?»
- «Unfortunately, we can.»
- «And with impunity?»
- «And if we punish?»

«I do not understand...»
«Do you think the Law can be confounded?»
«No!»
«And if the Law itself should be confused?»

The episodes of shame and doubt are followed by identification reminds us of the Hungarian psychologist, F. Mérei. Saul meets a young believer. He ought to investigate him, but his sympathy does not allow him to do so. Nevertheless, his identification still has some limit. It is not he who arrests and not he who participates in stoning him to death, although he is present. The believer throws his personal belongings in front of Saul, who later on exchanges his own sandals for those of the believer and begins to travel to Damascus in the executed man's sandals.

We do not know, of course, whether the Biblical Saul was beset by similar doubts or not. And we do not know whether Saul guessed something of the duality of man as Paul did. Although we cannot exclude this possibility, it is more probable that still he was not aware of his dissonant feelings at that time.

What we know definitely is that Saul's and Paul's ways of achieving goals were rather different. And goals are determined by the composite of ways, and not only by the fine words employed. Saul's principal ways were extreme forms of physical violence: prison and murder; Paul only could preach. Saul attempted to overcome evil by destroying it root and branch; Paul spoke of following the wrong track. Saul endangered the lives of others, Paul endangered his own life. Maybe Saul's vision, with all its consequences was prepared by the fact that he had had enough of killing. Even if this was so, his behaviour did not follow from what was going on in his mind: he was travelling to Damascus to carry on the fight against the Christians. His choice and decision in the spirit of which he acted were denied by his extraordinary and unexpected vision. At the same time, he was reinforced to act in the spirit of a leading idea, to serve a new faith.

Before his conversion Saul was very hostile towards Christians. This kind of explosive hostility could come from the psychological processes which resisted his changing his belief. We may say that, unconsciously, he calculated with all the conflicts and psychological burdens which he had to face. Firstly he changed his social allegiances. He converted from a system of loyalty to a contradictory system of loyalties. But we cannot say that his moral incentives would have been in a serious conflict. Saul could be as just (honest) as Paul was.

As James (1982) says, when the tension between contradictory selves is unbearable, that part which represents latent beliefs and drives prevails. Relative unity is restored or dissociative tendencies are reduced. One is turned back from the usual centre of personal energies. One becomes «reborn». Although this happened to Saul as well, the process of becoming Paul lasted until the end of his life. His conversion opened a window on a new moral aspect, as well as on new cognitive abilities. Christianity as an idea was not founded by him, his creativity was not enough for this. But he performed pioneering work by working out the arguments for evangelization, by making the new faith specific, if you like. Thus, the antecedent of his conversion could be that his tasks as Saul were simpler and less rich than those made possible by his latent endowments.

In East-Central Europe nowadays in our region Paul's case is much more popular than that of Moses because sudden conversion offers an attractive illusion. In accordance with this, someone can rightly consider invalid everything that one has broken with, because he is able to build up an essentially new self against the earlier one. And the new self leaves behind the old hybrid-existence, giving way to one less conflict-ridden and more successful than the old. Sudden conversion — from Saul to Paul — refers psychological changes neither the contents nor the manner of which identical with the model phenomenon. We may think of a Vidocq, a criminal who became a policeman; of Mussolini, a socialist

journalist who became a fascist politician; of Georg Lukacs, an idealist sceptical thinker who became intransigent Bolshevik commissar and Marxist-Messianic philosopher. There are common traits in all of them. In contradiction with the alternating or multiple personality, the self following the change is stable. A change of self is for the rest of one's life.

This is not the case with the usual change of roles. One can be parent, child, lover, friend, passenger, leader, spectator, actor and observer all within a few hours. All belong to Self-2, which appears in our diverse social contacts, depending on situations. But one has no doubts about the personal identity of Self-1, to use Harré's phrase (1991). One knows that this is one who sees, hears, feels, and remembers in one's own unique body, who constructs the public and private world of one's own experiences. The continuous, homogeneous psychological and social uniqueness of Self-1 and of the psychological and social diversity interrupting the continuity of Self-2 create one. Nobody is deceived. Our role-playing situative diversity is actualized by the requirements of modern society without any pretence. But things do not necessarily remain to the last the way they are when they begin. Our faces can adjust to the masks we have worn for a long time. To deceive ourselves and/or others amounts to the same thing. We and the way we appear will be the same. It may happen that we do not know who we are and are not.

This is the everyday state of dissociation. The field of consciousness is narrowing. We cancel what we do not wish to remember. Within a short time we can be sincerely enthusiastic, respectful or even determined, then no less sincerely indifferent, disrespectful or meek towards the same person, group, or matter.

Relatively clear outlines of self-identity become obscure; what is of primary importance is not the pathology of persons, but that of a society which is responsible for dual socialization. Distorted words of self-defence are spreading. Illusory and real, desirable and necessary, true and false, Self-1 and Self-2 are converging, or they change places if situative rewards and self-defence require it.

So under fundamentally changing social circumstances those who have clearly said «A» earlier and pretended that it was the most obvious, now say «non-A» about the same thing pretend the same. What they thought at that time and what they feel now is to all intents and purposes unimportant, even for themselves. Blatant changes of colour dishevel the surface of the mind at the very most: there is indeed a sudden conversion in those who are unable to convert.

REFERENCES

- Bachelard, G. (1949). *La psychanalyse du feu*. Paris: Gallimard.
Erikson, E.H. (1958). *Young man Luther*. New York: Norton.
Greaves, G.B. (1980). Multiple personality 165 years after Mary Reynolds. *Journal Nervous and Mental Disease*, 10 : 577-596.
Harré, R. (1991). The discursive production of selves. *Theory and Psychology*, 1: 51-63.
James, W. (1982). *Varieties of Religious Experience*. Penguin American Library.
Kohlberg, L. (1963). Psychological analysis and literary form: a study of the Doubles in Dostoewsky. *Daedalus*.
Kohut, H. (1977). *The Restoration of the Self*. New York: International Universities Press.
Rank, O. (1925). *Der Doppelgänger*. Leipzig: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag.
Szondi, L. (1973). *Moses. Antwort auf Kain*. Bern-Stuttgart-Wien: Huber.

Programming a Scientific Psychology: Artificial Intelligence on the Couch

DAVID CRANE (*)

I need to change my title. Not the title at the top of my paper; rather, the title in front of my name. Through some sort of error I've been designated a «professor» in the conference program. I am not; I am merely a mister, a doctoral student of English and comparative literature at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. I hope that I won't be accused of misrepresenting myself — or worse, of being an imposter, of stealing a title I don't deserve and of speaking from a position I'm not entitled to.

The title at the top of my paper, however, is partially stolen — cribbed and reworked from Freud's «Project for a Scientific Psychology.»¹ Of course, that is a title Freud didn't choose; it was added posthumously by the translator to a work Freud never wished to be published. The work's editors justify defying the author's wishes by claiming that the «Project» and the Fliess correspondence published with it would «amplify the prehistory and early history of psycho-analysis in a way that no other available material does, ... and furnish a vivid picture of [Freud] during the difficult years during which his interest shifted from physiology and neurology to psychology and psychopathology.»² In other words — my words — they would be of scientific interest *and* biographical interest, and in this case those two interests appear inseparable. I will eventually return to Freud, but first I wish to address, through a different psychological route, a question begged by both his unwanted title and my stolen one.

What is a «scientific psychology»? Allen Newell, in his 1973 essay «Artificial Intelligence and the Concept of Mind», attempts to examine the concept of mind through what he calls «an orthodox view of scientific psychology». He describes that view thus: «building theories (models, if you prefer) about the behavior of the human mind, testing these by whatever empirical methods seem appropriate, and then adopting for 'the current view on mind' whatever theory seems best to survive the tests. Beyond that one cannot go.»³

(*) University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Department of English and Comparative Literature, P.O. Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201, USA.

¹ Sigmund Freud, «Project for a Scientific Psychology» (1950 [1895]), *Standard Edition* 1: 281-397.

² Marie Bonaparte, Anna Freud & Ernst Kris, «Editor's Note», Sigmund Freud, *The Origins of Psychoanalysis: Letters to Wilhelm Fliess, Drafts and Notes: 1887-1902*, Trans. James Strachey and Eric Mosbacher, New York: Basic, 1954, x.

³ Allen Newell, «Artificial Intelligence and the Concept of Mind, in *Computer Models of Thought and Language* (Roger C. Shank & Kenneth Mark Colby, Eds.), San Francisco: Freeman, 1973, 1.

As Newell's title states, he views the concept of mind in conjunction with artificial intelligence (AI), which he calls «a domain of scientific endeavor that is somehow to be laid out before us». AI, then, is not quite yet viewable; it is something yet to be endeavored upon and explored; a scientific field yet to be mapped and yet to emerge.

Yet Newell admits that he is much clearer about artificial intelligence than he is about the concept of mind. He should be. He had, after all, participated in the 1956 workshop at Dartmouth where the term «artificial intelligence» was first used. He had been, then, somehow responsible for initially laying out the domain before us, and he continues to be a foundational figure in that domain. But Newell, and his collaborator Herbert Simon, were invited to that workshop almost as an afterthought.⁴ They worked at Carnegie Tech and the RAND Corporation, outside the geographic and disciplinary circles (dominated by MIT, Harvard, Bell Laboratories, and IBM) that circumscribed the domain where most of the research in computer science and automata studies (as AI used to be called) was at that time done. The gathering at Dartmouth was designed to widen those circles, partly by renaming the nascent domain in whose name its field-workers gathered.

The official title of the gathering was «The Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence». The title and the new name within it were coined by John McCarthy, one of the project's organizers and a mathematician at Dartmouth. He had been dissatisfied with that old name, «automata studies». Others, however, preferred the established, sober, scientific name. But McCarthy's choice won. With the new name and title thus formulated, the new domain began to be laid out — or at least differently mapped. Ironically, Newell and Simon disliked the new name and they continued for a number of years to call their work «complex information processing».⁵

Eventually Newell picked up the new name, but with trepidation.⁶ In fact, he claims that the endeavor of AI is largely irrelevant to *philosophical* questions of mind. Instead, their connection is more symbolic, based on models (or theories) of symbolic systems. Newell prefers an «information processing» model of mind, a model derived, he notes, from psychology and not from AI (59). He prefers to view AI as an «exploration», and in exploring models and functions of information processing it can help build a scientific psychology based on a premise of the mind as an information processor.⁷ However, the strongest connection he can make between AI and mind is analogical, based on the formal and symbolic similarity in their functioning — their performances. Newell's analogical connection moves toward the metaphorical, and in fact jibes with the folk metaphor of the computer as an electronic brain.⁸

It also leads him to a second analogy: «Neurophysiology is almost totally irrelevant to the nature of the mind», and «Electronics is almost totally irrelevant to the nature of artificial intelligence» (45). This line of reasoning carries the formal functioning of each nature beyond its base in matter. What matters, then, is not what these natures work in, but how they appear to work. Newell doesn't follow up on the implications of this analogy, and I will hold off on the matter 'til a little later. Instead, I want to look at the *manner* in which his essay appeared.

His essay heads the collection *Computer Models of Thought and Language*, edited by Kenneth Mark Colby and Roger C. Shank. In the preface, the editors state that their

⁴ Pamela McCorduck, *Machines Who Think: A Personal Inquiry into the History and Prospects of Artificial Intelligence*, San Francisco: Freeman, 1979, 94.

⁵ All this information on the name and the Dartmouth project comes from McCorduck 93-97.

⁶ Although he mentions that there is nothing «special about artificial intelligence that is not assimilable into the main stream of computer science» (59).

⁷ This is a simplification of a complex argument and more open-ended conclusion.

⁸ Newell, however, would deny that the relationship is metaphorical. See Newell, «Physical Symbol Systems», *Cognitive Science*, 4: 135-83, 1980. Cited in Barbara von Eckardt, *What Is Cognitive Science?*, Cambridge MA: MITP, 1993, 98.

book intends «to describe attempts to model human psychological processes on the computer». As they further explain:

Much of the work in AI has been conceived to develop intelligent machines without claiming that the processes model human thought processes. Within AI, psychology, and linguistics, however, there are growing groups of people concerned with representing human thought processes in the form of computer programs.⁹

Newell's essay frames the more specific issues addressed in the rest of the volume. In fact, he initiates that frame not just in his heading essay, but at the head of his first page. «The title is our starting point» runs his first line, as if to condense the collection's framework into seven words, seven words that can both contain and open the modelling metaphor he will address.

But as he closes the essay, Newell shifts from addressing «information processing» as a model (or theory) to addressing it as a «view» (59). This metaphor recalls the «view» of scientific psychology, the «current view of the mind», and even the «domain of scientific endeavor... to be laid out before us» mentioned at the outset. By view he means «a framework comprehensive enough to encourage and permit thinking..., so that not only answers, but questions, criteria of evidence, and relevance all become affected» (59). As the underlying and overriding assumption, the information processing view — as a current, orthodox, scientific view — not only lays out the domain, but it allows that domain to be seen as scientific; it claims the domain for science. We see science and we see scientifically because both the domain and our view are science's properly titled property. We see it and explore it properly when entitled to by science.

This domain, however, is not independent. As Colby and Shank indicate, the AI of their book is part of a wider field; that field, in turn, is part of the domain named cognitive science: a domain also yet to be fully laid out, but a domain whose very name lays a claim to science.¹⁰ As Barbara von Eckardt observes in her comprehensive book, *What Is Cognitive Science?*, this «immature» and «transdisciplinary» science has four major substantive assumptions. The first that she lists (and the one I will address) is the «computational linking assumption». It states: «The human, cognitive mind/brain is a computational device (computer); hence, the human cognitive capacities consist, to a large extent, of a system of computational capacities» (50). Is this a metaphor or a working hypothesis? Both, says von Eckardt, but only if the assumption is a certain kind of metaphor: a scientific one.

Utilizing Max Black's «interactive» view of metaphor and Richard Boyd's¹¹ notion of «scientific» or «theory-constitutive» metaphors, she concludes that the linking assumption is a scientific rather than a literary metaphor. Scientific metaphors become, von Eckardt states, «the property of an entire scientific community» (103). This entitles them to function properly as terminology, and not as a mere literary device (though also not as a literal description). Still, their «analogical inferences must be true» (102). To illustrate this truth value (or validity) she likens metaphorical understanding to the processes of «mapping»

⁹ Roger C. Shank and Kenneth Mark Colby, preface, *Computer Models* n. pag. I should also note here the original context of Newell's paper: a conference on the Concepts of Mind by the Study Group on the Unity of Knowledge in Berkeley California, August 1969. The work on which the paper was based was funded in part by RAND and the National Institutes of Health.

¹⁰ The cover of the «Report of the State of the Art Committee to the Advisors and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation» (1978) includes philosophy, psychology, linguistics, computer science, anthropology, and neuroscience as the disciplines standardly included in cognitive science. Cited in Barbara von Eckardt, *What Is Cognitive Science?*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1993, 2, fig 1.

¹¹ See Richard Boyd, «Metaphor and Theory Change: What Is 'Metaphor' a Metaphor for?», in *Metaphor and Thought* (A. Ortony, Ed.), Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

used in cognitive science research on analogical reasoning (101). This corresponds to Black's interaction of «commonplaces.» Yet the first commonplace that Black provides about metaphors is that they are «illicit».¹² Could it be, then, that the mapped-out and titled property of the linking assumption is based on a baser assumption, a baser urge? The link at least seems to be proven by research that already assumes it.

One locus where this metaphor matters most (and that returns to Newell's second analogy) is the debate in cognitive science between the «isolationist» and «constraint» stances. Isolationists claim that «the information-processing theories of cognition need not be constrained by the findings of neuroscience...» (von Eckardt 321). Because those theories are functional and formal theories, the matter in which they are realized — whether electronic or gray — is rather immaterial. In other words, they can describe and occur in a possible variety of substances. Some isolationists also claim that information is lacking to scientifically connect form and matter. On the other hand, constraintists, such as von Eckardt, remain wary of merely possible occurrences. «What is relevant», she declares, «is whether it is actual» (323).

Von Eckardt's demand for a more anatomically assured basis for cognitive science stems from her desire for the domain to be truly transdisciplinary. It also stems from her attempt in her book to assure cognitive science's substantive base, and to make of it a domain. She composes that base, that immanent domain, from a set of foundational assumptions in order to form a «foundational consensus» (4).¹³ Her book's title, by taking the form of a question, hints that its contents might inform the uninitiated about the science's foundations. That, however, is not quite the case. It instead serves not merely to present cognitive science to the lay reader but to lay the groundwork for a disciplinary consensus as to what cognitive science is: to make it comprehensive; to make it answer her title.

Cognitive science has gained currency in recent years, and this gain roughly corresponds with psychoanalysis's decline. Psychoanalysis' scientific view is now not so orthodox — at least in the domain of science. Still, it claims to be a science, and its theoretical domain was founded upon and applied with such a claim. That claim, however, has always been and continues to be contested, both from without and within. As Philip Holzman asks in the title a fairly recent essay, «Is the Therapy Destroying the Science?»¹⁴

Holzman takes his title from a line in Freud's postscript to *The Question of Lay Analysis*. In that 1926 booklet (responding to charges of quackery filed against Theodor Reik for practicing therapy without an MD), Freud attempted to distance psychoanalysis from applied medicine and link it to the purer realm of science. The notion that psychoanalysis was merely a therapy hindered its claims to science and its scientifically based claims to cure. «I only want to feel assured», Freud requests as he nears his conclusion, «that the therapy will not destroy the science».¹⁵

Yet paradoxically, the therapy is also fundamentally linked to the science, as Freud explains a few pages later:

In psycho-analysis there has existed from the very first an inseparable bond between cure and research.... Our analytic procedure is the only one in which this precious conjunction is assured. It is only by carrying on our analytic pastoral work that we can deepen our dawning comprehension of the human

¹² Max Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962, 25. His intent, however, is to dispel the mystery, the illicitness.

¹³ And she does note that this process may be unscientific.

¹⁴ Philip Holzman, «Is the Therapy Destroying the Science», *JAPA*, 33: 725-70, 1985.

¹⁵ Sigmund Freud, *The Question of Lay Analysis* (1926-1927), *Standard Edition* 20: 254. Actually, this line and the ones that follow come from the postscript which was added in 1927.

mind. This prospect of scientific gain has been the proudest and happiest feature of analytic work (256).

In addressing the question of who is entitled to analyze, Freud based his discipline's therapeutic claims in the proud and pleasurable gain of science. Thus, therapy would be at the service of science, placed within that eminent domain.

The content of Freud's booklet had been stated in earlier works, but in this case it was revised for an uninitiated audience (a lay audience), and redesigned to persuade that audience of psychoanalysis' inherent value. The more widely read *Introductory Lectures* also served that function, though they were originally addressed to the non-laity: medical students, lay only in terms of psychoanalysis. In the opening lecture Freud presents his view on psychoanalysis' relationship to medical psychiatry. He questions whether psychiatry's «purely descriptive hypotheses deserve the name of a science».¹⁶ He states: «Nothing is known of the origin, the mechanism or the mutual relations of the symptoms of which these clinical entities are composed; there are either no observable changes in the anatomical organ of the mind to correspond to them, or changes which throw no light on them» (20-21).

Psychoanalysis shifts the focus from brain matter to psychical functioning. It recognizes the scientific — or more accurately, the epistemological — gap between the anatomical organ and the diseases psychiatry wants to locate there. «This», claims Freud, «is the gap which psycho-analysis seeks to fill. It tries to give psychiatry its missing psychological foundation. It hopes to discover the common ground on the basis of which the convergence of physical and mental disorder will become intelligible» (21). A void in knowledge, then, becomes the foundation of psychoanalysis and hence psychiatry; in fact, the foundation is psychoanalysis. Where a void was, there a science shall be. Yet as Freud's next line shows, that science seeking a common ground is founded as an independent domain: «With this aim in view, psycho-analysis must keep itself free from any hypothesis that is alien to it, whether of an anatomical, chemical or physiological kind, and must operate entirely with purely psychological auxiliary ideas...» (21).

Actually, Freud doesn't use the word «science» in this discussion. He is more concerned with medicine. However, in Lecture 16 that word does appear as he returns to psychoanalysis and psychiatry. He states:

Psycho-analysis is related to psychiatry approximately as histology is to anatomy: the one studies the external forms of the organs, the other studies their construction out of tissues and cells.... To-day, as you know, anatomy is regarded by us as the foundation of scientific medicine. But there was a time when it was as much forbidden to dissect the human cadaver in order to discover the internal structure of the body as it now seems to be to practise psycho-analysis in order to learn about the internal mechanism of the mind. It is to be expected that in the not too distant future it will be realized that a scientifically based psychiatry is not possible without a sound knowledge of the deeper-lying unconscious processes in mental life.¹⁷

In this case, psychoanalysis as a foundation is based not in the gap between matter and functional form; it is based, by analogy, in anatomy — *as* an anatomy. Because anatomy, in that contemporary view, is the base of science, its analogical connection to psychoanalysis locates the latter in science as well. The historical progression Freud expects will realize psychoanalysis as the scientific base for psychiatry, if not the basis for scientific medicine. But at the time of the *Lectures*, it seems merely to be a base science. Psychoanalysis, at this point, is not fully laid out.

¹⁶ Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1916-1917), *Standard Edition* 15: 20.

¹⁷ Sigmund Freud, «Psycho-Analysis and Psychiatry, *Introductory Lectures*, *Standard Edition* 16: 254-55.

Freud, it seems, still clings to an anatomical foundation for his science of the mind, a foundation he threw out (yet hoped to retrieve) when he abandoned his neurologically based «Project for a Scientific Psychology». The intention of that project was «to furnish a psychology that shall be a natural science: that is, to represent psychical processes as quantitatively determined states of specifiable material particles, thus making those processes perspicuous and free from contradiction.»¹⁸ Those lines were written in September of 1895; in late November he wrote to Fliess that he could «no longer understand the state of mind» in which he «concocted the psychology».¹⁹ His quest for science then shifted from the brain to the confines of his consulting room.

Almost exactly two years after writing the opening lines of his «Project», Freud abandoned something else: his belief that actual scenes of seduction cause neuroses. By again removing the origin of neuroses from an «actual» realized source, he furthered his theoretical move from the foundational science of anatomy to a metaphorical anatomy. The foundational theory of his own infant science, its own laying out, turned to the fantasies of infants.

Freud's turn to fantasy stemmed from his self-analysis, which began in 1897. By reconfining the consulting room to the metaphorical space of his own psychical workings, he relocated the historical and theoretical foundation of his science to the mental anatomy of himself: information gained from his own experience. In fact, being analyzed — though, except for Freud, not by oneself — became the basis upon which one was entitled to practice psychoanalysis. Freud addressed this question of entitlement (one different from the question of lay analysis) in his short 1910 essay «'Wild' Psycho-Analysis». «Wild» analysts are those, doctors or not, who have not been analyzed, and, as Freud states, they do «more harm to the cause of psycho-analysis than to individual patients».²⁰

Freud wished to preserve psychoanalysis' health, and to insure that, its entitled practitioners

founded [at the Nuremberg Congress earlier that year] an International Psycho-Analytical Association, to which its members declare their adherence by the publication of their names, in order to be able to repudiate responsibility for what is done by those who do not belong to us and yet call their medical procedure «psycho-analysis» (226-27).

By publishing their names, the Association's members could rightfully claim the name psychoanalysis, and they could practice in the responsible and scientifically titled domain that the name «psychoanalysis» — and thus the title «psychoanalyst» — claimed. The name and the title, when made the property of a professional association, could entitle to their domain a science laid out on the couch.

In my subtitle I used the word «couch» as a metaphor for psychoanalysis, and in so doing I implied that I would somehow psychoanalyze AI. That is not quite what I have done. Instead, true to my field of study, I have read some texts — of AI, cognitive science, and psychoanalysis — to find the connections between them; connections based in their foundational claims to science; yet connections that are also, at base, tensions manifested in their language: their words, their names, their titles. To do so I concentrated on foundational moments — points of formation and reformulation that mark connections, associations, and distinctions. Moments of language laid out and viewed through title and metaphor. This certainly is a psychoanalytically based reading, one that makes of words symptoms and means of transference.

«Words were originally magic and to this day words have retained much of their ancient

¹⁸ Freud, «Project», *Standard Edition* 1: 295.

¹⁹ Freud, letter 36 (29.11.95), *Origins* 134.

²⁰ Sigmund Freud, «'Wild' Psycho-Analysis» (1910), *Standard Edition* 11: 227.

magical power», claims Freud.²¹ Attention to words is the basis of analytical understanding, so perhaps I have psychoanalyzed AI to some extent. I also laid out an exchange of words between the two domains — placed them in therapy, so to speak. Psychoanalysis, then, has been my constitutive metaphor for analysis; it has helped me guide AI back to psychoanalysis' own infancy, to where the couch was in the crib. Yet as a metaphor, it is somewhat imposed, somewhat illicit, somewhat «wild», and, finally, somewhat artificial. Not, then, in the interest of a literal cure, but in the interest of a literary — and somewhat magical — science. And perhaps all sciences are somewhat magical — speaking metaphorically — especially when they couch their claims so much in that word «science».

²¹ Freud, *Standard Edition* 15: 17.