

# LITERATURE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS



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**THIRTEENTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**ON**

**LITERATURE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS**

Edited by FREDERICO PEREIRA

**Boston**  
July ♦ 1996

**Center for the Study of Psychoanalysis and Culture (SUNY-Buffalo, USA)**

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# P A P E R S

# Psychoanalysis and the narratives

*MICHÈLE BERTRAND (\*)*

Intending to speak on narratives in psychoanalysis, I am aware of the fact that I make a metaphoric use of the term «narratives». In psychoanalysis of course, patients talk, but not write. Some of these patients may have written on their analyses: so did, for instance, the wellknown H. D., Stanton, Kardiner, who were analysed by Freud. But these books were published many years after their analysis, and they cannot be considered but as later reconstructions; not as the original «text» of their analysis.

However, I have two arguments:

1. Psychoanalysis was discovered in a culture in which such narrative forms as novels or autobiographies were already very common. I think that the narrative forms have not left a mark only on literature, but also, more generally, on culture. Even in everydaylife, there are certain schemes for telling stories, and these schemes are different in different cultures.

2. In talking cures there are constructions, and the therapeutic efficacy of talking depends on these constructions.

In his earlier works, Freud conceived psychoanalysis as a process «per via di levare» more than a process «per via di porre». Psychoanalysis ought to remove obstacles, such as repression and other mechanisms of defence which prevent unconscious thoughts from coming to light. Then, with «Beyond the Pleasure Principle» and other later papers, the question of trauma rose and there was a change in his conceptions. In «Constructions in Psychoanalysis» Freud stated that constructions may supply what memory cannot.

More generally speaking, when an analysand tries to perceive relations or to link some features with others, he is unceasingly constructing and reconstructing the past. That is a kind of creation, which may in itself have a therapeutic efficacy. What I intend to state is, that constructing or reconstructing the past is a process of detachment. The change occurs when the patient's speech, instead of working as an action, begins to work as a mental space in which he may conceive his analysis either as creating or knowing.

It seemed to me that it would be interesting to apply to psychoanalysis a paradigm that Paul

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Ricoeur developed in *Temps et récit* (1985). He states that there are three levels in narratives, which he names respectively Mimesis I, Mimesis II and Mimesis III.

1. A Semantics of action, as prefiguring a narrative discourse.
2. Narrative compositions, as configuring a story or an History.
3. Refiguring the past, as the sequence of various readings which may be done on a work in the field of literature.

Applied to psychoanalysis, this may be linked to three transference positions:

1. The psychoanalyst is included in the present relationship, as a listener, who may be perceived as indifferent or interested, as kind or not.
2. He (or she) is identified with one or another of the characters which take place in the analysand's personal drama, that is to say, one of his (or her) imagos.
3. At the third level the analysand is waiting for an achievement or a fulfilment of his (her) work. Waiting such a fulfilment involves the psychoanalyst being able to admit his own implication in the work. These three points I shall try to develop now.

#### A SEMANTICS OF ACTION

Why an action? According to Roy Schafer (*A New language for psychoanalysis*, 1976), in psychoanalysis, anything is an action. Thinking is an action, seeing, remembering, are actions. Keeping silent or inactive are actions, as well as moving from a place to another place.

This conception is rather similar to Max Weber's. Action is intentional. The intention may be unconscious, but it is present. In that human actions differ from natural or physical processes. The latter do not involve choices, aims, objectives, means, and so on. Roy Schafer says, they need no symbolic values, they have no meaning. They simply happen.

But a human property is to turn into an action what is not an action, such as diseases or death. Men confer on them a meaning.

If speaking is an action, a first competence is required from the speaker: a certain familiarity with such notions as agents, aims, objectives, means, cooperation, conflict, success, failing, circumstances, etc. A Semantics of action clarifies these concepts.

A second competence is necessary to understand the meaning of action: using the symbolic systems which give to action a descriptive context: not only beliefs or ideology, but the framework in which acts become significant. Just an example. A man who was analysed by Fairbairn, told the following story: at the end of his last session, Fairbairn shook his hand for the first time. He was so strongly moved, that his self-analysis hence developed, and many years later he wrote about it. In France, where shaking hands is very common, I think that it would not have such an impact. In England, it had.

Not only cultural codes, but also the interactive context is almost important. When an analysand says, for instance: «I do not know what you intend me to say», it may, according to circumstances, have different meanings.

1. You are wrong, you did understand anything.
2. You know about me something I do not, but I would like to know.
3. You are trying to manipulate me.

This listing is not restrictive. Moreover, that are the possible meanings, but there are also actions: in the first case, the analysand creates a rivalry relationship. In the second case, he begs for a gift, or a nurture. In the third one, he attempts a sado-masochistic seduction.

This may lead us to consider transference not only as prefiguring an action (and hence

involving a semantics of action), but also as configuring some dramatization. A dramatization is what Aristoteles names *Mimesis Praxeos*, and Ricoeur the setting of a plot.

What makes a plot? Three main points are to be noticed.

1. A plot makes various features become a story, which is a whole and has a meaning.
2. It links together such heterogeneous things as agents, aims, motivations, etc., that is to say, it displays in a syntagmatic order all the components that a semantics of action listed in a paradigmatic schedule.
3. Therefore, it may be considered as a kind of kantian schematization: schematization unifies empirical elements under the rule of a concept, as dramatization unifies units of meaning under the setting of a plot; that is to say, a structural sequence of features.

One reason for the efficacy of talking, in psychoanalysis, may be the following. Generally speaking, such situations as diseases or death are natural or physical features, that is to say, meaningless: as Spinoza would say, in Nature there is neither good nor evil. Good and evil are anthropomorphist conceptions of Nature; men considers physical processes as intentional: that is to say, as if they were actions; but such natural processes as disease or death leads men to be aware of their weakness and passivity in regard of external circumstances. However, by constructing stories on deaths or diseases that happened, they turn a situation of passivity into a dramatic action in which they play a role. Even if the role is passive, even if Fate overwhelms human attempts, telling their story is an action. So that, while being passive in a certain way, they are active in another way. They become the authors of the scenario in which they are implicated as actors. Hannah Arendt pointed it out, with regard to the Philosophy of History. Philosophy of History tells things as if they may result from men's intentions: so that, she says, there is a confusion between being an author and being an actor in History: but an actor makes things, while an author tells them. In psychoanalyses, even when the analysand has been suffering passively the things, he becomes active by telling them, setting a plot in a narrative way.

Such are «family romances», as well as «disease romances». I shall give an example of the latter. A girl of 15 had the first symptoms of a diabetes mellitus. She told me her disease story in the following way.

Her father Gerald, and her mother Agnes, divorced when she was very young. She had never met since her father, and lived with the mother and the mother's husband, Anthony, and their two children. She loved Anthony as if he was really her father, and was perfectly happy. But, at 14, she wanted to meet her father, and spent holidays with him and his wife, and their two children. Then, she became ill.

What is meant, in this story? Having two fathers was a very comfortable situation, as long as she did not have to recognize her ambivalence. There was a good father, Anthony, whom she loved, and a bad one, Gerald, who left her. But when she met Gerald and his new family, this construction was destroyed. She discovered that the bad father was not so bad, she can love him; and that the good father was not so good, while she was afraid to grieve him, what means she was ambivalent to the beloved Anthony. Even her position between the two families was significant: on both sides, there were a father, a mother and their two children. She only had a father on one side, and a mother on the other side, she was split. So, when she attributes her disease to her meeting with Gerald, in a certain way she means that she received something from him, (the unconscious meaning was something sexual, a love story), but something bad (something forbidden), so that she was punished and became ill. This a first level of interpretation. But I would like to emphasize another point: by attributing her disease to her decision,(meeting Gerald), she makes herself, in a fantastic way, the origin of what happened. So, she turns her passivity in regard of this event into an action, in order that the situation may be bearable.

This is a fiction, in which unconscious fancies and desires are almighty. The question is, 1. In

what way such fantasies may have a therapeutic effect? and 2. May telling stories (which does not refer to reality) more effective than reconstructing the past, in an historical way? That is to say, what kind of narratives are the more efficient?

Telling fictions is efficient as a substitute for action, as I demonstrated in the previous part. In certain cases, it may be considered as a kind of transitional space in mind, as Winnicott means a transitional object. But the condition for a transitional use of fictions is that there is not a strong belief in it. In this perspective, interpretations have a great importance. While they are speaking, analysands are not differentiated from their words. It is an action-speaking. But an interpretation, or even a mere intervention, when it occurs at the right time, in the right way, may produce a suspension of belief. So, a reflexive dimension is introduced in the patient's mind, he suddenly becomes able to hear what he was saying but not hearing, and listen to his own words as a text full of meaning. So begins a process of detachment.

I shall give an example. A patient, a woman, could not say anything during a session. She was anxious, she felt unpleasantly. Just at the end, she sighed and said: I cannot breath today, I have something rather like a stone on my breast.

– A stone? asked the psychoanalyst.

– Yes, a big stone.

– A stone? repeated the psychoanalyst.

And suddenly she began to laugh: she just had become aware of this fact: her psychoanalyst was named Stein, (in german, Stein means Stone).

A process of detachment requires, I think, a listener who can make the speaker aware of his speaking. In everydaylife, rarely is somebody able to listen to another's speech as a text. Why? Because most of the time, speech is an action, aiming at the listener in order to seduce him, influence him, or wound him. If the listener tries to protect himself from the other's attacks, he replies in the same way, but is unable to listen to that serenely, as a meaningful text. That may occur in a psychoanalysis: psychoanalysts are human; but they have been trained, as a rule, in order to listen to the text of their patients.

The process of detachment begins first in the psychoanalyst's mind, then in the patient's mind. So, more and more an analysis progresses, more and more, it uses narratives not only in the sense of fictions, but as refiguring the past, in an historical way. History indeed involves also fiction; more exactly, the difference between fiction and History is not in their adequacy to reality, but in their referential dimension (in fiction, reference and meaning are the same, not in History).

Constructing and reconstructing the past, that is what a patient intends to do, and this is the reason why psychoanalysis has a property, changing the past. What is changed, of course, is refiguring the past, as far as there is no past but in anybody's mind, a reconstructed past. The constructing part in a psychoanalysis, is almost important, at least as important as remembering what is unconscious.

Now this construction is made possible as far as someone is listening to it as being meaningful. That is the role of a psychoanalyst. So, it may be compared to an act of reading. Referring to Wolfgang Iser's works (*Der Akt des Lesens*, 1976) and Robert Jaus' theory of reception, Ricoeur states that a work has not been achieved before a reader, or many, have developed in it meanings which had not already been explicited. A text is not to be considered as a closed system, but remains open, waiting for an unachieved sequence of reinterpretations of the work.

In psychoanalysis, something is to be compared with «Acts of reading». To be achieved, or fulfilled, an analysis needs some acknowledgement from the psychoanalyst, of his own involvement in the work. I do not mean that he has to acknowledge the patient: this would be a nevrotic demand. I mean that he has not to stay in some narcissistic position, as if he had neither a desire nor

something to receive. At least, he has a plan, a project, he wants his patient improving his situation, and is pleased when he is successful. I often heard that analyses might be unending, when the psychoanalyst was standing in such a narcissistic position as waiting himself for nothing from the psychoanalysis. This is a defensive position, and may have negative effects, even what is called «negative therapeutic effects».

On the contrary, acknowledgement may become, by sublimation, an equivalent for the patient's desire to receive something from his psychoanalyst, or to give him something. What he received may be a work, such as a study of case, or a contribution to his theoretical conceptions; but even if he learnt something but did not write anything, there was here a contribution to his experience and understanding of psychoanalysis.

How many readings of Dora's case, of the Wolfman's case, after Freud, have been proposed? In psychoanalysis as well as in literature, texts always are to be reinterpreted. But the first of all was the patient's text.

# True stories: Some psychoanalytic remarks on mimesis

WALTER SCHÖNAU (\*)

I would like to begin by telling you two true stories that bear some resemblance. What I am after is not the unusual events in these stories as such, but the specific reader response to the fact that they are not made up. On the basis of these stories, I will make some psychoanalytic remarks about one of the major concepts in literary theory: mimesis.

## THE MINER OF FALUN

In 1719, the body of a miner called Mathias Israelsson was discovered in a copper mine in Falun (Sweden). He had died as a young man in a mining accident in 1670, thus nearly 50 years before. His body had been buried under the rubble of the cave-in that had been the cause of his death. It was completely saturated with copper vitriol, and had been preserved so well that it seemed as if the man had died only the day before. According to the sources reporting the discovery, among others a scientific account written in Latin at the University of Uppsala, only a few people were able to recognize the miner after so many years. One of these was his fiancée, who had remained faithful to him and had not married another man. A very aged woman now, she flung herself upon the corpse while weeping profusely. This grief, incidentally, did not prevent her, as the rightful claimant, from selling his remains for a large sum of money to the University, where scientists wished to examine the body. Another source mentions the disgraceful fact that women used to throw themselves upon the corpses of any miner recovered after an accident, because a widow's pension was only awarded after the dead man had been found. (This condition also applied if a miner's widow wanted to obtain a licence to set up a public house.)

This moving scene of the anagnorisis, as the ancient Greeks called it, in which the old woman recognized the body of her missing fiancée who has remained young in death, became the climax of the description of this extraordinary event in Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert's book *Ansichten*

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*von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaft* (1808). This book was read by nearly all writers of the German Romantic movement and exerted a powerful influence on them. After the *Iason* magazine had published this «true story» again one year later, accompanied by an appeal for literary reworkings of the material, it soon became the source of a rich tradition of poems, plays, operas, stories and novels based on this remarkable event (Frenzel 1992). All Germans are familiar with the poetic calendar story by Johann Peter Hebel, *Unverhofftes Wiedersehen* (1810). It is a gem of the art of narration, and has therefore often served as a model for narrative and psychological analyses (Pietzcker 1996, 137-159). However, Hebel and his successors have considerably altered the story. For a start, in his version only the old woman recognizes the recovered miner. Needless to say, the sale of the corpse by the former bride is omitted. Instead, the author inserts a moving dialogue between the old woman and her eternally young bridegroom which puts Hebel's ode to the constancy of love into a Christian perspective:

The following day, when the grave had been dug at the churchyard and the miners came to collect him, she tied the black silken scarf with the red hem around his neck and accompanied him in her Sunday clothes, as if it were her wedding day and not the day of his funeral. For when he was laid to rest, she addressed him. «Sleep softly now. Only a handful of days in the cool marriage bed; it won't be long. I have just a few things to do and then I will return and it will soon be day again. What the earth has returned, she will not retain the second time either», she said while walking away and looking over her shoulder one more time (Hebel 1970, 48).

Carl Pietzcker has recently analyzed the story from a psychoanalytic perspective as one of the many texts that are structured according to the universal fantasy pattern of union, separation and reunion that he investigated. This also explains why the story still fascinates readers today, although most of us no longer adhere to the Christian belief in the resurrection extolled by the story. Furthermore, his analysis convincingly identifies the contours of a mother-son constellation and thus of an incest fantasy in the final dialogue I quoted just now (Pietzcker 1996). Friedrich Hebel, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Hugo von Hofmannsthal and many other authors – and not just from Germany or Austria – were also inspired by the story to create works of literature in highly different forms and with highly different accents. I will address the question why this is so in due course.

#### PAUL AUSTER, *GHOSTS*

I have taken the second story I would like to tell you from Paul Auster's postmodernist novel *The New York Trilogy* (1987). It is part of the central novel of this trilogy, *Ghosts* (1986). One of the characters, Blue (all characters in this novel are named after colours), is thinking about his father, a policeman who was shot twenty years ago. Blue wonders »if there is a heaven, and if so whether or not he will get to see his father again after he dies«. Auster continues:

He remembers a story from one of the endless magazines he has read this week, a new monthly called *Stranger than Fiction*, and it seems somehow to follow from all the other thoughts that have just come to him. Somewhere in the French Alps, he recalls, a man was lost skiing twenty or twenty-five years ago, swallowed up by an avalanche, and his body was never recovered. His son, who was a little boy at the time, grew up and also became a skier. One day in the past year he went skiing, not far from the spot where his father was lost – although he did not know this. Through the minute and persistent displacements of the ice over the decades since his father's death, the terrain was now completely different from what it had been. All alone there in the mountains, miles away from any other human being, the son chanced upon a body in the ice – a dead body, perfectly intact, as though preserved in suspended animation. Needless to

say, the man stopped to examine it, and as he bent down and looked at the face of the corpse, he had the distinct and terrifying impression that he was looking at himself. Trembling with fear, as the article put it, he inspected the body more closely, all sealed away as it was in the ice, like someone on the other side of a thick window, and saw that it was his father. The dead man was still young, even younger than his son was now, and there was something awesome about it, Blue felt, something so odd and terrible about being older than your own father, that he actually had to fight back tears as he read the article (Auster 1990, 150-151).

Anyone familiar with Auster's work, and particularly with his autobiography *The Invention of Solitude* (1982), will immediately recognize the motif of the son in relation to his missing father. I have dealt with this subject four years ago at a previous IPSA conference (Schönau 1993). All readers of this passage will be struck by the curious resemblance with the first story, including the moving and confusing motif of the reversal of the natural ages of the characters.

#### THE UNCANNY

What the two stories have in common is the motif of the unexpected reunion with a loved one who died a long time ago and whose body has been preserved intact by sheer coincidence. This motif may be called «uncanny», in accordance with Freud's definition of the concept. Freud pointed out that «many people experience the feeling [of uncanniness] in the highest degree in relation to death and dead bodies, to *the return of the dead*» (Freud 1919, S.E. XVII, 1981, 241). We feel the horror associated with the experience that the return of a dead person – an animistic notion which our reason has long since rejected – is, in a sense, possible after all. Our feelings are very confused and highly ambiguous, because there is not only anxiety, but also, and especially, emotion and joy because of the unexpected reunion. The anxiety can be traced back to the ancient fear of the «revenant» who seems to have returned unexpectedly «from the undiscover'd country from whose bourn [usually] no traveller returns», and who, according to popular belief, can take us back with him to the abode of the dead, since the dead person also represents Death.

Both stories evoke primitive morbid fantasies, but also appeal to the Christian belief in the resurrection on Judgment day and to the possibility of a reunion in the Hereafter. Whereas Hebel can offer a comforting perspective, in accordance with his edifying and romantic calendar stories for Southern German countryfolk, Auster's postmodernist fiction for intellectual readers only leaves room for a wish, the question «if there is a heaven, and if so whether or not he will get to see his father again after he dies».

Both stories therefore coincide with the archaic and archetypal fantasy structures that we know from our own dreams and from numerous myths about «uncanny» passages between the ordinary world of man and the world beyond the grave. However, as we have seen these are fantasies, both individual and collective, which despite the growing demystification of the world and the increasing rationalization of our inner world are still forcefully present in our unconscious.

#### TRUE STORIES

These stories, however, are also linked precisely by their factuality, although in the Auster case this is not so much documented as pretended by the vague reference to the source in the form of the true story magazine *Stranger than fiction*. Be that as it may, an essential element of their impact on the reader is the fact that the events are explicitly presented as having «actually happened» - although the imagination, particularly in the case of the Swedish miner in Hebel's story and in many later adaptations of the material, has altered these events considerably. Yet even

Hebel, despite all the poetic and edifying stylization that fictionalizes the text, feels it is important to emphasize the factuality of the text. Although we are apparently fascinated by stories that resemble our prototypical or primal fantasies (as is so often demonstrated by psychoanalytic interpretations of literature), such stories have an additional appeal of their own when they prove to be true. In *The Red Notebook* (1995), Paul Auster, for example, recounts a whole string of such improbable tall tales, each of which could form the basis of a novella or novel, and all of which are true, as he emphatically claims (Auster 1995, 38).

Why does he feel the need to assert this? Perhaps such a statement, as for example the one displayed at the start of many films («Most of what follows is true»), functions as a defence strategy. At first sight, the assertion that something uncanny has really happened only seems to intensify the horror: «So it's true after all that the dead return!» But it also shifts our perception slightly, because the fearful is reduced to a unique strange event, limited to a particular place and time, with little chance of repeating itself. We can therefore play down the uncanny event by calling it an anecdote. It is easier to dismiss it as something that has taken place in historical reality, i.e. «out there», than if it had been presented as the product of fantasy. We are thus able to ward off the notion that «accidentally» the event also closely resembles a fragment of our psychic reality «in here», an unconscious primal fantasy that is part of our inner world.

It is similar to the life of Napoleon, which Freud in a letter to Thomas Mann (11/29/1936: Freud 1961, 428-430) analyzed as being modelled after the life of the biblical Joseph. Sometimes historical processes or events coincide with unconscious fantasy patterns – obviously, Joseph's life is such a fantasy structure – and then our attitude towards these historical facts or these charismatic historical figures is, to a large extent, determined by the unconscious patterns we recognize in them. The history of the literary reworkings of the miner of Falun material is a good example of the fascination that operates in such cases.

## MIMESIS AND FICTION

Perhaps this gives us an opportunity to draw various, more general, conclusions about the psychological function of mimesis (as a representation of external historical reality) in literature. The mimetic function of literature, i.e. the fact that it incorporates elements of reality – which it sometimes simply introjects, as for example in the collage, but usually assimilates – can perhaps be seen as a derived, a secondary, ancillary function in relation to its primary fictional function, which is to describe fantasies. Although the relationship between mimesis on the one hand and the creation of fiction on the other varies, it seems to me that realism in literature, at least from a psychoanalytic point of view, is a form of defence, of concealment intended to hide the fact that basic fantasy structures is what it is really about.

This also applies, in effect, to the great interest in mimesis shown by the theoreticians, who from Plato and Aristotle to Erich Auerbach tended to regard it as an essential feature of literature. Could it be that this emphasis on the representation of reality elements in literary theory is an intellectualizing defensive strategy to help us ignore the psychic reality that is as much a source of literary works as reality? Are the biographers who tend to look for the «real» models of fictional characters also applying a defensive strategy? Why do we like so much to read about those people in the life of the author who were transformed into literary characters? If we continue this line of reasoning, the apparent absence of fictionality in true stories such as the two I discussed may be a kind of reassurance: «No, this is not taking place in my timeless psychological reality, but in a historically determined, specifically localized reality. This is not about me, not about my unconscious fantasies, but about others, and about hard facts». That these hard facts coincide with the basic structures of our psychic reality, with the patterns of our primal fantasies, seems to be something that can only be perceived in the light of psychoanalysis.

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# A failing early triangulation process in *The Fox* by D. H. Lawrence

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## INTRODUCTION

In the novella *The Fox*, Lawrence tells the story of two girls, Jill Banford and Nellie March, nearly thirty years old, living on a small farm in England at the end of the first World War. They had to sell their heifers and are trying unsuccessfully to raise chickens. The hens refuse to lay eggs and suffer from strange illnesses. The most serious problem, however, is a fox repeatedly raiding the barnyard. They try to shoot him, but he is too elusive for them. One evening March comes face to face with the fox looking up at her. She is spellbound, realizing that he knows her, and she does not fire. Afterwards she goes to look for the fox and from then somehow he dominates her unconsciousness. In November 1918, just after the end of the war, a young soldier, Henry Grenfel, comes to the farm. He is of Cornish origin and they find out that he is the grandson of the previous owner. Several years before he had run away, enlisted in Canada and did not know of his grandfather's death. The girls let him spend his leave at the farm. For Banford he is like her young brother home from France; for March he is identified with the fox. The first night he stays at the farm, March dreams of the fox. She wants to touch him but he bites her wrist and whisks his brush across her face; it sears and burns her mouth. Grenfel decides that it would be a good thing to have the farm for his own by marrying March. He shrewdly plans a strategy to catch her. When he formulates his proposal she is quite helpless and evasively confused. Later she admits that she has taken him for the fox. When he insists and corners her, she gives in. Banford reproaches her that she is losing her self-respect and declares that she cannot live with Henry at the farm because he will boss and bully them both. The young man, who overheard the conversation, goes out and shoots the fox. That night March dreams that Banford is dead; she covers the body in the coffin with a fox-skin. During the last days of Grenfel's stay at the farm, Banford's hostility towards him and a possible marriage with March gets accentuated. But between March and the young man some attraction comes about and they fix their wedding for Christmas. Returned to his camp, however,

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after a few days he receives a letter from March that she cannot marry him and will stay with Banford. He rushes back to the farm where he kills Banford, simulating an accident, while felling a tree. Grenfel and March marry at Christmas. It's a failure; he wants her to submit and be just his woman; she wants to be an independent woman. «She wanted to be alone: with him at her side» (F<sup>1</sup>, p. 157).

The novella, published in 1922, is an extended version of a short story which appeared in *Hutchinson's Story Magazine* in 1920. The author revised it several times between 1918 and 1920. One of the earlier versions (1919) is reprinted in *A. D. H. Lawrence Miscellany* (ed. H. T. Moore). In this short story the age of the girls is more than thirty and Grenfel ran away from his father instead of his grandfather. But the principal difference is that the story ends rather abruptly after Grenfel's proposal to which March forthwith gives in; she is in his power. He reminds her of the fox but still she marries him and she is curiously happy. Banford is opposed to the marriage but she is helpless and powerless. While the short story ends with a more or less happy end, in the novella a lot of open conflicts and violence (shooting of the fox, killing of Banford) gets introduced and it results in a failure for all the protagonists. Ruderman (1984) assumes that the changing patterns of the author's relationships with different women, in particular his wife Frieda, between 1918 and 1921, help to account for the alterations. «By 1921 Lawrence had realized that the ending of the 1918 version of the story, with Banford's complete if unwilling capitulation to Grenfel, was simplistic, and that the force of both women's resistance was underdrawn...» (p. 56) As it appears from a contribution of 1955 by Cecily Lambert to *D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography Vol I* (Nehls, 1957), the author drew some data for the outline of the tale from his contacts with two women, living at Grimsbury farm in Berkshire, nine miles from the place where he resided in 1918. Cecily Lambert, who inherited the farm from her grandfather, lived with her cousin Violet Monk and they had not any skills at farming. Lambert's brother Nip, who stayed at the farm during a convalescent leave from the war, could have been a model for Grenfel. The Lawrences often visited Grimsbury farm and the author maintained a correspondence with Cecily and Nip Lambert. Of course, even if they are modelled on certain prototypes from the entourage of the writer, we consider the characters and their interactions first of all as resulting from the author's fantasy.

#### DIFFERENT VIEWS ON THE NOVELLA

The novella has been approached from different angles. According to Leavis (1955) it is «fully and unequivocally a study of love... It is a study of human mating; of the attraction between a man and a woman that expresses the profound needs of each and has its meaning in a permanent union» (p. 260). He strongly refuses to take into consideration any ideological meaning of the tale: «The psychological truth of *The Fox* is so compelling, and the close belongs so much to the concrete specificity of the situation presented, that the tale can hardly seem involved in any questionable generality of intention» (p. 265). But Moynahan (1963) considers the story as a mythical work. «Henri, like the other characters, is a kind of form into which the life force wells. The form called Banford is somehow defective or diseased. No life wells up in her, and she must be discarded because her disease is catching. Life is the irreducible value, something to be served as well as enjoyed» (p. 208).

Some interpretations are formulated from a sociological and/or moral point of view. Tedlock jr. (1963) sees Grenfel, identified with the fox, as the lower class man with the «cunning and ruthlessness required to achieve the vitalistic reversal of values and relationship», embodied in «two dilettante girls who maintain an anti-life alliance suggesting the intricacies of lesbianism...» (p.

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<sup>1</sup> F refers to *The Fox* edition mentioned in the references.

117). Also for Hough (1956) Grenfel is a representant of the necessary vital natural forces. Daleski (1978) confirms that, at the time the novella was written, there was in England a lack of vital force, of which Grenfel is the incarnation. But he regrets the murder of Banford. «Henry after all is not a fox and calling murder by another name does not make it smell any sweeter» (p. 154). Sagar (1966) notices that the man/fox identification is used «to evade the responsibilities of human consciousness altogether, and to render the taking of human life in terms morally equivalent to the fox's taking of a hen» (p. 117). Holderness offers a more comprehensive view. For him *The Fox* expresses the unresolved conflict between social and natural values. Henry and the fox represent the powers of life and their success in winning March is a victory, a triumph of life. But on the other hand, «the relationship between March and Banford is a valid human relationship fulfilling the needs of both women; and... Henry's murder of Banford is a crime, an offence against human values» (p. 171).

From a psychoanalytic point of view different interpretations have been formulated. Miller (1952) premises that March is caught in an «Oedipal situation, in which man is constantly threatened with destruction or nullity, death in life, through love either for the mother or for some woman imagined as the mother» (p. 26). Grenfel awakens March's repressed sexual desires and by killing Banford, representing the repressive forces, brings March to fulfilment. We must remark that the term «Oedipal situation» does not refer here to the typical triangular conflict, in which a person of one sex is an object of rivalry between two persons of the opposite sex, but to a destructive bondage between mother and child, we conceive rather as pre-oedipal. Moreover March does not at all seem fulfilled in her marriage with Grenfel.

The study of Bergler (1958) deals in the main with the relationship between Banford and March, which he describes as Lesbianism. Lawrence indeed calls March «the man about the place» (F, p. 85). She does most of the outdoor work and «in her puttees and breeches, her belted coat and her loose cap, she looked almost like some graceful loose-balanced young man....» (F, p. 86). Bergler conceives the enacting of husband-wife roles as a camouflage of a perpetuating mother-child relationship. Still, in *The Fox* this camouflage is all too transparent. From the context it is evident that Banford represents the mother figure. She is the owner of the farm. She is in command and takes the decisions, for instance that Grenfel can stay at the farm without paying a board. She also displays some positive maternal qualities; she is «warm-hearted» (F, p. 103), with a «natural warmth and kindness» (F, p. 99). She is concerned about March but treats her in a possessive way. For Bergler the behaviour of March is masochistic. We would rather call it helplessness. She depends on Banford and lives with her in a mother-child symbiosis. But this does not exclude a desire for independence and female identity, which gets aroused in the contacts with the fox and Grenfel.

Ruderman (1984) analyses the novella as an elaboration of the concept «devouring mother», a term used by Lawrence in a letter of Dec. 5, 1918 to Katherine Mansfield, to describe his wife Frieda (Letters, Vol. III, p. 302). It corresponds to the description by Rheingold (1967) of the phenomenon he calls «appetitive» mother-love (p. 197). Undoubtedly it can be applied to Banford. From the beginning she absorbs March by her protecting attitude. When Grenfel arrives at the farm she offers him hospitality, reducing him to a boy who needs her help and protection. She goes to the village to buy the food. But when he tries to rob her of March, she reacts by tears, hysteric behaviour, and bitter invectives. Grenfel imagines that she has «little iron breasts... For all her frailty and fretfulness and delicacy, she would have tiny iron breasts.» (F, p. 132). When he is away, she convinces March to write the letter in which she declares that she prefers to stay with her instead of marrying him.

Ruderman's interpretation of Grenfel and March is more problematic. Grenfel, like the fox, is an ambiguous figure. At first he appears obviously driven by possessive needs. He wants to own the farm so that he can be master. Then he plans to catch March. «He would have to catch her as you catch a deer or a woodcock when you go out shooting» (F, p. 104). And when they are married, «He wanted to make her submit, yield, blindly pass away out of all her strenuous consciousness»

(F, p. 157). Still, for March at a given moment, he embodied another perspective. Like the fox, he evoked in her some feelings of individuation as a woman and she declared that she did no longer want to spend her life with Banford. The ultimate problem, however, is the different meaning of «being a woman» for March and Grenfel. For her it is gaining independence, a liberation from the symbiotic bond with a mother figure. For him it is being a vulnerable child. «She was a woman, and vulnerable, accessible to him finally...» (F, p. 138). In that sense we can agree with Ruderman's interpretation that at the end Grenfel is only replacing Banford as a devouring mother. However, it becomes difficult to follow her when she conceives March also as a devouring mother. The edge of the argument, that she is older than Grenfel, is taken off by the latter's musing: «What if she was older than he?... He was older than she, really. He was master of her» (F, p. 104). He is not looking for a mother figure but for someone he can dominate. Also his attraction to March's soft, woman's breasts is a poor argument since he imagines this quality of March's breasts in contrast to the little iron breasts he attributes to Banford. If both are devouring mothers, why should one have soft breasts and the other iron ones? Finally, the conception of all three protagonists as devouring mothers offers a static interpretation of the characters, without taking into consideration the varied dynamic interactive processes represented in the story.

#### A FAILING EARLY TRIANGULATION PROCESS

The quoted views on *The Fox* offer certain elements to a psychoanalytic understanding of the novella but we think that for a more comprehensive psychoanalytic representation of the related interactions, we must direct our attention to the role of the father as a third object in the separation-individuation process of the child. In the year that *The Fox* appeared, Lawrence also published his *Fantasia of the Unconscious* in which he formulates his fantasies with regard to attachment and individuation processes in the early development of the child. In this essay he writes: «Then the father by instinct supplies the roughness, the sternness which stiffens in the child the center of resistance and independence, right from the very earliest days. Often, for a mere infant, it is the father's fierce or stern presence, the vibration of his voice, which gives the first impulse to the independence which later on is life itself » (p. 49). This claim bears a remarkable resemblance to the psychoanalytic assumption of Greenacre (1966): «Thus, after the first weeks of life, the movement in the child is toward a gradual separation from the mother, which may ultimately allow the growth of a relationship on a different level. The father, however, must emerge from a marky figure "off there" to one with whom the child is familiar, after which at least an incipient object relationship is possible» (p. 198).

This early, preoedipal, positive role of the father was already put forward by Loewald (1951). Mahler (1966) emphasized the meaning of the father figure as an important help for the child in the separation-individuation process, the more when the mother displays an appetitive love. Abelin (1971), called the experience of the child, confronted with two different parents, related to each other, «early triangulation». In a later paper (1975) he assumes that this triangulation «would establish the first non-mirroring sense of *gender identity*, which Stoller (1968) has shown to precede the oedipal phase» (p. 295). Rupprecht-Schampera (1995) focuses on the particular characteristics of this early triangulation process in boys and girls. The girl may realize that she is interesting to the father as an erotically attractive female creature and use this modality to catch his attention. «It can therefore be said that *girls use oedipal triangulation in order to obtain preoedipal (early) triangulation and hence separation from the mother*» (p. 461). Depending on the father's response the child experiences, different evolutions can take place. If his reaction appears as moderated and controlled, «He will then be assuming part of the function of the third object after all, albeit at a later time» (p. 462). However, if he is experienced as sexually overwhelming, totally absorbing or openly rejecting, the separation-individuation process will be at stake.

With these psychoanalytic theories in mind and assuming that Lawrence at the time he wrote *The Fox* was preoccupied by fantasies about early individuation processes, we interpret the novella as a symbolic representation of a failing early triangulation process. Till her meeting with the fox, March lives in a state of black consciousness. She is «a creature of odd whims and unsatisfied tendencies» (F, p. 87), but she is prevented from a personal development by her absorption in the work on the farm, owned by Banford. When the fox looks into her eyes, «she knew he knew her» (F, p. 89). She obviously experiences him as a new, a third object entering her closed world. When he runs away, she expects to find him again. «In her heart she was determined to find him» (F, p. 89). Only a few days later she tells Banford about her meeting with the fox. In the following months she remains possessed by his spell. «He had become a settled effect in her spirit, a state permanently established, not continuous, but always recurring» (F, p. 91).

When, one evening, Grenfel surprisingly arrives at the farm, March is at once under the influence of his strange, soft, modulated voice. She stares at him spellbound and for her he is the fox. During the conversation between Banford and the youth she remains silent. «Yet her large eyes dilated and glowed in spite of her; she lost herself» (F, p. 94). That night she dreams vividly. She hears the fox singing, goes out and wants to touch him. «She stretched out her hand, but suddenly he bit her wrist, and at the same instant, as she drew back, the fox, turning round to bound away, whisked his brush across her face, and it seemed his brush was in fire, for it seared and burned her mouth with a great pain» (F, p. 100). March is attracted to the fox but she immediately experiences the danger of an oral aggressive and erotic contact. In the morning, when she sees Grenfel eating largely, she keeps her face averted.

Grenfel sees March as a possible prey. «And it was as a young hunter that he wanted to bring down March as his quarry, to make her his wife» (F, p. 105). Though he can force her to say «yes», his overpowering approach is not quite successful. When March declares that she thought he was the fox, he realizes that he has to get rid of the image of a devouring animal. «I'm sure you don't really think I'm like the fox» (F, p. 115) he says. Still, when he overhears a conversation between March and Banford, in which the latter calls him an awful steeling little beast, he feels that he has to act. He goes out and shoots the fox. Several critics have interpreted this shooting of the fox as an identification of Grenfel with the fox. We think it is the opposite. He wants to destroy the image of the fox as a stealing, devouring beast, attributed to him. The effect is indeed that, once the fox is dead, March can admire his white belly and white underneath; she even passes her hand down his belly and along his tail. Her dream that Banford is dead and that she covers her body in the coffin with the fox-skin clearly expresses her desire for separation from the mother figure and the fox-skin is a means to materialize that separation.

In the following days, a growing hostility between Banford and Grenfel comes about while March develops a more independent attitude. To Banford she replies: «Don't you worry yourself, nobody's going to treat me cheaply. And even you aren't, either» (F, p. 130). Grenfel now imagines March as an erotically attractive being and she replaces her man's cloths by a woman's dress of dull, green silk crape. «Through the crape her woman's form seemed soft and womanly» (F, p. 133). In the evening he invites her for a walk outside. They sit down in the shed, where he can convince her of marrying him before he leaves for Canada. «If only she could sleep in his shelter, and not with Jill. She felt afraid of Jill. In her dim, tender state, it was agony to have to go with Jill and sleep with her. She wanted the boy to save her» (F, p. 141). March experiences Grenfel in the first place as someone who can save her from the possessive absorption by Banford.

It's only a temporary effect. For the ninth day after he left to the military camp, Grenfel receives a letter in which March writes: «When I think of Jill, she is ten times more real to me. I know her and I'm awfully fond of her, and I hate myself for a beast if I even hurt her little finger. We have a life together. And even if it can't last for ever, it is a life while it does last. And it might as long as either of us lives... I know what love means even in Jill's case, and I know that in this affair with you it's an absolute impossibility... I love Jill, and she makes me feel safe and sane, with

her loving anger against me for being such a fool... I can't marry you, and really, I won't do such a thing if it seems to me wrong» (F, p. 143). When he has read the letter, Grenfel has only one thought: he must eliminate Banford. He gets a leave, hires a bicycle and rushes to the farm.

When he arrives, the girls, together with Banford's father, are cutting a tree. When March sees him, «She was as helpless as if she had been bound» (F, p. 148). He proposes to finish the job and, making it appear as an accident, directs the falling tree on Banford who gets killed. He thinks that he has won. March «looked up at him with tears running from her eyes, a senseless look of helplessness and submission. So she gazed on him as if sightless, yet looking up to him. She would never leave him again. He had won her. And he knew it and was glad, because he wanted her for his life. His life must have her» (F, p. 153).

But then comes the anticlimax. They are married, «But though she belonged to him, though she lived in his shadow, as if she could not be away from him, she was not happy. She did not want to leave him: and yet she did not feel free with him» (F, p. 153). She knows that what he expects from her is not the love of a free independent woman, «she had to be passive, to acquiesce, and to be submerged under the surface of love» (F, p. 154). Like a child who considers it his duty to make his mother happy, she feels guilty because she has not made Banford happy «She was glad Jill was dead. For she had realized that she could never make her happy» (F, p. 155). She still hopes to become an independent woman, «She *would* have the reins of her own life between her own hands. She *would* be an independent woman to the last. But she was so tired, so tired of everything» (F, p. 157). The triangulation process has failed. The third object has aroused some perspective of separation from the mother figure, but afterwards adopted the same absorbing attitude. Grenfel has replaced Banford, first as the fox, the devouring animal, later, under the cloak of an erotic approach, as a possessive conqueror. March can only dream of a feminine identity and independence.

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# *Lady Chatterley's Lover*: Pastoral's departure into delusion

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In «A Propos *Lady Chatterley's Lover*», Lawrence asserts that he wants to make people «think sex, fully, completely, honestly, and cleanly», and specifies that the «new impulse to life» will be «a phallic rather than a sexual regeneration» (332, 352).<sup>1</sup> The emphasis in closure, however, lies neither on sexual nor on purely «phallic» regeneration, except in the Lacanian sense of relation to a paternal metaphor; and it is interesting that Oliver Mellors' letter constitutes an ode to chastity rather than to sexual candor. While the prominence and restorative values the novel accords to sensuality participate in pastoral and epithalamial conventions, the plot of phallic regeneration ultimately departs from these conventions and exaggerates the male role into a divine power. The phallic deity invoked by this exaggeration and the persecutory threats Oliver senses constitute the novel's ventures into delusion, and it can be argued that the book's infamous four-letter words represent not so much a full speech of sexuality as attempts to negotiate, through naming, a relation to a delusional supernatural source of power.<sup>2</sup>

To be deluded is to be misled in mind or judgment, or frustrated. Psychoanalytically, delusion attends psychosis and paranoia.<sup>3</sup> In this novel, the overt sexual plot of regeneration fails to control the ending but serves instead to introduce the delusional, paranoid, and quasi-religious and

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<sup>1</sup> Julian Moynahan contrasts the sexual as «abstract, cerebral, and vital» with the phallic as «concrete, physical, and organic», 72. Michael Squires distinguishes between sexual and phallic relationships in Lawrence as those that «develop from the mind and those that develop from the emotions, and he quotes from a letter to Curtis Brown in which Lawrence refers to «the phallic reality [as] warm and spontaneous», 11.

<sup>2</sup> Lydia Blanchard claims Lawrence «exhausts the language of sexuality to return [it]... to oblivion», in «Lawrence, Foucault, and the language of Sexuality», 23.

<sup>3</sup> J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis define paranoia, «whatever the variations in its delusional modes», as «[c]hronic psychosis characterised by more or less systematized delusion, with a predominance of ideas of reference but with no weakening of the intellect and, generally speaking, no tendency toward deterioration», 296.

apocalyptic tone of the final letter. Freud sees paranoid delusion as «a defence against homosexuality» (103-186), and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's discussion of homosexual panic draws on the connection between homosexuality and paranoia (19-21, 138-39, 182-212). The motifs of persecution and redemption in relation to a divine supernatural power that disrupt the pastoral conventions of Lawrence's novel are those Freud identifies in the case of Daniel Schreber. The delusional and religious aspects of Oliver's letter and the megalomaniacal exaggeration of the male role parallel features in Schreber's fantasies of being «unmanned», handing over his soul, and being homosexually raped in order to save the world (Schreber 75).

In its persecutory and redemptive motifs, the novel's closure opposes an evil force against a metaphorical «crocus» of desire. In spite of the pastoral conventions of the plot, the crocus and the phallic passion it represents hold a tenuous plea against the threats of industrialization, named «Mammon». However important, the «solution» of faith in sexual relations, even in an extraordinary phallic regeneration, seems inadequate to the ruthless mechanization Clifford epitomizes and the generalized malevolence Oliver fears.<sup>4</sup> The meditative letter that ends the novel opposes the persecutory images of mechanized evil with his belief in the redemptive promise in passion; he also personifies his own sexual organ as a phallic «deity». This resort in closure not only to a vision within a letter but also to alternating persecutory and redemptive motifs signals an instance of the attempt, guided by a paranoid narrative desire, to resolve conflicts in the plot by means of delusional scenes.<sup>5</sup> Without the demon of Mammon and *deus ex machina* of the flame that the letter invokes, Oliver confronts an otherwise inescapable disintegration that both Clifford and (to a certain extent) he enact.<sup>6</sup>

This disintegration is pervasive, and it strikes the first note of the novel: «Ours is essentially a tragic age» (1). As a result, the role of sex in the novel is as a means of healing, of psychic and seasonal rebirth, and of reconciliation to loss through trust in natural and seasonal rhythms.<sup>7</sup> These attempted renewals move pastoral beyond its properly utopian vision and socially critical function to elegiac gestures.<sup>8</sup>

The «renewed rhythm of life» («A Propos», 353) becomes not mainly a seasonal and procreative one, but a rhythm alternating moments of arresting threat and elevating promise. The «to-and-fro» Lawrence recognized as his style in the «Forward» to *Women in Love* captures these competing persecutory and redemptive strands. The text's attribution of desire similarly moves to and fro, between an industrializing other's persecutory desire and Oliver's redemptive wish. Practical matters threaten Oliver and his figuratively «renewed rhythm», too. Tensions between a natural, specifically sexual, rhythm and the interruptions of his divorce proceedings and Oliver's search for work are never resolved. Instead, the conflict between transformed vitality and injured hope appears in the persecutory and redemptive motifs, or Mammon and the flame.

Not only does the problem of impaired vitality appear in each main character, but a mood of injury characterizes the world of the novel as a whole. Beyond his physical paralysis, Clifford's injury is «the bruise of fear and horror», «the paralysis, the bruise of too great shock... spreading in his affective self» (50). His paralysis typifies the general condition of post-war England. Commenting on the colliers' talk of a strike, Connie sees its motivation as:

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<sup>4</sup> Alternatively, Julian Moynahan concludes that «the novel teaches us that the power in life which sustains the crocus is, strictly speaking, unconquerable», 75.

<sup>5</sup> I draw on Peter Brooks's notion of narrative desire, argued in *Reading for the Plot*.

<sup>6</sup> Barbara Hardy notes that «the conclusion of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* gives full expression to the note of doom with which the novel began», 166.

<sup>7</sup> Dennis Jackson likens the novel's patterns of seasonal and mythic regeneration to vegetative myths in «The «Old Pagan Vision»: Myth and Ritual in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*».

<sup>8</sup> Moynahan notes that the use of «tragedy refers to a great deal more than a world war. The ruins are perhaps the abstracted spirit of the age itself», 75.

the bruise of the war that had been in abeyance, slowly rising to the surface and creating the great ache of unrest, and stupor of discontent. It would take many years for the living blood... to dissolve.... And it would need a new hope. (51)

Contagiously, this bruised and diminished of vitality spreads to Connie and appears in Oliver. Living «in the void» (16) and unconnected, all three contrive a means of relation with a vivifying power. Clifford puts his energy into his work and into writing, «as if the whole of his being were in his stories» (14).

For Connie, the vivifying power is phallic and human; it fits the conventions of pastoral and the romance plot. Key among these is the seasonal rebirth of plants, animals, sexual energy, even love.<sup>9</sup> Connie registers the restorative effects of «phallic regeneration» in the sexual and procreative realms, but she initiates little. While pastoral conventions allow characters some individuality,<sup>10</sup> the romance plot muffles any quest Connie might have.<sup>11</sup> In spite of her bohemian background, her becoming pregnant outside of wedlock (moreover with a man who has less status and money than she), and her not viewing marriage as a bargain, Connie's goals of love, maternity, and living with the father of her child absorb her into the conventions of heterosexual marriage plots.

Alone among Lawrence's female protagonists, Connie Chatterley is pregnant at the end of the novel, as well as in love with Oliver and committed to a life with him. Within the sexual and maternal roles the book allots to her, her pregnancy promises a happy outcome. Yet uncertainty and ambivalence surround Oliver Mellors, who is separated from her not only by hundreds of miles, disparities of class and finances, and a lack of concern for the coming baby, but also by his role in focalizing the closure of the novel and its primary concerns with impotence. As he displaces Connie from the role of protagonist, Oliver upholds the book's concern with impaired vitality.

The fabulous, romantic, and pastoral qualities of the novel help explain its neglect of future marital and familial consequences. As in the last third of *The Rainbow*, in *Women in Love*, and in *The Plumed Serpent*, the novel's early focus on a woman's psychic and amorous experience switches to an androcentric point of view.<sup>12</sup> Connie's fundamental role is as sexual compensation for the narrative concern with waning desire. Her pregnancy removes her from an ultimate androcentric focus on Oliver and on delusion.

Within the first two chapters, the protagonist seems to be a post-catastrophic mood, or the numbness that creates this mood, rather than any character. (Clifford embodies this failed vitality.) Figures of loss take shape in the Chatterleys' respective predicaments: a man without sexual strength and a woman without a lover. Within the economy of the novel, the great catastrophe appears in the absence of phallic sexuality. Like a ghost, absent desire haunts Wragby Hall, as do the sounds and smells of Tevershall pit. They carry a specific inflection:

the stench of this sulphureous combustion of the earth's excrement.... even on windless days the air always smelt of something under-earth: sulphur, iron, coal, or acid. And even on the Christmas roses the smuts settled persistently, incredible, like black manna from skies of doom. (11)

The apocalyptic note of the smuts echoes the sexual wasteland suggested in the opening paragraph.

After two chapters in which she enacts the post-War numbness, Connie emerges as embattled protagonist when her discontent grows to a «mad restlessness» that «twitch[e]s her limbs when she didn't want to twitch» (18). Her transformation here is one of demonic possession and perversion by sexual energy; her «one refuge, her sanctuary» is the wood (18).

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<sup>9</sup> In 1966, Keith Sagar was the first to note the use of a pastoral, even pre-lapsarian romance plot in the novel.

<sup>10</sup> Hardy notices that Sir Clifford lacks the «particularity» of other characters, 170.

<sup>11</sup> Rachel Blau DuPlessis refers to this function of the marriage plot in *Writing Beyond the Ending*, 5.

<sup>12</sup> See works by Margaret Storch, Judith Ruderman, and Cornelia Nixon especially for accounts of the threat of femininity to men in Lawrence's works.

True to the conventions of pastoral, this wood personifies innocent goodness, pleasure, and trustworthy natural forces; it conveys to Connie «an ancient melancholy, somehow soothing to her, better than the harsh insentience of the outer world» (67). In miniature, here is pastoral's function. The trees suggest a further saving presence:

They, too, were waiting: obstinately, stoically waiting, and giving off a potency of silence. Perhaps they were only waiting for the end.... But perhaps their strong and aristocratic silence, the silence of strong trees, meant something else. (67)

The wood provides both the locus and the promise of rebirth. The potent «something else» of the trees unites the vegetative metaphor of rebirth in earlier novels with the emphatic phallicism of the man who lives in the venerable wood. The trees' vitality takes shape in a vision: the sight of Oliver, half-naked like a satyr and washing. As the spirit of the wood, he incarnates the «something else» the novel anticipates. His first name close to that of a tree, the gamekeeper tends the flora and fauna proper to pastoral, as a type of shepherd.

Foreshadowing the letter's invocation of a deity, Connie responds to Oliver's body as if to something supernatural. What overwhelms her is not «the stuff of beauty, not even the body of beauty, but a lambency, the warm, white flame of a single life, revealing itself in contours that one might touch: a body!» (68). The power of this «body» derives from its revelatory heat and light. Like the winner «Lively Spark» in «The Rocking-Horse Winner», this phallic body provides the vitality Connie and the trees lack.

At first, Mellors serves the plot of pastoral regeneration just as loyally as he serves Clifford; only at the end does he betray the romance plot to focus the novel's more androcentric concerns. As slight as he is, the gamekeeper unites the warmth, skill with animals, and natural intuitions of the manhood idealized in Lawrence's novels. In response to Connie's crying over a tiny chick, Oliver feels «the old flame shooting and leaping up in his loins» (122).

This flame, pagan god of the woods, reappears in the closing letter, after frequent mention establishes it as metaphor and metonymy for male desire. Associating the flame of desire with retributive violence, Oliver speaks to Connie with apparent resignation of the persecution he anticipates: «So if I've got to be broken open again, I have» (125). Alone, he imagines the agent of this intrusive violation as «the vast evil thing ready to destroy whatever did not conform. Soon it would destroy the wood and the bluebells would spring no more» (128). Not exactly industrialization, the oppressive menace is «that outside Thing that sparkled viciously in the electric lights» (127). This «dread of the malevolent Thing outside» (127) discloses the persecutory element of paranoid delusion that afflicts both Mellors and the novel. Pastoral's role is to critique urban life, but this «Thing» embodies more than social ills, and the novel ends with an emphasis more on the redemption of than on societal critique. True to pastoral's isolation, Oliver is alone while others, at a distance, are «glorying in the Thing triumphing or being trodden down in the rush of mechanized greed or of greedy mechanism» (127-28). His initial problem of isolation builds into a megalomaniacal sense of his being the only one to oppose civilization's impending catastrophe.

Because the disintegration the novel depicts is not just sexual, reintegration is neither reached or available on the sexual field on which the narrative action is played out. The forced quality of the celebration of sexual relations signals that just as the problem diverges from the «merely» sexual, so must any solution to it depart from sexual events. Passion becomes a divine force in this redemptive scheme, father figure to psychic rebirth and to Connie's pregnancy, which Oliver calls a «side issue» (327). The persecutory double of this passion is the Thing that treads men down.

Aristocrat Clifford Chatterley and former soldier Oliver Mellors both return from the war shattered men: the first with physical injuries and a «defenceless» character; the latter successful in military terms, but injured by a failed marriage. Clifford's physical and psychic impotence underlie an overweening business ruthlessness. Oliver's letter celebrates his idiosyncratic chastity as emphatically distinct from impotence, but both men withdraw from adult relationships after Connie's pregnancy.

Each man uses Connie: Clifford wants to extend his reach into the future by means of his

«entitlement» to Connie's fertility and Oliver wants to redeem his faith in a future. As pagan and pastoral deity, he celebrates the intercourse between man and phallic divinity in the meditative letter that reveals his dread of attack, specifically a homosexual attack.

That letter's final note is one of muted hope, as ambivalent about present and future persecutory threats as about the redemptive promise not of a child or fatherhood but of the soul (Oliver's) that is fanned into being by a flame between him and Connie. Just as a delusional scene finally misses any realistic target, Oliver's letter seems more a salute to himself and to his connection with a phallic power, Pentecostal and persecutory, than a missive that foreshadows a happy ending for the couple.

One measure of the degree to which the regenerative (pastoral-romantic) target is missed is the distance between the earlier sexual celebration (a heightened splendor of language, ritual, pleasure, and power) and the ode to chastity at the end. Yet the novel is about neither sexuality nor chastity *per se* but about sex as a means to vitality and manhood and phallic regeneration as a relocation of religious faith. Sexuality is finally figured as a means of connecting with an authoritative force, a submission to a dark personified passion that is the most vital force in the novel, if somewhat demonized by phobia and fear of women. The novel's limited interest in pregnancy results from a paranoia that explores sexual difference by transforming the female protagonist through a sexual awakening and then banishing her to concentrate on a male-focused sexuality: it is John Thomas who has the final words and the «hopeful heart».

The discovery of a new locomotive engine fulfills Clifford's «life-long secret yearning to get out of himself» (114); Oliver finds *his* «Pentecost» in the forked flame between him and Connie (327). Neither comes to very satisfactory terms with his new life; Clifford won't let Connie divorce and insists on his entitlement, Oliver exults in chastity and in having created a space for his soul. Ultimately Oliver's words and his faith substitute for sexual acts, a «phallic» and redemptive chastity. But the goal remains achieving peace through relation with a phallic divinity making Connie merely a medium for his initial efforts. Each man occupies himself in imagining what he cannot fully believe in: the fiction of short stories or the fiction of phallic faith.

The conventions of the romance plot and pastoral genre focus the cure of post-catastrophic numbness on the happy-ever-after future of the lovers. The novel balks at this, however, and banishes the pregnant Connie from view. Only her farewell to the housekeeper separates the scene in which she confronts Clifford with her pregnancy and plans from Oliver's summarizing epistolary credo. The shift of topic from paternity to phallic faith marks the novel's abandonment of the romance plot and its embrace of delusion. The jarring focus on the sexual means and end of the redemptive plot underscores the departure from, and *subversion* of, romance.

Like Clifford's role as obsessive, mechanically-driven Lord of Wragby Hall, Oliver Mellors' letter exhibits a wishful masculinity with a marked paranoid, and homophobic, cast. Up to a point, the book explores the hysteric's question of sexual difference, or «What is it to be a woman?»<sup>13</sup> Oliver finally retreats from this topic in a set of rhetorical gestures that troop the colors of insistently proclaim his manhood. In a polemical and prophetic mood, he deplores the «limp» state of mankind and the doom that deadens them. He recommends that the mass give up trying to think, and instead «be alive and frisky, and acknowledge the great god Pan... let the mass be forever pagan» (326). Oliver prescribes more dancing, singing, and swaggering to «live in handsomeness» (326). Sharing the sense of doom the «limp» masses feel, he attributes it to the attacks of Mammon: «Anyhow, I feel great grasping white hands in the air, wanting to get hold of the throat of anybody who tries to live beyond money, and squeeze the life out» (327). Homophobia and paranoia reside in this fear of extinction at male hands.

In the emotional space between the grasp of Mammon and Oliver's belief in a Pentecostal experience between him and Connie, the letter creates some protection, at first only a gap, on the

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<sup>13</sup> Lacan, *Seminar III*, Chapter 12 explores this question.

basis of his belief in the two of them. But the letter harrows the protagonist's psyche and dredges up a nightmare vision of persecution and strangulation. It also recreates an unnamed god out of the phallic flame and installs in him the «hopeful heart» of its final phrase.

In spite of his prediction, three times repeated, of «a bad time coming» (327), the hopeful note of Oliver's letter to Connie is his belief in a metaphysical crocus, symbol of his love for her. Uniting the symbolism of psychic growth and tender masculinity, the flame gains significance when Oliver replaces divinity with love for Connie and for the phallic flame itself. He states that the flame is «the only thing in the world»:

I've got no friends, not inward friends. Only you. And now the little flame is all I care about in my life. It's my Pentecost.... That's what I abide by, and will abide by. (327)

In spite of such threats to his belief as «the breath of People», the lover's separation, and the winter to come, Mellors claims that romance has transformed him spiritually:

My soul softly flaps in the little pentecost flame with you, like the peace of fucking. We fucked a flame into being. Even the flowers are fucked into being between the sun and the earth. But it's a delicate thing, and takes patience and the long pause. (327-28)

Here intercourse between the sun and earth creates flowers as that between lovers, or between divinity and man, redeems souls. (Similarly, Schreber fantasizes intercourse first with his doctor and then with God, in order to redeem humankind.) Having created his soul, Oliver explains the «long pause» of chastity as a necessary outcome that results less from distance than from paranoid choice, for the letter mentions that the two might be chaste together, and «the ink could stay in the bottle» (328). But given the difficulties of shared chastity, legal and financial circumstances appear to justify the lovers' separation and make chastity the highest virtue:

So I love chastity now, because it is the peace that comes of fucking. I love being chaste now. I love it as the snowdrops love the snow. I love this chastity, which is the pause of peace of our fucking, between us now like a snowdrop of forked white fire.... Now is the time to be chaste, it is so good to be chaste, like a river of cool water in my soul. (328)

This water seems to reward the achievement of manhood. The repeated avowals of loving chastity seem to assert their claims too often, and protest too much.

As initial protagonist and epitome of the pastoral romance, Connie «had a child at the back of her mind» (66); Oliver, on the other hand, presents paranoia's delusional anticipation of relationship with a supernatural presence, whether in the guise of «evil Thing» or Pentecostal manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Unable to forge a connection like Connie's with a phallic source and to remain within the scope of pastoral romance, Oliver turns to the external world and to his religious sense for his relation to Godhead instantiated as phallic regeneration.

Like Walter Morel's and Gerald Crich's experiences of «broken manhood» and of «something breaking in his soul», respectively, Oliver's vulnerability exposes him to a «society, which he knew by instinct to be a malevolent, partly-insane beast» (127). The sense of pervasive ridicule in the first chapter accumulates around a similar note of malevolent attack. Clifford sees everything as «a little ridiculous, or very ridiculous... everything connected with authority,... the army,... government or the university,... the governing class.... Sir Geoffrey, Clifford's father, was intensely ridiculous» (7). Clifford even acknowledges that «in the eyes of the vast seething world», his position at Wragby is ridiculous (8). The stakes for Oliver are having his manhood broken open through «phallic» regeneration to resurrect an authoritative masculinity: possession of his own vitality through sublimated coition with a phallic divinity. His participation in a regenerative vitality seems his only option, yet one with menacing «complications» (125).

The language and scenes that censors called obscene can instead be understood as delusional. The infamous vulgar language functions to invoke this further «phallic» reality of authoritative masculinity. As source of authoritative and sexual power, this phallic deity promises human, sexual, and seasonal transformation. But the erotic charge associated with an identificatory submission to a dominant and paternal model of manhood also triggers the prohibition against homosexuality and its manifestation in the themes of persecution and homophobia.

In generic terms, the appearance of delusion and its intertwined elements of persecution and redemption constitutes a departure from conventions, a recourse to strategies alien to the established plot and the conventions of romance and, specifically, pastoral. In this novel, the shift into delusion builds on earlier disruptions of pastoral, such as Oliver's intimation of being broken and facing the «evil Thing», and creates a near-hallucination, both for the Mellors and for the text, as he enacts its desire. The shift to epistolary form, to a prophetic and prescriptive tone, and to the letter's closing conceit of ventriloquism through a regenerated phallus remain technical strategies of closure (Torgovnick, 11). The move out of pastoral into the realm of the supernatural, in which Mammon raises grasping white hands and a phallic flame and crocus represent phallic vitality, signals a generic shift out of the generic conventions of romance and (into delusion).

The conflict between Oliver's pastoral search for redemptive transformation and his anticipation of persecution opposes two irreconcilable conventions. Pastoral equips him with the consolations of seasonal and sexual rhythms; the world of mechanized evil he envisions offers his passive filial position an affiliation with male authority only through domination. The move to delusion, a representation and resort of thwarted androcentric and homoerotic narrative desire, gives the connected themes of phallic redemption and persecution their fullest play. Chastity provides a common ground. Less violent than the phobic reaction of murder or suicide, his desire for chastity is a response to the dread of phobic retaliation, intrapsychic or external, and screens androcentric focus and homoerotic desire.

The note in this final novel is elegiac, a farewell both to sexual and to narrative desire that transforms loss into a brave assertion of faith in ultimate reunion by «the unnamed god that shields [the little flame] from being blown out» (328). In pastoral romance infused with a pagan phallicism, Lawrence finds a vehicle for delusion's typical conjunction of sexual and religious impulses. In the closural intersection of pastoral and pentecostal themes, moments of delusion with a paranoid tinge celebrate a phallic fundamentalism uniting the wish for vital renewal and, for an author at the end of his health and life, the recognition of death's ultimate transformation.

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# Marianne Moore: Object and libidinal investment

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D. H. Lawrence once observed that «it is hard to hear a new voice, as hard as it is to listen to an unknown language.... The world fears a new experience more than it fears anything. Because a new experience displaces many old experiences. And it is like trying to use muscles that have perhaps never been used, or that have been going stiff for ages. It hurts horribly.» (Lawrence 7)

Moore herself quoted Pound, «Come, my songs, let us speak of perfection—/We shall get ourselves rather disliked.» (Pound 32) She frequently rephrased the second line: «We shall get ourselves very much disliked.» That the poetry of Marianne Moore confronts the reader with a new language is easy enough to demonstrate. Contemporaries commented on her technique including the syllabic verse, light rhyme and scientific vocabulary, but especially on her subject matter as unprecedented for poetry. In fact not infrequently some have wondered if this be poetry at all. The evidence of disorientation, bewilderment, fascination, sometimes annoyance on the part of her contemporaries and her critics would be easy enough to produce. That, like Pound, she pursued a life-long quest for something resembling perfection, has also often been granted.

While her peers, the modernist poets, (including Eliot and Pound, Williams and Stevens, H. D. and Richard Aldington, Bryher and Robert McAlmon) rivaled one another in hyperbola when praising her innovations, both in technique and in thought, the public was and remains rather baffled and the academic critics do not often have much insight into what is going on in this poetry. Relatively few books have been devoted to Moore (in 1970, books on Eliot outnumbered those on Moore seventy to six while Stevens, Pound, and Williams were each the subject of about twenty.) Despite some recent efforts, on the part of the critics, (Moore was after all a woman, and though I find it almost impossible to make a case for a feminist reading of her work, the effort has been produced), there is however little real theory put into play in these attempts. One branch of investigation seems to be entirely avoided, that of psychoanalytic theory. Marianne Moore's father

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suffered a nervous breakdown some months before the birth of the poet. He was hospitalized and apparently his daughter never sought to know anything more about him. Her mother took her son, only a little more than a year old, and returned to her own widower-father's house where Marianne was born. As a point of departure then we have the situation of a child born into a maternal realm who was to live her entire life in a state of quasi-symbiosis with her mother. While her brother did eventually live independently of his mother and sister, his given name Warner is his mother's family name; he was never called John, his father's name. (John, however, is also the given name of the children's maternal grandfather). As Marianne Moore developed her poetic art, her mother became and remained her first reader and critic.

This paper will explore the fear D. H. Lawrence evokes, but will not so much attempt to link it to the experimental nature of Moore's work as to the underlying psychological message of the poetry.

### THE VISUAL

As Bonnie Costello has demonstrated in her book *Marianne Moore: Imaginary Possessions*, Moore's dominant sense was that of sight. Her metaphors are predicated on a visual resemblance, and as Hugh Kenner has suggested, even her stanzas are usually arranged by their appearance on the printed page. Certainly her poems are filled with visual imagery executed with astounding care and precision. Patricia C. Willis's catalogue *Marianne Moore: Vision into Verse*, published in 1987 on the occasion of an exhibition of Moore's work at the Rosenbach Museum and Library in Philadelphia, clearly establishes visual connections to the production of many of Moore's most complex and interesting poems. It could certainly be argued that almost every poem Moore produced can be traced to an art object, a picture she had seen, a postcard she had collected, or even to sketches she herself had made. Unlike many of her colleagues, Moore rarely produced a poem from «life» but rather from an actual painting she had seen, or a photo, print, or reproduction she owned.

From a psychoanalytic point of view, the investment in an object most often encounters one of two thematic centers, that of the fetich and the reflection on perversion, or that of phobia and the examination of neurosis. Psychoanalytic literature records numerous cases where the quasi-phobic behavior of the mother, holding her child at a certain distance as if for fear of infection, encourages the development of visual sense in the constitution of the child's primitive relation to the maternal object. For the moment, let's simply mention the paradoxical affirmation of Lacan in his seminar on object relations that what is loved in the object, is that which it lacks, and that it can only give what it does not have. (Lacan 151)

The claim is often made for a poetry by Moore arising from her enthusiasms and this is certainly a valid point of departure for studying her themes. Yet I am more forcefully struck by Moore's vehement dislikes. Moore herself was often cognizant of her distastes (phobias): in «*The Dial: A Retrospect*», she quotes D. H. Lawrence's letter to her: «I knew some of the poems would offend you. But then some part of life must offend you too.» (*Prose* 360)

To get into particulars, one need only consider the animals Moore's poems praise and note that they are often those beasts most capable of provoking a phobic reaction. Of the famous pangolin we read:

though there are few creatures who can make one  
breathe faster and make one erecter.

«The Pangolin», (*Poetry* 120)

In another poem, speaking of a bat, but also identifying with the animal, the poet questions:

on what ground could one

say that I am hard to frighten?

«Then the Ermine:» (*Poetry* 160)

And of course, in the wonderful «Poetry» (longer version), the supreme value of being «genuine» seems to imply the possibility of provoking just such a reaction:

Hands that can grasp, eyes

that can dilate, hair that can rise

if it must... (*Poetry* 266)

And the often quoted ideal for poetry to present «imaginary gardens with real toads in them,» should, I believe be examined in terms of the juxtaposition of the pleasurable with the repulsive.

If Moore's animals evoke the objects of phobia, is it legitimate to postulate that the poem presents a technique of avoidance of the anxiety linked to the theme of castration? A moment ago I insisted on the preponderance of the visual in Moore's poetry, remarking that the animals evoked are rarely creatures taken from «life», but almost always artistic representations: photographs, paintings etc. At this point it may be helpful to postulate that whenever a young child elects a phobic object, it is always a **signifier** rather than an object per se. Now before attempting to confront the question of castration, we need to remind ourselves of the distinctions Freud makes between the different categories of fear. Fear is not anxiety, and anxiety is not the fear of an object. Anxiety, is the confrontation by the subject of the absence of an object: absence in which he loses himself, disappears, and to which anything at all is preferable, even something as strange as the forging of an objectionable object, the object of phobia.

#### ARMoured ANIMALS

Like Paul Valéry, Moore values the mystery of the shell, the «principle that is hid», not in murkiness and imprecision but in a form that is fixed, hard, and compressed. Although both snail and, by implication, poet possess «a knowledge of principles», such principles, (compression, etc.) are mysterious and elusive, but also seductive.

According to Bachelard, a shell is one of several «primal images» of refuge, along with houses, nests, and even color; «whenever life seeks to shelter, protect, cover or hide itself, the imagination sympathizes with the being that inhabits the protected space.» (Bachelard 132) Moore's favorite animals tend to be burrowers just as the nicknames chosen by her family, Rat, Badger and Mole all belong to burrowing animals. The plummet basilisk, the frigate pelican and the ostrich are all pictured in connection with their nests. The pangolin is praised for both armor and nest. The paper nautilus is shell, nest and armor. And such «protected shapes» are not exclusive to animals. A *Dial* «Comment» shows Moore's predilection for «protected shapes» extending to signatures and typography: «The secrets of Dürer, however, are not easily invaded, the clearness and simplicity of his signature in the adjusted yet natural housing of the D beneath the mediævally prominent A, ...». (*Prose* 203 and Leavell 84)

Moore is especially insistent on the fact that there is no clear demarcation between self and shell. In «The Pangolin» «Armor (only) seems extra». It is not; there is nothing deeper than the skin.

In a review of *The Necessary Angel* in 1952, Moore wrote «Wallace Stevens... puts his finger on this thing poetry, it seems to me where he refers to “a violence within that protects us from a violence without.”» (*Prose* 647)

Earlier in this study I referred to Lacan's paradox that what is of interest in the object of libidinal investment is that which is lacking to it. The psychoanalytic clinic and the poetry of Marianne Moore add to this another layer. In fact, Moore seems to anticipate the question of castration anxiety by assuming a mastery of the theme of lack. As an introduction to her 1967 *The*

*Complete Poems of Marianne Moore* she quips «Omissions are not accidents. M.M.». Wereupon Moore will transform lack into possibility: what is of interest in the object of libidinal investment is a veil, (armor, nest, etc.) a screen upon which to project the imagination.

## GENDER

Commenting on a case presentation by Françoise Dolto, in his 1956 seminar on object relations, Lacan notes the importance of Dolto's discovery that children of either sex only become phobic if their mother has had a troubled object relationship with the opposite sex in the person of her own father. Lacan sees this discovery as justification for his theorization of the triangular nature of the relationship between mother-child and phallus. (Lacan 56)

I have already mentioned the fact that the poet never knew her own father, that after his mental breakdown some months before her birth, the poet's mother returned to her own home to keep house for her widowed father until his death. Marianne Moore lived with her mother until the death of the later when the poet was almost sixty. In the voluminous family correspondence between the poet, her mother and elder brother the trio went by nicknames derived from *The Wind in the Willows*. Thus Mrs. Moore was Mole, brother Warner was Badger and Marianne, Rat. It is striking to the analyst reading this correspondence to note that the pseudonym necessitates a gender change for the poet who is always «he» in the letters. Speaking of Marianne, Mrs. Moore writes to her son: «Rat admitted that there was nothing in the *Broom* that he could not spare; the *Dial* too for that matter; that *Secession* had no interest for him; that *The Natural History Magazine* he could not do without, nor the *Spectator*, nor some others but that in the matter of the kind of modern caviare that seasons new writing he was sure; there was but one verdict concerning it.» (MWM to JWM, May 8, 1923 Rosenbach VI:26:06)

Lack of symmetry, or even a preference for asymmetry is striking in Moore's poetry. It is a prominent characteristic of her favorite animals one of which is the rhinoceros. When speaking of plants, she dwells on hybrids, like nectarines, with their characteristic asymmetry of origin. Lack of symmetry could be used to describe Moore's form. Like the names Rat, Mole and Badger, which confer the masculine pronoun on all three members of the Moore family, the choice of object in the poetry tends to elide the question of gender. The chameleon, after all, is one of Moore's ideal self representations.

The phenomenon of phobia has not been linked to the questioning of gender. However, as Lacan demonstrates, the appearance of a phobia is an attempt to solve the problematic relationship with the mother by calling upon the symbolic order.

In Freud's famous case of a phobia in a five-year-old boy, the «Little Hans» case study of 1909, the transformation which will prove to be decisive is that of the preoccupation with the bite into the fantasy of the unscrewing of the bathtub. At that point in the narrative of Hans' phobia, the relationship between the actors changes entirely. It is one thing to greedily bite the mother, and to fear in retaliation, being bitten by the horse's huge teeth; it is something else to dream of unscrewing the tubes of the maternal body, taking her apart and putting her to use, for the first time, as an moveable element in a system, necessarily from now on equivalent to other elements. This I would propose is the use of poetry for Marianne Moore. As an example one may take the often anthologized

When I Buy Pictures  
or what is closer to the truth,  
when I look at that of which I may regard myself as the imaginary possessor,  
(Poetry 48)

Through the mastery exercised by the eye, the subject avoids the law which would normally distinguish possession from deprivation. As in the case of the gender-neutral Rat, the necessity to choose

a defined and thus limited place in the world has been avoided.

The preponderance of pictorial representations as a point of departure for the poem has another link to the phenomenon of the phobia. In the case of Little Hans, analyzed by Freud, the fear of the horse, in spite of the quantity of horses in the streets of Vienna, seems to have had its origin in a picture book where Hans found, opposite the page representing the stork, the image of a horse being shod. Hans' fear of being bitten by the horse is therefore linked to his curiosity about origins it is perhaps a screen placed in front of this curiosity.

The image is a way of stabilizing, immobilizing anxiety which is of course, first of all linked to the question of where babies come from. Phobia functions by transforming anxiety into a localized fear around which can be organized all that is uncertain in the crisis of the child's relation with the maternal, the question: what am I for mother, what is my sex for my mother, etc. Thus the multiple meanings attached to the horse for Hans. Or as Moore puts it: «I like to see a thing from all sides.» (Hall 34) Object immobilized; self freed of the constraints of space, ubiquitous.

If the phobic object is then a means of avoiding castration anxiety, it may be useful to remember Lacan's definition of castration as a theme belonging to the category of symbolic debt. (Lacan 37) The object, on the other hand, is imaginary. The castration we are referring to is always that of an imaginary object. If we return now to my title, «Object and Libidinal Investment», we can recall that libido is the term used by Freud for that which conditions the behavior of beings towards one another, which, for example, leads them to assume an active or passive position. Yet Freud reasons rightly, that it is necessary to expend a certain amount of activity to assume a passive position and that therefor there is only one libido and that it is active.

If you read Freud's article on feminine sexuality, you will learn that the problem which presents itself to the little girl is not simply the problem of the lack of the phallus, but more importantly the problem of needing to give or restore the phallus to the mother, the phallus, that is, or its equivalent, just as if she were a little boy. Marianne Moore never lived in an exclusively feminine environment; the presence of her maternal grandfather in early childhood and of her brother Warner throughout her life testify to the presence of the masculine. If her identity theme is asymmetric then, this is a result of a blotting out of the Name of the Father, a recognition only of a maternal lineage. In the case of Marianne Moore, as in any case where the subject has lived an atypical oedipal history, the maternal ideal is the determining factor for a solution to the problem of the relationship of the subject to his or her sex. The solution is an identification to the maternal ideal.

It would seem that in connection with any sublimation, a notion that can be understood as the naturalization of the Other, one always finds, at the level of the imaginary, an inversion of the relationship of self and other.

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# A self-psychological study of narcissistic fantasies in O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*

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*The Emperor Jones*,<sup>1</sup> written by Eugene O'Neill in 1920, depicts various aspects of narcissism including grandiosity, power, and greed. The odyssey of the play's main character, Brutus Jones, reveals, as his experience shifts from one scene to another, the presence, emotional power, and the vicissitudes of his «archaic narcissistic fantasies» (Ulman and Brothers, 1988) (see Miliora 1994, 1996 for applications of this concept to other O'Neill plays). Moreover, the play presents a powerful example of the dialectic relationship between fantasy and reality. The specific narcissistic fantasy of invincibility is personified by Jones, a middle-aged American black man who has become the Emperor of an island in the West Indies.

*The Emperor Jones* is a one-act, 8-scene play. Its action occurs during the course of approximately 14 hours spanning two days. The progressive unfolding of the eight scenes comprises a temporal cycle from afternoon to dusk and night of one day and continuing to dawn of the next day. Although the play dramatizes Jones's physical flight through the forest during the night and early hours of the morning, this flight can be conceptualized as his journey into progressively deeper levels of self-fragmentation and madness.

Jones, a former Pullman porter who escaped from jail in the United States, arrived on the island as a stowaway. Two years later he had become the self-proclaimed Emperor of the island. His ascent was catapulted by an incident which occurred during an island revolution. A black man had been hired by Lem, an old native chief, to kill Jones. Aiming at Jones from a distance of 10 feet, the man's gun misfired and Jones killed him instead.

Jones told the natives that no lead bullet could kill him. Indeed, he created the myth that he had a special charm that rendered him so strong that only a silver bullet could do so. Since it was highly unlikely that the natives could obtain silver bullets, Jones became, in their minds, omnipotent. Believing him to be godlike, «a miracle out o' de Bible» (179), Jones assumed the status of Emperor.

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<sup>1</sup> All references to the play are taken from O'Neill, 1921, 1948.

Jones is haughty, pompous, and condescending. He enjoys the trappings of a ruler and he considers himself intellectually superior to the natives who idealize and venerate him as the omnipotent «Great Father». Indeed, Jones considers the people who venerate him as «fool, woods niggers» (177). Jones has exploited the natives via merciless taxation and has amassed a fortune in a foreign bank. He plans to leave the island and enjoy his fortune in Martinique before the natives realize that they are victims of a scam.

The silver bullet myth allows Jones the grandiose fantasy of being invincible except by his own hand. He has a single silver bullet in his revolver to use to kill himself if it becomes necessary. As he expresses his grandiosity, «I'm the on'y man in de world big enuff to get me. No use'n deir tryin'» (179).

The setting of the opening scene, as written by O'Neill, attests to Jones's sense of his grandiosity,

The palace is evidently situated on high ground.... the room is bare of furniture with the exception of one huge chair made of uncut wood which stands at center... this is very apparently the Emperor's throne. It is painted a dazzling, eye-smitting scarlet. There is a brilliant orange cushion on the seat and another smaller one is placed on the floor to serve as a footstool (173).

The grandiose and prideful Jones is described as a «tall, powerfully-built» man whose face shows

an underlying strength of will, a hardy, self-reliant confidence... His eyes are alive with a keen, cunning intelligence... he is shrewd, suspicious, evasive. He wears a light blue uniform coat, sprayed with brass buttons, heavy gold chevrons on his shoulders, gold braid on the collar, cuffs, etc. His pants are bright red with a light blue stripe down the side. Patent leather laced boots with brass spurs, and a belt with a long-barreled, pearl-handled revolver in a holster complete his make up.... (175).

In the opening scene, set in the late afternoon, Smithers, a cockney trader, has realized that a native uprising to unseat Jones is being planned. Unbeknownst to Jones, the natives, led by Lem, have been congregating in the hills all that afternoon preparing for a revolution to overturn Jones. Smithers conveys this news to Jones. Jones realizes that he will have to leave at once in order to reach a gunboat on the other side of the island by the next morning. The natives have taken all the horses and Jones is forced to make his escape through the forest on foot. Jones, in his grandiose, cocky style, is unperturbed by this prospect. He tells Smithers,

(With indignant scorn)... Don't you s'pose I'se looked ahead and made sho' of all de chances? I'se gone out in dat big forest, pretendin' to hunt, so many times dat I knows it high an' low like a book.... (With great contempt) Think dese ign'rent bush niggers dat ain't got brains enuff to know deir own names even can catch Brutus Jones?... You watch me, man! I'll make dem look sick, I will. I'll be cross de plain to de edge of de forest by time dark comes. Once in de woods in de night, dey got a swell chance o' findin' dis baby! Dawn tomorrow I'll be out at de oder side and on de coast whar dat French gunboat is stay'. She picks me up, take me to Martinique when she go dar, and dere I is safe wid a mighty big bankroll in my jeans.... (183).

As Jones begins his escape, the «steady thump of a tom-tom» is heard from the distant hills. The sound begins at a «rate exactly corresponding to normal pulse beat – 72 to the minute – and continues at a gradually accelerating rate from this point uninterruptedly to the very end of the play» (184). The sound signals the start of the natives' war dance which is a prelude to their coming after Jones. Jones is contemptuous of the natives' religious ceremony and saunters out of the palace to begin his escape through the forest. In his revolver are five lead bullets and a silver one to use on himself if necessary.

The mood of the play as well as that of Jones shift in the next six scenes as he tries to find his way through the forest. As he does so, the temporal setting shifts first to the semi-darkness of dusk and then to the utter blackness of night. These changes in the temporal setting point to the progressive escalation of his fear as the scenes unfold. The shifts in his emotional state parallel the progressive acceleration of the tom-tom whose sound represents the progressive acceleration of his heartbeat.

In the second scene Jones reaches the Great Forest. Here he expects to find the food he had placed in a tin box, which he had hidden under a white stone. Scrambling from one white stone to another, he realizes that he cannot find the hiding place. It has become totally dark now. The «Little Formless Fears» creep out from the forest. Jones imagines that these «formless creatures» laugh at him with a «low mocking laughter like a rustling of leaves» (189-190). Jones, terrified, pulls out his revolver and fires at them. The «creatures» seemingly scurry back into the forest. The silence is broken by the quickened sound of the tom-tom and Jones plunges into the forest.

Scene three is set in the forest at nine o'clock in the evening. The moon has just risen and Jones reaches a small clearing. His face is scratched and his once brilliant uniform has several large tears. He stands transfixed as he sees a middle-aged Negro who is dressed in the uniform of a Pullman porter and who is shooting craps. Jones recognizes him as Jeff, a man from his past. Jones says, «Jeff! I'se sho' mighty glad to see you! Dey tol' me you done died from that razor cut I gives you» (192). Then, becoming confused and frightened, Jones fires at the image. The hallucinatory apparition of Jeff disappears. The beat of the tom-tom is louder and more rapid. Jones forgets the path and plunges into the underbrush.

Scene four occurs in the heart of the forest at 11 o'clock. Jones's uniform has become ragged and torn. He is in terror of the «ha'nts» and he tries to convince himself that no such things exist. Suddenly, he sees a chain gang of black convicts. A white guard, holding a rifle and a whip, follows them. The convicts work on the dirt road which has suddenly appeared in the forest. The guard points to Jones and «motions him to take his place among the other shovelers. Jones gets to his feet in a hypnotized stupor. He mumbles subserviently» (194). When the guard lashes Jones with the whip, Jones shoots him. The imaginary road and the figures disappear in the encircling darkness. Jones runs away.

In the fifth scene, it is one o'clock in the morning. Jones «looks wildly about the clearing with hunted fearful glances. His pants are in tatters, his shoes cut and misshapen, flapping about his feet. He slinks cautiously to the stump in the center and sits down in a tense position, ready for instant flight. Then he holds his head in his hands and rocks back and forth, moaning to himself miserably» (195). He prays to Jesus, confessing the two murders he committed as well as his exploitation of the natives.

Then, Jones sees a crowd, dressed in Southern costumes of the period of the 1850's and he realizes that this is a slave-market. An individual who is the auctioneer motions to Jones to stand on the auction block. There are planters who are very eager to buy him. Jones becomes «convulsed with raging hatred and fear». He pulls out his revolver as he screams, «Is dis a auction? Is you sellin' me like dey uster befo' de war? And *you* sells me? And *you* buys me? I shows you I'se a free nigger, damn yo' souls!» Jones fires at the auctioneer and at the planter. «The walls of the forest fold in. Only blackness remains and silence broken by Jones as he rushes off, crying with fear – and by the quickened, ever louder beat of the tom-tom» (197-198). By this time, Jones has expended all five of his lead bullets.

Scene six occurs at three o'clock in the morning. Jones realizes despairingly that the only bullet left in his gun is the silver one. «His pants have been so torn away that what is left of them is no better than a breech cloth». He sees two rows of figures; «they are sitting in crumbled, despairing attitudes... all are Negroes, naked save for loin cloths...» The slaves sway as if they were following the roll of a ship at sea. Jones throws himself down on the ground in order to shut out the sight. Eventually, his body sways in unison with the others, his voice reaching «the highest pitch of

sorrow, of desolation». Their despair resonates with his. Then Jones rises and runs off. «The tom-tom beats louder, quicker, with a more insistent, triumphant pulsation» (199).

Scene seven occurs at five o'clock. «The expression of [Jones's] face is fixed and stony, his eyes have an obsessed glare, he moves with a strange deliberation like a sleepwalker or one in a trance» (200). The figure of a Congo witch-doctor appears and he dances and chants before an altar of stones. Jones becomes completely hypnotized by the chant.

As described by O'Neill,

The whole spirit and meaning of the dance has entered into him, has become his spirit.... The forces of evil demand sacrifice. They must be appeased. The witch-doctor points... to Jones with a ferocious command. Jones seems to sense the meaning of this. It is he who must offer himself for sacrifice. He beats his forehead abjectly to the ground, moaning hysterically (201).

Jones cries out, «Mercy, Oh Lawd! Mercy! Mercy on dis po' sinner» (201). The head of a crocodile emerges from the river and the witch-doctor motions Jones toward the crocodile. Jones crawls forward, but then he reaches for his revolver and fires his last bullet, the silver one, at the crocodile. The figures disappear. «Jones lies with his face to the ground, his arms outstretched, whimpering with fear as the throb of the tom-tom fills the silence about him with a somber pulsation, a baffled but revengeful power» (202).

The last scene occurs at dawn at the edge of the forest as in scene two. Lem, a group of his soldiers carrying rifles, and Smithers are examining the ground. They realize that this is the place entered by Jones the night before. Then they hear a sound from the forest. The soldiers enter the forest and they shoot and kill Jones. Apparently, Jones had run in a circle around the forest, rather than through it. Believing that Jones had a special charm that rendered him immune to lead bullets, Lem had melted money in order to fashion silver bullets. It was a silver bullet that killed the Emperor.

## DISCUSSION

As the Emperor who can be killed only by means of a silver bullet, Brutus Jones considers himself essentially invincible. He looks down at the natives as ignorant. He is greedy and exploitative. He enjoys being venerated and having the trappings of royalty. Even when he realizes that he has to leave his palace, he imagines himself smarter than the natives, who certainly must know the forest more intimately than he, and strong enough to make his way through the forest on foot.

Although he created the silver bullet myth, which renders him omnipotent in the eyes of his subjects, Jones enacts the myth as if it were actually true. He behaves as an actual all-powerful, cruel, and greedy despot would. For example, he expects his commands to be obeyed without hesitation and he threatens to whip those who hesitate to do so. He is haughty and contemptuous of his subjects for their idealization of him as godlike. He considers himself superior to them and he has exploited their naivete and amassed a fortune at their expense.

This behavior of Jones signals that his self-experience is organized around an archaic narcissistic fantasy of his superiority, indeed, of his invincibility. According to Ulman and Brothers (1988), archaic narcissistic fantasies have a childlike, magical, unrealistic quality and they are fragile and easily disturbed and/or shattered. As long as he is in the palace with the status of Emperor, where he is venerated as godlike, this fantasy is intact. However, once he leaves this milieu which affirms his grandiosity, Jones's narcissistic fantasy is vulnerable to being shattered. When such a shattering occurs, Jones experiences the polar opposite of grandiosity, namely a loss of self-confidence and resulting self-deprecation. Concomitant with the shift from one fantasy state

to the other is a shift in mood from inflation to deflation. According to Miliora and Ulman (in press), the grandiose fantasy is termed «blissful» and its opposite, dreaded or «mortifying».

In scene two, for example, the «formless fears» personify Jones's own fear. The change in his emotional experience from cockiness to fear signals a shift in his fantasy state. His grandiose fantasy of invincibility begins to be disturbed by his failing to find the food he had hidden. Since disturbed, the grandiose fantasy begins to vacillate to its polar opposite, namely, the mortifying fantasy of utter vulnerability. Jones shoots at his imaginary fears, thus signaling that the mortifying fantasy is beginning to take hold of his subjective experience. Jones no longer feels superior or invincible, but rather, fallible and vincible.

In scene three, Jones enters the forest which, metaphorically, is his mind. It is nine o'clock. He imagines encountering, Jeff, whom he had killed in a craps shoot. Jones becomes terrified and disoriented and shoots the second of his five lead bullets at the hallucinated figure. It is clear that Jones has plunged into madness and he becomes progressively more insane as he proceeds through the forest.

In later scenes, Jones's subjective experience of being enslaved represents the polar opposite of his narcissistic fantasy of being an invincible ruler. In these scenes, he is in the position of needing to obey rather than being obeyed, of being whipped rather than whipping others. By this time, Jones has expended all five of his lead bullets. Only the silver bullet – the symbol of his invincibility and status as Emperor – remains.

In scene seven, Jones is exposed to the terror of his own death by virtue of the hallucinatory fantasy of the Congo witch doctor who beckons him toward the man-eating crocodile. Here, Jones experiences the mortifying fantasy of being eaten alive by the crocodile. To save himself, Jones shoots at the crocodile with the silver bullet. In so doing, he alerts the natives to his whereabouts. Ultimately, the very symbol of his invincibility, that is, a silver bullet, causes the Emperor's destruction.

The play, particularly the scenes in the forest, can be conceptualized as the progressive stages of Jones's plunge into madness (see Paparo, 1984 for a self-psychological analysis of madness in Shakespeare's *King Lear*).

While he was in the palace (scene one), Jones was safely embedded in a selfobject milieu that affirmed his archaic grandiosity and inflated his self-esteem and self-confidence. He was surrounded by people who venerated him as their emperor and he had at his disposal the concrete trappings of emperorhood – for example, clothes and room furnishings. This selfobject milieu afforded Jones an ambience that sustained his self-cohesion as well as his grandiose fantasy of himself. In this milieu, he was supremely self-assured, indeed, he was arrogant about his self-sufficiency. He was also self-possessed, in control of his life and his emotions.

Once Jones left the palace and entered the forest, he was deprived of the milieu that kept him together, so to speak. An important step in the process of his going mad is his inability to find the food he had hidden at the edge of the forest. At this juncture of his journey, Jones knows the natives will come after him and he hears the tom-tom. In effect then, the only humans in his immediate surround want to capture and kill him and the sound of the tom-tom signals impending doom (see Kohut, 1978[1957] as regards the psychological function of the tom-tom). There is nothing and no one that can sustain Jones's vulnerable and tenuous sense of cohesion and his fantasy of invincibility (and thus his self-confidence) except the food. Had he found the food, not only would it have provided sustenance to his body, but, in addition, it would have served as some reassurance – that is, emotional sustenance – that he knew the forest well enough to succeed in escaping. When he realized that he could not find the food he had hidden, his archaic fantasy of invincibility was threatened and his confidence in his self-sufficiency was shaken. Nevertheless, Jones defends against his fear and plunges into the forest.

When it becomes totally dark, Jones becomes terrified at the sound of the rustling of leaves and he shoots at the sounds. Here, in scene two, there is the clear indication that, stripped of his

selfobject milieu, Jones has nothing to protect his sense of self, indeed, his sanity, from the mounting terror. The only humans in the social environment want to kill him; there is no food to sustain him; there is no light to guide him; the sound he hears in the distance – the accelerating tom-tom – accelerates his terror. In other words, his world is unfamiliar, alien and hostile. Jones is now organized around a sense of himself as totally naked and vulnerable.

In scenes three through seven, Jones has a series of hallucinatory experiences. The images he «sees» have taken on a strong reality element that indicates self-fragmentation and madness. Jones is now possessed by fantasies that have taken over his sense of what is real. His prayers and begging forgiveness for his «sins» are Jones's attempts to reconstitute himself, to recover from his sense that he is falling apart and going to pieces. Shorn of the last vestiges of selfhood, including his clothing and the bullets, symbols of his capacity to defend and protect himself, Jones is killed.

From the perspective of self psychology, Jones's journey makes an important statement as regards the need for a selfobject milieu to sustain one's sense of self (see Miliora, 1994, 1996 for elaboration of this theme). The archaic level of Jones's narcissism indicates that his self-cohesion is tenuous, that is, he is vulnerable to self-fragmentation. Consequently, when confronted with the complete loss of the selfobject milieu that had affirmed his grandiosity, Jones goes mad.

At another level, the play makes a statement about the plight of the black man in America (see Floyd, 1985 for further elaboration on this theme). Relegated to the role of a paid servant (that is, a Pullman porter), Jones suffers immense narcissistic injury and abject humiliation. After Jones killed another black man in a craps game, Jones was imprisoned in a chain gang and treated cruelly by a whip-lashing guard. Jones killed the guard as an expression of his narcissistic rage. These affronts to Jones's dignity as a human being are parallel to the suffering of his ancestors on the slave ship and the auction block during earlier times. In scene five, for example, Jones is «convulsed with raging hatred» (197) at the idea that he could be bought and sold.

The play expresses one of O'Neill's favorite themes, namely that greed and materialism leads to self-dispossession, indeed, that the «desire to possess leads to self-dispossession» (Porter, 1994; see also Sheaffer, 1973 for a discussion of O'Neill's never-completed cycle entitled «A Tale of Possessors Self-Dispossessed»). Jones is a man possessed by grandiosity and greed. His amassing a fortune at the expense of the natives has the narcissistic function of inflating his grandiosity and sense of his superiority. He speaks of this to Smithers,

You didn't s'pose I was holdin' down dis Emperor job for de glory in it, did you? Sho'! De fuss and glory part of it, dat's only to turns de heads o' de low-flung, bush niggers dat's here. Dey wants de big circus show for deir money. I gives it to em an' I gits de money. (With a grin) De long green, dat's me every time! Dere's little stealin' like you does, and dere's big stealin' like I does. For de little stealin' dey gits you in jail soon or late. For de big stealin' dey makes you Emperor and puts you in de Hall o' Fame when you croaks. If dey's one thing I learns in ten years on de Pullman ca's listenin' to de white quality talk, it's dat same fact. And when I gits a chance to use it I winds up Emperor in two years (177-178).

The greed led Jones to become possessed by his archaically grandiose fantasy of being invincible. In effect, Jones surrendered his identity, his sense of self, as the price for greed. As Jones proceeds through the various scenes of the play, he loses his possessions – the clothing and the silver bullet that symbolized his identity and emperorhood (see Bogard, 1972). Ultimately, Jones's plunging into madness can be conceptualized as an act of possession by the very illusions which he had created.

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# Transference run wild: David Mamet's *Oleanna* and the crisis of human interaction

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Freud, in «Observations on Transference-Love», muses that «... we who laugh at other people's failings are not always free from them ourselves...» (159). There are moments in David Mamet's 1992 drama, *Oleanna*, when the audience observes incidents on stage but may not be immune to their representational effects. John is the forty-something assistant professor in whose office the events of the play occur during three separate encounters. Carol is John's twenty-year-old student. In Act One, she has an unscheduled meeting with John in his office. Act Two presents the discussion by John and Carol of what transpired during that first meeting: Carol is convinced that John sexually harassed her; John is equally certain that his behavior was «unassailable» (46). He wants Carol to withdraw the charges she filed against him with his departmental Tenure Committee. At the end of Act Two, John attempts to prevent Carol from leaving his office and she screams for help. In their third meeting, John refers to the charges brought against him by Carol as «accusations». Carol responds by insisting: «Excuse me, but those are not accusations. They have been *proved*. They are facts» (62). This is the dilemma the audience faces: we see the crucial events occur before our eyes, but we are not in agreement as to what has taken place or who is responsible. Have we witnessed «accusations» or «facts»? At the 1993 New York Orpheum Theater production I attended (directed by Mamet), the small audience was convinced that Carol had misinterpreted the actions and intentions of John throughout the first two acts. The 1994 San Francisco ACT production I attended (directed by Richard Seyd) concluded with an audience roundtable where the individuals displayed a majority opinion that Carol was correct in her accusations and interpretations. This discrepancy is critical because at the end of Act Three, John discovers that Carol has taken legal steps to charge him with battery and attempted rape as a result of their Act Two altercation. The play concludes with an unambiguously brutal and violent assault on Carol by John.

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For the purpose of my essay I wish to clarify that transference (in the words of Peter Loewenberg) is «the experiencing of emotions and feelings toward a person in the present which are inappropriate to that person and are a repetition, a displacement, of reactions from some significant persons of earlier life» («Emotional Problems of Graduate Education», 49). The transference is the pivot on which the psychoanalysis turns: the analysand displaces onto the analyst emotions and feelings that were repressed in relation to the primary figures. As Freud notes in «Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through», «... the patient does not *remember* anything of what he has forgotten and repressed, but *acts* it out. He reproduces it not as a memory but as an action; he *repeats* it, without, of course, knowing that he is repeating it» (150). Transference, beyond psychoanalysis, is a basic component of ordinary life – most especially, those life interactions that involve relationships of unequal power and social status. Peter Loewenberg focuses on transference relationships in the university: «the basic anger that is felt against the authority, the feeling that the authority is disappointing, punishing, or neglecting, the desire to hurt the teacher, does not arise only from the [student] situation. It is anger that has been carried around since childhood...» («Emotional Problems of Graduate Education», 52). I believe that transference is crucial to Mamet's play because Carol is coping with transference feelings toward John, her professor. At the same time that (as her professor) John serves as the object of her transference, he is in an analogous situation in his professional life: he is being evaluated for tenure. The Tenure Committee has announced his tenure but the official university approval has not yet been granted. On the basis of the preliminary announcement, John wishes to purchase a home for himself, his wife, and his young son. Thus, like Carol (who is dependent on John for her academic, professional, and economic future), John is dependent on the Tenure Committee for his future in the most all-encompassing manner. Mamet sets his play at the exact moment at which a dependent student subject to transference (Carol) seeks out her professor (John) who is likewise dependent and subject to transference. Each is also inclined to countertransference feelings toward the other.

Transference is central to our literary response as well. As Norman Holland expresses it, «the patient becomes as an audience, ready, willing, and able to indulge in all kinds of displacements, projects, and introjections... willing to bring to the analyst as he would to a character in a play his feelings toward his father, mother, wife, or any important person in his life. He finds himself able to let his everyday perceptions be distorted by his fantasies» (*The Dynamics of Literary Response*, 84-85). Implicit in Holland's insightful description is the reverse: that the audience is like a patient, subject to transference reactions to the events depicted on the stage. Indeed, the audience serves both as the patient in terms of the transference and as the analyst with regard to interpreting and assessing the material presented in the theatrical «session». (Shoshana Felman makes a similar observation concerning the dual role of the literary critic in «To Open the Question», 7.)

I am intrigued by this situation: a transference audience charged with interpreting a drama that concerns itself with characters in transference who are acting out! I am impressed, as well, by Mamet's meticulous incorporation of these transference themes into the fabric of his drama. In this essay, I am concerned with how Mamet's play exemplifies what Roy Schafer considers the significance of Freud's discovery of transference: «the demolition of the boundary between transference love and “real love”; viewed broadly, the demolition of the boundary between the analytic relationship and “real-life” relationships» («Five Readings of Freud's “Observations on Transference-Love”», 77).

When we first encounter John, he is on the telephone. That telephone (whose persistent ringing intrudes on the discourse) lures the audience into a preliminary identification with Carol to the extent that we (like Carol) must interrupt our attention from the office conversation to address the phone conversation. Carol is seated across the desk from John. We infer from John's conversation that he is speaking with his wife, Grace, and that he had been about to leave his office to drive to the new home he was in the last stages of purchasing, the mortgage approval being contingent on his tenure award. It was at this point, moments before the phone call, that Carol appeared, without an appointment, to speak with John. Carol expresses a state of perplexity that fully realizes Freud's

description of the acting-out patient in «Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through»: she «produces a mass of confused... associations, complains that [she] cannot succeed in anything and asserts that [she] is fated never to carry through what [she] undertakes» (150). «I *have* to pass this course» (9), Carol exclaims, but is filled with a sense of her own failure: «It's garbage. Everything I do» (10). John's telephone call alerted him to an urgent problem with the purchase of his new home: he must attend to it immediately. He presents his position succinctly and with empathic professionalism: «I think you're angry. Many people are. I have a *telephone* call to make. And an *appointment*, which is rather *pressing*; though I sympathize with your concerns, and though I wish I had the time, this was not a previously scheduled meeting...» (12-13). The logical question to ask is: why does John not leave at this point? Why does he feel obliged to remain, even as the calls from his wife, attorney, and realtor become increasingly persistent and urgent?

The answer, I believe, is that transference has already reared its head. John receives tremendous narcissistic gratification from his role as professor to his students. In his classroom, he is in control; he is the primary object of his students – the world of his class revolves around him. Being evaluated for tenure, however, and subjecting himself to the assessment and approval of a bank's mortgage center is a position of heightened vulnerability: these variables are outside John's ultimate control and thus, he feels demeaned. His very adequacy as a provider for his family is at stake. We understand, at least, his desire to remain empowered for a moment longer – and yet another moment still. But it is this desire that displays John's transference ambivalence. John (on the verge of tenure but still beholden to the whims of the Tenure Committee) and Carol (who has followed directions but is on the verge of failing John's course) are both displaying a transference acting out toward authority as described by Peter Loewenberg: «the hostility aroused takes the manifest form of wishing to pay the authority back, to irritate and make fun of him, to damage and cheat him, to discourage and exasperate him, to baffle and humiliate him and show him up... [both wish] to destroy the master, to take his place and inherit his power» («Emotional Problems of Graduate Education», 52). For John, that authority is represented in the transference by his tenure, his success, the security of those who evaluate him; for Carol, that authority is represented in the transference by John, her professor. Both, to use the words of Loewenberg, are «infantilized» by being placed «in a position of filial dependence» (51).

Despite his desire to leave, John experiences a strong pull to remain in his office. As a result of his ambivalence about leaving and the pressure on him to leave, he is scattered, brusque, impatient. «Look. Look», he tells Carol, «I'm not your *father*» (9). Carol's response is immediate: «Did I say you were my father?... Why did you say that?» (10). Why, indeed? We may presume to hypothesize that John wished to express that some of what he sensed Carol was asking of him, needing from him, was transference. Nevertheless, he could not have sensed this without the analogous identificatory impulse that he, too, was immersed in a transference situation.

John displays his identification with Carol after she tells him: «you think that I'm stupid» (13). «I was brought up», John responds, «and my earliest, and most persistent memories are of being told that I was stupid» (16). In response to Carol's incomprehension of the material presented in his class, John offers his own remembering of himself as an incomprehending student: uncomfortable with himself as the professor, the authority figure, John sees himself in the mirror as Carol. «The *real* people. Who were they? They were the people other than myself. The good people. The *capable* people. The people who could do the things I could not do: learn, study, retain... all that *garbage*.... Listen to this. If the young child is told he cannot understand. Then he takes it as a *description* of himself. What am I? I am *that which can not understand*» (16). Carol has solicited John for his aid as her transference figure, her professor: she is having trouble learning. John chooses precisely that moment to confide in her that he, too, has an internalized feeling of inadequacy and that learning - what Carol yearns to do – is «garbage».

The «people» who berated John did so «through his life [and] in [his] childhood»; «and», he muses, «perhaps, they stopped. But I heard them continue» (17). Carol, thus, is faced with an

exemplary figure who assures her: «I feel that I must fail» (18). The knowledge that she craves as a means of identification with John is being held up for ridicule. Despite her willingness to test the limits of John's personal obligations, she is nevertheless aware that John is transgressing the boundaries of his professional identity by confiding in her. He is, as he admits later, «tak[ing] off the Artificial *Stricture*, of “Teacher”, and “Student”» (21). Carol inquires of her professor: «why would you want to be personal with me?» (19). John's answer is crucial: «Because I like you.... Perhaps we're similar» (21).

Peter Loewenberg describes the problems of transference within an academic professor-student situation: «Regression takes place in regard to the nature of the things asked for from the teacher. When teacher and student engage in their initial encounter, the expectations appear clear and unambiguous. The student wants knowledge: data, method, and interpretation. The instructor wants to teach: to impart, demonstrate, and expose. Soon both parties realize they want other things as well. They desire all of those signals from each other that human beings want in any relationship: approval, acceptance, praise. The student wants sympathy, interest, and guidance; the instructor wants an audience, narcissistic supplies, and power» («Emotional Problems of Graduate Education», 51). In Mamet's *Oleanna*, all of this is applicable. The teacher, however, is also in the role of the student, the apprentice, and, increasingly, over the course of the second and third meetings, the student assumes the role of the teacher. This role reversal is inherent in their mutual transference identification: if Carol desires knowledge, she wishes to be John, in the role of professor – since John occupies that role, he must be supplanted. Since John has an innate feeling of failure, he wishes to be Carol, the inept student; he wishes that he *not* be what he is on the verge of becoming – the tenured figure of authority.

On one level, Carol is absorbed in her conflict; on another level, she recognizes that she is demanding the impossible of John – and attaining it: «why did you stay here with me?... When you should have gone» (20). John's response reinforces the sense of role reversal. Like Carol, John has «problems... with my wife... with work» (21-22). Since John believes they are «similar», he must be as «angry» as he earlier intuited Carol to be. He confesses: «I hated everyone who was in the position of a “boss” because I *knew* – I didn't *think*, mind you, I *knew* I was going to fail. Because I was a fuckup. I was just no goddamned good» (22).

Like Carol, John is conflicted: he assures her that it is possible to «work [your] way out of the need to fail» (22). At the same time, he provides her with a prescription for rationalizing failure, by blaming the tools of measuring of success: «... the tests... which you encounter in school, in college, in life, were designed in the most part, for idiots. *By* idiots.... They are not a test of your worth» (23). Since Carol did poorly on a paper assigned by John, it follows that John is demonstrating to her that he is an «idiot», a «fuckup».

Mamet is crafting yet another mirror relationship as well: the sense of John and Carol as acting out roles in life and the reflected idea of them as actors on the stage. Later on, John will confide that what he loves about teaching is the «aspect of performance» (43). But what breaks the cycle of failure, he believes, is that «you have to look at what you are, and what you feel, and how you act. And finally, you have to look at how you act. And say: if that's what I *did*, that must be how I think of myself» (22).

In Mamet's play, acting is the central metaphor for the transference interaction of teacher and student. «We can only interpret the behavior of others...» John declares, «through the screen we create» (19-20). The «screen», the mask, the affect of concealment: these are the barriers to meaningful communication. Peter Loewenberg, in «Love and Hate in the Academy», explores this theme: «Persons who are not in touch with their feelings cannot communicate. Their affect is so restricted by being tied up in concealing parts of themselves that they are insensitive to large areas of experience» (72). John reveals to Carol that he considers it his «job... to provoke you» (32). Thus, John teaches as a performance in order to provoke. When John discovers that the intrusive calls to his office were not about an actual emergency with his new house, he shares the knowledge with Carol that the calls were a sham, a ruse to lure him to the «surprise party» in his honor to

celebrate the announcement of his impending tenure and house purchase. Carol views this as a sign that his friends and family are «proud» of him; but John, her professor, revises her interpretation: «there are those who would say [surprise is] a form of aggression» (41). What type of learning does John's teaching instill? Carol assures him that «I'm *smiling* in class, I'm smiling, the whole time. What are you *talking* about? What is everyone *talking* about? I don't *understand*. I don't know what it *means*. I don't know what it means to *be* here... you tell me I'm intelligent, and then you tell me I should not be *here*, what do you *want* with me? What does it *mean*? Who should I *listen* to...» (36).

In response to a performative teacher whose mission is to provoke her, Carol presents the image of a smiling, comprehending student who does not understand and who questions the motivation of her professor who assures her of her intelligence. «What do you *want* from me?» is her compelling question: if she is so intelligent, why does she not understand? Why would a professor wish to spend time with her – considering the full measure of her self-perceived stupidity – and what could he possibly mean when he tells her that they are similar? Is her professor as stupid as she feels herself to be? What can he mean when he says he likes her? Surely, he cannot like her for her supposed intelligence; he must like her sexually, erotically, for her appearance or for her dependence on him for enlightenment and insight. Carol and John exemplify Loewenberg's observation that «inner conflicts will always obtrude upon our functioning in the outer world. This is often apparent in academic departments and in faculty relations with students.... If people do not want to understand, they do not hear, they misconstrue and misapprehend, they pervert and distort, and play with words» («Love and Hate in the Academy», 74). It is at this moment in the play – when Carol is at her most vulnerable, in an upset and volatile state – that Mamet elects for John to comfort her in a human manner: he «puts his arm around her shoulder» (36).

Carol screams out «NO» and «walks away» (36) but she remains conversing with John. She indicates her displeasure at John's offer of physical comfort. Nevertheless, she does not hear John's statement: «I'm talking to you as I'd talk to my own son» (19). Her transference misreading of the encounter interprets the entire sequence of events as being primarily about her: her professor likes her, wishes to be personal with her, considers them similar; indeed, he even offers to «start the whole class over.... Your grade for the whole term is an "A". If you will come back and meet with me. A few more times.... What's important is that I awake your interest, if I can, and that I answer your questions.... We'll break [the rules].... We won't tell anybody» (25-26). Carol illustrates Freud's description (in «Observations on Transference-Love») of the analysand who «endeavor[s] to assure herself of her irresistibility, to destroy the doctor's authority by bringing him down to the level of a lover and to gain all the other promised advantages incidental to the satisfaction of love» (163). But it is important to emphasize that, in Mamet's version, the «doctor»/professor contributes to this transference acting out by systematically removing her own justifications and alternative interpretations for his actions and motives. In confusion, Carol asks John: «You said that education was "prolonged and systematic hazing"». John agrees: «Yes. It can be so.» Carol then presents the culminating question of identification: «if education is so *bad*, why do you do it?» John's answer guarantees that Carol will view his example in an ambiguous and paradoxical manner: «I do it because I love it» (35).

John illustrates Loewenberg's contention that «persons who isolate their affects may become excellent scholars but they are not equipped to deal with other people. People who intellectualize send to others messages that are mixed, one part saying, "yes", the other part saying "no"» («Love and Hate in the Academy», 72). Loewenberg's description of a professorial counter-transference fits John's behavior precisely: «for many scholars the conflicts of the present are displaced in time and space to the remote past or to the symbolic world of abstraction in order to isolate immediate emotions» («Love and Hate in the Academy», 73). John's present conflicts are transformed into the pseudo-postmodern, paradoxical platitudes that he displays for Carol with no sense of irony, but behind which dwells Mamet's dark and ironic vision: «... we confound the *usefulness* of higher

education with our... right to equal access to the same.» When asked by Carol, «it is a prejudice that we should go to school?», John's response is: «Exactly» (30). John's lesson to Carol is that, by being performative, we are able to displace our present conflicts and feel «unassailable» in our «unflinching concern» for the «dignity» of students (46). But his mixed message only succeeds in communicating to her that he is assailable precisely because he «mock[s] and exploit[s] the system which pays [his] rent» (68).

Carol is never able to understand that the crux of John's lecture to her is concerned with *his* problem and not with hers. He identifies with her feelings of terror at the possibility of failure. They are similar because he, too, is angry at those who are judging him and assessing the merits of his desires and his aspirations. He is unable to communicate with her not merely because she is so conflicted as to be a poor listener; Mamet insists that John is as conflicted as Carol and thus, when he grasps for exemplary material to heighten the significance of his lessons, he arrives at the example of himself. Like an actor, John communicates through performance and his medium is himself. «Look at me», he tells Carol. «The Tenure Committee. Come to judge me. The Bad Tenure Committee.... They put me to the test. Why, they had people voting on me I wouldn't employ to wax my car. And yet, I go before the Great Tenure Committee, and I have an urge, to vomit, to, to, to puke my *badness* on the table, to show them: "I'm no good. Why would you pick me?"» (23). Carol is perplexed: «They granted you tenure.» But John perceives, in his conflicted destructive vision of shame, fraud, and failure, that the actions of the committee are only for show, a performance analogous to his own as a teacher: «Oh, no, they announced it, but they haven't signed. Do you see? "At any moment... they might not sign"... the *house* might not go through.... They will find an index of my badness» (23-24). John's point is that when he looks at Carol – a self-hating, self-doubting individual in neurotic conflict – he sees himself. He attempts to help her with her problem and succeeds in neurotically acting out against his own transference fear of looming success.

But just as Carol is unable to comprehend how or why her professor could like her in her perceived stupidity, why he would find her similar to him and how he would choose her as a confidant with whom he would be personal, so John is unable to believe that the Tenure Committee truly finds him meritorious: John is convinced that their vote is a fiction, an act, a theatrical screen that conceals their perception of him as a cynical, contempt-ridden skeptic of the institution whose approval he craves. Having failed the test of the midterm paper, Carol labels her work as «garbage» (14); facing an analogous test that he believes himself to have failed, John teaches Carol that the tests – all tests – are «garbage... a joke», even and especially, the test-of-all-tests, «The Test» of his application for tenure (23). In the process of what he takes for remembering, John, in actuality, is acting out. To borrow Freud's words from «Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through», John «yields to the compulsion to repeat, which now replaces the impulsion to remember.... The greater the resistance, the more extensively will acting out (repetition) replace remembering» (151). But Mamet's *Oleanna* asks the audience a related question: how will you interpret and react to the concluding scene of the drama – on the basis of what you remember or on the basis of the repetition, the transference?

The second meeting between Carol and John occurs at the request of John. Carol, in consultation with an unspecified campus activist group, has filed a sexual harassment complaint against John on the basis of their previous consultation. The power imbalance of professor and student is now more equalized: while still her professor, John needs something from Carol – he needs for her to understand his real motivation so that she will modify her feelings of injury and withdraw her «indictment» (63). Now it is John who does not understand: he does not understand the context from which Carol has construed his behavior as constituting sexual harassment. True, she quoted his statements correctly, but she narrated the encounter without factoring into the equation his narcissistic desires. Now it is Carol in the position of power over John; she is able to offer tortuously fatuous distinctions that recall the paradoxical pomposity of her transference figure: «whatever you have done to me – to the extent that you've done it to *me*, do you know, rather than

to me as a *student*, and, so, to the student body, is contained in my report. To the tenure committee» (47). The important question to ask is why John should desire yet another meeting with Carol. Having read her report to the Tenure Committee and knowing that she places a context on his statements that fixes him as a «sexist... elitist» (48) sexual harasser, it is useful to ponder why John opts to repeat for the umpteenth time an experience destined for failure. His transference conflict induces him to once again live in the regressive past rather than face the reality of his actual situation. Carol expresses the dilemma of the audience: «We don't say what we mean. Don't we? Don't we? We *do* say what we mean» (49). And it is on this basis – whether meaning may be accurately construed from what was said – that we are able to infer intention and responsibility for Carol and John.

It is clear that Carol has appropriated John's manner – his domineering, patriarchal style; his belief in surprise as an aggressive device (witness the complaint to the Tenure Committee and the filing of legal charges for battery and attempted rape) – as a supplanting of John's role as a transference figure. Simultaneously, she embodies Peter Loewenberg's characterization that «many disciples so closely embrace their mentor's thought that any originality has no chance to develop or disappears. They have become second-imprint surrogates of the powerful one» («Emotional Problems of Graduate Education», 53). She visited John initially with a positive belief in him and in higher education and a negative attitude about herself. Loewenberg addresses this situation: «when there is an unfused internal mixture of idealization and denigration, one of the incompatible self-images will be projected. If one projects his idealized self, only the bad self will remain. The idealized figure can do no wrong. But when one projects his disparaged self, he feels contempt for others and arrogant conceit about himself» («Love and Hate in the Academy», 70). As a result of John's «teaching», she now has a negative view of his philosophy of higher education: she retains a belief in the value of higher education but now she esteems her ability to influence the outcome of her education and she has a decidedly negative attitude toward John. «I don't *care* what you feel. Do you see? DO YOU SEE? You can't *do* that anymore. You. Do. Not. Have. The. Power» (50). In a challenge that calls to mind the thematic implications of the entire play, Carol questions how John has the temerity to reinterpret, to recontextualize, to «spin doctor» actual events: «How can you *deny* it. You did it to me. *Here*. You *did*.... You *confess*. You love the Power. To *deviate*. To *invent*, to transgress... to *transgress* whatever norms have been established for us. And you think it's charming to “question” in yourself this taste to mock and destroy» (52).

But at the same time, the audience is in the position to question the assertion that John may or may not have «transgress[ed] whatever norms have been established for us.» In other words, at precisely the moment that Carol is affirming the value of norms and institutions and usurping the role of John as pedagogue, she is also appropriating his role as trickster, cynic, and perverse contextualizer: she is manipulating the text in order to construct the semblance of guilt and indict him. From the perspective of the audience, the transference shifts: if gender inequity is the dominant signifier, then Carol has achieved a revolutionary overthrow – turnabout is seen as fair play. If, however, we view the events from the dual perspective of Carol and John both in transference crisis afforded us by psychoanalysis (without discarding the transference effect of gender abuse but viewing it in a wider context), then we may account for the discrepancy in audience reactions. (There is also a viable explanation for the discrepancy in the disparate choices made by the two directors but that is not the subject of this essay.)

Ultimately, we are impelled to ask two questions: why does John repeat so compulsively even to the point of asking Carol for yet another interview after she so misunderstood his behavior in their second meeting? But we are also impelled to inquire why Carol consents to these subsequent meetings. Why does she seek out John at the onset? Why does she continue to speak with an obviously preoccupied professor? Why, feeling as she does that John is a sexist, elitist, violent sexual harasser, does she consent to private meetings with such a character? When John complains to her that «they're going to discharge me», Carol's response speaks volumes to Mamet's concerns

about the transference symmetry of the two characters' mutual acting out: «As full well they should. You don't understand? You're angry? What has *led* you to this place? Not your sex. Not your race. Not your class. YOUR OWN ACTIONS» (64). These lines deliberately and eloquently recall John's earlier assertion that «finally, you have to look at how you act. And say: if that's what I *did*, that must be how I think of myself» (22).

In their third meeting, Carol teaches John a great deal about what she has learned from him: instead of focusing on John as the subject of the lesson (as he did), she derives a sense that meaning itself is a matter of hermeneutic formulation – a psychoanalytic construction of reality. She offers to withdraw the university charges if John will symbolically censure himself by agreeing to include his own book on a list of «questionable» texts: «someone chooses the books. If you can choose them, others can. What are you, “God”?» (73-74). When faced with reality construed in this manner, John's performative inclinations vanish. He comes to an epiphany about Carol and about himself: «And, and, I owe you a debt, I see that now. You're *dangerous*, you're *wrong* and it's my *job*... to say no to you.... You want to ban my book? Go to *hell*, and they can do whatever they want to me» (76). If the play ended here, the audience would perceive an unambiguous choice arrived at by John. In sacrificing job and future, he could be seen as affirming his own higher integrity by arriving at an identity principle that allows him to exist in the present, to remember as opposed to repeat.

But Mamet does not end the play here. It is at this point that John discovers that Carol has surprised him yet again - in another act of aggression - by filing legal charges of battery and attempted rape against him. At this moment, his wife again intrudes by telephone on the transference discourse. Does John not perceive that Carol has repeatedly surprised him by catching him off guard or unaware? Does Carol not perceive that John is a cornered animal, explosive, volatile, with nothing to lose? Apparently they realize nothing of what they have been repeating for the audience. John insists that Carol leave, but, characteristically – narcissistically – juggles his conversation with his wife with his acerbic barbs at Carol. Carol cannot resist a parting shot, hurled at John while his wife is in earshot on the telephone: «don't call your wife “baby”» (79).

*You have to look at how you act*: why does Carol admonish John about such a trivial matter as his private name for his wife after having succeeded in supplanting his power, privilege, and his potential to abuse them? Even more significantly, why does John beat Carol unambiguously – viciously, violently, savagely? Why does he do the act of which he had been earlier accused – this time, in the aural presence of his wife whom we presume to be still on the telephone line? Freud describes (in «Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through») the behavior of our two subjects, our two patients: s/he «repeats everything that has already made its way from the sources of the repressed into [her/his] manifest personality – [her/his] inhibitions and unserviceable attitudes and [her/his] pathological character-traits» (151). Carol succeeds in transforming her professor into an erotic object; by validating his sadistic abuse, she justifies her earlier condemnation of herself as an unintelligent person in whom her professor would *not* be sincerely interested. John succeeds in fulfilling the prophecy from his past that he falsely believed he had transcended – that he was a failure and that he was «unworthy» (17). His actions provide – by his own creed – the measure of his character: he is an abuser, a thug, a failure; he was never in conscious awareness of his repressed compulsion to act out his neurotic dynamic of past repetition. More compassionately, we may say that his illness - his neurotic regressive conflict - lived his life for him rather than John being able to seize the ability to make conscious choices for himself in the unambiguous present.

The last words of the play are uttered by Carol. She says, first to John, and then to herself, the phrase that motivates the audience to wonder whether she did not also have the scenario live her rather than her being able to consciously choose and control its outcome: «Yes. That's right... yes. That's right» (80). It is as if, when perceived with twenty-twenty hindsight, Carol has been the professor of this lesson: her remarks praise John, her «student», and demonstrate that, yes, he has finally got it right – he *is* guilty and she is the one who has insisted, «I know what I am» (14).

This is Mamet's dark and ominous vision of transference run wild. From a psychoanalytic

viewpoint, we are presented with a drama that brings together two dynamic narratives: in the case of John, a tragic fall from power and greatness motivated by the same psychic blindness that caused the tragedy of Oedipus; in the case of Carol, an ironic rise that obscures and confuses the genuine issues of the abuse of institutional power and the unfair treatment of human beings on the basis of gender. John's failure is a result of his neurotically-induced hubris; Carol's newfound power and influence are a result of a flaw in society – a tendency to miscontextualize and allow acting out to substitute for genuine remembering and genuine life.

In «Analysis Terminable and Interminable», Freud considers the profound challenge of the transference as Mamet envisions it: «... not every good relation between an analyst and his subject during and after analysis was to be regarded as a transference; there were also friendly relations which were based on reality and which proved to be viable» (222). Our crisis of human interaction is the one faced by the audience of Mamet's play: transference and reality – how do we differentiate between them? How do we isolate the feelings of transference and separate them from the authentic moments of conscious life? To guard against acting out, ought we to restrict human beings to their narrowly constricted roles or professions? Should professors be professors and students be students only? Or are not all of us also – and always – human beings? *Oleanna* cries out for a world in which human beings will be impelled to construct modes of relative, functional «objectivity» where learning may take place by the mutual agreement of student and teacher within the academic community. Only in the full awareness of transference conflict may that conflict be collectively overcome.

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# Headhunters and victims of war: W. H. R. Rivers and Pat Barker

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«Headhunters and Victims of War» presents a complicated, interwoven study of transferences. The primary subject is W. H. R. Rivers, who appears as a literary figure in the novels of Pat Barker, *Regeneration* (1992), *The Eye in the Door* (1994), and *The Ghost Road* (1995), but the secondary subject is Barker herself. The complication is inevitable. The paper begins with an examination of Barker's assumptions about Rivers, and in the process it illuminates the effect of transference on her writing by determining how her narrative diverges from the archival and historical material. Of course, as a novelist, Barker had a perfect right to embroider or ignore the facts, but whenever she does, the issue of father child relationships tends to emerge in that intermediate space, which Winnicott (1960) says is the locus of creativity. Thus two kinds of transferences emerge to be disentangled, Rivers with his patients and his fellow professionals, and Rivers and Barker.

Rivers, the primary subject, had an extremely adventurous and sometimes controversial career. At various times he was a neurophysiologist, anthropologist, psychologist, psychiatrist, science educator, and political candidate. During the First World War, the setting of the novels, he was a medical officer in the Royal Army Medical Corps where he treated young officers who were suffering from anxiety neurosis as a result of the unspeakable horrors that they had experienced at the front. At the time their affliction, which we know as post-traumatic stress syndrome, was called «shell-shock» in order to differentiate it from female hysteria.<sup>1</sup> Barker depicts his sessions with a variety of young officers, most of whom regard the older man as a father figure even though «it was a regular part of my treatment to guard against the process known to the psychoanalysts as transference» (Rivers, 1923, p. 35). His patients, most notably the poet Siegfried Sassoon, were

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<sup>1</sup> Barker (1992, 1995) has Rivers reflect that immobility causes the soldiers to develop hysteria and that women felt equally trapped by their inability to make choices, but Rivers did not go quite so far. He did note, however, that in «civil life» women were vulnerable to danger in childbirth and coitus, factors which did not affect men (Rivers, 1922, p. 136). Irving Goffman was one of the first to note that «the soldier is in a position analogous to women's regarding autonomy and power» (Smith-Rosenberg, 1985, p. 331, n. 5). See also Showalter (1987).

extremely lucky. Many soldiers, like Robert Graves (Seymour, 1995), had no treatment and suffered from nightmares and flashbacks for many years. Workingclass soldiers were sent to doctors, such as Lewis Yealland (Barker, 1992; Showalter, 1985), who used electric shock while ignoring the traumas that the men had experienced. Like many doctors who served during the war, Yealland was apparently well-meaning, but nothing in his training had adequately prepared him to treat the psychological and physical problems he encountered. Brutal though his methods were, he did help some of his patients, especially those who were inclined to believe that their problems were completely physical (Shephard, 1996).

Fortunately for those who saw him, however, Rivers had a more complex background and more sympathy for the neurasthenics than did many of the other doctors, many of whom thought the young men were malingering. Rivers's patience and interest in his patients' stories made him an effective therapist. Not surprisingly, he thought that as a medical officer his job was to help the young officers to recover sufficiently to return to the front. Rather than relying solely on distraction, he encouraged them to remember their traumas. When that proved next to impossible, he taught them to record and retell their dreams so that gradually together doctor and patient could construct a narrative that could be shared and exorcized. His methods owed much to his reading of Freud, many of whose ideas he respected. He did, however, like most of the doctors who worked with neurasthenic soldiers disagree with Freud's emphasis on sex. His analysis of soldier's dreams suggested to him that childhood conflicts were less of a problem than fear for their lives (Rivers, 1923).

The mystery, of course, is to explain how Rivers developed an effective clinical method from the various influences to which he was exposed when most of the British medical establishment had set ideas which contradicted the uncovering method pioneered by Freud. Moreover, it is astonishing that he managed to reconcile his respect for Freud's thinking with his rejection of Freud's premise that sex was at the root of many symptoms.<sup>2</sup> Some recent critics have overemphasized the conventional side of Rivers. Samuel Hynes accuses him of simply helping «many of his patients to suppress their anxieties, and to return to active service» (1990, p. 177) while Elaine Showalter claims that he was «so perfectly conditioned by his education, his class, his sex, and his professional role that he performed his duties – even if his dreams were sometimes a bit troubled – with perfect aplomb» (1985, p. 188). Rivers, however, like most clinicians, did not respond to his patients according to his theories. Instead he had the confidence to follow his instincts and to analyze honestly his own countertransference. His awareness of his own conflicts kept him honest and flexible.

If Rivers had not been open to new experiences, he could not have been helpful to Siegfried Sassoon, for he presented Rivers with a challenge unlike that of the other officers. Rather than suffering primarily from neurasthenia, he had developed a principled anti-war position, one which challenged Rivers's convictions. In the effort to understand Sassoon, Rivers read the anti-war books and journals that Sassoon recommended and «began to feel that these new ideas constituted a threat to his own position» (Hynes, 1990, p. 178). Hynes summarizes the situation by suggesting that Sassoon had turned the tables on Rivers: «something odd had happened in the doctor-patient relationship: the patient had not been converted, but he had disturbed the doctor's dreams» (1990, p. 179). Hynes, however, does not give Rivers credit for his honesty, nor does he understand that the key to Rivers's success with sensitive patients like Sassoon was his recognition of his own conflicts and his willingness to question his own motives. In a typically self-deprecating fashion, Rivers reported the beginning of conflict and repression that occurred when he began to realize that rather than «converting a patient from his “pacifist errors” to the conventional attitude», the doctor risked being converted to the patient's «point of view» (Rivers, 1923, p. 168). It was his willingness to listen to Sassoon's arguments and to be troubled by their implications that made it possible for

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<sup>2</sup> Showalter claims that in the postwar period he «helped domesticate» Freud's ideas for British consumption (1985, p. 189). Janet Oppenheim comments that approaches such as Rivers's «eviscerated» Freud's ideas, which made «it more palatable to a suspicious public» (1991, p. 309).

Sassoon gradually to abandon his intransigent position and to accept the doctor's help in other matters. Ironically, the doctor who did not believe in the sexual basis of neurasthenia encouraged this patient to be more comfortable with his homosexuality. Hynes, to his credit, comments that Rivers «helped his young patients to accept feelings that traditional notions of war had suppressed, and to redefine what it meant to be a man» (1990, p. 186).

Rivers was interdisciplinary in his interests but professional in his commitment to the various fields. He contributed to the literature of physiology, psychology, anthropology, and clinical psychiatry. Certain traits are recognizable in all his areas of interest, indicating that he carried over what he learned in one field to the next. Thus his life as a whole reveals certain consistent threads, habits that remained, even though he moved from research to clinical work and after the war to science education. In his later years he was in charge of science undergraduates at St. John's College, Cambridge and had agreed to stand as a Labour candidate in the next parliamentary election when he died prematurely at fifty-eight. Each intellectual endeavor was colored by certain basic principles – such as his fierce sense of duty and his disarming honesty – that he developed early probably from his religious training. Even a quick review of his life suggests that he constantly had to struggle against significant physical disabilities but developed the ability to learn from personal difficulties and discomforts. Maintaining religiously inspired ethics if not beliefs, he sought ways to convert his suffering and that of his patients into an affirmation of life.<sup>3</sup>

It is not surprising, however, that Rivers undervalued the role of sex in children's development, for the life he led was ascetic to an extreme. His early experiences taught him to respect the life of the mind and to struggle to overcome or ignore bodily frailty. In childhood and adolescence impediments began to emerge, which repeatedly threatened to disrupt his chosen career. He had grown up in a clerical family, whose men traditionally attended Cambridge on scholarship. His uncle and father were noted experts on stuttering. In fact, his father's stuttering therapy supplemented his income as vicar. For reasons that no one can begin to explain the vicar named his first-born William Halse Rivers Rivers, the double last name being curious enough to contribute to the boy's developing a bad stammer at an early age. Moreover, after early childhood Rivers was unable to visualize any scene except in dreams. In later life he speculated that some forgotten childhood trauma lay behind his difficulty (Rivers, 1922), a trauma that Barker (1995) blames on his father in *The Ghost Road*. Much to his biographer's surprise, Rivers enjoyed his public school, Tonbridge, where he was a day-boy. Although Slobodin had read E. M. Forster's *The Longest Journey* (1907), a novel in which he pilloried Tonbridge, he missed Forster's point that day-boys were much happier than boarders. Despite the stuttering, Rivers, unlike Forster, was a successful schoolboy, doing well on both the classics and the science side at school and in sports. He seemed to be headed for a Cambridge scholarship when a serious illness caused him to leave school before he completed sixth form. As a result of missing the examination, the family could not afford to send him to Cambridge. Instead, he went to the University of London and received his first medical degree at twenty-two and his M. D. two years later (Slobodin, 1978).

Specializing in medicine at an early age did not diminish Rivers's intellectual curiosity or restrict his areas of interest. Learning became the central feature of his adult life; he pursued his interests to the point of exhaustion. He never married nor had any kind of family life that might have interrupted his compulsive habits. He had no interest in women, indeed some suspected the «"confirmed"» bachelor of «"closeted" homosexuality» (Stocking, 1995, p. 198). Yet, as Arnold Bennett noted in an obituary, he showed none of the usual academic prejudices against women. He responded to Bennett's complaint about «the professed disdainful attitude of undergraduates towards girls» with surprising «candour and warmth» (Bennett, 1922). Barker (1995) speculates that Siegfried Sassoon aroused considerable feeling in him, and Elaine Showalter claims that «his

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<sup>3</sup> His funeral service consisted of music and no liturgy (Haddon, 12081).

therapy was a seduction and a negotiation» (1985, p. 187). In a later article, however, Showalter (1987) suggests that homoerotic feeling was largely on Sassoon's side, whose father had deserted his family when he was very young (Fussell, 1975). Rivers's account of Sassoon in *Conflict and Dream* (1923) shows little sign of sexual conflict. He admitted that two factors account for the absence of sexual conflicts in his dreams of that period, one is his age and the other his absorption in work (Rivers, 1923). The relationship was, however, very important to Rivers, for helping young men released his nurturing feelings (Showalter, 1987). Before the war his diffidence had isolated him, but afterwards as he himself said, «it was impossible for me to return to my life of detachment» (Rivers, quoted in Langdon-Brown, 1936).

Early in his career Rivers developed an interest in the connection between the body and the mind, work which had been pioneered by Walter Cannon, a physiologist at Harvard Medical School (Schlesinger, 1979). Within five years of receiving his M. D. he wrote research papers on hysteria and neurasthenia. One of his mentors was Hughlings Jackson, a neurophysiologist, who was known for his humane treatment of patients. At twenty-eight, Rivers, like many of his contemporaries in neurophysiology went to Germany where he attended lectures by the psychiatrist Binswanger and an experimental psychologist. A year later he went to Heidelberg where he worked on a project with Emil Kräpelin, a well-known German psychiatrist. Upon his return he trained in psychiatry in England (Slobodin, 1978). As a result of these early studies, Rivers was better prepared than most neuro-physiologists for the task of devising a treatment that would help neurasthenic officers return to duty. Moreover, his interest in psychiatry was longlasting. Although he went back to Cambridge in the post-war period and took up the post of praelector of natural science studies, he continued to write about his war-work. During the postwar period, he was the first president of the medical section of the British Psycho-analytic Society (Slobodin, 1978).

Turning to the second theme of novelistic transference, in general Pat Barker adhered very closely to what Rivers wrote and the material available about him. She speculates that Rivers's earlier work in ethnology had made him aware of cross-cultural differences and thus was less inclined than his fellow physicians to reject theories that challenged British values. According to her, Rivers' affection for the headhunters on Eddystone Island, in particular his relationship with Njiru, an especially impressive informant, gave him the insight necessary to be an outstanding clinician for the officers whose experiences at the front had overwhelmed them. Working in different cultures not only challenged any feelings of superiority his British upbringing had inculcated in him but also provided him a more congenial space in which to live and work.

Barker is clearly correct in assuming that becoming an anthropologist expanded his world and offered Rivers a relief from the strictures of Cambridge society. Many of those who wrote his obituaries commented that cross-cultural study played a saving role in his life. One of his Cambridge colleagues noted that joining the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Straits in 1898 improved his health and increased his «mental vigor» (Shore, 1923, p. 5). His biographer Slobodin (1978) speculated that sea voyages – the first of which he took in 1887 – probably saved his life, for on shipboard he could not overwork as he did in England. Moreover anthropology penetrated his isolation by providing an intellectual adventure in which friends and foes were clearly delineated. Training students, like W. J. Perry, to write more effectively so that he would advance their group arguments<sup>4</sup> gave Rivers experience in being a mentor, a role which prepared him for helping troubled young men. His close colleagues were aware that he often suffered from intermittent depression (Shore, 1923). A medical associate of Rivers, Walter Langdon-Brown, commented astutely that «it was because he had to heal himself that he could heal others» (1936, p. 30).

Although Barker's overall perspective is confirmed by those who knew Rivers, some of her secondary ideas appear to be contradicted by the facts. In particular, no evidence emerged that sug-

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<sup>4</sup> Rivers' letters to Perry in which he criticized drafts of his work are in the University College Library London, Perry Mss. 279 A1/1.

gested that he had developed a father-son relationship with a key native informant on Eddystone Island, the healer Njiru. Clearly he was impressed with the expertise of what he called «leeches» like Njiru. He deliberately adopted this old-fashioned term to indicate that they combined medicine and magic in their work, and according to Bennett referred to a British doctor as a «magician». Bennett commented that «all civilised society was a sort of South Sea island to him» (1922, p. 290). Rivers also recorded an incident about a «leech» who massaged his patient (Rivers, 1926), an event which became a key incident in *The Ghost Road* (Barker, 1995). This leech could have been Njiru, but he is never named. Moreover, as other ethnographers have noted, by the time Rivers did the field work which pre-dated his final trip to Melanesia in 1914 as part of the Percy Sladen Trust Expedition, he was relying more heavily on genealogical surveys than on «intensive» fieldwork (Rivers, 1914, I), even though fieldwork is what makes his early writing on *The Todas* (1906) so distinctive.<sup>5</sup> Stocking reports that Rivers spent most of the time on a mission ship, *Southern Cross*, and that his forays into the islands were «carried on through linguistic intermediaries» (1995, p. 200). His nearly illegible fieldnotes taken on that final 1914 trip<sup>6</sup> contain no reference to Njiru or to any one who could have played such a role. Moreover, most of the notes reflect a schematic approach, more in keeping with the survey technique of *The History of Melanesian* (1914) than with *The Todas*.

Other incidents from Rivers's writing, such as the fugue state of a patient (Rivers, 1922) appear verbatim in *The Eye in the Door* (Barker, 1994). What Barker does not mention, however, is that Rivers's inability to speak any of the languages of the people he studied caused him to rely heavily on English-speaking informants and interpreters (Rivers, 1914, I), leaving him less time to develop a close relationship with someone with whom he could communicate only by speaking pidgin. Barker (1995) suggests that Rivers and Njiru transcended the problems of pidgin, a vastly reduced trade language that people develop when they have limited contact with speakers of another language, but no evidence exists to support that claim.

Barker focused on the relationship of Njiru and Rivers because the idea of foster-fathers appealed to her. She grew up in a fatherless household. Her mother had had an affair when she was in the Wrens (Women's Royal Naval Service), but she was never willing to tell Barker who her father was. Instead, she fabricated a series of stories that the young girl believed. Her grandmother did most of the parenting and despite the straightened circumstances of the household, Barker went first to grammar school and then to the London School of Economics (Morrison, 1996). Barker paid her grandmother a tribute in *The Century's Daughter* (1986), a novel about an elderly woman who in the course of a long life rescues her granddaughter from the life of poverty and despair that had marred the experience of women from the north of England for several generations. In that novel Barker points out that economic conditions in the north were irremediably destroyed during World War I. When the economy of the region was ruined, good jobs for men disappeared. Women could obtain menial positions, such as house cleaning, which is what her grandmother, mother, and stepsister did (Morrison, 1996). These conditions made it difficult for men to marry and support a family. This time instead of focusing on the lives of women, as she does in most of her early novels, Barker's World War I novels abound in men, the generation of her grandfather, the last generation of men to have a decent livelihood. Knowing her personal history makes it easier to understand why Barker attributed some of her father-longing to Rivers and also emphasizes the inadequacy of his own father in *The Ghost Road* (1995).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Stocking (1995) recounts that in interviewing the Todas, Rivers relied heavily on an interpreter, who had for ten years been trying to convert the Todas to Christianity and that this man spoke to them in Tamil, which the men spoke as a third language and only a few women spoke fluently.

<sup>6</sup> Rivers's papers are in the A. C. Haddon Collection, 12000-12086, Cambridge University Library.

<sup>7</sup> Curiously, George Stocking (1995), an historian of anthropology, speculates that Rivers began to overcome his stammer in 1911, after his father's death, the year he became a believer in diffusionism. Stocking uses Rivers' biographer as his source, but Slobodin (1978) merely says that Rivers gradually learned to ignore his stutter, which became less of a problem in the postwar years.

Rivers's life, however, was not quite as father-deprived and dramatic as Barker implies. Instead his field-work gave him ample opportunity to develop techniques that later he applied to patients, largely because he had to struggle to compensate for some disadvantages as a fieldworker. Unlike later anthropologists, he lacked the linguistic skills<sup>8</sup> that would allow him to listen to everyday conversation and pick up information inadvertently (Sanjek, 1990). Moreover to collect data about death and the religious rituals that fascinated him, he had to overcome the unwillingness of his informants to talk about their sacred customs. When he worked with the Todas in the early years of the century, they feared the reprisal of the gods. On a few occasions when someone had confided in him, the individual's near relative fell ill. The community was inclined to hold Rivers responsible, a conviction which made it more difficult for him to collect more data subsequently. He was rarely allowed to observe ceremonies for fear of the gods' punishment. To get any information at all, he had to earn his informants' trust by paying very close attention to what they said and by showing as much interest in their practices as they did (Rivers, 1906). Only then would they begin to describe to him the rituals of their community.

Despite the breadth of his knowledge, today Rivers is primarily known today as the psychiatrist who treated Siegfried Sassoon. Except for those who are experts in field-work, most contemporary anthropologists ignore his genuine contributions to ethnology.<sup>9</sup> The field has changed and in the past few decades researchers have not gone into the field without learning the indigenous languages. To make matters worse Rivers, along with two colleagues, championed notions of cultural diffusion. He was convinced that immigration patterns explained the development of culture in prehistoric Melanesia, an attempt which was declared unscientific by Malinowski (Slobodin, 1978). His memory was first restored, however, by Paul Fussell (1975), who drew on Siegfried Sassoon's recollections of Rivers in *The Great War and Modern Memory*. He mentioned Rivers only briefly, but Fussell's book made such an indelible impression upon me that when I encountered Rivers in Barker's *Regeneration* I felt as if he were already an old friend. The situation may well change in the future. For example, George Stocking's history of modern social anthropology pays ample attention to Rivers. Stocking claims that although contemporary anthropologists have «repressed» their recollections of Rivers' «conversion» to diffusionism, «it is impossible to understand the development of social anthropology in Britain» without examining the career of Rivers and his followers (1995, p. 183).

In sum, one cannot escape issues of transference when examining Rivers' career and later reputation. Otherwise how can one explain why currently anthropologists have rejected his thinking, but literary scholars who are interested in psychoanalysis are often intrigued by his role. Like William James, the combination of vulnerability, professionalism, and knowledge makes Rivers such an appealing character today. To those of us interested in creativity Rivers is an inspiration; he managed to use his talents and outstrip his contemporaries in human understanding because of, not in spite of, his frailties.

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<sup>8</sup> Firth (1966) reminds us that Rivers thought that not speaking the language did not present any great difficulty, a position with which contemporary anthropologists disagree. Rivers (1968) felt that the genealogical method, which he pioneered, compensated for his inability to speak the local languages.

<sup>9</sup> Margaret Mead (1972) recalls that in 1926 she and a New Zealand psychologist named Reo Fortune both admitted to hero-worshipping Rivers although in an earlier reminiscence she recalls that between 1922-24 she regarded his ideas as «fantastic reconstructions of the past» (Quoted in Slobodin, 1978, p. 157). Lévi-Strauss (1949) argues against Rivers's historical sociology but takes him seriously for his work on kinship.

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# *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins

## Collins: a detective of his repressed desire

PIERRE MET (\*)

The present paper is a psychoanalytical reading of William Collins's novel *The Moonstone*, published in 1868.<sup>1</sup> The central idea: the theft of «The Moonstone» during the night of Rachel Verinder's birthday seems to be the fulfillment of repressed wishes. It corresponds to Collins's desire both on the oedipal and pre-oedipal levels. The story set in a Victorian environment is told by various narrators talking each in turn. It explains how Franklin Blake under the influence of Laudanum performed an act which can be interpreted as a manifestation of aggression directed towards the mother's breast.

I have chosen this novel as an example of fiction which can easily be analysed by a psychoanalytic critic. But I also wish to emphasize how some works at the end of the 19th century (Hawthorne, Melville) show a remarkable intuition of what Freud will discover in the following thirty years.

### 1. AN AMBIVALENT ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE MOTHER

The relationship of the subject to his object is described as based on either love or hate. The novel begins with a prologue developing the themes of violence, theft and loss. An anonymous narrator writes a letter to his family in England in order to explain a long standing difference of opinion between him and his cousin Colonel Herncastle which has poisoned their relationship ever since.

«The private difference between my cousin and me took its rise in a great public event in which we were both concerned – the storming of Seringapatam, under General Baird, on the 4th of

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<sup>1</sup> References to *The Moonstone* are to The Penguin Classics edition, 1986. The text is that of the edition of 1871, which was revised by Collins.

May, 1799.» (M,33). Collins imagines he experiences romantic adventures the theme of which is the loss and the recovery of a family's Jewel known as «The Moonstone». In order to hide his aggressivity towards the object, the author displaces an anal sadistic aggression against the body of the mother by going to war in colonial India.

The story based on an ambivalence of affects produces an image of parents with male and female aspects:

- Rosanna Spearman, a female character, is given a phallic name,
- a female indian god who typifies the moon is depicted under the form of an erect statue bearing the yellow Diamond, a metaphor of the Phallus,
- The Moonstone' is placed by a Sultan as an ornament on a dagger (X,35),
- Colonel Herculastle declares he wants to see the diamond on his finger. «The Moonstone» is thus the «cause» of desire and marks out the pleasure of the subject. It is passed round and seems to be destined to being given to someone or being received from someone, but must not be kept, and at this point, one remembers *The Purloined Letter*, of course.

The fact for a feminine character to recover through violence what she has been deprived of during the primal scene is a means for the author to rephallicize the mother. Collins beckons the object when it is missing and rejects it when it is present, we are reminded of Freud's grandson and his *fort / da* game. This ambivalent attitude towards the object is a secondary gain which helps the subject to avoid the unpleasant feelings caused by absence.

In the manner of Robinson Crusoe who eliminates all traces of his presence on the beach of his island, the author attempts to smooth out the footprints of Rosanna Spearman in the sand. «The Moonstone» is a signifier of the presence and of the absence of the object. What is fantasized here is a control over the absence of the object: such is my interpretation of the smoothing out of the footprint.

Step → Footprints → Footprints smoothed out

The mark was not yet blurred out by the rain – and the girl's boot fitted it to a hair.

(...) Hunt as he might, no sign could he find anywhere of the footsteps walking from them. (M,196)

After the theft, Rachel is aggressive towards the investigators and refuses to give the name of the person guilty of the theft, though she had seen it with her very own eyes.

Miss Rachel walked swiftly through to her bedroom, wild and angry, with the fierce eyes and flaming cheeks. Mr. Superintendent once more attempted to question her. She turned round on him at her bedroom door. «I have not sent for you!» she cried out, vehemently. «I don't want you. My diamond is lost. Neither you nor anybody else will ever find it» (M,123)

Her silence corresponds to a repression of the manifestation of aggressive tendencies. The subject rejects the object while assaulting it: Limping Lucy is physically handicapped. Collins takes pleasure in getting rid of female characters: Rosanna Spearman commits suicide. One of the function of the scenes of violence (as in the primal scene) is in fact to give the mother a power she would normally have lost in an «ordinary» primal scene. The subject tries to avoid anxiety by returning to an earlier stage and considers absence one of the normal processes of re-creating an internal object which has been destroyed in his/her fantasy.

## 2. A WISH TO DESTROY THE HATED OBJECT: THE FATHER

The writer imagines a situation in which the father is a threatening character who undermines his son.

Add to this, that M. Blake disliked all boys, his own included, (...).

Master Franklin was taken from us in England, and was sent to institutions which his father could trust in that superior country, Germany; (M,47)

Here, the castrating father punishes the child, probably for his incestuous fantasies, by moving him away from the object. «The Moonstone», the evil eye, constitutes a mental representation of the bad father whose murder by the son evokes an inherited sense of guilt. Collins describes how the child watches his parents having intercourse as something violent for the mother, who is tormented by an aggressive father.

I was so painfully uncertain whether it was my first duty to close my eyes, or to stop my ears that I did neither. I attributed my being still able to hold the curtain in the right position for looking and listening, entirely to suppressed hysterics. (M,280)

Repetition seems to lead the subject to reproduce the memory of the murder of the father by the son and lays particular emphasis on hatred for the father. The author:

- murders Ezra Jennings and Godfrey Ablewhite
- banishes the three Brahmins who are never seen any more.

The subject shows his aversion for a disloyal father; two famous detectives, sergeant Cuff and superintendant Seagrave, both paternal characters, are incapable of finding the answer to the riddle of the theft of «the Moonstone»; Doctor Candy, a father figure, betrays Franklin Blake's confidence (a son). He gives him laudanum to drink (a metaphor of food coming from the bad breast). Refusing this actual situation, the subject imagines an ideal father figure whom he loves in contrast to the real father whom he hates.

Doctor Candy, whose wrongdoings initiate the action of *The Moonstone*, anticipates Freud's theory of forgetting.

«His memory of events, at that time, is hopelessly enfeebled» said Ezra Jennings. «It is almost to be deplored, poor fellow, that even the wreck of it remains.» (M,418)

In the same way Franklin Blake is unable to remember what he did during the night when «The Moonstone» was stolen in the room of Rachel Verinder. Collins assumes that all experiences are recorded but that some cease to be available to consciousness as a result of repression, this being activated by the need to diminish anxiety.

I went slowly down the doctor's stairs, feeling the disheartening conviction that he really had something to say which it was vitally important to me to hear, and that he was morally incapable of saying it. (M,417)

The Father is shown as being diminished. Sergeant Cuff is sent to retire to Ireland and walks among his roses carrying a stout «oaken» stick. Ezra Jennings is a split character who takes opium to ease his chronic pain.

«Physiology says and says truly, that some men are born with female constitutions – and I am one of them!» (M,422)

This castration image is the translation of a latent wish, the death of the father, into a manifest content.

### 3. AN OEDIPUS COMPLEX IN REVERSE

Collins's novel illustrates something like an Oedipus complex in reverse. The subject minimizes his rebellion against the father and imagines the seduction of the father by the son in a socially acceptable way. A respectable old servant, Mr. Betteredge, «a father character», is asked by Franklin, the son, to tell the story of the loss and recovery of «The Moonstone». Here the subject wishes to see the ideal father acting in complicity with the son.

We had a transaction together, before he left, which consisted in his borrowing of me a ball of string, a four bladed knife, and seven and six-pence in money – the colour of which last I have not seen, and never expect to see again. (M,47)

Ezra Jennings, a metaphor of the castrated father, introduces the subject into the symbolic order. He works upon fragments of Doctor Candy's discourse and demonstrates that the crime has been committed without Franklin knowing it. He clears Franklin Blake not of the act of the theft, but of the bad motive for the act. At this point of the novel, the hero, like Oedipus, is standing at a cross-road.

We arrived as he said those words, at a place where the highway along which he had been walking, branched off into two roads (N,426).

Collins seems to convey the idea that something, that is originally repressed, always re-emerges in a symbolic fashion; after the enigma has been solved, there is still something missing, which binds the subject to the symbolic father.

The writing subject is unable to grasp the situation as a whole. «The Moonstone» is a series of narratives. The loss of integrity is replaced by a two parts structure:

one experienced as bad: The loss of the Diamond (1848)  
one experienced as good: The discovery of the truth

Everything is narrated by a member of the family; Collins illustrates the splitting of the self. Freud provides abundant evidence that there is nothing in the psyche by which the subject may situate himself as a male or a female being.

The first sound of his voice informed me that we now had the resolute side of him uppermost once more. The man made of cotton has disappeared; and the man of iron sat before me again. (M,127).

Collins associates the theme of the quest for truth to the theme of blindness. A man driven to investigate the crime discovers he himself is the perpetrator.

And, on the unanswerable evidence of the paint-stain, I had discovered Myself as the Thief. (M,359)

In the prologue, the narrator has not seen with his own eyes Colonel Herncastle murdering the Indians. Gabriel Betteredge is not aware that Rosanna is in love with Franklin; he is convinced of Rachel's love for Godfrey Ablewhite, which is wrong. Franklin Blake does not understand the meaning of the gift of «The Moonstone» to Rachel by her uncle; he can't remember having stolen the Diamond. Like Oedipus he is left blind. The compelling force of the unconscious is obvious. It is what is not known, not consciously recognized, that determines the action.

Unless, after long experience, I am utterly mistaken, those men are high-caste Brahmin – I charged them with being disguised, and you saw how it told on them, clever as the Hindoo people are in concealing their feelings. (M,107)

#### 4. THE LETTER: A MEANS OF RESTORING WHOLENESS

The subject tries to restore «The Moonstone» to its original place, and uses strength in order to mask his fear of sexuality. The theft becomes an object of investigation, and the discovery of the missing garment which bears evidence of the crime does not exonerate the author from guilt. Collins expresses a wish which has been fulfilled; reducing guilt by a process of recreating an internal object which has been destroyed in fantasy. The writer tries to establish the truth by means of all kinds of written documents. The letter compensates a loss and allows the subject to resolve his inherent ambivalence towards objects and the world.

«Open the sealed letter first – The letter I gave you this morning!»

I opened the letter.

«Read the name I have written inside.»

I read the name that he had written. It was *Godfrey Ablewhite*, (M,502)

Under the influence of opium Blake has to reenact the stealing of the diamond. Collins uses regressive activities here, and shows that the letter is a defense which can be used to reduce the sense of guilt. It will help the return of the repressed by the means of the construction of mental images. The investigation of the self stresses scopic desire. Rachel is watching the violation of her intimacy through reflection in the mirror. Freud will demonstrate later the difficulty of the subject to associate words representation to thing representation. Language may serve to symbolize the dearest lost object.

What words passed between them I can't say. But standing near the old oak frame which holds our large looking-glass, I saw her reflected in it shyly slipping the locket which Mr Franklin had given to her, out of the bosom of her dress, and showing it to him for a moment, with a smile which certainly meant something out of the common, before she tripped off to bed (M,113)

The emphasis on looking (the scopic drive) must be noticed: the characters watch and are watched. The subject takes his pleasure in looking. Its preferred form of sexual activity is looking at the sexual activities of others. Colonel Herncastle has a dagger dripping with blood. It is the phallic image of the rapist after his act. The story shows how a male detective penetrates female secrets. Franklin's phallic stick is penetrating the sand's «vagina dentata» whereas the ebb and flow movement of the waves is suggesting female sexuality.

I own I closed my eyes at the moment when the point of the stick first entered the quick sand. (M,357)

In this novel, anticipating Norman Holland's *Five Readers Reading* and Robert Silhol's *Le Texte du désir* each character sees reality in his/her own particular way: but this reality always appears as a result of a reconstruction.

Rosanna records her transgressive love in a letter that is sunk beneath the surface of the shivering sands and can be retrieved by a chain. This can be read today as a metaphor, *en avance*, beforehand, of the Freudian unconscious,

On our way to the Shivering Sand, I applied to Betteredge to revive my memory of events as affecting Rosanna Spearman at the period of Sergeant Cuff's inquiry. (M,355)

The inquiry uses many written documents to investigate the truth. Betteredge reads *Robinson Crusoe* as if it were a *Bible*; Miss Clack writes many letters and hands out many tracts; Franklin is advised the reading of a book entitled *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, he takes pleasure in reading and stopping and resuming his reading of Rosanna's posthumous letter. Erza Jennings, in this story the ancestor of the psychoanalyst, interprets Doctor's Candy free associations and unconscious mental life; he discovers that some instances of forgetting are related to neurotic conflict.

It may be possible to trace Mr Candy's lost recollection, without the necessity of appealing to Mr Candy himself. (M,420)

This shows that the blanks in the letter are the important thing and here we think of Henry James's *The Wings of The Dove*. It explains why the subject of the enunciation wants to erase the signifier as such (of unconscious desire). Erza Jennings requests that all his papers be buried with him in an unmarked grave: all this is better repressed, Collins disavows the absence of «The Moonstone» and writes a novel to tell us that the diamond has been there before and has taken afterwards. The lack of «The Moonstone» can be interpreted as a castration.

\* \* \*

This novel is a metaphor of the struggle taking place within Collins's psyche. It carries out the task of repetition : the loss and recovery of the object. Desire is continually displaced and transferred.

So the years pass, and repeat each other; so the same events revolve in the cycle of time. What will be the next adventures of the Moonstone? Who can tell! (M,526)

The author imagines a son, Franklin Blake, who aggresses his mother and murders his father, parents against whom the child has negative oedipal feelings. The writing of this tale expresses the return of the repressed male anxiety about blood and loss. The story of the crime and the story of the restoration of the jewel are like masks exonerating the subject from guilt.

At the end of the story, renunciation of «The Moonstone» is not tolerated without some attempt at compensation. The object is there but it can still be seen. The subject is not looking for the phallus but for its absence and the possibility of the love object of becoming an object of desire.

And there, in the forehead of the deity, gleamed the yellow Diamond, whose splendor had last shone on me in England from the bosom of a woman's dress. (M,526)

Doing so, the transgressive child gets rid of his alienation from his father's art. It corresponds to Collins's desire to reconstruct a masculine identity for himself empowered by the father's example himself rephallicized. This can partly explain his choice to become a poet and a novelist.

# Don Juan and the shiksah: Seduction scenes in Albert Cohen's novels

SOLANGE LEIBOVICI (\*)

Constantly recurring themes and people characterize Albert Cohen's work. The author has devoted his life to a single work with a single plot that increases in length and poignancy, from *Solal* (1930) to *Belle du Seigneur* (1968).<sup>1</sup> The main theme is the story of Solal, the Jewish Don Juan who left his family and the Greek ghetto where he was born to become rich and unhappy in Switzerland and France. He suffers from the enviable curse of having every woman fall in love with him. These ladies are interchangeable: beautiful, married or engaged, and always gentle.

Just as all Solal's inamorata are breathtakingly beautiful, the Jewish women in his life are horribly ugly. Their ugliness, however, is not intended in a literal sense. Cohen views moral virtue and purity as ugly and regards physical beauty as impure. Jewish women are ugly and sometimes even deformed, but nevertheless pure and innocent because they are unencumbered by lust and sinful fantasies. Their bodies are sexless, and they satisfy their erotic urges by partaking in gastronomic excess. Shiksahs, on the other hand, who appear elegant and demure and whose slim figures attest to their tiny appetites, are easily seduced into nights of wild, uninhibited passion. Physical repulsiveness should therefore be considered symbolic of a moral purity that is not to be violated under any circumstances. In suggesting that sexuality should be saved for shiksahs, Cohen condones their humiliation and defilement: their nature is as impure as the pork they love to eat.

Solal succumbs to the charms of the other species like a forbidden fruit. Likewise, his cousin Naileater enjoys eating ham sandwiches while telling himself that ham comes from «the Israelite and consequently the pure part of the pig», and his uncle Saltiel fantasizes about visiting the pope, whom he secretly admires. Cohen's novels glorify woman's quality of being different, as well as otherness, struggle, and obstacles to unification and fusion.

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<sup>1</sup> *Solal* was translated in English in the 1930s; *Belle du Seigneur* was translated in 1995, London/New York, Viking/Penguin Group.

Temptation, however, is absent from Cohen's archaic Jewish universe, a way of life he identifies with love. In his work, love is a bond of intimacy that gradually forms between two people who have shared a lifetime of sorrow and joy, «the biblical love so different from my Western passions». Love is also the feeling of tenderness and forgiveness of a mother for her son and of a son for his mother.

Albert Cohen's first novel *Solal* introduces the seducer in action. He has been abandoned by Adrienne, his lover, and hopes to regain her affections. After a few melancholy introductory remarks about his sorrow and his love for her, he quickly devises a strategy. One: declaring his love to catch her attention. Two: arousing her envy by making her think he has someone else. Three: suggesting that he will soon fall for the other woman if she does not act quickly. He tries to arouse all conceivable sentiments: motherly feelings, tenderness, satisfied pride, worry. Adrien succumbs to his desires; she visits him at his hotel and soon lies naked on his bed.

Adrienne is succeeded by her young friend Aude, who almost seemed to expect Solal. Aude daydreams about Eastern lands and exotic passions. Solal, an eccentric and excessively handsome man with black curls, seems to personify her erotic fantasies. The two «enemies» soon confront one another. Aude falls in love with Solal when he replaces the wounded lion tamer at the circus and forces the ferocious tiger into a retreat with a crack of his whip. Adrienne, an aging woman who has had her day (she is round thirty), throws herself before a train like the abandoned Anna Karenina. Aude marries Solal.

*Belle du Seigneur* contains two versions of the seduction scene. Solal hopes to seduce Ariane without involving his appearance or his social status. First, he surprises her at home, disguised as a caricature of the Wandering Jew with his curls, his fur hat, and his old greatcoat. He is filthy and scruffy and has painted his front teeth black. He has eliminated the conventional attributes of a seducer and has reverted to his opposite.

Shocked at his disgusting appearance and his passionate words, Ariane throws a glass in his face and injures him. The blood that gushes forth symbolizes a love pact, even though it begins with a curse. «Vilely shall I seduce you as you deserve and as you want. When we meet again, and that shall be soon, in two hours I will ravish you in ways that women love and cannot resist, foul and filthy ways, and you, love's great fool, shall be mine, and you will come away with me, in doe-eyed ecstasy.» (BS:38) The profession of love is a declaration of war.

Solal launches his second attack by the book in the prestigious setting of the League of Nations in Geneva where he works as Ariane's husband's superior. He encourages this man's literary aspirations by assigning him to write a book about Don Juan. In every campaign to seduce a woman, Solal approaches her husband first to eliminate him.

Solal quickly reveals all his tactics for convincing a woman to go along with him. First, give «the subject notice that she is about to be seduced» (BS:346) to challenge her. The second step involves demolishing her husband. Third, «wheel out the poetic gambit», the romantic setting, and play acting that her husband is unable to emulate on a daily basis. The whole strategy serves to make her feel unique and adored. She blames her husband «because he is witness to the petty indignities she suffers daily, her rumpled hair in the morning», (BS:348) or the repulsive consequences of the laxative from the night before. She longs to believe the noble words spoken by this Prince Charming and the moral alibi of his references to Bach, Kafka, or God. She tries to deny that he too is merely a container of «ten meters of intestines». Cohen delights in references to inevitable human anality to shatter woman's glamorous image and the poetic charm of language and oral qualities.

The fourth tactic is the strong-man ploy and the act of virility because «they find danger in strength attractive, and the power to kill excites them, for they are baboons». (BS:350) Fifth: cruelty, they love a «handsome, cruel smile showing many toothbones» (BS:360) and appreciate a man's brutal whims, because they long for variety and torture. Tactic number six is vulnerability because his power should include an aspect of weakness to «arouse her maternal instinct». (BS:371)

Seventh is «contempt from the outset», because it makes her lose control, and because «a scornful attitude shows that he is used to being loved».

The eighth tactic involves appealing to their vanity through consideration and compliments, which always works. «Do not be afraid of laying it on too thick: they will believe anything.» (BS:372) Nine is «sexuality by suggestion»: «While speaking loftily» about how «Bach brings us closer to God», gaze intently at her breasts so that «she will guess that you desire her». (BS:354) The tenth and final gambit: «the declaration of love. Use all the stale old clichés you like, but attend to your voice and its fire». (BS:375) Women will fall for any sweet talk, provided the speaker's voice sings like a cello.

Solal is a perverse and subversive Don Juan: he does not promise love, marriage, and loyalty, but seduction, humiliation, and cruelty. He does not foretell happiness because he derives pleasure only from speech and from the rhetoric of seduction, which is based almost exclusively on interminable and excessive word games.<sup>2</sup> His verbal power is almost as impressive as his physical beauty, and seduction links the two incompatible extremes of body and spirit, as well as the author and the reader – who also begins to believe in true love and salvation through such love. Like Ariane, who falls in love with him and leaves her dull husband, the reader eventually will come away empty-handed.

The spell of the seduction ritual occurs at another level as well: jokes, distortions, and ridicule, in the other version of the seduction scene, as narrated by Solal's alter ego Naileater. Freud has observed that jokes can contain the same defense mechanisms as dreams. Jokes, however, neatly circumvent these mechanisms and make people laugh, whereas dreams conceal them. Thus the *Witz* directly refers to subconscious elements. A hint of compulsion lurks behind the repeated summation of strategies, and the author's clear delight in referring to the story's anal character: humor is a liberating expression of fearfully suppressed fantasies.

Naileater is a crafty liar and an ugly but likeable slob with huge hairy black feet, who is always hungry and whose many nicknames include that of «King of Farts».<sup>3</sup> As the founder, president and only instructor at the Higher and Philosophical University of Cephalonia, he delivers a lecture on seduction before a simple but admiring audience in exchange for food or a small fee. He weaves his story around the adulterous Anna Karenina. His listeners, who think the tale is true, are filled with a combination of disbelief, horror, and envy.

First, he describes the conditions necessary for seduction. Of course, the lady concerned must be married. Anna Karenina is indeed married. As a true poetess, she is totally revolted by her husband, who suffers from constipation and locks himself in the toilet several times a day. The lady of desire must be noble and virtuous, as such women derive the greatest pleasure from sexual escapades. They are also naive and easily led on by sweet tales of music and God. The lady must be in good health, as a sickly woman will never deceive her husband. Moreover, the seducer should hold a prestigious position, as power is synonymous with the ability to kill, which women adore. Vronsky has a truly honorable function: as a prince, he is responsible for emptying the czar's washbasin every day, clearly a very impressive occupation. Once all the conditions have been fulfilled, the game of seduction can begin.

As an excuse to approach Anna, Vronsky starts a conversation about literature. Anna can pretend to enjoy the discussion because they share a common interest.

After this first move, Vronsky proceeds to the next step: showing that he is honest and trustworthy and has high moral standards, which women like to claim that they value. Make no mistake, however, Naileater enthusiastically elaborates: they always prove to be bloodthirsty gorillas! «How

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<sup>2</sup> Shoshana Felman, *Le scandale du corps parlant*, Paris, Seuil, 1980.

<sup>3</sup> You may appreciate learning that Albert Cohen was a very neat, elegant man who periodically suffered from anorexia.

different from my husband», muses Anna, «that bumbling fatso who sits on the toilet and never talks to me about the moon!» Then the wretch has the czar send her husband abroad to clear the coast. During the evenings that follow, he is able to pay her leisurely visits.

They talk endlessly about music and literature. As he speaks, he restrains himself from farting, and she does the same. Whenever her stomach rumbles, she coughs or jerks her body to muffle the sounds. She feels his intense glare penetrate through her skin. Powerfully aroused, she keeps comparing him to that miserable, vulgar husband of hers whom she resents for going to the toilet and possibly even more for knowing that she does the same. Her seven-year-old son is safely tucked away at the home of an old woman to enable her to spend her evenings privately in the company of her Prince Charming and his elegant mustache. Suddenly, Anna is in bed. Instead of worrying about her little boy, she abandons herself to wild calisthenics as she thrashes about with him. After her lover has gone, she finally releases all her pent-up farts and rushes to the toilet. Next, she runs to the kitchen to stuff herself with huge chunks of leg of lamb because she is famished.

Naileater is the anti-hero, the comical and Rabelaisian double who represents Solal's repressed anal and vulgar characteristics in the manner that Leporello or Sganarelle signifies Don Juan's alter ego. In *Don Juan und der Doppelgänger*, Otto Rank writes that Leporello is Don Juan's conscience; likewise, Naileater is an inversion of Solal's personality. Solal is the seducer, Naileater is the teacher, who turns the seduction discourse – and the poetic myth of romantic passion – into what it truly is: dirt, excrements. Solal's beauty is only a cover for sadistic misogyny, while Naileater's ugliness is a guarantee for authenticity.

What is Solal's main justification for seducing women? The hope that a woman may someday resist his advances, which may be the essence of Don Juan's eternal search for the Woman, but «alas, he never strikes out». Solal's fantasy of rejection by a woman contrasts with the reality of the successful seduction. He regards all his lovers with mixed feelings, including love and hate and love and disgust.

Solal appeals to women's motherly quality of accepting him as he is, without criticizing or passing judgment. He wants to pursue the symbiotic relationship between the mother and the small child. This perspective idealizes the mother figure as a virtuous and caring woman whose love remains untainted by the «physical» or the «social». Solal seduces shiksahs to escape the oppressive confines of motherly love and the inevitable, unsolvable feelings of guilt that coincide with incestuous desires, which of course should never be satisfied. His emotions are torn: pure love for the mother focuses on an ideal image, while erotic urges are diverted to the other woman.

Nevertheless, the child also sees the beloved mother as a woman, who even allows herself to be seduced as such and is unfaithful to him. As a young child, Solal looks at his parents and gazes from his father to his mother while trying to read their minds, «as he rejects the unbearable, revolting images of his father and mother in bed at night». He vents his disgust and rage in his description of the ugly Jewish women. The seduction of the beautiful shiksah is an act of revenge against the mother. Each time Solal seduces a woman, he repeats the original scene in which his father seduces his mother. His repulsion for his father is the antipode of his desire to identify with him.

While Cohen glorified his mother in the sentimental, guilt-ridden *Le livre de ma mère* (1954), he wrote little about his father. His autobiographical work *Carnets* (1979) looks back on the period when he related his own family-romance: «Over and over, I tell myself that my father had nothing to do with my birth, that the event was magical, and that a mighty prince engendered me through the power of his words, that *he* is my real father, a wonderful father and a ruler I may never meet...»

This children's tale contains elements that reappear in his subsequent novels: rejection of the father, creative power of language, aversion to parental sexuality. In Cohen's novels, Gamaliel is an implacable and righteous rabbi who represents the incarnation of the unrelenting God of Israel. In *Carnets*, however, Cohen writes about his father: «When he entered, he was a true man, the lion

tamer with a thick mustache that he loved to twist upward in an obscene gesture. How that boastful twisting irritated me.» This lion-taming, virile father resembles the lion tamer in *Solal*; here, too, the father must give way to the son, who will have the wild beast – which symbolizes the woman’s wild passion - crawl before him.

Cohen’s mother was also a «*belle du seigneur*», who submitted to the animal-like force of her master with the mustache at night. The idealized mother is also indirectly subjected to Solal’s misogynist and degrading expressions. The seduction is a regressive game that tries to exorcize the mother’s desire for the father, blended with feelings of fear and aggression over her submission to the father’s seduction. The child’s sexuality is structured by the relationship between the parents, as well as by their desire that precedes and defines his own. In the seduction scene, Solal continually and repeatedly plays the scene he fears (the beautiful woman gives in to her own erotic longings and submits to the man) while he fantasizes his true desire (the ugly but virtuous mother takes the child’s side and turns away from her husband). He plays both the father and the son in this scene. Eliminating the real father, he himself becomes the «mighty prince» who engenders by the power of his words, like the author creating a romantic character.

Nevertheless, the seduction scene is also a metaphor for Cohen’s mixed feelings toward Western culture and especially Western literature, symbolized by Western women. Solal uses the shikhsah to seduce the Western culture that has seduced him and has led him to betray his people and his heritage. Solal simply cannot fall in love with a Jewish woman: as he has transformed himself into the romantic character of the Don Juan, his desire is dictated by the desire of other characters in novels, who act as mediators as in René Girard’s «*désir triangulaire*».<sup>4</sup> First, the shikhsah satisfies *their* romantic demands as no Jewish woman can. By repeatedly assailing the passion in Western novels, Cohen demonstrates his hero’s constant struggle with an idealized image he is unable to fulfill.

Sander Gilman writes that «the Jew in the Western Diaspora does respond, must respond, to the image of the Jew in such cultures».<sup>5</sup> Solal internalizes this image as a kind of secret hiding place. In the cellars of his magnificent French castle, Solal hides his entire extended family, a baroque collection of children, adults, and elderly people who have pitched their tents there. The sweltering, noisy, and colorful ghetto has abandoned its Greek island and has followed him to France. At night, with them, Solal can be himself and live a secret life as a Jew among Jews. Solal is inextricably linked with this part of himself. The cellar of Solal’s house is his repressed true identity, which is unable to adapt to the standards of the Western cultural superego.

When Solal’s wife Aude discovers this other world, and he can no longer hide his Jewish identity from the outside, their quarrel detonates the eternal conflict between the two cultures. Upon descending into the secret cellars, Aude notices a different scene than Solal perceives. He is struck by his family’s warmth, their joy, their uninhibited Eastern mentality, their eccentricity. Aude discovers a repulsive medieval market beneath her house. She notices Ruben, whose left eyelid is shut and twisted into a grimace, hears the shrill screams of women conversing in whiny voices, and sees shady dealers with greasy noses and hands covered with blue hair. She sees melancholy, terrified lunatics, and a mother rocking her recently circumcized baby, proud of the blood flowing down her child’s thighs. The cellar also is a cliché, which functions here perfectly: underworld or hell, it’s the country of the creatures of the night and the moon, of vampires and parasites.

Aude views Solal’s world from the anti-Semite’s perspective of ideological distortion. In turn, Solal conforms to this stereotype by dressing up as a poor old Jew in his effort to seduce Ariane. Cohen enjoys playing with stereotypes and presenting them in a favorable light. Although some of

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<sup>4</sup> René Girard, *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque*, Paris, Grasset, 1961.

<sup>5</sup> Sander Gilman, *The Jew’s Body*, New York and London, Routledge, 1991, p. 4.

Cohen's Jewish characters resemble highly distasteful anti-semitic illustrations, his descriptions are never what they initially seem. Jeremiah, the poor tramp, has a nose resembling a squashed cucumber. Notwithstanding his unattractive appearance, he is one of Cohen's most likeable characters.

But there is another cellar in *Belle du Seigneur*, which belongs to the midget Rachel in Berlin in the 1930s, and might symbolize the world of judaism as well as the mother's womb. There, Solal finally comes to terms with his Jewish identity. After putting on a fake nose and looking in the mirror, he sees an «integral full Jew, with the majestic appendage that attests to the will to live, enlarged by constantly sniffing for the enemy and smelling traps». The *schnozzel* becomes a sign of will power and heroic vitality.

Solal is torn between two kinds of stereotypes: the ones about the Jews, and the ones about the Western hero, a conflict which cannot be resolved. At the end of *Belle du Seigneur*, Cohen sacrifices him to the demands of romantic literature: like a true romantic hero, Solal commits suicide with his beloved Ariane after an ultimate seduction. Solal's final vision, however, is the cellar in Berlin with little Rachel – his mother's name was also Rachel – calling that his time has come.

Albert Cohen married twice and had many affairs with gentile women. The year his mother died, he met Bella Berkowich, an attractive Jewish woman who became his last wife.

(Translated by Lee Mitzman)

# Lacan and literature

HENK HILLENAAR (\*)

Like Freud, Lacan had all his life a very great interest in literature. In his case this might be considered as less surprising than in that of his master. Someone whose thinking is so much determined by the overpowering role of language in the functioning of the human psyche, will be equally inclined to study the most outstanding product of language: literature. Therefore, in Lacan's work, we find long statements on James Joyce, Marguerite Duras, Edgar Allan Poe, Paul Claudel and many others. However we cannot say that the admiration is mutual. Until now the literary world has shown not much interest in the ideas of Lacan. Whereas Freud's writings on *Oedipus*, *Hamlet*, *Gradiva* or on wit and wordplay have got a wide, mostly appreciative reception, we can't, apart from a few exceptions<sup>1</sup>, speak of such a response in the case of Lacan.

Such reaction is probably due in the first place to the notoriously hermetical character of many of his texts. When, in 1971, the French magazine *Littérature*<sup>2</sup> asked him to contribute to a special issue on «Literature and Psychoanalysis», Lacan, who once compared himself to the Spanish hermetical poet Gongora, wrote an article with the title «Lituraterre» that was in fact a mass of loose and obscure statements and wordgames, explaining what he conceived to be the main objective of literature: to be an open experiment with language, of the kind we encounter in Mallarmé's or Joyce's work. Literature, according to this article, should never lead to a polished story of an author who keeps everything under control but is avoiding the confrontation with the «language of the Other», and of his unconscious desires.

However, the choice of this rather one-sided point of view involves a number of limitations: everything that is part of what we call «hermeneutics» – the referent, the meaning of a text or its explanation – seems no longer of great importance. Lacan's approach is structuralistic or systemati-

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<sup>1</sup> For example: Shoshana Felman, *Le scandale du corps parlant*, Seuil, 1980; Robert Silhol, *Le texte du désir: La critique après Lacan*, éd. Cistre (Belgium), 1984. The latter contains a series of theoretical statements as well as some convincing and suggestive exercises of close reading where Lacan and hermeneutics seem no longer contradictory; Slavoy Zizek, *Looking awry: an introduction to Jacques Lacan through popular culture*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1991, analyzes mainly films, but also, the secret outlines of some literary texts.

<sup>2</sup> *Littérature*, n.º 3, octobre 1971.

cal, which means that questions regarding the act of language – on speaking and writing – are predominant and tend to exclude discussions of what a particular text could actually mean. Lacan seems only interested in the linguistic sign, the «signifiant», or rather in the chain of «signifiants». He is under the spell of the laws that govern this chain and of the transgressive way we apply them in our «discourse». What counts ultimately is that language continues to be spoken and written. A subject is essentially a subject of language; therefore our main task should be to keep language going, in ourselves and in society. And though the link with a more or less clarified meaning of the text will never be missing, we see that Lacan is much more concerned with the text as a linguistic construction than with the dream-construction underneath. It is quite understandable that many do not find this an attractive way to deal with literary texts. Literature is primarily a matter of imagination and of story-telling. This is also true when we think of what happens on the couch of the psychoanalyst. When in May 1993, the same magazine *Littérature*<sup>3</sup> devoted another issue to «Literature and Psychoanalysis», one of the conclusions of the editorial staff was that until then the Lacanian concepts had not been very fertile in this field, and that publications of true importance had been rare.

In Lacan's work literature functions primarily as a domain in which he can recognise and test his own ideas. In a homage to Marguerite Duras he wrote that she turns out «to know without Lacan what Lacan is teaching»<sup>4</sup>. He was inclined to see a soul-mate in James Joyce, whose literary daring and inventiveness Lacan tries to equal with his stylistic tours de force. His preferred authors are nearly always avant-garde figures, whose ideas or language experiments approach his own or can be used to illustrate them. The best known example is to be found in Edgar Allan Poe. In his famous essay on Poe's *Purloined Letter*, Lacan provides us with a very lively illustration of his theory of the all-embracing role of the «signifier» in our lives; the «purloined letter» that the queen has received and for which the king, his minister and the latter's chief-inspector are searching, continually changes ownership, without yielding its secret. To Lacan the letter represents the «signifier», in its first and most important function: to denote the central interior emptiness of the human subject, which determines our existence of absence and longing. Your «sad fate», says Lacan's signifier at the end of this text to the reader, is that «you are thinking that it's you who is acting, whereas it's me who keeps you on the move and who decides with which bonds I constrain your desires»<sup>5</sup>.

The interpretation that Lacan developed some years later of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*<sup>6</sup> is also mainly an illustration of one of his fundamental concepts: according to him *Hamlet* is the «tragedy of desire». During the performance of this piece, desire completely changes direction, Hamlet's Father not being able to oppose the fatal wishes of his wife, Hamlet's Mother. Acceptation of «castration» is here converted into a game with death, first Ophelia's – Lacan writes: 'O phallus! – and afterwards with Hamlet's own demise. As a matter of fact, according to Lacan, the «Other», the origin of our desires, can be the Father or the Mother. Responsible for the symbolic order, the Father protects the child against the Mother, but if he fails, the child has to fall back on the «Absolute Other»: Lacan uses here the term «Das Ding» of the beginning, in which he recognises much of the Mother. In such cases the Mother indeed no longer gives life but is a pull towards death. Rather than new revelations or a hermeneutical approach, this comment on Shakespeare provides us with a literary representation of Lacan's concepts and ideas.

Another creator of «tragedies of desire» is the French playwright Paul Claudel, also an object of admiration for Lacan because of his baroque use of language and his passion for extreme attitudes and situations. Claudel, some of whose works are thoroughly studied by Lacan<sup>7</sup>, could in

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<sup>3</sup> *Littérature*, n.° 90, mai 1993, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> «Hommage fait à Marguerite Duras, du Ravissement de Lol V. Stein». in: *Cahiers Renaud/Barrault*, n.° 52, déc. 1965.

<sup>5</sup> Le Séminaire sur «La lettre volée», in *Écrits I*, p. 52.

<sup>6</sup> In 1959. These lessons have been published by J. A. Miller in *Ornicar?*, n.° 24 (1981), n.° 25 (1982) and n.° 26/27 (1983).

<sup>7</sup> *Séminaire VIII. Le Transfert*, Paris: Seuil, 1991, 311-384.

this context be even more interesting than Shakespeare, because he is not only a contemporary of Lacan but also the creator of a type of language that urgently requires interpretation. Lacan aims at something else. He wants to clarify his own theories and not Claudel's ideas: «I have been looking for something in our own contemporary experience to which I could connect my ideas»<sup>8</sup>. Again these lessons focus on the Father: after the «dead Father» of Oedipus and the «damned Father» of Hamlet, Claudel in his play *Le père humilié* shows us two «humiliated Fathers»: Pope Pius VI, who was deceived by Napoleon, and then a nonhistorical character, Toussaint Turelure, who was killed by his son. The latter takes his dead father's mistress as his own. With many colorful or provocative details Lacan recalls for us the long story of the Coufontaine-family. Claudel's threefold tragedy<sup>9</sup>, he writes, is dominated by castration, which means the birth of the desiring subject. Besides a source of pleasure, the literary text is again first of all a source of recognition and of legitimization. Compared to all the attention that is paid to the Lacanian anthropology and to the writing-process, the part that hermeneutics take in these considerations seems neglectable.

#### DESIRE AND PHANTASY, PLEASURE AND KNOWLEDGE

The question remains if the subject does not represent more than only castration and lack. Is there not more in the speaking subject than emptiness that has to be filled, even more, preserved? Do literature and art not have other, more positive functions? Is desire not also, and even in the first place, creative? And shouldn't we consider literature in the same way? Writing and reading are also ways to compensate, sublimate or exorcise our desires. Melanie Klein speaks in this connection about «repairing the loss». As a reader of Hegel, Lacan obviously acknowledges this other side of the medal of desire, but he disposes of it as an illusion, like everything that is part of the «imaginary world». Therefore he never really wants to pose questions about content and explanation. Nor is he willing, like Freud was, to evaluate literary creations according to their meaning or intention. For him each meaning is a reduction that detracts from the many other meanings that undoubtedly exist. Lacan does not want to see any definitive statement in language and signs, he is only interested in absence that creates new absence, desire that produces other desire<sup>10</sup>, and in the way all this happens. For, if the unconscious ever may be caught, it should be in this movement of the text.

It is in this context that we perceive Lacan's theory about fantasy, the material of the literary work. Fantasy in fact precedes desire, our psychic life not having desires as its origin but 'scenes' that arouse desire<sup>11</sup>. Fantasy shapes desire, making it the specific relationship between a subject that becomes himself in this process and the object that awoke this desire<sup>12</sup>. Such an obsessive inner scene itself frequently becomes an object of desire. It involves always a field of tension which

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<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, 316.

<sup>9</sup> *L'Otage, Le Pain dur, Le Père humilié*.

<sup>10</sup> Departing from this opposition between desire experienced as productive and creative on the one side, and the Platonic and Christian view of human desire as lack and suffering on the other, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattuari published in 1972 their famous *Anti-Oedipe*, criticising psychoanalysis and first of all Lacan and the Lacan vogue of those days. Their ideas had a tremendous success and make themselves felt to the present day. In his history of French philosophy Vincent Descombes notes that disciples of Hegel, Sartre and Lacan tend to neglect the ideas of Nietzsche and Bergson which are less rooted in negation (Vincent Descombes, *Le Même et l'Autre*, Paris: Minuit, 1979, 39-42).

<sup>11</sup> J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *Fantasme originnaire. Fantasme des origines. Origines du fantasme* (1964), Paris, Hachette, 1985.

<sup>12</sup> This object – Lacan speaks of an «objet petit a» – must have been experienced originally as something that had separated from the primordial unity, «the One», which was constituted by the subject and the body of the mother, one might think of the breast, or the faeces. Lacan considers every later object as a substitute of these forgotten objects of the beginning.

occurs in every literary text and is also part of Lacan's theory: each object of desire sends us back to the unrealizable dream of «the One», the total satisfaction or symbiosis of the beginning, and so it becomes something like a delusion, purely imaginary. Conversely such an object has its place within the linguistic reality which is universally accepted and cognizable, being guaranteed by the law of the symbolic order.

Renouncing his usual verbose and abstruse style, Lacan stated in one of his seminars: «Within the phenomenon of word/language we can subsume the three orders of the Symbolic, represented by the “Signifier”, the Imaginary, represented by the “Signified” and the Real which we can find in the speech as it sounds as a diachronical process»<sup>13</sup>. Of course, this «Real»<sup>14</sup> cannot be reached as such in language or literature, although it is always present as base and frame of our object of desire. Sometimes too, it is truly with us, as a disaster, an overwhelming presence, when, «dancing on a volcano», we touch the wide open gap in the heart of our well organised symbolic order. What we, indirectly, make visible of the Real is precisely the fact that it is given coherence by the symbolic order of language and that this coherence receives its guarantee from the «Father». His «name» and authority protect us against desires that are sometimes too violent to reunite with the «Real», as in the beginning, meaning, with the Mother. Therefore she nearly never has a positive role in Lacan's thinking. The Mother asks too much, she is dangerous, with many kinds of delusions trying to keep us away from the Father and the social order. This Queen of the Night, of the Imaginary Order, becomes easily, if we do not take care, «das Ding» that is going to devour us.

This interplay between «imaginary» and «symbolic» – in which readers of Saint Thomas of Aquinas would perhaps recognise a secularized version of the tension between the «formal» and the «material» object – is used by Lacan as an invitation to pass through our fantasies: «passage» that should teach us to renounce our illusions and to commit ourselves to the word, the law of the «Other». However, this «Other» has also always been the Authority against whom we unconsciously organise our resistance. The «Other» provokes or inspires our repression, negation and exclusion. Therefore we constantly and necessarily condemn ourselves, according to Lacan, to jump from the frying pan into the fire. That's his vision of life: as speaking and writing subjects, we owe our existence to the chain of «signifiers» which is bearing and determining us, which gratifies and cheats us.

Once again we encounter the same phenomenon: in the eyes of Lacan the interesting point of fantasy is to be found not in its content but in the partly conscious, partly unconscious movement from one fantasy to another caused by our speaking and writing. Content or signification always turns out to be an illusion. Lacan seems to forget that literature convinces and seduces the public mainly because of this game of the provisional and the illusory. Is it not his idea that we need these imaginary identifications to build up our inner consistency? Lacan is under the spell of the forms that language can take. What he likes to observe in a writer are the neurotic or perverse games that the artist plays with language. The desire and the fantasy of the maternal object, which underlay, as its condition and its point of departure, this game with the laws of the paternal language, have to yield to the latter and disappear. In the psychic interplay between «maternal» and «paternal» forces, between imagination as creation of our own world, and imagination as struggle against the world of the father, Lacan focuses on the struggle. Therefore hermeneutics become something like a necessary evil. In the world of desire Lacan prefers to cultivate the confrontation with the Father rather than to taste the

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<sup>13</sup> *Séminaire III. Les Psychoses*, 75-76. And in the *Séminaire XX. «Encore»*, he writes: «The real is the mystery of a body that speaks, it is the mystery of the unconscious», 118.

<sup>14</sup> The «Real» should not be confused with «Reality», the latter pointing to the necessarily deficient way we try, by means of imagination and language, to give form to this omnipresent «Real» and to make it manageable and livable.

temporary, uncertain fulfillment provided by the Mother<sup>15</sup>. This has also been remarked, but in a very different context, about Freud and his neglect of the maternal aspects in the psyche.

Obviously Lacan considers the imaginary order to be essential. Without that inner dimension, he writes, we would be like «inhabitants of the moon». And in another famous statement he tells us that love is the «capacity of changing the fantasies we make about the other». He nevertheless does not stop unmasking these fantasies, denouncing them as alienation. As metaphors they are more «meta» than «phor». In his seminar *Encore* they are called «stupidity» (bêtise) and «failure» (ratage), terms he endlessly repeats. As opposed to this general lack and emptiness Lacan only seems to acknowledge fullness, the scheme «everything or nothing» dominating in his way of thinking. Of course, a creation of our imagination cannot only be an illusion, it must also be something real, inside and outside us. It has to provide us with an inner coherence and an identity that may last ten or twenty years, even a lifetime. Lacan knows all of this but does not give it serious attention. He does not, as Freud did, feel the need to search for meanings that might be hidden behind the products of our imagination. In his clinical practice, as well as in literary texts, he is mainly fascinated by other, new words that enable us to leave the words of yesterday behind us.

Lacan does not seem to realize that literature which provides words with a wealth, a «cornucopia», of meanings, is first of all a sphere of fullness. Joyce, who became Lacan's big model under the writers, could have been a model in this respect as well. Reading Joyce we are accustomed to feel behind every ten words the presence of one hundred meanings. Even Lacan cannot forget this, but he is more mesmerised by the game than by its material. It inspires him to play his own games with words and language.

#### MYSTIC OR JANSENIST?

Should we perhaps call Lacan a mystic, as he did himself in his seminar *Encore*?<sup>16</sup> After all, whether he is working on psychoanalysis or on literature, his approach to the human mind seems to be a mystical one: he wants to enjoy the secrets of our present secularized inner world, and at the same time he is governed by a dominant feeling of not-knowing, which makes him experience the interior world as being chiefly negative. This mystical disposition seems to be confirmed by the numerous references he makes to «the One» of the beginning, when desire was born, and to the «impossible (sexual) relationship», meaning that desire will never end. His nearly obsessive interest in mathematical formulas shares the same pattern. Do mathematics not use the only language that coincides with «a reality»? The structuralist mind sometimes seems to reach a point here where «the theory of reality coincides with reality»<sup>17</sup>. Therefore Lacan is also interested in poetry which uses mathematics in establishing laws for measure, rhythm and rime. Mathematics – and something alike might be said about pleasure (jouissance) – «snatch us away from our fantasmatic way of functioning».

Nevertheless, it is significant that in Lacan's view, language, and specially literary language, not only enables us to establish a relationship with lost reality, but is, even more, also an instrument of pleasure, of «jouissance». It is Lacan's originality to have seen in this pleasure a third «substance», in the medieval, scholastic or Cartesian sense, in addition to the two well known Cartesian «substan-

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<sup>15</sup> In the later work of Lacan, where he shows more and more interest in the idea of the «Real», he introduces the concept «sinthome», perhaps also as a kind of way out of this problem. «Sinthome» points at the very own way in which a subject gives form to the articulation between the «Real», the «Imaginary» and the «Symbolic». The symptom that, in Freud's view, needs clarification and cure, becomes in the eyes of Lacan a kind of identity-theme that has to be cultivated.

<sup>16</sup> *Encore*, 71.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, 118 and 108.

ces», thinking and space: «To the traditional philosophical way of thinking which makes us suppose that thinking has a firm connection with being, I declare that we are determined by pleasure (jouissance). Thinking is pleasure [...] And there is a pleasure of being»<sup>18</sup>. According to Lacan this pleasure becomes real in the use of language. He does not differentiate between the speaking and writing person enjoying language and the mystic enjoying God. Both realize the inadequacy of what they experience. Language takes the place of the pleasure we once received in our symbiosis with the mother, which later has become impossible. Sexuality is only a poor effort to repeat this primal experience. As «there is no sexual relationship» - in the original meaning of a complete symbiosis language can acquire immense importance. We approach reality «with the instruments of pleasure», Lacan writes, but as far as he is concerned, «there are no other instruments than language»<sup>19</sup>. Simultaneously, however, language denotes restriction or frustration of pleasure. Therefore we endlessly go on speaking and writing, while the contrary is also true: «Because pleasure speaks, there is no sexual relationship»<sup>20</sup>.

Nevertheless, «the signifier is situated at the level of the substance that takes its pleasure»<sup>21</sup>. And this pleasure arises because of what Lacan calls semblances: «du semblant». Here the imaginary seems to get its revenge. Something similar is particularly true in relation to the supreme imaginary, our love-life. Here too, illusion and dream determine everything: according to Lacan, not life, as for Calderón, but «the world is only a dream»: «a dream of the body as far as it speaks, for a subject who knows does not exist. There are only subjects who correlate with their object of desire»<sup>22</sup>. And of course the written word takes its share of this pleasure. As Lacan writes, «l'écrit, c'est la jouissance». He ends with this somewhat curious statement: «The unconscious, that is that being, when it speaks, experiences pleasure, and does not want to know anything further»<sup>23</sup>.

Yet, in this quotation, we see again that there are subjects who speak and have pleasure but none who know. Lacan persists in terming whatever we consider as knowledge illusion, or, more evocatively, «manure». He regards it as the necessary but hardly attractive motor of a process that aims at something totally different, a way of coping with the symbolic order, in the light of the name of the Father, whose law is beyond all imagination... What matters is not information but transformation<sup>24</sup>. As we have already noted, the work of Jacques Lacan is marked by negative thinking like that of most mystical writers. Negativity, and not particularly Hegel's negativity, permeates his works. His view of human sexuality, a most Freudian point of departure of his thinking, is much more negative than what we encounter in Freud's theories. Not only is there «no sexual relationship possible», but every «signifier» indicates also a primordial lack, lack of pleasure, lack of meaning. If in Freud's view the psychoanalyst became – but only very late – the one who «turns out not to know», Lacan adds that in fact even the patient cannot acquire any «truth» about him – or herself. Whereas for Freud the fantasies of the patient were an achievement, a way of knowing him more thoroughly, Lacan considers them almost exclusively as material that is needed to get to something else. Consequently his final message is to make a virtue of need and to «enjoy your symptom».

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<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, 66.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem, 52. In the same seminar, Lacan deals at great length with another, more mysterious form of pleasure, more direct and further reaching than language, and which implies a true encounter with the «Real». Lacan calls it a «supplementary-pleasure», analogous with Marx's «supplementary-value». He locates this form of pleasure in the woman, though he does not exclude the possibility for a man to experience it. Afterwards he will establish a link between this «supplementary-pleasure» and motherhood.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, 57.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, 26.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, 114

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, 95. This would be the occasion to speak about transference and counter-transference and about their central function in the literary process: movements in writer and reader that recall feelings of the past – love, lack and desire – and that transfer them to to-day's spoken or written word. On this particular point Lacan seems to adopt Freud's views unequivocally.

<sup>24</sup> The expression is Robert Silhol's in op. cit., 30.

After these considerations, one may doubt if Lacan resembles the mystical authors as much as he thought. He does mention their names – Hadewijch, Teresa and others – employs some mystical notions, and indicates analogies between their works and his. However their texts are hardly ever quoted or used by him, whereas he does quote Saint Paul and Luther. Wouldn't it be more obvious, if we really want to find an analogy between Lacan's works and some religious tradition from the past, to recall that very French movement, Jansenism? The emphasis on God as a Father and particularly on God as the Other, the distrust of the worship of the «Mother of God», the refusal of the illusions of the senses which can delude the faithful – nothing is true as long as it is not «the» truth and, moreover, the doctrine, which paradoxically is simultaneously stated, about the all-determining «delectatio» – pleasure – all these are typical of the Jansenistic way of thinking. Many elements of this Cartesian or even rationalistic thought can also be found in Lacan's work. When one sees how Lacan presents the human subject, speaking of the «stupidity» and the «failure» into which he inevitably falls<sup>25</sup>, the psychoanalyst resembles Pascal who also very much liked to portray the «self» as «haïssable» (hateful).

Therefore it is not difficult to argue that, *mutatis mutandis*, Lacan could be considered as a remote and very original heir of the Jansenist spirit, which has never really disappeared from France and French cultural life. However Jansenists did not much care for mystics. The latter could be more easily found among the Jesuits and their followers, who proved to be more tolerant of the weaknesses and illusions of their flocks, and gave free rein to everything that is maternal in creation and devotion. One could see Lacan as a Jesuit on the inside and a Jansenist on the outside. His baroque, Jesuit way of speaking and writing could be seen as a compensation for the severity he shows or, even more obviously, as a form of resistance.

Concerning literature and mysticism, the familiar objections to Lacan's thinking, reappear: What can literature be for the psychoanalyst, if the latter does not take seriously our «self», our «nature» or our dreams? All these basic elements of the literary text seem to become in the Lacanian anthropology a kind of mysterious gateway – over which are carved the words «felix culpa», «happy guilt» – through which we have access to the symbolic order. It is this leading authority of the symbolic order, the order of the Father, of the Other with his many known and unknown domains, which Lacan seeks. He wants to leave the realm of the Mother which is made of dreams and narcissistic illusions. Naturally Lacan is also thinking of an interplay between these two poles, the paternal and the maternal, which are determinant for the functioning of our psyche and its creations. But in his writing this interplay never becomes evident.

His ideas about literature are similar to those he has about friendship. Lacan likes to define friendship as the sharing of what we do not have: lack of knowledge, of being, of communication. He calls it the «negative community», a term and a concept he borrows from his friends Bataille and Blanchot (without acknowledging the loan). Thus he touches an essential and often forgotten dimension of friendship. But surely, if friendship or literature were nothing but this negative community, there would not have been many friends, or much literature. It is, in other terms, necessary to keep both sides of the text's tissue: the lack and the achievement, the result of the intermingling of dream-construction and language-construction. Lacan, who conceived a fascinating linguistic theory, most of the time does not take that into account. In reading his *Écrits* or his *Séminaires*, we are mainly confronted with the solitude of the «self» that is only able to create illusion, not content or identity, and certainly no truth, be it relative or provisional. These ideas might result from a temperament that only knows «everything or nothing». He once very funnily wrote: «Les extrêmes me touchent»<sup>26</sup>, and this is also typical of what we called his «Jansenism».

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<sup>25</sup> «The “self” is not a being, it is something that is supposed to be thanks to what speaks. What speaks has only to do with solitude», *Encore*, 109.

<sup>26</sup> *Séminaire Le Transfert*, 365.

This essentially narcissistic attitude is preserved, subtly and paradoxically, throughout a series of variations on the central Lacanian theme: the predominant place of the Other in our mind. This Other is mainly seen as seat and motor of the unconscious, and as such it is a negative force that denies and rejects. Consequently the positive Other is again forgotten: the Other as reservoir of prefixed meaning and of linguistic laws which we have to obey if we want to participate in the human community.

This unilateral approach may be why Lacan's ideas have remained until now rather unproductive in literary theory and particularly in the reading of literary texts, the reason also why even Lacan-orientated scholars have chosen other ways for their close-reading of a text. This applies to Robert Silhol's well reasoned interpretations of Apollinaire and Shakespeare<sup>27</sup>, for example. This is even more relevant to the works of Julia Kristeva which might be considered a thorough revision of Lacan's anthropology and its applications. Her theory of the semiotic stratum of the text, which can be found in every speech act and every literary creation, rightly restores the importance of the sensory, the maternal, the imaginary that Lacan is inclined to treat as an orphan. In the numerous suggestive pages of literary criticism Kristeva has written since 1980<sup>28</sup>, hermeneutics play again a major role mainly absent in Lacan's comments on literature. Seen from a distance, her work appears to us as a necessary complement to the structuralist criticism of the 1960's and 70's.

#### BACK TO HERMENEUTICS

In spite of its one-sidedness, Lacan's work has had the unestimable virtue to have shown, during a period when structuralism monopolized research in literature, a way out of such dogmatic thinking. Lacan offers a new, exciting model of the human psyche and of its active unconscious. Even from the Freudian point of view, his theory is something one cannot easily ignore at present. One of the most serious lacks in Freudian theory, namely the place of the Other in our psyche, has been noticeably addressed by Lacan<sup>29</sup>. He gave to this Other the place it has since been granted in contemporary psychoanalytic thought<sup>30</sup>.

The well known distinction he drew between the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic has made possible new perception and new understanding of our spiritual reality. It allows us an other, broader approach of this reality. Thanks to him, among others, the philosophy of language has received the central role it deserves. Lacan makes language appear not only in its mimetic, rhetoric and creative functions but primarily as the system of symbols to which we owe what we term truth, value and even identity. In the works of Lacan, language becomes the role we used to give to the messengers of the gods: again the «name of the Father» functions as a guarantee. It is a pity however that this rather Jansenistic Father often seems to resent the pleasure and even more the possession of our discoveries.

Therefore one could try to make a virtue of need, the need of hermeneutics, approaching from a hermeneutical point of view the central opposition in language between the Imaginary and the Symbolic use of it. We are aware that in literary fantasy the constructions of imagination are only possible because of the game of linguistic symbols, which give consistency to it. But we also know that one of the primary tasks of the Imaginary is to impede the functioning of the pre-existent symbolic order by negation, denial, exclusion, disturbance etc. Literary pleasure is largely caused by resistance<sup>31</sup>. Whether we are concerned with «perversion» or with «neurosis», we are always trying to avoid or to change the symbolic order.

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. note 1.

<sup>28</sup> Julia Kristeva: *Pouvoirs de l'horreur*, Seuil 1980; *Histoires d'amour*, Denoel, 1983; *Soleil noir. Dépression et mélancolie*, Gallimard, 1987; *Le temps sensible. Proust et le temps littéraire*, Gallimard, 1994.

<sup>29</sup> In the same perspective we can mention Melanie Klein, Donald W. Winnicott and André Green.

<sup>30</sup> See on this subject for instance André Green and Manuel Macias, *Un psychanalyste engagé*, Calmann-Lévy, 1994.

<sup>31</sup> «Le plaisir littéraire est un plaisir de résistance», R. Silhol, *op. cit.*, 32.

The imaginary scene always takes place on, or between, two levels, one that goes back to the so-called pre-Oedipal time of the ever receding symbiosis with the Mother, and the other when we encounter the Father whose law and language must help us to part from the Mother. Both imaginary constructions, the pre-Oedipal and the Oedipal, need the language-construction to keep themselves intact. Without this, psychosis threatens us. However on the first level, the pre-Oedipal, the Other is rarely present as Other. Here the Other is first of all symbiotic, maternal. It is a closed construction, whereas the Oedipal fantasy involves much more the face and the voice of the Other as a third person, who now comes into play. This voice, because of language, always participates in our mental life, but is mostly neglected, consciously or unconsciously repressed in the pre-Oedipal self-centered constellation of the psyche. Therefore one could maintain that the distinction between the pre-Oedipal and the Oedipal attitudes presents some analogy with the distinction between the Imaginary and the Symbolic which is basically different. We are dealing with two forms of desire, and both are present in every act of speech, every text. However nearly always, one of the two will be pre-dominant. It is a matter of articulation between the imaginary aspects of words and speech and the symbolic, «imaginary» denoting here a narcissistic use of language in which the voice of the other is scarcely heard. In this same hermeneutic approach, a «symbolic» use of language indicates that this voice will be heard oftener. This articulation of the two ways of the author's attitudes: having the Self as center, or making the Other also a center, can be investigated in many different ways. Some rather schematic and provisional suggestions to illustrate this approach should be sufficient here.

We can, in the first place, look at the choice of the characters in a text: which actually play a part and which do not, and what kind of relationship do they mainly represent? Naturally the Mother and Father figures are of the most interest for our purpose. «Empty places», the absence of a certain kind of characters – parents, siblings, lovers, men, women, etc. – are mostly very relevant. It is also fascinating to examine how an author treats time and space in a novel or poem. «Once upon a time», an indeterminate or a circular time mostly conjure up closed imaginary atmospheres where the desire of a lost maternal world is predominant, whereas a linear, historical sense of time, even if it is a fictitious one, offers more possibilities for a representation of the world of the Other, of the Father. Somewhat similar is the author's use of space in his or her story. Do closed, protected spaces, where it is easy to recognise the nostalgia for the security of the beginning and fear of the external world predominate? Or do we find the open space of adventure and conquest? Everything is a matter of accentuation, sometimes clear and heavy, sometimes much more secret, in a field of tension between two ways of imagination, the first giving more chances to the imaginary function of the language, the second involving more of the symbolic function. Both components however are essential in any text. They need each other. What is important is their articulation.

The same kind of conclusion can be drawn from the study of the «atmosphere» created by such or such author in his book, or, more specifically, of the mentality he prefers to give to his personages. Does he like the «everything or nothing» atmosphere, which is typical of the pre-Oedipal climate, or does he (really) want to relativise and «ironise» what he is writing, which refers to experiences with the Oedipal conflict. To clarify this we may also examine the author's techniques of narration and description. Is he, for example, inclined to relate clearly structured stories, with recognisable and checkable facts, or is the story only a pretext to give way to strange fantasies and descriptions? In the first case the meaning which the writer wants to give to what he creates and which is called «the imaginary» by Lacan, comes much closer to the symbolic function, to the «law of the Father» that society and even grammar and dictionaries define for us. In the second case it is much more likely that the gap between these two worlds is considerably greater, the open or secret resistance of the imaginary being much more serious.

In fact all literature is the result of such a play or interplay. Literary style could be seen in this perspective: as the field of tension that a writer creates in his use of language between the «imagi-

nary» rules of his body and his personal history<sup>32</sup>, on one side, and, on the other side, the «symbolic» laws he shares with the community of experience and language to which he belongs. This is the tension between pleasure and reality, between «the body of the Mother» and «the law of the Father». Thanks to Lacan we are now able to study this «Family Romance»<sup>33</sup>, as Freud termed it, on a higher level of abstraction, at a distance with less danger of conclusions that might be too quick or too naive.

One could pose a series of questions and see if the answers take the same direction. The author's figures of speech may also clarify matters. Are these, for example, of a more metonymical kind, governed by the desire for proximity and coordination – an inheritance of the Mother – or are we dealing with more metaphorical figures, those which do not avoid the adventure of reality and language, those which confront, be it in a daydream, the Other's mind and heart<sup>34</sup>, and problems concerning subordination? Freedom in dealing with the symbolic order can however often be employed in a perverted way, to overthrow the law and to bend it to one's own will. Think of Joyce and of... Lacan. Nevertheless that is another field of tension than the first case.

To understand a text clearly, the most central issue is perhaps whether the writer reserves a place for «the Other as Other», if he actually goes beyond his own narcissism, and his own world, and dares to meet the Other as such, which is a sign that the Oedipal conflict is not avoided. One of the clearest signals is the manner in which he deals with sensual and sexual matters. Are these expressed with adult feelings or with those of a child? Such questions, with more or less converging answers, map the field of tension between the two poles Lacan distinguishes in our mental and linguistic behaviour. Brought back into a hermeneutic framework these poles turn out to coincide significantly with the two poles of Freud's «Family Romance». With these suppositions, we can pose more precise and more far-reaching questions concerning a text and the unconscious desires which are at work in it.

This is a rather un-Lacanian way to use Lacan's concepts in order to recover a hermeneutic approach. It certainly is a reductive approach, but hopefully, an acceptable reduction, and in any case, one that is relevant in teaching. After all, literary theory without care for meaning is, like psychoanalysis without interpretation, a dead end, a senseless game. It is also in this perspective that we have to discover why the idea and the theory of representation are so badly taken care of in Lacan's work. If we want to discover and represent some sense, some truth, however temporary and provisional, we do not need to possess the Sense, the Truth. We do not even have to believe in them. A non-hermeneutic oriented theory may be a caution against a naive and monolithic text reading. However, it should not inspire a swing to the other extreme, which instead of renewing the Freudian ideas, would renounce them.

After all, was not Jacques Lacan's central aim to create a school where the doctrines of Freud would be taught in a new way and given new perspectives?

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<sup>32</sup> This is very close to what Julia Kristeva calls the «semiotic» level of language. Isn't this «language of the body» in fact the same as what in Lacan's theory is called the «imaginary»? But Kristeva, in her theory, gives much space to hermeneutics, something that does not fit into Lacan's perspective which acknowledges the dynamics of language, and much less its meaning.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Freud, *Gesammelte Werke* (18 vol.), VII, 224, Frankfurt, Fischer verlag, 1960, and: Marthe Roberet, *Roman des origines et origines du roman* (1972), Paris, Gallimard, coll. TEL, 1977.

<sup>34</sup> About this approach of the metonymical and the metaphorical one can read Guy Rosolato, *Éléments de l'interprétation*, Paris, Gallimard, 1985.

# Jouissance and knowledge or the critic's curse

ROBERT SILHOL (\*)

Let me first explain my title. *Jouissance*, to begin with, as many of you know, is not a term easy to define. Not so much because it is in «Lacanesque», as because, from what I have been able to observe, it has been given several meanings through the years. We find «jouissance» in the French translation of Freud, of course, as early as 1905 (once in *Three essays on the theory of sexuality*, and about a hundred times in *Jokes...*), and especially in *Beyond the pleasure principle*, 1920, where it no longer is *Genuss*, with its sexual connotation, but simply *Lust*, no pun implied.<sup>1</sup> With Lacan, who made of the term *jouissance* one of the central elements of his theory, it is first used in its sexual connotation (*Encore, Séminaire XX*, 1972, published 1975), but soon receives a wider meaning, and this made me realize I should perhaps alter my title and content myself with something like: «The Critic's curse» or «James's carpet and knowledge». Why indeed use such an elusive concept as *jouissance* without taking the time to clarify its meaning, or at least the meaning it has for me? But this would be the subject of another paper – whole books have been written on the issue – and cannot be done here. Instead, because I like the idea of having «jouissance» in my title and am reluctant to change it, I will ask you to abide with me and consider this «jouissance» as the x of an equation (Bion did the same with his alpha-function), hoping that this presentation will in the end give it some specific meaning. And what I would like you to note, to start with, is that I have placed the term in opposition with «knowledge», which is perhaps a first step toward defining the concept.

## I

And now to my main concern, knowledge and the critic's curse. I think I won't be exaggerating too much if I say that most of us here agree about the fact that the human «subject», as defined by Freud, is split, alienated from itself, agree in short with the Freudian model Cs/Ucs. That there is

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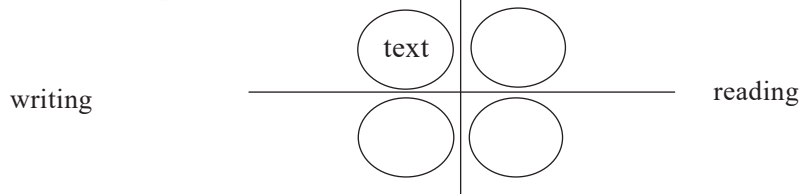
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<sup>1</sup> *The Standard Edition of the Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, London, Hogarth Press, Vol. VII, VIII, XVIII.

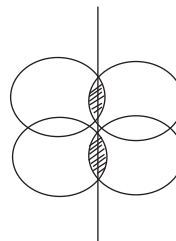
«something» conscious and something unconscious in us was demonstrated by Freud after he had managed to interpret dreams successfully. Again, we all know this; the concept of unconscious only makes sense because what is unconscious in us, unknown, *manifests itself*, and of course manifests itself in a veiled, distorted way, so that we do not know at first what is being manifested (or said). What was new with Freud was not so much the fact that dreams – and we can add texts, literary works and even our everyday behavior – had a symbolic dimension, but that we had now a model, a new set of rules for the interpretation of what was being manifested. Among these rules, there is one that concerns the analyst, but also the psychoanalytic critic: it is the rule which advises the analyst not to project too much of his or her unconscious desire on the dream or the text to be analysed. This, of course, is impossible or only asymptotically possible, relatively possible, let us say, but learning to assess this danger properly is part of the analyst's training and we can say that in fact the «warning» is effective: the analyst's knowledge that he is also inhabited by an unconscious desire is what makes an analyst of him, what will enable him to listen to his patient with «floating attention».

But of course things are a bit different when it comes to dealing with texts. For indeed, what can it mean to look at a text with «floating attention»? What I am trying to say is that the psychoanalytic critic should try to be careful and distinguish between reading and analysing.

This might seem obvious and easy to do, but it is much more difficult than it sounds. For we must now take into consideration the fact that our object, spoken discourse or text, can no longer be reduced to the «object out there», and that the old, correct, manifest/latent structure does not entirely account for what takes place when we read a text or listen to someone. The model now, and this is well known, includes the reception side of the experience of reading or listening, so that in the end the reading operation is something like this:



and certainly nothing beyond this:



Reading, as Norman Holland has so brilliantly shown in his *Five Readers's Reading*, is always a reconstruction. Between the two objects, a) what was produced when someone wrote, and b) what is produced when someone reads, there may only be a vague relationship, if there is one at all in some cases.

All this is well-known today, but I think we should remind ourselves not to forget it because of the very nature of literature, which has among its many functions the task of making us forget that...

meaning is always the result of a construction by a subject. Indeed, this is already true from the simple<sup>2</sup> point of view of the linguist: the word is not the thing, the sign is always at a distance from the referent, but language is able to fulfil its function of representation precisely because it «suspends» that space, erases, or rather gives the illusion that the distance between sign and referent is erased, rubbed out.<sup>3</sup> And if we turn now to literature we find the same function at work: that of representation, but more specifically that of *veiling, masking...* a void, a gap, an impossibility. Again, this is not new, and we all know about this «willing suspension of disbelief», but I think the consequences of this particular aspect of «representation» haven't been given enough consideration.

For even before we approach the text to find out what sounds, what words, images or story it has in store for us, yes, even before we open our book to look for whatever particular contents it has to offer, *we ask the text to lie to us*, to maintain the illusion that it is true, that *it* is possible, etc. The act of reading – like the act of speaking – implies this hallucinatory satisfaction, this denial of the void.

And of course, our *unawareness* is the condition of this function of representation (that is the reason why I have used the word «hallucinatory»). Representation depends on this illusion of truth.<sup>4</sup> Which brings me to a question: if reading, the pleasure of reading, is a function of our unawareness, of our «ignorance», how can literature be a source of knowledge?

## II

Literature *cannot* be a source of knowledge, and it is precisely because we are aware of this or, at any rate, strongly suspect this, that we have become psychoanalytic critics.

What I have tried to show so far is that the pleasure of reading, the nature of representation as far as literature is concerned, is a pleasure of hallucination, an experience, to put it briefly, not unlike what happens when we dream. (It suffices to look at the structure of the metaphor to understand this.) And because the dreamer cannot *at the same time* dream and analyse his or her dream, no knowledge is to be acquired from our first immediate contact with the text. Whatever the affect, whatever its force, and even, in some cases, its power of illumination, some distance, however small, minute, has to be introduced by the analyst: it may be done in a fraction of a second – it's not a matter of time –, it may even be confused with the affect itself, with the emotion, but I take it to be a re-orientation of our interest, a change of focus, a shifting of the reader's position and status. I no longer dream or read, but try to find out what my dream or my reading experience was just made of. This is not to say with great naiveté that this change in focus is going to enable me to acquire «real» knowledge when there was none before; I am naturally quite aware of the fact that this «knowledge» can only be relative, incomplete, «impure» even, and still made of many symbolic elements.

What matters, I think, is that the distinction be made clear: the reader on the one hand, on one side, and the analyst on the other (even if such a distinction is partly theoretical). This is what Derrida did not understand in his pages on «The Purloined letter» (in *La Carte postale*, «Le Facteur de vérité») when he argued that a metaphor can be so telling as not to need elucidation; such a position – not so distant in fact from that of the «aesthetic critic» for whom Beauty and Truth are one – amounts to *a refusal to analyse the metaphor*: a resistance and nothing else.

The analyst, then, the psychoanalytic critic, does not do this: instead, he or she looks at the text with a Freudian magnifying glass. Thus *some* knowledge can be obtained from texts, a knowledge

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<sup>2</sup> «Simple», for there is no need in this case to resort to the psychoanalytical model Cs/Ucs.

<sup>3</sup> See R. Silhol, «C'est à quel sujet?», *Le Sens, Cahiers Charles V* 16, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> If we had time, we could also discuss the fact that one of the pleasures of reading consists in receiving an answer to our questions, but an answer that always conforms to our unconscious desire: «Mirror, mirror, who is the fairest of all?»

which corroborates the findings of psychoanalysis. Freud himself, reading Sophocles, found in the Greek legend confirmation of the universality of the Oedipal triangle. Thus the «fate» of literary characters can be better understood: Othello's jealousy is the expression of an Other in him, Hamlet's procrastination is a consequence, among other things, of the double-bind his dead father has burdened him with<sup>5</sup>, Balzac's Goriot is the representation of a father who would have wanted to be a mother, while Camus's stranger can be interpreted as the portrait of a schizophrenic indifferent whose function is to mask the subject's (the writer's) oedipal wishes.<sup>6</sup> And this time, therefore, thanks to psychoanalysis, we have obtained some knowledge (not just emotions – or *jouissance* –) that is an understanding of the way we behave and not simply a description.

### III

And yet, we were not dealing with actual men and women but just with literary characters, and we must now ask ourselves to what an extent we can rely on those representations, on those «portraits». I mean, there is no real Hamlet, no real Lady Macbeth, no Raskolnikoff, and we are deceiving ourselves when we speak of their «fate», or of the logic that rules their lives, and also when we try to explain the incoherence of their behavior.

Naturally, in some cases, these representations are so exact, so successfully drawn, that we can accept the illusion of reality and pretend literary characters are just like real people. But we are only dealing with metaphors of reality.

(It could be argued, for instance, that Oedipus did not hate the man he killed at the crossroads and that, on that count at least, the character is not a perfect example of the Oedipus complex. His real Oedipal feelings, in fact, are more clearly made explicit by his decision to leave Corinth, for had he not feared, unconsciously if you wish, to see the prophecy realise itself, he would not have gone to Thebes.)

If there is a logic and an ultimate coherence to be analysed in literary texts, it is by going beyond the appearances represented by the characters that we shall find it. It is this ultimate mask or veil that we must lift, and this can be done if we listen to the text as if it were the discourse of a patient on the couch, the discourse of an unconscious subject, a delirium even. In this case, literature becomes our clinical material.

If there is a flaw in Lacan's essay on «The Purloined Letter» it probably lies here, in the fact that he used Poe's story as a metaphor of his own (valid) theory, making on the way quite a few fine remarks, but not telling us in the end what it meant for the «Queen» to get her «letter» back and – as the «Queen» is nothing but a character – what it meant, in clinical terms, that a story-teller should have organised the journey of the letter as he did, from the Queen to the Queen.

### IV

In his «Figure in the Carpet» (1896), Henry James may have had an intuition about all this. As you remember, he wrote a story about the meaning, or the secret about... something... in a book, something likely to explain the talent of the author of the book, and also, it seems, likely to reveal the ultimate secret about...we don't know what. And of course, the narrator, who is supposed to

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<sup>5</sup> See R. Silhol, «Hamlet et son Autre», *L'Auteur à l'oeuvre*, Fontenay/Saint Cloud, E.N.S. Editions, 1996.

<sup>6</sup> See R. Silhol, «L'Etranger et le désir de l'Autre», *Fathers and Mothers in Literature*, Amsterdam/Atlanta, Rodopi, 1994.

write the definitive article about the... thing, fails to discover what it is, and we learn that even those who were close to the writer – the artist with a secret – never knew themselves what it was! The metaphor is obvious: there is a figure in the carpet, but no one knows what it is. The secret in the end is that there is no secret to be obtained. This, I take it, is a very clever way of saying, as early as 1896, that *there is no knowledge to be had from literature*, only reading pleasure.

That was very wise, but that was in 1896, and now, thanks to psychoanalysis, we know a little more about discourse, and we know, among other things, that there is a way to «listen» to texts which makes them say something worth while, something that is not accessible when we simply content ourselves with just «reading» the text. In the case of «The figure in the Carpet», for instance, several interpretations are possible, and they are not contradictory. First, and most obvious, the story, with its labyrinthine plot and endless search, and failure in the end, is a clever unconscious way of saying the author has really nothing to reveal about himself. Look as we may, there is nothing to find, James says, which is a candid way of insisting he has nothing to hide. In fact, the subject refuses to speak: resistance.

Beyond this clever strategic manoeuvre, however, because the resistance was nonetheless expressed with words, and because, in short, a piece of discourse was produced, psychoanalysis can look and listen between the lines - and sometimes in the lines themselves - and come up with an hypothesis about the *raison d'être* of the text, its psychological conditions of production.<sup>7</sup> In this case, one of the «keys» that open new dimensions of knowledge is to be found in the way James uses the words *lady* and *ladies*, in the way the frantic search for a secret is accompanied throughout the story by the word «lady», by marriages and by deaths... by his relationship to femininity in fact.

I would like to conclude with a few lines borrowed from Keats. You all know his

A thing of beauty is a *joy* for ever:  
..... it will never  
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep  
A bower quiet for us, and a *sleep*  
*Full of sweet dreams...*  
..... yes, *in spite of all*,  
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall  
From our dark spirits.  
(*Endymion*, book I, 1-5, 11-13, 1817)

A joy for ever and a sleep full of sweet *dreams* which, *in spite of all* moves away the pall from our dark spirits, here is, magnificently described, the function of art and also, unwittingly, the illusion our literary pleasures – joy, *jouissance* – are made of. For we have learnt, since Freud, that it can no longer be maintained that beauty is truth and truth beauty. What we are left with is just *jouissance*.

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<sup>7</sup> A second type of enquiry, using both socio-historical methods and psychoanalysis, could also easily show what the sociological *raisons d'être* of the text were, and we know there is no longer any contradiction between the two sets of determinations thus unearthed, since they both combined their efforts, as it were, to produce the text as we know it.

# Lacan et Gide ou le point de rencontre entre texte et perversion

NATHALIE KOK (\*)

## GIDE ET LA PSYCHANALYSE

Dans le milieu psychanalytique français André Gide est considéré comme un auteur typiquement pervers et cela au même titre que le «Divin Marquis», soit le Marquis de Sade. Comme preuve de la perversion gidienne on se réfère volontiers aux biographies comme à son autobiographie en citant notamment son homosexualité.<sup>1</sup> L'orientation sexuelle de l'auteur devient ainsi un prétexte pour envisager toute son oeuvre au regard de sa «perversion»; la vie est censée expliquer l'oeuvre et vice versa.

Parmi l'ensemble des psychanalystes, Lacan, à première vue, ne semble pas détonner. Lui aussi s'est adressé à la personne de Gide pour élucider la perversion en recourant à la biographie par Jean Delay.<sup>2</sup> Pourtant, il n'arrive pas à la même conclusion. C'est que pour lui, la perversion de Gide ne se situe pas du côté de sa pédérasie, mais dans le fait d'être inconditionnellement soumis à sa cousine Madeleine Rondeaux qui est l'objet d'une dévotion remarquable de la part de l'auteur. Nous y reviendrons.

La théorie de la perversion de Lacan, en effet, rompt avec la tradition morale et psychiatrique qui, depuis le XIXème, a assimilé la perversion à une déviation sexuelle. La théorie lacanienne met en place une distinction entre structure et fantasme pervers pour trouver son aboutissement dans une logique perverse soutenue par un discours pervers. Le noyau de la perversion, selon Lacan, est constitué par un certain rapport à l'Autre.

Ici je me propose de développer d'une part, brièvement, la logique perverse selon Lacan et d'autre part, de voir ce qu'il en est dans l'oeuvre elle-même de Gide. Autrement dit, je voudrais m'acheminer là où Lacan ne s'est pas dirigé. J'examinerai plus spécifiquement le récit *L'Immoraliste* dont la première publication date de 1902.

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<sup>1</sup> Voir par exemple Marchand 1956 et Jadin 1995.

<sup>2</sup> *Écrits* (1966), pp. 739-764; *Le Séminaire*, les séances du 5-3-1958 et 24-6-1959.

L'enjeu de Lacan en matière de perversion, à la fin des années cinquante, est d'élaborer et d'approfondir l'idée d'une structure perverse qu'il essaie de différencier du fantasme pervers tel qu'il apparaît chez le névrosé. Le névrosé, toujours hanté par l'angoisse de castration, est fasciné par le pervers qu'il regarde comme quelqu'un qui sait jouir sans culpabilité. Cette fascination si évidente devant le pervers est alimentée par un fantasme pervers: pour soutenir son désir, le névrosé – et probablement chaque être humain dit «normal» – *s' imagine* une scène où tout est permis, une zone érotique où il n'y a plus de limites ou de lois, où tous les désirs sexuels sont comblés au profit d'une jouissance toute-puissante. Le névrosé est convaincu que le pervers y accède. Le fantasme pervers, dit Lacan, est l'apanage du névrosé. Aussi, en tant que tel, s'agit-il d'un fantasme fort répandu.<sup>3</sup> Témoin la définition traditionnelle de la perversion comme une sexualité qui dévie et transgresse, mais qui correspond surtout à une idée que se font les névrosés de la perversion.

Lacan va insister, précisément, sur le fait que le fantasme pervers ne garantit pas la perversion. La «vraie» perversion, pour lui, sera la structure perverse qui se définit non pas à partir du fantasme, mais à partir d'une certaine position subjective, conséquence d'un oedipe atypique. C'est que l'enfant pervers refuse de renoncer à sa position phallique:<sup>4</sup> tout en se rendant compte du désir de la mère pour le père et du désir du père pour la mère, l'enfant pervers ne cesse de se considérer comme l'accomplissement du désir maternel. Le pervers refuse de passer par le désir de l'Autre. Si le névrosé refoule le fait d'être castré ce qui l'expose à une angoisse de castration qu'il essaie de conjurer par le fantasme et le symptôme, le pervers dément la castration en lançant un défi au père castrateur.

Comme Lacan l'indique dans son séminaire sur la relation d'objet (1956-1957), ce désaveu pervers se soutient d'une identification phallique singulière: le pervers s'identifie tantôt à la mère, tantôt au phallus. C'est dire que, dans son rapport à la mère, le pervers se présente à la fois comme sujet et objet de désir. Le pervers «peut s'identifier à la mère, s'identifier au phallus, s'identifier à la mère comme porteuse de phallus, ou se présenter comme porteur de phallus».<sup>5</sup> Le phallus, le pervers l'a et il l'est, passant alternativement dans l'une et l'autre position, mouvement que Lacan associe à un jeu de miroirs.

Du côté de *l'être*, le pervers se fait l'objet du désir de l'Autre. Le pervers cherche éperdument à «boucher [l]e trou dans l'Autre» afin de se vouer à sa jouissance.<sup>6</sup> En 1969 Lacan définit la perversion comme la restitution du a à l'Autre, comme la poursuite d'une jouissance pure. La perversion se présente, ainsi, du côté de l'être, comme une abnégation du désir. Le désir en effet fait disparaître le manque. Il est l'indice de la castration et à cause de cela quelque chose d'insupportable pour le pervers. S'offrant comme «idole»<sup>7</sup> au désir de l'Autre, le sujet pervers s'efforce de supprimer tout désir, de le pervertir en jouissance. Le pervers se conçoit comme objet a, un déchet, «le pur holocauste du désir de l'Autre comme tel» dans les termes de Lacan.<sup>8</sup> La perversion se manifeste donc, du versant de l'être, comme une vraie dépossession narcissique «au sens où le sujet manque à son affaire».<sup>9</sup>

Pourtant, le versant de *l'avoir* va garantir la position de sujet du pervers, et du même coup son désir. En s'arrogeant la possession du phallus, le pervers va lancer un défi au désir de l'Autre, un défi au désir de la Loi par lequel, il va fonder son propre désir. En fait, quoique «à peine» comme dit Lacan,<sup>10</sup> le pervers, par le biais du défi, ne cesse jamais d'accentuer la fonction du désir chez l'homme.

<sup>3</sup> Lacan 1958-1959.

<sup>4</sup> Lacan 1966, 554.

<sup>5</sup> Lacan 1994, 225.

<sup>6</sup> Lacan 1968-1969.

<sup>7</sup> Lacan 1975, 247.

<sup>8</sup> Lacan 1964-1965.

<sup>9</sup> Lacan 1965-1966.

<sup>10</sup> Lacan 1966, 823.

Le sujet pervers se présente donc comme un sujet fondamentalement clivé. Divisé entre l'être et l'avoir, il s'efforce à réunir désir et jouissance et cela par un renversement continu des positions. Or, si Lacan dit que la perversion de Gide se situe du côté de sa cousine, plutôt que dans son désir pour les jeunes garçons, c'est parce qu'elle lui permettra d'occuper à la fois les positions de *l'être* et de *l'avoir*. Gide s'assujettit à elle en même temps qu'il va se servir de sa correspondance pour lui transmettre son désir de manière tant symbolique qu'imaginaire: la lettre à Madeleine est son fétiche qui rend le désir possible et avec lequel il va essayer de la combler:

La perversion d'André Gide ne tient pas tellement dans le fait qu'il ne peut désirer que des petits garçons, que le petit garçon qu'il avait été. La perversion d'André Gide consiste en ceci: c'est que là il ne peut se constituer qu'à perpétuellement se dire, se soumettre dans cette correspondance qui pour lui est le coeur de son oeuvre, à être celui qui se fait valoir à la place occupée par sa cousine, celui dont toutes les pensées sont tournées vers elle, celui qui donne littéralement à chaque instant tout ce qu'il n'a pas mais rien que cela, qui se constitue comme personnalité dans elle, par rapport à elle, qui le met par rapport à elle dans cette sorte de dépendance. (Lacan, 5-3-1958).

Visant la jouissance, le pervers s'efforce à remplacer la Loi de la castration par une loi qui devra garantir la complétude. Il s'en prend à la Loi symbolique, la qualifiant comme fausse, pour dénoncer le manque-à-jouir qui relève du manque du signifiant. Tous les «grands pervers» – Sade, Sacher-Masoch, Mishima – tiennent, en effet, invariablement un discours qui refuse la Loi symbolique pour mettre en place une nouvelle éthique, une loi de la Nature qui impose la jouissance.

On pourrait dire que ce que le pervers s'efforce finalement de démontrer, c'est la compatibilité de la subjectivité avec la jouissance, autrement dit que la jouissance primordiale est possible à partir d'une position de sujet. Ce qui est à prouver et ce qui est au fond l'enjeu pervers, c'est donc l'idée que l'effet du langage peut être aboli. Ce que la perversion vise n'est pas la transgression sexuelle mais le démontage et la transgression du symbolique. Il importe au pervers de faire la démonstration de l'existence de la jouissance pure et totale; la jouissance n'est pas perdue, dit le pervers, elle existe et elle est récupérable. Aussi le vrai fantasme pervers, c'est celui d'un *savoirjouir*.<sup>11</sup>

Il est indéniable que le discours constitue un élément essentiel du montage pervers. Comme l'a souligné Serge André, «c'est dans sa parole même que le pervers commence à passer à l'acte».<sup>12</sup> C'est que le discours va servir sa cause: à savoir le défi de la Loi et la transmission du savoirjouir. Que le discours pervers ait aussi à jouer un rôle dans les belles lettres, cela ne fait pas de doute. Nous l'avons déjà appris par le biais des «grands pervers» qui, tous, ont fait preuve de cette volonté de promulguer une autre éthique en passant par la lettre.

#### L'IMMORALISTE DE GIDE, INTRODUCTION

En effet, *L'Immoraliste* de Gide nous propose une éthique qui se veut différente. Michel, le narrateur et protagoniste du récit, conçoit une éthique sensualiste qui doit lui permettre de se rétablir après une grave maladie, de fortifier son corps ainsi que de récupérer la joie de vivre qu'il n'a jamais vraiment connue.

Le récit *L'Immoraliste* consiste en l'aveu de Michel qui, après avoir convoqué trois amis en Algérie où il vit depuis la mort de sa femme, raconte comment il s'est libéré. Il s'agit pourtant d'une liberté fort paradoxale. C'est que la libération de Michel a abouti à une impasse consistant dans le fait que là où il en est arrivé, la «volupté suit de [trop] près le désir» (471). Sa confession, à

<sup>11</sup> Braunstein 1992, 236.

<sup>12</sup> André 1993, 54.

la fin, se transforme en une demande: d'être arraché à la prise de cette volupté paralysante qui l'empêche de prendre en main sa destinée.

Fils d'un philologue et historien, Michel s'est lancé très tôt, dès son adolescence, dans le monde universitaire où il a réussi à s'imposer comme une autorité dans le domaine de l'histoire ancienne. Au chevet de son père mourant, Michel promet d'épouser une amie, Marceline, et cela uniquement pour plaire à son père qui ne veut pas qu'il reste seul, sa mère étant morte depuis longtemps. Pendant le voyage de noces Michel tombe gravement malade. C'est grâce à Marceline, puis à sa propre volonté qu'il est capable de s'en sortir. Sa maladie et sa guérison marquent le passage vers une autre vie. Son rétablissement se présente sous les aspects d'une véritable renaissance, car Michel fait «la palpitante découverte» de la vie (381). Son corps et ses sens se réveillent après une longue hibernation. Les deuxième et troisième parties du livre racontent les conséquences de cette transformation du héros et notamment l'abandon progressif de Marceline par Michel. Le récit se termine par la mort de Marceline.

Ce qui me semble capital dans le discours de Michel c'est le fait que tout est centré à la fois sur une recherche et un détournement de la castration; la question de l'être et de l'avoir se retrouvent au coeur du récit. Je me propose d'élaborer avant tout ce point essentiel, afin de bien saisir le noyau pervers de *L'Immoraliste*.

#### RECHERCHE ET DETOURNEMENT DE LA CASTRATION

La transformation de Michel, l'éveil de son corps et de ses sens, a son origine dans une situation où il était livré à un Autre: d'abord à la maladie, désignée par Michel comme un «ennemi» (384), et ensuite à sa femme, Marceline. Malade, Michel est fondamentalement impuissant, immobilisé et «comme mort» (380). Il se trouve donc essentiellement dans une position d'objet. Après une période de lassitude, où il se laisse faire, cependant, il est soudainement pris par un désir de vivre qui l'incite de prendre de le dessus. A partir d'une lecture d'un livre et quelques brochures consacrés à sa maladie, la tuberculose, Michel s'impose lui-même un traitement afin de renverser et de maîtriser sa situation: «il fallait [désormais] juger bon, nommer *Bien*, tout ce qui m'était salubre, oublier, repousser tout ce qui ne guérissait pas» (384). Précepte salubre qui va valoir une loi. Nous voyons comment son énonciation mène tout de suite à l'accusation de Marceline, tenue seule responsable de la mauvaise alimentation servie dans les hôtels.

La règle conçue et imposée par Michel – de ne penser qu'au *Bien* de son corps – vise au début uniquement sa guérison. Dans un deuxième temps, cependant, cette règle devient le point d'appui d'une doctrine à la Rousseau qui, mettant en place la primauté du corps, va à l'encontre de la culture considérée comme fautive et postiche. Michel va se vouer à la découverte de l'«être authentique» (398), un «pur être» hors culture. Il se consacre à la vie corporelle, aux sens, éliminant radicalement l'Autre au profit d'une «joie» solitaire reliée à la beauté d'un corps devenu fétiche (402).

La guérison de Michel va donc de pair avec un changement moral. Le premier indice de ce changement est fourni par le fait que Michel ne dit pas un mot quand il voit que Moktir, un des protégés de sa femme qui s'occupe des enfants indigènes à Biskra, vole une paire de ciseaux. Ce vol non dénoncé sera suivi par un autre, lorsque Michel découvre que Alcide, le fils du vieux Bocage qui gère sa propriété en Normandie, braconne dans ses forêts. Qui plus est, Michel va se rejoindre au petit pour se voler lui-même. Dans les deux cas, Michel se place à la fois dans la position de sujet et d'objet de vol. Il en éprouve une grande «volupté» (447). Autrement dit, le dédoublement se trouve à l'origine d'une jouissance.

Ayant adopté l'éthique du «pur être», l'immoraliste rejette toute la dimension de l'avoir, de la possession. La propriété qui est un thème récurrent dans le discours de Michel et qui apparaît non seulement sous forme d'argent, de terres ou de maisons, mais aussi de famille, de femme et d'enfants, est sans cesse dévaluée, parce qu'elle empêcherait de goûter la plénitude de la vie. Michel

s'efforcera de se débarrasser de tous ses biens. Il ne valorise que ceux qui sont et non pas ceux qui ont. Ses objets idéaux auxquels il s'identifie sont les enfants et les paysans, c'est-à-dire ceux qui restent en marge de la culture et ne jouissent que de leur corps et de leur force. Aux yeux de Michel seulement celui qui ne possède rien vaut quelque chose. Tout au long du récit, en effet, c'est le manque qui est recherché et invoqué. Les symboles de castration abondent: on trouve partout des coupures, trous, vides, couteaux, ciseaux etcétera. Quand il rencontre l'enfant Bachir, vêtu d'une «pauvre chéchia», Michel fixe le «trou à la place du gland» (382); lorsqu'il regarde Marceline malade, ses yeux, «au lieu de chercher son regard», se dirigent vers «les trous noirs de ses narines» (468).

Dans *L'Immoraliste*, la castration – imposée à soi-même par soi-même – est condition de jouissance, l'exemple en étant fourni par Bachir qui «s'enfonça[nt] la lame [d'un couteau] dans le pouce [...] en rit». Bachir «s'amusa[e] de voir couler son sang» et «montr[e] la coupure brillante» à Michel (382). Michel essaiera d'inverser l'impact de sa faiblesse en jouissant de ses défauts: au sujet de sa sensibilité il remarque: «Je gardai cette sensibilité, la garde encore, mais, aujourd'hui, c'est pour voluptueusement en jouir.» (386-387). Il sera clair que les vols aussi s'inscrivent dans cette série de castrations maîtrisées. En se volant, Michel se prive de ses possessions et, se sachant «castré», en jouit.

Pendant, la castration est non seulement détournée pour en jouir mais aussi pour déjouer l'Autre. C'est que les vols s'effectuent toujours devant un tiers représentant la Loi qui, absent, est leurré tout en étant invoqué dans les coulisses. Pendant le premier vol, Marceline est dupe, pendant le deuxième c'est le tour de Bocage. Ce détournement pervers de la castration, tel qu'il se manifeste dans le vol, me semble remonter à la «superchérie» commise par le père de Michel (373). Dans ce texte de Gide, la perversion se révèle ainsi essentiellement comme une *père-version* dans le sens d'un appel au père.

Au début de sa confession, Michel raconte comment son père le considéra comme son «égal» et comment pour en fournir la preuve, il publia le travail de son fils sous son propre nom, ouvrage qui lui valut beaucoup d'éloges (373). Le père, nous apprend Michel, en «fut ravi». Le terme «ravi», du verbe «ravier», employé ici, est ambigu: car il n'indique pas seulement l'exaltation du père, mais renvoie aussi à un vol: «ravier» veut dire également: «s'emparer de façon illégale de quelque chose». Le père vole son fils qui en est conscient. Ce savoir d'être volé est associé en même temps à la jouissance du père, jouissance de l'Autre qui est justement provoquée par une transgression de la Loi comme par un détournement du Nom-du-Père.

Le vol masochiste de Michel trouve donc son origine et modèle dans ce vol commis par le père. Il se passe encore quelque chose de similaire dans le mariage de Michel avec Marceline, car, là aussi, il est question d'un abus du Nom-du-Père. Michel, on l'a dit, se marie avec Marceline pour le seul amour du père. Le mariage ne représente qu'un don, un sacrifice au père. Michel n'aime pas Marceline. Aussi, de son point de vue ce mariage ne vaut-il pas grand chose; c'est une farce, une «cérémonie banale» (372) que Michel accomplit avec un «empressement de commande» (375). Le mariage de Michel et de Marceline, par conséquent, n'a pas de fondement, puisque la base d'amour manque complètement. Michel ne donne rien; tout ce qu'il fait c'est de s'absenter, instaurant un vide du côté de Marceline, comme pour souligner encore expressément son manque. Michel jouit de cet abandon, de ce rien, imposé par lui-même. Rendant visite à Ménalque quand Marceline est gravement malade, il éprouve, malgré son inquiétude, «un état [...] d'exaltation singulière [...] très proche [...] du bonheur.» (434). Cette nuit-là Marceline fera une fausse-couche.

Le Nom-du-Père passant de Michel à Marceline du fait de s'être mariés, n'est en fin de compte qu'un signifiant trompeur et vide, parce qu'au lieu de supporter le désir et l'amour de l'autre (de Michel), il véhicule la mort de Marceline. C'est que Michel lui passe sa tuberculose, «don» par lequel il «vole» la vie de sa femme.

Le discours de Michel est caractérisé par ce même ravinement du symbolique. Au niveau du style, la figure de la métaphore est pratiquement absente; c'est la métonymie qui règne. Plus caractéris-

tiques encore sont les nombreux antithèses, effets de miroir et renversements vertigineux. Il en résulte un discours complexe et cela malgré son apparente transparence.<sup>13</sup> Le discours pervers, pour ainsi dire, se retourne contre lui-même et devient, comme l'a indiqué Sartre (1952) à propos de Jean Genet, un «discours tourniquet».

Ce que j'ai voulu montrer ici, m'appuyant sur la théorie lacanienne, c'est que la perversion ne réside nullement dans une dimension pornographique, mais dans un détournement de la castration qui revient à un détournement de l'Autre, et essentiellement du Symbolique. Le propre de la position perverse étant cette «suspension» entre l'être et l'avoir, le corps et le manque, la jouissance et le désir, la nature et la culture.

S'il y a effectivement un rapport entre littérature et perversion dans le sens que la littérature se prête volontiers aux manifestations perverses, au démontage symbolique comme aux fantasmes pervers du névrosé, il sera faux d'affirmer – comme de nombreux critiques l'ont fait – que toute la littérature est perverse. Le discours pervers est un discours spécifique qui, plutôt que d'être la représentation d'une pratique sexuelle illicite comme le veut l'idée préconçue du névrosé, tourne autour d'un vide, celui de l'infondé du Symbolique. A mon avis, l'éthique perverse, véhiculée par le discours, est une tentative de restaurer cet infondé en ré-ancrant le symbolique dans le corps en tant que porteur de jouissance. Le corps, en effet, est l'unique support de la loi perverse, ce qui vaut autant pour Michel que pour les libertins de Sade. Si Michel a rassemblé ses amis, c'est pour leur parler et se faire écouter; l'A/autre est sollicité dans sa présence physique: dans son corps, son regard, son écoute. C'est précisément dans cette complicité physique, dans la séduction opérée par la parole que le jugement de l'Autre s'effondre. Celui-ci n'est plus en mesure de condamner le pervers; il y est comme engagé et le pervers se dérobe.

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Miller 1993, 8.

## «Who speaks?» The surrealist *little bit of reality* and the Lacanian *lalangue*

RADU TURCANU (\*)

In this presentation, I shall try to show how the Surrealist *little bit of reality*, along with the notions that shape it, automatic writing and the «mad language» of love, can be paralleled to some of the most important Lacanian innovations: the objet *a* cause of desire, the barred subject, and the *lalangue* or «the precondition of meaning» (Jacques-Alain Miller, *Television*, p. 9).<sup>1</sup> Thus, on the one hand, Surrealism is seen by Breton as a «consciousness crisis», a sweeping project aimed at revamping human's knowledge of language mechanisms and of their role in the subjective formation (*Manifeste du surréalisme*, p. 26).<sup>2</sup> Lacanian psychoanalysis, on the other hand, with its professed return to Freud, brings out a view of the unconscious structured like a language and a topology of the subject in graphs and mathemes (*Écrits*, p. 800). Moreover, both Breton and Lacan are interested in the transmission of a cryptic message which is undermined by reason at the very moment of its linguistic forging, and is therefore received by us only as an abbreviated and truncated form of some more original speech. This message can be deciphered either through the Surrealist «mad language», always related to the love relation and to its demands, or by a *lalangue* – word coined by Lacan from the French *langue* and the definite article *la* – which accompanies the subject before and after he traverses the fantasy constructed around the object cause of desire. As for the Surrealist *object*, it derives from the *little bit of reality* which lies deep in the subject and prevents him from acquiring his full measure, and it is the function of automatic writing to bring them again together as a round up being. In its turn, the *lalangue* is articulated around the *objet a* and reveals not only the decentering of the subject and his alienation with respect to his origins, but also his struggle to preserve their separation and keep desire alive, beyond the fantasy of the sexual relation marking the subject at heart.

Breton believes that the message which is to be found through automatic writing is comparable to the enigmatic words once heard at Eleusis, *Osiris is a dark god*; it is «le changement de signe qui tend à faire passer l'indisponible humain du côté du disponible» (*Arcane 17*, p. 106). In a

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<sup>1</sup> The Lacanian *lalangue* is the mother tongue preceding all other language in the constitution of the subject.

<sup>2</sup> See also *Prolégomènes à un troisième manifeste du surréalisme ou non*, p. 179.

similar context, Lacan talks about the «médiation pour situer le sujet: d'un rapport du savoir, [d'une coupure] de la chaîne signifiante [qui est] seule à vérifier la structure du sujet comme discontinuité dans le réel» («Subversion du sujet et dialectique du désir», in *Écrits*, p. 793, p. 801). Moreover, an identical question haunts the two authors: «qui parle à ma place, et qu'est-ce que ça veut dire, qu'on parle»? asks Breton; and: «... je ne sais pas qui parle, à qui je parle et dans l'intérêt de qui nous parlons? J'oublie, je parle de ce que j'ai déjà oublié» (*Point du jour*, p. 15).<sup>3</sup> Lacan raises a similar dilemma: «Qui parle [quand Je parle]? Car cette réponse ne saurait venir de lui, s'il ne sait pas ce qu'il dit, ni même qu'il parle» («Subversion du sujet...», p. 800). The problem would then be, for both Breton and Lacan, to attest to the occupancy of the place from where a subject talks as well as to the content of his speech. And in both cases, the answer to the first part of the question, «Who is speaking when I, the subject, speak?» is that it is a barred subject who uses, or rather is used by language. The embedment in language or in what Lacan calls the *defiles of the signifier* opens a rift in the human being allowing for meaning to be actualized and for the human subject himself to come into existence.

This initial reply needs some clarification, and I shall begin by pointing out Breton's basic mistrust, tampered with a revolutionary ebullience, of the subject's social and individual history. «Tout est à faire, tous les moyens doivent être bons à employer pour ruiner les idées de *famille*, de *patrie*, de *religion*» (*Second manifeste du surréalisme*, p. 82). And: «Le rationalisme absolu qui reste de mode ne permet de considérer que des faits relevant étroitement de notre expérience. Les fins logiques, par contre, nous échappent» (*Manifeste du surréalisme*, pp. 18-19). Positioned inside a heterogenous and defective setting, in the very defiles created by the split between speech and thought, the subject, according to Breton's Surrealist logic, tries to find a remedy to this existential flaw by propagating his voice and thought at an equivalent speed, so that the latter will not overpower the former. Eventually, a decisive offensive of the imagination will set free a desire susceptible to reshuffle and unify the subjective constitution, while also making speech and thought coincide. *L'automatisme de la trouvaille* will add to the *little bit of reality* on which the subject is erected those objects deemed for ever lost yet found again through the techniques of automatic writing; «les mystères qui n'en sont pas feront place au grand Mystère... [à une] réalité absolue» (*Manifeste du surréalisme*, p. 23, p. 24).

The Surrealist project flaunts thus, besides the deployment of a «mad language», a new alchemy of the verb whose aim is no longer to discover the philosophers' stone, but to build a new ark which, this time, will be for everybody. «... ce message constitue un patrimoine commun dont il ne tient qu'à chacun de revendiquer sa part... de recourir à volonté à ce langage qui n'a rien de surnaturel et qui est le véhicule même, pour tous et pour chacun, de la révélation» («Le Message automatique», in *Point du jour*, p. 182). The phantasmic ship of the Surrealists does not save humankind from a deluge, but from the hands of a God who forsook it. This is why, the relation established all along between the divided and alienated subject and his lost and found anew objects (the magnificent «objets de la trouvaille»)<sup>4</sup> is one of love. And it is this love relation which compensates for the lack of the Other from a picture where there will always be a subject and an object as long as their union does not set free an-Other desire, different from that for amorous gratification.<sup>5</sup> Breton envisages therefore a liberation of mankind through a gathering of lost objects and within the *mad* relation of love and its automatic writing (*Arcane 17*, p. 48), «ne serait-ce qu'en protestation contre un scandaleux état de choses; [il faut] faire prédominer au maximum tout ce qui ressortit au système féminin du monde par opposition au système masculin... s'approprier

<sup>3</sup> Also in *Second manifeste...*: «[...] qui peut, je le demande, avoir *humainement* la parole?» (p. 141).

<sup>4</sup> «L'objet trouvé... est un objet d'amour» (Rosolato, «Penser le plaisir», p. 128).

<sup>5</sup> This Lacanian Other is always the Other sex: «l'Autre, dans mon langage, cela ne peut donc être que l'Autre sexe» (Lacan, *Encore*, p. 40). And: «Le désir de l'homme c'est le désir de l'Autre» (*Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse*, p. 261).

jusqu'à le faire jalousement sien tout ce qui la distingue de l'homme sous le rapport des modes d'appréciation et de volition» (*Arcane 17*, pp. 62-63).<sup>6</sup>

Inasmuch as the techniques of automatic writing abundantly remake the harmony between the object and the split subject moaning over the loss, they project the quest for lost objects along the vector of the metaphor. As both receptacle and tomb of the found object, the *little bit of reality* reveals and conceals at the same time the exquisite character of this reunion, and it is precisely the idea of a surreal as reality in excess, offsetting the initial scarcity of human existence, that I want to emphasize here. Breton's surreal encompasses the lost object and transforms it into an object constructed from the materiality of language, making the original want into a marvelous gain, and it is this metaphorical transmutation that creates the actual texture of the surreal. This object-metaphor, «objet d'une trouvaille», results thus from a double inscription in language or in the signifying chain: of the barred subject whose desire alienates him from the object of his craving – here, *the little bit of reality* –, and of the subject who, following the act by which he is supposed to find again the lost object, takes over meaning at the outcome of his exploit. When the subject speaks, his bit of reality becomes, retroactively, a marvelous filling touching all objects and making them desirable. «Le tout, pour le surréalisme, a été de se convaincre qu'on avait mis la main sur la “matière première” (au sens alchimique) du langage» (*Du surréalisme en ses ouvrages vives*, p. 179; p. 181). Hence, Surrealist automatic writing is initiated at the intersection between dream and wakefulness, in a lay out foretelling maybe the contemporary notion of *interface*. Yet, in order to locate this subjective structure, one has first to break the tambour of reason and contemplate the abyss within (*Du surréalisme...*, p. 182).

Moreover, in trying to find an answer to the question «who speaks?» Breton writes that one night, just before going to bed, he thinks he hears a sentence which, although it cannot be properly articulated, insists to be uttered. Obsessed with this experience, which will become recurrent, the poet attempts to pin down the sentence, and the result is something like: «Il y a un homme coupé en deux par la fenêtre» (*Manifeste du surréalisme*, p. 32). A subject is cut into two by a window perpendicular to the axis of his body, and in the newly created rift the surreal will find its rare place, the dwelling doomed in *illo tempore* but reconstructed through automatic writing. The subject emerges from this experience endowed with a speech which simultaneously thinks («la pensée parlée» – *Second manifeste...*, p. 142), something in him more powerful than the subject himself and which propels him, even against his own will, into immortality (*Second manifeste...*, p. 120).

Looming up in the chasm opened between the half-asleep subject and its lacking object, the mad language of love is capable to translate the subject's thoughts. Not only that, but it reshapes his essence and thus fills his existence with the being from which, during his painful creation, the subject was detached at the very moment of his imaginary splitting up. This language, «sur lequel l'immense majorité des hommes pourrait se pencher sans se voir» («*Second manifeste...*», p. 142), is a mirror representing the vector of the demand for love, with woman occupying the place of the desired object and the poet standing there for the amorous subject. Which is why, the object is continuously dropped and recreated in a metaphor (according to a Lacanian precept, «*the woman doesn't exist*»; there is only *a woman multiplied indefinitely*).<sup>7</sup> In *Nadja* or in *L'amour fou*, it is by an *objective chance* separating the state of dream from that of wakefulness that the encounter between the subject and the object-woman takes place. The latter is that marvelous precipitate of desire which stops language from its drift («glissement») inside *the defiles of the signifier* and clings to the signifying chain in an anchoring point («point de capiton»);<sup>8</sup> from there, the object-woman creates the meaning substituting metaphorically for the imaginary lack at the core of the subject, for his *little bit of reality*.

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<sup>6</sup> «Dans le surréalisme, la femme aura été aimée et célébrée comme la grande promesse, celle qui subsiste après avoir été tenue» (*Du surréalisme en ses oeuvres vives*, p. 185).

<sup>7</sup> «... le sujet féminin est toujours appelé, lors de sa rencontre par l'homme, à s'inscrire dans une sorte de retrouvaille, qui le place d'emblée dans une position caractérisée par l'ambiguïté des rapports naturels et des rapports symboliques» (Lacan, *La relation d'objet*, p. 95).

<sup>8</sup> See Lacan, «Subversion du sujet...», p. 805.

For Lacan, a similarly barred and dismantled subjective entity arises, again metaphorically, in the signifying chain, along with the *objet a* causing both the subject's desire and his split nature. Yet this object, because it is always the object of a desire for something else, ascertains the fundamentally incomplete structure of the subject himself, his *manque-à-être* (want-to-be). The difference between the Lacanian topology of the subject and Breton's design of a new subjectivity through the mad language of love, is that while the Surrealist poet ties the subject to the vector of the metaphor and to an alienated state of being which can be conquered after all, Lacan describes the analytical subject as irrevocably caught in the arcane self-constitution, in his own division and imperfection. In the graph of desire («Subversion du sujet...»), he shows how the vector of desire is elevated above the vector of the love relation which creates the split subject, and along the fantasy about the lost object. Lacan suggests by this that the mechanisms generating signification as well as the vector constitutive of the subject are rooted, beyond the metaphorical formation, in a metonymical structure. This structure is present both at the onset of the subjective make-up and at the point of its impasse when, because of his metaphorical rather than real genesis and because of his cleavage from any object cause of desire, the subject overcomes his alienation by his downright rejection of the object since, as Lacan used to say: «ce n'est pas ça» (*Encore*, p. 101). If metaphor means advent, creation, institution of the barred subject («l'avènement du sujet», *Écrits*, p. 515), metonymy is separation from, giving up and restitution of the object to its master, to the law of the chain or to the place of the Other, the Freudian «das andere Schauplatz».<sup>9</sup> And the subject comes to enjoy his austere law by going from metaphor to metonymy, from the love relation to the separation from the object of love, in short, from bad to worse.

The order of inscription for the two vectors, one of the metaphor and the love relation, the other of the metonymy and the severance from the object, is not arbitrary. The vector carrying the metaphor of the split subject seems to be primordial, as the object whose search is thus inaugurated is an object cause of the desire forging the subject. Yet, as Lacan points out in his comments on the graph, the significance of this constitution is retroactive, an *après-coup* effect, and the chain itself, with its endless possibilities of substitution among signifiers and with no restrictive law hindering their movement, is a metonymical representation of what awaits the subject even before he is born: a direct emergence in language and in the defiles of the signifier. This subject finds a meaning for himself through his love relation for the object cause of desire, and supposedly advances in his quest by regaining a position initially lost in the chain, that of master over the lost object. In order to do so, he goes through the fantasy about the object and repositions himself with respect to the Other, first by symbolically identifying with this Other and then by giving up even this identification and by establishing thus his original non-relation with this Other.

The non-relation between the subject and the *objet a* belonging to the Other (both the *objet a* and the Other are situated on another scene), that of the unconscious, begins then as an advancement of the hypothetical subject within the chain and with the transposition of his desire onto an imaginary setting where he is fabricated as split subject. What is thus perceived as subjective ascent is essentially a representation based on a metaphorical formula and having at its center the lack derived (condensed) from the loss of the object – in the manuals of rhetoric the metaphor is usually the foundation of all other figures, including the metonymy. Lacan calls this upshot a signification effect, in which the free flow of signifiers is halted from its drift and given a law saying that in the gap created by the crossing of the chain by desire, any signifier/all signifiers is/are that which represents the subject for another signifier. This is somewhat similar to the Surrealist definition of automatic writing, based on Breton's description of the man cut into two by a window. In the Lacanian theory nevertheless, the subject is still added to the chain but as a lack in it, as himself an *objet a* for the Other's desire, the way the *bit of reality*, in all its negativity, fills

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<sup>9</sup> See also *L'éthique de la psychanalyse*, pp. 121-137.

human existence and makes it into a reality in excess, a magic reality (and, furthermore, the way metaphor and meaning are constantly supplemented with the pure and senseless movement of the signifiers inside their chain or defiles). Thus, it is the metonymical trajectory of the object cause of desire which comes both at the origin and at the closure of any subjective production, both as a gap in the chain and as a supplement to it, both as a meaning effect and as a void at the subject's heart remnant of the direction of the entire process of signification. «Ce qui est aimé dans un être est au-delà de ce qu'il est, à savoir, en fin de compte, ce qui lui manque» (*La relation d'objet*, p. 142).

The *interface* of subjectivity was for Breton the window cutting the subject in half; for Lacan, it is the fantasy hindering the sliding of signifiers, a fantasy in which the object of the love relation acquires its metaphorical consistency. Yet, on the same place in the Lacanian graph, metonymy and a desire transformed back into a drive are also present, phasing out the metaphorical construction of the subject. Lacan unveils thus how the signification effect is the product of the capture of the human being, at his birth and even before that, by the metonymical structure of *lalangue*, that is by a (m)other tongue which he speaks unwittingly and often unwillingly. «Le langage est ce qu'on essaie de savoir concernant la fonction de lalangue» (*Encore*, p. 126).

We have seen so far that Breton is constantly fascinated with the possibility of reuniting in a marvelous whole the divided subject and his lost object. His automatic writing results in a metaphorical sequence in which surreal objects are appended to the *little bit of reality* represented by the subjective position itself. One could then read his surreal as a kind of over-determination of the lack of relation between the subject and the object, as a meaning conferred, like in a dream where the incoherent latent thoughts are reorganized by the manifest content, to the subject's initial madness of letting himself cut in half by a window. «Dans le courant surréaliste l'amour a subi une intensification telle, par l'idéalisation *passionnelle* du désir, le jeu des projections et des identifications, de l'irrationnel qui défie le rationnel, qu'un virage a lieu: l'aura de la folie lui donne sa dimension mythique» (Rosolato, p. 135). If, for Breton, the surreal is endowed with the magical powers of a super-real, and the love relation enacts the imaginary identification between subject and object, Lacan suggests that actually the vector of desire is not stopped by any type of identification. For him, the disjunction between the two is essential in reasserting the existence of the subject beginning with his mythical desire, which is the desire of the Other. The vector of desire creates another demand, different from the demand for love, and which will emanate as a further gliding of a desire no longer linked to any law. This desire, beyond the love relation and beyond imaginary or symbolic identification, is a drive similar to the mythical impulse which initiated the subjective formation, yet also distinct from it, since through this drive-desire the subject finally knows, symptomatically, that his is a desire for an *a objet*, for an *abject* object.<sup>10</sup> «L'amour sexuel éprouve pour l'esprit... la plus terrible pierre d'achoppement», writes Breton (*Point du jour*, p. 79). Lacan proclaims in his turn that «there is no sexual relation», meaning by this that there is no real compensation to the imaginary splitting up of the subject, and that it is hopeless to try to locate this non-relation in the subjective world, that of the metaphor of love. The *real*, hidden in this very non-relation and lying at the core of the subjective constitution, is symbolized, embellished, and made bearable by being given retroactively a signification in which love substitutes for the lack of relation in the sexual union.<sup>11</sup>

The paradox illustrated by the elevation of the Lacanian graph of desire, from alienation and metaphor to separation and metonymy, is that the subjective position in the chain is tied to the

<sup>10</sup> «Car le symptôme est une métaphore, que l'on veuille ou non se le dire, comme le désir est une métonymie, même si l'homme s'en gausse» («L'instance de la lettre dans l'inconscient», in *Écrits*, p. 528). Which is why, again, Lacan sees the position of the analyst as identical with that of the *objet a*.

<sup>11</sup> There is only «[un] rapport de travers... qui sépare le sujet du sexe» (*Écrits*, p. 799). That which adorns the lack of a meaningful relation inside the hypothetical union between a subject and an object, «[c]e qui supplée au rapport sexuel, c'est précisément l'amour» (*Encore*, p. 44). See also the *four discourse structures* in *Encore*, chapter II.

object cause of desire by their very disjunction. If the subject's desire is a desire for a surreal, exquisite, or abject object, it is because the Other is inexistent in the second part of the graph, as it has vanished once human desire becomes again a drive, beyond fantasy (*the Other is itself lacking and desiring*, says Lacan)<sup>12</sup>. And although the Other ceases thus to exist for the subject, It still answers his demand, only this time with a more fundamental language, one that returns to its repressed origins the way desire returns to itself as drive; this is, in the end, what constitutes the maternal language dubbed by Lacan *lalangue*. It is this *lalangue* devised from the place of the inexistent Other which speaks in the subject, and it is at this point that one also finds the answer to the second part of the question raised at the beginning of this paper: «what does a subject say when it – the language as *lalangue* – speaks for him?»

Breton admits that the Other does not exist («Il n'y a jamais eu de fruit défendu. La tentation seule est divine» [*L'amour fou*, p. 136]), yet it is less clear whether for him the Other's desire can be heard for itself and not only as a prop for the subject's own consistency. For Breton, once the Other is thrown out the door, It nonetheless returns through the window, and the poet, typically in the Other's shoes, is a *revenant* (in Alexandrian, *André Breton par lui-même*, p. 178). In his turn, Lacan designates as the subject's empty desire the location of this *revenant*, because there is no Other of the Other («il n'y a pas l'Autre de l'Autre», *Écrits*, p. 818), no over or meta-determination and, *jusqu'à nouvel ordre*, there is no cure in sight for the imperfect subjective structure. In the Lacanian theory, the *lalangue* or the speech of the Other is that kernel of the real which cannot be assimilated into the signifying chain, that which resists intact in the defiles of the signifier: «ce qu'on fait avec lalangue dépasse de beaucoup ce dont on peut se rendre compte au titre du langage» (*Encore*, p. 127). Moreover, the subject's world filled with meaning is always hypothetical as far as this *lalangue* is concerned (*Encore*, p. 127), and the subject's own constitution is also hypothetical because the subject «n'est rien d'autre que dire qu'il y a hypothèse» (*Encore*, p. 130). By the junction of the signifier to the signified and the fabrication of meaning, the subject only misses his goal, that of being whole again, since for him the supposed wholeness is the stage at which he is fading away. Therefore, the supreme proof of love for the Other is not found in the love relation but in the separation of the subject from both the object cause of desire and from the Other dwelling in the proximity of this object. *La vraie amour* then means to drop the object of desire in order to free the Other's desire. And here is, following both Breton and Lacan, a possible answer to my second question («what does the subject say when he speaks?»): the subject cut into two by a window or the subject prisoner in the defiles of the signifiers talks first without knowing what he is saying. Yet, what he at least seems to be announcing is that the mad love and mad language deployed by Surrealist writing are better read in light of the Lacanian *haineamoration* and its *lalangue* (*Encore*, pp. 83-84).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See *L'envers de la psychanalyse*, p. 31.

<sup>13</sup> Or in light of the modern metaphor of the subject and its metonymical translation in postmodernism (when the surreal can also be spelt as the post-real).

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# Dys-seminating Lacan: Gender theory's lost other

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Lacanian psychoanalysis made its way into the mainstream of American theoretical practice by routes both indirect and plural. Althusser's «Freud and Lacan», first translated into English in 1969 presented a materialist, ideological «Lacan» a full eight years before Lacan's *Écrits* saw translation. Lacan had barely had his say in English when his own work was overshadowed by Fredric Jameson's enormously influential appropriation of it in *The Political Unconscious*.<sup>1</sup> No sooner had Jameson laid claim to a politicized version of Freud's greatest discovery than American Marxism found its Lacanian colony – indeed, its own territory – coopted by semiotic critics who saw both materialism and psychoanalysis as assimilable to broadly defined constructs of linguistic code. Thus, Kaja Silverman made bold to wrest Lacan away from the Marxists with the claim that «both Freud and Jacques Lacan have demonstrated that psychoanalysis is in effect a branch of semiotics».<sup>2</sup> By the mid-80s, Lacan's concepts were central within English-speaking theoretical communities while his texts remained marginal.

The problem with Lacan's reception is not that his significant theoretical constructs have been employed to support arguments widely discrepant from Lacanian theory and psychoanalytic practice. That Lacanian ideas have been influential simply measures their vitality; that these ideas have been appropriated simply acknowledges their power. Lacan himself used Saussure to read Freud, after all. It is, though, fair to acknowledge Lacan's own position on the theoretical fusions of other disciplines with psychoanalysis since he made himself uncharacteristically explicit on this point. If in the search for a critical method the analyst abandons Freud and psychoanalysis or subordinates

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<sup>1</sup> Althusser's article appeared in the *New Left Review* in 1969, translated by Ben Brewster; it was republished in *Lenin and Philosophy*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971. Alan Sheridan's translation of *Écrits, A Selection* (New York: Norton, 1977) precedes Jameson's Marxist recuperation of French psychoanalytic thought, New York: Cornell UP, 1981, p. ix.

<sup>2</sup> *The Subject of Semiotics*, New York: Oxford UP, 1983.

analysis to any other discipline, that analyst is no longer doing analysis. «Why look elsewhere than in the register to which this discovery must, if one is to be rigorous, be limited?» Lacan asks.<sup>3</sup> Thus, for Lacan, the problem of the subject of the unconscious structured like a language must be posed within the Freudian field to be adequately addressed.

Few contemporary theorists would agree with Lacan's policing of boundaries, and coming from the intellectually omnivorous Lacan, this retreat from pluralism seems difficult to credit. However, there are indeed risks that arise with intellectual pluralism, risks that Rachel Bowlby acknowledges in her caution that theoretical assimilations always threaten to turn «helpful contacts» into «sterile fusion».<sup>4</sup> Currently, some potentially helpful contacts between Lacanian analysis and gender theory are going unexplored because of the persistent sterile fusion of the Lacanian registers in the work of feminists writing in English. Therefore, I want first to point out some examples of this fusion in the work of two widely read gender theorists: Toril Moi and Judith Butler.<sup>5</sup> Then, I want to suggest some probable sources of the confusion, and finally to point out the consequences for gender theory today.

Toril Moi briefly conflates the Lacanian registers when she writes in *Sexual/Textual Politics* that «In the Imaginary there is... no sense of a separate self, since the «self» is always alienated in the [capital] Other» (100). Moi's substitution here of the symbolic Other for the imaginary other, substitutes the unconscious structured like a language for the alienating other of the mirror - though it is the latter that the theoretical grammar of Moi's summary requires. The substitution seems particularly odd, since Moi follows it a mere six lines later with the explicit statement that «Lacan distinguishes between the Other... with a capital "O" and the other with a small "o"» (100). Moi's substitution occurs in an obligatory one-paragraph summary of Lacanian mirror stage theory that inserts Lacanian analysis into the master discourse of gender studies, subordinating psychoanalysis to Moi's distinctive deconstructive feminist perspective. Here, Lacan's admonition that psychoanalysis «becomes null and void, through having been made subordinate» (Sem III, 234) seems in part borne out – at least in terms of his own register theory.

What is the smallest quirk in passing in Moi's *Sexual/Textual Politics* becomes pervasive in Judith Butler's influential critique of Lacanian psychoanalysis, *Bodies that Matter*. Here, the sterile fusion of Lacanian registers pervades Butler's discussion of «The Lesbian Phallus and the Morphological Imaginary». Moreover, the collapsing of the registers occurs in three distinct forms in Butler's chapter, first in her conflation of disparate psychoanalytic models; second, in her conflation of penis with phallus; and finally, in her symptomatic substitution of the symbolic Other for the imaginary other manifest in Butler's inability to accurately quote Lacan's own text in spite of her extraordinary scholarly rigor.

Butler's chapter conflates psychoanalytic models which are theoretically and historically distinct – both Freudian models and Lacanian ones. Thus, Butler reads «On Narcissism» against *The Ego and the Id* though the former belongs to a mid-Freudian model that differs significantly from the last «entified» model of a psyche composed of Id-Ego-Superego. Similarly, Butler uses Lacan's mirror stage essay to argue for the imaginary nature of the phallus in «The Signification of the Phallus» – even though the former essay provides a coda to Lacan's early phenomenal and developmental model of the psyche while the latter condenses a portion of the seminar on desire, a seminar reflecting Lacan's structural theorizing at its strongest. Though mirror stage theory and register theory do share signifiers, their variant theoretical models constellate variant signifieds; if

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<sup>3</sup> *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III, The Psychoses, 1955-56*, trans. Russell Grigg, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, New York: Norton, 1993. See related discussion on 234.

<sup>4</sup> See «Two by Three», *Paragraph: A Journal of Modern Critical Theory* 13 (1990), 89-96.

<sup>5</sup> The following analysis focuses on Moi's *Sexual/Textual Politics*, London: Routledge, 1985, and Butler's *Bodies that Matter, On the Discursive Limits of «Sex»* (New York: Routledge, 1993). My claim that these texts are influential texts is admittedly subjective, based on my impression that they are frequently cited in articles discussing gender theory and that Moi and Butler frequently appear on syllabi of courses in feminist theory.

the terms remain the same, their meanings have structurally altered, but the alteration fails to make its way into Butler's critical assimilation of the latter model to its predecessor.

The signatures of conflation – of fusion – that appear in the mixing of registers at the level of psychoanalytic paradigms also appear in a sequence of claims, a continual reiteration of substitution and more substitution and always in the same direction. After arguing quite persuasively for the imaginary nature of the penis, Butler goes on to suggest that Lacan has simply renamed the penis the phallus (80); further, that the penis is the «privileged referent» to be symbolized by the phallus (84); and finally, that the relationship between penis and phallus (and by implication between imaginary and symbolic) is the relationship of signified to signifier (90). But issues of signifiatory slippage are not issues of reference, nor are they issues of meaning. And this series of confluences simply reiterates the earlier fusion of psychoanalytic models, creating a suture against which Butler then argues with great sophistication and subtlety.

Butler's most overtly symptomatic suture of the Lacanian registers reveals itself in her persistent error in directly quoting the text of Lacan's early seminars. Like Moi before her, Butler substitutes the symbolic Other for the mirroring other. It is as if, having merged mirror stage theory with register theory, Butler is literally unable to *see* a difference between the two. Thus, Butler consistently fails to distinguish the imaginary other from the symbolic Other, terms Lacan's model of the subject of the unconscious insists upon to draw a precise and consistent distinction between the mirroring imaginary and the symbolic treasury of signifiers. By continually effacing the imaginary other with the symbolic Other, Butler indeed does what she explicitly states as her essay's goal: she «rewrit[es] the morphological imaginary» (72) though the rewriting is far more literal than her subheading implies.

Where Lacan speaks of the body finding its unity «in the image of the other» with a small o (Sem II, 54), Butler rewrites «in the image of the Other» with a capital (75), and where Lacan writes «the imaginary structuration of the ego forms around the specular image of the body itself, of the image of the other» small o, imaginary other (Sem II, 94), Butler again revises to «the image of the Other» with a capital O (76) collapsing Lacan's straightforward structural distinction and begging the issue of structural difference. Butler perpetuates the error in her own discussion, commenting that «the specular image of the body itself is in some sense the image of the Other» (76) and that the «extrapolating function» of narcissism is the «principle by which any other object or Other is known» (77). There is no small irony in Butler's symptomatic misquotation of Lacan given her rigorous inclusion of parallel phrases from both French and English texts, and carefully documented citations from both the French and English seminars.<sup>6</sup> But as Lacan points out, the unconscious is always visible, right there, literally spelled out in the text – and Butler's text proves no exception to this Lacanian rule.

To sum up briefly here before moving on, a symptom manifests itself in two central texts of gender studies as they confront Lacanian analysis, a symptom that takes the form of a confusion of paradigms, of registers, of O/others. It is important to ask what has caused the imaginary other to cease to signify in the texts of gender theory – even when those texts focus on the imaginary register itself and what the consequent loss of the imaginary other might mean for feminism and gender studies more generally.

The cause of the lost other in Moi's text seems straightforward since it reflects the still overwhelming influence of Lacan's mirror stage essay in English language accommodations of Lacanian psychoanalysis to other theoretical discourses. Moi presents the imaginary as a developmental stage that is left behind or outgrown when the child enters the symbolic. Moi's summary is typical: «The Imaginary corresponds to the pre-Oedipal period when the child believes itself to be a part of

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<sup>6</sup> The irony of Butler's reading and its notable omission of the imaginary other is emphasized by her apt focus on Lacan's most emphatically structural of the early seminars, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II, The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, New York: Norton, 1991.

the mother, and perceives no separation between itself and the world. In the Imaginary there is no difference and no absence, only identity and presence. The Oedipal crisis represents the entry into the Symbolic Order... from now on the desire for the mother or the imaginary unity with her must be repressed» (99). Linear, progressive, and phenomenal, Moi's condensed version leaves little doubt that the imaginary is but a nostalgic remnant of the march through childhood's stages. This suggests, then, that in Moi's text the missing imaginary other aptly expresses the repressed imaginary of the Oedipal symbolic; fittingly, Moi's textual substitution enacts Lacanian theory in the very way that Moi herself reads it.

The loss of the imaginary other in Moi appears, on closer examination, to be little more than an artifact of summary, an error precipitated by oversimplification. The disappearance of the imaginary other in Butler's thoroughgoing critique of the mirror stage essay is, on the other hand, oddly paradoxical since it enacts textually the argument Butler struggles so painstakingly to prove. Looking more closely at Butler's actual text may be helpful here. The page-long explication of Lacan's mirror stage theory in which five symptomatic substitutions of the symbolic Other for imaginary other occur concludes with the quotation that «certain organs are caught up in the narcissistic relation» (76-77). The following page of text, on which the symptomatic substitution occurs three more times, argues as follows: first, the previously unspecified «organs» may be «the male genitals» (77), and if this is so, then Lacan's mirror stage theory grounds itself on a specifically masculine narcissism. Consequently, the narcissistically engaged masculine organs now condition and structure every object and [O]ther and as a result, the «extrapolating function» of narcissism raised to an epistemological principle becomes phallogocentric. In short, a phallic imaginary is masculine and any explanatory function such an imaginary might serve is inherently phallogocentric. Therefore, it is from Lacan's phallogocentrism that Butler's lesbian phallus liberates us, providing a subversive substitute for the hetero/sexist Phallic Signifier that she herself has taken great pains to introduce into the Lacanian imaginary.

Given the persistent insertion of the symbolic into the imaginary, and the assimilation of the symbolic construct phallus to the image of the penis, it is not surprising to hear Butler conclude that «if the phallus is an imaginary effect, a wishful transfiguration, then it is not merely the *symbolic* status of the phallus that is called into question, but the very distinction between the symbolic and the imaginary» (79). But just whose wishful transfiguration does Butler's text demonstrate we may want to ask since the symptom, Freud tells us, marks the location of the wish and it has clearly been Butler's wish to do away with the distinction between the registers all along.

Reducing Lacanian theory to a unified field as Butler does supports binary notions of subject and symbolic Other, turning Lacan's intrapsychic model into an interpersonal model. This interpersonal model is clearly politicizable and compatible with the kinds of Foucauldian and deconstructive political impulses that characterize Butler's own theory of «performance as citation and gender as iteration» (Whitford, cover). Politically, then, Butler needs to situate the point of infinite substitution within a dualistic imaginary to accomplish her own theoretical goals. Thus, the imaginary, in Butler's analysis, is regarded as a field that functions in a structurally unproblematic way. Indeed, it is Lacan's structurally sophisticated theory of the registers that Butler has resisted throughout.

However, the psychoanalytic processes Butler discusses in *Bodies that Matter* and elsewhere - processes of internalization, identification, and interpretation - inhabit the imaginary and the symbolic registers in structurally divergent and irreconcilable ways.<sup>7</sup> Briefly, in Lacanian theory

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<sup>7</sup> Butler is an astute critic of psychoanalysis and has, throughout her career, raised significant issues about psychoanalytic theory. Her article «Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory, and Psychoanalytic Discourse» offers Butler's characteristically precise analysis of psychoanalysis's and feminist theory's implications for each other. See *Feminism/Postmodernism*, ed Linda Nicholson, New York: Routledge, 1990, pp. 324-340.

internalized imagoes are structurally unary while symbolic signifiers are binary; projective imaginary identification is a binary reflective process while symbolic identification – relation to a set of relations – requires at least three terms (think of the minister's position vis a vis the royal relationship in the purloined letter); three terms also mark what Lacan calls the imaginary triangle of schema R, the point at which the subject becomes self-interpreting, while the symbolic as a linguistic unconscious is the perpetual source of fourth terms, terms whose relations to any interpretive position that attempts to contain them are inherently deconstructive and pluralizing. Not only is the imaginary disjunct from and irreconcilable with the symbolic register as a register, the imaginary is also morphologically complex in and of itself. As a result, Lacan's register theory suggests that any attempt to postulate hegemonies which are not *self*-subverting is misguided; therefore political oppression might better be situated in the register that Slavoj Žižek describes as the «shadow world of practices».

We have seen the imaginary other disappear problematically from the texts of two significant voices in gender theory – Toril Moi's and Judith Butler's, so it might be fair to ask in conclusion whether repression of the imaginary other – that is to say, the withholding of projective identification – poses a problem for feminism more generally. This has, unfortunately, become the case for it is just such projective and unifying identifications that feminists more and more frequently withhold from other feminists – black feminists from white, working class feminists from bourgeois, third world feminists from first world, gender theorists from women's historians. It would be to the advantage of gender studies to reexamine the imaginary register and to reconsider the value of constructed unities – Lacan's register theory can help.

## Ear disease in *Hamlet*

DIANNE HUNTER (\*)

The musicologist Joachim-Ernst Berendt has remarked that the miracle of the human ear is being rediscovered in the cultural moment when patriarchy is losing power. It therefore seems appropriate that numerous writers associated with the current revival of sacred female power have revalorized the ear as a more primary, deeper way of knowing than the epistemology of the eye, which came into dominance during the Renaissance discovery of perspective in painting and triumphed in the empirical science championed by Francis Bacon. Tacitly responding to Ernest Jones's notorious reading of the icon of the Annunciation as a displacement upwards of a fantasy of anal penetration by a flatulent phallus, Julia Kristeva in «*Stabat Mater*», has spoken of the significance for feminism of the Madonna's conception through the ear in medieval and early Renaissance iconography. The narrator of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* remarks, «the ear is the antechamber of the soul». The American poet-prophet H.D. ends her epic, *Trilogy*, with a feminist gospel tuning in the goddesses of pre-history via the spiral form, the shape of the cochlea, the inner ear, in which a memory spiral opens into spiritual renewal through a prelinguistic form of listening.

Psychoanalysis has been famously called «the talking cure», but is perhaps better described as a listening cure. Thus Freud's follower Theodor Reik spoke of psychoanalytic work as a special kind of hearing, listening with the third or inner ear:

No doubt, the third ear of which we often speak will appear to many not only as an anatomical, but also as a psychological, abnormality – even to psychologists. But do we not speak of hearing with the «inner ear». What Nietzsche meant is not identical with this figure of speech, but it is akin to it. The third ear to which the great psychologists referred is the same that Freud meant when he said the capacity of the unconscious for fine hearing was one of the requisites for the psychoanalyst.

The student of psychoanalysis is advised to listen to those inner voices with more attention than to what «reason» tells about the unconscious; to be very aware of **what is said inside himself** (my emphasis), *écoutez aux voix intérieures...*

Though Freud had a tin ear for music, his moving of the therapeutic scene to the terrain of inner listening for the familial roots of the passions of the human voice has contributed to reevaluation of the authority of the ear and to the current break with the dominance accorded to the visual in post-Renaissance European culture.

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In the historical moment in which Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was composed, the ear was coded as an admonishing organ, the avenue for hearing sermons. Though Protestant preachers in Shakespeare's days attacked the theatre as a place of corrupting public spectacles, «gaping gazing sights», Elizabethans spoke of going «hear a play», as the term «audience» suggests. Though Hamlet is not the only person in the play to see the ghost, he is the only one to whom the ghost speaks; and Hamlet remains skeptical until the play within the play that what the ghost has told him is reliable. He fears that perhaps the ghost has abused his ear; and Hamlet says, «I'll have grounds/ More relative than this. The play's the thing/ Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.» What Hamlet needs is a visual demonstration in order to see into the King's mind. This visual demonstration takes the form of an attack on Claudius's guilty mind, and the seeing into it Hamlet characterizes as a kind of ocular stabbing: «I'll observe his looks./ I'll tent him to the quick.» If he sees the king blench [flinch], says Hamlet, then he'll «know» his «course». So the reliable form of knowing here is visual. Hamlet will only be authorized to revenge when he has had ocular proof that Claudius is guilty. This reliance on the visual is ironic because for anyone not already knowing the guilt of the king, Hamlet's play proves nothing but that Hamlet, «nephew to the king», wants to kill the king and get the love of the queen. It is actually only the overhearing of Claudius's confession during the prayer scene after the play within the play, when Claudius speaks of having murdered his brother, that the guilt is located outside Hamlet's imagination.

The ear is given a special prominence in *Hamlet*, most obviously in the bizarre story of poisoning through the ear, but just as significantly in so far as the pouring of the poison can be understood as a metaphor for listening in this play. Ears in *Hamlet* are abused, invaded, diseased. Listening to the ghost seems to drive Hamlet from mourning into a more than feigned madness. Ernest Jones has traced the medically improbable death of Hamlet Senior from hebona to Shakespeare's having confounded the narcotic «hebon» with «henbane» (hyoscyamus), which at that time was believed to cause mortification. Jones notes as well that Pliny mentioned henbane as a cause for mental disorder when poured into the ear.

Even before hearing about the ghost from Horatio and the soldiers on the watch, Hamlet appears to be a walking shadow, haunting Denmark with the memory of his dead father. In the play's opening, Bernardo, having twice seen the ghost of buried Denmark, prepares to tell again the skeptical Horatio the tale of the dead king's return:

Sit down a while,  
And let us once again *assail* your ears,  
That are so *fortified* against our story,  
What we two nights have seen (my italics).

The image of listening here is embedded in a metaphor of the mind as a castle fortified against attacking sounds which assail the ears. These ears do not want to hear; they are defended against hearing because it is safer that way. As Bernardo proceeds to set the scene of the previous night's watch, «The bell beating one», it is as if his story comes to life, for the ghost reappears as if on a sound cue. Here the ghost is silent, but its very presence seems enough to make Horatio turn *pale* as a ghost himself. Horatio charges the ghost to speak, but it stalks dumb away. Bernardo remarks to Horatio, «You tremble and look pale». The now ghost-like Horatio, asked if the spectre is «not *like* the king?», replies, «As thou art to thyself. Such was the armor he had on/ When he th' ambitious Norway combated.» Since Horatio is close in age to Hamlet, Horatio can be speaking here only of what he has heard because King Hamlet fought Norway and killed him on the night of Hamlet's birth, thirty years before. Horatio cannot have seen it.

We then hear that young Norway, Fortinbras, has raised an army to reclaim the inheritance his father had lost that night in combat with Hamlet's father. It is to guard against and to prepare for war against this young Fortinbras that the strict nightwatch and the «nightly toils» of the Danish subjects are being maintained. Whereas they are guarding against an attack from without, the soldiers have in effect been *assailed* from within by the ghost in armor as with Hamlet in his more

than feigned madness, keeping one's eyes open for an outside enemy leaves one unprepared for an enemy within.

The appearance of the ghost the following night reinforces and psychologizes this idea of an attack from within, for just before the ghost enters in this scene, Hamlet speaks of «breaking down the *pales* and *forts* of reason» (my italics). Hamlet describes reason as fortress in the same way that Bernardo had responded to Horatio's «Tush, tush, 'twill not appear», by imagining skepticism as a fortification to be assailed through the ears. As the ghost prepares to speak, he warns Hamlet:

But that I am forbid  
To tell the secrets of my prison house,  
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word  
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,  
Make thy eyes like stars start from their spheres,  
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,  
And each particular hair to stand on end  
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine.

But this terrifying tale of hair-raising, eye-popping revelation, left to Hamlet's imagination, «must not be/ To ears of flesh and blood». Nevertheless, biding Hamlet, «list, list, O, List!», the ghost unfolds a tale revealing that «the whole ear of Denmark/ Is by a forged process... rankly abused». In this image, a lie abuses the collective ear. The ghost in effect says, not only have I been poisoned through the ear, but so has the whole of Denmark. He reports how Claudius «in the porches of my ears did pour/ The leperous distilment, whose effect/ Holds such an enmity with the blood of man/ That swift as quicksilver it courses through/ The natural gates and alleys of the body/ And with a sudden vigor it doth posset/ And curd, like eager droppings into milk,/ The thin and wholesome blood. So did it mine,/ And a most instant tetter barked about/ Most lazer-like with vile and loathsome crust/ All my smooth body.» The word «tetter» means eruption, so this description of the leprously mortifying effects of the poison provides an anatomical analogy on the old king's body to Horatio's remark in the play's opening scene that the appearance of the ghost «bodes some strange eruption to our state». Thus the curdling of the king's blood introduced to us aurally may be said to represent the origin of the hidden impostume which proves to be poisoning Claudius's Denmark. Murder through the ear can be said to poison the body politic.

The poisoned king's symptoms, moreover, suggest venereal disease, for, like much else, love in this play is diseased. The staging of the ghost's story as a play within the play, argues Stanley Cavell, shows that poisoning through the ear represents Hamlet's version of the primal scene, his fantasy of his origin. (Cavell is tacitly depending on Freud's observation that whenever we dream we are watching a play, we are having a primal scene fantasy.) Through reversals which Cavell unravels on the model of Freud's analysis of the Wolf Man's primal scene, Hamlet's primal scene fantasy has been disguised. Claudius, says Cavell, is a substitute for the true poisoner who, in Hamlet's mind, is Gertrude. Perhaps we can translate Cavell's interpretation to mean that Hamlet hears from the ghost that Gertrude poisoned Hamlet Senior's life. In any case, to Hamlet's mind, betrayal of love is fatal. Thus, Hamlet gives the player Queen the lines, «None wed the second but who killed the first», and «A second time I kill my husband dead/ When second husband kisses me in bed.» Later, Hamlet bids Claudius, «Farewell, dear mother», for «father and mother is man and wife, man and wife is one flesh, and so, my mother.» Hamlet's fusion of killer and wife, man and wife, lends support to Cavell's claim that in Hamlet's mind Gertrude is the ultimate poisoner in the crime that Hamlet is compelled to remember and revenge.

Since revenge requires repeating a crime in order symbolically to undo it, Hamlet too must be a poisoner, and, it seems, a violator of ears. Anticipating his identification with the aggressor Lucianus at the play within the play, Hamlet builds himself up for his theatrical attack play by comparing his own inactivity with the passionate speeches of the visiting player:

What would he do  
Had he the motive and the cue for passion  
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears  
And *cleave the general ear with horrid speech* (my italics).

Then, at the performance of his lines, «None wed the second but who killed the first», Hamlet comments in an aside, «That's wormwood». Wormwood, a bitter plant, is not only galling but sickening; taken in excess, it can be poison. Though Hamlet means to cleave the general ear and to «do such *bitter* business as the day/ Would quake to look on», he rejects the matricidal role of Nero, saying, «let not ever/ The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom... I will *speak daggers* to her, but use none» (my italics). The queen, subject to Hamlet's direct verbal attack in the closet scene, says his words «like daggers» enter her ears. Hamlet, having been assaulted through the ears by the ghost's tale, which threatened to break his heart and make him instantly old, manages to cleave his mother's heart in twain by getting her to see Claudius as «a mildewed ear/ Blasting his wholesome brother». This seems to be a different kind of ear – vegetal rather than anatomical; but still, it is a diseased ear.

Images of an infected ear which spreads corruption through accusation extend to the Laertes-Polonius plot. For example, Claudius describes the people «[t]hick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers/ For good Polonius's death». Laertes, returned from France, «wants not buzzers [whispering tale-bearers] to *infect his ear/ with pestilent* speeches of his father's death» (my italics). Ophelia's madness is «the poison of deep grief». «[N]ecessity», concludes Claudius, «will nothing stick our person to arraign/ In ear and ear». Thus is Claudius (albeit falsely) accused in every ear of guilt for Polonius's death. Laertes's revenge on Hamlet, which is implicated in Hamlet's on Claudius, is poisoned, both literally in the envenomed sword, and figuratively, insofar as it is misguided, having been manipulated by Claudius's corrupting powers of persuasion.

One way of interpreting these clusters of imagery is to say that *Hamlet* dramatizes the power of words, the sinister and penetrating aggressiveness not only of lying but also of truthful speech, and the vulnerability of the ear therefore to transgression. For discussion of the ear in this play as vaginal or anal, see Kristeva or Jones. I would like us to be able to hear in these images not only unconscious anatomical references, the iterative dictionary of decoding of an outmoded form of psychoanalytic listening, but as well the historical implications of the ear imagined as a locus of disease, for the ear is an organ that during the Renaissance underwent devaluation in favor of the emergence of the authority of the eye.

# Shakespeare's Sonnet #129 deconstructed

*MARVIN B. KRIMS (\*)*

## Sonnet #129

Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame  
Is lust in action, and till action, lust  
Is perjur'd, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,  
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,  
Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight,  
Past reason hunted, and no sooner had,  
Past reason hated as a swallowed bait  
On purpose laid to make the taker mad:  
Mad in pursuit and in possession so,  
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme,  
A bliss in proof, and prov'd, a very woe,  
Before, a joy propos'd, behind, a dream.  
All this the world well knows, yet none knows well  
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

Sonnet #129 stands apart from many of Shakespeare's Sonnets in that it does not address the Sonnets' frequent theme: the complex and other troubled relationships between the Sonneteer and those he cares deeply about, the «young man» and the «dark lady». However, the Sonnet does focus on what often is at the heart of their difficulties with each other: lust. The Sonnet resembles the others in that it explores the problematic and paradoxical elements of its central motif: in this case, the troubling feelings and imagery that may be associated with the sexual desire and its satisfaction. Since it is precisely the enjoyment of the sexual love and lust within the context of a loving relationship that is a problem for many people, a close reading of the Sonnet and its subtext, may throw some light on the causes of this perplexing problem.

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Sexual relations with a beloved person can be such a pleasure that it seems a paradox in itself that emotional problems with this natural expression are so very frequent. Yet problems with this aspects of loving, in the context of a fully developed, long term relationships are among the most common difficulties encountered in psychoanalytic practice. And this in turn probably reflects their frequency in everyday life as well. I intend to explore Shakespeare's Sonnet #129 both as a representation of these kind of difficulties and as a disclosure of the underlying unconscious conflicts which can cause them. Shakespeare's intuitive understanding of people and his ability to express this insight with metaphoric language which resonate with unconscious conflict are the basis for this exploration.

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The opening lines of the Sonnet – the so-called «Lust Sonnet» – abruptly strike us with the paradox of psychological difficulties with physical side of loving: «Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame/ Is lust in action.» (1) From this pejorative portrayal of emotional exhaustion and orgasm (In Shakespeare's time, «spirit» could signify «semen».) through the concluding couplet, the Sonnet delivers a dismal account of what the words simultaneously endorse as a thoroughly enjoyable and satisfying experience.

I intend to discuss the words of the Sonnet as speaking to us on three levels. On the surface level, the words simultaneously endorse and subvert the conventional idealization of sexual love encountered in many texts – and in many people. The subversion is essential, for idealization of sex can obscure the psychological problems frequently encountered in real life when people try to make love. This subversion of idealization prepares the way for the second level: a representation of the conscious experience of these psychological problems with sex; what these problems might actually feel like to us. Finally, at the third and deepest level, I shall try to show how the Sonnet discloses some of the unconscious conflicts that can cause these problems.

#### LOVE DEIDEALIZED ON THE SURFACE OF THE TEXT

The first two lines of the Sonnet abruptly dismantle what we think of as the ultimate of sexual pleasure, orgasm («Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame/ Is lust in action») Here we are told – bluntly, tersely – that orgasm is but a shameful waste of vital energies and body fluids. This starkness is unrelieved by further elaboration; no shower of gold in Danae's lap here. The final lines of the quatrain continue the attack on positive expectation. We are told that the beginnings of love («till action») are «perjur'd, murderous, bloody, full of blame,/ Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust». This adjectival assault seems designed to undermine what we thought to be a pleasant prelude and insists that it is quite the opposite: an «extreme» danger («extreme» is repeated twice in the Sonnet), more an act of treachery and betrayal than an act of love. We do not try to please and tempt the person we love; we seek to dissemble ([Lust is] «perjur'd», «not to trust»). We do not seduce and excite; we try to destroy: [Lust is] «murderous, bloody, cruel». And, of course, we feel «full of blame» – or perhaps we ourselves are the intended victims! It is as if now the Sonneteer were confusing us by renegeing on his intention to describe what lust is and, instead, devotes the entire first quatrain to telling us precisely what lust is not.

And by continuing in much the same tone, the next two quatrains compound our confusion. We are told that we no sooner enjoy our sexual pleasure («enjoy'd no sooner») than we despise what has just happened; we now feel that we have been lured into a trap by «a swallowed bait/ On purpose laid to make the taker mad». Accordingly, making love is at once bliss and danger – «A bliss in proof, and prov'd, a very woe,/ Before a joy propos'd, behind, a dream». Sex is presented as desirable and dreadful, from beginning courtship to final satiation.(2) And the concluding

couplet, in a tone of supreme irony, assures us that there is absolutely nothing we can do «To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell».

At first, we might be moved to quarrel, to deny and attack what the Sonneteer tells us: surely the Sonneteer is in a dark mood, perhaps has had some personal difficulties with his own love relationships; we might note that the word «love» does not even appear in his Sonnet! Perhaps then, as a result of some disappointment, he has turned away from love and his Sonnet speaks only of loveless fornication.(3) But a less defensive voice within us might ask: By questioning the Sonneteer's mental state, are we trying to dismiss what he tells us? And even if, for a moment, we grant that the Sonneteer is indeed in an unhappy state, we need also grant that his unhappiness might lead him to selectively focus on those painful aspects of inner truth which might elude awareness in happier times: even though the Sonneteer sees only shadows and not the sun, it can be the shadows that cause problems in love relationships. By focusing our attention on this darker side of physical love, his account might help us to better understand the underlying causes of such problems. Perhaps, then, we need to attend more closely to the Sonneteer's words so that we might learn more about these problems.

#### THE CONSCIOUS EXPERIENCE OF DIFFICULTIES WITH SEX

Here, I begin with the second quatrain and its central metaphor - perhaps the central metaphor of the entire Sonnet: the «swallowed bait/ On purpose laid to make the taker mad». This metaphor, I argue, can be read as a representation of the *conscious* difficulties people can encounter – within themselves – when they try to make love:

Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight,  
Past reason hunted, and no sooner had,  
Past reason hated as a swallowed bait  
On purpose laid to make the taker mad.

The first line of this quatrain («Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight») states a theme, which is then reiterated throughout the Sonnet: after lovemaking, the delight at once gives way to revulsion and hate. The repetition of «Past reason» in the next two lines («Past reason hunted» and «Past reason hated») emphasizes the illogical, internally driven, visceral nature of these contradictory feelings associated with lust.

The first «past reason» in «past reason hunted» we can easily understand: our need for sexual gratification has little to do with reason; the compelling forces here are physical need and emotional drive. And since «reason» and «raising» were pronounced alike in Shakespeare's time («Ra'zon»), there may even be a bawdy pun on the engorgement of sexual tissues during sexual excitement. But both the hunt and the excitement are only «past reason» in that they do not originate in our intellect; the Sonnet does *not* tell us that they are «past reason» in the sense of «irrational» or «demented».

However, the second «Past reason» in «Past reason hated as a swallowed bait/ On purpose laid to make the taker mad» presents problems. Whereas the first «Past reason» simply affirms the urgent nature of sexual love, the second suggests that, as soon as we have taken our pleasure, we promptly take leave of our senses and now hate the love we so urgently pursued and so briefly enjoyed. The experience of intense pleasure undergoes a radical metamorphosis and now feels like the extreme torment of a «swallowed bait». We feel caught (perhaps «hooked» or «snared» comes closer to the Sonnet's trope) by an evil design, a trap purposely set to drive us mad («mad» is also repeated twice). Thus the second «Past reason» carries the meaning of an *irrational* hatred: we are irrational in that we hate the very thing we desired but a moment ago.

However, we note that this figure is presented as a *simile*. «Past reason hated *as* a swallowed bait/ On purpose laid to make the taker mad» is *elliptical*. Its full reading would be «Past reason

hated as [if it were] a swallowed bait/ On purpose laid to make the taker mad». We feel as if we had swallowed bait, even though we know there is no reality in the phantasy; unlike the paranoid, we retain the ability to distinguish between reality and phantasy. Nevertheless the words may first frighten us by their «feel» of paranoia even as the simile structure reassures us that we know it is all mere phantasy. To reinforce this simultaneous threat and reassurance, the next two lines («On purpose laid to make the taker mad:/ Mad in pursuit and in possession so.») tell us twice that we are «mad» – yet maddened by a phantasy we know is unreal. (4) And perhaps we ourselves wonder if we might be quite «mad» to feel persecutory anxiety in the midst of such delight.

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But I would guess that few people have a conscious phantasy of «swallowed bait, on purpose laid to make the taker mad» after making love. A trope, however, is just a trope: a symbolic representation of feelings and phantasies, not a literal description. Thus, in this reading, the figure of «swallowed bait» represents a feeling of inner discomfort, a tension close to anxiety, that many people experience after making love. This tension-anxiety leads some (usually men) to move away after sex, to distance themselves from the very lover whose attentions were so eagerly sought a moment ago. Those who must do this need to reassure themselves that they are not somehow caught or trapped in the relationship: they haven't «swallowed bait».

In others (often women), this tension after sex may cause concern that they have been seduced by a false or deceptive lover; in this sense, they have «swallowed bait». This concern often takes the form of a need for reassurance that one is truly, truly loved, another way to dispel the anxiety generated by the phantasy of the «swallowed bait». In both instances – the need to distance and the need for reassurance – the anxiety is irrational: the lovers have had exactly what they want, with the person they want and by means they helped devise and enjoyed. This is the paradoxical anxiety represented in the Sonnet's symbolic imagery of the «swallowed bait».

In addition to problems in which the anxiety about the «swallowed bait» manifests itself in this way in the love relationship, there is another group of problems in which this anxiety manifests itself as symptoms which interfere with one's ability to enjoy sex. These intrapsychic problems are more or less independent of the interpersonal field and can occur even (perhaps especially) in the best possible relationship, a relationship that seems to meet most of one's needs, wishes, and even special conditions. Such symptoms include diminished pleasure in sex, perhaps with pain or disgust, impotence, and difficulties with orgasm. (5) Indeed, distressing feelings around the time of orgasm are perhaps the leitmotif of the Sonnet and the central theme of all three quatrains. (In the full paper, I expand upon difficulties with orgasm related to toilet training as one of the leitmotifs of the Sonnet.)

Thus the Sonnet may be read as a description of sexual love together with the many problems, interpersonal and intrapsychic, that may consciously bedevil people while they try to enjoy it. What then can the Sonnet tell us about the unconscious conflicts underlying these problems?

#### THE UNCONSCIOUS CONFLICTS UNDERLYING PROBLEMS WITH SEXUAL PLEASURE

The lines «Past reason hated as a swallowed bait/ On purpose laid to make the taker mad» not only represents *conscious* problems with sex but also contains references to the *unconscious* conflicts that can cause these problems. Although I shall discuss some of these conflicts separately, they of course communicate, interact with, and reinforce each other.

In a Sonnet whose major movement is sexual, it makes some sense to begin with the «swallowed bait» as a reference to copulation, disguised by upward displacement: hence, a penis enters and is embraced by a vagina. (I elect a genital, heterosexual reading of the Sonnet although other

forms of sexuality might also be represented here.)(6) But clearly this agreeable experience of sexual union is not being represented here. Note that the line containing the «swallowed bait» is introduced by the words «no sooner had» in the previous line: orgasm has just occurred, and perhaps some of the passion is fading. According to this reading, hitherto unconscious phantasy, previously obscured by the sexual excitement, can now rise closer to the surface of consciousness: a phantasy that a bait has been taken, a hook is set, a trap is sprung.(7) This imagery of capture serves equally well to represent a phallic man tricked into entering a vaginal trap or a vaginal woman deceived into accepting a phallic bait. According to this phantasy, we are no longer dealing with loving intercourse: one genital organ has seized the other, and there is no escape. This anxiety-laden phantasy, previously suppressed by sexual excitement, is now closer to the surface and produces the anxiety that causes some to require distance and others to seek reassurance. And if the anxiety is not contained by these defensive measures, the earlier mentioned symptoms may develop.(8)

However, the manifest content of the words «swallowed bait» clearly refers to the mouth, not the genitalia. Thus, still deeper anxieties might be represented here, anxieties from the earliest stage of development: the mother-infant relationship. Since this relationship serves as the basis for all later love relationships, we should not be surprised to find resonance to this stage in a Sonnet about love. Thus, the figure of the «swallowed bait» also alludes to hunger for the breast and the wish for union – really reunion – with the mother, along with the well-known threats that are associated with these wishes: fear of oral incorporation, with loss of boundaries and possible obliteration of the self as a separate person. Thus at this most primitive developmental

level, there is no need for a trap or a hook to hold the «taker»; bait and taker are merged. Accordingly, the experience of oneness with one's lover can bring a mixture of profound satisfaction and primordial terror, the proportions depend on one's earliest experiences.(9)

(Here in the unabridged paper, I explore, in addition to these conflicts about genital and oral drives, unconscious conflicts about aggression as represented in the Sonnet.)

The Sonnet's representation of all these unconscious conflicts helps us to understand why a lover might be quite anxious («mad») in a situation of such delight; he/she unconsciously contacts phantasies of sexual entrapment, oral engulfment, and finally destruction.

.....

But who has not experienced difficulties during childhood with some – if not all – of these developmental areas? Childhood quandaries about sexual matters are common in the suppressive child-rearing atmosphere many endured. Problems with the mother-child relationship are inevitable: these may be simply having to share one's mother with a sibling, or with one's father, or allowing her to attend to her own personal needs. And certainly children need to develop constraints in matters of aggression and toilet training. The concluding couplet, «All this the world well knows, yet none knows well/ To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell» can thus be read as acknowledgment that we all suffer from emotional problems (as if we need to be told) that might cause us to misperceive the desirable «heaven» of lovemaking as our personal version of «hell».(10) But if this is so, why is it that so many of us do not shun love relationships but rather seek them out and do all within our ability to maintain them?

In part, the answer is that the Sonnet's insistence that «*none* knows well/ To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell» exaggerates to create its effect: it overlooks the many who in fact do shun the heaven that leads to their personal or philosophical hell. But this answer begs the question. A more satisfactory response might be that sex within a context of a loving relationship can be a pleasure even in the presence of unconscious conflicts, even though the conflicts may limit the passion or constrict the frequency, creativity, and diversity of the loving. And the impact of the Sonnet on so many readers suggests that this may well be a common situation.

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## Embodied imagination and the psychoanalytics of water in Hemingway's «Summer People»

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To Donald J. Coleman, M.D.; Stuart D. Hirsch, M.D. and Mervin S. Stewart, M.D. at the Pittsburgh Psychoanalytic Institute – in friendship and appreciation

... if we can convince our reader that below the water's surface images there is a series of increasingly profound and tenacious images, he will soon experience in his own meditations a sympathy for this deepening of our search. Underneath the imagination of forms, he will find an emergent imagination of substances. He will recognize a type of intimacy in water, that is, its substance....

Gaston Bachelard, *Water and Dreams* (8)<sup>1</sup>

The distinct dual modes of sexual desire and love appear as two significant constituents of the thematic of Ernest Hemingway's short story «Summer People».<sup>2</sup> Two men, the writer Nicholas Adams (nicknamed Nick or Wemedge) and an older friend, Carl (nicknamed Odgar), respectively sexually desire and love a young woman, Kate (nicknamed Butstein or Stut). This triangular relationship, in turn, undergirds the story's characterization, plot and narrative discourse. The formal structures of the story produce and amplify their effects through Hemingway's rigorous adherence to

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<sup>1</sup> The translation of this passage from Bachelard's *L'Eau et rêves* is mine.

<sup>2</sup> Hemingway wrote «Summer People» in 1924. It was posthumously included in *The Nick Adams Stories* in 1972. In this collection, editor Philip Young, arranged the Nick Adams stories, both previously published and unpublished, in «chronological sequence» (5). In 1987, «Summer People» was republished in *Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*, designated as The Finca Vig'a Edition. I have used this last collection as my source.

the classical unities of time, place and action. The act of reading reanimates these unities and is, in turn, guided by their admirable subliminal control of the story's narrative progression. The story's action takes place in a mere few hours at a lake in the proximity of Northern Michigan's Hortons Bay and its surrounding woods.

In what presently follows, I offer a preliminary psychoanalytic meditation on the significant roles «embodied imagination» and water play in «Summer People». I deal with the subject more extensively elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

#### ENTERING THE SPACE OF EMBODIED IMAGINATION IN SUMMER PEOPLE

The animals painted on the walls of Lascaux are not there in the same way as are the fissure and limestone formations. Nor are they *elsewhere*. Pushed forward here, held back there, supported by the wall's mass they use adroitly, they radiate about the wall without ever breaking their elusive moorings. I would be hard pressed *where* the painting is I am looking at. For I do not look at it as one looks at a thing, fixing it in its place. My gaze wonders within it as the halos of Being. Rather than seeing it, I see according to, or with it.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, «Eye and Mind»

To me, Hemingway's «Summer People» immediately speaks of mobility and its polar corollary, eventual immobility. It begins with a strong sense of psychosomatic motility and ends in the stasis of sleep. The psyche's trajectory moves in the story from occasional hyperconsciousness to an unconscious reprieve from consciousness or yearning for oblivion in death. Were it a painting, with which its configurations of images have much in common, I, the reader as subject, would find its most compelling aspect to be my strong feeling of being-there. I would move within the spatio-temporal imaginal spaces of the painting and feel their emotional or passional tug at my psyche. Consequently, I would recreate the painting according to my own psychical predispositions. The whole recreative operation would resemble, for example, what I imagine might be my own invisible bodily presence in Seurat's *Une Baignade* whenever I see this painting or see it through eidetic memory. As an imagined body or, to put it more precisely, as «embodied imagination», I would be standing, say, next to the dog at the lower left-hand corner of the painting. Then I would walk in the painting clockwise, recreating all I see as I go along in a parallel universe, which at once organizes itself within and without me. I partake of its mysteries as I reexperience its original moments of conception and execution. In one totalizing movement, my psyche sketches out a painting parallel to the original one. This act of recreation is no doubt true of one's experience of all arts. Thus I can equally imagine doing a slow and more scopophilic tour of the erotic expanses of Cézanne's «bather» paintings. In each case, my esthetic enjoyment will immix with an imaginary sense of the liveliness and vitality of the body in exuberant recreative participation in the imaginal space.

Similarly, I enter the universe of «Summer People» where it most naturally provides me with an aperture into its originary narrative space: its textual beginning. In this story, this textual beginning is grounded in the visual. I will finally leave this narrated universe at its point of culmination in another visual scene, watching Nick getting ready to fall into the partial immobility of sleep. The initial

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<sup>3</sup> The psychical role the water plays in this story comprises a chapter in a book on Hemingway's fiction that I am currently writing.

window, which opens onto the narrative discourse, immediately allows me to discover a well-sketched visual stretch that lies ahead of me. «Halfway down the gravel road from Hortons Bay, the town, to the lake there [is] a spring» (496). The image of the «gravel road» offers a magical gate into further discoveries of narrative details. With the introduction of the road into the narrative discourse the descriptive line quickly loses its mimetic passivity and is discernibly energized. The road suggests purposeful mobility. It implies a constellation of expenditures of energy and kinesthetic modes. The gravel offers the image of my being firmly in touch with the earth's gravitational field as an external reality and yet remaining suspended and defiant within my own field of experiential kinesthetics. In short: the story makes available a well-defined provisional clearing where «embodied imaginative structures», to use Mark Johnson's terminology (xv) may have free play within the act of reading.

In this composite narrative and psychological clearing, I am free to make further explorations in the heat and the dark of the summer night. In the eye of my imagination, I can follow «The water [come] up in a tile sunk beside the road, lipping over the cracked edge of the tile and flowing away through the close growing mint into the swamp» (496). This sharply-drawn visual description in itself comes forth from an intricate bodily visual response – first, the narrator's and then mine. At this point, what most matters is precisely what I can *see* in the description in the place it occupies for itself in my imagination. The importance of the description's imaginary visuality resides in the fact that seeing, in its most specific and concrete sense, is a corporeal phenomenon. The corporeality of the act of seeing maintains itself both in concrete spatial reality and, by its evocative powers, in the imaginal reality. They are closely intertwined. The latter realizes itself in concrete acts of seeing with the eyes. The former parallels the latter to the degree that it reconstructs the reality of the former in its absence. Combined, they allow me, the reader, to see immeasurably farther and in a totally new way, which drastically enhances itself in scope and becomes enormously supple and nuanced in details. The whole process should convince us anew of the irrecusable truth of the bodily origins of the conscious as well as the imaginary and the unconscious. The imaginary and the unconscious, therefore, no matter how vast their extent or their content, always squarely reside in the interstices of the corporeal.

At this time in my reading, Nick suddenly appears in the darkness and the night. A rapid shift takes place in the narrative point of view with Nick's initial solitary, nocturnal appearance. What has so far been an objective narrative point of view subtly changes into a limited omniscient one. In the gathering darkness, Nick crouches over the spring, puts «his arm down into the spring» and, without seeing, feels «the featherings of the sand spouting up from the spring cones at the bottom against his fingers» (496). The limited omniscient narrative point of view continues to realize itself in visual images, but now tactile images also begin to accrue. The result is a rich synesthetic weave in the narrative. Consequently, my feeling of being there through the psychological agency of embodied imagination greatly intensifies. This feeling arises in both its general and conventional senses as well as in its more specific and existential signification of *Dasein* in Heideggerian philosophy. Heidegger tells us that «*Dasein* is an entity in which case I myself am there» (78). I may say, then, that I am «there», in «*Summer People*», considering «there» in its dual but inseparable spatial and existential meanings as well as their imagined and fantastic extensions.

Accordingly, this shift in the narrative point of view underlines a radical psychic slide as well. What may be regarded as a so-called «realistic» or mimetic description up to this point is thereafter disrupted and then undermined. The acuity of synesthetic images does not diminish because of this subversion. The act of perception now, however, achieves its full measure of sensory reception, cognition and intuition. Phrased differently, the unconscious penetration and appropriation of the textual universe maximize themselves in this subversive intervention. Nick's presence from now on endows the narrative discourse with its own subjectivity or textual unconscious. The text of «*Summer People*» acquires thereby a specific ontological mode. It becomes a quasi-living object – a subject-object, as it were.

This textual subjectivity highlights itself in Nick's first plaintive utterance, «I wish I could put all of myself in there» (496). He then reflects: «I bet that would fix me» (496). With Nick's intervention in the exteriorized narrative, immersed as he is in himself, a complex psychological state makes

itself felt in the text. To quote Heidegger again: «Existentially, a state-of-mind implies a disclosive submission to the world, out of which we can encounter something that matters to us. Indeed from the ontological point of view we must as a general principle leave the primary discovery of the world to “bare mood”» (177). Heidegger uses the German word «Stimmung» to indicate «bare mood», which «originally means the tuning of musical instrument» (ftn. 172). This word, Stimmung, is of considerable help in reading «Summer People». It denotes «mood» as a special case of being-in-tune-with or being-attuned-to the world around us, with which we make an indissoluble unity which we designate as the human world.

Concurrently, from a more specific psychoanalytic viewpoint, a mode of transference establishes itself between the reader and the text with Nick's introduction into the narrative. The significant aspect of this transference is that it takes place as the psyche concentrates on foregrounding «embodied imagination». This transference is mediated by what I have referred to as the textual unconscious in «Summer People». In this mediation, water plays a foundational role as an «intimate» substance for the characters in the story. The transference «mood» causes a shiver of identification between Nick and I, the reader. It is remarkable how Nick's own mood elicits in me a state of emotional availability and responsiveness, of «being-there» with him in the tableau that he is in the process of creating. I hear the haunting night music of his free associations as we move along together. I appropriate these free associations as my own and analyze them as such. The discernible change in the narrative point of view initiates a silent dialogue, an «I-Thou» relationship, to borrow Martin Buber's formulation. This dialogue is between Nick and I to the extent that I create him as I go along as both I and the not-I in an indistinguishable way. In other words, we share the same psyche for the duration of the story. He is «I» and he is my «Other», to paraphrase Lacan. Nick takes over my psyche within the temporal boundaries of my reading as the Other, as the all too intimate and gallactically remote part of myself, my unconscious. It is this indirect and intimate transference appeal to me as the reader that makes Nick's passage from the third person category «he» to the second person «thou» in the act of reading so noteworthy. Such a transference relationship intensifies my sense of identification-projection with Nick and his changing moods to the extent that often, as I have already indicated, we are united and become one.

On the other hand, I never entirely lose touch with Nick or myself. His presence enables me now to empathize with him or remark critically on what he says to himself. But, significantly, I do so as if what he says were simultaneously addressed to me as well in the circularity of the identification-projection process.

At this precise moment in the twin acts of textual reading and the imaginative participation in it, I detect a new mode of reading that powerfully surges up. It is the text reading me and analyzing me as a text as part of my own reading and analysis of it. Thus I, who exercise the god-like power of breathing life into the narrative and determining the potential hermeneutics of its literal meanings, am completely implicated in my reading. Indeed, this implication is the basis of the attendant hermeneutics of the text that I offer. The reader's sense of implication in one's reading is inescapable and possess its own considerable psychoanalytic, which André Green has so ably theorized.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, one may justifiably say that all narratives reciprocally read the reader in the act of reading. In short: I, the reader, am read as I read. From a psychoanalytic point of view, this is a privileged analytic as well as an epistemological moment of unlimited significance. As such, it provides a new horizon of possibilities in critical thought that has to be fully recognized, accepted and explored. From my perspective, what makes this reciprocal reading unusually interesting in «Summer People» is that the text constitutes itself mainly as «embodied imagination».

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<sup>4</sup> For a more extensive discussion of André Green's psychoanalytic theory of separate the text reading in the reader, see my essay «The Unbinding Process: The Pedagogy of Listening to the Text with the Third Ear».

The desire, the potent love-spirit which all the gods have created in the waters, this I invoke, this I employ, to secure thy love for me!  
Indrani has magnetized the water with his love-force.

*Atharva Veda*, Sanskrit Magic Text<sup>5</sup>

Water serves as an organizing symbolic structure in «Summer People». Below this symbolic structure, deeper levels, each possessing its own patterns of meaning, organize themselves in the narrative discourse. First, the objective narrator, as I have referred to it earlier, allows me to watch «The water [come] up in a tile sunk beside the road, lipping over the cracked edge of the tile and flowing away through the close growing mint into the swamp» (496). Image after image sketches itself out clearly. Each image demarcates a line between the human world made manifest by the tile with its cracked edge and the road and the natural horizon beyond them. Their natural horizon encloses within it the flowing spring water, its course through the close-growing mint and its disappearance as it empties into the invisible swamp located beyond the descriptive frame.

The dichotomy between the double natural and human projects itself into a nodal point where the spatio-temporal coordinates of the imaginal domain begin to intimate the spectral presence of whole clusters of psychical activities, which are both conscious and unconscious at the same time. I imagine seeing the cool, crystalline spring water run over the cracked edge of the tile like quicksilver in the dark night. What fascinates is its invisible subterranean sources, full of mysteries and appearing darker to the imagination than the color of night. Now the spring concurrently flows through my psyche as well as the dark-green haze of the close-growing mint in the text and its implied external reality. The principle of «embodied imagination» allows me to taste the sweet water, feel its freshness and coldness and smell the aroma of the effusion of mint and see the water run its course into the swamp.

These images possess extraordinary metaphoric and metonymic powers, because water in itself occupies considerable space in what Lacan refers to «as the symbolic order», the domain of language and culture and consequently the conscious-unconscious continuum of the psyche. Water focuses my attention in reading «Summer People» on its different manifestations and qualities as the objective correlative of so many diachronic anthropological and synchronic psychic operations. The various modes of the water present in the story flood the mind with unconscious fantasies of amniotic, subterranean, riverine, lacustine and oceanic waters. Their psychic analogs in regressive-progressive movements involve fantasies of interuterine fluids and inscribe themselves boldly on symbolic body of flowing rivers of life, desire and eventual riverine death and disappearance. The water flows away as a rivulet in the text of «Summer People». It eventually empties into the utter blackness of a stagnating swamp, providing a dwelling for fantasy of decomposition and death. However, the swamp intimates more than a ghostly watery grave. It fires our imaginations with secrets of all things living and dead. It represents the eternal womb of mother earth, where life and death issue forth as coincidental. This coincidence brings us face to face with a paradoxical but irrefutable truth. The swamp, the culminating point of the aquatic saga in the story, is the site where two contrasting processes are reconciled. Organic rot rules the swamp alongside imperceptible but immense recycling and regenerating processes. Therefore, the swamp lodges itself in the vast metaphoric lexicon of the unconscious – where the operations of complementarity are pure and absolute, because the unconscious dissolves polarities

<sup>5</sup> For the complete text of «How to Gain a Man's Love», see Harvey Bedeck *Treasury of Witchcraft*, p. 35.

and makes it possible for opposites to merge and move in one harmonious flux. In this fashion, the spring water establishes its course in the realm of the psyche. As a result, water is associated with mundane conscious thoughts on the one hand and extraordinary psychical activities on the other. It stands for what Gaston Bachelard regards as «familiar mysteries» (*les mystères familières*), with their «irreducible quotient» of unconscious intimations in everyday life (10).

I have already noted that I encounter Nick as he puts «his arm down into the spring» and wishes he could put all of himself in it, there develops between us what psychoanalyst Emanuel Hammer, in words reminiscent of Heidegger, refers to as a feeling of «empathy and being-thereness» (129). With Nick's appearance, my water fantasies as the reader are primarily mediated by his narrative discourse and his various responses to the different modalities of water. As I read I am somewhat aware that water as a substance has already been appropriated by Nick's psyche before it reaches me and becomes mine. We share these fantasies for as long as it takes to read the text. My responses resonate along with his in the different registers of the psyche and consciously and unconsciously expand and deepen. Clearly, now the spring water represents an element that simultaneously belongs to both the natural and the imaginary order. The cool spring water offers Nick relief from thirst, serves him as a type of hydrotherapy, and provides him with direct and sublimated relief. Nick experiences the spring water as an antidote to the oppressive heat and the accumulated frustration of the previous day. More strikingly, the spring is paradigmatic and serves as a metaphor or «condensation» for the feminine body and potential relief from sexual tension. The combination also foreshadows Nick and Kate's sexual intercourse at the end of «Summer People». One may say that the title of the story might well have been «A Summer Night's Dream Fulfilled».

Nick now approximates what I would characterize as a mild «preoneiric» state. «Down the road through the trees he [Nick] could see the white of the Bean house on its pile over the water» (496). The «white of the Bean house» in the immensity of the night is hypnotizing. He focuses on this image as in a dream, visualizing «Everybody [...] swimming down there» (496), but he is reluctant to join them for a specific reason: «He did not want to see Kate with Odgar around» (496). What complicates Nick's mood is his unstated strong desire to be with Kate without Odgar (Carl). Since Odgar is older than Nick and omnipresent, Nick's wish for his absence carries traces of an oedipal resentment. Yet, more consciously, what particularly irritates Nick is Odgar's sexual longing, which comprises a kind of oxymoron in its emotional intensity and overt sexual passivity. Nick's instinctive desire overrides his reluctance and he persuades himself that «he'd better go swimming» (497). Later, it becomes evident that Nick's desires of being close to Kate and diving into the lake and immersing himself in it interweave and are closely tied up together.

As Nick arrives at the lake, Kate is coming out of the water «like a seal». Her spontaneous cry, «It is Wemedge», ushers in a series of what one may regard as «lacustine fantasies». «Come in, Wemedge», she urges him, «it [the water] is wonderful» (497). Nick complies and dives into the lake. Yet he reveals at once that he does not care «anything about swimming, only to dive and be under water» (498). So, beyond his desire to be with Kate, his interest in swimming reduces to a mode of organization of his body as a diver and a mode of amphibious being. Psychoanalytically, both activities suggest unconscious metaphors or condensations for the sexual act and prepare the way for other disclosures of unconscious fantasies. He takes «a deep breath», takes «hold of his knees under his chin» and sinks «slowly into the water» (498). Nick's doubled-up posture in the enveloping opaque waters of the lake conjures up fantasies of the fetal position in the amnion. It is an approximate unconscious reenactment of it. The surface water, which he finds «warm as piss», rapidly turns comfortably «cool, then cold» (498). Similar to the infant's prenatal sensations, Nick's are mostly tactile. He perceives the immersion into the cool water as soothing to his skin and welcoming to his body. As he sinks deeper into waters of the lake, his gradual descent intimates his awareness of different levels of the psyche, most importantly the experience of the «poemagogic phantasy», to use Anton Ehrenzweig's term for the quasi-poetic promptings of the primary process (292). These two stages of his psychic life are essential to Nick's creative counterpart, Nicholas Adams, the writer.

Psychically, there are definite limits to this descent, beyond which Nick cannot go without

having to pay an inordinate price. As he nears the bottom of the lake, the water grows increasingly cold. The lake bottom is also marly and sticky, eliciting the triple unconscious fears of his becoming «muddybrained», of becoming engulfed in the viscous marl and of eventually drowning. He is, therefore, neither a denizen of the lake's surface waters nor of its deepest layers. He only feels at ease when he explores the intermediate expanses below the surface of the lake and above its gluey marly bottom. Nick's mid-range «comfort-zone», to use the vernacular expression, designates the «poemagagic» where as a creative writer he resides as one with the universe in pre-oedipal unity and bliss.

Carried quite far psychically by his dive into the lake's cool intermediate waters and feeling strange but exhilarated «coming from underwater into the dark», Nick boldly steps into yet farther reaches of creative fantasy. The visible night hovering over the lake – signifying creative chaos and that other invisible night, the unconscious – facilitates Nick's further excursions into aquatic fantasy. «Have you ever swum in a sea where it was phosphorescent, Carl?» (498). The question approximates a Zen koan, breaking up the ordinary natural flow of language and thought. «No», comes Odgar's expected curt answer. Interestingly, he is addressing his dismissive answer to Kate rather than Nick. His voice sounds «unnatural» and shows dis-ease as it usually does whenever he talks to her. Oblivious to Odgar's reply, Nick proceeds with his own fantasy in which water bridges the chasm between its own physical reality and phantasmagoric expansions. «We might rub ourselves all over with matches», Nick suggests (498), bringing a properly eerie dimension into his crepuscular aquatic fantasy.

Again, taking a deep breath, drawing his «knees up», going into another fetal position, Nick glides down into the waters of the lake. He does so «this time with his eyes open», but «it is no good» (498). «He [cannot] see underwater in the dark» and realizes that «he was right to keep his eyes shut when he first dove in» (498). «Reactions like that» rightly strike him as «funny», that is, uncanny, emanating from the unconscious. The failure of sight, as we ordinarily experience it when we close our eyes or are momentarily or permanently blinded, is a new and crucial experience for him. In the country where insight is superior to sight, the eyeless are the true seers, because they see the invisible.

When Nick resurfaces, Kate asks him to dive again. She wants to see him do «A good dive» this time (499). He complies with her request and does a swift dive, short in duration but ample in underwater fantasy. Now Nick wonders if he could «have» Kate under water. He rushes up to the surface to be greeted by her joyful cry, «It was perfect. Absolutely perfect.» «You are the most wonderful diver, Wemedge» (499), she assures him. On some unconscious intersubjective plane, he already seems to have shared his fantasy with her. She presently rewards him by invitingly «touching his back with her foot», which Nick only acknowledges by tightening up «under the contact» (499).

Nick, the diver, now plunges more deeply into the ultimate primeval fantasy. A mode of attenuated free association then follows through his two stream-of-consciousness sentences. The sentences become fleet and fluent like jazz improvisations. They also develop in unmeasured cadences of poetic speech and its dilated patterns. He wonders «if it was possible to be with somebody under water» (499). He convinces himself that «he could hold his breath for three minutes, against the sand at the bottom, they could float up together, take a breath and go down, it was easy if you knew how» (499). Trying to infuse fantasy with a dose of reality, he carries an interior monologue about his prior underwater experience:

He had once drunk a bottle of milk and peeled and eaten a banana underwater to show off, had to have weight, though, to hold him down, if there was a ring at the bottom, something he could get his arm through, he could do it all right. Gee, how it would be, you couldn't ever get a girl though, a girl couldn't go through with it, she would swallow water, it would drown Kate, Kate wasn't really any good underwater, he wished there was a girl like that, maybe he could get a girl like that, probably never, there wasn't anybody but him that was that way underwater. (499)

His underwater sexual fantasies superimpose primordial scenes of our most conscious preoccupations, daydreams and unconscious fantasies in a plenum of sexuality. They include a number

of ontological stages. There is a quantum jump from the void of primordial waters before that utterly unthinkable moment when the inorganic matter silently gives birth to the living organism in the primal ooze. There are also the endless reenactments of the primal scene of actual and potential conception enacted by the miracle of genital sexuality. Together, they all constitute the originary ground of human existence and the long saga of its epistemology. One may say that these aquatic fantasies are circular to the extent that they begin in nothingness and end in nothingness. They embrace the non-being before our conception and the non-being of our death and disappearance. In that sense, they enfold the conscious and the unconscious mirroring of our passion for being and dread of unimaginable non-being. As these complexities unfold, I respond to much more than Nick's ability to swim underwater or his ability to hold one's breath abnormally long while submerged in water. Nick's wish to be «a fish», with its implied multiple fantasies about the aquatic origin and continuation of life, pushes my responsiveness further. I comprehend the fish as symbolically stands for a state of sexual blessedness and bliss.

Nick's narrative of his libido-generated aquatic fantasies has not yet completely run its course. Other images follow where his imagination appropriates the sea in its absence. His wish to be a fish metaphorically communicates his fundamental desire to transcend the limitations of the human condition. This transcendence makes it possible for him to transform himself in fantasy into «a replica of nature in its strongest tendencies and at the same time a herald of its wisdom and art», which Friedrich Nietzsche attributed to the «Dyonisian» satyr. Nick replaces the satyr by the fish.

Odgar, the more Apollonian of the trio and the displaced father figure, pronounces Nick's wish to be a fish «a good joke» (499). However, Kate reacts receptively to Nick's fantasy. To his inquiry, «Would you like to be a fish, Butstein?» she answers rather intimately, «Not tonight» (499). It is a conditional «no» that carries a potential future «yes». What is more important is that Kate chooses Nick, who desires to be a fish, as her totemic animal and accordingly divulges, «I'd like to be, Wemedge» (499). It would appear to me that Kate's metamorphic fantasies are even richer and more imaginative than Nick's. The fantastic metamorphosis she seeks involves both species and gender. Her intuitive grasp of the sense of transcendence she seeks amply broadens its psychical sense and radicalizes its direction.

Odgar's reasonable and conventional reaction to Kate's desire to merge with Nick is, «You can always be Mrs. Wemedge» (499). But the suggestion totally misses the point. The commonplace language of marriage – hinting at notions of morality and legality, uttered in the name of the father, to paraphrase Lacan, by a displaced father - negates the transcendence Nick and Kate are exploring in fantasy. For his part, the Dionysian Old Nick, with «Kate's legs stretched against his back as if she were resting them on a log in front of a fire», insist that he is going «to marry a mermaid» (499). For the writer Nicholas Adams, such a fantasy-marriage, with its touch of zoophilia, is psychically liberating. It allows Nicholas Adams to define himself as an imaginative writer rather than a realist and chronicler of so-called conscious everyday life, his own and the others'. He goes even further and makes clear that the mermaid would never become «Mrs. Wemedge» (499), even in fantasy. Thereby he makes his freedom from social conventions and banal language of received notions absolute. As Kate jokingly puts it, he proves to be «disgustingly immoral» (500) in pursuit of artistic transcendence in fantasy. Therefore, he is «beyond good and evil» as a writer and surrenders himself freely to the promptings of the unconscious, his creative core. Finally, the reader finds him lying «there thinking about his mermaid while Kate's insteps press against his back» (500). Soon he is «no longer thinking [and is] "quite happy"» (500).

Somewhere between aquatic sexual fantasies and eventual sexual fulfillment with Kate in a primal patch of virgin forest, Nick, the experiencing counterpart part of the writer of imagination, Nicholas Adams, accedes to happiness. With his libidinal energy momentarily spent, nothing remains for Nick but the narcissistic semi-oblivion and immobility of sleep, in which he indulges as the narrative provides a slow, jazz-like fade-out that gradually obliterates itself in silence. The discourse of mobility and disclosure, realizing itself in well-integrated psychosomatic movements at the beginning of the story, completes its course in the discourse of its antithetical twin, immobility and

closure. There is a tremor of pleasure for the reader in perceiving the act of conciliation of these binary movements. This dissolution of seemingly irreconcilable opposites ordinarily belongs to the primary process. It is achieved here through the «dedifferentiation» effect of the creative process, to use Ehrenzweig's term, which allows an approximation of the undifferentiated state of image-making. Thus Roland Barthes's «pleasure of the text» (jouissance) and Jacques Lacan's notions of jouissance, with their unlimited wealth of connotations, are the reader's for the taking in «Summer People».

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# Rabbit stew and blowing Dorothy's Bridges: Love, aggression, and fetishism in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*

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There is something a little perverse about love at first sight. Powerful and poetically beautiful, such love is nevertheless constituted by a sort of blindness unlike the ordinary blindness of dull sublunary lovers' love. The lover who truly loves passionately at first sight somehow fails to *see* the immediate object of his devotion.<sup>1</sup> Instead he *recognizes* some quality that speaks to him, or «hails» him in an almost Althusserian sense; but this quality isn't *in* the object so much as it is projected onto the object and then «discovered» there.<sup>2</sup> It is as if the love object had stumbled by chance onto the

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<sup>1</sup> Of course Freud argued that our ability to love develops out of primary narcissism; but yet as David has argued, «There can be no truly amorous goal... without recognition of an *irremediable narcissistic insufficiency, or more precisely, of an inevitable and urgent demand that the Other be Other, that his essence is his Otherness*» (David's emphasis, qtd. in McDougall 300).

<sup>2</sup> I use the allusion to Althusser for its vividness, but it is as problematic as is Althusser's conception of the temporality involved in «hailing». For an individual to recognize the object that hails and subjects him, that individual must already be a subject. Aware of this paradox, Althusser asserts that one is «always-already» a subject, even in the mother's womb. But this, then, calls into question the very importance of the concept of hailing that Althusser is trying to explain. This difficulty is mitigated, however, if we correct Althusser's misreading of Lacan's essay on the mirror phase, upon which he bases the concept of hailing. The mirror phase is formative of the function of the I – not formative of the function of the *subject*. Thus, Althusser's model of hailing applies more properly to the ego than to the subject; and the ego of the subject can indeed be formed in a dialectical relation with the object that later hails him and reinforces his position as a subject. Yet the concept of a «dialectic» in some measure elides the question of whether the object that hails comes from within or without. And here there is much to be gained by correcting Althusser's misinterpretation of Lacan. If what is in question is the relation between an object and the formation of the *ego*, we are in the realm of transitional space – the ultimate origin of the fetish object. And, as Winnicott explains, the transitional object is neither an internal object (which is a mental concept), nor is it (for the infant) an external object; it is a possession. Its function and origin,

stage of an imaginary drama, long in progress, only to be immediately and unconsciously recognized as a replacement for another object lost in the opening scene. The quality in the love object that hails the lover can't really do so from «outside» because in the «other scene» the subject was formed partly in a dialectical relationship with precisely the quality that now appears to hail and subject him from without. Thus, colored by nostalgia from the moment of its inception, this love so refined that it knows not what it is takes the immediate object of devotion as counter-melancholic replacement for a lost object whose absence cannot be admitted and for whom mourning has long been forbidden.<sup>3</sup>

When Maria, lithe and fragile, first steps forth from the darkness of the cave carrying a big iron cooking platter, in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Robert Jordan falls in love at first sight. As she sets the platter before him, Jordan admires her features – her high cheekbones, her bright smile and eyes, her irises and skin of the same golden tawny brown, her full lips, and her «small up-tilted breasts» showing through her grey shirt – but there is something else, something that clearly hails Jordan and that he immediately recognizes as «the strange thing about her»: «Her hair was the golden brown of a grain field that has been burned dark in the sun but it was cut all over her head so it was but little longer than the fur on a beaver pelt. She smiled in Robert Jordan's face and put her brown hand up and ran it over her head, flattening the hair which rose again as the hand passed» (22). «She'd be beautiful if they hadn't cropped her hair», Jordan muses; yet when his throat swells up so that he can't speak (indicating, perhaps, a swelling elsewhere) it seems fairly obvious that Jordan *is* moved, and he is moved precisely by Maria's cropped hair. Running her hand over her head, Maria has to remind Jordan not to stare, and to divert him, or perhaps suspecting with prophetic accuracy that the way to this man's heart is through his stomach, she tells him to eat.

The communal meal that follows bonds Jordan with his new comrades, but the dish also establishes a more subtle bond between the two lovers: «It was rabbit cooked with onions and green peppers and there were chick peas in the red wine sauce. It was well cooked, the rabbit meat flaked off the bones, and the sauce was delicious» (23). As Jordan carefully piles the bones to one side of his plate and uses his bread to sop up every last drop of the sauce, the girl continues to watch him. Jordan dips his cup full of wine and drinks, but the thickness remains in his throat as he asks her, «How art thou called?» «Maria», she replies, but Jordan soon adopts another name for her – «little rabbit» – a name apparently intended to capture her fragile vulnerability and Jordan's infinite tenderness for her.

Yet as Arturo Barea pointed out soon after the publication of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Robert Jordan's pet name for Maria is either a vicious nickname for a young woman who has recently been raped, a horrendous slip of the tongue, or an embarrassing testament to Hemingway's limited Spanish. In Spanish, rabbit is *conejo*, also the common Spanish slang term for *coño*, or «cunt», a fact that Robert Jordan, as a college instructor of Spanish, should certainly have known. This apparent gaffe has baffled Hemingway critics for years. James Mellow can't believe that Hemingway, who possessed a working knowledge of Spanish slang derived from his bullfighter friends and hours spent in Cuban bars, could have used this term unknowingly – though he is at a loss to explain why Hemingway would knowingly want to do so. Wolfgang Rudat has suggested, rather unconvincingly, that

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in fact, are paradoxes that must be accepted as such, and it comes into being precisely on the condition that the tension in its divided status as a creation of the child and as a gift from the mother shall never be explored. «It is permitted madness, madness that exists within the framework of sanity» (9). If by citing Winnicott we have only elided by other means the question of the object's origin, we have done so only to the extent that all humans do the same in the very process of forming a relatively stable ego.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps I should have begun my essay with a different opening sentence – «There is something a little manic (i.e. «countermelancholic») about love at first sight.» Yet, aside from the sheer awkwardness of such a sentence, I would like to suggest that there is an element of melancholia in perversion (though not necessarily the reverse) – a cannibalistic introjection of the lost narcissistic object which is identified with and held to be simultaneously present and absent. (Angela Moorjani has made a similar observation.) Freud noted that one sign of melancholia was the inability to love; passionate love at first sight, then, becomes an obvious sign of a manic defense against melancholia.

Jordan's slip is a joke at his own expense, a jab by Hemingway aimed at academics who fail to apply their ivory-tower knowledge to the real world. Allen Josephs, however, sees Jordan's unfortunate choice of a nickname for Maria as simply the most egregious and ironic of some sixty different errors in Spanish peppered throughout the novel. If Hemingway had been aware of the term's double-meaning, Josephs argues, he obviously never would have used it. Jordan clearly loves Maria, treats her gently, and uses «little rabbit» only as a term of endearment. Indeed, Joseph's case appears to be the most convincing, but I would like to suggest another explanation for Maria's nickname. Jordan's tender feelings for Maria mask an element of hostility that is somehow bound up with «the strange thing about her», and thanks to a split in Hemingway's ego, one part of him knew exactly what it was doing in naming his heroine, while another part of him was entirely innocent.

The object that hails Jordan when he first meets Maria – her cropped hair – had indeed been a significant object in one of the novel's opening scenes, where the bald General Golz somehow associates Jordan's long hair with his «irregular [military] service» and irregular sex life, but the power of this object to hail Jordan originates in another scene entirely – in Hemingway's fetishism. By now many of us know the story. Twinned with his older sister, Marcelline, for the first seven years of his life – the two were dressed as twins of the same sex, sometimes as boys, sometimes as girls, almost always with identical haircuts – by a mother who identified with him so strongly that she christened him a with version of her own stage name («Ernestine») and dressed him in baby clothes that had once been her own, Hemingway had an unusual childhood, but one that in many ways is typical of the pre-fetishist. As Phyllis Greenacre has demonstrated, this sort of intense mother-infant identification and opposite-sex pseudo-twinning is particularly disturbing for young boys and a common precursor of fetishism, tending to prolong and disrupt the process of separation and individuation, inhibiting the formation of a stable ego, body-image, and gender-identity, and leading ultimately to a bisexual rift in the ego that precedes and prepares the way for the splitting that Freud considered a result of fetishistic thought.<sup>4</sup> There can be no doubt of its affect on Ernest: at Christmas when he was three-and-a-half – precisely when Stoller tells us he should have established a fairly stable «core gender identity» – he was afraid that Santa Claus wouldn't know if he was a boy or girl. Is it any wonder that he became a hair fetishist? How better to ward off the threat to his gender identity than to turn the symbol of unity with his pseudo-twin sister into a substitute phallus that denied the very distinction between the sexes?

A phallic position substitute for the pregenital transitional object, the fetish object simultaneously memorializes and disavows separation from the object of primary identification once that separation has become equated with and symbolized by the phallic position construction of anatomical sexual difference. Like the transitional object (which is itself by no means «perverse» and which for most infants is gradually decathected with the growing stability of the ego), the fetish object shores up the ego at the cost of keeping it in some sense suspended between the fetishist and his objects.<sup>5</sup> As Freud first explained, the fetish represents for the fetishist an illusory «female phallus», warding off

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<sup>4</sup> «In a number of the patients developing later fetishism, enough to make me think it might be of some import, the boy child has been in very close visual contact with a female, either the mother or more importantly a sister relatively close in age, and it appears that there may have been a state of primary identification which resembles that seen in twins, with a well forecast bisexual splitting of the body image even antecedent to the phallic phase» (Greenacre 25). Greenacre makes this point, and becomes increasingly convinced of its importance, in at least half a dozen papers on fetishism and perversion published in the 1950s and 1960s.

<sup>5</sup> Of course I am aware of the recent work on «female fetishism» by Naomi Schor, Elizabeth Grosz, Emily Apter, and Lorraine Gamman and Merja Makinen. Yet even Schor acknowledges that «female fetishism is a rare, if not nonexistent perversion» (98); she constructs her arguments around the mechanism of «disavowal», central to fetishism (and many other conditions), rather than around the actual use of a genuine fetish object. Likewise, Grosz «agree[s] with the psychoanalytic orthodoxy that female fetishism is physically inconceivable», with the proviso that «both “normal” (i.e., heterosexual) femininity and female homosexuality can be seen – in sociopolitical terms – to be in excess of their psychoanalytic descriptions as a form of fetishism...» (my emphasis, 102). And in spite of the title of her book, *Female Perversions*, Louise J. Raplan refers to «fetishism, transvestism

castration anxiety by disavowing the anatomical distinction between the sexes while simultaneously and paradoxically memorializing the same through its very status as a symbolic *substitute*. For the fetishist, then, women must be both «phallic» and «castrated», «other» and *not* entirely «other», a divided attitude built into the very structure and treatment of the fetish.<sup>6</sup>

For Hemingway, hair was more than a fetish *object*; it was a fetish *word*, or a «word-thing». It was, after all, in an essay on fetishism that Lacan observed, language is «subtle matter, but matter nonetheless. It can fecundate the hysterical woman, it can stand for the flow of urine or the excrement withheld». And citing the case of the Wolf Man (in which a mutilated wasp, or «Wespe», gives way to Sergei Pankiev's initials, «S. P.»), he adds, «Words can also suffer symbolic wounds» (269). In fact, the relation between the fetish and the female phallus, according to Lacan, can best be understood through linguistic transformations rather than through «vague analogies in the visual field», such as comparisons between fur and pubic hair (267). Not surprisingly, then, Hemingway's fictional universe is populated by Harrys: *Harry Morgan*, *Harry Walden*, and *Harold Krebs*, whose sister calls him «Hare». It's certainly no coincidence that Colonel Cantwell drinks at *Harry's Bar* in Venice when he isn't waxing ecstatic over Renata's windblown raven hair. Nor is Robert Jordan's horribly inappropriate nickname for Maria, «little rabbit», any mistake.

The trail of Jordan's «rabbit» leads right to Hemingway's fetish: «rabbit» = «hare» = «hair» – an equation which Hemingway all but spells out for us. When Jordan chastises the gypsy, Rafael, for leaving his post and thereby allowing a fascist horseman to wander silently into the camp, the gypsy apologizes but explains that he had been tempted away by the prospect of shooting that night's dinner: «It was the *hares*. Before daylight I heard the male thumping in the snow. You cannot imagine what a debauch they were engaged in» (274). But it shouldn't escape the reader's notice that two other little rabbits, or «hares», were engaged in a similar debauch in the snow at much the same time: Jordan and Maria. (I say «two» because there is an element of psychological «truth» to Maria's assertion that she is identical with her lover: «I am thee and thou art me and all of one is the other» [262]. Thus, Jordan

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exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual masochism, sexual sadism, pedophilia, zoophilia, and necrophilia» as «male perversions», reserving the term «female perversions», for less obviously sexual psychological «strategies» which nevertheless, like the male perversions, use a parody of traditional gender role stereotypes to master preoedipal childhood traumas (12). This said, however, Greenacre and Stoller cite convincing cases of female fetishism, but both stress that such cases are extraordinarily rare and are seen in women with masculine identifications so intense that they almost have «delusional penises». Gamman and Makinen, on the other hand, explore a genuine non-phallic eroticization of objects by women which has its roots in the childhood transitional object; the object they describe, however, represents something related to, but quite different from, the masculine/phallic fetish object; if we are to preserve important psychodynamic distinctions and distinctions about how the fetishist *uses* his or her object, we should reserve a separate term for the phenomena they describe.

<sup>6</sup> We see this paradoxical structure and treatment when Maria's phallic braids are chopped off by the fascists who rape her, or in the way Brett Ashley's cut («castrated») hair makes her «boyish» («phallic»). There are, however, more obvious examples of phallic women in Hemingway's work. Surely it's no accident that Catherine Bourne chooses the name «Peter» for the transvestic alter ego that surfaces in her nighttime games with David in *The Garden of Eden*. In a fragment from *Eden* manuscript, Hemingway writes: «I'd never known anyone named Peter that wasn't a prick» (miscellaneous notes and fragments KL/EH422). In fact, all of the women in the *Eden* manuscript are plainly phallic. When Barbara Sheldon tries to explain her attraction to Catherine, she tells David: «You know no man ever looked at her that didn't have an *erection*. I don't know what women have but whatever it is I have it» (my emphasis, KL/EH422.1, 5.5.7). Or when Marita playfully offers to be David's girl disguised as a young Cossak officer, the ensuing conversation about Gogol's tale of the Cossaks, *Taras Bulba*, and Gautier's *Mademoiselle de Maupin* – both of which involve the sort of cross-dressing which is a staple of fetishistic and transvestic fantasy – reveals Marita's phallic nature. David describes Gautier's novel as «pleasant fancy writing to make excitements», not «dirty like pornography», just «what we do made into musical comedy», and he asks Marita if Gautier's novel gave her «an erection». «Of course», she replies, «Didn't it you?» «Sure», says David. «That's why he wrote it. For himself and his friends. That's how all books that are just fun are written» (my emphasis, KL/EH422.1, 36.45.22).

also becomes a «rabbit».) The connection between the gypsy's hares and the «little rabbits» is underscored a few pages later when Agustin warns Jordan that if he thought Jordan didn't really love Maria he would have shot him in the night while he lay with her – the very fate suffered by the two hares. Thus, instead of «little rabbit», Maria might more appropriately be nicknamed «little hare», for with her closely cropped head she in fact has only «little hair».

But there is a good deal more to the matter than a dreadful pun. Hemingway was also pre-consciously aware of the slang meaning of *conejo*. Given the fetishist's use of the fetish object, or *word*, as a substitute female phallus, both a monument to and a tool for disavowing the penisless state of women, Hemingway simply couldn't pass up the opportunity provided by *conejo* to conflate the words «hare», «hair», and «cunt». The word «cunt» may stand in as a monument to Maria's penisless state (remember, Jordan thinks of her hair as being as short as a «beaver pelt»), but by putting «rabbit»/«hare»/«hair» on her «cunt», Jordan also phallicizes her, turning her into the phallic woman. More importantly, by equating «hair» with the female genitals, Hemingway disavows the penisless state of women in general. By merging with his little rabbit, deeply romantic and spiritual as the image may be, Jordan probably satisfies a number of different urges in the characteristically over-determined manner of the fetishist. Jordan's merger with Maria, who according to Pilar *looks enough like him to be his own sister*, testifies to his fluid ego boundaries and satisfies his narcissistic desire to recapture the world of primary identification and blissful twinship. But this merger, facilitated by Jordan's plans for identical haircuts, also probably satisfies Jordan's and Hemingway's urge to identify with the «castrated» woman (since *conejo* means «cunt»), while simultaneously managing to ward off the castration anxiety implied by such an identification through identifying with the phallic (hare/hair) woman and literally becoming the phallus (hare/hair) himself.

This last interpretation may help us to understand Jordan's consumption of rabbit stew throughout the novel. Jordan first meets Maria when she brings him a plate of rabbit, and rabbit again figures as Jordan's last supper. I realize, of course, that rabbit, one of the glories of Spanish cuisine, would be one of the easiest game animals to catch in the mountains of Spain, and its presence needs no excuse in the work of a man who loved good food as Hemingway did, but given the long reach of his fetishism one can't help but wonder whether Jordan eats his words to bolster his and Hemingway's genitality. Greenacre speculates that for the fetishist one function of sex with the fetishized feminine partner may be the incorporation of the phallus through her. Such incorporation, Greenacre contends, is most often visual, but it may also be oral, and I see no reason why it can't also be *verbal*. Jordan's consumption of the phallus in the guise of hare is a striking example of just this sort of incorporation. Moreover, Jordan simultaneously bolsters his *ego* by incorporating his «little rabbit». Stabilizing an uncertain body-image by incorporating the phallus already reinforces the ego, but Greenacre further explains that the search for identical partners («twins») can involve a «taking in» of «a similar person» to intensify one's sense of identity (119).

Yet there is also an obvious element of aggression in Jordan's cannibalistic consumption of rabbit, piling the bones to one side of his plate, as there is as well in the insulting slang slippage of the word *conejo*. Almost every major theorist of the perversions now acknowledges that the role of aggression in the perversions is powerful, ubiquitous, and undeniable.<sup>7</sup> It is certainly curious that one

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<sup>7</sup> While the connection between aggression and the perversions has been explored at length by Robert Bak, Phyllis Greenacre, Louise Kaplan, Otto Kernberg, and others, this aspect of the perversions has been explained most thoroughly by Robert J. Stoller in his book *Perversion: The Erotic Form of Hatred*. In the case of fetishism, aggression can be sublimated more successfully than in many other perversions since the violent impulses, particularly the desire to «castrate» the object (in Hemingway's case, to cut the hair of his female characters), can be acted out upon the *fetish* object instead of the *love* object; nevertheless, Greenacre writes: «The fetish... contains congealed anger, born of castration panic» (333), and Stoller agrees:

Fetishes are benign enough: no one is killed, mutilated, or raped. In fact, the action is played out with an object, not a whole person, and whatever is done to that object – the fetish – it is either

of Hemingway's first acts after writing the conclusion of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* was to organize a monumental slaughter of rabbits. In the early fall of 1940, right after mailing off the final proofs of the novel, Hemingway went on a jackrabbit hunt with his family. According to Carlos Baker, Hemingway's sons, «Patrick and Gregory killed eighty each, and Ernest and [his third wife] Martha swelled the total to almost four hundred» (352). The aggression implied by this slaughter, however, may have been directed at Martha, with whom Ernest had a stormy relationship, as much as it was at her historic ancestors in Ernest's affections. A number of critics have suggested that Martha served as a model for the fictional Maria. Martha shared Maria's golden hair, and she even cut her hair like Maria's to please Ernest (Meyers 435). More importantly, in the first chapter of an aborted novel – a sort of cross between *For Whom the Bells Tolls* and Hemingway's other major work about the Spanish Civil War, the 1940 play *The Fifth Column* – Hemingway calls Martha's fictional counterpart «rabbit». The ten typescript pages of the novel begin the story of a couple staying at a hotel in Madrid during the shelling of the city. (Ernest and Martha had stayed in the city under precisely these circumstances in 1937, and the story's Don Enrique is an obvious self-portrait: «Ernesto» has been crossed out in the text only to be replaced by «Enrique».) Don Enrique and his lover share a meal of rabbit cooked in onions and a red wine sauce and then try to get some sleep. When they are awakened by shelling in the night, Enrique/Ernesto tries to wake his «rabbit», only to be scolded sleepily: «We ate the rabbit. You mustn't call me rabbit when we ate the rabbit» (KL/EH 522a). (The story also contains a maid – the «only inefficient servant» in the hotel – named *Marta*.) Thus, it is no mistake that Jordan's mission in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is to blow a *bridge*. Hemingway had named Martha's fictional counterpart *The Fifth Column*, «Dorothy Bridges», and Dorothy is described as being «charming like the snake with rabbits» (51).

Because this aggression couldn't bear conscious expression in love story, Hemingway re-channeled it into Maria's brutal rape and symbolic «castration» for which Jordan becomes the savior. At the outbreak of the Civil War, the fascists had herded Maria and a line of women up a hill to the barbershop that stood across from her town's City Hall. As daughter of the town's liberal mayor, Maria was pulled out of line first and shoved into a barber's chair. As she explains to Jordan:

«At that time I wore my hair in two braids and as I watched in the mirror one of them lifted one of the braids and then pulled on it so it hurt me suddenly through my grief and then cut it off close to my head with a razor. And I saw myself with one braid and a slash where the other had been. Then he cut off the other braid but without pulling on it and the razor made a small cut on my ear and I saw blood come from it. Canst thou feel the scar with thy finger?» (351)

Jordan feels the scar but suggests that they skip this topic; yet Maria persists. She tells him how the fascists had struck her in the face with her braids, how they had tied them around her neck and then shoved them into her mouth to form a gag. They then shaved her scalp, and Maria remembers her head «coming *naked* under the clippers». Only after this was she dragged across the street to her father's office and raped.

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inanimate or a body part not apt to feel devastated. Why, then, should society not respond benignly, «Do not call these acts mental diseases or disorders or perversions. Do not talk of sin»? The modern, enlightened stance aims at reducing the priggish, defensive, projecting, hypocritical rules that treat deviations, including the erotic, as fundamental attacks on the body politic (though some philosopher-practitioners of the perversions have used perversion as a paradigm for subversion). Our present instance, fetishes, are only symbols, highly compacted stories that subliminally signal their fuller meanings; they do not stab, bite, poison, smother, crush, or demolish. Nonetheless, hidden in these symbols... are scripts that portray hostile acts. That fetishists really harm no one need not be confused with the fact that their behavior hides, among other things, this hostility dynamic. (*Observing* 17)

The rape of Maria represents nothing less than the fascist rape of «virgin Spain» itself, and the rape of her locks vividly objectifies the theft of her girlish innocence. Thinking about his inability to forgive the fascists for what they had done to Maria, Jordan muses, «Forgiveness has been exaggerated. Forgiveness is a Christian idea and Spain has never been a Christian country. It has always had its own special idol worship within the Church. *Otra Viraen más*. I suppose that was why they had to destroy the virgins of their enemies» (355). Yet Maria has not been destroyed. Somehow she has retained her innocence, and in some sense her «virginity», in spite of the rape. She has never kissed a man before kissing Jordan and has to ask «Where do the noses go?» and she accepts Pilar's wisdom that «nothing is done to oneself that one does not accept». Her strength holds out hope for the Spanish people and establishes her in the best Hemingway tradition as beaten but heroically «undefeated».

The cutting of braids, with their vaguely phallic shape, however, is also the classic act of the hair fetishist, or what Freud called the *coupeur de nattes*. Of course, the violence of Maria's rape functions primarily to expose the injustice and brutality of the war. And within the novel's romantic dynamic, this savagery throws the tenderness of Jordan's love for Maria into stark relief. But the cutting of Maria's braids also functions as an outlet for Hemingway's displaced aggression, an aggression shared ever so subtly by Robert Jordan. The connection between the cutting of Maria's braids and castration couldn't be much clearer. Within a phallogocentric system, deflowering is traditionally constructed as a «castration». Here, there is a cutting, a symbolic spilling of blood, a «nakedness» beneath the hair, and a scar. This scar, moreover, is particularly meaningful, since it reminds us of another scar mentioned only a few pages earlier. Maria tells Jordan the story of her rape in the first place because she wants to explain to him why she is too sore to make love that night. When she speculates that the soreness may be a lingering effect of the rape, Jordan consoles her, «That is nothing.... It is possible thou wert hurt once and now there is a *scar* that makes a further hurting. Such a thing is possible» (343). Of course, the other possibility, that Maria's soreness is the result of her earlier wild lovemaking with Jordan, subtly aligns and contrasts her lover with her attackers. Either way, by pairing the scarring of Maria's genitals with the scar left by her haircut, Hemingway plainly constructs the chopping of her hair as a castration. And it is here, in Maria's paradoxically phallic and castrated status, in her contrary roles as Jordan's twin-like lover and as the object for his unconscious aggression, that we should look for an understanding of her pet name, little rabbit.

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# William Faulkner, creativity and the ravages of alcoholism

BERTRAM WYATT-BROWN (\*)

In 1958, a state Senator of Mississippi expressed the mixture of horror and affection for the liquor that bedeviled his constituents. You will recall that back then Mississippi was an officially dry state where bootleggers were taxed as if running legitimate businesses. «If you mean», he pontificated, «the evil drink that topples the Christian man or woman from the pinnacles of righteous, graceful living into the bottomless pit of degradation... then certainly I am against it.» But, he continued more agreeably, «if you mean the oil of conversation, the philosophic wine, the stuff that is consumed when good fellows get together, that puts songs in their hearts» and enables «a man to forget, if only for a little while, life's great tragedies... then certainly I am in favor it.»<sup>1</sup> William Faulkner, a son of Mississippi's troubled past, grasped these complementary sentiments with an intimacy that has bewildered and saddened his admirers both during and after his death in 1962.

Recipient of the Nobel and the Pulitzer Prizes and one of America's most accomplished writers, the Southern novelist lived his life and even died, at the relatively young age of 64, an unredeemable alcoholic. For the literary scholar his personal difficulties might not mean much: the texts alone are what count. Yet, given the long acknowledged relevance of Freud's theories to interpret Faulkner's characters – witness John T. Irwin's study of repetition and incest – it stands to reason that a better comprehension of Faulkner's own emotional struggles enhances an appreciation of the novels themselves.<sup>2</sup>

But addiction to liquor is not sufficient to explain Faulkner's emotional history. In fact, the events in his early life, while hardly carefree, were not so traumatic that one would immediately

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Donald Goodwin, *Is Alcoholism Inherited?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 4.

<sup>2</sup> John T. Irwin, *Doubling and Incest. Repetition and Revenge: A Speculative Reading of Faulkner* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975). See also, Bennett Simon, *Tragic Drama and the Family: Psychoanalytic Studies from Aeschylus to Beckett* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988). Simon does not mention Faulkner but his analysis of ancient and modern tragedies would seem applicable to Faulkner.

conclude that anyone in his situation would have reacted with an equal degree of desperation. Nevertheless, he should be perceived as a chronic depressive with roots stretching, rather mysteriously, into his earliest years. Such an interpretation helps to illuminate his gothic inclinations and his compassion for wounded, alienated creatures, stricken with either open despair or futile repression of it. Faulkner was especially convincing in his portrayals of young men like Charles Bon, Joe Christmas, Henry Sutpen, Jason, Caddy, Quentin, and even the idiot Benjy. One way or another they are lost souls, or, like Quentin Compson, they might resemble «an empty hall echoing with sonorous» voices or, to change images, «a barracks filled with stubborn back-looking ghosts».<sup>3</sup> Irwin shrewdly observes that Faulkner thought of writing as «a progressive dismemberment of the self in which parts of the living subject are cut off to become objectified in language, to become (from the writer's point of view) detached and deadened, drained... of their obsessive emotional content.» Irwin, however, attributes this process to a fear of death. More likely it was a dread of emotional castration, psychic emptiness, and mordant pain. As T. S. Eliot once observed human beings can stand only so much reality; and reality, in some sense, was what Faulkner sought to ward off. The fiction-writer never attempted suicide so far as the record shows, because writing released the most destructive aspects of his despair. A promising insight into the relation of writing to depression comes from a look at suicide itself. Analyst Edwin Shneidman persuades us that the last written words of suicides are often arid, barren, cryptic, and preoccupied with the minutiae of the moment. They seldom reveal the real reasons for the step toward self-destruction. When preparing to die, the sufferer is most unlikely to «write a meaningful suicide note», Shneidman proposes, their thoughts being too constricted and inward to reach out that far.<sup>4</sup> By such reasoning, we could speculate that Faulkner's novels are his way of rejecting that drastic step. Instead, he only gradually destroyed himself with liquor, a chemical which, in the end, did prove fatal. Both alcoholic enslavement and deep melancholy combined to dominate Faulkner's inner life.

By far the easier task is to chronicle alcoholism, the first of these illnesses. In all likelihood the craving for drink was partly genetic. As some neuro-genetic studies show, biology may combine with family environment, the more traditional explanation, to account for habits of drinking from one generation of kinspeople to another. Using children in Denmark and the United States who had been adopted at no more than six weeks of age, physician Donald Goodwin and his staff discovered to their own amazement that a genetic vulnerability to alcohol found in the children of alcoholics was the only factor to separate the non-alcoholic-related children from those who were so related.<sup>5</sup> A Manhattan psychiatrist found that in his testing the sons of alcoholics proved «significantly more sensitive to the effects of alcohol» than a control group and that the research uncovered «a genetic marker of vulnerability for alcoholism».<sup>6</sup>

In regard to heredity, William Clark Falkner of Ripley, Mississippi, Faulkner's great-grandfather, colonel, novelist and founder of the tribe, was known to be a very heavy drinker. John Wesley Thompson Falkner, the colonel's son and the writer's grandfather, was even more tempted by the bottle and periodically checked in to the Keeley Institute near Memphis.<sup>7</sup> At a very young age, Faulkner once reminisced, the old Masonic officer used to give him «heeltaps», that is, the drops of bourbon left in the bottom of the glass.<sup>8</sup> Faulkner's sometimes violent and somewhat rudderless father,

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from *Absalom, Absalom!* in David Minter, *William Faulkner: His Life and Work* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980) 13.

<sup>4</sup> Edwin Shneidman, *Suicide as Psychache: A Clinical Approach to Self-Destructive Behavior* (Northvale, N.J. and London: Jason Aronson, 1993), 99.

<sup>5</sup> Goodwin, *Is Alcoholism Inherited?*, 145. The control group consisted of 78, and the alcohol cohort had 55 male participants. Alexander Tolor and John S. Tamerin challenged the validity of the study, see *ibid.*, appendix, «The Question of a Genetic Basis for Alcoholism», 139-44.

<sup>6</sup> «Behavior», *Science News* 121 (May 29, 1982), 360.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Blotner, *William Faulkner* (2 vols.; New York: Random House, 1977), 1: 56.

<sup>8</sup> Robert N. Linsott, «Faulkner without Fanfare», *Esquire* 60 (July 1963), 36-38.

Murry, was subject to the same disease. Heredity may have predisposed these men to over-indulgence, but, of course, a home in which a father or mother drinks is bound to create an environment that could subtly encourage offspring to do likewise. The example of unstoppable episodes of drinking would be bad enough, but worse is the experience of unpredictable moments of anxiety and uncertainty in a young child when a father is untrustworthy, unloving because he is out of control and potentially violent. Murry Falkner's ungovernable behavior doubtless contributed to his son's early sense of despair even though, throughout most of his life, Faulkner did not fully realize the depths of his malaise.<sup>9</sup> He could neither admire and respect nor please his anti-intellectual father, whose favorite moments were spent in at his livery stable boozing it up with other idlers. Father and son shared nothing in common except a love of alcohol and even that failed to draw them together.

Faulkner's relationship to his mother, however, may have developed even more of a sense of loss and valuelessness than did his feelings of ambivalence toward his erratic father. His earliest recollection suggested a sad sense of abandonment, as if he had been a motherless child with only the beloved Callie Barr, his black nurse and prototype for Dilsey, and occasional visits from interest grandmothers to relieve his solitude.<sup>10</sup> At about age three, he remembered, in a screen memory, being greatly frightened by being a strange place and suddenly «taken with one of those spells of loneliness and nameless sorrow».<sup>11</sup>

No child, no boy especially, likes to look solely to his mother for protection and admiration for the child's personality and gifts. In an honor-conscious society as early-twentieth-century Mississippi was, to be known as a «mama's boy» was a shame that seriously eroded a child's self-esteem, and fears of becoming too feminine were early inculcated. Frederick Karl observes that Maud was a woman whose force of personality might well have attracted and also repelled a youngster. She «was domineering, and dominant, a no-nonsense, nondrinking woman who followed the principle of reality». Maud Falkner was dutiful but not warm in her childrearing practices. She often rocked him when an infant because he had the colic, but always in a straight-back kitchen chair that made a harsh racket as if she were hacking away on a woodpile. She met her childfren's needs but offered few signs of love. When she thought her teenage son was stoop-shouldered, she laced him into a stiff brace in the morning and unlaced the device when she saw fit in the evening.<sup>12</sup> In the kitchen she posted a sign that read in crimson letters: «Don't complain – don't explain», to reinforce as powerfully as she could Southern customs of reticence.<sup>13</sup>

Maud Falkner's strengths were many, but her legacy, while helpful, came at a price. She had brains and discipline. Early in her sons' lives she began them on the road to reading, chiefly the classics. «Billy», as he was called, took to the literary feast with relish, but however much reading aided his later creativity, it set him farther apart from other boys. Moreover, he inherited her artistic talent and developed a sophisticated approach to art that was a great intellectual resource. Yet his skill

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<sup>9</sup> On the issue of alcoholics' children who are suffering from depression but are not equipped to recognize the name of their misery until fully grown – if then: see David A. Karp, *Speaking of Sadness: Depression Disconnection and the Meaning of Illness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 58; Frederick R. Karl, *William Faulkner: American Writer A Biography* (New York: Ballantine, 1989), 17-18.

<sup>10</sup> See William Faulkner to Mary Bell Barr [her daughter] February 7, 1940, and to Robert K. Haas, February 7, 1940, in Joseph Blotner, ed. *Selected Letters of William Faulkner* (New York: Random House, 1977), 117-119. «She was born and lived and served, and died and is now mourned; if there is a heaven, she has gone there» were Faulkner's simple words of grief [p. 119].

<sup>11</sup> William C. Falkner to Mrs. Walter B. McLean, September 10, 1925, in Blotner, ed., *Selected Letters*, 20. See also, Jay Martin, «Faulkner's "Male Commedia"», in Donald M. Kartiganer and Ann J. Abadie, eds., *Faulkner and Psychology: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha 1991* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1994), 144; and William Faulkner, «Sepulture South: Gaslight», in Joseph Blotner, ed., *Uncollected Short Stories of William Faulkner* (New York: Random House, 1979), 455.

<sup>12</sup> John Falkner, *My Brother Bill: An Affectionate Reminiscence* (New York: Trident, 1963), 81-82.

<sup>13</sup> Minter, *Faulkner*, 10.

at drawing won him only mockery from schoolmates. Maud Falkner was not to blame, of course; she was a strict Methodist and sought her son's development of his potential, but the society in which the Falkners lived prized learning and artistic interests very little.

As eldest son, Faulkner was perhaps more subject to the whims and insecurities of both his parents which circumstance further implanted feelings of despair. By age twelve or so he was alert to the decline of his father's financial status, a situation which alarmed his wife and may have led her to shift her primary attention to her favorite son and away from her unsteady spouse. That transfer would scarcely be welcome for boy still seeking his path toward purely male identity. In fact, the writer might have been quite autobiographical in «Barn Burning», a story about surly Ab Snopes's boy, Sarty, whose family was constantly on the move from one sharecropping farm to another. In real life, Murry Falkner uprooted the family and moved the household from one rented place to the next until Murry obtained a big house in Oxford – later sold. When his various dabbings in business failed, Murry would insist that the family move West, but his wife always adamantly refused. Resentments simmered on both sides and adversely affected young William's sense of security.<sup>14</sup>

Making matters worse was Faulkner's slight frame - five foot five or six. On that score, he took after his mother, whereas as his beefy father not only failed to see him as a chip off the old block but physically inferior to Faulkner's three brothers who, though younger, shot up to over six feet in height. Moreover, the very rapid appearance of baby rivals for his mother's attention and affection added to his silent distress. Maud Falkner loved her eldest, but every two years Murry burdened her with yet another infant – a total of three more boys – John, Murry, Jr., and Dean Swift. Such a situation can almost lead to a profound mourning, a sense of irredeemable loss. By the fifth grade William Faulkner no longer tried to please his family with high grades at school. Instead he played hooky or sat through classes, «quiet, withdrawn, inattentive». One classmate recalled that on the playground he «stood around a great deal» and did not romp with the other children.<sup>15</sup>

As he underwent the stresses of adolescence Faulkner may have felt like Quentin Compson in *Absalom, Absalom!* whose very tone of speaking suggested deep hopelessness – «the flat, curiously dead voice, the downcast face, the relaxed body not stirring except to breathe».<sup>16</sup> By his late teens Faulkner had become locally notorious for his drinking, idleness, and reclusive habits, all of which further alienated him from his sociable if incompetent father. Uncle John Falkner, a bluff banker, declared that «that damn Billy is not worth a Mississippi goddam – and never will be».<sup>17</sup> Such circumstances reinforced Faulkner's own sense of self-disgust even as he also was developing the depressive's contradictory sense of omnipotence – a nobody-understands-my-genius sentiment.

In addition to these alienating factors in Faulkner's upbringing, the sensitive child and teenager had to contend with oppressive Southern cultural attitudes and mores that gave the intellectually gifted young person so little space. His silences, of which biographer Karl writes, were not just moments of reverie and contemplation but a means to wall out others, to nurse wounds, hide anger with little risk of exposure.<sup>18</sup> Who can push aside a lifetime of local sneers? Years later, Al Bezzerides, a Hollywood screen-writer, Faulkner's sometime occupation – had the objective distance to assess Faulkner's character in a way that his closer friends and Faulkner's own family could not. About a visit to Faulkner's home, in the 1940s, the screenwriter later wrote, «I can recall my feeling of amazement that these people didn't know who he was». They treated him with almost undisguised

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<sup>14</sup> Frederick Karl, *William Faulkner. An American Writer: A Biography* (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), 30, 55.

<sup>15</sup> Minter, *Faulkner*, 11-12.

<sup>16</sup> William Faulkner, *Absalom Absalom!* (New York: Vintage, 1964), 258.

<sup>17</sup> Susan Snell, *Phil Stone A Vicarious Life* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991), 133.

<sup>18</sup> Karl, *Faulkner*, 13, 55, 90, 114, 119, 228, 275n, 378; Ben Wasson, *Count No 'Count: Flashbacks to Faulkner* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1983), 39.

contempt and mockery.<sup>19</sup> For forty years the residents of Oxford had established their unflattering image of Faulkner and suspected him of being half-effeminate, a queer duck who in his youth «painted pictures», of all things, when the only proper subjects for real men to paint were fences, pig pens, and barns.<sup>20</sup>

In dealing with these issues, Faulkner adopted a common Southern male habit. He found drink a ready solace to drown out the ugly voices of disapproval but also cover the underlying despair and self-loathing. As the Mississippi legislator observed in 1958, alcohol had an honored place in the Southerners' male world, but it was subject to obloquy in the female, churchgoing one. To drink was to establish a claim to manhood but, given his mother's intense disapproval, it was a guilt-ridden choice and place him in the unwelcome company of a father who did not love or respect him.

In handling these problems, Faulkner had only one outlet, his writing. Seldom did he ever confide in anyone, most especially not physicians or psychiatrists. He even denied anyone the liberty to discuss his drinking in a serious way and refused to recognize that he was alcoholic at all.<sup>21</sup> «Never ask me why», he once told a physician. «I don't know the answer. If I did I wouldn't do it.» His conflicted personality permitted him, however, the license to create the many pairs of voices of love and hate, fear and boldness in his fiction.<sup>22</sup>

Unfortunately, Faulkner's overindulgence eventually eroded his creative gifts. Such was also the case with a fellow Southern novelist and depressive, William Styron, but the differences in their approaches is significant. With reference to his forty-year affair with hard liquor, the contemporary novelist wrote, «I used alcohol as the magical conduit to fantasy and euphoria». Later on he realized that he drank primarily «to calm the anxiety and incipient dread that I had hidden away for so long somewhere in the dungeon of my spirit». He had greater insight than Faulkner did. But then Styron, a Virginian, was younger and less a child of the repressiveness and denial that Mississippians cultivated. An exile, he lived in the North where psychiatry, with its better understanding of depression and alcoholism, had become more acceptable than ever it did in the Deep South.

Faulkner took the opposite road, away from self-knowledge, no doubt because he fear that any change of regimen or attitude might unravel the cords that bound him to the fragile muse of literary inspiration. His years in New Orleans, his return to Oxford with his ill-fated marriage to Estelle, an early love but extinguished long before, and his time in Hollywood in the mid-1930s were times of astonishing creativity and of weighty psychological strains. While Faulkner worked at screenplays in Hollywood, for instance, Meta Carpenter, a gorgeous functionary in the film industry, maintained an almost idyllic relationship with him. He was free of any permanent commitment and she had at her feet a man of literary powers exceeding any others in that cinematic desert. Nonetheless, in 1935 his very worst attack of delirium tremens occurred in her presence, not back in Oxford under the eyes of neighbors and a disapproving wife. He hallucinated that German pilots were assaulting him from the air like wasps in angry campaign. The off-and-on relationship with Meta Carpenter which satisfied so well his need for both sex and a mothering away from Oxford and Estelle, continued into the 1940s.<sup>23</sup>

When his marriage to Estelle Franklin – always rocky – nearly fell apart in the early 1950s, he had another alcoholic collapse at Princeton where he was trying to finish *The Fable*. Dr. Eric P. Mosse, an analyst, the only one ever to see him professionally, specialized in the treatment of artists. One session alone convinced Mosse that his patient was suffering from a combination of «drinking

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<sup>19</sup> Louis Daniel Brodsky, «Reflections on William Faulkner: An Interview with Albert I. Bezzarides», *Southern Review* 21 (April 1985), 387.

<sup>20</sup> Wasson, *Count No Count*, 39.

<sup>21</sup> Faulkner quoted in Jay Martin, *Who Am I This Time?: Uncovering the Fictive Personality* (New York: Norton, 1988), 189; Joel Williamson, *Faulkner and Southern History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 184 (Sally Murry quotation), 185, 250; Tom Dardis, *The Thirsty Muse: Alcohol and the America Writer* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1989), 27.

<sup>22</sup> Blotner, *Faulkner* 2:1604; Williamson, *William Faulkner and Southern History*, 249.

<sup>23</sup> Panthea Reid Broughton, «An Interview with Meta Carpenter», *Southern Review* 18 (October 1982): 276-801.

and depression» and prescribed electric shock. Faulkner responded well as many do to the therapy, but the novelist was outraged by the expense. No one ever tried that experiment on him again. Nor did he ever seek help from other psychiatric sources.<sup>24</sup>

As his body deteriorated under the onslaught of too much moonshine and whisky he felt his inner creative resources drying up.<sup>25</sup> After twelve enormously productive years from the late twenties to the early forties, the alcohol began to erode his literary confidence and his capacity to write and deepened his sense of hopelessness. How long can liver, heart, and kidneys stand a «normal gait», as he called it, of two bourbons for lunch, a couple more in the afternoon, followed by a Martini before dinner, wine with the meal, usually another whisky or so sipped leisurely until bed?<sup>26</sup> And that regimen was when he was not engaged in binge drinking. Those occasions arose when some special stress stimulated an unstoppable craving.

In the face of this evidence, Michael Millgate, one of his most prominent literary critics, minimizes Faulkner's alcoholic record and argues that when writing the novelist «drank only occasionally, or not at all.»<sup>27</sup> But recalling youthful days in New Orleans, William Spratling, an early friend, remarked on witnessing him busily tapping at his typewriter on a tiny balcony with «an invariable glass of alcohol-and-water at hand». When not drinking while writing, he grew restless until, New York reporter Robert Linsott reported, «a drink and luncheon time came around».<sup>28</sup>

Millgate also dismisses the novelist's signs of depression, attributing his notorious and almost aggressive silences as merely «a deliberate defense against the intrusions of the world», especially New York cocktail-party literary circles where, as Millgate concedes, he sometimes collapsed under a table or had to be shipped to the nearest sanitarium.<sup>29</sup> It should not be necessary to overlook or underestimate Faulkner's emotional travail in order to revere his writing. Far from it. We must marvel at how interconnected his mental problems were with the sensitivities of his creative imagination.

Even Faulkner finally recognized that his talents were diminishing. But rather than seek help, he became more erratic. Al Bezzerides explains how he once told his friend in the mid-forties that he was ruining his heart and reminded him how doctors had warned him to abstain. Faulkner's response was to get so drunk that he lugged a huge suitcase up a hill behind the hotel where the pair were staying. When he caught up with the breathless, sweating inebriate, Bezzerides demanded an explanation. Faulkner replied that he wanted to see if his heart really would give out. Unimpressed, Bezzerides hoisted him over his shoulders and carry him down the hill while Faulkner kept pulling at his own collar. Bezzerides asked him what the devil he was doing. «I'm trying to get down» was the piteous reply.<sup>30</sup>

The remarkable factor about this unhappy pathology was how little it affected his productivity. Unlike the seriously depressed Walker Percy who wrote only six major novels, Faulkner produced seventeen. During the Civil War Abraham Lincoln was once advised that U.S. Grant was too much a drunkard to hold his command. The President replied, «find out what brand of whiskey he drinks and send a barrel to each of my other generals». If there were a comparable authority directing American literary endeavors and a similar complaint had been made about a leading practitioner like William Faulkner, the same response might well be appropriate. More important, even if none of us becomes

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<sup>24</sup> Blotner, *Faulkner*, 2:928, 1442, 1603; Richard Gray, *William Faulkner: A Critical Biography* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 82; Meta Carpenter Wilde and Orin Borsen, *A Loving Gentleman: The Love Story of William Faulkner and Meta Carsenter* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), 143.

<sup>25</sup> Kay Redfield Jamison and Frederick K. Goodwin, *Manic-Depression: The Psychotherapeutic Approach* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), 67.

<sup>26</sup> Linsott, «Faulkner without Fanfare», 36.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Millgate, *The Achievement of William Faulkner* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 31.

<sup>28</sup> William Spratling, «Chronicles of a Friendship: William Faulkner in New Orleans», *Texas Quarterly* 9 (Spring 1966): 35; Linsott «Faulkner without Fanfare» 36.

<sup>29</sup> Millgate, «The Achievement of William Faulkner», 32.

<sup>30</sup> Brodsky, «Reflections on William Faulkner», 387.

a towering general or a great novelist, we can examine the lives of geniuses like Faulkner for insights into our own attempts at creativity, limited though it may be, by relative sobriety and unremarkable imaginations.

# William Faulkner's «Conscious use of Freud» in *The Sound and the Fury*

ROBERT SPRICH (\*)

In memoriam: Carvel Collins, 1912-1990

After William Faulkner received the Nobel Prize in 1950, his place in the first rank of 20th-century American writers was secure; but prior to that time, he was often badly served by major critics, even ones like Malcolm Cowley, whose *Viking Portable* edition of Faulkner's writings (1946) was the single most important factor in reviving interest in his work and building momentum toward the Nobel award. Cowley's insistence on having Faulkner write an Appendix to «clarify» the characters in *The Sound and the Fury* was an insult comparable to asking James Joyce to write a «reader's guide» for *Ulysses*! But, in a sense, Faulkner got his revenge: the characters he described in the Appendix often differ from those in the novel. It is as if – more than a decade after writing the novel – he viewed his characters through a haze of nostalgia. But, in the long run, I believe that these disparities in characterization have undermined the integrity of the original masterpiece.

When *The Sound and the Fury* first appeared (1929), most reviewers assumed that Faulkner was attempting to tell a Naturalistic story in the manner of Theodore Dreiser or Frank Norris, but that his writing – despite flashes of brilliance – was quite uneven in quality. Why, for example, didn't Faulkner place the final «Dilsey» section first – since it gave the most accessible overview of the events in the novel?

Another explanation of Faulkner's supposed inconsistencies was that he was just a good ol' boy from the rural South whose writing skills were intuitive and spontaneous – not connected to any literary tradition. (One thinks of Robert Burns, who cultivated his image as the untutored «ploughboy poet» when, in fact, he had learned his craft from Pope, Swift and Dryden.)

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Unfortunately, Faulkner did little to contradict the prevailing misconception that his literary technique was rather haphazard. Even very late in his career when he lectured at the University of Virginia (c. 1958), he was still saying that he first «tried» to tell the story of *The Sound and the Fury* from Benjy's point of view, then Quentin's etc. This, of course, is simply false. There is abundant internal evidence to show that this novel was conceived as a complete entity – not piecemeal. Moreover, Faulkner knew so precisely what effects he wanted to achieve that he sometimes used a device akin to the cinematic technique of «storyboarding»: he would tack pieces of paper around the walls of his workroom which recorded the various threads of plot and theme that he was weaving together in his prose.

Another impediment to potential readers of Faulkner was that he continually experimented with different narrative methods. Despite his mastery of the powerful «interior monologue» form, he moved on to other narrative strategies, such as the interwoven chapters of *The Wild Palms* and *Old Man*. Faulkner was certainly a risk-taker: throughout his career he rarely repeated himself and never fell into a clichéd narrative formula.

One critic who seemed well attuned to appreciate Faulkner's work was Carvel Collins, who had read and admired *The Sound and the Fury* shortly after its publication (while he was still in college). Collins went on to enjoy a distinguished career as a scholar-teacher at institutions such as Harvard, M.I.T., Stanford and Notre Dame. A specialist in American literature and the 20th century novel, Collins devoted himself increasingly to researching Faulkner's life and work. By the mid 1950's, he was widely acknowledged to be the «Dean of Faulkner Scholars».

Of *The Sound and the Fury* Collins asserted that Faulkner was not trying to write in the Naturalistic style; instead he took as his models writers such as James Joyce and T. S. Eliot, especially with regard to the use of external structuring devices like *The Odyssey* or *The Golden Bough*. Carvel Collins put to rest once and for all the notion that a «country bumpkin» like William Faulkner would not have been familiar with such sophisticated writers: in *William Faulkner: Early Poetry and Prose* (1962), Collins showed that Faulkner was thoroughly familiar with the French Symbolist poets and with the early work of James Joyce. It should come as no surprise that Faulkner also knew Joyce's *Portrait*, *Dubliners* and *Ulysses*. From these novels he could have learned both the technique of «interior monologue» and what Collins called the «mythological method» of using systematic allusions to classic literary works. (One might also note in passing that two of Faulkner's books – *Go Down, Moses* and *The Unvanquished* – were constructed very much like *Dubliners*: a collection of seemingly autonomous short stories which came together in a larger synthesis.)

In a talk presented at the English Institute (Columbia University, 1952), Collins asserted that Faulkner had used at least three external structuring principles in *The Sound and the Fury*. First, there was a detailed parallel with the passage in Act V of *Macbeth* from which the novel's title is taken. Second, a parallel with Freud's model of the human psyche wherein the three Compson brothers resemble the id (Benjy), the ego (Quentin) and the superego (Jason). Third, an elaborate parallel with the biblical account of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus in which the Compson brothers merge into an inverted or failed Christ-figure (just as Leopold Bloom was in many ways a failed Ulysses).

During a 1958 lecture at M.I.T. Carvel Collins spoke of the initial response to his suggestion that Faulkner had made conscious use of these three structuring devices in *The Sound and the Fury*. The *Macbeth* parallel did not present a problem, but the other two proved quite controversial. In fact, according to Collins, the critical reception of these ideas evolved through three stages: denial, grudging acceptance and over-eager acceptance. As to Faulkner's knowledge of Freud's work, Collins pointed out that Freud was a major topic of conversation in New Orleans literary circles, where Faulkner spent several months during 1924-25. Also the 1926 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* contained a lucid account of psychoanalytic theory.

Collins made it clear that he did not claim Faulkner had any profound insights into Freudian psychology, only that he had employed the attributes of such Freudian concepts as id, ego and

superego to give added depth to his fictional characters. This use of external parallels could be seen as an arbitrary exercise in intellectual virtuosity, like the juggler who impresses us with the number of objects he can keep in the air. But if Freud's model does, in fact, correspond to the way the human psyche functions, then Faulkner may have tapped into a resource which adds considerable emotional force to his novel and to which his readers would respond on an unconscious level.

Joseph Campbell, Northrup Frye and others have written extensively about the power of myth to energize and transform an otherwise commonplace narrative. I believe that Faulkner's subtle use of the central Christian myth, even in an inverted, ironic manner, added substantially to the impact of this novel. All three Compson brothers were «crucified»: Benjy was castrated and then institutionalized; Quentin committed suicide; Jason lost money on the stock market and through theft by his niece. Yet, despite all this suffering, nobody was «saved».

Thus my central point is not simply that Faulkner can be shown to have been a meticulous literary craftsman who followed the example of Joyce and Eliot, rather than that of the Naturalists. It is that Faulkner chose these three particular structuring principles – Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Freud's model of the mind, and Christ's Passion – and wove them organically into the fabric of the Compson family tragedy.

Did Faulkner make a conscious use of Freud in writing *The Sound and the Fury*? Collins' classic essay on the subject presents a detailed and compelling argument that he did. But even if one were to reject this hypothesis, one would still have to admit that Faulkner showed an impressive amount of insight into human psychology in the novel. First, the free associative structure of the three interior monologues – especially Benjy's – is so true-to-life that Richard Ellmann said it was comparable to Joyce's best work – a remarkable compliment.

Second, Faulkner made use of the psychic device of «splitting», whereby in the unconscious mind one person can become separated into several different people. If the psychic attributes of the three Compson brothers could have been blended together, the resulting character might be balanced and functional; but separately they are all grotesques.

Third, Faulkner understood the human compulsion to confess to a crime that one has not committed. Quentin «confessed» that he had committed incest with his sister Caddy, hoping to get a response from his cynical, self-absorbed, alcoholic father. For Quentin, even severe punishment would have been preferable to no response at all. But his father refused to take him seriously. Of course, the novel makes it clear that Caddy did have sex with several young men, though not with her brother Quentin, whose name recalls Sir Walter Scott's Quentin Durward, an idealistic knight who defended the honor of damsels in distress.

Finally, Faulkner showed his appreciation of the important psychic concepts of ambivalence and ambiguity. It is clear that Quentin had a complex love/hate relationship with Caddy, and the shame of her sexual acting out was surely a factor in his suicide. When the inevitable happened and Caddy got pregnant, it was natural for readers to seek clues as to the father's identity. Some blamed Quentin; Benjy was also a major suspect, since he had once «pushed at» Caddy (never mind that it was in the presence of the whole family). It's a wonder that Elvis wasn't implicated!

Perhaps present-day genetic testing could have resolved this issue; but it would seem that Caddy had tried to degrade herself through her promiscuous behavior. She had slept with so many men that she really did not know who the father of her child might be. And this carefully controlled ambiguity is quite significant to what Carvel Collins sees as the main theme of *The Sound and the Fury*: the tragic dissolution of the Compson family through lack of love.

The four sections of *The Sound and the Fury* paint a remarkably consistent and gripping portrait of the Compson family tragedy, but Faulkner knew better than to tie up the loose ends of the plot too neatly. Miss Quentin is the only member of her generation in the Compson family. At the end of the novel she is a troubled young woman whose father is unknown and whose mother is dishonored. She steals her uncle Jason's money and runs away with a man from a travelling carnival. It seems unlikely that she would ever be heard from again.

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# Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Freud's Fear of Music

MARCIA GREEN (\*)

Victor Fleming's 1941 film version of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is generally acknowledged to be the most psychoanalytic adaptation of Stevenson's novel. James Twitchell, in his book, *Dreadful Pleasures*, writes that in the film, the audience sees «a series of Freudian montages contrived to make sure we don't miss the point. Ivy pulls the cork out of Jekyll's bottle: Jekyll is in a chariot driving horses which turn into nude figures of Beatrix and Ivy, the two women sinking now into seminal mud - everything but trains going into tunnels and waves crashing on the shore.» (251) But there is another scene in this film which is not only filled with psychoanalytic implications but could help explain why Freud himself was reluctant to respond to music.

The scene takes place near the end of the film as Dr. Jekyll is walking through a park on his way to his fiancée's house for their engagement party. He whistles a tune to accompany his walk. In the midst of whistling this tune, he realizes that the melody he is hearing is not the one he desires to hear. He changes the tune and continues to walk but once again he hears himself inadvertently whistling the undesired melody. Unable to comprehend what is happening, he sits on a park bench and within a matter of seconds and without drinking his potion, Dr. Jekyll transforms into Mr. Hyde. What is important in this scene is that music acts as an obsessive thought that constantly intrudes into Dr. Jekyll's consciousness. More importantly, however, is the fact that Jekyll cannot control the music nor the appearance of Mr. Hyde. Before I discuss Freud's reticence about music it will be necessary to first examine what the music in the film represents and then to analyze exactly what is happening musically during the park sequence when Jekyll is whistling.

The two melodies which confound Jekyll during this scene are associated with the two female characters – Beatrix, Dr. Jekyll's fiancée, and Ivy, Mr. Hyde's mistress. It is Beatrix's musical theme which we encounter first in the film during a scene which takes place in her home. After attending the dinner party of a mutual friend, Dr. Jekyll along with Dr. Lanyon escort Beatrix and her father, Sir Charles, home and Jekyll and Lanyon are invited inside. In the next scene we watch as Beatrix selects a particular disk for the music box. When the waltz begins she urges Jekyll to observe her father. He looks towards Sir Charles and notices that as the music plays he turns to look at a portrait of a woman. «It's the waltz he and Mama first danced together», Beatrix announces. Her

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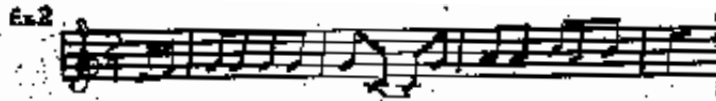
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remark elicits a contemplative look from Jekyll who then asks, «May I have this dance, Miss Beatrix?» She accepts and the two of them begin waltzing around the room. Their dancing distracts Sir Charles and he turns his attention from the portrait to the two dancers just in time to see Jekyll waltz Beatrix out from under his watchful eye, through the door and out into the privacy of the garden.

During this sequence we hear the entire waltz. [Example 1] (For the purpose of this paper, all the musical examples are in the key of C.) The music communicates that Beatrix is a refined person and quite suited to marry a physician. The waltz also serves as an Oedipal signifier. The waltz which is associated with Beatrix's parents becomes the vehicle by which Jekyll adeptly usurps Sir Charles' position in relation to his daughter. During the waltz Jekyll leads Beatrix away from her father and out into the garden. In doing this, he transforms the waltz into the music which will now become associated with the newly blossoming relationship between himself and Beatrix.



In contrast, Ivy's music is presented in musical fragments when we first hear it and consequently her melody contains no musical history or musical memories. [Example 2] Like Ivy, the music exists for the moment and then disappears. The first time we get to hear a hint of Ivy's melody is in the scene immediately following Jekyll's and Lanyon's departure from Sir Charles' home. They hear the screams of a woman being assaulted and run to rescue her. They escort her to her home and since she insists that her ankle is injured and cannot walk, Jekyll carries her into her apartment. As he is opening the door to her room we hear, for the first time, the melodic fragment which will come to represent Ivy.



Ivy's melodic fragment is in duple meter – thereby differentiating it from the triple meter of Beatrix's waltz. We also hear that Ivy's melodic fragment sounds more animated as is evidenced by the faster melodic rhythm. Ivy's melodic fragment is repeated as Jekyll leaves her apartment. A few moments later we hear it again while Jekyll and Lanyon are riding in a carriage. They discuss the possibility that Jekyll was yielding to his «evil» side when Lanyon discovered him kissing Ivy. What is significant is that musically we know more about Beatrix than we do about Ivy. Since Ivy's tune is just a fragment we still do not know to what kind of musical composition Ivy's fragment belongs or from where it originates. But for now this musical fragment suffices to convey that Ivy, like her music, has temporarily drifted into Jekyll's life. It is not until Mr. Hyde appears that we get a more complete picture of Ivy and her musical origins. Both Ivy's and Beatrix's melodies return during the most psychoanalytically explicit scene of the film – the first transformation of Jekyll into Hyde via the potion, but when they accompany this scene they are presented in a parodic manner. Consistent with conveying Mr. Hyde's newly emerging personality, Bea's waltz is turned into a facetious mockery, a caricature of the original while Ivy's melodic fragment becomes more grotesquely intense and jeering.

Shortly after his transformation back into Jekyll, he and Beatrix are caught in an uncompromising situation by Sir Charles. This necessitates that the father and daughter leave for the continent. With Beatrix out of his immediate environment, the lonely Jekyll resorts to drinking his potion. As

Mr. Hyde, his first impulse is to attend a burlesque show at the Palace of Frivolities. From outside the theater we hear the orchestra playing Ivy's melodic fragment and once inside we see the stage where provocatively costumed show girls entertain the customers by singing the following chorus to Ivy's melody:

You should see me dance the polka.  
You should see me cover the ground.  
You should see my coattails flying,  
As I jump with my partner around.  
When the band commences playing  
My feet begin to call  
And the rollicking, jumping polka  
Is the jolliest one I know. [Example 3]



During this music Hyde is escorted to a private table where he lasciviously glares around the room. The audience is invited to sing along and Hyde fixes his eyes on a figure across the floor. The camera angle reveals Ivy working behind the bar singing the chorus and flirting with the customers. Ivy switches the word «coattails» to the word «bustles» as she coquettishly escapes the advances of a patron. This risqué, musical review reveals the origin of Ivy's melodic fragment. We now know that Ivy's musical fragment originates from the bohemian polka, which is part of the entertainment at her place of employment.

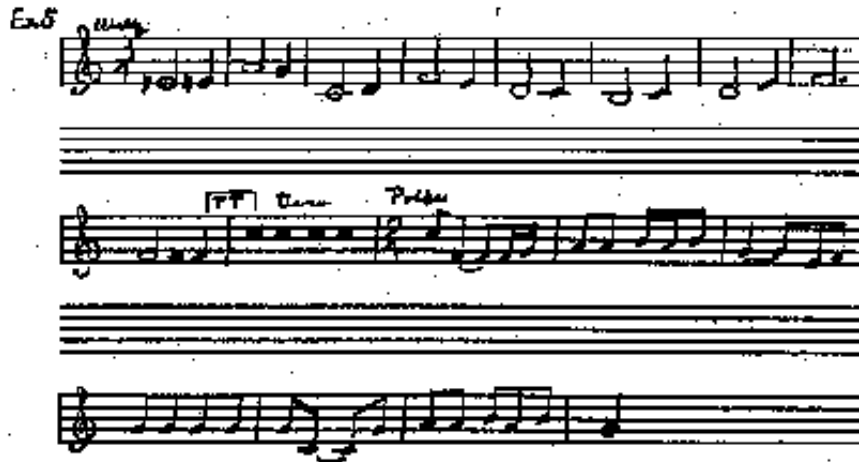
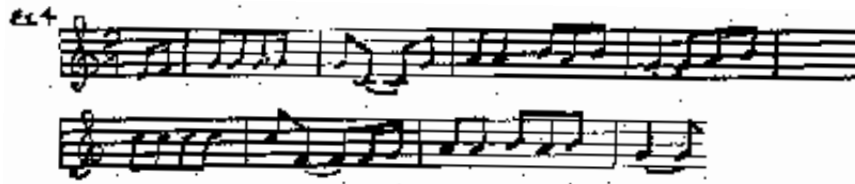
In this scene Hyde works quickly and deceitfully to get Ivy's attention. He initiates a bar room brawl in order to get Ivy fired. He then offers to provide accommodations for her. Hyde uses this apartment as a grotesque stage on which he physically and psychologically abuses Ivy. He insists during his visits that she sing the polka for him. She is terrified by this request but his threats induce her to reluctantly sing the melody. Hyde insists that she must smile and be happy when she is singing but his remarks only terrify her more. Musically, what was once heard as the carefree, fun filled, «jolliest dance of all» has become a «danse macabre» for Ivy. How do these two melodies affect Jekyll as he whistles them on his walk? And how are they instrumental in producing Jekyll's involuntary transformation into Hyde?

As the scene in the park begins, Jekyll is greeted by the gatekeeper, Mr. Weller. He informs Weller that he is on his way to his engagement party. Congratulations ensue and we view Jekyll walk away – his back to the camera – across what appears to be a bridge. He begins whistling Ivy's lively polka melody. He finishes whistling the first two phrases of Ivy's melody and just as we view him vanish into the foggy mist, we hear him stop whistling. The camera moves in front to face Jekyll who appears puzzled and confused. It is not clear that Jekyll even realizes what tune he had been whistling. What is clear is that he knows that he shouldn't be whistling it. He momentarily regains his composure when he remembers Beatrix's waltz melody. Having retrieved the desired melody he

continues to walk and whistle the waltz as the camera tracks alongside him. But soon after, the camera angle switches its perspective. We view Jekyll once again from behind: he inadvertently begins to whistle the polka and his figure dissolves into the fog. The camera now directly confronts Jekyll's perplexed face. He runs his hand over his brow and struggles to find the notes to Beatrix's waltz. He whistles the first two notes and then, all at once, crosses the threshold into the polka with the third note. He tries again but to no avail. Confused and lacking any understanding about why he is haunted by another melody, he stumbles towards a park bench where he sits down, removes his top hat and wipes his brow. The camera now moves in for a close head shot of Dr. Jekyll and we watch him transform for the first time into Mr. Hyde without the aid of his potion.

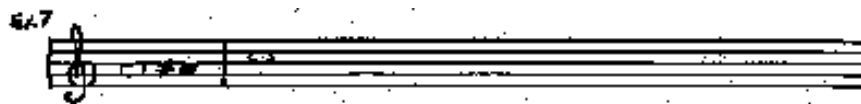
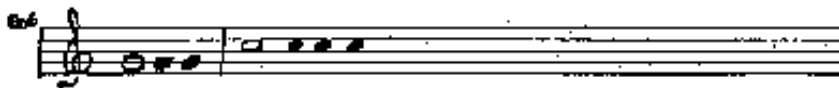
In his book *The Haunting Melody* Theodor Reik asks the question, «What does it mean when a melody occurs to you in the middle of thoughts of a quite different kind, when your mind is occupied with rational considerations and aim-directed thoughts?» (vii) Jekyll's conscious thoughts are of Beatrix and their impending engagement and yet his unconscious intrudes upon these thoughts and compels him to whistle Ivy's melody. The polka melody in this scene functions as a haunting melody – a melody which pursues an individual as would an obsessive thought. But how does this explain why the polka (or Ivy's melody) enters into Jekyll's unconscious mind first? Both Ivy and Hyde are certainly a part of Jekyll's otherness which he has kept hidden from Beatrix. But Jekyll is also having a difficult time remembering and retaining Beatrix's waltz. Is Jekyll ambivalent about his marriage to Beatrix and that's why he is whistling/wishing for Ivy? But how would Jekyll even know the melody to this polka? He can't have heard it when he took Ivy home after her assault because he doesn't hear it – only the viewers of the film hear it. The viewers of the film perceive Jekyll's divided nature while Jekyll remains deaf to it. The only way that this melody can exist for Jekyll is if he himself is Mr. Hyde. This also explains why Jekyll had difficulty retaining Beatrix's melody. The music is already offering the clue that Jekyll's involuntary transformation into Hyde is beginning. The two melodies which were introduced into Jekyll's and Hyde's psyches were both manipulated by these two characters' personalities and transformed into their exclusive purview – Jekyll usurps Sir Charles' waltz and Hyde mutates the jolly polka. By analyzing these two melodies we can further understand why Jekyll is so disconcerted by them and how Hyde manages to signify his presence and prevail.

Though Beatrix's waltz is in triple meter and Ivy's polka is in duple meter, there are some striking similarities between the melodies which make them seem familiar to each other in the way Hyde is Jekyll's familiar. Both melodies begin by sharing the same intervallic distance of a half-step between the first two notes. So when Jekyll begins to whistle these two notes, he could technically be whistling the waltz. It is only by hitting the third note of the melody that the difference between the melodies is revealed. Jekyll whistles the polka melody until the eighth measure when – at the half cadence, on the dominant – he stops whistling the polka and tries to figure out how to retrieve the waltz. [Example 4] He successfully begins whistling the waltz until the eighth measure where once again – at the half cadence, on the dominant – he temporarily hesitates and stumbles into whistling the polka. [Example 5] What is crucial for an understanding of how this segment of the film works through music on both the viewer's and Jekyll's unconscious mind is that the interval which confounds Jekyll as he is whistling the waltz and which compels him to whistle the polka is the tritone (TT) also known as *Diabolus in musica* – the devil in music. Considered musically dangerous, this interval was prohibited from use by early music theorists and the church. It is referred to as a tritone because it spans the distance of three whole tones, thereby dividing the octave in exactly one half. Its demonic associations stem most likely from the fact that this interval musically functions in two diametrically opposed capacities: as part of a diminished seventh chord it functions to *weaken* the tonality of the established musical passage, thereby assisting with a modulation into a different key; simultaneously, as part of a dominant seventh chord, this interval is used to *firmly establish* the tonality of the modified or altered key. It is no wonder then that Jekyll is having a difficult time with his musical unconscious. He is being modulated into and being firmly established in his other personality – Edward Hyde.



Throughout this sequence Hyde's presence is asserting itself into Jekyll's consciousness via the music. Jekyll tries to repress Hyde by remembering the waltz but after Hyde establishes his musical presence through the tritone Jekyll never is able to regain control of himself as Jekyll or the waltz/Beatrix, which represents his higher conscious process. (It is interesting to note that a tritone is formed at the beginning of the second phrase of the waltz – perhaps signifying the inherent potential of evil in Sir Charles or Beatrix if they should choose to act on it. And it is exactly at this point in the waltz that Jekyll starts whistling the polka.)

In his final attempt to retrieve the waltz Jekyll sounds the first two notes against the third note as a test [Example 6] and when the melody doesn't sound correct, he proceeds to adjust the first two notes by raising their pitch by a half step – keeping the third note at the same pitch. [Example 7] When he sounds the third note we realize that he once again forms the opening notes of the polka. The raising of the first two pitches each time by a half step creates a chromatic scale which musically serves to build the emotional tension. The musical tension is further compounded when we remember that Ivy's initial jolly sounding theme is subverted by Mr. Hyde and used as a prelude to his sadistic musical torturing of Ivy.



The fact that Jekyll is whistling these two tunes may also offer insight into how music expresses unconscious feelings or thoughts. Melodies frequently enter into our minds and haunt us. However, whistling functions as an audible unconscious act which, while seemingly not bothering the whistler, signifies the presence of the melody to others around him thereby drawing attention to

the listener and his tune. Whistling is also used to signal or summon – a taxi, an animal, or another person – in this case, Mr. Hyde. Since the phrase «whistling for» indicates a wish or desire which one must go without, then, unbeknownst to him, Dr. Jekyll, by whistling, is unconsciously summoning Hyde and simultaneously wishing for but having to go without – Ivy. But how do these musical clues provide insight into Freud's own personal difficulty with music?

One of Freud's protégés, Theodor Reik, poses a similar «fanfare-like question». In the first chapter of his book, *The Haunting Melody*, Reik asks, «Why does music play no role in the work of Freud, which was to the greatest extent based on impressions received by hearing? In the fifteen volumes of his collected writings music is only mentioned three or four times. In his psychoanalytic practice, his own musical associations or those of his patients were scarcely noticed.» (3) In order to attempt to answer this question, Reik examines the manner in which Freud approached his life and work.

There are...instances that show Freud, sometimes forcefully and purposely, resisting tendencies in himself which he recognized as opposed to the goals he wished. Such reactions seemed to take the form of an energetic and sometimes overemphasized turnabout... He renounced... his original speculative tendencies because he did not wish them to interfere with his objective observations. He relinquished earlier interests in favor of psychoanalytic research. (6)

These observations by Reik present a picture of Freud that closely resembles Dr. Jekyll when, in the final chapter of Stevenson's book, Jekyll in his «Full Statement of the Case» writes the following:

And indeed the worst of my faults was a certain impatient gaiety of disposition, such as has made the happiness of many, but such as I found hard to reconcile with my imperious desire to carry my head high, and wear a more than commonly grave countenance before the public. Hence it came about that I concealed my pleasures; and that when I reached years of reflection, and began to look round me and take stock of my progress and position in the world, I stood already committed to a profound duplicity of life... from the high views that I had set before me, I regarded and hid them.... It was thus rather the exacting nature of my aspirations than any particular degradation in my fault, that made me what I was.... (103)

But Reik provides further clues into Freud's Jekyll-esque qualities when he recalls:

Wilhelm Stekel reports in his autobiography that Freud told him that he had once wanted to use the material his patients provided in the writing of novels of his own. He sacrificed literary ambition of this kind in the service of scientific research, but an echo of it is sometimes noticeable, especially in the case histories he wrote. [Freud] says occasionally, «I have been brought up with strict science and I cannot help it if my case histories sometimes sound like novels.» (6)

Though Freud held in abeyance his desire to write literary works, his Hyde-like tendencies emerge in his essay, «The Moses of Michelangelo». Similar to Jekyll's «Full Statement» which reveals how and why he was compelled to experiment, Freud, in this essay, gives a glimpse of the reasons why music confounds him. Freud writes:

[W]orks of art do exercise a powerful effect on me, especially those of literature and sculpture, less often painting. This has occasioned me, when I have been contemplating such things, to spend a long time before them trying to apprehend them in my own way, i.e. to explain to myself what their effect is due to. Wherever I cannot do this, as for instance with music, I am almost incapable of obtaining any pleasure. Some rationalistic, or perhaps analytic, turn of mind in me rebels against being moved by a thing without knowing why I am thus affected and what it is that affects me. (211)

In these lines Freud admits that he needs to spend a long time contemplating things. He therefore prefers works of art which allow him to control the amount of time he needs to analyze

the artwork and his emotional response towards it. He privileges those works of art which are stationary and concrete. These prerequisites are not possible with a musical work of art. Musical sounds will not stand still in order to be contemplated by the listener. Musical notes are meant to be heard as they move through time and therefore cannot be isolated for observation. Freud most likely realized that when it came to music he could not control it – it, however, could control him.

Reik makes the point that «[m]usic, so poor in definite and definable objective and rational contents, can convey the infinite variety of primitive and subtle emotions.» (9) What kind of primitive and subtle emotions was Freud repressing that music should cause him to have such a negative reaction to it and that he should comment on his attitude in this particular essay? The first clue comes from Peter Gay who suggests that, in reading Michelangelo and his Moses, Freud was reading himself. «[Freud's] life, it appears over and over, was a struggle for self-discipline, for control over his speculative impulses and his rage – rage at his enemies and, even harder to manage, at those among his adherents he found wanting or disloyal.» (316) It is possible that music could summon forth these emotions and Freud would not be able to understand why he was being affected. But could there be a more profound fear at work in Freud's unconscious?

Reik suggests that:

If a melody... occurs in the midst of clear, aim directed ideas, the psychoanalytic investigation could perhaps discover not only what is on your mind without being aware of it, but also what's in your heart... [T]he voice of an unknown self conveys not only passing moods and impulses, but sometimes a discovered or denied wish, a longing and a drive we do not like to admit to ourselves... [T]he recurring tune may announce in its compelling and compulsive pressure the working of an unknown power in you... Whatever secret message it carries, the incidental music accompanying our conscious thinking is never accidental... The intangible that is invisible as well as untouchable can still be audible. It can announce its presence and effect in tunes, faintly heard inside you. (10-12)

All of these unconscious musical episodes accompany Jekyll during his walk through the park and ultimately result in his involuntary transformation into Hyde.

Freud as a scientist wished to discover the unconscious working of the mind so why was he not willing to deal with the unconscious effects of music on the mind? Music, according to Reik, would be the most direct means of disclosing emotional problems. But Reik also suggests that music could reveal what was in the heart. His observation that the intangible, the invisible, and the untouchable can still be audible is perhaps the most unnerving aspect of how music works to reveal the unconscious. Let's suppose that Freud allowed himself the pleasure of experiencing music. He might occasionally be compelled to whistle a tune – possibly during one of his walks around Vienna. What if someone heard the tune he was whistling and asked him why he was whistling it? This is where the unnerving aspect of music becomes apparent in Freud's psyche. He would be inadvertently revealing a secret self to the general public without first having the controlled atmosphere which he desired in order to closely analyze why he was moved by the music and then compelled to whistle it. This certainly would be a frightening experience for the scientist and the man because the music could be revealing what was secretly residing in his unconscious/heart before the conscious mind could defend or mediate against the implications.

Jekyll, a well respected scientist, takes many precautions to assure that the Hyde part of him is securely locked up in his laboratory, inside a cabinet, inside a drawer, inside a vial, and ultimately, inside a grain of salt. Freud, the scientist, takes similar precautions about concealing his humanistic identity when he published «The Moses of Michelangelo» in *Imago*. The essay was printed as being written «by \* \* \*» and remained unacknowledged for ten years. (Gay 314)

To further secure that the «lion's claw» – that is, Freud's identity – is kept secret, Freud creates a collective fictional editorial voice. This fictional third person narrative appears as the first footnote to this essay. It reads as follows:

Although this paper does not, strictly speaking, conform to the conditions under which contributions are accepted for publication in the Journal, the editors have decided to print it, since the author, who is personally known to them, moves in psycho-analytic circles, and since his mode of thought has in point of fact a certain resemblance to the methodology of psychoanalysis. (211)

These conscious manipulations to protect his identity allow Freud to estrange himself from his essay and his published self. Freud, in his own way, recalls the words of Jekyll when in his statement he writes, «He, I say – I cannot say I.» (120)

«Freud persisted in calling the paper “a love child”.» (Gay 314) But why would Freud not want anyone to know that he wrote this essay? Does he fear that a more humanistic, or passionate, side will be revealed to the public? Does he fear that his scientific side is yielding to an emotional side?

Reik mentions that he had twice observed Freud enjoying music:

The very wording of that statement about his restricted capability for enjoying music proves that there was an emotional reluctance against this art operating in Freud.... It is likely that this turning away, this diversion was the result of an act of will in the interest of self-defense and that it was the more energetic and violent, the more the emotional effects of music appeared undesirable to him. He became more and more convinced that he had to keep his reason unclouded and his emotions in abeyance. He developed an increasing reluctance to surrendering to the dark power of music. (4)

Near the beginning of Fleming's film, Jekyll has his first encounter with the gatekeeper and he poses the following question. «Mr. Weller, here's a point. If you had a balloon that could carry a man to Mars and the pilot you had picked suddenly disappeared, would you get into the balloon yourself and cast off?» Mr. Weller answers, «A balloon? That's a good one, sir. I think you got me there. I don't know, though. If I had a balloon that would take me there and back, mind you, I don't know that I wouldn't have a go at it.» Even before Jekyll begins his experiments, the viewer realizes that he is concerned with possessing control over his situation and his possible other self. And indeed, the element of control becomes a crucial issue for Jekyll when he realizes that without his conscious effort he transforms into Hyde.

Both Freud and Jekyll are physicians who use themselves as the primary source of their creative and scientific inquiry – Jekyll drinks his potion and becomes Hyde while Freud is the subject and the object of his own analysis. Dr. Jekyll had parted ways with his close friend Dr. Lanyon after they disagreed about scientific matters. While writing his essay on Moses, Freud's «association with Jung was going sour.... [H]e drafted “The Moses of Michelangelo”... just before he began to fashion his “History of the Psychoanalytic Movement”, the “bomb” he planned to throw at Jung.... In that polemic, he would keep his fury in check, just barely, the better to serve his cause.» (Gay 314)

It is curious that Freud, anonymously through his «love child», confronts the two puzzles which had confounded him throughout his life – the statue of Moses and music. Reik's observations help us see that Freud did respond to music, even suggesting that Freud realized how much of an emotional impact music had on him. Freud's only recourse then was to realize that music was the master of a part of his unconscious over which he had no control – in other words, music could «Fly him to the Moon» but Freud hadn't figured out how to get back.

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# Hysteria and female adolescence: The case of Arthur Schnitzler's *Fraulein Else*

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Schnitzler's novella *Fraulein Else*, written in the form of an interior monologue, was published in 1924, the same year that Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* appeared. In both texts the setting is a huge building complex (a hotel<sup>1</sup> or a sanatorium, respectively), and in each case the action takes place before the First World War. *Fraulein Else* also invites comparison with James Joyce's *Ulysses*, published in 1922, for both texts are set at the turn of the century, and use the device of the interior monologue to reveal the thoughts of a female protagonist. Less different than they may appear at first sight, Else and Molly may be called variants of the masculine fantasy of the Eternal feminine.

As the novella opens, Else T., the daughter of a Viennese attorney, is spending her holidays with her wealthy Aunt Emma and Emma's gynecologist son Paul at the vacation resort of San Martino di Castrozza. Thoughts of vacation are brought to an abrupt end when Else receives a letter from her mother containing the urgent request for Else to borrow 30,000 guilders (this sum will later be increased to 50,000) from Mr. von Dorsday, an old friend of the family who is likewise a guest at the hotel. The matter is pressing indeed, for Else's father has embezzled funds entrusted to him and is now threatened with arrest. Else accepts this humiliating commission and receives financial assistance from Dorsday with one string attached: she must appear naked before him. Else fulfils this condition in a modified form by revealing herself to him in the public arena of a musical salon. After this experience, Else collapses, is brought to her room in an unconscious state, and finally poisons herself with veronal.

The action takes place between seven p.m. and midnight on September 3, 1896.<sup>2</sup> Two further references to time are important in this respect: the fifth of September is the date by which the

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<sup>1</sup> The hotel is called «Zauberburg», i.e. a magic castle (45). All quotations from *Fraulein Else* (in brackets) are from the following edition: Arthur Schnitzler: *Die Frau des Richters. Erzählungen 1923-1924*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1992, pp. 9-75. Translations are mine.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Michaela L. Perlmann (1987, 115).

money owed by Else's father must be deposited; the sixth of September is the date on which the nineteen-year-old Else expects her period (12). By means of these temporal references, Schnitzler emphasizes that Else is threatened not only from the outside, that is by her father's predicament, but from the inside, for she is going through two physical and emotional phases characterized by a high degree of vulnerability, namely premenstrual syndrome and, of course, adolescence itself. The crux of the definition of the novella as a literary genre is the unheard-of event. In this case it seems to be a revelation of the feminine which is so intimate that it would appear to violate all taboos. Yet despite his preoccupation with the questions of female adolescence and menstruation, it is debatable whether or not Schnitzler is able to meet the expectations he arouses in his readers.

*Fraulein Else* is the story of a double violation, for it has as its theme the violence committed upon women within the family and within society. At the holiday resort of San Martino di *Castrozza*, Else is made to suffer a *castration* of sorts, that is the cutting off of her adolescent development towards independence. As the delegate of her family, she is placed in the role of the dutiful daughter; at the same time, she is endowed with the power of a parent or even the omnipotence of a savior, which would explain the reference to Saint Martin. Else's dependency in this double-bind situation makes a mockery of the *second chance*<sup>3</sup> adolescence represents.

To all intents and purposes, the father turns his daughter into a prostitute; moreover, he has presumably violated her, as Else's dreams indicate. In one such dream it is made clear that the father figure Dorsday has deflowered the child Else (42). Furthermore, it is not inconceivable that a man capable of embezzling funds entrusted to him might well abuse those dependent on him in other ways.<sup>4</sup> By kissing his daughter's hand, he treats her as a coquette (75). When, in her final dream, Else begs him not to do so, reminding him that she is his child, she indirectly expresses the wish that her *passionate* father should become the *tender* father once more.<sup>5</sup> The father is a representative of the patriarchal social order, as is made clear by the allusion to *The Marriage of Figaro* (18). The *ius primae noctis* defines the wedding of the bride/daughter to be synonymous with that of the country's ruler. Accordingly, feminist psychoanalytic critics describe the position of woman in a patriarchal society as a «daughter-like existence».<sup>6</sup> Women are raised in order to sell themselves, as Else herself complains (45); any attempts on women's part to develop a sense of self-esteem based on professional or other individual achievements are systematically undermined. Schnitzler lays bare the almost inevitable processes by which women are socialized to identify with culture's dictates, showing fidelity to the paternal law. Dorsday and the other males are unable to see woman as an integrated whole; women are split into images of Madonnas and whores, images that Else has internalized. The status of woman as object of vision and of male discourse is manifest in Else's running self-commentaries: as she speaks and is spoken about she splits into the male viewer and the female object of the masculine gaze.<sup>7</sup> *Fraulein Else* is a key text with respect to the position of femininity in patriarchal culture: woman represents deficit, non-entity, and death. The run in her silk stocking just below the knee (der «Riß unter dem Knie» [23]) is a metaphor of castration; Else's Jewishness denotes the social marginalization of the Jew as well as of woman. The innumerable allusions to art indicate her imaginary position. The surrogate father-figure Dorsday, who is an art dealer and claims to purchase Else's beautiful body for the third of the price of a Rubens, confirms woman's reduction to the status of an image, i. e. an object, and this

<sup>3</sup> It was Kurt Eissler (1958, 250) who called adolescence a *second chance*: «Adolescence appears to afford the individual a second chance; it is a kind of lease permitting revision of the solutions found during latency which had been formed in direct reaction to the oedipal conflict.»

<sup>4</sup> The funds Else's father has embezzled are *Muendelgelder* (16)! A *Muendel* is a ward, a minor under the care of a guardian. Schnitzler's phrasing would seem to be an indication of abuse on a metaphoric level.

<sup>5</sup> It was Sandor Ferenczi (1932) who distinguished between «the language of passion» and «the language of tenderness» in order to describe the predicament of the child traumatized by sexual abuse.

<sup>6</sup> See, for instance, Christa Rohde-Dachser's critical analysis of Helene Deutsch's «Psychology of women» (1991, 82).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Elisabeth Bronfen's analysis of *Fraulein Else* (1992, 281-290).

becomes possible only over her dying body. Even Else's performance of public disrobing, which signifies an active subversion of her value as an object of exchange, is conditioned and framed by death, i. e. by the suicidal veronal. In her last moments Else «enacts the analogy between Woman as image and as corpse» (Bronfen, 1992, 288). Her public disrobing is meant to disclose the deadly transactions undertaken on her body by a patriarchal culture, but it is done in the language and the writing of the body/corpse itself. And a corpse is a medium of no authority – the opposite of the authorship and the power of independent speech reserved to man. Thus, woman's active choice of fate, her aspiring to subjectivization, is equivalent to self-obliteration, sacrifice and murder:<sup>8</sup> «They're all murderers. Dorsday and Cissy and Paul, even Fred is a murderer and Mama is a murderer. They've all murdered me and pretend not to know» (72).

Although Schnitzler brilliantly discloses the abuse of women by patriarchy it must be kept in mind that it is the author Schnitzler who consents to have it so. The narrative technique of the interior monologue, although an apt metaphor for woman's silence and immobilization, is used by the author as a device to speak out in public himself and as a springboard to literary fame. Schnitzler does not provide his heroine with any means of escape from her cultural fate. Did he himself manage to escape the accusation that while laying bare the foundations of patriarchy he simultaneously renewed their validity? In my final remarks, I will take a closer look at the difficulties and duplicities that arise when male authors and doctors undertake to analyze women's predicament, an approach that will lead to a comparison of both Freud and Schnitzler with respect to their creative aspirations.

Else's sudden public disrobing is dismissed as an «attack of hysteria» (71). In conformity with tradition, Else, like the hysterical patient, is accused of simulation and lying, that is, of being «a swindler». But this kind of pathologization and criminalization is revealed by Schnitzler to be a projection of her guardians, the illegitimate couple Cissy Mohr and the gynecologist Cousin Paul being »swindlers« themselves (69). Thus, the hysterical woman is defended, society accused, and the nosological category of hysteria called into question. Else's attack occurs in 1896, one year after Breuer and Freud published their *Studies on Hysteria*. According to his journal entries, Schnitzler was familiar with this publication, and 1896 saw the appearance of the controversial essay *On the Etiology of Hysteria*, in which Freud introduced his theory of seduction. This essay was in its fourth printing in 1922, the very time Schnitzler was at work on the manuscript for *Fraulein Else*. I suspect that Schnitzler's novella is a response to Freud's writings, among them his discussion of Dora, in which Freud cites Schnitzler in a footnote (Freud, 1905, 43). Even the title *Fraulein Else* may be read as an allusion to Freud's case studies of hysterical adolescent females such as «Fraulein Elisabeth v. R». The study of «Katharina» (1895, 125-135) also appears to have several things in common with Schnitzler's novella, particularly the incestuous relationship between the uncle and his fourteen-year-old niece. In a footnote (1924), Freud later admitted that in truth the girl had become ill as a result of sexual advances made by her own father, not by her uncle (Freud, 1895, 135).

Schnitzler's novella is comparable to Freud's novella-like case studies in two significant ways.<sup>9</sup> Not only is the repressed allowed to come to the fore in Else's monologue, but the hysterical patient's sufferings are not dismissed as mere pretense. One can almost read Schnitzler's *Fraulein Else* as an homage to Freud, who said in the *Etiology* that the reaction of the hysterical patient *appears* to be exaggerated because we can know only a small part of its causes, and that this reaction is, *in reality*, normal and psychologically comprehensible (Freud, 1896, 216). Thus, Schnitzler could be said to have renewed the concept that the hysterical woman has been traumatized by abuse (sexual and otherwise) and at the same time to have transcended the simple theory of seduction. For, in

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<sup>8</sup> This follows from the fact that, as a woman, Else «can design her self-representation only from within her cultural image repertoire», as Elisabeth Bronfen has argued (1992, 288).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Freud's remark that his case studies «read like novellas» (1895, 161).

*Fraulein Else*, Schnitzler reveals a complex sociopathological process, i. e. a multiplicity of motivational forces behind the hysterical reaction. Viewed from this perspective, Schnitzler's novella resembles Freud's analysis of Dora while simultaneously presenting a *critique* of it. Like Else, the adolescent girl Dora is used as an object of exchange among men that are fathers; her mother and surrogate mother figures either neglect her or betray her interests in favor of those of men, so that it is impossible for Dora to gain confidence and stability through these relationships. As in Else's case, father-figures emotionally exploit Dora and try to seduce her. It seems as if Freud himself, father-figure, doctor, and therapist, does not escape Schnitzler's critique of the patriarchy unscathed: the gynecologist Paul misdiagnoses Else's physical state, thus becoming the cause of her death. Further parallels in the stories of Else and Dora include the fact that both adolescent girls seek revenge and that both texts are structured by means of two dreams. In each case, the second of these dreams signals the termination of the unhealthy doctor/father relationship. While Dora is able to put an end to her existence as a passive object of exchange by breaking off the treatment, Else resorts to suicide.

In his approach to therapy, Freud cultivates the art of listening. Schnitzler encourages us to use the same technique with his heroine by penetrating the silence behind the visible symptoms of Else's hysteria and by giving voice to her unspoken inner thoughts. Thus, what Freud does in a therapeutic sense is what Schnitzler does in a literary sense. Yet the idea of a *man* encouraging a *woman* to speak brings with it problems of its own: could it be that the male listener listens selectively, hearing only what he would like to hear? Furthermore, does the male listener not project his own fantasies onto the statements made by the female subject/patient? Despite his criticism of Freud, even Schnitzler is not free from a certain bias, I would argue. Does what the feminist critique of psychoanalysis has disclosed about Freud apply to Schnitzler too? Both femininity and adolescence remained *dark continents* within Freudian thought.<sup>10</sup> The analysis of Dora resulted in failure because Freud refused to accept the *otherness* of his female patient and because he would not permit those feelings to resurface which were connected with his own unsuccessful adolescent development. His case studies may therefore be read as adolescent narcissistic creative fantasies stemming from his identification with the conceiving and the pregnant mother. Fears of separation and abandonment in relation to the pre-Oedipal mother led to a desire for autonomy so extreme that they even caused Freud to take on the maternal role himself, thus denying his feelings of dependency.<sup>11</sup> It is because of this that Freud's therapy did not enable the adolescent Dora to realize herself fully as a female subject, much less as a mother. In a way, the poet/doctor Freud divested Dora of her procreative faculty by making *her* case *his* story. The text/child *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, though conceived in 1900, is not delivered, i. e. published, before 1905. The reason for the final termination of the year-long pregnancy is that Dora herself gave birth to her first and only son in 1905 (King, 1995, 172 f.). The correlation of the date of publication with Dora's delivery testifies to Freud's guilt feelings. Processes of literary production and of transference seem to operate in a similar way in Schnitzler. Else, for example, is made to die as a daughter, a bride and a virgin before the expected onset of menstruation can occur. Is she then not, like Dora, divested of her womanhood and her ability to bear children, so that it is Schnitzler, the male author, who ultimately monopolizes the power of creation? Why is it that Else is made to portray herself exclusively within her role as a daughter during her monologue? What does this reveal about Schnitzler's own role as male author in the production of this portrait of an adolescent girl?

These questions lead to an examination of Schnitzler's own fantasies and his biographical situation at the time of writing. Although (or perhaps because) he claims that Else, except for her name – a cousin, who died young, was called Else – has no source but in his imagination (Urbach, 1974, 130), there are a number of parallels between the author and his creation. Both Else's mother and

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. the articles in Bernheimer/Kahane (Eds.), In *Dora's Case. Freud – Hysteria – Feminism* (1985).

<sup>11</sup> This has recently been argued by Vera King in her book on *Die Urszene der Psychoanalyse. Adoleszenz und Geschlechterspannung im Fall Dora* (1995).

Cissy bear a resemblance to Schnitzler's mother, who was subordinate to her husband in their marriage and saw her son as an incarnation of her own ideal self.<sup>12</sup> The Hungarian Jew Dorsday and the gynecologist Paul may be said to represent the author's father, who, unable to understand his son, gave him insufficient emotional support and therefore could not make amends for the narcissistic neglect Schnitzler suffered from his mother. Most importantly, Else appears to be a fictionalization of the author himself to a great extent. Like Flaubert, who said, «Madame Bovary, c'est moi», one could almost hear Schnitzler saying «Fraeulein Else – bin ich». The author identifies with his character, a young girl traumatized by the authority of her unempathic elders. It is, above all, Else's exquisite understanding of art – literature, music, painting – that makes her a double of her author, for to excel in art helps to compensate for the trauma. The huge number of literary citations and cryptocitations in her monologue make the reader wonder whether Else has an identity outside of literature at all. Thus, Else resembles an allegorical figure: she incorporates the profession of her author, his literacy. Moreover, Else is the daughter of a mother whom she – though sarcastically – calls «an artist» (18) and of a «genius»-father (39). Thus, the adolescent daughter is made to mirror the inborn artistic greatness of her father/author. Else's aristocratic handwriting and her talent for excellent phrasing also confirm the narcissism of the literary artist (57). This, however, requires that the male genius be clearly differentiated from his female complement. This is done by Schnitzler in the following way: 1. Else is portrayed as an artist manqué, which would seem an affirmation of Otto Weininger, that spokesman of patriarchal culture, who said that «there never was and never can be a female genius».<sup>13</sup> Else can only cite or reproduce art, by playing the piano or by quasi pantomimically enacting Schumann's *Carnaval*, for example. 2. *Else* stops writing in her diary at the age of 17 (49); on the other hand, seventeen is the age for which *Schnitzler's* own systematic journal writing is first documented (1879). 3. *The Marriage of Figaro*, which stands for the power of the patriarchy over women throughout the novella, is used in Schnitzler's diary as a code term signifying the commencement of the author's own literary production. On November 10, 1923, he notes that losing his hat in the theater after a performance of *The Marriage of Figaro* inspired his first poem.<sup>14</sup> Schnitzler's own adolescent crisis came to a conclusion with his giving birth to himself as a writer, so to speak. His heroine Else repeats this adolescent crisis of her creator on a metaphoric level, although without the artistic solution.

The praises of literary critics upon the appearance of *Fraeulein Else*<sup>15</sup> after Schnitzler's divorce from Olga Gussmann (1921) helped to confirm the author's hope that reliving puberty could function as a means to overcome painful phases and enable him to resume his literary productivity. In 1926 he reports to Olga that his strength and his motivation to work had greatly increased over the past two years (Schnitzler, 1995, 224). In *Fraeulein Else*, Schnitzler attempts to cope with his own trauma of deficit, dependency, and loss in his relationship to the pre-Oedipal and Oedipal mother. This trauma resurfaces both at the time of his divorce and when his daughter Lili reaches puberty at the age of twelve (1921). Similarly, Freud's eldest daughter, Mathilde, was 13 years old when he worked with Dora. The name *Lili* and the name of Schnitzler's mother, *Louise*, merge in the name of *Else*, all three stemming from the same root. Schnitzler's literary production *Fraeulein Else* results from the penetration of the conscious and the unconscious of a woman, her monologizing interior. This is depleted, so to speak, robbed of its mysteries and relinquished like an empty shell. All potency is accumulated on the side of man. With his daughter-like heroine Else as a complement, the author enacts a fantasy of narcissistic perfection. The figure of the daughter

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the latest biographical essay on Schnitzler by Ulrich Weinzierl (1994, 30-36).

<sup>13</sup> «[Es] gibt kein weibliches Genie, hat nie ein solches gegeben und kann nie ein solches geben» (Weininger [1903] 1980, 242).

<sup>14</sup> «(Ich verlor meinen Hut im Theater – wie vor etwa 50 Jahren in der Oper bei Figaro, was mein erstes Gedicht zur Folge hatte)» (Schnitzler, 1995, 96).

<sup>15</sup> On December 10, 1924, Schnitzler notes: «Von allen Seiten Elogen über Frl. Else (From all sides eulogies on Frl. Else)» (Schnitzler, 1995, 210).

represents both Schnitzler's vulnerable and violated self *and* the vengefully castrated mother who is to be prevented from deserting her son. Moreover, the daughter in the text is made a mother substitute – endowed with the faculty to rescue – at the same time that the successful literary production assures the author that he himself possesses the procreative powers of the mother. Thus, in a way, the novella *Fraulein Else* reaffirms the roles of woman as virgin/mother, redemptress, and muse, and this, once again, is *a killing of woman into art*.<sup>16</sup> This is – in spite of all his lucid criticism of woman's social and cultural powerlessness – the insurmountable residue of masculine fantasies within the author Schnitzler. The fantasy of flying at the end of the novella, reverberating with Christian overtones, resembles an ascension of Else together with her father and cites Gretchen's rescue of Faust with the help of the Virgin: «The eternal feminine draws us to higher spheres».<sup>17</sup>

Schnitzler's as well as Freud's attitudes towards their adolescent heroines could not help but reflect the blindness and exploitative bent of the prevailing patriarchal culture. It remains to add that Schnitzler's daughter Lili committed suicide in 1928 when she was 18 years old and her father 66.

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<sup>16</sup> The phrase «to kill women into art» is from Gilbert & Gubar (1979, 18, 36).

<sup>17</sup> «Das Ewig-Weibliche / Zieht uns hinan» (Goethe [*Faust II*, v. 12110], 1994, 464).

## ***The Last Gentleman: A fiction illustrating the psychopathology of everyday life***

NANCY E. SCHAUMBURGER (\*)

The brilliant manic-depressive poet in Saul Bellow's *Humboldt's Gift* (1973) makes the intellectual wisecrack, «Once you had read *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* you knew that everyday life was psychopathology» (9). Walker Percy's equally well-read amnesiac Will Barrett in *The Last Gentleman* (1966) would have relished this witticism about the unintended irony of Freud's landmark book on slips of the tongue, common expressions, seemingly innocent jokes, and the like. To Will, who perceives things rather differently from most people, with or without the telescope that he often carries with him, a different kind of «dailiness» constitutes the horror of modern living.

Events in *The Last Gentleman* are often sad and shocking, including the haunting suicide of the hero's father and the death from cancer of the boy to whom Will is tutor and companion, but it is nevertheless a picaresque quest-novel laced with a good deal of dark comedy, wild adventures, and peculiar characters. Will is a 25-year-old «child, interrupted» because of witnessing his despairing father's suicide at age fifteen. He suffers from such trauma-induced symptoms as fugue states, impaired vision, and one deaf ear. In short, he has experienced pain so extreme that it is unrecollectable, unviewable, unhearable, unspeakable – and he has «misplaced» much of his life.

Will is also troubled by the usual afflictions connected with the southern male heritage and belonging to an old family of distinguished melancholy misfits.

In addition to sharing with Bellow's Humboldt both mental illness and a desire for some kind of spiritual assurance, Will too experiences the failure of psychiatry to help him. However, unlike Humboldt or the alcoholic, numbed physician Dr. Sutter Vaught in *The Last Gentleman*, Will exhibits no self-destructive behavior.

As Dr. Gamow, his paid, long-term psychiatrist in New York fails to perceive, Will's spectacular fugue states are not just symptoms of a sickness which his specialty enables him to describe accurately (29), but also a wholesome indication of the young engineer's impressive drive towards

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stronger emotional health. In each of his panicky flights away from the «ravens particles», as he calls the onset of an episode of disintegration, Will is heroically attempting two daunting tasks: 1) to re-connect with a part of his painful individual past and his family's history, this time fitting the jigsaw pieces together in a different pattern so that his life can become more lucid and bearable, and 2) to prevent his own suicide.

After all, what more baggage is it possible to jettison after the loss of identity? (One common definition of mental illness, as we know, is precisely that: the death of the personality.) Will also knows, all too well, that the next stop after «fugue-ing out» is often checking out. The body follows the mind's flight to the logical conclusion: termination of the self-blueprint. A factual fellow, Will must also know the mortality statistics on the children of suicides, as Percy himself did.

Whether Will comes back to reality on a Civil War battlefield or in his symbol-freighted southern hometown Ithaca, he is surrounded by grim memories, even trophies of failure by the males in his family to thrive.

The «original misfit» (270), a veteran Confederate physician with a bellyful of death who took to prescribing laudanum to ease his own anguish, has bequeathed his name and skull to the succeeding generations. Will studies the empty brain-pan, Hamlet-like, with pity and scientific detachment, not wishing to meet that end just yet.

Will's father, whose suicide the adolescent boy actually watched, left behind the World War I Greener rifle with which he had killed himself. Will examines it in his dotty aunts' house, noting that gunpowder grains from that final discharge remain, like the spermatozoa on the penises of the young male suicides who had apparently – at least according to Sutter's autopsy speculations – sought salvation in sex and found re-entry to a less intense feeling-level intolerable. Will always realizes that he teeters near the brink of falling after the death-obsessed, gun-happy Barrett tribe into the grave.

Instead of re-loading the rifle, though, Will re-assembles the English collapsible boat that had lain in the attic, still half-unpacked, since his last duck-hunting trip with his father ten years ago. It will become his ingenious vessel of escape from negativity (and, incidentally, the police) across the river to Louisiana, a more promising «place of small and pleasant deeds» (265), where Will can embark by train on the last leg of his unconscious religious odyssey.

For a man with a memory like Swiss cheese in some matters, Will significantly remembers «the feel and fit of the spar-ends and the brass-sockets [of the boat] and even the goofy English directions: “Don't be discouraged if spar L does not fit immediately into socket J – patience is required”» (263). Here, at long last, are the kindly instructions Will needs in order to «float» a life, so to speak - the instructions that neither Dr. Gamow (a cartoon psychiatrist, appallingly lacking in empathy) nor bewildered, bitter Dr. Sutter Vaught could supply: Patience is required.

As one of Percy's favorite poets, Gerard Manley Hopkins, phrased it, «My own heart let me more have pity on» (1). Healing such deep psychic wounds as Will carries with him takes time, his own persistent constructive efforts, and the rewarding «interpersonal relations» that he is now acquiring with the troubled Vaught family. It also takes a couple of miracles, all in due course.

Will's basic problem is not periodic amnesia. In his Chaplinesque peregrinations, he is experimenting with different ways of living, retaining what he finds useful (such as the handy boat) and discarding what he finds unhelpful (the raglan sweater that he used to wear in New York when he was trying to blend in, like Woody Allen's «human chameleon» in the film *Zelig*, with the Ohio bunch). He is inventing and performing his own psychotherapy, just as John Stuart Mill did also in his 25th year, the year of his own mental cave-in from an equally extraordinary, traumatizing childhood.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mill was forced from infancy by his father to become an intellectual child prodigy. He movingly analyzes his ultimate breakdown from this unnatural upbringing and his original self-treatment plan for recovery in a famous chapter from his *Autobiography* which is often assigned to psychiatry students.

Will's problem is the same as Mill's: how not to die or, as Will puts it, «how to live from one ordinary minute to the next on a Wednesday afternoon» (279). He needs to achieve some satisfactory continuity and authenticity of being. Obviously, Will is not going to find it at a Dixie football game, a country club, a mall, or any of the other distractions from the fact of our limited time-span that society provides. In order to stop fleeing the fear of imminent extinction, dying before having really lived, Will must confront death in its most wrenching form.

In addition, Will has to comprehend that loving someone does not necessarily mean abandonment. While Will's father did abandon his son, the young man is not therefore predestined to the specific «*déjà-vu*» or repetition-compulsion of choosing «significant others» in his current life who will likewise desert. Will is struggling for differentiation, individuation; he need not be a clone of his father or re-live any part of his tragic family and regional history.

In unorthodox ways, by devious strategies, this ex-mental patient endeavors mightily to integrate the countless persons, places, books, experiences, perceptions, and passions that make him distinctively Will Barrett.

Throughout the bizarre twists-and-turns of his spiritual quest from New York to New Mexico and the numerous unforgettably weird vehicles he must ride, this contemporary Don Quixote has a guiding star, his Dulcinea, Kitty Vaught. His bride-to-be, an elusive person-in-process who also has a lot of living to catch up on, shares with her dying fifteen-year-old brother Jamie and their sister Val the nun of the self-designed religious order of one, a certain common talent: the capacity to love, accept, and understand far beyond their years.

Like Will, these three Vaught siblings have all suffered and watched, close-up, the suffering of others they love. In some ways, the quartet of spiritually striving young people in the novel resemble the empathic «participant-observers» or «wounded healers» that make the ideal therapists as described by the great American psychiatrist Harry Stack Sullivan.<sup>2</sup>

But first they need to create meaning in their own lives, to find a God who cares about suffering, who «will dry every tear» in the image of Isaiah (25, viii), a passage Will knows very well.

Although their «radar» takes less sensational forms than Will's sometimes hilarious symptoms, such as the inconvenient leaping knee, the three younger Vaughts have also seen that the oblivious consumers of the world's endless Vanity Fairs are in reality «the living dead». They could probably also pity and regret the lack of happiness that the residents of the «model community» Levittown demonstrate when Will appears with the «pseudo-Negro», a hyper-pigmented white man (and nearly causes a race riot).

They even recognize such misguided searches for spirituality – or, in the terminology of the novel, such «fornications» – as those pursued by Dr. Sutter Vaught, his ex-wife Rita, and many, many others, all looking for answers in bottles, deserts, bodies, stale ideas, head-games, general perversity. It is the participation of the three surviving Vaught siblings and loyal Will in Jamie's dying that will finally deliver them all, so the ending implies, to the «amazing grace» of religious belief.

Despite Will's documented mental difficulties, he is a surprisingly useful, cheerful fellow to have around in a genuine calamity. It is only the average daily calamity of living without meaning that he cannot handle well. However, in the splendidly vivid episode of the unexpected hurricane in Connecticut, he knows exactly how to rescue that lost Shakespearean babe «striding the blast» right in front of his stopped car (17-18). Similarly, Will instantly holds out his hand to the stunned workman who crashes through the museum's skylight at the Velásquez exhibit; he is able to share the «survivor-euphoria» of the other visitors, even though he was cowering behind a pillar a minute

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<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Sullivan, 245-246. Sullivan was also concerned about the therapist's capacity for appropriate levels of empathy with the patient's self-revelations.

before, unable to see the famous painting at all through his fear of the «public secretion» (20-21) that clouded it for him. Nearness to death *does* have the remarkable effect, he notes, of removing artificial barriers between people, provoking inspired actions, and literally clarifying one's vision in Will's case – the painting materializes now as if fresh from the artist's brush.

This knack for instinctively doing the right thing in his own mind and feeling good about his competence in such situations augurs well for the young engineer's future ability to enjoy life. Like the angel Raphael, unknowingly hired by Tobias' father as a traveling companion for *his* young son to a faraway land and a buried treasure in the charming *Book of Tobit*, Will comes through for Jamie. He even has to quell demons, in a sense, those emanating from Sutter's despair and Will's own fear of death.

Percy emphasizes the stark physical realities of the dying process, such as loss of bowel control, because this «last social occasion» is embarrassing or «shaming» to all participants who cannot yet share the natural, comforting vision that the priest Father Boomer has been summoned to deliver for Jamie with baptism.<sup>3</sup> When we must confront the «unaccommodated thing itself», our frail shell of mortality, there are no more artificial roles, forms, races, sexes, classes, or even words. Only the human bond matters, Will perceives now.

Coached by Will's clear oral interpretation of Jamie's faint last request, the priest continues to clasp the boy's hand warmly until his soul has passed. Will learns simultaneously that he is not losing a beloved friend forever, as he lost his father, but gaining a kind of personal intercessor who will pray for him *and* Sutter until they complete their own earthly journeys. Jamie dies content with this brilliant last assignment Father Boomer has given him. Will can then go on with his life, loved and loving.

Through his conspicuously sane communion with Sutter's dying brother, Will attains at last the religious dimension that he has always pursued as well as a solid sense of identity with a viable future. He will no longer need to check his wallet ID and calendar, pore over road maps, read ridiculous self-help books, or consult the many other handy signs and portents that have previously enabled him to get a temporary «fix» on himself.

In addition, Will's final shout of «Wait!», which had failed to prevent his father's suicide, succeeds at least in stopping Sutter from rattling off in his perverse Edsel to blow *his* brains out. Perhaps Will *is* – as Sutter had previously joked wanly (283) – the angel-instructed apostle Philip running after the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch in the Gaza desert to teach him the meaning of the prophecies he was reading (*Book of Acts* 8: 26-38).<sup>4</sup> Sutter too knows the Bible, though he claims it has not helped him.

Will seems to have triumphed over long-term despair, doubt, and befuddlement in the genuine «transcendence» of delivering Jamie to rebirth as a baptized Catholic. As Jamie reunites with «Our Father who art in Heaven», Will balances the waste of his own father's death with the promise of Will's energetic survival as a loving, clear-sighted, useful member of a family and a community, making a «small contribution of good will and understanding» (302) to a sorry world. He can plau-

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<sup>3</sup> See Goffman, 229-233. He discusses the well-documented social distress to observers caused by violations of expected norms on the part of a person who is about to die. In the novel only Father Boomer regards the symptoms of dying matter-of-factly, unperturbed.

<sup>4</sup> This story is also a probable influence on the novel because of the divinely guided appearances and disappearances of Philip at various locations, a phenomenon analogous to Will's frequent re-locations in fugue states. The New Testament anecdote has a surprisingly modern flavor in that the Ethiopian official spontaneously invites Philip for a chummy religious chat in his chariot and winds up requesting and receiving an impromptu baptism when they pass a convenient pool. In the novel Father Boomer improvises baptism for Jamie out of a hospital glass. Percy was probably also attracted by the Ethiopian's race, his occupation (he is a Queen's treasurer), which seems to be in some conflict with his pre-existing interest in salvation, and his sexual condition as a eunuch (one could argue that Sutter's sexual obsessions are a form of auto-castration and that he has become a kind of spiritual eunuch).

sibly invite Sutter, a kind of dark «double» or updated incarnation of Will's doom-driven father, to join him in this enlightened enterprise. This physician may not be able to heal himself, but perhaps Will now holds the power.

«Everydayness is the enemy», Percy often argued in both his essays and his fiction. Will too perceives that succumbing to bland ordinary reality without a challenge could mean the death of one's soul, a far worse fate than the death of the body. What is a relatively sane person to do in a society that does not notice its own «sickness unto death»?

Psychiatry has failed to help Percy's modern knight errant Will in his first appearance in *The Last Gentleman* for the simple reason that this still-immature, so-called science of the mind does not yet address spiritual needs adequately; it does not recognize religious malaise as a legitimate «diagnostic category» (unless, of course, one's psychiatrist is the god-like Reilly in T. S. Eliot's metaphysical comedy *The Cocktail Party*, obviously a rare exception). While there are some notable non-fictional exceptions now in the profession, such as Percy's admirer Dr. Robert Coles, most psychiatrists – like Will's Dr. Gamow – still deny the totality of the patient, seeing only an aggregate of symptoms, and can never grasp the mysterious uniqueness of each individual soul.

More prescient preceding psychiatrists, such as Sullivan, always respectfully emphasized the «unpredictable» dimension of the individual patient.<sup>5</sup>

Will is one of the astonishing recoveries from a tragic past that psychiatry cannot fully explain. He beats the usual prognosis. By the end of the novel, Will has become a contemporary Ancient Mariner, with both an urgent message to proclaim to the world that is mistakenly called «normal» and a mission of spiritual rescue for its other misfits whose distress he understands all too well. In a pun on his name that Freud would have appreciated, this almost terminally decent young man «*will bear it*», the intrinsic suffering and the message of achievable joy, of deliverance from an inadequate reality.<sup>6</sup> He has reconciled himself to the human condition – at least for now.

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<sup>5</sup> See Sullivan's respectful emphasis on the unknowable, unpredictable aspects of an individual's personality, xi-xii.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Hobson, 66. The pronunciation of Will's name at this point is clearly symbolic of his new-found self-confidence about the future; he seems certain he will be able to handle the positive lifestyle he has previously envisioned and described to Sutter.

# Hitchcock's *Vertigo*: One viewer's viewing

NORMAN N. HOLLAND (\*)

I was reviewing movies for WGBH-TV in Boston, 1957-59, when *Vertigo* came out. Most critics simply said, Hohum, another Hitchcock thriller. I thought it was a brilliant film, and said so. When we did our parody of the Academy Awards, we gave it what we called our «Anatomy Reward» for Best Picture of 1958. Now, of course, everybody says it's a masterpiece. I was there first, though. I feel I discovered this movie. It is oddly precious to me.

Among the regular critics' readings of *Vertigo*, I find Robin Wood's the most telling. Wood talks about the film in terms of the mysterious, in every sense, including the religious, breaking into an otherwise ordered and lawful world. The film upsets the world of the 1950s: enlightened, rational, progressive, surpassing, even discarding, the past. In *Vertigo*, this is Midge's world, in which a brassiere is designed by an engineer like a cantilever bridge. He, incidentally, works «down the peninsula» (Silicone Valley?). The phrase is later used to describe the mysterious San Juan Bautista.

The premise of the film, Wood writes, is a man who has faced death. At first he tries to pick up his life again, logically, step by step, on the ladder in Midge's apartment. Then he is offered something else: mystery, the supernatural, a life beyond death. He is offered, in short, Madeleine, the Magdalene, the woman who opens the mysteries of love.

The opening chase sounds one theme like a prelude: Scottie's fear of heights leads to the death, not of the criminal, the guilty man, but of the policeman trying to rescue Scottie, an innocent, even a hero. The theme is guilt, irrational, undeserved guilt.

Then, throughout the first two parts of the film, Scottie's two women square off around the question of what's rational. Midge is the rational human, who doesn't for a minute believe a ghost from the past is taking over Madeleine Elster. She laughs at the idea. Madeleine represents that irrational idea as not only possible, but as actually happening. She embodies the mysterious. Judy, in her turn, de-mystifies the mysterious. As I read the film, by their last night together, Judy and Scottie might put their relationship together again on an honest basis. In the last moments of the film, however, a nun breaks into the film frame. The mysterious breaks into the rational again – and Judy falls from the tower, for real this time.

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Hitchcock's own cameo appearance seems to me to bear out Wood's reading. (I think one can show that all of Hitchcock's signature appearances in his films «fit» their themes – at least as I interpret them.) He walks across the film frame, carrying a trumpet case, as Scottie is about to go upstairs to Elster's office in the shipyard. I read Hitchcock as marking the move from one world to another. He is a Pied Piper, leading Scottie away from the realistic world, where, as «hard-headed Scot», he has just been trying rationally to overcome his acrophobia. He enters the mysterious world that Elster will build for him. The décor of Elster's office, Wood says (112), takes us from enlightened modernity in Midge's apartment to a fantastic past in which men had the freedom and power to use women and throw them away.

If I follow out Wood's reading, in the first third of the film, Scottie is himself the rationalist. He tries to overcome his acrophobia rationally. He tries to correct Elster's apparent delusion. He tries to persuade Madeleine that «There's an answer for everything». In the second third, he is overwhelmed by his guilt and mourning – irrational forces. In the last third, he is lost in mystery, but *we* know what he doesn't know. He, not we, submits to the irrational, the mysterious, only to find what we have known since Judy Barton's soliloquy, namely, that it was not irrational at all. Restored to rational understanding, however, he suffers the same loss again, now in a truly mysterious way – because of the nun, who breaks into the scene. «I heard voices.»

My summary cannot capture Wood's complex and subtle treatment of many details. What I carry away is his general idea. It gives me a way of reading the film that makes intellectual sense of many details. What it does not do is give me a way of coping with the flaws I see in this film.

I feel I discovered this film. Accordingly, I feel possessive. As if it were my child, I want it to be perfect. I resent its flaws, and they are many and obvious. For example, how did Scottie get down from the roof? A loose end. Another is the visibly artificial. In this, as in many of Hitchcock's movies, he uses process shots: he photographs some action against a projected background, so that the studio doesn't have to make an expensive set or shoot on location. These scenes look fake when the projected background doesn't match the colors or the contrast ratio of the rest of the scene. Hitchcock, I think, lets that happen deliberately.

In *Vertigo*, I sense such a mismatched process shot when Scottie and Madeleine kiss by the cedars of Monterey, itself a movie cliché. Scottie's mute driving around San Francisco as he trails Madeleine Elster, seems equally «off». Yet the off-ness fits. It adds to the strangeness and unreality of mysterious Madeleine. Hitchcock keeps me in two different states of mind. In one, I know I am watching a fake, a fiction, an untruth. In the other, I *feel* as though it's real because I am involved and I want to know what will happen next – I *care*.

The key process shot and, of course, this one is deliberate – occurs when Scottie has finally, utterly re-created Madeleine in Judy. He kisses her passionately, totally. The camera circles the kissing couple, focused on them, romantic music soaring. The background, however, changes from the pale green of Judy's hotel room to the black wood and leather of the stable at San Juan Bautista where Scottie last passionately kissed Madeleine. Hitchcock is using the unreality. Intellectually I get the idea that the two women are now one. Emotionally, at this moment of love triumphant, I feel dizzy and confused.

The most important unreality is, of course, the whole murder plot itself. It's preposterous. Who on earth would hatch this incredible scheme to murder his wife? All this fakery so that people will believe Elster's wife fell off the mission tower? What ever happened to blunt instruments or the taste-free poison? Why not hire a killer instead of a detective?

How could Gavin Elster be sure that Scottie would fall for Madeleine or that his vertigo would outweigh his love for her? How could he possibly be sure that Ferguson would not look at the first Madeleine's body after it fell from the tower and realize this was not his Madeleine? Ferguson is, after all, a detective. He has fallen in love with Madeleine. And he won't look? How could Elster be sure Judy playing Madeleine wouldn't slip up somewhere? As she does in the last part of the movie.

I find myself thinking how absurd all this is. But I think that after the movie is over, not during it. It is Hitchcock's art, his genius, to sucker me into belief. He displaces my attention from Elster's

plan, which we do not learn about until two-thirds of the way through. He focuses me instead on the possibility that a dead woman from the nineteenth century is taking over a live one. He gets me to believe that.

I think what Hitchcock is encouraging is my projection into the film. We have fifteen minutes of dialogueless film as Scottie drives around after Madeleine's Bentley, seeing her follow out the life of Carlotta Valdes. All that time, I watch as Scottie watches. I wonder, as he wonders, What the hell is going on? There is no critique, no «voice of reason». And I believe.

Hollywood these days tries to make us believe by elaborate make-up or special effects or quadrasonic sound. This ultimate in realism puts a finis to projection. The current Hollywood «product», the «McMovie», as Harvey Greenberg calls it, leaves no room for our imagination. Today's thriller or horror film acts out a fantasy literally. By doing so, though, they limit us to that one fantasy.

Hitchcock, by his unrealities and improbabilities, gets me to judge them. In doing so, I participate in the movie and, ultimately, project into it, remedy its defects with my own imagination. Let's face it, most people nowadays, brought up on a visual diet of commercial television, never develop much sense of unreality or imagination. By contrast, Hitchcock mobilizes my wish to believe, to not feel that the movie is fake. In doing so he gets me to help create the movie, to project my wishes into it, my wish that a Madeleine not die, but go on immortally. My denial of death.

I think Hitchcock gets me to project by his use of «the uncanny». Freud gave a prescription for eerie or «horror» effects in films and stories in his remarkable 1919 essay, «The Uncanny». Hitchcock elicits belief and consequent fear in Freud's terms exactly: by presenting some infantile or unconscious mode of mental functioning as if it were actually happening. Wood's reading – the irrational breaking into the rational – sets the film precisely into Freud's formula.

In *Vertigo*, the regression is the belief that one is being possessed by the dead. That is, after all, a kind of version of the normal mourning process, of (in psychoanalytic jargon) introjecting the lost object, less formally, not «letting go». In effect, Madeleine is introjecting and identifying with a lost object, Carlotta Valdes. Then in the second and last thirds, Scottie cannot let go of the lost Madeleine and tries to re-create her.

That would be an object-relations reading. Back in 1958, however, I built my review around Freud's ideas of the uncanny and the repetition compulsion. Here is a transcript of that forty-year-old television program, a specimen of New Criticism (please forgive my spoken English):

The much more subtle and complex way of making a frightening movie [than by special effects] is by what Freud called «the uncanny». He meant: a work of art which translates into reality something which is either an infantile way of thinking, which you have since outgrown, or a repressed thought buried in your unconscious. Both these, when they come back and seem to be happening in reality, are terribly, terribly frightening.

This image of looking down past things repeated is the central image of the picture, because this is a picture which is essentially about a variety of different kinds of repetition. The picture itself, the plot, is built on a twofold structure, where the first episode, which comes to an end in the middle of the picture, is repeated in a sort of horrible way in the second episode of the picture. The picture has this double repetition of plot. But there are all kinds of repetitions in the picture. That spiral which was bouncing around on your television screen not so long ago was an attempt to duplicate what Mr. Hitchcock does during the screen credits... A whole lot of spirals, which are, after all, repeated figures whirring around on the screen.

There are other kinds of repetition. At one point Jimmy Stewart and Kim Novak go out to a redwood forest, and they look at a cross-section of a redwood tree, seeing the various rings of the redwood tree, which again suggest the succession of seasons, a repetition of things in time and space.

Through it all there is a structure of two-ness. There is the double plot I have already mentioned. Two, if you have ever gone into medieval number symbolism, or

if you have ever looked up Freud's speaking of numbers in dreams, two is a feminine number, for obvious anatomical reasons.

[Midge] is a sort of sweater-and-skirt type. Mrs. Holland pointed out, all the sweaters are the same kind of sweater, the same monotonous design of cardigan, just in different colors.

Another element repeated in the picture is water. The husband of Kim Novak is a shipbuilder, as we have seen, and this associates him with the water. A lot of the critical scenes of this movie take place in or around water. Now water suggests repetition by the wave surface, which is another form of repetition, but also water in a Freudian sense (we are just bristling with Freud tonight) is one of the powerful symbols for mother. And mother is a powerful repetitious force in our lives.

For a man, every woman he falls in love with after his mother will have something to do with her. For a woman, all of her behavior patterns will be determined in part by her mother. So when [Midge] says to Jimmy Stewart, «Just call me mother», she is picking up this water image but also she is reminding you of the repetitious quality of family.

Reality around us is cyclic. The human being himself tends to return to death, to an earlier state of affairs when he was just dead matter. In the cycle of the seasons, in all the cyclic processes of nature around us, we see this tendency to return to an earlier state of affairs. *Vertigo* is dealing with this compulsion to repeat, this idea of the death wish, something that is deeply buried in our own psyches. That makes the film frightening, but also developing a universal principle of reality, which in a very real sense describes the human predicament. That is why this is so much better a picture than any Hitchcock has done before.

Much in the manner of 1958, I looked for a centering essence to the picture, an essence that would express some universal human principle. I found it in psychoanalytic ideas like the uncanny and the repetition compulsion.

*Vertigo* is also a film about the triple goddess. This is an idea popularized by Robert Graves, and it figures prominently in Jungian criticism. I first encountered it in Freud's essay on *The Merchant of Venice* and *King Lear*, «The Theme of the Three Caskets». Mythologists point to the repeated occurrence in myth and legend of triads of women: the Gorgons, the Graces, the *graiiai*, the *moirai* (Fates), the Norns, Macbeth's «weird sisters», and so on. Often, the triad follows the pattern of the Fates, the first associated with birth, the second with the course of life, the third with death – in T. S. Eliot's phrase, «birth and copulation and death». Sometimes they follow the related pattern of a virgin or spring goddess, a mother or harvest goddess, finally a crone or death-goddess. Persephone in her six months on earth, Demeter the goddess of fertility and harvest, Persephone-the-destroyer in her six months in Hades. Sometimes they follow the pattern of virgin or unattainable love, the lush, sensual woman, the old woman.

The pattern occurs over and over in fictions, and it occurs in *Vertigo*, which is, most of us would say, a film much about women or Woman. Midge identifies herself at least three times as «mother». «Mother's here», she says to Scottie in the mental hospital. By contrast, Madeleine is an idealized image of woman, like a goddess, a Venus. The deadly third woman is the nun, dressed in black, who causes Judy/Madeleine's death. She echoes Carlotta Valdes, the Mater Dolorosa, who also burst into Madeleine's life (supposedly).

Midge is altogether different, the woman to relate to, to talk to, to be friends with. Madeleine is the woman to look at. Indeed, Scottie looks at her naked after he fishes her out of San Francisco Bay. (Death and rebirth? Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*?) The nun is the woman we don't see, the woman in darkness and shadow. So is Carlotta Valdes, another destroyer (supposedly).

In the film, Scottie realizes that Judy and Madeleine are one, when Judy puts on the red jeweled pendant that had supposedly been Carlotta Valdes'. I see a contrast between that bloody red and the greens that Hitchcock deliberately associated with Judy/Madeleine: Madeleine's and

Judy's green dresses; the green soft-focus effect associated first with Madeleine, then with the remade Judy; the green neon sign flashing outside Judy's window; the giant redwoods, *sempervirens*, always green.

Red and green. Stop and go. Green and go occur with looking, fantasizing, with the unreal and ideal woman from the past. Red and stop occur with sexuality or the genitals, the moment when the ideal woman is seen to be the low, sluttish woman or vice versa. In other words, the recognition scene in the movie acts out the same split in male sexuality that Madeleine and Judy do: the ideal, unreal woman and the available, sexual tramp. The cliché is Madonna-whore. The mirror in that scene splits Kim Novak in two, as so many mirrors in this film have done. Then the film undoes that split. The two kinds of women are one, and that is a horror.

A red oval jewel with ornamentation around it, hanging down. As so often in Hitchcock's work, the symbolism is «Freudian» and a bit obvious. Interestingly, we never see Madeleine wear that jewel, although Elster tells Scottie, «When she is alone, she takes them [Carlotta's jewels] out and handles them gently». We see the pendant in Carlotta's portrait. We see it in the mock portrait Midge paints of herself in the role of Carlotta. And, of course, at the climactic moment of the film, we see Judy wearing it. It is as though we can't see the red object on the other versions of Woman but not on the idealized goddess.

Hitchcock, I think, is playing in this film with my emotions about my mother. He uses the anxious combination of the ideal love one feels (or felt) toward a mother and one's feelings toward a woman announcing her sexuality. That is the love (or lust) Scottie feels for Madeleine, and evidently he has never before experienced this kind of total love (or lust) as an adult. It is total commitment. She is an ideal, cool, aloof, mysterious, a goddess.

Madeleine is a woman located in past generations, but she is also now. There is a hint of eternity about her. She is both all-powerful and helpless, needing to be rescued from the spirit that is possessing her. She is the woman-to-be-looked-at, the goddess on a pedestal, one of Hitchcock's blond heroines like Madeleine Carroll.

I think we are seeing something about Hitchcock's idea of woman. The «royal road» to Hitchcock's psyche, it seems to me, is the changes Hitchcock did and did not make in his source. *Vertigo* is based on a novel, *D'entre les morts* (From Among the Dead) by the two French writers, Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac. They had written the screenplay for *Diabolique*, one of the scariest movies ever made. According to François Truffaut, in his book of interviews with Hitchcock, they wrote this book precisely for Hitchcock. They were not on contract. They just hoped he would option it and make a movie of it, and he did.

Some things Hitchcock took over directly from the novel. He kept the basic plot. A husband gets rid of a wife by involving a friend with a woman playing the role of the wife, who then is killed. In the novel, the villainous husband's name is Gévigne. This becomes Gavin in the film. Hitchcock also kept the name Madeleine. She is the Magdalene, the woman Christ transformed from a prostitute to a saint. Medieval paintings show Mary Magdalene as a penitent with a box of ointment or reading alone before a tomb or a skull. The film shows her that way when she sits before Carlotta Valdes' portrait holding a bouquet.

Some changes Hitchcock made simply to suit American audiences, like changing from Paris-Marseilles to San Francisco. Others are more ingenious, like using the same church tower for the two deaths.

One major addition Hitchcock made was the Midge character and the whole plot associated with her. Entirely Hitchcock's, she is the rational foil to the fabulous, mysterious Madeleine. Midge is the non-ideal, an available woman, the woman to relate to as an equal or even to patronize a bit, a pal, the gal next door. «Mother's here». She is the woman Scottie has apparently outgrown, a woman who would like to be seductive and sexual, but is cozy instead.

Then, both Madeleine and Midge contrast with the sluttish Judy Barton who lets us know that many men have tried to pick her up (and some succeeded). Midge draws brassieres for a living, and

both she and Madeleine are well girded in the bra department. Kim Novak, however, Hitchcock told Truffaut (248), took particular pride in not wearing a bra when she was playing Judy Barton.

Hitchcock, as I read him, is playing with a powerful tension I felt, perhaps all men and women feel. He plays off the idealized goddess-mother of infancy against the later, more realistic mother, necessarily less the total possession of the infant. He gives us two versions of that later non-ideal, one asexual (Midge) and one sexual (Judy). Judy is or was the fatherfigure's (Elster's) woman. Hitchcock had originally planned to use Vera Miles for Madeleine/Judy, he told Truffaut (247), but she «became pregnant». «After that I lost interest.» «I couldn't get the rhythm going with her again.»

If I read the film for what it did for Hitchcock, I find an image of his wish fulfilled. As Donald Spoto points out (275), Hitchcock in making *Vertigo* is like Pygmalion, an artist creating the perfect woman to show up the deficiencies of ordinary women. Here, *The ideal woman is secretly the sexual woman, and the sexual woman can be turned into an ideal*. Not the merely «nice» woman. When nice, pure Midge shows him the picture of herself as Carlotta Valdes, Scottie is disgusted, turned off, angry. The ideal has to be the sexual, even sluttish, woman. From her, Scottie (and earlier Gavin Elster) made the ideal.

Guilt is another Hitchcockian change from the source. Many critics have pointed to the Catholic-raised Hitchcock's preoccupation with guilt, particularly undeserved guilt. Here, he makes the Scottie character present at the first death (not so in the novel). He makes the falls take place from a church tower, with priests and nuns as witnesses. He adds a long, droning monologue by the coroner, stressing Scottie's guilt (undeserved). He gives Scottie a guilty nightmare and a nervous breakdown. In the second death in the novel, the Scottie character himself kills his re-created love. In the film, Scottie is innocent, but who is going to believe him? That coroner? A man twice present when a woman he is involved with falls from the same church tower? No way.

There are minor Hitchcockian themes as well: «the woman with glasses.» Here, it is Midge. In *Strangers on a Train* it is the repellent first wife (to be killed) and the homely kid sister (and Hitchcock cast his own daughter Patricia in that role). There is something wrong with people with glasses, particularly women. They don't «look right». They are not pleasant to look at, and they themselves can't look, and looking is terribly important to Hitchcock. In this movie, like many of Hitchcock's, the core of the action is looking (think of *Rear Window*). Here it is looking at that goddesslike blonde.

Stairs are another Hitchcock preoccupation. Horrible things happen in Hitchcock movies at the top or the bottom of stairs – as in this film. Some critics have spoken of a «Hitchcock image», a corridor, tunnel, or drain, some receding hole, anyway. Something goes into it and disappears or something scary comes out of it. Here we see it in Judy's coming down the corridor or out of the bathroom when she is finally *toute Madeleine*, Midge going down the corridor at the mental hospital, above all, the look down the stairway in the church tower. As a psychoanalytic critic, I can't help referring this to fantasies or memories of the primal scene (a child's witnessing sexual intercourse). I would expect such preoccupations with a gifted filmmaker.

There is a famous effect in this film. Some have dubbed it «the Hitchcock shot». It could be called the *Vertigo* shot. Three times he achieves the dizzying and disorienting effect of vertigo. We see it first when Scottie looks down and freezes, causing the policeman's death. We see it the second and third times when he runs up the tower after Madeleine. In the final shot, however, looking down from the tower, Scottie does not have vertigo. He has been cured, but at what a cost!

Hitchcock had wanted to do such a shot for a long time. After fifteen years (and some technological innovations), he realized he could do it by zooming the lens in (increasing its focal length) and dollying the camera out at the same time. Why did he obsess about it for fifteen years? Perhaps because one goes in and out at the same time, both closer to the subject and more distant.

Hitchcock carried over some of the larger elements of the novel unchanged, like the trip to the cemetery or the old hotel. He also took unchanged some of the smallest details from the novel such as the «gray suit, very tight at the waist» (Boileau & Narcejac 1956, 25), «severely cut». (28). But

the Madeleine of the novel is «dark and slim» (20), with «dark hair discreetly tinted with henna» (23), «abundant hair which seemed too heavy for her face» (20). Hitchcock's transcendent Madeleine is one of the luscious blonde women who step through his films in almost endless procession: Madeleine Carroll, Joan Fontaine, Marlene Dietrich, Janet Leigh, Doris Day, Tippi Hedren, above all, Grace Kelly.

Scottie re-creates the goddess Madeleine from the tarty Judy (as Christ, the Hanging Man, transformed the Magdalene). But Scottie is only re-creating. At the end we learn that Gavin Elster was the first to create the blond goddess from the tramp. (Robin Wood cleverly points out that Elster is a shipbuilder, ships are she's, Elster is a she-builder.) But even Elster was not the first.

That was Hitchcock himself. As he said of Vera Miles, this was «the part that was going to turn her into a star». It is Hitchcock who will create the blond goddess. When he chose Novak, he annoyed her by making her set her hair and wear clothes in ways he liked and she didn't.

Hitchcock's contempt for actors was legendary. «Actors are cattle», he is said to have said. In later years, I've read, he would drive up in his Rolls Royce, check the scene out, then drive off, leaving the actual shooting to his assistant. To be sure, he had elaborately and meticulously sketched out the whole scene on paper the night before. But even so! Actors for Hitchcock were not supposed to act, they were just supposed to *be* there. «James Stewart», commented Truffaut (111), «isn't required to emote; he simply *looks* – three or four hundred times – and then you show the viewer what he's looking at».

What gives Hitchcock's actors their emotion is the Kuleshov effect (Holland 1989). It's not their acting, but the *surrounding situation*. And that Hitchcock controlled totally.

Consider Kim Novak's acting, about which critics (and Hitchcock himself) have had their doubts. Take the scene after the supposed drowning, when she comes out of the bedroom. Seeing the movie the first time, you think she's embarrassed because Scottie has seen her naked. Seeing the movie the second time, you realize that Novak's character was pretending to be unconscious and is now pretending to be embarrassed. The actress is pretending to pretend to be embarrassed. What a challenge! Wow! Terrific! And Novak carries it off! Or does she? Isn't it the situation that clues us to read her behavior as a double-level pretense? The meaning of her acting depends on what we know of the circumstances around the event. It depends on what Hitchcock has set up, not what Novak does.

I think Hitchcock's practice is part of his world-view: people are at the mercy of their surroundings, dwarfed, for example, by Mt. Rushmore or the Statue of Liberty. I think that is why Hitchcock is drawn to psychiatric explanations, which are invariably over-simple (as at the end of *Psycho* or *Marnie*). In *Vertigo*, a psychiatrist describes Scottie's breakdown as «acute melancholia together with a guilt complex», labels that say nothing. I think Hitchcock uses such cookbook psychiatry to image people as controlled by circumstances. Psychiatric explanations are worthless, because the problem is deeper. If you are guilty, undeservedly guilty, the reason is in the universe.

My point is, that is why Hitchcock insisted on as much control over his films as he could get. He was the controlling circumstance. He was the god in charge of creating the blond goddess. «Miss Novak arrived on the set with all sorts of preconceived notions that I couldn't possibly go along with», he told Truffaut (247-8). «I went to Kim Novak's dressing room and told her about the dresses and hair-dos that I had been planning for several months. I also explained that the story was of less importance to me than the over-all visual impact on the screen, once the picture is completed.» Exactly what Scottie does in the film itself.

Hitchcock wanted to look at that ideal blond woman. The operative word is *look*, something he shared with most male moviegoers and probably many women. (Nowadays critics talk about «the gaze».) For example, there is a scene where, it is clear, Scottie has seen Madeleine naked. (I read his expression when he ministers as a possessive smirk, even a leer.) This being 1958, we do not see her nude. We infer what happened. (Hitchcock is using, as always, the audience's projection.) Conversely, according to Hitchcock,

Cinematically, all of Stewart's efforts to re-create the dead woman are shown in such a way that he seems to be trying to undress her, instead of the other way around. What I liked best is when the girl came back after having had her hair dyed blond. James Stewart is disappointed because she hasn't put her hair up on a bun. What this really means is that the girl has almost stripped, but she still won't take her knickers off. When he insists, she says, «All right!» and goes into the bathroom while he waits outside. What Stewart is really waiting for is for the woman to emerge totally naked this time, and ready for love (Truffaut, 244).

Truffaut comments simply, «That didn't occur to me». (And he a Frenchman!) It didn't occur to me either, and I think Hitchcock's idea that he is *undressing* Judy has more to do with his fantasies than anything we are seeing on the screen. (It has been suggested to me, though, that that final bun is another symbol for the female genitals – golden this time.)

Re-creating Madeleine was evidently the fun of the film for Hitchcock. It is for me, too, and so is looking at the cool elegant Madeleine during the first third, as it probably was for Hitchcock. Then there are two other moments that trouble me, that make me feel distinctly uncomfortable.

In one, Midge cheerily shows Scottie the portrait she has painted of herself in the role of Carlotta Valdes (complete with the fateful red jewel). She expects him to laugh along with her and get past his obsessive belief that Madeleine is being possessed by a dead woman. Instead, he is repelled. Mild Johnny reacts strongly, rejecting the picture – and her. His harsh words are, I believe, the last words he speaks to her in the film. She cries bitterly over her foolish attempt at a joke after he leaves. Why was it so awful?

The other discomfort comes right after Scottie has seen Judy Barton on the street. He comes up to her hotel room and begs her to have dinner with him. She finally says yes. Right after that, Hitchcock lets us in on Judy's secret. She starts to write Scottie a confession and farewell, but changes her mind. It is at this point that we learn what Gavin Elster's plot was and how Judy abetted him in it.

Telling us the answer to the mystery two-thirds of the way through is Hitchcock's most brilliant stroke in *Vertigo*. In the novel, the re-creating Madeleine *is* the mystery, revealed only in the last pages. Hitchcock's team all told him not to do this, but it is a genuine stroke of genius. From the moment of Judy's soliloquy, *we* know what Scottie doesn't know and Judy does know. As Hitchcock put it –

The truth about Judy's identity is disclosed but *only* to the viewer... that Judy isn't just a girl who looks like Madeleine, but that she is Madeleine! Everyone around me was against this change; they all felt the revelation should be saved for the end of the picture. I put myself in the position of a child whose mother is telling him a story.... In my formula, the little boy (*sic*), *knowing* that Madeleine and Judy are the same person, would then ask, «And Stewart doesn't know it, does he? What will he do when he finds out about it?».... We give the public the truth about the hoax so that our suspense will hinge around the question of how Stewart is going to react when he discovers that Judy and Madeleine are actually the same person (Truffaut, 243).

In other words, the focus changes from the mystery about Madeleine to *What will happen when he finds out?* We will have shifted from staring at the blond goddess to a much more human problem: what will happen to Judy when Scottie finds out?

Both the episode of the fake portrait and the revelation that Judy is Madeleine feel uncomfortable to me. I understand the portrait episode as asking me to identify Midge with the fantasy woman. The confession shifts me from re-creating the gorgeous Madeleine, too beautiful to be real, into the real relationship between Judy and Scottie. I think it is because both moments lead me away from the fantasy I enjoy, looking at this perfect woman, too beautiful to be real. Both moments ask me to relate instead of look.

Frankly, I would rather look. I like following Madeleine in the first part. I like the rescue from the Bay and seeing her nude, at least in my imagination. I like the last third, when Scottie re-creates Madeleine.

One way I see this film is as this man's, Scottie's, two relationships to women. Perhaps it is about all men's relationships to women – or Hitchcock's. Perhaps it is only moviegoers' relations, entranced by these ideal figures on screen who so contrast with our everyday lives. Perhaps it is «about» the psyche of the typical moviegoer, at least the male moviegoer. Perhaps it reaches women because both genders have the same early emotions toward a mother. Once she was the ideal and she necessarily ceases to be. Or perhaps I am linking the film to a man's wish for a lover who would submit completely, give up all, even identity, and expect nothing in return. Perhaps I see the film as about the way such a wish limits and subverts real love, such as Scottie might have had with Midge. It is a wish that limits Scottie, limits Elster, limits Hitchcock, limits me.

Why, then, do I feel this is such a «great» film? I *know* it is, because I can show (to my own satisfaction, anyway) how beautifully articulated it is, how every moment contributes to the unity and complexity of the whole. But why do I *feel* it is?

I think because the film deals with my own major defense, denial. Scottie can deny the impossibility of a woman from the past taking over a living person (something realistic Midge never for a moment believes). Because Carlotta is responsible, he is freed of his responsibility for the «death» of the first Madeleine.

The snide coroner, in his nasty, nasal monologue (entirely Hitchcock's addition) insists on Scottie's responsibility. He failed to acknowledge the realities of the situation, Madeleine's apparent illness and his own vertigo. He is guilty, guilty, guilty. Scottie has a nightmare and breaks down. Somewhat recovered, he wanders the streets looking for his lost love, until he meets Judy and, mournfully, re-creates the lost Madeleine.

My own feelings as he re-creates Madeleine are: Why not? He has managed the impossible. He has managed to create or recreate this gorgeous movie star woman. She loves him. Why not enjoy it? Why not love her, have an affair, whatever? The fantasy woman is made real. Scottie begins this movie as a failed detective. He is wearing a corset, thus feminized, leaning on a cane, unable to climb three steps, unable to sustain a sexual relationship (his failed engagement to Midge). This weak man is not only able to create the ideal woman, he even possesses her (in the fadeout after Judy appears with Madeleine's hairdo).

Then, in the final moments of the film, miraculously, Scottie is not guilty! Sure, everybody will think he is, but he isn't really. He is not an unrealistic, demanding, unfeeling lover whose deficiencies lead to the death of the loved one. No! He was the victim!

The film feels «right» to me because I can intellectualize about it and interpret it. It feels «profound» to me, though, because it has dealt with a psychological issue near the center of my own being: denials leading to finalities, the failure of relationships, even to death. Denials of the unreality of someone like Madeleine, a denial that limits and subverts real love.

*Vertigo* not only dramatizes such denials, but it also achieves them. The film says (to me, anyway), there is another rational, simpler explanation for the failure of relationships. It isn't Scottie's or my denial. There is no cause deep in the mind's mysteries. It was *them*. It was the wicked man associated with wealth, the past, with freedom and power, particularly the freedom and power to use and throw away women, him and his sluttish mistress. *They* are the guilty ones – just *them*, out there, on the screen, in the movie.

Denial triumphs. I have canceled the guilt, changed the years, undone the loss, turned back time, denied denial itself. I have achieved (in fantasy) the goddess-woman-mother. I have achieved that power and freedom men speak of three times in the film, the power and freedom to use women and toss them away. Elster, Scottie, Hitchcock with his total control of star and film - and now me, the critic attaining the power and freedom I envy in the artist. And I pay just enough of a price, the

death of Judy/Madeleine, revealed now as the guilty party, so that I am truly freed. At least for the 120 minutes of *Vertigo*.

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# *Eat drink man woman: A postmodern rewriting of Ozu's family melodramas*

KISEKO MINAGUCHI (\*)

In the films directed by Ang Lee, *Pushing Hands* (1991), *The Wedding Banquet* (1993) and especially *Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994), we see a challenge to the patriarchal tradition of contemporary Taiwan.<sup>1</sup> In each text, the identity of an aged father is put at risk, his emancipation forced by his family members.<sup>2</sup> Among the three tragi-comedies, the most gripping characterization of the father is found in Chef Chu in *Eat Drink Man Woman*, whom Schickel credits for rendering «the culinary arts... as thrillingly as the martial arts.»<sup>3</sup>

This particular cinematic text, *Eat Drink Man Woman*, I argue, owes its narrative and stylistic devices to Ozu-directed *Late Spring* (1949) and *Tokyo Story* (1953). Lee simply stated, at a TV interview arranged to promote the release of *Pushing Hands* in Tokyo, «I respect Ozu». Yet, Ozu's family melodramas are often labeled «old fashioned».<sup>4</sup> I start this study by asking a pressing question: why then, across cultures and generations, does Lee draw on Ozu's schema and style to elaborate a concept of the dissolved family institution in the postmodern electronic society? The answer may also help us answer why Ozu is still a powerful myth.

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Despite their apparent extravagance, Sunday meals cooked by Chu, the best chef of Taipei, are revealed to be simply «metaphors for... torture added to their [Chef Chu's three daughters']

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<sup>1</sup> *Sense and Sensibility* (1996), another family drama, represents an exception to this pattern.

<sup>2</sup> «Family members» refer to two characters: in *Pushing Hands* the American daughter-in-law, a frustrated writer-to-be, and the son's American gay partner who forges a disguised marriage for him in *Wedding Banquet*.

<sup>3</sup> Schickel, 1994, 61.

<sup>4</sup> The Japanese «New Wave» directors who appeared in the late 1950s identified Ozu's works, especially after *Late Spring*, with outdated concepts of «cinema».

other torments.»<sup>5</sup> Not surprisingly, the most sexually developed middle daughter, Jia-Chien, is the one who could detect, after a sip of chicken soup, some decline of Chu's taste buds. Jia-Chien's Oedipal attachment to her kitchen rival, who will not allow her to take over his job, is different from what is naively expressed by Noriko in *Late Spring*. Noriko enjoys her life of devotion to her father and no specific reference is made to her mother, when she takes the dead mother's seat at table. Most importantly, Jia-Chien's wish to leave home is motivated by the taste gap, which causes little trouble at Noriko's home. Jia-Chien's mentality, as if to reflect her exquisite tastes for food she has been building up since childhood, is certainly more complex than simple-looking Noriko's. Noriko's quest begins only when her aunt worries if hers might be too late a spring. Jia-Chien's criticisms and complaints of her father in effect contradict the support she offers to him during his depression.

Chu, in an apron accentuating his identity as a perverted but competent nurturer, also stands in opposition to Noriko's widowed father. The Japanese professor of economics is admittedly impotent in practical house management. He does not even know how to cook rice and yet he conjures up his own matchmaking to push his unwilling daddy's girl out into wedlock. Thus, Lee's film *Eat Drink Man Woman* becomes a whimsical satire on the post-war Japanese family Ozu depicted in *Late Spring*.

The serious spoof is enriched by picturing similar veins of communication trouble within Chinese and Japanese families. In both families, inadequate readings of the heart lead to confusion and suspicion, because a desire not to hurt intimate ones' feelings entraps them into mutual muteness. Jia-Chien shares with Noriko jealousy and suspicion concerning their fathers' new match. Jia-Chien's misunderstanding of others, however, is caricatured as an incurable chronic disease. An extreme example is the fear of her sick father's being rolled down a hospital hall, which she hastily fantasizes at the sight of his nightgowned appearance at the Cardiovascular Department. One could argue the fantasy projects her wish-fulfillment; this is a way she could occupy the home kitchen, a symbol of control, at will. Lee's treatment of the father is equally more satirical and psychosexual, parodying Ozu's simplicity. The potentiality of tragi-comedy in *Eat Drink Man Woman* is heightened at the father's announcement of engagement, when he shows the doctor's certificate guaranteeing his heart could tolerate marriage. Jia-Chien is stunned. A viewer feels less betrayed than the credulous daughter, because the viewer is capable of suturing the fragmentary shots which prepare him/her for Chu's decision to make a new family: enjoying cooking a lunch box for the bride-to-be's little girl, plotting with her for the girl's happiness, checking his heart at the hospital where his associate died, and toning muscles as well.

Chu tops the rest of these Chinese and Japanese patriarchs, outmaneuvering his family and his friend, Mrs. Ryan with a complicated semblance of indifference and interest concerning the opposite sex. Chu, acted by Sihung Lung, offers an exact copy of Chishu Ryu's somber look when he plays Professor Somiya. This iconic bond helps establish a hallmark of what Lee parodies. Yet, unlike Noriko's father, Chu brews up a secret romance on his own. He needs time, as his analogy of tortoise exemplifies, before he summons his courage to ask for the approval of his marriage, an act audiovisually confirmed by a steamed tortoise having its shells cracked with a hammer to take its guts out.<sup>6</sup> His tardiness has given his daughters an opening, but even now he is preempted by his eldest daughter. When Chu finally verbalizes his honest feelings and his engagement to a young divorced woman, he is only outmatched by female hysteria. Even the eldest daughter, the pious Catholic and a close friend of his fiancée, sharply repels his serious intention as nonsense. When Mrs. Ryan, the humiliated mother of his fiancée, has a fit and falls, the confusion surges to its apex, drawing our

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<sup>5</sup> Schickel.

<sup>6</sup> Chu is once compared with a tortoise by his friend because of his patient reticence. Other similarities to the tortoise symbol can be seen in Chu as well: «the pledge of its stability» in supporting the universe, as is stressed in the Chinese classics, and «the well-known longevity» and «the beginning of the spiritualization of matter» often associated with the tortoise. See Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1994, 1016-1019.

attention to her horizontal body carried away by the daughters' mates in vertical standing position. In close parallel with the daughters' emancipation from the patriarch, Lee has been strenuously distracting the viewer's attention to patterns of lines to embody the lack of equilibrium.

The round table shot which started with Jia-Chien's jeopardizing an icon of the father as mother substitute with her connoisseur's taste, is thus punctuated with her tearful look at the apologetic father sneaking out with the little daughter-to-be. The distancing of the father-daughter relation, possibly motivated by the good intent of freeing his daughter from the family obligation, involves something more intricate than misunderstood paternal love. Later, near the film's end, the father, now a guest, sitting side by side with Jia-Chien at the round dinner table, appears in the same compositional and musical context as after the death of his chef partner, when he lamented he could not taste tea. This time, the life with the pregnant wife must no longer be that insipid, because he eventually gets to celebrate the revival of his taste buds. Left alone in the empty house now for sale, Jia-Chien is finally promoted to the chef of the kitchen, though ready to leave for the Amsterdam branch office of her job. With the soup of her mother's recipe and the father's striped apron, she is empowered to acquire autonomy and nurturance allowing her to articulate her nostalgia for her dead mother. In this psychodrama she plays his surrogate wife/her mother. This seemingly incestuous relation is underlined by an iconic and indexical link in the patriarchy. Jia-Chien is an absolute image of her mother in the wedding photo and the analogy between the two personalities had often been pointed out.

The miracle here is the remedy for her father's loss of taste, which had been triggered by the object loss of his friend's death. The concluding shot of Chu looking appreciatively up at his curer-daughter with the soup bowl in her hand might thus construct in a viewer an image of Chu receiving the sacred cup from his former wife as Holy Ghost. Evidently he is stepping into an oral stage of psycho-sexual development where he can trust his own taste buds without depending heavily on the gaze of the other for his decision making, especially Jia-Chien's gaze, displaced as his superego.

In strong contrast, no elements are left out from the final sequence of *Late Spring* that do not denote the father feels let down. Immediately followed by the wave shot, *Late Spring* shoots the father coming home from Noriko's wedding. He clumsily peels an apple without even changing his wedding suit. In place of Noriko's visual and sonic presence represented by the door bell and her speaking voice, his solitary act of peeling an apple resonates more quietly than the quiet night. Soon the apple skin's rickrack breaks, and every motion freezes with his drooping head. This act arouses, in contrast to Chu's communion, *mono-no-aware* (compassionate sadness).<sup>7</sup> For those familiar with *Love in the Afternoon* (1957), what is communicated by the widowed father who sees his daughter off in secret is no less moving, but obviously Noriko's father is pictured as more introspective and profoundly emotional. Yet it should be noted that Professor Somiya is evidently forbidden such psycho-sexual awakening as Chef Chu embarks on.

The shot of father and Noriko together talking and sleeping in the same inn room on the last of her virgin nights might evoke some discussion of incest in cultures preoccupied with the subject, which suspicion is inappropriate at the least to the honest, conservative father who cannot possibly pay for another room.<sup>8</sup> A similar argument has actually been raised that the aged father feels incestuous desire for his widowed daughter-in-law, also named Noriko, in *Tokyo Story*. Such a reading of the shot where the father gives her his dead wife's wrist watch as her keepsake is, however, implausible.<sup>9</sup> The suggestion lacks the same definite contextual evidence as made about Jia-Chien.

Indeed, the father in *Tokyo Story* acknowledges Noriko's good personality and the two are shot spacially close, especially back in Onomichi after his wife's funeral. During the parents' visit

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<sup>7</sup> Schrader, 1972, 34. Schrader writes that the comment «Ozu is the artist of *mono-no-aware*». was originally made by Richie. The translation of «*mono-no-aware*» into English comes from Tamako Niwa.

<sup>8</sup> For the cultural codes by which film works, please see *Critical Inquiry* 12, 1986.

<sup>9</sup> Bordwell, 1988, 172. Bordwell simply introduces this interpretation as one of a variety.

with their own children in Tokyo, the aged mother, he admits, was most pleased to have a warm supper, massage and her dead son's *futon* to sleep in at the daughter-in-law's cheap one-room apartment. The father must have recognized her amiable patience in contrast to his own children's unfairly exercised autonomy. That alone, not «incest», would explain the often questioned shot of Noriko who is induced to crack into tears at her father-in-law's appreciation and encouragement. His positive reaction to honest and generous Noriko is emphatically contrasted with his almost hypocritical and certainly repressed response to self-centered Shige, his own daughter, greedy for food and *kimonos*. The shot of odd cracks in the window glass against which the close-up of the father amiably expresses his wish to leave is a classical Hollywood clue to disparity. The duplicity is played on both parts, when Shige's lip service permits her to reply «You are welcome to stay longer».

A table, especially one covered with a white table cloth, by the mechanism of displacement, often alludes to bed and sexual activity, according to Freud's rules of dreams. «The sexual complex of ideas is... transposed on to the eating complex», he says.<sup>10</sup> The breakfast sequence in *Citizen Kane* is famous for its ironic revelation of the couple's collapsed marriage. It is no wonder that Ozu, who «was very taken with» that Hollywood cinema,<sup>11</sup> also sets a variety of dinner tables in *Tokyo Story* to depict, instead of marriage, broken up hierarchy. The lack of eating scenes in their own children's middle-class homes exemplifies a table as an index of affection. Ozu's most powerful use of the metaphor is struck at the most lively family dinner sequence, an event which occurs only at the mother's funeral. It is hardly acceptable, however, to assign to the satire some psychosexual implications.

The narrative concern with «breaking up» is subtly presented a few times in *Tokyo Story*, and must not be missed. Shige teases her overweight mother for once breaking a chair at a P.T.A. meeting. At the after-funeral dinner the eldest son brings up the memory of a firecracker scaring his younger brother. The particular theme is also hinted at by graphic signifiers such as the crisscross within a circle design on Shige's *obi*, the screening wall in an Atami inn with a similar hole, and the analogous logo of a *sake* bar. In each case, the two intersecting lines of both x and + dissect the wholeness. One should remember autonomy is monopolized not by the eldest son, a town doctor, but by Shige, the owner of a beauty parlor, who lives only with her good natured husband. Interestingly, all these graphic configurations are related to the sequences where the parents are frustrated with the hospitality manipulated by the opinion-leader, Shige. The motion of a fan, also round, emphasizing the aforementioned metaphorical circle, is synchronized with the rhythm of the family members' emotions to map their interrelated dynamics. The foolish optimism, expressed by the father while fanning the sick wife lying in *futon*, seems to summarize his stance to life's disappointments later acknowledged by his daughter-in-law. How many people in a Japanese audience of the 1950s could have enjoyed Ozu's phonetic metaphors of [kraeking] syntagmatically combined by visual images is unfortunately another matter, because of the disparity between two languages. There appeared no [kraek] in Japanese *katakana* culture until the past few years.

Other cues of vertical paralleling lines are too dominant in *Tokyo Story*, as in *Eat Drink Man Woman*, to be metaphorically or even thematically analyzed with completion. The vertical stripes on Shige's *obi*, bristling chimneys, electric poles and newly constructed buildings in Tokyo, wooden grave markers, pillars, railroad track lines, all seem to expose the horizontal lines concentratedly displayed on the curtain and window of Noriko's room, and the harbor landscape in Onomichi. Indeed they could be most convincingly attributed to Ozu's obsession with balance and fear of its impossibility, with psychology and allegory at stake.<sup>12</sup> One cannot resist endeavoring some allegorical reading, however, against Thompson and Bordwell's assertion that Ozu is too playful and ambiguous to allow us to assign such order and reason to his texts.<sup>13</sup> The implication of

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<sup>10</sup> Gristein, 1983, 120.

<sup>11</sup> Bordwell, 88.

<sup>12</sup> Richie, 1978, 190.

<sup>13</sup> *Screen* 1976, 42, 45, 65, 70.

acceptance and trust often attributed to the horizontal lines by critics might be rightfully grasped in the context of the concerns and desires of family members which parallel and can rarely be unanimously harmonized.<sup>14</sup>

In a round table in Chu's dining room, positioned against a wall screen decoratively windowed with a big round hole, can be found Lee's affinity for Ozu's obsession with the circle and, when viewed by the camera through grated glass, with the encircled crisscross demonstrated in *Tokyo Story*. The rhythmic distancing and approaching of Chu and Jia-Chien repeated across the round table suggests without a doubt, some sexual innuendo. A female viewer's question is, What about her?<sup>15</sup> The meals she cooks satisfies physical desire of her boyfriend as well as her father but, in effect, leaves her barren. The two parallel sequences of a tea room where, across the square table, she passively and reticently accepts self-centered logic of her boyfriends might especially justify the interpretative reading, in terms of configurations employed as a narrative device. A round dining table patterns family dynamics and a square tea table is a good measure to identify her extra-familial love. In either instance, it is significant that she is not orally satisfied. She appreciates neither tea nor soup.

The prologue of *Eat Drink Man Woman* strikes a viewer with its dynamic stream of cars dashing straight toward a viewer, which is rhymed three times with the crowd of cars moving horizontally. Of these traffic shots, the three without any important characters are crucial to the cinematic art as much as the three corresponding shots of ships and trains in *Tokyo Story* traveling horizontally or vertically in the parents' town. In *Tokyo Story*, what Burch called «a pillow shot» either enforces «the nostalgia or sense of life's transience»<sup>16</sup> or punctuates some narrative sequences which Ozu borrowed from the technique of late Meiji Period fiction, as Bordwell explicates.<sup>17</sup> The train route which had invited the mother's death later carries away Noriko, accentuating his loss of the two women. The shots of a train have a strong diegetic connection to the characters. But travel from Onomichi could do, I suggest, without a ship. Hence, the Western critic like Schrader interprets the coda of the ship shot as «a positive statement on the unity of man and nature but also a wry commentary on the lack of it».<sup>18</sup> Possibly disoriented by his own attempt to insert the space shot into the main stream of the narrative, he identifies it with «the larger context of *furyu* which affects and encompasses everything».<sup>19</sup> Bordwell is at a loss whether the shot should be located within the father's perspective or rhyme with the prologue.<sup>20</sup>

In the last ship shot, in particular, a viewer notices a ship, sailing along to follow the wake of the other ship from left to right, changes its direction halfway to face a viewer. To the shift some critics will be tempted to attribute either a sentimental, nostalgic, or theoretical symbol of separateness. However, to draw our attention to the integrated lines and angles in the space, instead, the following shots in *Late Spring* are quite pertinent. Noriko's aunt walks toward a viewer looking in full face and switches her direction 90 degree to her left. This occurs in the room which has been deserted by her niece in traditional bridal costume. The aunt's unexpected appearance is inexplicable unless she comes to make sure nothing essential is left. But she doesn't behave so; instead, she stares silently at us. A change of direction is also noteworthy in the previous sequence

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<sup>14</sup> Willis' comment on «an acceptance of our inability to accept» represented in the last harbor shot of *Tokyo Story* adds another dimension to what I state here: *Sight and Sound* 1978-79, 45.

<sup>15</sup> A search for feminine identity should not necessarily be acknowledged as belonging to woman alone. More theoretical exploration is attained in Doane's writing in *Contemporary Film Theory*, 1993.

<sup>16</sup> Geist, *Film Q*, 1983, 5. See also *Film Criticism*, 1983, 53 for Bock and *Film Criticism*, 1980, 35-56 for Kornshak. Burch borrowed «*makura*» from the Japanese conventional poetic epithet «*makura kotoba*» as a metaphor for a shot lying outside the main narrative flow. Kornshak argues the terminology implies only the causal chain has its value.

<sup>17</sup> Bordwell, 153.

<sup>18</sup> Schrader, 44.

<sup>19</sup> Schrader, 36.

<sup>20</sup> Bordwell, 332.

of Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine the aunt visits in Kamakura with Noriko's father to pray for Noriko's marital good luck. Here, a policeman with his back on us keeps walking the center of the film frame straight ahead before he turns squarely left, possibly looking for the purse the aunt has picked up as a good omen.

The ship in *Tokyo Story* and the aunt in *Late Spring* alike achieve an effect of reaching out to a viewer. Both beckon us to organize the shots for some reflections, strengthening the sense of different directions. The back of the aunt climbing up the stone steps of horizontal lines, a remnant of the Odessa Steps sequence in Eisenstein's *Battle Ship Potemkin*, also constitutes the lineal intersection, though the effect of subject-object interaction is rendered weaker than when she faces us. To follow this reasoning, then, a viewer's involvement might be initiated by Lee's prologue with more impact and no less readiness than by Ozu's epilogue in *Tokyo Story*. The notion of balance and dissection is concurrently suggested by the painted checks on the road which the dashing cars thread. After all, the much argued empty shot of Ozu is rightfully interpreted as to tempt us to meditate the meaning of the transitional stage in a family life. Kornshak also favors the concept of «intersection» and «transition» on this account. Possibly he is heavily affected by what is signified by the intersection in Antonioni's *L'eclisse* he adopts to compare with Ozu's device. He considers the spaces devoid of humans in general figure, in semiotic terms, «a vacuum». The void of signified expects us to fill with our own signified.<sup>21</sup> His concern does not lie in the concept of lineal balance as much as mine does.

A closer examination of Lee's manipulation of the parallel shots of the flow of cars, nevertheless, might offer another clue to the riddle of Ozu's ship shot. Lee's use of empty shots, I think, is somewhat closer than Ozu's to Antonioni's. Important narrative events have occurred at and around Antonioni's intersection. The space here is used to focus our reflection at least for seven consecutive minutes on the heroine's transition and change in love life. Lee's is slotted into four shots two of which denoting the intersection. His concern with the car as an icon should be worth special noticing: a mixture of flux of time, youth, and masculinity. Speed is a definite emblem of youth and masculinity as indicated in two suitors' courting on motor cycles, whereas the aged and the pregnant use taxis and buses. The individual cars, the motor cycles and the bus Chu's family uses flow into confluence, with the semblance of a river, ready to be associated with the streaming items in *Tokyo Story*.

A series of plane shots, slotted in *Casablanca*, can also furnish some insight into Lee's use of Ozu's device. People in *Casablanca*, including the young couple from Bulgaria, look up at the plane with adoration, for a visa is hardly obtainable. But the plane brings in Major Strasser, a symbol of oppression and evil, and later Ilsa and Laszlo, the underground fighter. Rick's cafe offers an intersection of these ideologies, loves, desires and jealousies. Outside the cafe, for good reason, Rick's nostalgia for New York is perceptively spoken for by Captain Renault, as the plane buzzes over the cafe. And finally, narrowly escaping from the Major's pursuit, the plane displays its 360 degree spectacle during its circular «driving», before it takes off. Unlike Ozu's ship, the plane reveals its close-up face toward us at every appearance, as if it demands to absorb our spirit out into the narrative dimension it plans to explore. *Tokyo Story* and *Eat Drink Man Woman* in identical fashion invite us to project our own life in search of balance onto the empty shots. *Casablanca* eliminates this with meddling eloquence of the narrator and the characters. *Casablanca* «moves – crisply, professionally, expertly – from beginning to end with hardly a pause that would allow the audience time to reflect on the action».<sup>22</sup> This strain, I think, is relaxed by the insertion of the empty and reticent traffic shots in Lee and Ozu.

Especially Ozu's may look boring to some spectator; he keeps in his epilogue two steam boats downgraded from Curtiz's huge ship, sailing across the Mediterranean, which is promptly taken over by train or auto or foot as the refugees' trail on the map shifts from Europe to the rim of Africa. It is likely that Ozu learned from *Casablanca* (1942) much more than this. His signifiers I

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<sup>21</sup> Kornshak, 35-36.

<sup>22</sup> Siegel, 1992, 97.

have discussed in regard to the configurations in Tokyo Story resemble those of x superpositioned on + in *Casablanca*. The flower on Rick's collar, the door, and the back of the chair subtly certify Rick is the man of destiny, when the viewer realizes they all signpost the challenging path to the intricate double cross on the expectations of the viewer as well as the characters. The murderous rescue scenes display the wheel and the propeller rotating, which are iconographically identical to those signals suggestive of Rick's longing for flight. The parallel shot of shooting has come full circle, like a wheel, from the beginning of the story, driving Rick to confront the German officer. This may help understanding the mystifying icon of a tire set in Noriko's office. This can be read in the same filmic language as Curtiz's, which Ozu seems to take on in an attempt to be clear about Noriko's literal and metaphorical trip from Onomichi (past) back to Tokyo (future) to mitigate life's disappointment.<sup>23</sup> Ozu could not afford to make the signifieds of the traffic shots and the criss cross within the circle as loud as those in the Hollywood war romance, I suspect, because of the limited human dynamics and suppressed emotions he dealt with. Destiny was of course not as actively at play with human hand in the postwar Japanese society as in wartime French Morocco.

In the compulsive framing of the father in the larger frame of prologue and epilogue, Ozu's rigor is also seen at work. This reflects the orientation of his calm, obstinate acceptance of life's disappointment. Lee, on the other hand, chooses to leave the potentiality of both Chu and Jia-Chien open beyond the text, imitating the way Rick and Renault are allowed to walk off shoulder to shoulder after the plane carries away Ilsa and Laszlo to the country of freedom. The decoding of Chu in a striped apron, otherwise a metonym of mother and wife, is delayed until the last shot. Without delay, the father adroitly transforms himself from hen to rooster to be constructively incorporated into life in motion in the latest spring, which Rick, an outlaw, gives away to his rival. The stream of cars serves both the contemporary poetic rhythm of mood and, concurrently with table shots, involve Chu and his family into a narrative flow. Motion is associated with liberation. The third contribution would not have been realized without the combined legacy from Ozu and Curtiz. In other words, swift and strong orientation is operated on us by transmitting the first plane shot of Curtiz to his prologue endowed with the function of Ozu's empty shot, just another example of Lee's postmodernic manipulation.

Lee, like other postmodernists, succeeds in both subtle and obvious attempts at conveying a theme of disparity: the cracking of thunder, crab shells, chicken bones; a split in a curtain and a gate, and the cracking up of Mrs. Ryan. The cuts in meats and vegetables are too aesthetically disguised into an appetite for life to allow a viewer to notice Lee's plot. In fact, the check patterned on the street with white paint, the window viewing of the family around the table, the businessman's jacket and Chu's girlfriend's suit, and even the string over a cooked tortoise mark the punning maneuver. One time it signifies sectioned wholeness of the family body and at other times, repression or simply a foil for stripes. The sexy career woman, Jia-Chien, is caricatured for her blind tackle with the secular affairs. The effect of the framing reprise of her standing as a nurturer of the father is to introduce, thus, a measure of irony into an otherwise pleasant moment of reconciliation and redemption. The camouflaged unity again fits into the motif of dissemblance and misreading of minds. The counterposition of two men in *Casablanca*, in this light, also should be remembered to suggest, as Ray notes, the «darker side of an essentially optimistic belief».<sup>24</sup>

We can grant Thompson and Bordwell that Ozu's work «permits space to contest the primacy of the cause-effect chain».<sup>25</sup> Truly, the attempt at a plural reading of Ozu's space will be immediately

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<sup>23</sup> None of Ozu's critics including Richie and Bordwell has ever associated these two works. I want to point out to prove my statement that Howard Koch, one of the writers of *Casablanca*, was led to his first Hollywood credit by his writing for Welles's Mercury Theater, «The War of the Worlds». In *Late Spring*, too, I find the vase against the leafy shadows as descending from the vase and its shadow in Rick's office. Ilsa's duality is more perplexing than Noriko's, which are exemplified in her smiling and sober looks.

<sup>24</sup> Ray, 1985, 112.

<sup>25</sup> *Screen* 1976, 73.

led to a standstill, particularly without resorting to the suggestions from Lee's remake of Hollywood tradition. Lee proclaimed he respected Ozu. Lee's play with space tempts a viewer to trust what he said about Ozu. And yet this does not help with a viewer's grasp of semiotic complexity, for Lee dramatizes a certain cynicism in his counterpart to Ozu's father figure, who in turn evolves to embody conservative view of happiness in marriage, the same kind as forced upon dubious Noriko by her father.

The distractive tendency of auditory effects is also responsible for our sense of disorientedness. The hearing of cheerful dancing music in the beginning cooking sequence, with which Chu seems intoxicated, is deceiving, since what is signified to a viewer does not remain tasteful but tart. The silence Chu strenuously keeps in the matter of his love is almost a myth, balanced with overstated polyphonemic effects of clucking, chopping, frying, steaming, and roasting. The gap between aural and visual cues concealed in the meats and vegetables cracked with kitchen weapons and in contradictory verbalizations of many characters is comprehensible, in retrospect, as long as it does not compete with the leitmotif of dissonance. Or, is Lee seriously challenging the notorious use of the sweet popular song ending *Tokyo Story*, to accredit it to the schizophrenic monotony of modern life?

It should be emphasized that reticence has deep sexual implications with Jia-Chien, too. The silence she keeps in the end shot indicates neither consent to nor empathy with the father's blessing. Non-feminist critics might also be aware that Lee's homophonic unity of audio-visual symptoms of disparity helps to administer a Chaucerian farce not only on the obviously abused Mrs. Ryan but also on Jia-Chien. Thus, in the dubbed celestial music one could detect two unbalanced tones, while *mono-no-aware* is evoked all the more poignantly around the sharing and yielding female figure, rather than a father figure. To be sure, the mended father-daughter bonding is transitory and uneven. Hence, all is not well that seems to end well.

If anything, the postmodern director, Lee prefers Curtiz's ending to Ozu's, so that a viewer's desire for wish fulfillment imposed on a figure with whom he/she identifies in his/her fantasy scenario is not totally betrayed.<sup>26</sup> Lee's critical reflections of Ozu and Curtiz are subtly interwoven to be textualized in parodic references to the narrative and the form of *Tokyo Story* and *Late Spring*, as well as *Casablanca*. Both Ozu and Lee in developing the family dynamics take over the very life stage, where Curtiz ends the text retaining the implication of a new start. The film of political propaganda required the patriotic anti-hero Rick to make a sacrificial dedication to the happy escape of the two couples, once bargaining with money and the other time with life. The two Asian directors twist the political strategy of cheating and misunderstanding which threads the wartime love story to fit with the family context, imposing Rick's ambivalent goodness on the father figure. The result diverges two ways: either to resort to or to reduce tragic import, without ruining the poetic appeal to life's transience.

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Lee might have concluded «isolation is no longer a practical policy» to live with in the post-modern society. Ozu's solitary father is thus accompanied by Chu's daughter. Curtiz's crack of a piano where the letter of transit is hidden develops into the visual and acoustic signals of the middle class culture in Taiwan. Both Ozu's and Curtiz's signifieds are transtextualized into the traffic and table shots. Moreover, some gist of bitter comedy is shared with *Casablanca*. Jia-Chien's psychosexual orientation is unique, though, tinged with intense satire which pervades the

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<sup>26</sup> A spectator sometimes likes to switch identifications with one character to the other on screen as is discussed by Lapsley and Westlake in *Contemporary Film Theory*.

screen as the title *Eat Drink Man Woman* points to that entertainment. In *Eat Drink Man Woman* the reticence of *Tokyo Story* is retained within measure despite its impactful overtone of the auto shots which are remade from the plane shots in *Casablanca*. Both *Eat Drink Man Woman* and *Tokyo Story*, I think, can rightfully claim to be included in the list of the sequels of *Casablanca* starting with *To Have and Have Not* (1945) and continued by *Key Largo* (1948), *Play It, Sam* (1972), *Tequila Sunrise* (1988), and *Havana* (1990).

The avowed advantage Lee takes of his bicultural backgrounds is not debatable, especially when one thinks of Ozu who could not find the way to dilute his *tofu* culture in which his cinematic text is immersed.<sup>27</sup> For many reasons, Ozu avoided engaging heavily in the psychological premise of sex. Freudian/Lacanian psychoanalysis, feminism, the reader response and history seem to offer some perceptions of a postmodern film to signify the void with, which was left by Ozu.

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<sup>27</sup> It is well known that Ozu asked his actors to suppress emotions in looking and behaving. In *Tokyo Story* no panning is adopted. Simple cuts are accumulated into its unique rhythm. In defense of his controversial persistence with these techniques and the repeated motifs of a broken family, he often said that he would abide by *tofu* making. The metaphorical remark suggests his virtuosity of simplicity, which I attribute to Japanese classical culture. A *tofu* will afford whatever rich involvements a spectator or a succeeding director may make, since its simple form and taste is compatible with them, often helping them stand out.

# Fascism, the leader and the masses: Mussolini's autobiography

CARLOTTA VON MALTZAN (\*)

Italian fascism was the first movement to pride itself on constructing a totalitarian state, *uno stato totalitario*. It is to that movement that we owe the invention of a formula that was to be echoed, some years later, in Germany, that of the *totale Staat*. While Italian Fascism might be called a totalitarian movement it did not parallel the totalitarian state structure of Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union as Hannah Arendt has argued. What Italian fascism however did share with both of them was the cult of the leader and the total control this leader exercised over the masses. This cult is echoed in the title that all three leaders assumed for themselves: Hitler called himself *Führer*, Stalin titled himself from the 1930s onwards as *Vozhd*, while Mussolini became known as the *Duce*.

On 24 April 1995 Umberto Eco delivered a lecture at Columbia University on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Europe from National Socialism in which he puts forth his ideas on what he calls Ur-Fascism. With regard to the function of the leader he postulates that the fascist leader «knowing that his power was not delegated to him democratically but was conquered by force, also knows that his force is based upon the weakness of the masses; they are so weak as to need and deserve a ruler». (Eco 1995:15) According to Eco in Ur-Fascism individuals as individuals have no rights whereas the people – *das Volk* – is regarded as a monolithic unit which expresses the will of all. Since a mass however is incapable of owning a common will, the leader presents himself as interpreter of this will. Because the people have lost their delegating powers, the citizens do not act anymore. Instead they are only called upon to enact the role of the people. For that reason, Eco concludes, the people as a people – *as Volk* – are nothing more than a theatrical fiction.

What will concern me in this paper is not so much the enactment of the role of the people but rather the enactment of the role of the leader vis-à-vis the people – a relation governed by power. For this I will refer to Mussolini's autobiography which he completed in 1928 at the age of 45 after having been in power for six years. The following questions will guide my analysis: How does Mussolini construct his self in order to fulfill what he perceives to be the function of a leader? What is

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therefore the leader in relation to the masses? What is the relation of power between the leader and the mass? How is it enacted? What has made him a leader?

Umberto Eco's assumption that weak masses need and deserve a leader is not new. Probably one of the first to advocate the hypothesis that the ruler uses masochistic tendencies of the people for his own advantage was Etienne de la Boétie who around 1550 published an essay entitled *Discours de la servitude volontaire (Discourse on Voluntary Servitude)*. On the relation of power between the leader and the masses he writes:

He who thus domineers over you has only two eyes, only two hands, only one body, no more than is possessed by the least man among indefinite numbers dwelling in your cities; he has indeed nothing more than the power that you confer upon him to destroy you. Where has he acquired enough eyes to spy upon you, if you do not provide them yourselves? How can he have so many arms to beat you with, if he does not borrow them from you? The feet that trample down your cities, where does he get them if they are not your own? How does he have any power over you except through you? (de la Boétie in Borch-Jacobsen 1989:153)

What de la Boétie implies, in fact presupposes, is a consciousness on the side of the subject that he is subjected and even more so that the one who subjects him is in no way different from the one who is subjected. It also presupposes a heterogeneity among the masses in the sense that Bataille outlined, one which would allow them to shift the centre of power from the one heading the state to the masses themselves. However, Italian Fascism functioned in such a way that this heterogeneity only existed in the leader who immediately stands out as something other, outside of the masses, above them, yet connected to them like the head to a body. The leader acts and thinks on behalf of the masses, he directs, governs, and exercises total control over all the affairs of the masses. But how does he do this, and how does he present himself in order to achieve this total control?

Towards the end of his autobiography Mussolini unequivocally states what he perceives the power of the fascist state to be. «Today the State is not an abstract and agnostic entity; the Government is present everywhere, every day. Who lives in the ambit of the State, or outside the State, lives and feels in every way the majesty of the law».<sup>1</sup> In a document entitled *Fascism. Doctrine and Institutions* published 7 years later in 1935 Mussolini clarifies his notion of the Fascist state: «The Fascist conception of the state is all-embracing; outside of it no human or spiritual values can exist, much less have value. [...] Fascism, is totalitarian, and the Fascist State – a synthesis and a unit inclusive of all values – interprets, develops, and potentiates the whole life of a people.» (Mussolini, 1935:11) This conception however does not necessarily imply, as Bataille (1993:155) has pointed out, an identity of the State and the imperative force that dominates the whole of society. In fact, Mussolini did not stop to mention and stress a distinct principle of sovereignty that he alternatively designates as the *people*, the *nation* and the *higher personality*. Yet the principle of sovereignty is the same as the Fascist formation and, more particularly, its leader as evinced by Mussolini:

Fascism is [...] an idea [...] the most coherent, the truest, expressing itself in a people as the conscience and will of the few, if not, indeed, of one, and ending to express itself in the conscience and the will of the mass [...] into a nation, advancing, as one conscience and one will, along the self-same line of development and spiritual formation. Not a race, nor a geographically defined region, but a people, historically perpetuating itself; a multitude unified by an idea and imbued with the will to live, the will to power, self-consciousness, personality. In so far as it is embodied in a State, this higher personality becomes a nation. It is not the nation which generates the State. [...] Rather it is the State which creates the nation, conferring volition and therefore real life on a people made aware of their moral unity. (Mussolini 1935:11-2)

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<sup>1</sup> Mussolini, undated: 239. In the following all quotations indicated by the use of parenthesis in the text refer to this edition.

Despite the obscurity of this statement, Mussolini leaves no doubt as to the referent of the term «personality». As Bataille (1993:155) has argued «the term *personality* must be understood as *individualization*, a process leading to Mussolini himself, and [...] it must be understood that he has: 1) substituted the principle of the sovereignty of the individualized fascist formation for the old democratic principle of the sovereignty of the nation; 2) laid the groundwork for a conclusive interpretation of the sovereign agency and the State». The process that Mussolini thus outlines is one that always leads back to Mussolini himself: the idea of Fascism is the conscience and the will of one individual expressing itself in the conscience and will of the masses.

That Mussolini however did not derive his power from his official function in the State like prime ministers, for example, rather from the existence of a Fascist party and from his personal position as the head of that party was abundantly clear to him. In his autobiography he answers the question why he did not disband the Fascist Party after his assumption of power. The reason he gives is: «Because of my personal situation, in having created the party, I always dominated it. [...] This consciousness of my incontestable domination has given me the ability to make the Party live on.» (240) The reason that this should be important becomes clear a few paragraphs further on: «The Fascisti, the young particularly, had followed me with blind, absolute, and profound devotion.» (241) It is thus not the «sentimental motif» (241) that spurred him to retain the party, rather its usefulness for ensuring and maintaining Fascism as a State or governmental structure through the entire and blind devotion of the party's members. In his own words: «The Fascist Party, while remaining independent, is bound by ties of steel to the very essence of the new Fascist State.» (245)

Still the question remains: How does Mussolini manage to (re)present himself as the rightful and uncontested leader not only of the Fascist Party but also of all Italian people? What is it that bonds him to the people and what bonds the people to him? According to Mussolini it is a natural bond, and his position is a natural position. Nature serves to enhance this position because it destined him to be the ultimate leader of all Italians. This he states in the beginning of his autobiography when he claims that it was destiny that led him on the path to greatness. «Slowly but fatally I was turning my spirit and my mind to new political ideals destined to flower for a time.» (21) Similarly Mussolini consolidates this image at the end of his autobiography by voicing a vision for today and for the infinite future:

Air and light, strength and energy, shine and vibrate in the infinite sky of Italy! A most lofty civil and National vision leads today to its goal this people, which lives in its great new springtime. [...] I, like the most devoted of citizens, place upon myself and on every beat of my heart service to the Italian people. I proclaim myself their servant. (251-252)

Who else does Mussolini portray himself as but the father, who guides his sons because as he puts it with regard to the masses: «I value them, I launch them, I guide them» (251). The Duce is the father, and a father is a duce. With this conviction Mussolini can claim «My psychology was the Italian Psychology». (34) This claim logically leads to Mussolini's presentation of himself which could be formulated as «I am Italy» as well as the corollary «Italy is I». It is thus not surprising that Mussolini also believes:

It is a general conviction that good or bad friends can decisively alter the course of a personality. Perhaps it may be true for those fundamentally weak in spirit whose rudders are always in the hands of the steersmen. During my life, I believe, neither my school friends, my war friends, nor my political friends ever had the slightest influence upon me. [...] I am sure that whenever I took an extreme decision I have obeyed only the firm commandment of will and conscience which came from within. [...] I spoke and thought and conceived of the whole Italian life taken as a synthesis – as an expression of a whole people. (29/30)

The totalitarian project which Mussolini outlines therefore presupposes a conception of a society sufficient unto itself and, since this society is defined as power, the conception of a power which is sufficient unto itself. As Claude Lefort has put it:

The action and knowledge of the leader are measured only by the criterion of *organization*, when the cohesion or integrity of the social body turns out to depend exclusively on the action and knowledge of the leader. [...] The process of identification between power and society, [...] the process of enclosing both society and power are linked together to constitute the totalitarian system. With the constitution of this system the representation of a «natural» order is reestablished, but this order is supposed to be social-rational and does not tolerate apparent divisions or hierarchies. (Lefort, 1986:286)

The «natural» position that Mussolini thus occupies as leader is confirmed by the «natural» order and vice versa.

This «natural» order requires a number of representations which make up its ideological matrix. The first one is the image of the People-as-One. This image is combined with that of a Power-as-One, power concentrated within the limits of the fascist formation and, ultimately, in an individual, that is the Duce who embodies the unity and will of the people. This relation is only too clearly symbolised in the emblem of the Italian Fascist Party: the *fasci*. The image of the People-as-One and the image of a Power-as-One stem from the same phantasy and imply a further dynamic: The People-as-One can be represented *and* affirmed only by a great Other, the leader. In order for this image to cohere it also needs its counterpart; and this complementarity is certainly neither secondary nor less important to the representation of the People-as-One. This second image is the enemy of the people since only the image of the enemy allows for the identity of the people. That means that anyone alien to the people threatens their cohesion and must be eliminated.<sup>2</sup> This syllogism Mussolini reiterates throughout his autobiography. I give just one example, which is particularly revealing as it refers to dissident members of the Fascist Party and not just outsiders: «Every disturber is an enemy even if he carries in his pocket the identification card of the Party.» (241)

The creation and representation of the image of an enemy is absolutely necessary, no matter whether this enemy is real or imagined or whether this enemy is an inside disturber of the organisation or an outside force. It is necessary in order to conceal a fundamental contradiction that haunts the leader of a totalitarian society and thus Mussolini. Based on the representation of the People-as-One he is on the one hand merged with the people, the party, he is incorporated in it, dissolved *qua* individual in a Fascist or Italian «us»; on the other hand he occupies the position of the master, he who sees and names everything, who functions as the mobiliser of the masses. This division, the division between leader and masses, is denied by the incessant production of enemies. The production of enemies in a totalitarian state thus denies an internal division between the leader and the masses and repositions that division to one between inside and outside. This same production of an enemy is complemented by an image of the leader as father. This of course reveals a paradox. In Mussolini's autobiography the image of the Fascist State and of his own role as leader is split out. The representation of the People-as-One requires the exclusion of the malevolent or evil Other, the incessant production of an enemy. Simultaneously the cohesion of the People-as-One breaks down into the whole and a part that stands for the whole, thereby paradoxically reintroducing the figure of the other, namely the omniscient, omnipotent, benevolent, good Other: the father, the leader, the Duce, Mussolini.

How is it, that this paradox does not crumble and that this image obtains through its perpetuation? In 1921 Freud published an essay entitled *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*

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<sup>2</sup> Also compare Eco who states: «The only ones who can provide an identity to the nation are its enemies. Thus at the root of the Ur-Fascist psychology there is the *obsession with a plot*, possibly an international one.» (Eco, 1995:14)

in which he examines the psychological structure of masses and their relation to their leader. This essay is commonly taken as the basis for understanding fascism.<sup>3</sup>

The central, essentially political thesis of Freud's essay is: The cohesion of the *Masse*, the group, that is society, is established through the love of all its members for the *Führer*, the leader who takes the place of their ego ideal. Thus society is necessarily structured according to a politico-familial model in that the leader functions as a *Vaterersatz*, a father substitute. The starting point of Freud's essay is an examination of Gustave le Bon's *Psychologie des foules* (*The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*). In his study of *The Crowd* Le Bon maintains that the *Masse*, the crowd, «respects force and can only be slightly influenced by kindness, which it regards merely as a form of weakness. What it demands of its heroes is strength, or even violence. It wants to be ruled and oppressed and to fear its masters» (Le Bon in Freud, 1991:105). Le Bon also argues that groups «never thirsted after truth. They demand illusions, and cannot do without them. They constantly give what is unreal precedence over what is real; they are almost as strongly influenced by what is untrue as by what is true» (Le Bon in Freud, 1991:107). Mussolini indeed saw the bond between himself and the people as a bond of love, one could say familial love. He seems to echo Le Bon when he writes: «I feel that all Italians love me. I know that only he is loved who leads without weaknesses, without deviation, and with disinterest and full faith.» (252) The leader thus extorts submission by extorting love, by dispensing the «illusion» that he loves all members of the group equally.<sup>4</sup> What Le Bon thus has to say sounds like the theoretical model for Mussolini's speeches and particularly for his belief, that it is only through exhibiting strength that he can gain the love, the support and ultimately the submission of the masses.<sup>5</sup> It is therefore not surprising to find such congruence between Mussolini's presentation of himself as leader and his relation to the masses and Freud's central thesis.

Although Freud largely agrees with Le Bon's analysis of the masses he feels dissatisfied with Le Bon's analysis of the function of the leader. In the first part of *Group Psychology* Freud demonstrates that the first social bond or *Bindung* that binds the masses together is their love for the leader. The second *Bindung* is the one that links group members among themselves. It follows automatically from the first, inasmuch as the lack of freedom of the individuals bound to the leader produces among them a relation of equality and by the same token, of fraternity. The organisation of the group thus reproduces that of the family. The members of the group are like brothers vis-à-vis the father. Freud demonstrates this by referring to two artificial crowds: the Church and the Army. With regard to the army he says: «The Commander-in-Chief is a father who loves all soldiers equally, and for that reason they are comrades among themselves.» (Freud, 1985:123) Without the bond with the leader/father, members of the group would not be bound to one another. For when the army or for that matter any mass loses its leader, panic strikes. As long as the leader is present, the soldiers or the members of a crowd are capable of confronting the greatest dangers, even sacrificing their lives. This is proof for Freud that it is not the interest of the ego – or self-preservation – that leads the crowds, but libido. In other words, the suppression of the bond with the leader would immediately bring about a dissolution of the crowd: «The loss of the leader

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<sup>3</sup> Compare for example Georges Bataille's footnote Nr 11 where he writes: «[...] that work, published in German in 1921, appears as an essential introduction of the understanding of fascism» (Bataille, 1993:160).

<sup>4</sup> see Freud (1985: 156): «[...] the members of a group stand in need of the illusion that they are equally and justly loved by their leader.»

<sup>5</sup> The kinship between Le Bon's writing and Mussolini's presentation of himself has already been noted by Hannah Arendt in *Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft* (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*). She quotes Le Bon as one of the ideological references of fascism: «Die eigentümliche Selbstlosigkeit der Massen war bereits Gustave Lebon aufgefallen, siehe La Psychologie des Foules, 1895, Zweites Kapitel.» (Arendt, 1975: 46) Mikkel Borch-Jacobson confirms that «the Fascist ideologues beginning with Hitler and Mussolini, were well acquainted with the theses popularized by Le Bon, and applied them explicitly, so that it is not an exaggeration to say that *The Crowd* finds its political enactment in Fascism» (Borch-Jacobson, 1988: 270).

in some sense or other, the birth of misgivings about him, brings the outbreak of panic, though the danger remains the same; the mutual ties between the members of the group disappear, as a rule, at the same time as the tie with the leader.» (Freud, 1985:127) Mussolini was aware of this dynamic:

I had an effect on my soldiers which seemed to me almost mystical. The boys saw in me the avenger of our wronged Italy. The dying said, «Give us our black shirts for winding-sheets». I could not remain unmoved when I knew that their last thoughts were of «Our native land and the Duce». [...] They accepted my authority voluntarily and completely. [...] «They were looking to me as at a chief whose place could not be substituted and whose word was law». (108)

In his autobiography Mussolini also contemplates what would happen if he would release some of the control over the Fascist Party. He comes to the conclusion that the «Party could not have existed and lived, and could not be triumphant, except under my command, my guidance, my support, and my spurs» (122).

The reason why the Fascist Party and by extension the Fascist State would dissolve without Mussolini as its leader can again be explained with Freud. The cohesion of the group is only ensured because of the identification of the group members with one another. They identify with one another by virtue of their common love for the *Führer*, the Duce. Freud says, they «have put one and the same object [the leader] in the place of their ego ideal and have consequently identified themselves with one another in their ego» (Freud, 1985:147)<sup>6</sup> To which extremes such a replacement of the ego ideal with the object and the resultant identification with the leader can lead may be demonstrated when Mussolini recounts the death of one of his young followers: «This fine boy died after two days of agony. With the pain of the wound and at the point of death he wanted to have always near him my photograph. He declared himself glad and proud to die and that from me he knew how to die.» (109)

Mussolini's autobiography can thus be read as an enactment of the role of the leader. In all instances Mussolini is highly aware of the effect that his person creates. It is only through the presentation of himself as the ultimate dominator – who while being like a head to the body is also part of the whole – he is able to build and maintain his power. Finally, one question remains. Where does the leader come from? Or, to put it differently: How does Mussolini manage to establish himself as the leader? And how does he relate to himself as leader?

In *Group Psychology* Freud postulates that the masses as we find them today are a revival of the primal horde: «Just as primitive man survives potentially in every individual, so the primal horde may arise once more out of any collection.» (Freud, 1985:155) The relation between the primal horde and its leader Freud describes as follows:

The members of the group were subject to ties just as we see them to-day, but the father of the primal horde was free. His intellectual acts were strong and independent even in isolation, and his will needed no reinforcement from others. [...] he loved no one but himself, or other people only in so far as they served his needs. To objects his ego gave away no more than was barely necessary. [...] the leader himself need love no one else, he may be of a masterful nature, absolutely narcissistic, self-confident and independent. (Freud, 1985:155-156)

What we find ourselves with, then, is a myth. It tells us that at the origin there was an Ego, a Father, a leader, not bound in any attachment. His place was unique. Although the group banded

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<sup>6</sup> For the Father occupies the place of the Oedipal object. The identificatory bonds are not in themselves libidinal, but they depend on the libidinal object bond: just as the little Oedipus identifies with his father *because* he wants to possess the mother, so the members of the group identify themselves *because* they love the leader.

together to kill the father, succession to the place of the Father, the leader was impossible:

None of the group of victors could take his place, or, if one of them did, the battles began afresh, until they understood that they must all renounce their father's heritage. They then formed the totemic community of brothers, all with equal rights and united by the totem prohibitions which were to preserve and to expiate the memory of the murder. (Freud, 1985:168)

The father's heritage was therefore untransmittable. For the usurper of the father's place would have to recognise that he no longer held absolute power or was an autonomous sovereign subject as there were a number of fathers and each one was limited by the rights of the others. Given this situation, Freud assumes that the first one able to free himself from the group and assume the father's place was the first epic poet, albeit his breakaway was achieved only in his imagination. He did so by inventing the heroic myth. «The hero was a man who by himself had slain the father - the father who still appeared in the myth as a totemic monster. Just as the father had been the boy's first ideal, so in the hero who aspires to the father's place the poet now created the first ego ideal.» (Freud, 1985:169) What the poet however invented was not an epos, rather a drama. The poet pretended to be recounting the exploits of another, but that other was «he». In his *Phantasie*, imagination, the poet identified with the Father, enacted, played the Father. He put himself in the role of the Father or, and this amounts to the same thing, he was putting himself in the place of the one who was putting himself in the role of the Father. He put himself, ego, in the place of his ideal. This phantasy or dream was completely egoistic.

The poet who [...] in this way set himself free from the group in his imagination, is nevertheless able [...] to find his way back to it in reality. For he goes and relates to the group his hero's deeds which he has invented. At bottom this hero is no one but himself. Thus he lowers himself to the level of reality, and raises his hearers to the level of imagination. But his hearers understand the poet, and, in virtue of their having the same relation of longing towards the primal father, they can identify themselves with the hero. (Freud, 1985:170)

The leader is thus born in myth, in phantasy. Mussolini's creation of himself as leader is an enactment of this myth. He generates his own narcissistic ideal. By giving himself to himself as his own model, he gave himself to himself: he imagined *himself*. He himself *was the other*, with whom he identified.<sup>7</sup> The difference between the epic poet and Mussolini is that he did not rely for the staging of the heroic myth on a theatre or epic audience but that he used Italy as his stage.

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<sup>7</sup> The phrasing here is inspired by observations made by Mikkel Borch-Jacobson, 1989: 239 who refers to the same passage in Freud and interprets it as the birth of the first subject in humanity.

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# Why Plato banished the artist: Some Jungian observations

MARIA KARDAUN (\*)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the second half of the fourteenth century, a few decades before the reintroduction of the complete text of the Platonic dialogue the *Republic* in Western Europe (in Latin), the Italian humanist and poet Giovanni Boccaccio in his defense of poets and poetry could still safely claim that, with his condemnation of poetry, Plato had intended only to expel some admittedly obnoxious comic poets, and that he certainly had not meant to banish great poets such as Homer or Hesiod from his ideal city.<sup>1</sup> However, when the first translation of the *Republic* appeared in 1402, it was found, as anyone could now read, that Plato's objections against poets and poetry were directed precisely against Homer and Hesiod.

The reavailability of the text of the *Republic* did not solve, then, the dissatisfaction that had been felt with Plato's views on literature. On the contrary, no less nowadays than in the fourteenth century, it is hard to accept that perhaps the greatest literary philosopher who has ever existed would order «Homer and the like» – that is to say any literary artist of value – to be excluded from his commonwealth. This is even stranger since Homer is often cited in the dialogues to demonstrate a philosophical point. Yet, banishing Homer and his colleagues is what Plato explicitly and repeatedly recommends, and there can be no doubt that he means it.

Apart from dissatisfactions from a psychological point of view, Platonic literary theory also presents some philosophical difficulties, but as I hope to show these are much less weighty than is generally assumed. In the second section of this paper I will argue that Plato's views on the function and the essence of art, including literature, form a coherent, interesting, and to my mind convincing theory that fits well with his overall philosophy.

In the third and final section some depth-psychological observations with regard to Platonism and (literary) art will be formulated, because, even though its philosophical coherence and relevance are much less problematic than is generally thought, Platonic art theory does have some characteristics that may be called eccentric and ask for additional, psychological explanation. Thus, I do not agree

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<sup>1</sup> Boccaccio, *De genealogia deorum* XIV, 19. To Plato's imputed reservations against only bad poets Boccaccio expresses warm sympathy: «indeed I think they ought to be not expelled, but exterminated».

with the general tendency of classical philologists to object to psychological explanations with regard to Plato and Platonism since these «will hardly satisfy anyone who is convinced of Plato's having a well-balanced personality».<sup>2</sup> To this typical remark many replies are possible, of which the most important is perhaps that depth-psychological explanations are not necessarily at variance with the value and the dignity of their object, be this a theory or a person. Secondly, at least from the common-sense point of view it cannot be denied that Platonic philosophy, including Platonic art theory, is somewhat unbalanced, not to say weird. While acknowledging that psychological explanations should of course never serve as an excuse to neglect accurate research of the Platonic philosophical system, I think it is worthwhile to shed some light on Platonism from the Jungian point of view. We will concentrate on the question why it is that Platonism turns so vehemently against dramatic poetry.

## 2. PLATONIC ART THEORY IN A NUTSHELL

In what follows only a brief account of Platonic art theory can be presented. As I mentioned before, I find this theory rather convincing, but this does not imply that I share Plato's opinion with regard to the desirability of art censorship. Two things may perhaps be distinguished, namely Plato's analysis of what art essentially is on the one hand – an analysis that is very constructive and worthwhile –, and the policy on art which Plato recommends on the other hand. Anyone with more or less democratic feelings will find this policy unacceptable.

The traditional reading of Plato's views on art is as follows. According to Plato – it is said – art, including literature, has a low ontological status. It is mere *mimesis*, «trivial imitation» that is. Being *mimesis*, art is at two removes from True Reality (the transcendent world of the eternal Forms), and therefore art is necessarily untrue and cannot but have a bad moral effect on its public.

One of the disadvantages of this reading is that it depicts Platonic art theory as rather naively inconsistent, since Plato certainly does not always talk unfavourably about art. On many occasions he makes it clear that works of art can be true and benefit society;<sup>3</sup> hence Plato's acknowledgement of the positive and important role which literature and music can play in education. Naturally we do not want to suppose that Plato would contradict himself to the extent of claiming on the one hand that art is necessarily untrue and bad for compelling ontological reasons, merely in virtue of being mimetic, and on the other that some pieces of art can nevertheless be true and worthwhile, in spite of their being mimetic.

The problem in the traditional reading is connected closely with a misunderstanding of the key term *mimesis*, as if this Greek word meant «imitation». But recent linguistic research has shown that in Platonic texts (as in ancient Greek literature in general) «mimesis» means not «imitation» but «representation».<sup>4</sup> Therefore, though it is true that in Platonism art is regarded as being essentially mimetic, it cannot be its mimetic quality in itself which makes some pieces of art mere imitation.

To understand Platonic art theory it is imperative to perceive Plato's sophisticated use of the concept of *mimesis* («representation»). In the *Republic* Plato tells us that all poetry is mimetic – meaning that the essence of literature consists in its representing something in a non-discursive,

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<sup>2</sup> Verdenius 1978, 268.

<sup>3</sup> «True» not in the sense that they faithfully copy concrete reality, but in the sense that they represent something of the eternal Forms. E.g. *muthoi* – «literary stories» – are always fictional, but this does not necessarily prevent them from being true in a higher sense: see *Rep.* II 377 ff, where Plato distinguishes between fiction which is true and fiction which is not, and where he suggests that *untrue* literary representations of the gods are to be rejected under any circumstances, whereas *true* representations may sometimes turn out to be acceptable.

<sup>4</sup> See Kardaun 1993.

immediate, picturelike way -,<sup>5</sup> but that we nonetheless have to distinguish between normal, storytelling poetry («*haplê diégêsis*»), which is simply mimetic, and mimetic poetry («*poiêsis mimêtikê*»), which is mimetic in a double sense. Storytelling poetry may occasionally represent the eternal Forms directly, but mimetic poetry never does; instead of representing the Forms themselves, mimetic poetry represents only copies of the Forms in an inessential way. In other words, it is at two removes from True Reality and therefore nothing but imitation.<sup>6</sup>

This last category, mimetic poetry, has to do with direct speech, or more generally with impersonation or acting. In practice, by «mimetic poetry» Plato seems to have in mind chiefly drama, both tragedy and comedy. Plato warns against drama, and wants to have it forbidden in his ideal state.

Let me try to explain how the Platonic system works by recourse to an example.<sup>7</sup> The doctrine of Forms is well known: there is only one paradigmatic Form «Virtue», but there are many concrete examples – or to use the technical term, instances – of Virtue, consisting in e.g. virtuous acts. According to Plato his much admired teacher Socrates is himself an instance of the eternal Form «Virtue». Now, if you are an artist, you may represent Socrates through a hymn, praising his virtuous qualities as they really are. In that case you are representing Virtue itself through its instance Socrates, and in that case Plato thinks your poem is true and acceptable, and probably even useful in society. But if you think you can allow yourself the liberty of representing Socrates on stage, with a beard and with individual idiosyncracies, then Plato considers your art to be at two removes from Reality, since in that case you are representing Socrates in an inessential way, namely in his lowest appearance and only insofar as he is *not* an instance of Virtue. Thus, your art does not represent the eternal Form «Virtue»; it is merely a poor imitation of one of the many instances of Virtue.

To recapitulate: all poetry is mimetic, but some poetic products are more mimetic than others. So-called «mimetic poetry» is at two removes from True Reality and is therefore categorically forbidden in Plato's ideal state. In practice, mimetic poetry is identified by Plato with drama and some parts of epic poems.

This seems understandable enough. However, to make things more complicated, even if artists happen to produce art that is at only one remove from True Reality, art that reveals Truth with a capital initial, even then these works must be strictly and severely censored in Plato's ideal state (mind: not categorically forbidden, but still put under severe restrictions). For instance, even if Hesiod's story about what Cronos did to his father Uranos were true, it would be something to keep concealed from the public.<sup>8</sup> For what reason?

This may be illustrated by a famous passage from the *Laws*. In this dialogue the Athenian philosopher, who leads the discussion and who is generally regarded to act as Plato's mouthpiece, informs us

«that when a poet takes his seat on the Muse's tripod, his judgment takes leave of him; like a fountain he allows to flow out freely whatever comes in, and his art being *mimesis*, he must often contradict his own utterances when representing men of opposite dispositions (...). But this should not be the case in a law; the legislator must give not two rules about the same thing, but one only.» (*Laws* 719 c1-d3, translation from A.E. Taylor, with some adaptations by MK.)

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<sup>5</sup> Note that pictures can be pictures in words. Cf. *Soph.* 234 c6, where Plato speaks of *eidôla legomena*, translated by L. M. de Rijk as «images in speech» (De Rijk 1986, 82).

<sup>6</sup> In most of the older readings of the *Republic* (Havelock, Diès, Verdenius, Else, and others) this distinction is neglected or misunderstood. As far as I can see W. K. C. Guthrie was the first to recognize the essential difference between artistic products that are at one remove from Reality, since they represent the Forms directly, and artistic products that are at two removes from Reality, since they only represent the concreta in their concrete ontic status (Guthrie 1975, 545-8). See also Kardaun 1993, 63-5.

<sup>7</sup> This example is constructed by analogy to *Soph.* 267 a5-e2, where Plato treats the difference between the true philosopher (*ho sophos*) and the would-be philosopher (*ho sophistês*). To appear wise, the latter performs an act: he misleadingly imitates the external behaviour of the former.

<sup>8</sup> *Rep.* II 378.

It has often been suggested that Plato simply had something against artists and that he is just being unpleasant towards them here, accusing them of inconsistency for no particular reason; but if you read this short passage in its context and keep in mind that *mimesis* means «representation», it makes perfect sense. The major part of the *Laws* is – unsurprisingly – about law-giving. Plato is explaining here what kind of laws the philosopher-legislator should edict. Well, the legislator should edict laws like a poet produces poems: laws should be plain and unambiguous, so that they cannot be misunderstood, whereas literary products apparently have puzzling qualities which according to Plato makes them unfit for uncensored distribution.

At first sight this may seem somewhat surprising, since it is obvious from the context of the *Laws* that we are dealing here with true poetry, poetry that is at only one remove from True Reality: according to Plato gods and goddesses are without deceit, so the Muse cannot but reveal Real Truth, and also we have here an artist who does not attempt to think all by himself, but who «like a fountain allows to flow out freely whatever comes in» – meaning: who does not spoil the divine gift of the Muse with uncalled-for changes or speculative additions of his own. In other words, the artist in question definitely passes the divine message on to society unaltered; his art being *mimesis*, he simply represents Truth as revealed to him by the Muse, and does not make selections or adjustments of any kind.<sup>9</sup>

Nonetheless, this kind of divine Truth-revealing has to be checked by a philosophical censor. This is not because the artistic product in the passage cited above is at two removes from Reality, since this is not the case, but because of a lack of proper receptiveness on the part of the public, of you and me, so to speak. In Plato's opinion society cannot cope with Truth. The one thing that Plato fears is that the divine Truth will be profaned by vulgarization and misunderstanding.

In Plato's eyes artists are not capable of judging what should be made public and what not. Even insofar as they are willing to check themselves, their lack of knowledge makes them unfit for this responsible task. Their job it is to be inspired by the Muse and to deliver what they are told as purely as possible. Thus they are often compelled to contradict themselves when they depict various answers to one and the same question. (Of course, these contradictions exist only on the concrete level; on the level of the Muse there is no inconsistency at all.)

To the average, non-philosophical public this is confusing, misleading and at times alarming, because they lack the means to see what is behind the superficial details of literary works. They tend to draw false conclusions from literature, as a result of which they may behave inappropriately. Therefore, it is Plato's conviction, the philosopher should intervene and act as literary censor, instruct the citizens about what to read and hear, and save them from any possible harmful, misleading, unbearable, premature insights that they might gain from reading the «wrong» literary works.

### 3. SOME JUNGIAN OBSERVATIONS

So far, so good. We have here an art theory that – at least in its abstract form – is interesting and coherent.

That is to say: to my mind the Platonic answer to the question as to what art essentially is, is satisfying enough. I think, for instance, that it is characteristic of (real) art that it reveals a higher truth, as Plato suggests (a truth that is *not* to be grasped intellectually, however). Instead of «higher truth» we could perhaps say that art represents not concrete reality as such, but a collective psychic reality behind the concrete. In this respect I find persuasive the Platonic image of the artist sitting on the tripod of the Muse: art is only to a very small extent created by the conscious personality of

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<sup>9</sup> That (real) poetry originates directly from the Muse is an often recurring theme in Plato's work; see *Apology* 22 b-c, *Io* 534 b-c, *Meno* 99, *Phaedrus* 244-5.

the artist. In order to produce something artistically worthwhile, the artist has to be inspired by «the Muse». In a manner of speaking one could say that the Muse is the real creator of works of art, or in depth-psychological terminology that art is basically rooted in and derived from the collective unconscious. And undeniably, insofar as artistic products happen to be only trivial imitations of outward reality, their *raison d'être* is questionable. (It is not easy to judge, though, whether a certain piece of art is only trivial imitation.)

We have already mentioned certain rules of Platonic art censorship. However unsympathetic, they certainly make sense as an indispensable means to control Plato's utopian society: in view of Plato's overall system it is clear that in his society art should be put under severe restrictions.

We have only to recall how the Platonic system is built up. High up in the Platonic hierarchy of being we find True Reality, namely the transcendent domain of the Forms. The Forms are beautiful, perfect, immaterial, unchanging, eternal entities. In the *Timaeus* they are said to belong to the masculine gender, though this may be no more than a metaphor. According to Plato, achieving an intellectual vision of the eternal Forms is the highest goal of human life. Only very few philosophers may hope to attain this happy state of mystical experience. Next comes reasoning or use of the *logos*; reasoning is highly esteemed by Plato, but takes second rank, since it is a reflective and therefore indirect way of recognizing Truth, though eventually it may lead to direct vision. Then, in the third place, we find the emotions. As a rule, these are to be avoided. Needless to say that they are regarded as feminine.<sup>10</sup> And finally, in the lowest place, sense perception is located. Sense perception is even more base than the emotions: it is animal-like.

The object of both the emotions and the senses is defined by Plato as non-being, namely as the absence of Reality, whereas – as you may remember – the object of intellectual vision and reasoning is True Reality or Being with a capital initial.

To cut the story short: that at which Platonism is directing – something which is especially manifest in the *Republic* –, is establishing a kind of intellectual fascism, both politically (in the state) and psychologically (in the psyche of the individual). Very briefly summarized: *logos* should reign at all cost, and emotions should be repressed whenever they are likely to come into conflict with reason.

It may be helpful to illustrate this with some examples of Platonic practice. The Socrates figure, who plays a major role in the Platonic dialogues, is always very proud of his (real or supposed?) independence from emotion. In the *Phaedo* we read that a few hours before his death Socrates is visited by his wife, the notorious Xanthippe, who has come to the prison to take leave of him. She has brought their little son with her (their youngest, two elder sons seem to have died previously) and she weeps and so on. Instead of saying goodbye to her, Socrates treats her like an object, ordering over her head that she be taken home. From the Platonic perspective the cold and imperturbable attitude with which Socrates always meets his wife's emotional claims, be they justified or unjustified, is highly satisfactory. A comparable lack of normal human feeling we find in the unconfirmed story of Socrates's reaction to the death of his son Sophroniscos. When Socrates is told that his son has died, he does not see any reason to interrupt his teaching. Only after his teaching is done, he declares with calm discipline that the time has come «to do justice to Sophroniscos as the law demands».<sup>11</sup> And lastly a telling story about Plato himself may be mentioned, namely that he once decided not to punish a slave, however deserved the punishment was, merely because of the fact that he detected a feeling of anger in himself: apparently he did not want to run the risk of letting emotion have the slightest influence on his behaviour.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Phaedo* 117 d-e, where Socrates reproves one of his young admirers for his emotions: weeping at someone's death, Socrates's own in this case, is to be regarded as a feminine, immature and unhelpful response.

<sup>11</sup> These and other examples of Socrates's attitude towards his own and other people's emotions are discussed more extensively by M.-L. von Franz in the context of her analysis of two reported dreams of Socrates (von Franz 1985).

<sup>12</sup> Antiquity offers us several different sources for this story: see Zeller 1859, 318 n. 2.

In view of all this, it is not surprising that Plato should be suspicious of free artistic expression. The normal compensatory quality of art in the Platonic context automatically becomes a subversive one. Platonism is repressive to such a degree that it cannot afford to allow for alternative views of life.

Plato's ambition to eliminate any compensatory influences goes astonishingly far: not only does Plato recommend that artistic expression be strictly controlled, he even wants to regulate the dream life of the citizens in his ideal state. Plato believes that by concentrating on worthy and beautiful thoughts before going to sleep it is possible to avoid «dream visions that are unlawful».<sup>13</sup> It is imperative to make this effort, since otherwise something terrible may happen: as you fall asleep, the beast in you awakens. It shakes its filthy head and goes in quest of that which will gratify its instincts. Since it knows no shame, Plato warns, it will do anything, e.g. sleep with the mother.<sup>14</sup> Plato seems to hint here at the Oedipus motif, possibly more specifically at Sophocles's play *Oedipus rex*. In *Rep.* III he tells us the same kind of things about actors: they know no shame, stop at nothing and will represent literally anything on stage.

This brings us to our last point: at the beginning of this paper the question was raised why it is that Platonic philosophy turns so vehemently against dramatic poetry.

Officially, having to do with direct speech, dramatic poetry is supposed to be at two removes from True Reality. It is Plato's conviction that drama must be rejected categorically because it is mere imitation: its double mimetic character makes it fundamentally trivial and untrue.

We have to ask ourselves, however, why it is that Plato develops a literary theory that disqualifies precisely drama *a priori* as trivial and untrue. «Direct speech» or «acting» does not serve as an answer, since there is no reasonable ground why it would be impossible to represent Truth in direct speech or on stage.<sup>15</sup> On the contrary, from any viewpoint except Plato's, drama is very instructive: it shows us important cultural characteristics from an artistic perspective, thus compensating our normal, everyday view of things. But as we have seen it is an intrinsic feature of Platonism that it is allergic to alternative points of view. Plato has no use for compensatory activities in his ideal state. He regards them as dangerously subversive. And indeed, within the Platonic system this subversiveness applies especially to drama. Dramatic insights cannot be accepted as true by Plato since they undermine his philosophy. Drama offers exactly those insights into human life in general and Greek culture in particular which Plato wants to eliminate.

This may be illustrated by some examples from Greek tragedy. In Aeschylus's famous play *Agamemnon* (458 B.C.) a certain form of rationalistic decision-making which seems to have been gaining popularity in fifth-century Greece, and which Platonic philosophy strongly favours, is unmistakably depicted as morally and practically wrong. King Agamemnon is forced by powers beyond his control to choose between forsaking his duty as the leader of a military expedition and killing his daughter. He decides to pursue his military duties, and sacrifices his daughter. In Platon-

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<sup>13</sup> *Rep.* IX 572 a8.

<sup>14</sup> Considering how it is treated, it is not surprising that Plato's poor beast is somewhat out of control. Using the same metaphor Jung remarks: «Too much of the animal distorts the civilized man, too much civilization makes sick animals» (Jung 1953, 28).

<sup>15</sup> Of course, it may well be that Plato genuinely *dislikes* direct speech and acting: the fact that in drama plots of mythical stories are not simply narrated, as in other literary genres, but represented on stage makes it particularly difficult for the audience to resist being influenced. Any audience will be much more involved in what happens before their eyes than when the same story is told in indirect speech. However, Plato's disapproval of drama cannot originate exclusively from its directness. Cf. what Plato decrees about music: music without words («*aneau logou rhuthmos te kai harmonia*») is not allowed in Plato's city, since one never knows what it will arouse in its listeners. But music that harmoniously accompanies a valuable text is particularly esteemed. In other words, its direct influence, once it is controlled and recognized as safe, makes music an even more valuable element in the Platonic education system than if it were less direct (*Rep.* III 398-403 and IV 424; *Laws* II 653-654 and 669-670).

ism predicaments such as Agamemnon's do not present specific moral problems. Genuine conflicts of duty do not exist, since rationally speaking there always is a best solution (and in those cases where two or more solutions are equally good, one may choose any of these). Insofar as agents are able to reason properly, they will recognize what is the best thing for them to do in every situation. Once they *know* their duty, they will automatically act accordingly, and lead a life free of moral guilt. Thus, virtue is a matter of knowledge, moral problems can be solved through reason, and in principle guilt can be avoided, since it is merely a result of miscalculation.

As Martha C. Nussbaum has pointed out,<sup>16</sup> Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* shows us exactly the opposite: sometimes an unavoidable choice between two morally bad possibilities may impose itself. Even if agents are wise enough to choose the best solution, that is to say the lesser evil, they remain responsible for the wrong that they commit through their neglect of the competing ethical claim. If they fail to accept this responsibility, they will be punished. According to the implicit logic of the play, Agamemnon is to blame not so much for the choice that he makes, but for the strange lack of anguish with which he performs his horrible sacrifice. He does not feel guilt in a situation where he apparently should. He seems not to experience the agonizing conflict imposed on him. In order not to suffer he successfully represses his affection for his child. He is even overcome by a kind of eagerness to collaborate with evil: once he has decided to kill his daughter, he treats her unnecessarily harshly. It is this neurotic lack of feeling that makes him arrogant and insensitive to later dangers, as Aeschylus shows us. From the moment Agamemnon gives in to the cold frenzy that creeps upon him while sacrificing his own child he slowly dehumanizes, and this leads in a subtle way to his eventual destruction. It is obvious that Plato would not like such a play.

Another example is *Medea* by Euripides (431 B.C.). Euripides was notorious – later became famous – for his realistic female figures. Indeed, *Medea* is a play about feminine psychology, but as I see it, it depicts not the psychological structure of Greek women but of the *Greek anima*. When Jason declares about Medea's killing her (and his) own children that «no Greek woman would ever do such a thing» (1339-40), he is certainly right. Medea is not a woman. She is the granddaughter of Helios and a supernatural being: she is the exotic, hot-tempered and dangerous *anima* of the Greek male, represented by the Jason figure. From Euripides's artistic point of view, Jason has a very narrow-minded, cold, plain, and greedy personality. He uses Medea to achieve things through witchcraft, and rejects her quite logically – he thinks – as soon as she is no longer profitable. It is well known how the story ends: eventually the ambitious Greek hero is destroyed by his «foreign» *anima* and her witchcraft. Obviously this is not a representation of reality that Plato would embrace either.

Finally Sophocles's play *Oedipus rex* may be mentioned (written in the 420s). Plato refers to this play, and generally to the Oedipus motif, more than once. Its theme can be summarized as follows: the irrational cannot be controlled, and it is dangerous to try too hard to free oneself of numinous constraints, since this may easily lead to opposite results. Oedipus's problem is that he has a bad relationship with the unconscious. He is always impatient, irritated, will listen neither to his fellow human beings nor to the gods. When the oracle at Delphi tells him that he will kill his father and wed his mother he simply «decides» to do otherwise. He pedantically calls himself the child of the goddess Tyche: he makes his own fate, he thinks.

*Oedipus rex* offers the distressing insight that seemingly rational, valiant and independent men are no less vulnerable than others to the traps and dangers of unconscious complexes. Superficially, Oedipus seems to live a life according to his own conscious plans, but actually he behaves according to extremely primitive archetypal patterns. The Oedipus motif contains a warning. Oedipus is the prototype of modern man who more than is actually justified thinks that he has freed himself from tradition, the gods and the irrational in general. His unjustified trust in his own

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<sup>16</sup> Nussbaum 1986, 25-30. For a different view on this subject, see Williams 1993, 132-136.

paternal, rational powers makes him regress into a state of extreme dependence on the mother complex. Just as the oracle predicted, he kills his father and lives with his mother. Thus he tragically achieves the opposite of that at which his rationalistic ambition was driving. In the world depicted by Sophocles in his *Oedipus rex* the gods and the irrational have the last word. That must be a gloomy picture to Plato, who set himself the task of establishing an utopian state based on rationality alone.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> I am grateful to Dr. J. W. McAllister for his advice about the English.

# Luther on himself, Erikson on Luther: Literature, history and psychology (\*)

LÁSZLÓ HALÁSZ (\*\*)

When McLuhan (1962:141-142) described the Gutenberg galaxy, he emphasized that the point was «the linear and homogeneous» approach of «typographic logic» which penetrated everything, and thus became a force for transforming mind and society. In his vision, Reformation along with individualism, alienation and nationalism were the consequences. In fact, Luther regarded the press as his close ally, allegedly saying that mankind had more to thank Gutenberg for than anybody else. Luther was a man for books and saw the incorporation of his ideas in the printed word. «His thought is determined by the book (...) and his spirit ravished by the printed letters» (Thieneman, 1931:158). We see Luther with the Bible in his hands as he was painted by Holbein. In the Reformation's eyes the Holy Script is the glorification of the written word. God speaks us by the Bible. Biblicism and literature are brother phenomena. «The masterpiece of German prose is, appropriately enough, the masterwork of Germany's greatest preacher: the Bible so far has been the best German book» - says Nietzsche (1921:216). At the same time, Luther is the first poet-composer of the Reformation; several hymns of him are being sung even now.

Nevertheless, Luther regards his eloquence and literary art not as a rhetorical skill, a poetic endowment but as the plain asserting of the truth. Precisely from this point of view he sets himself against Erasmus and compares himself to Saint Paul: «Although I am inexperienced in speaking, nevertheless, I am not inexperienced in the knowledge of facts, by the grace of God. Thus indeed with Paul, I dare to arrogate to myself and with confidence to repeal to you an expertise, although I arrogate to you eloquence and natural ability, and also derogate them to myself freely and obingly» (Luther, 1960:95). Saint Paul «was an unimportant and a despised person, nevertheless wrote powerful and courageous letters (2 Cor. 10:10) and gloried in the fact that his language was not embellished with ornate and flowery words (1 Cor. 1:17), yet he was richly endowed with literary art and wisdom» (Luther 1964:1.378).

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But here is another paradox. Luther who does not «arrogate» to himself Erasmus' oratory and eloquence, knows that he exhibits «literary art» and must know that he is a brilliant translator, i.e. interpreter, of the Bible, declares that Holy Writ is a text in no need of interpretation. From that point of view, too, he sets himself against Erasmus. Erasmus thinks that the method of *collatio* (=comparison of similarities) is demanded by the «very quality of the manner of speech in which sacred Literature is transmitted to us, for it is almost entirely concealed in tropes and allegories, and in similes and parables, and is indirect sometimes, even to the obscurity of enigma». If there is indecision about an interpretation «again and again a comparison (*collatio*) of passages undoes the knot of the difficulty, for what is said more covertly here is indicated more lucidly there» (Erasmus, 1968:283).

Luther is not willing to accept it. «I have not compared, but have asserted, and do assert» (Luther, 1960:293). Not *collatio*, but *collisio*. Either God or Satan rules. «If God is in us Satan is absent, and nothing is present except to will good. If God is absent, Satan is present, and nothing is in us except to will evil» (Luther, 1960:287). Erasmus' argument for tropological exegesis is «more to the point than that about the criterion of truth. As Luther declared in his *Assertio*: "I do not wish to boast myself more learned than everyone, but that Scripture alone should reign; nor that it be interpreted by my spirit or that of any other men, but I wish it to be understood through itself"» (Luther, 1964:7.98). That is, after all he regards himself as who knows the text authentically and understands the clear Word of God. Thus, he can be conceived a counterartistic literary man, a counterhermeneutical hermeneuta. Although he refuses that he were a prophet but he is absolutely sure that God is with him and «have the Scriptures on my side».

But from where does this certainty come, if certainty it is? Luther studied law at the University of Erfurt, in line with his father's wishes. At that time, the beginning of the 16th century, no-one read the Bible. «I first looked at it in the library of the University of Erfurt» – said Luther. But the sea-change came only later on. In 1505, when he was twenty-one, Luther became a magister and some months later «I was surprised by a powerful storm. A thunderbolt fell right next to me and I was afraid that I would die there and then without any conversion (...) and vowed that I would be a monk» (Luther, 1883T:4707,5373). Although he regretted his pledge and although his father «was very angry», in the end he stuck to his decision. He became «a pious monk».

Even if to be a monk with such an education might not have been extraordinary at all, what was unusual that Luther had some conflict-laden experiences not only at the time of his pledge, but over many years. «Although I was deeply pious, I went to the altar and came away from it with doubts. Even when I made my confession I had doubts and if I did not pray I was in despair» (Luther, 1883: 22.305.35). «I passed the nights in wakefulness, fasted, prayed, lashed and tortured my body to be obedient and lived in purity» (Scheel:1929.62.26). «I erred for a long time and did not know where I was, I knew something but I did not know what as long as I was contravening Chapter 1 Verse 17 of Paul's Letter to the Romans: "The just shall live by faith." This helped me. Here I could see which justice was proclaimed by the Apostle Paul (...) I compared the abstract contents of the verb (to be just) and its real subject (just man) and made sure of my business. I began to differentiate between the justice of the law and that of the Gospel (...) No matter how unobjectionable my life as a monk was, I felt myself to be a sinner before God, my inner man protested and was unable to hope that he would be conciliated by my amends. Thus I was angry with God (...), raged with a worried soul and fought against Paul unsparingly (...) I began to interpret the justice of God as the justice in which the just man lived by faith owing to the offer by God (...) Then I felt as if I had been reborn completely and entered Eden itself through open doors. Holy Scripture acquired another meaning» (Luther, 1883: 54.185.14). We should not forget that Luther felt himself to have been «reborn completely» about ten years after his conversion, which was his first rebirth. James (1935:199) speaks of «twice-born» people. This is valid for St Paul but not for Luther, who was born more than twice.

So Luther was at grips with one of the fundamental theses of the greatest convert's but I do not think that he modelled his own conversion on that of Saul, although at the end of his life he called himself «Saul like a lot of other people» (Scheel,1929:54.179). I see only one purpose in the

comparison of their conversions: to indicate the fundamental differences. Paul's metamorphosis was enormously great. He became a preacher of the persecuted from the persecutor of Christians. A Jew then a Christian, a soldier then an Apostle, and still just following his conversion on the road to Damascus «soon he was proclaiming Jesus publicly in the synagogues», that is, he started to evangelize «filled with the Holy Spirit» at once. At the same time, Luther who did not have to metamorphose in this way (and who even avoided face to face contact with his father), only twelve years later began his real public activity when he nailed up the Ninety-five Theses.

Paul converted from a system of loyalty to a contradictory system of loyalties. But we cannot say that his moral incentives were in serious conflict. Saul could be as just (honest) as Paul was (Halász, 1994). His conversion opened a window on a new moral aspect, as well as on new cognitive abilities which he was ready to use at once, because Paul's new identity was being unconsciously prepared in the final period of Saul's life. It is true that the basis of his new identity: Christianity had already been made available to him. Again, despite Wycliffe and Huss had done, Luther's frame, Protestantism, had no existence prior to him: not even in his phantasy, not even as an anticipated idea or image. From that point of view following his conversion he as a monk was basically the same Christian as he had been as a magister earlier, and the change could be regarded only as the beginning of «a long road at the end of which all the connections ceased between myself and the Pope» (Luther, 1883:14.471).

Luther emphasizes several times that he did not consider opposing «the Pope's authority as the Angels did» (Luther, 1883T:3767), and even when he had published the Ninety-five Theses he states that «at that time I recognized the Pope as my Lord. (...) Then I was a great believer in the Pope» (Luther, 1883T:5346,6427). By all means, Luther's finding and/or realizing his Lutheran identity was a very slow process, far ahead of his youthful years. Erikson (1958:94-95), of course, is right when he says that one motive was common in God and Martin: «the need for God to match Hans within Martin, so that Martin would be able to disobey Hans (...) the father and fatherhood. For the final wow would imply both that Martin was another Father's servant.» And it is also obvious that he formed his identity as a devoted believer by the meditations and rejections of earthly desires. «I was holy, I killed nobody but myself» – confessed Luther (Scheel, 1929:915). Although Erikson (1958:115) admits that «It would be much too easy (...) that Hans'son was seeking in religion what he could not find in Hans», still some pages later he calls by Thomas Wolfe's words (1936:39) «the deepest search in life (...) (is) a search to find a father» in whom «the belief and the power of his own life could be united».

While Saul had as mature an identity as Paul had, Luther had no such an identity before his conversion and could build it only in subsequent years. The moratorium was helped by «reconditioning his sensory and social responses» and «reinforced by the community practice of cornering and labelling, and thus jointly mastering, the common devil by methodical confession» (Erikson, 1958:130,132). Then Luther was ordained and celebrated his first Mass. He remembered that «he felt like feeling as though he was experiencing the world as a Judas», then «he suddenly felt that he was about to speak to God directly, without any mediator» (Luther, 1883T:3556). At the same time, he also reported that he «almost died from anxiety because he felt no faith» (Luther, 1883T: 4171). The only fact that we know for certain is that his father was there behind him. In Erikson's interpretation (1958:139-140) «when he was to mediate between the father and The Father, he still felt torn in his obedience to both».

By any means, Luther is afraid of his father, and not without reason; in vain did he try to win his goodwill after the ceremony, but his father hurt him with coarse words. Luther did not forget this and many years later said «I, secure in my justice, listened to you as to a human being and felt deep contempt for you» (Luther, 1883:8.574). It is somewhat difficult to contradict Erikson when he says that «at this late date Martin was thrown back into the infantile struggle», and he had to see that his father's fervent and angry temperament was also his own. It is, however, an open question as to how all this contributes to the Lutheran personality as it is known to mankind.

Luther visits Rome where he sees that priests celebrated «six or seven Masses while I was doing only one (...) and they received money for them» (Luther, 1883T:5484). He remarks that «if the Pope, the cardinals and the priests in the Pope's court celebrate the Mass in such a way, how much they have deceived me» (Luther, 1883T:3428). At the same time, he mentions a monk's dream that a hermit will attack the Papacy in the time of Leo X. And he does not omit to add: «Then I did not think at all that I would be that hermit. That is, Augustinian monks are called hermits» (Luther, 1883T:3478).

Luther is now twenty-six. He is already over his conversion and some of the serious consequences of it, but had he died at that point, nobody (including himself) could have thought that his mentioned life experiences had any special significance. This shows not only how long it was before he was ready to play his role (largely since this role, which was shaped significantly by political and economic forces beyond his control was not yet ready either), but also what seems to be obvious (to us) by postdiction – that is, not at all by prediction.

Soon afterwards Luther went to the monastery of Wittenberg and was awarded his doctorate of theology when he was twenty-eight. Afterwards he revealed the meaning of Paul's words: «The just shall live by faith» in the Letter to the Romans, and subsequently in his commentary on the Psalms, he revealed that this justice was identical with Jesus's faith and our identification with his sufferings when praying. Thus Luther redefined his - who knows how many times reborn - identity. Behind this Erikson (1958:203) sees «Martin's struggle for justification, involving the emancipation of his obsessive conscience from his jealous father and the liberation of his thought from medieval theology». Luther alters God as a father imago. «God is given the attribute of *ira misericordiae* - a wrath which is really compassion. With this concept, Luther was at last able to forgive God for being a Father, and grant Him justification» (Erikson, 1958:222).

Even if this is the only possible explanation I do not believe that Luther's Protestantism would have been coded into this theological attitude. The role of the circumstances, of the situational factors, is at least as important as that of the dispositional ones. And this is not only the standpoint of some psychologists in personality and attributional theory, but that of Luther himself. «The mere reading of the Holy Scriptures never lead to my learning. My work and the intrigues of my enemies drew me into it. First and foremost I would have defended the Mass and monasticism as an institution» (Luther, 1883T:3793). «I did not think of leaving the monastery at all. I was completely dead to the world» (Luther, 1883T:4707) until the matter of indulgences. And following his audience with Cardinal Cajetan, the Pope's delegate, when Luther unequivocally refused to withdraw his theses, he confessed «If in Augusta the cardinal had dealt with me less aggressively and raised me up when I fell on my knees before him, the matter would never have gone so far (...) If he had kept silent it might easily have happened that I could have kept silent, too» (Luther, 1883T:3857).

Naturally, earlier on and reading Luther's quoted words about this subject just now, we may suppose that they are not expressions of his uncertainties and of alternative outcomes, but simply show Luther's tactics. Realizing the extraordinary consequences of his behaviour, he is not willing to take the risk, and shifts the responsibility to the Papacy. However, all of the quotations are from Luther's reminiscences during tabletalks, many years after the events described and when he knew definitely that he had fought his fight successfully. «The Pope cursed me. Since then I have been enriched physically and mentally. Again, I also cursed him, but my curse is stronger than his» (Luther, 1883T:1443).

Thus, also out of the question according should be any supposition that Luther's responsibility shift could be connected with his refusal to take the responsibility for the hatred behind his behaviour and that this is why he represses it. «If I am prompted to say "Hallowed be Thy name", I must add, "Cursed, damned, outraged be the name of the papists." If I am prompted to say, "Thy Kingdom come", I must perforce add, "cursed, damned, destroyed must be the Papacy"» (Luther, 1883:30,470). And no more than a year before his death he reported that «I was a passionate believer in the Pope (...) I got into this squabble despite my will and intention, completely by chance» (Scheel, 1929:54,179).

Erikson (1958:139) writes about Luther's «distinct tendency to retrospective dramatization (...) partially to folksy exaggeration of his table-talk». He calls this tendency *historification* which means

«that Luther may honestly remembered as a detailed event in time and space what actually occurred in his thoughts and emotions». As far the presented reminiscences are concerned, historication – I think – would have required more opposing thoughts and emotions than those which Luther reported. If he had presented himself as someone who recognized the most important things soon after his conversion (his first rebirth), who at an early stage predicted and felt everything, who never considered any compromise, then he could have dramatized his prophetic heroism. But on several occasions he reported on thoughts and emotions which he did not have and when he began to develop them, they were rather vague for a long time. The greatest advantage of the slow process of finding oneself is that it leaves the personality open and hinders any premature closure. Thus, if one has significant qualities, they may float freely, providing wide scope for the flexibility of repression and for thorough elaboration.

On the basis of all this, we can now answer our fundamental question about Luther's certainty. There is a sharp contrast between his long-lasting identity crises replete with doubts and the absolute certainty of his standpoint in the later period of his life. Fromm (1941:66) sees Luther as «a typical representative of the authoritarian character». Concerning his «unusually severe father», his relationship to authority – be it his father, the Pope or the princes – is ambivalent. «He was filled with an extreme feeling of aloneness, powerlessness, wickedness, but at the same time with a passion to dominate. He was tortured by doubts as only a compulsive character can be, and was constantly seeking for something which would give him inner security and relieve him from his torture of uncertainty.»

At the same time, Luther gets into a physically depressed state, suffering several times from anxieties which he calls «the onslaughts of Satan» (O'Rourke Boyle, 1983:129). It is quite obvious that in his depression his feelings of loneliness, helplessness, isolation, feebleness and self-contempt are increasing. When he gets over about depression he feels not only feel relief, but a victory over Satan on the part of the opposite side of his soul. «In this state of personal recovery, Luther (like any individual recovering from an oppressive mental state) had recourse to massive totalisms from which he derived the foundation stones for a new wholeness. The whole person includes certain total states in his balances: we are, Luther proclaimed, totally sinners (*totus homo peccator*) and totally just (*totus homo justus*)» (Erikson, 1958:216).

Experiencing the contradictions of human nature was not unknown to St Paul, either: «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). Nevertheless, Luther's excessive vindicativeness and the way he becomes a man of God, accompanied even by anger, rage and hate reminds us of Moses more than of Paul. Certainly, Luther would agree from the depth of his psyche with Kohut (1977:132-133) that everybody is a bipolar being, is a unity of *Guilty Man* and *Tragic Man*. The former is directed by pleasure seeking and drives, not uncommonly destructive, the latter by conscience, and by drive-elaborating and drive-curbing ego and superego functions. Especially remarkable is the way Kohut explains the adequacy of the adjective *tragic*. It is not enough to think that to give up the pleasure principle is tragic in itself, but «the undeniable fact that man's failures overshadow his successes prompted me to designate this aspect of even negatively as *Tragic Man* rather than "self-expressive" or "creative man"». Luther's case confirms this as even the greatest success is unable to prevent him falling into deep despair.

Yet, Luther could feel the extraordinary force of his self-expressiveness, of his creativity. It was just this that set him far apart from average examples of authoritarian personality who at the same time have enduring identity crises and a clear disposition to neurotic depression. By way of his self-actualization, his talent spontaneously strove for totalism: in literature – which, we should not forget, then and later meant what he had already read and got to know, what he had written on rather different human subjects, on theology, on leadership. He became a great Renaissance figure, indeed.

To experience deeply his tensions in his hopeless, but unsparing fight against his bipolarity he cannot accept anything that would support attempt somehow to reconcile the *Guilty Man* with the

*Tragic* one. This is why he is absolutely for *colliso* and against *collatio*. He sees himself (and the world as well) as the outcome of collision between the mutually antagonistic forces, in the final analysis those of God and Satan, in the recesses of his (un)consciousness with the threatening monster of the *hybris*. This tragic dichotomy is the frame of the view in which both *historification* and *his-story-fiction* are constructed.

White (1978:58ff) extends Frye's (1957) ideas that literary fiction can be traced back to archetypal forms of stories, «pregeneric plot structures», or in other words to romance, tragedy, comedy and satire. As White says they offer plausible way of describing the world and have an explanatory effect which a historian also cannot disregard. Before (s)he approaches «the data of a historical field» (s)he «prefigures» it. To all intents and purposes, the act is poetic as far as «it is precognitive and practical in the household of the historian's consciousness». We also describe ourselves in the framework of the pregeneric plot structures mentioned above (Gergen & Gergen, 1988). We try to find a coherent connection between the events of our lives in order to understand our acts. Thus, we produce a new relationship between past and present. The precognitive activity is, of course, never unlimited. It does not mean arbitrariness, or independence of our life events. During these operations we cannot disregard the fact that all of our experiences have a narrative structure, and that «we all live out narratives in our lives because we understand our own lives in terms of the narratives» (MacIntyre, 1984:212).

In other words, Luther's own life story is presented as being as much literary as historical; the text of his self is a poetic product of his narrative mode, a product of the same eloquence and literary art with which his oeuvre is imbued. The phrase *history-fiction* does not mean the nonsense that his whole story would be a mere fiction. But it does indicate that his phantasy (fictive narrative), his tragic vision are organically built into his life history (non-fictive narrative). With regard to the fact that he is not an expert, who many years after the events, is putting down his story (version), his tale and the interpretation of it are based on his prefiguration of the historical field in line with his life experience and education, but he is a leading protagonist in the events themselves, he has prefigured them just at the moment when developing them, and remembering them later, too. If based on Christi and Orton (cf. Stainton Rogers, 1995) we can speak of *story-made-story teller* then we should say that Luther's very remarkable story made a very remarkable story teller.

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# Das Fraubild im Werk Claire Golls

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Die Autorin Claire Goll (1890-1977) steht vor allem als Muse und Lebensgefährtin des expressionistischen Dichters Yvan Goll in der Literaturgeschichte zu Buche. Eine Tatsache, der sie mit ihren Memoiren *Ich verzeihe keinem. Eine literarische Chronique scandaleuse* (1976) bewußt Vorschub geleistet hat. Das von Claire Goll imaginierte Musenimago steht jedoch im schrillen Kontrast zu ihrem tatsächlichen Leben. Es verschleiert völlig, daß Claire Goll ein umfangreiches Oeuvre hinterlassen hat und zu den voranstehenden Dichterinnen des Expressionismus<sup>1</sup> gezählt werden muß.

In ihren Gedichten behandelt sie – genauso wie in den Prosawerken, die in dieser Zeit entstehen<sup>2</sup> – die großen Themen des Expressionismus wie Krieg, Großstadt, Liebe, Schmerz, aber auch die Sehnsucht nach einer besseren Welt und die Erhebung des Menschen zum Weltbürger. Daß diese bessere Welt nur auf der Grundlage der Gleichberechtigung von Mann und Frau verwirklicht werden kann, ist für Claire Goll keine Frage. In ihrem Artikel *Die Stunde der Frauen*, der 1917 im *Zeit-Echo* erscheint, schreibt sie:

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<sup>1</sup> Da die Epoche des Expressionismus zu den am besten erforschten Perioden in der deutschen Literatur gehört, erlaube ich mir an dieser Stelle, jegliche theoretische Diskussion dieser heterogenen Bewegung zu überspringen und lediglich anzumerken, daß dem Expressionismus, der augenscheinlich im wesentlichen von Männern geprägt ist, eine weibliche Variante zur Seite steht, deren bedeutendste Vertreterinnen – abgesehen von Else Laker-Schüler – bis heute weitestgehend der Vergessenheit anheimgefallen sind. Es bleibt zu hoffen, daß die 1993 von Hartmut Vollmer herausgegebene Anthologie *In roten Schuhen tanzt die Sonne sich zu Tod. Lyrik expressionistischer Dichterinnen*. Veränderung in diesen Zustand bringen und zu einer Neuüberdenkung mancher Prämissen der Expressionismus-Theorie führen wird.

<sup>2</sup> Bei den expressionistischen Prosawerken Claire Golls denke ich in erster Linie an die folgenden Werke: *Die Frauen erwachen*. Frauenfeld: Verlag Huber & Co. 1918. *Der Gläserne Garten*. München: Roland Verlag Dr. Albert Mundt 1919 (= Die Neue Reihe, Bd. 17), *Tagebuch eines Pferdes. Ein Gedicht in Prosa*. In: *Lyrische Films*. Basel: Rhein Verlag 1922 und *Journal d'un Cheval. Les Mémoires d'un Moineau*. Avec un dessin de Marc Chagall. Paris: Jean Budry 1926. Dabei ist anzumerken, daß noch die Romane der 20er Jahre – ganz besonders *Une Perle* (1929, dt.: *Ein Mensch ertrinkt*. Wien/Leipzig: Thal Verlag 1931) – thematisch und stilistisch die Nähe zum Expressionismus verraten.

Der schmachvolle Zusammenbruch der von Männern geführten Völker müßte uns endlich lehren, die Welt unter einem anderen Gesichtswinkel als dem männlichen zu sehen. [...] Wir Talentlosen, wir kleinen Statistinnen, die wir nie mitspielen durften auf der Bühne der Welt! Wann werden wir endlich nicht mehr Chor sein, der klagt, sondern einzeln auftreten im Leben? Wie lange wollen wir uns noch zurückdrängen lassen von den eitlen, brutalen Mimen der Gewalt? Wo bleibt *unsere* Revolution?

[...]

Der Mann kennt uns noch nicht. Er sieht die Frau, wie er sie seit Jahrhunderten festgestellt hat und behandelt sie so. Und vielleicht sieht er in vielem recht. Weil unsere Entwicklung nicht von innen, sondern von außen kam, sind wir nur das Resultat und nicht der Weg. Wir haben im Verhältnis zu ihm gar keine eigene Natur, sondern die, die er uns gibt. (Er verlangt, daß wir: er werden.) Wir haben uns selbst aufgegeben für jene andere, die er von uns verlangte. [...] Arbeiten wir an der Befreiung von diesem unter-menschlichen Zustand, in dem wir Frauen uns noch befinden.<sup>3</sup>

In meinen Ausführungen möchte ich an einigen Beispielen aus dem expressionistischen Werk Claire Golls untersuchen, inwieweit sich diese Freiheits- und Gleichheitsgedanken in der Darstellung der Frau, in der Darstellung des Selbstverständnisses der weiblichen Identität widerspiegeln. Abschließend werde ich diese Befindungen zu dem Fraubild in Beziehung setzen, das in dem späteren Prosawerk der Autorin gezeichnet wird, und versuchen, eine Antwort auf die Frage zu finden, warum die Autorin, die im Jahre 1917 zur «Revolution der Frauen» aufruft, in ihren Memoiren auf biologische Scheinargumente zurückgreift und die Weiblichkeit auf das Komplement zum Männlichen reduziert?

Die frühesten Gedichten der Claire Goll schließen inhaltlich nahtlos an ihr journalistisches Werk an. Die Grundfragen der Zeit: Krieg, (männliche) Gewalt und Großstadt sind ihre Themen. Im Gedicht *Arbeiterinnen* (1918) zum Beispiel versucht das lyrische Ich den Frauen die Tragik ihrer Existenz zu verdeutlichen. Die sozialpolitische Kritik am Schattendasein der (Arbeiter)Frauen in einer männlich orientierten Gesellschaft wird zur Klage und Anklage, wenn es die Frauen die Tristesse des eigenen Lebens wie in einem Spiegel erblicken läßt. In der Anrede der Arbeiterinnen mit Schwestern drückt sich eine Verbundenheit des lyrischen Ichs mit diesen Frauen aus. Zugleich ruft es die Frauen auf, diese Welt zu verwerfen. Auch *Junge Akrobatin* (1918) strahlt noch etwas von der Kraft der Empörung über die untergeschickte Rolle der Frau aus. Das bunte Bohème-Leben des großstädtischen Varietés dient als Kulisse für die Artikulierung der Einsicht, daß auch das Leben der Frau, die außerhalb der bürgerlichen Konventionen steht, von Unfreiheit geprägt ist. Inmitten einer Männerwelt, abgeschnitten vom solidarischen Wir-Gefühl der Frauen, scheint die Situation hoffnungslos. Leiser und verhaltener dagegen sind die Töne im Antikriegsgedicht *Krankenschwestern* (1918). Der Wahnsinn des Krieges hat die bedingungslose Menschheitsliebe der Frauen scheinbar nicht zum Erlöschen gebracht. In heroischer Selbstaufopferung versuchen sie im Lazarett der Gewalt des Krieges passiv Widerstand zu leisten. Nicht mehr Emanzipation der Frauen, d.h. nicht mehr ihre aktive Partizipation an gesellschaftlichen Prozessen wird zur Überwindung von militaristischem Denken und kriegerischer Gewalt gefordert, sondern ihre selbstlose Opferbereitschaft und Mütterlichkeit. Die Sanftmut der Frauen ist es, über die auch der Mann zu einer neuer Menschlichkeit finden wird, die Voraussetzung für die Errichtung einer neuen Welt ist.

Die Veränderung im imaginierten Bild von der Frau, die sich in *Krankenschwestern* bereits andeutet, wird in den Gedichten der 20er Jahre noch deutlicher sichtbar. Nicht mehr die Reflexion der gesellschaftlichen Probleme steht im Mittelpunkt der Gedichte, sondern die Liebe, oder exakter ausge-

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<sup>3</sup> Claire Studer [Goll]: Die Stunde der Frauen. In: Zeit-Echo 3 (1917) 1. und 2. Juliheft, 9-10 (= Ein Kriegstagebuch der Künstler, hrsg. von Ludwig Rubiner). Zit. nach: Claire Goll: Der Gläserne Garten. Prosa von 1917-1939. Berlin: Argon Verlag, hrsg. und kommentiert von Barbara Glauert-Hesse, 11f.

drückt: die Frau als Liebende. Das Gedicht *Du - Ich* (1922) gibt die Suche der Frau nach der perfekten Zweieinheit mit dem «Anderen» wieder, d.h. das lyrische Ich kann sich nur über die Beziehung zum Mann definieren. Im Gedicht *Frau* (1922) scheint das lyrische Ich vor allem an seinem Aussehen interessiert zu sein. Der bewundernde Blick des Mannes wird für die Frau zur Bestätigung ihrer weiblichen Identität. Für ein Paar Handschuhe aus Ziegenleder scheint sie bereit, die ideale Liebe aufs Spiel zu setzen. Hier rückt das imaginierte Bild in die Nähe des Bildes der *femme fatale*. Narzißtisch mit sich selbst beschäftigt, kann die Frau die Verzweiflung des Mannes lediglich registrieren.

Noch deutlicher als in den Gedichten zeigt sich die Wandlung des Bildes von der Frau in den Prosawerken Claire Golls aus dieser Zeit. In dem 1918 erschienenen Novellenband *Die Frauen erwachen* wird von der Erzählinstanz – ähnlich dem lyrischen Ich im Gedicht *Krankenschwestern* – gegen den Krieg Stellung genommen. Der Krieg wird in seiner Sinnlosigkeit angeprangert und als Ursache für die seelische und körperliche Verstümmelung oder Vernichtung von sowohl Männern als auch Frauen entlarvt. In diesem Sodom und Gomorrha des Krieges ist der Mann als Soldat, Arzt oder Priester der Held und Märtyrer, während die oft namenlose Frau als Mutter, Ehefrau oder Geliebte um ihn bangt. Erst durch die Nachricht von seinem Tode wird der Frau das Ausmaß des Grauens, das dieser Krieg verursacht, wirklich bewußt. Da sie bisher zu den Greueln geschwiegen hat, fühlt sie sich mitschuldig am Krieg. Zudem wird der Frau – die sich nur mit dem (Ehe)Mann an ihrer Seite denken kann – mit seinem Tode die eigene Identität und damit die Lebensgrundlage genommen. Nachdem sie sich an der Welt für das ihr angetane Unrecht gerächt hat, ist der eigene Tod für sie der einzige Ausweg aus Identitätslosigkeit und (Mit)Schuld am Krieg. Eine Ausnahme bildet in diesem Zyklus lediglich Schwester Libella in der gleichnamigen siebten der acht Novellen. Sie gleicht noch den völlig selbstlos handelnden Krankenschwestern im Gedicht. Sie wird in ihrer Güte und ihrem Mitleid für die verwundeten Soldaten im Lazarett zur «Mutter neben ihrer [der Männer] Kinderkrankheit» (Goll 1989, 186). Sie ist es auch, die sich aktiv dem Befehl des verrohten, unmenschlichen Stabsarztes widersetzt und mit einer nächtlichen Operation einem russischen Soldaten das Leben rettet.

In der Novelle *Myriel* (aus: *Der Gläserne Garten* 1919) wird die Protagonistin sich nach und nach ihres Frau-Seins bewußt und erkennt, daß sie, da sie das geistige Niveau des Mannes als Frau nicht erreichen kann, ihm nur über ihre erotische Attraktivität ebenbürtig sein kann. Hier stellt sich das Bild von der Frau als eine Synthese von romantischem Gedankengut und dem geschlechtsphilosophischen Denkens des 18. Jahrhunderts dar. Die Weiblichkeit wird als Komplement des Männlichen definiert. Es hat den Anschein, als ob Myriel die Ängste und narzißtischen Kränkungen, die das Bewußtwerden der Geschlechterdifferenz verursacht, zu mildern versucht, indem sie ein bestimmtes Idealbild weiblicher Tugend überbetont.

Der Rückgriff auf die in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft der Jahrhundertwende geltenden Rollenzuschreibungen an Frau (und Mann) beherrscht von jetzt ab das gesamte Werk der Autorin. Während in den Gedichten das Bild von der Frau als der großen Liebenden vorherrscht, werden in den Prosawerken die Konfigurationen der Frau überwiegend als «gute Mutter», «*femme fatale*» oder als «naiv-unschuldige Kind-Frau» beschrieben.

Unabhängig von den Blutsbanden sind die in den Texten auftretenden Mutterfiguren entweder als treu sorgende, sich aufopfernde, ganz in ihrer Mutterrolle aufgehende «gute» Mutter dargestellt oder als dummes spießbürgerliches Geschöpf, für das nur Luxus und gesellschaftliches Ansehen zählen. Die Mutterfiguren haben keine Vergangenheit und keine Zukunft und entsprechen damit im wesentlichen dem biologisch determinierten Klischeebild von der Frau. Sie sind im Grunde asexuelle Geschöpfe, die nur für und durch die Tochter leben. Unabhängig von dem Milieu, aus dem sie stammen, haben sie auf ihre eigene Art und Weise nur das Glück der Tochter im Auge.

Der stilisierten «guten» Mutter wird ein ebenso klischeehaftes Tochterbild gegenübergestellt. Die Töchter, von den Müttern allein erzogen, werden nicht zuletzt deshalb zu Ab-Bildern ihrer Mütter, da der Weg zum Vater als dem anderen Pol im Eltern-Kind-Verhältnis von vornherein abgeschnitten ist. Oberflächlich und romantisch veranlagt, entsprechen die Töchter voll und ganz der Vorstellung von der «höheren Tochter» des 19. Jahrhunderts, deren einziges Kapital die Schönheit

ihres Körpers ist. Sie sehen ihr Frau-Sein als einen von der Natur gegebenen Mangel, der einzig durch einen Mann an ihrer Seite überdeckt werden kann. Entsprechend ist ihr Handeln von Intuition und defensiver Passivität bestimmt, Eigenschaften, die es ihnen ermöglichen sollen, einen Mann und damit ihre Daseinsberechtigung zu erwerben. Sie sind sie nur allzu gern bereit, sich dem Manne, der sie okkupiert und manipuliert, in der Hoffnung unterzuordnen, durch ihn zu sich selbst zu finden.

Im Roman *Ein Mensch ertrinkt* (1931) scheint die Mutter-Tochter-Konfiguration jedoch von den oben beschriebenen Bild abzuweichen. Das Dienstmädchen Marie ist voller Hochachtung für die Mutter und willens, sich für die Liebe und Fürsorge der Mutter zu revanchieren. Mit dem in Paris verdienten Geld will sie ein Häuschen für die Mutter kaufen, in dem die Mutter in Ruhe und Beschaulichkeit ihren Lebensabend verbringen kann. In Mariens Erinnerung verklärt sich das Bild der Mutter zunehmend; sie beginnt immer mehr einer Heiligen zu ähneln. In diesem Prozeß spielt die räumliche Trennung von Mutter und Tochter keine unwesentliche Rolle.

Die Beziehung Mariens zur Mutter hat auf den ersten Blick den Anschein einer ewigdauernden glücklichen Mutter-Kind-Dyade.<sup>4</sup> Die Romanwirklichkeit ist aber anders gewesen. Marie gibt in ihren Erinnerungen selbst an, daß die Mutter – eine Waschfrau<sup>5</sup> – sie von ihrer Arbeit fernhielt. Das bedeutet in den Augen des Kindes, daß die Mutter neben dem gemeinsamen Leben ein (Teil) Leben hat, in dem es selbst keine (direkte) Rolle spielt; es fühlt sich aus der Welt der Mutter ausgeschlossen. Den (zeitlich begrenzten) Ausschluß kann sich das Kind nur als Zurückweisung durch die Mutter erklären. Das Kind erfährt die Ablehnung der Mutter als bedrohlich, was zur Ausbildung von Trennungsängsten geführt haben könnte. Die Frustration der kindlichen Vorstellung von der dauerhaften Einheit mit der Mutter wird Marie mit einem verstärkten Verlangen nach mütterlicher Zuwendung und Anerkennung beantwortet haben. Da aber jede Mutter (hier stimmen Roman und Realität überein) während der Ablösungs- und Individuationsphase in der Entwicklung des Kindes dessen Ansprüche an sie zwangsläufig frustrieren muß, erschafft sich das Kind in seiner Phantasie eine «gute» Mutter, die sich völlig in den Dienst ihres Kindes stellt, keinen vom Kind unabhängigen Interessen oder Arbeiten nachgeht und ihm ständig all seine Wünsche erfüllt. Es ist denn auch nicht die reale Waschfrau-Mutter, sondern die phantasierte Mutter, mit der Marie sich identifiziert und für die sie die Rolle der braven Tochter spielt, die niemals selbständig sein und die Mutter verlassen wird. Wenn Marie versucht, die Rolle der guten Tochter zu perfektionieren, kaschiert sie damit auch ihre Angst, die mit dem Wissen verbunden ist, daß sie – angesichts ihres Lebens in Paris – diese Tochterrolle nicht erfüllen kann.<sup>6</sup> Gleichzeitig dient die Gestalt der Mutter Marie aber auch als

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<sup>4</sup> Daß Marie sich mit der Mutterimago auch symbiotisch verbunden fühlt, wenn diese nicht in ihrer unmittelbaren Nähe ist, wird im Text mehrfach deutlich. Am überzeugendsten ist vielleicht die Textstelle, wo Marie während der mörderischen Autofahrt mit Babylas die Vision der Mutter hat. Marie sieht die Mutter auf dem Sockel der steinernen Madonna vor dem Altar der Dorfkirche stehen. Das Bild der Madonna ist der metaphorische Ausdruck dafür, daß es sich in der Vision wiederum nur um die Mutterimago handeln kann: «Wirklich, ihre Mutter stand auf dem Sockel und sah sie mit jenam heiligen Lächeln an, das nur Mütter haben. Durch das alte Kleid sah Marie das Herz der Mutter schimmern, noch viel röter als das aufgemalte Herz auf der Statue der Madonna. Es war, als durchluchtetete ein Engel die Brust der Mutter mit himmlischen Strahlen. Die Mutter winkte Marie und deutete auf ihr Heez. In diesen Herzen ruhst du, schien sie sagen zu wollen. Solange ich lebe, kann dir nichts passieren. [...] sie fühlte, daß sie Schutz brauchte. Ja, die Mutter war ihr erschienen, weil sie in Gefahr war (Goll 1988, 83f.).

Vgl. zur präödiipalen Entwicklung des Mädchens die Theorien von Benjamin (1988/1990), Fast (1984/1991) und Mahler (1975/1990).

<sup>5</sup> Die Tatsache, daß der Prototyp der «guten» Mutter eine Waschfrau ist, gibt Anlaß zu der Schlußfolgerung, daß das Bild der «guten» Mutter in den fiktionalen Werken Claire Golls umso verklärter wird, je tiefer die Mutterfigur auf der gesellschaftlichen Leiter steht bzw. je weiter sie (räumlich gesehen) von der Tochter entfernt lebt. Diese Typisierung der «guten» Mutter wird später im autobiographischen Roman *Der gestohlenen Himmel* wieder aufgenommen. Mutter Schick – ein weiterer Prototyp der «guten» Mutter – ist die Witwe des Stadtangestellten Schick und betretet die öffentliche Bedürfnisanstalt bei der Marienkirche in München.

<sup>6</sup> Hier ließe sich eine Verbindung zum Leben der Autorin herstellen. In den «Pariser Jahren» stand sie in regelmäßigem Briefkontakt mit der Mutter und war bemüht, ihr ihre meist materiellen Wünsche zu erfüllen.

Identifikations- und Projektionsobjekt. Die Identifikation mit der Mutter gibt Marie einerseits Gelegenheit, den Gegensatz zwischen dem Leben auf dem Lande und in der Stadt zu ertragen. Selbst in ihren Handlungs- und Wahrnehmungsweisen ländlich orientiert, sieht sie im Stadtleben eine Bedrohung dieser Identität. Andererseits ist aber gerade die starre Identifikation mit den Normen und Werten der Mutter letztendlich ihr Untergang, da sie ihr die Integration in das Stadtleben unmöglich machen, denn Marie hat das internalisierte Bild von der Mutter zur Imago des eigenen Ich-Ideals erhoben. Das Über-Ich der Protagonistin ist so tiefgreifend durch die Mutter bestimmt, daß diese Maries Entscheidung als Erwachsene noch stets beeinflußt und damit – trotz der räumlichen Trennung – ständig anwesend ist.

Die enge Bindung an die Mutter und die extreme Identifikation mit ihrer Dienstbarkeit und Selbstlosigkeit, scheint durch die geschilderte Familiensituation, die Abwesenheit des Vaters<sup>7</sup>, begünstigt zu werden. In der Ablösungsphase strebt das weibliche Kind die Identifikation mit dem Vater an. Er stellt für das sich in der Zweisamkeit der Mutter-Kind-Dyade befindende Kind das erstrebenswerte Andere, die «Außenwelt» dar. Steht der Vater für diese Identifikation nicht zur Verfügung, wird dem Streben des Kindes nach Unabhängigkeit (von der Mutter) eine Niederlage bereitet. Das Mädchen ist also gezwungen, sich zur Mutter zurückzuwenden und auf ein eigenes Begehren zu verzichten. Die Folge ist, daß sich, abgesehen von der zusätzlichen Problematisierung der Wiederannäherungsphase, die Entsagung eines eigenen Begehrens und das Begreifen der eigenen Handlungsunfähigkeit negativ auf die Subjektivität des Mädchens auswirkt. Es verharrt in Passivität und seine Liebe zum Vater ist von Neid auf sein «Anders-Sein», seine Handlungsfähigkeit, und von Unterwürfigkeit gezeichnet.

Im Grunde ist also auch Marie, obwohl sie sich aufgrund ihrer Herkunft und äußeren Erscheinung von den übrigen Töchtern zu unterscheiden scheint, ein infantil-naives, ihren phantastischen Wünschen und Sehnsüchten ausgeliefertes gutgläubiges Mädchen. Auch sie wählt ihre gesellschaftliche Rolle scheinbar aus freien Stücken, wenn sie nichts lieber tut, als sich zu verheiraten. In Wirklichkeit nimmt sie lediglich das Vermächtnis ihrer Mutter auf und kontiniert die eigene Fremdbestimmung. Der Mann wird zum Regisseur, dessen Anweisungen sich die Frau bedingungslos in der Hoffnung unterwirft, für ihre Aufopferung geliebt zu werden. Die Ehe wird zum Institut, in dem die verinnerlichten Strukturen reproduziert werden. Die Protagonistin wird jetzt – wie vordem von der Mutter – vom (Ehe) Mann beherrscht und beeinflußt, ohne daß ihr bewußt wird, daß ihre Rolle als Frau und Tochter Anteil an ihrer Unterdrückung hat. Daß Marie nicht erkennt, daß Babylas sich ihr aus Berechnung widmet, kann nur solange ihrer schlechten Menschenkenntnis zugeschrieben werden, bis er ihr seine wahren Absichten offenbart. Daß sie sich auch danach noch zu ihm hingezogen fühlt, muß andere Gründe haben. Die bewußte Unterwerfung unter die Macht Babylas' und die Anbetung des schönen, körperlich starken und in ihren Augen so selbstbewußten Mannes wurzeln in der vaterlosen Kindheit Maries. Maries Situation scheint eine Illustration der These Benjamins (1988/1990) zu sein, daß der «fehlende Vater» nicht nur «der Schlüssel zu ihrem [der Frauen] fehlenden Begehren», sondern auch «zu dessen Wiederkehr in masochistischer Form» (106) ist. Ist eine Identifikation des Mädchens mit der Person des Vaters aufgrund seiner Abwesenheit nicht möglich, verschiebt sich das Begehren des Kindes auf das Symbol seiner Macht, den Phallus, der ihm die identifikatorische Liebesbeziehung zum Vater «ersetzen» muß. Babylas verkörpert für Marie nicht die bedrohende, weil verschlingende Mutter, sondern den von ihr befreienden Vater. In dem sadistischen Babylas sieht Marie die idealisierte Vaterfigur, der sie sich bedingungslos unterordnen kann. Ihre Liebe gilt nicht so sehr dem realen Babylas des Romans, sondern dem idealisierten Bild von ihm.

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<sup>7</sup> Die Möglichkeit, daß der Bruder die Rolle des Vaters übernommen haben könnte, scheint unwahrscheinlich, da er in den Erinnerungen Maries überhaupt keine Rolle spielt. Von seiner Existenz erfährt der Leser nur durch die Bemerkung der Erzählinstanz, daß er im Kriege gefallen sei. Emotionell ist er also genauso abwesend wie der Vater selbst.

Erst Maries Mutterschaft gibt ihr die Kraft, sich – wenn auch von Schuldgefühlen geplagt – über bestimmte internalisierten Normen hinwegzusetzen. Um das Leben ihres Kindes zu retten, opfert Marie sich physisch und psychisch auf. In gewisser Weise fungiert das Kind aber auch als Mutterersatz. Ihm kann sie geben, was sie der Mutter geben möchte: Liebe, Zärtlichkeit und ewigdauernde Zweisamkeit. Gleichzeitig wird das Dasein des Kindes aber auch funktionalisiert. Es erfüllt die Aufgabe eines Übergangsobjektes im Sinne Winnicotts (1953): Das Töchterchen besitzt die Eigenschaft, Marie über die Abwesenheit der Mutter hinwegtrösten zu können. Kaum einen Monat alt, stirbt das Kind jedoch. Die Nachricht vom Tode der Mutter bricht Maries Lebenswillen endgültig. Überzeugt, durch ihren Lebenswandel zur Mörderin ihrer Mutter geworden zu sein, sieht sie einzig den Selbstmord als Sühne für ihre Schuld. Durch den Wassertod in der Seine kehrt sie in den Mutterschoß zurück.

Die Prosawerke Claire Golls überschauend kann zusammenfassend gesagt werden, daß die männlichen und weiblichen Geschlechterrollen fest umrissen sind und voneinander deutlich zu unterscheiden, vor allem aber unveränderlich sind. Diese Trennung der Geschlechter wiederholt sich in den Denkschemata der Protagonistinnen, die selbst in ihren kühnsten Träumen nicht auf die Idee kämen, die eigene Rollenvorstellung von der traditionell vorgegebenen abweichen zu lassen. Derart in bestehende Machtstrukturen verankert, überantworten sie sich in leidvoller Duldsamkeit ihrem Schicksal.

Die von der Erzählinstanz imaginierten Figurenkonstellationen sind meiner Meinung nach mehr als nur eine Wiedergabe sozialer Verhältnisse. Sie sind auch als Ab-Bilder psychischer Strukturen zu verstehen. So könnte die Zuweisung der Über-Ich-Position an die Mutterfigur im Roman *Ein Mensch ertrinkt* als Ausdruck der komplementären Beziehung zwischen sozialen und psychischen Gegebenheiten der Autorin selbst verstanden werden. Claire Golls Protagonistinnen sind Repräsentanten ihrer eigenen Auffassung des Frau-Seins, scheinen Ab-Bilder ihrer Psyche in einem bestimmten Abschnitt ihres Lebens.<sup>8</sup> Wiewohl ich mir völlig im Klaren darüber bin, daß die Phantasieprodukte der Erzählinstanz nicht ohne weiteres mit der Autorin gleichgesetzt werden können, ist die Versuchung, dies im Falle Claire Golls zu tun besonders groß, da die in den fiktionalen Werken dargestellte Familienkonstellation und die Rollenzuweisung an die Geschlechter denen in ihren autobiographischen Romanen und denen in ihren Memoiren auffallend gleichen. In den autobiographischen Romanen liegt das Hauptaugenmerk auf der Beziehung Clarisses zur Mutter. Das Thema Weiblichkeit ist für sie aufs engste mit dem Konflikt verbunden, der sich für sie aus dem Machtverhältnis, das die Mutter-Kind-Beziehung für sie darstellte, ergibt.<sup>9</sup>

Die Ereignisse werden aus der Sicht des kleinen Mädchens Clarisse geschildert, aber mit den Erfahrungen und Einsichten der erwachsenen Frau gedeutet. Dadurch ergibt sich die Entwicklungsgeschichte einer weiblichen Identität, die vom Imaginären beherrscht wird. In den Memoiren dage-

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<sup>8</sup> Diese Aussage gilt im Prinzip für alle weiblichen Handlungsträger in den Romanen (und den meisten Novellen) Claire Golls, auch wenn deren Geschichten unterschiedliche Erlebnisse aus dem Leben der Autorin zugrunde liegen. So haben z.B. der Roman *Arsenik* (1933) und die Novelle *Myriel* (1919) die Beziehung der Autorin zu Yvan Goll zum Thema. Die Grundlage des Romans *Eine Deutsche in Paris* (1928) bildet die Liebesbeziehung der Autorin zu Jean Painlevé und im Roman *Der Neger Jupiter raubt Europa* (1926) verarbeitet Claire Goll Erlebnisse aus ihrer Ehe mit Heinrich Studer. So sind denn auch die Protagonistinnen wie z.B. Susanne (*Arsenik*), obwohl sie durchaus geschäftstüchtig ist, die Malerin Erika (*Eine Deutsche in Paris*) und Myriel (*Myriel*), die ganz im Banne von Musik und Literatur lebt, nur allzu gern bereit einzugestehen, daß sie als autonome Personen nicht bestehen können und ohne einen Mann an ihrer Seite zur Identitätslosigkeit verurteilt sind.

<sup>9</sup> Es ist zu vermuten, daß auch die jeweilige Geschichte, die in den autobiographischen Werken erzählt wird, nur bestimmte Aspekte der Mutter-Tochter-Beziehung wiedergibt: Zum einen könnte dafür die Diskrepanz zwischen dem sich erinnernden und dem erzählenden/phantasierenden Ich verantwortlich gemacht werden, und zum anderen die Tatsache, daß die sich verändernden Lebensumstände, die jeweils unterschiedliche Anforderungen an das Ich und Über-Ich des Individuums stellen, Einfluß auf den Inhalt der Phantasie haben.

gen wird eine Frau gezeichnet, die fortwährend die eigene Weiblichkeit inszeniert, um in einer männlich dominierten Öffentlichkeit von ihrem Anspruch auf die männliche Position, die sie längst verinnerlicht hat, abzulenken. Mit der Reproduktion des traditionellen weiblichen Rollenverständnisses und der Verherrlichung der Weiblichkeit im biologisch-philosophischen Sinne wird das eigene Begehren, die in dieser Rollenverteilung den Männern vorbehaltenen Eigenschaften für sich einfordern zu wollen, maskiert.

Obwohl Claire Goll in den schweizer Jahren sowohl die Grenzen ihres sozialen Umfeldes als auch die Grenzen der von ihr aufgrund ihrer Sozialisation inkorporierten weiblichen Verhaltensmuster übersteigt, wenn sie sich in der Öffentlichkeit als Vorkämpferin für Emanzipation und Pazifismus profiliert, kann sie sich nicht wirklich aus ihrer sozialen Eingebundenheit in das Großbürgertum und den damit verbundenen Denkstrukturen lösen. Ihr pazifistisch-emanzipatorisches Engagement scheint denn auch eher das Resultat der gewalttätigen Mutter-Tochter-Beziehung ihrer Kinder- und Jugendzeit zu sein, als einer wirklichen politischen Bewußtwerdung.<sup>10</sup> Hinzu kommt, daß – wie auch Vollmer (1993) zurecht bemerkt – «schon allein wegen der [...] hitzigen Konkurrenzkämpfe, Vorurteile gegenüber dichtenden Frauen nicht völlig ausgeräumt gewesen sein dürften» (18). Trotz Freundschaften, Liebesbeziehungen und Eheschließungen hat es wahrscheinlich keine echte Gleichberechtigung der Geschlechter in den expressionistischen Zirkeln gegeben. Die expressionistischen Dichterinnen mußten sich – wie schon ihre Kolleginnen aus der Romantik – in erster Linie mit der Rolle der Muse zufrieden geben. Der Grund dafür, daß Claire Goll im Gegensatz zu vielen ihrer Kolleginnen, dieses Musenimago adoptiert hat, ist mehrschichtig: Die Basis für ihre Handlungsweise bildet zweifellos die nichtgelöste Beziehung zum Mütterlichen. Aufgrund ihrer Individualität und ihrer Sozialisation im Elternhaus hat die Autorin in keiner Phase ihres Lebens wirklich die Möglichkeit gehabt, die Konflikte, die sich für sie aus der Gegenläufigkeit ihrer Ambitionen und der Determinierung des Frau-Seins ergeben, zu lösen. Als sie 1921 die Beziehung zu Yvan Goll mit einer standesamtlichen Trauung besiegelt, wird deutlich, daß die moralische Indoktrination durch die Mutter viel stärker ist als ihr Begehren der Handlungsfähigkeit. Indem sie sich selbst und ihre Kunst ganz in den Dienst Yvan Golls stellt, versucht sie die Kollision der bürgerlichen Rollenvorstellung von Weiblichkeit und der eigenen Bedürfnisse in der Öffentlichkeit zu vermeiden. Wie sehr sie in dem Bemühen aufgeht, ihre Rolle perfekt zu spielen, widerspiegelt die Tatsache, daß die Autorin selbst ihren ProtagonistInnen keine Flucht aus den ihnen aufgezwungenen Lebensmustern erlaubt. Was die Heldin auch tut, ob sie sich freiwillig in ihre Rolle fügt oder gegen die Grenzen, die ihr durch das kulturelle Konstrukt Weiblichkeit gesetzt sind, rebelliert, immer wird es – der griechischen Tragödie gleich – ihr

—<sup>10</sup> Daß Claire Golls Motive für ihr pazifistisch-politisches Engagement vorwiegend persönlich und allgemein-humanistisch gewesen sind, ließe sich mit der Tatsache begründen, daß sie zwar an politischen Diskussionen im männlich-intellektuellen Kreise teilnimmt, reale Kontakte zur Arbeiterbewegung oder zur Frauenbewegung aber nicht vorhanden sind. In ihrem Tagebuch, das Claire Goll von September bis Dezember 1917 in Zürich führt, beschreibt sie eine der politischen Diskussionen folgendermaßen: «Sonntag 14. abends bei der Rubinerin (Rubiner ist verreist). Lernten Schulz bei ihr kennen. Proletarier mit unserer Bildung. Hat einen sehr geistigen Aufsatz im *Zeit-Echo*. [...] Gespräch über Kommunismus: die Rubinerin: "Ich will täglich 3 Stunden Straßen [fegen] im kommunistischen Staat. Jeder muß sich das Leben mit 3 stündiger Arbeit verdienen." (Aber sie scheut sich ein Abendessen zu kochen). Diese Volksbeglückung à tout prix, wider den Willen des Volkes, mit dem Maul, von einer schönen Villa in der Hadlaubstr. 11 aus, hasse ich. Zu solcher Freiheit muß man das Volk nach und nach reif machen. Für dies "nach und nach" soll sie lieber etwas tun. Aber sie will den plötzlichen Umsturz [...] Revolution verlangt sie als bürgerlichstes Ideal.» Auch als Claire Goll sich im Dezember 1918 mit Hingabe an den politischen Unruhen in Berlin beteiligt, scheint dies eher aus Eigennutz denn aus politischer Überzeugung zu geschehen: «Mir gefiel diese Atmosphäre von Gewalt und Unordnung. Mit Genuß dachte ich jetzt an den Schrecken meiner Mutter, an ihr entsetztes Zusammenzucken, wenn sie die Verwünschungen gegen die Reichen mit anhören mußte. Ich fühlte mich den Massen verbunden, die dem Bürgertum Angst einjagten» (Goll 1980, 94f.). Das Tagebuch befindet sich im Deutschen Literaturarchiv in Marbach unter Nr. 78.1117.

Untergang. Für eine gelungene Identifikation der Hauptperson mit ihrer weiblichen Geschlechtsidentität ist in den fiktionalen Werken Claire Golls kein Platz. So betrachtet ist es kaum mehr verwunderlich, daß das Leben aller ProtagonistInnen mit Selbstmord endet.

**Arbeiterinnen** (1918, aus: *Mitwelt*)

Schwestern, um die Frühlingshügel eurer Schultern  
Hängt ihr des Alltags Pelerinen  
Und euer Kleid ist morgenrotumsäumt,  
Wenn ihr euch durch die graue Vorstadt träumt.

Von den Lawinen der Fabrikgebirge  
Ist euer Blumenleib zerdrückt  
Und euer rotes Herz verbleicht  
Von keiner Flöte, keinem Traum erreicht.

Ihr seht nichts von der Sonne Bachanal,  
Und Firmamente nicht aus blauem Lenz  
Nicht Vogelchor um Abende geschürzt;  
Denn ihr seid in die Hölle abgestürzt.

Schwestern, um die schwarzen Hügel eures Elends  
Häng ich meines Sonntags Feiermantel  
Sein Scharlachwurf am Horizont zerschellt,  
Wenn er uns trägt zum Fluge aus der Welt.

**Junge Akrobatin** (1918, aus: *Mitwelt*)

Bunter Vogel du, der zwischen Welten  
Über Abend, Stadt und Staunen schwebt,  
Schwing dich auf dem Trapez  
Über dich selbst durch die Zeit.  
Deine Schenkel flattern zitternd von Zweig zu Zweig  
Und dein Herz von Mensch zu Mensch.  
Goldne Flitterlibelle, deine schwebende Sehnsucht  
Fällt nie durch die gierigen Augen ins Herz.  
Armer Stern, der allnächtlich aufgehen muß  
Am kleinen bezahlten Himmel der Gaukler.  
Der jeden Abend abstürzt in die Arme der rohen Athleten,  
In den giftigen grauen Zigeunerwagen,  
Der dich gefangen durch das unendliche Leben fährt.

**Krankenschwestern** (aus: *Die Aktion* 8 (1918), 324)

Ihr, aller Betten Mütter!  
Ihr weißen Vögel hinter dem Sturm!  
Blut fängt ihr auf in den Schalen eurer Herzen  
Die ihr gütig an die Wunden hält.  
Weiße Lilien, ihr blüht aus dem Mord!  
Ihr seid das Gebet am Eingang und Ausgang  
des Schlafes,  
Ihr seid der kühlende Schnee auf den bunten  
Fliederblumen,  
Die aus hektischen Todesgärten brechen.  
Der Regen des Mitleids, der eure knospenden  
Seelen öffnet,  
Fällt weich wie Erinnerung über den Mann:  
Ihr seid die Mutter während der Kinderkrankheit,  
Ihr seid die Schwester der Knabenzeit,  
Ihr seid seinem Schmerz die große Geliebte.

**Frau** (1922, aus: *Lyrische Films*)

Auf mich wartete die gütige Hand  
Des Freundes – .  
Aber ich fuhr in die Rue de la Paix  
Und kaufte mir Handschuh  
Aus blauem Ziegenleder.

Auf dem kalten Boulevard  
Ließ ich ihn frierend allein  
Mit der Dämmerung  
Und ging ins Kino,  
Ins: «Schicksal einer Verirrten.»

Und nachts verschenkte ich das Lächeln,  
Das ihm gehört,  
Und überhörte seinen Schrei,  
Den einsamen,  
Beim Tango.

Während ein Stück seines Sterns  
Demütig zur Erde fiel  
Draußen in der Allnacht,  
Und Uhren Unwiederbringliches schlugen,  
Schlief ich.

**Frau** (1922, aus: *Die Antirose* 1967)

Auf mich wartete die gütige Hand  
Des Freundes, Mannes, Geliebten-  
Aber ich fuhr in die Rue de la Paix,  
Zog einen irdischen «Ausverkauf»  
Dem himmlischen seiner Träume vor.

Auf dem kalten Boulevard  
Ließ ich ihn frierend allein  
Mit der Traurigkeit  
Und ging ins Kino,  
Begleitet, Zeit verspielend.

Und abends verschenkte ich das Lächeln  
Das ihm gehört  
Und überhörte seinen Schrei,  
Den Einsamen,  
Beim Tango

Während der ätzende Mond  
Ein Loch in sein Herz brannte  
Und Uhren Unwiederbringliches schlugen,  
Draußen in der Allnacht,  
Schlief ich.

**Du - Ich** (aus: *Der Sturm* 13 (1922),18)

Wir sind traumblutig  
Vom selben Stern  
Und einer Dämmerung  
Aus Ur  
Du und ich.  
Durch die Zeit  
Durch den Raum  
Durch die Welt stürz ich mich  
In Dich  
Knabe - Gott  
Sinke wieder  
Unendlich  
Jahrtausend  
Das Ur.  
.

**Du-Ich** (1922, aus: *Die Antirose* 1967)

Wir sind traumblumig  
Vom selben Licht  
Von gleicher Dämmerung  
Aus Sternasche  
Schon vor unsrer Geburt  
Waren unsre Wesen eins  
Und nach dem Tod  
Werden wir uns wieder suchen  
  
Durch die Zeit  
Durch den Raum  
Stürz ich mich  
In dich  
Knabe-Gott  
Sinke wieder  
Unendlich  
Ins Ur

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# Notes sur le rêve: À propos d'Henri Michaux

FREDERICO PEREIRA (\*)

On le sait: Freud nous fait comprendre le rêve en en faisant l'expression d'un espace et d'un fonctionnement à l'intérieur de cet espace.

Le Rêve nous parle de la structure de l'appareil psychique, et nous rend clairs ses mouvements. Au fond, le désir. Ensuite, le refoulement. Refoulement condamné, en quelque sorte, à l'échec; et avec cet échec c'est le désir qui fait retour: le retour du refoulé! Sous forme de symptôme, de lapsus... de rêve. C'est cela le *travail du rêve*.

Est-ce que cela a un sens?

Le rêve est énigmatique, il ne donne pas son sens, sa signification nous échappe... Nous disons: «Ce n'est qu'un rêve...». Et pourtant... Et pourtant dans ce «ce n'est qu'un rêve...» prend corps un malaise, une peur, un refus de l'affliction qui se ferait présente dans le soi si le rêve était pris sinon à la lettre, du moins au sérieux.

L'âme romantique voyait dans le rêve une communication. Le sens du rêve était présent dans le rêve même: sa surface disait directement sa profondeur. Dévoiler le sens revenait à l'écouter attentivement, au delà du désordre de l'esprit. Pourrait-on d'ailleurs parler de «dévoiler» le sens du rêve?... Ne suppose pas ce geste ou cette attitude qu'un *voile* se fait présent qui cache le message du rêve?...

G. de Nerval disait:

*«C'est ainsi que je m'encourageais à une audacieuse tentative. Je résolu de fixer le rêve et d'en connaître le secret. "Pourquoi, me dis-je, ne point forcer enfin ces portes mystiques, armé de toute ma volonté, et dominer mes sensations au lieu de les subir? N'est-il pas possible de dompter cette chimère attrayante et redoutable, d'imposer une règle à ces esprits des nuits qui se jouent de notre raison. Le sommeil occupe le tiers de notre vie. Il est consolation des peines de nos journées ou la peine de leurs plaisirs; mais je n'ai jamais éprouvé que le sommeil fût un repos. Après un engourdissement de quelques minutes une vie nouvelle commence, affranchie des conditions du temps et l'espace, et*

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pareille sans doute à celle qui nous attend après la mort. Qui sait s'il n'existe pas un lieu entre ces deux existences et s'il n'est pas possible à l'âme de le nouer dès à présent? De ce moment, je m'appliquais à chercher le sens de mes rêves, et cette inquiétude influa sur mes réflexions de l'état de veille. Je crus comprendre qu'il existait entre le monde externe et le monde interne un lien; que l'inattention ou le désordre d'esprit en faussaient seuls les rapports apparents – et qu'ainsi s'expliquait la bizarrerie de certains tableaux, semblables à ces regrets grimaçants d'objets réels qui s'agitent sur l'eau troublée» (G. de Nerval, 1855).

Voici donc que le rêve en même temps qu'il nous fait voir un *autre monde*, assure la communication entre cet *autre monde* et *ce monde ci*. Pour en voir les lieux, en saisir les rapports il faut être attentif, et regarder avec un esprit ordonné.

Freud ne nous dit pas que le sens du rêve est le lien qu'il établit avec un autre monde ou le lien qu'il tisse avec une autre scène. Le rêve est *l'autre scène*. Et à l'intérieur de cette scène, de ce théâtre intérieur., des *transformations* ont lieu. Des transformations destinées à accorder «les tendances et le système» (Freud, 1900).

Le sens du rêve, alors, est le *processus de transformation* qui le fait naître. L'idée de processus de production s'impose ici.

Mais dire que le sens du rêve est son processus de production, c'est à dire, le travail du rêve qui fait que le désir advienne à ses *images* oniriques, c'est dévaluer ce que dans le rêve se fait *présent*: c'est dévaluer la surface visible du rêve. Le sens n'est pas dans l'image, il est dans l'en – deçà de l'image, il est dans le mouvement qui fait le désir advenir à l'image... *qui fait le désir se faire image* (?...)

C'est ici qu'a résidence le fondement de la différenciation entre le contenu manifeste et le contenu latent du rêve.

Le contenu manifeste, puisqu'il est le résultat du travail du rêve, ne peut être pris à la lettre, et les liens qu'en lui se font jour, logiques soient-ils, sont, en quelque sorte, à ignorer. Le contenu manifeste est destiné à la *fragmentation* – tel est ce qu'on dit être le «dogme freudien».

Fragmentation qui permettra de restituer les unités du rêve, dans le contenu manifeste condensées, qui seront le point de départ d'une *déconstruction associative*.

L'association libre, théoriquement, est le processus inverse du processus de production du rêve, qui suit inversement sinon les chaînes de l'élaboration du rêve, du moins les grandes régions sémantiques que la production du rêve a parcouru.

L'association libre permet d'aller au delà de la répression, en restituant les représentations refoulées qui sont en quelque sorte le *moteur* du rêve.

Une telle visée dynamique du rêve, bien entendu, a permis à Freud de dépasser les limites du romantisme et du symbolisme, lui a permis de vaincre les obstacles que toutes les mantiques avaient, depuis des millénaires, affrontés.

Et pourtant... est-ce que *tout rêve* obéit à ce mouvement du refoulement, échec du refoulement, retour du refoulé? Est-ce que tout rêve a comme sens ultime la *réalisation déguisée d'un désir*?

Voyons ce rêve: «une rose noire avec un bouton très rouge.»

Rêve-image, comme beaucoup de rêves de ce type, qui ne produisent pas non plus de mouvements associatifs, et qui, cependant, donnent au sujet l'impression d'une *immensité de sens*, et à celui qui l'écoute la conviction qu'une communication profonde, intra- et inter-subjective, avec un tel rêve-image, a eu lieu. Ici, pas de réalisation de désir – et pas de fonction cohésive en mouvement non plus. (H. Kohut, 1971).

Seulement:... *une rose noire avec un bouton très rouge...*

Plusieurs associations pourraient être produites par celui-qui-écoute, mais une seule s'impose, à lui et sujet qui a fait de rêve: *ce rêve-image est une description non conflictuelle d'un état du self* (deuil et reprise vitale, renaissance).

Ce rêve sert à élucider cette idée qu'il y a des rêves, que j'appelle *emblématiques*, qui n'ont pas dans leur centre un processus de réalisation de désir, qui ne sont pas non plus des *self-state dreams*, et qui ont comme principale fonction *l'élaboration d'un paysage du soi*.

Donc, au delà du conflit, une fonction qui produit des paysages psychiques.

Pas de censure, du moins au premier plan, à ce niveau, pas de déformation substitutive.

Seulement: *production, élaboration d'images*.

*(Qu'est-ce que l'image, cependant? Une théorie de l'image est centrale pour la compréhension de ces rêves-images, de ces processus-image...)*

*Ce qui est là dans le rêve, dans ce type de rêves, est là. Il ne se déguise pas, il se donne à voir, il est pure présence et non pas un être là qui seulement renvoie à une absence...*

On pourrait ajouter (mais est-ce que cela nous avancerait beaucoup?...): Dans ces rêves aussi, l'émotion ou l'affect est transformé en objet de pensée. Ce qui produit cette transformation, faute de mieux, on l'appellerait, avec Bion, fonction  $\alpha$ . Ce qui n'est pas *alphabétisé* par l'appareil de rêve- $\alpha$  resterait encapsulé à l'intérieur du Self (objets autistiques, ou capsules du Soi), on serait expulsé dans la direction d'un *toilet-breast*; on apparaîtrait sous forme d'*objets bizarres*. Actions du clivage et de l'identification projective...

Cependant, la théorie de la fonction  $\alpha$  rend possible de distinguer les *rêves élaboratifs*, décrits par la théorie freudienne, et les *rêves évacuatifs*, marqués par le clivage et l'identification projective. Elle permet plus difficilement de comprendre les *self-state dreams*, et paraît impuissante à préciser les mouvements, qui donnent naissance au rêve-image ou, d'une façon plus générale, au rêve emblématique... (*C'est toujours une théorie de l'image qui est insuffisamment développée...*)

Quoiqu'il en soit, tout rêve – et en particulier le rêve-image – attire l'attention sur une fonction productrice d'images, que Sami-Ali a bien désigné par fonction imaginaire.

Ce n'est pas le processus de construction d'une représentation qui est en cause, mais la fonction qui rend possible l'avènement de toute *représentation-en-tant-qu'image*.

La théorie de refoulement, dis que nous pensons aussi à la fonction imaginaire, s'élargit: le refoulement peut s'abattre sur un ensemble représentatif, on bien il peut s'abattre sur des *régions fonctionnelles, plus ou moins larges, de l'imaginaire*. Dans ce dernier cas, le mouvement imagétique du rêve est bloqué, même si l'activation biologique correspondant au rêve est régulièrement activée.

Mais l'important ici c'est qui à côté du mouvement du refoulement, échec du refoulement, retour du refoulé après de multiples transformations (déguisements), il y a lieu pour penser une *fonction productrice d'images, un espace imaginaire* (Sami-Ali, 1974) qui n'est pas nécessairement volumétrisé de la manière caractéristique de l'espace mental tel que Freud l'a conçu dans *L'Interpretation des Rêves*.

En particulier, l'*organisme-rêve* vu comme expression d'une fonction imaginaire peut être pris au « *pied de la lettre*», conçu comme un langage autre seulement, sans qu'aucune divaluation de sa surface visible intervienne nécessairement. En particulier, *comprendre un rêve*, dès lors, *peut ne pas exiger sa fragmentation et déclenchement associatif*, le rêve pouvant apparaître comme pur présent, pure description d'un paysage interne.

Il ne faut pas oublier que Freud lui-même a été sensible à certains des aspects de rêve qui viennent d'être évoqués, même s'il s'est toujours concentré sur la dynamique du refoulement, echec de refoulement et retour du refoulé.

Non seulement une fonction essentiellement élaborative de rêve a été prise en compte par Freud (cf. Abriss), mais, très tôt, il a reconnu des processus descriptifs de l'état interne, en particulier des états de passage de la veille au sommeil. C'est le cas des phénomènes fonctionnels de Silberer, qui ne peuvent pas être fragmentés, sinon artificiellement, et ne donnent pas non plus naissance à des suites associatives. Ils disent ce qu'ils ont à dire d'une autre façon, par le langage des images.

La théorie du symbolisme nous pousse dans la même direction, puisque les symboles ne produisent pas non plus des fragmentations-associations, ou s'ils le font c'est de manière artificielle et sans ajouter de l'information.

Le grand intérêt de Freud en ce qui concerne le symbole nous pousse à recentrer notre attention sur des unités de sens qui ont un sens *en tant que telles*, indépendamment de tout processus de fabrication de signification. Penser le symbole c'est, en quelque sorte, penser un langage autre, fait d'unités et de processus différents de ceux qui caractérisent la représentation au sens strict.

Finalement, Freud lui-même a souligné que tout rêve a un point, ou un réseau de points où toute dynamique associative s'arrête, un point ou réseau de points qui font obstacle au travail interprétatif, à la notion même d'interprétation. Région à haute densité, elle peut être *vécue*, elle ne peut être dite: c'est l'*ombilic du rêve*.

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Or ces réflexions, faites à partir et à l'intérieur de la psychanalyse, trouvent un écho très vivant chez Henri Michaux, et spécialement dans son ouvrage de 1969, *Façons d'endormi Façons d'éveillé*.

*Façons d'endormi Façons d'éveillé*, consacré au rêve, «à ce sujet particulièrement, qui, gardé par des techniciens, ne tolère plus l'innocence»<sup>1</sup>. Cela veut dire plutôt que face au rêve – et à beaucoup d'autres choses de notre vie – il faut *construire l'innocence*. Un excessif savoir rend opaque ce qui pourrait bien ne pas l'être, ou ce qui en tout cas pourrait l'être moins si l'ignorance – pour évoquer M. Blanchot – pouvait encore avoir un peu ses droits. Construire l'innocence face au rêve c'est, en premier lieu, dire:

«*En rêve, simplement je suis*»<sup>1</sup>. Je vis «actuel», un sempiternel actuel. Il n'y a guère de «plus tard», et juste ce qu'il faut d'«auparavant» pour qu'il y ait cet «à présent que je vis, ou auquel j'assiste» (H. Michaux, op. cit.).

On peut expliquer le rêve, le rendre clair par un mouvement secondaire de compréhension. Mais c'est déjà le perdre, le transformer, *en faire autre chose*, un énigme par exemple, une *énigme-instrument*, quelque chose qui va servir à... alors que du rêve on pourrait dire que, par essence, il ne sert à rien.

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<sup>1</sup> C'est moi qui souligne.

«Les explications sur les rêves sont à l’infini, quel que soit le système de déchiffrement, il répond et même semble se constituer, pour répondre dans le sens où on interroge» (H. Michaux, op. cit.).

«... et même semble se constituer pour répondre dans le sens où on interroge...», n’est pas que cela signifie que c’est l’herméneutique du rêve qui le constitue?... que c’est l’art de l’interroger qui le définit en tant que réponse possible?...

On pourrait dire: *le sens du rêve est qu’il peut faire du sens... Pourrait-on le dire?...* Dans quelques unes de ses couches, le rêve dit ce qu’il dit – mais il y a certainement d’autres régions du rêve où il est constitué rétroactivement, où il répond pro-activement, où il répond donc à des questions qui seront posées seulement plus tard... (*Nachträglichkeit...*). *Mais dans le rêve, dans son tissu même, pas de “plus tard”, pas ou presque pas d’après-avant*», dit Michaux.

L’«en avant» ne l’impressionne pas. Le rêveur est rétroverti.

Même *sa façon à lui* est, avant tout, *sa façon d’être*. Il y a du déguisement, c’est sûr, mais il y a avant tout *une façon* (d’endormi).

«Ce n’est pas par ruse, précaution, qu’il ne dit pas les choses carrément, *c’est par sa constitution.*»<sup>2</sup>

Lui, qui se meut dans l’analogie, il peut tout faire, sauf s’empêcher de rebondir et de sauter d’une image à l’autre.

Il ne reste jamais à quia. Il enchaîne. Tout le fait songer à quelque chose. Radoteur, surtout ramenant à des vieilleries qui furent préoccupantes il y a longtemps ..... Serait-ce être enfant? Enfant? Peut-on appeler enfant le plus vieil occupant du corps, le survivant à l’aveugle résistance, l’indélogeable, l’incroyable? N’est-il pas plutôt l’«ancien»? (H. Michaux, op. cit.)

Enfant ou «ancien», le rêve est l’*autre*, non pas dans le sens de ce par rapport à quoi *je* me fais exister, mais dans le sens d’*une autre façon*, pour moi, *de simplement être*. «... *C’est sa constitution...*» C’est ma constitution en tant que *double*. Le *Je* de la nuit et le *Je* de la veille, ou les deux *Moi* qui se renvoient des matières (cf. J. Guillaumin, 1979).

Si alors le *Moi* de la veille est pris dans les mouvements indéfinis de la rêverie, sur quoi irait le *Moi* nocturne rêver?

«Vastes, variés, repris cent fois, tantôt avec la paix d’un lac, tantôt animés, excités, dynamisés, bouillonnants de vie, mes changeants rêves de jour s’adoptaient souplement à mes besoins. Je m’y démenais en actes imaginaires, je m’y adonais. J’y vivais, attrapant adversaires et le rêve lui-même à bras-le-corps. Je m’y abandonnais, y vivais, magnifiant il est vrai, plus que moi-même magnifique.

A ma manière, ils me satisfaisaient, utilisaient mes trop-pleins et aussi, convenablement transfigurés, mes manques. Dès lors, quelle nécessité de rêves de nuit? Il ne leur restait rien à faire. Voilà pourquoi je boudais les rêves de nuit, ces parents pauvres... avec lesquels on est obligatoirement passif, qu’on ne peut manier, où l’on ne peut choisir, lutter, intervenir, modifier et indéfiniment reprendre et remodeler, où l’on ne peut jouir des détours en force, les précieux retours en force, des rêveries.

Le rythme opposé à l’apathie, les courses opposées à la paralysie, la féerie opposée aux cauchemars.

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<sup>2</sup> C’est moi qui souligne.

Au lieu d'un ego malmené, dénigré, amoindri, un ego comblé, un tonus réglable, des émotions de toutes sortes, provoquées, poussées à fond, insensées, des êtres immenses, aux prérogatives inoïes, aux pouvoirs illimités, aux attributs singuliers. Je n'allais pas échanger cela pour des rêves de nuit. Le soir, avant ma nuit, je faisais mes rêves; ou aussitôt *après*, profitant de la langueur restante et des lieux encore indéfinis (H. Michaux, op. cit.).

Les rêves de nuit – cauchemars exceptés – paraissaient alors, dit Michaux, des *natures mortes* (!).

L'absorption du sujet par sa rêverie, dans sa rêverie, à l'intérieur de sa rêverie évoque aussi la *disparition*. Cette omniprésence de la rêverie fait penser à quelque chose de dissociatif (cf. Winnicott) – mais il faut ne pas être trop conclusif.

Une différence entre rêve et rêverie, mise en évidence par Michaux, est le degré de passivité de l'être subjectif. La rêverie, le sujet la construit – ou en a l'illusion –; le rêve, il le subit.

En plus: le support non imagétique de la rêverie peut être (est) très grand, alors que dans le rêve tout doit revenir à l'image. *C'est dans l'image, par l'image que la pensée se fait rêve – et l'image est par essence multiple.*

Le rêve *paraît* nature morte *aussi* parce que, *en tant qu'image*, il est du *semblant*. Tout est dans tout, tout ressemble à tout et dans la totalité du rêve c'est le Soi qui se rassemble en tant que pure *dispersion*.

À une indéfinie prolifération d'objets (chacun double du Soi) s'ajoute la construction d'espaces capables de les contenir, mais ce qui est vu ce ne sont pas les espaces mais plutôt les objets.

Mais même s'ils ne sont pas vus les espaces sont pensés, objets d'intuition: «je fais un espace...». «Un espace d'attaque et défense, un espace de violence...» «... je fais un autre espace...» ... *douceur, horizontalité, égalité, harmonie...* «...Il faut un troisième espace... pour englober les précédents» (H. Michaux, op. cit.).

Que mettre à l'intérieur de cet Espace? Au fond, *n'importe quoi*. Tout est objet possible, tout est possible image. Image à l'intérieur des rêves, image à partir d'où le rêve se construit.

«... Rêvasser à partir de rien, du rien en soi qui est presque tout, c'est à quoi il faut toujours revenir... bien entraîné, on peut rêver à partir de n'importe quoi: d'un village, d'un visage, d'une poire, d'une mouche, d'une feuille, d'une vitre, d'un pavé... mais pas de mise en vitrine, pas communiquer avec l'extérieur» (H. Michaux, op. cit.).

Les êtres du rêve, les espaces du rêve – voilà des *champs de force*.

... *visage, poire, mouche, village, feuille, pavé...* peu importe, car tout est façon d'être du soi dans sa façon d'endormi... rien n'est plus narcissique que le rêve.

Objets multiples, multiples espaces, le rêve est aussi *objet* (cf. Pontalis), ce qui à mon sens veut dire exactement: *objet*, chose avec laquelle il est possible de jouer, à l'intérieur de lui, et *après*, pendant que le rêve a cours et dans le mouvement qui en fait mémoire de rêve. Réseau il est point de multiples départs, puits qui communique avec le centre du Soi (ou avec l'illusion d'un centre du Soi...), irradiation...

Cependant: dans l'absence de mots, avant tout. Vivre le rêve, respirer le rêve, ne pas le capturer dans les constructions du langage.

«Sans paroles, je veux des masses psychiques.» Je dirais: *de pures images qui sont le chemin vers le sans mot et sans image.*

«Vertu de l'image unique, de l'image fixe, de l'image modèle, son pouvoir restaurateur, son pouvoir d'exclusion.

Vertu de l'image qui va préparer de sans l'image. Mais avec la même force, le même prédominance.

VIDE-SUBSTANCE» (H. Michaux, op. cit.)

Et au delà des mots, au delà même des images, c'est le *rythme* pur que l'on (re)trouve, la rythmicité de toute chose, à commencer par celle du corps *unthought known* (Ch. Bollas). Comme celui qui purement respire... Comme la chose qui *va* et *revient*... Comme un *fort-da* qui serait encore du *non-pensé*...

«Pour moi après tant d'années, le rêve assouvit encore un désir inapaisé de mouvements,... me faisant vivre surtout de gestes, de rythmes, d'actes» (H. Michaux, op. cit.).

Et cela *en face de l'autre* qui est celui qui voit le rêve, celui qui pense le rêve.  
Dans le silence.

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