LITERATURE AND PSYCHOLOGY

Proceedings of the
Ninth International Conference on Literature and Psychology
Lisbon • July 3-6 • 1992

Edited by **Frederico Pereira**

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

Cover Painting: «Olha o Sangue no Mármore Circula», by *Cruzeiro Seixas*

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Photocomposed by *Instituto Superior de Psicologia Aplicada* — Lisbon

Printed by *Guide - Artes Gráficas, Lda* — Lisbon

Depósito Legal nº 63361/93

ISBN 972-95486-2-5

1993

NINTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

ON

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Center for the Study of Psychoanalysis and Culture (SUNY-Buffalo, USA)
Institute for the Psychological Study of the Arts (University of Florida, USA)
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Janus Pannonius University (Pécs, Hungary)
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Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Littéraire (Université Paris VII, France)

Published by Instituto Superior de Psicologia Aplicada, Lisbon

9TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LITERATURE AND PSYCHOLOGY

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The Psychology in Literature-and-Psychology

NORMAN N. HOLLAND (*)

The question I am asking is, What should be the psychology in literature-and-psychology? What psychology should we use when we use psychology to talk about literature and literary problems?

As I see it, there are two psychologies abroad in the world of literature-and-psychology. By the way, a very large world that is, to judge from the number of people at our international meetings and the geographical spread from which they come. And, of course, psychology is itself a vast enterprise.

Let me focus my question by concentrating on the subject that has fascinated me, lo, these many years. Reading. What goes on in people's minds when they read? More precisely, what happens to transfer the black squiggles from the pages of the book open on my desk to ideas, beliefs, feelings — a whole experience in my mind. How does reading happen? That is surely a psychological question.

When I look at the world of literature-and-psychology, I see two psychologies that people use to answer it. Or perhaps I should say two groups of psychologists, since psychology is, finally, a human activity, not something handed down to us like the tablets of Moses. One group is the regular psychologists, who have accumulated a vast literature based on a great many different experiments with reading. The other group consists of literary critics and philosophers who have also accumulated a vast literature, but theirs is based primarily on introspection or on impressions of students and other critics reading.

I would like to suggest that when we literary people ask how reading works or when we ask some other question in literature-and-psychology in general, we should look to both groups. We should not confine ourselves to the second group, even though most of us here belong to that second group. I certainly do, for example.

But consider the first group, the psychologists. What do they tell us? They purport to tell us precisely what happens when we read and how literature acts on us. And their answer is, Literature doesn't act on us at all. *We* act.

Moreover, when they say this, they say it with a truly astonishing unanimity. When one looks into the psychological literature, one finds a remarkable consensus. Starting in the 1970s, the psychologists give us a *constructive* view of perception, cognition, recognition, memory, and the many other psychological processes wee use when we read (Laberge & Samuels 1977; Crowder 1982; Taylor & Taylor 1983; Smith 1988). We actively *construe* the world around us, including the books we read. Words do not simply do things to us.

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We *use* words to do things to ourselves. We *use* words to make things happen in our minds.

We do this by asking questions of the text. We bring hypotheses to bear. We carry in our minds certain schemata or scripts or scenarios for how the world works. We know how restaurants or football games or learned conferences are conducted. We know how to use syntax or just simple words. And we ask questions of the text based on those schemata. We hear the answers the text makes. Then, depending on whether the answers fit our hypotheses or not, we continue that line of inquiry or start a new one. All this happens of course, unconsciously, rapidly, and almost automatically — until the psychologists begin trying to see the details of the process.

How do they see these details? By experiments with actual readers. Let me describe some of them. Consider the following sentences: «If the balloons popped, the sound wouldn't be able to carry since everything would be too far away from the correct floor. A closed window would also prevent the sound from carrying, since most buildings tend to be well insulated. Since the whole operation depends on a steady flow of electricity, a break in the middle of the wire would cause problems» (Bransford & Johnson 1972).

Now, in these sentences, grammar, syntax, and vocabulary are all perfectly clear. There is nothing ambiguous. If you give these sentences to people to read, they can of course read them, but they cannot tell you what they mean, they cannot remember them, they cannot paraphrase them. In short, they simply do not «get» them.

Suppose, however, *before* they read the sentences, you give them a cartoon that shows a young man on the ground serenading a young lady high up in an apartment house. He is serenading her by floating the loudspeaker of his electric guitar up on a set of balloons. Then, no problem. Try it. Read them again. See? People have no trouble at all understanding the sentences, paraphrasing them, remembering them, and so on.

The point is that we can *only* understand the story if we have a construct that fits the words. The words do not determine the meaning. We *make* the meaning, using a construct to make sense of the words. We are active readers. We construe the text. Or, as it is sometimes put, what we already know determines what we will come to know.

But we do not draw on schemata just for what we usually call «obscure» texts. We use them all the time. And it is not difficult to see these constructs in yourself. Consider these three sentences:

> The baby kicked the ball.
> The halfback kicked the ball.
> The golfer kicked the ball (Anderson & Ortony 1975).

Although the words — the signifiers, if you will — *ball* and *kicked* do not change, you get in each sentence an entirely different notion. You change your idea of what the ball looked like, what the kick looked like, and what the style and motive of the kicker was. And it is easy to see why. In each case you bring a different construct or schema to bear, and in each case the meaning of the words changes. The signifiers do not signify the same signified.

One of the more rigorous techniques for exploring reading measures the time it takes a subject to recognize a word. For example, imagine someone reading this pair of sentences. «There was something wrong with the car. John raised the hood and tried to adjust the window.» Comprehension of those last six letters is distinctly slower than the same six letters in other, more appropriate contexts. Why? Because the reader has developed hypotheses about what is wrong from the preceding phrases. «Window» does not fit those hypotheses and requires further mental processing — more time (Perfetti 1985). Even at the level of the interpretation of letters, there is always some constructive activity by the reader. In general, of course, this psychological approach shows the error of the old nineteenth-century concept of signifieds.

One of the most common of these experiments is the so-called «cloze» technique. The

subject of the experiment is asked to read a text with some of the words blanked out (Hunt 1985). That way, you can tell from the guesses the subject supplies what hypotheses he or she is forming. The situation is analogous to your and my reading a text with a word in it that we do not know (if that is possible in a group so intelligent as ours). We work out the meaning of the word from the context. That is, we apply guesses and hypotheses until the context tells us our hypothesis is right. The cloze experiments create a situation in which there is no signifier at all, but we nevertheless find a signified.

Another technique, called miscuing, asks readers to repeat a sentence from memory. Often the subjects will replace an unfamiliar word with one more familiar. For example, in an English sentence like «I switched off the headlamp of the car», American subjects will remember or, perhaps, read the unfamiliar English «headlamp» as the American «headlight». Again, it is not the text that determines the reading. Rather, the reader applies a schema from the reader's mind to the words on the page. It is not the signified, «lamp», that governs, but the hypothesis the reader supplies. No part of the reading transaction is simply caused by the text.

Similarly, subjects will often simplify the grammar to more familiar forms. Consider these two sentences:

> The truck driver told the waitress he'd like to have some coffee.
> The truck driver told the waitress he'd like to have a new job.

When asked to repeat the sentences, readers often remember the first sentence as, *The truck driver asked the waitress for some coffee.* But they never interpret the second sentence as a request. Again, what the signifier *told* signifies depends on what the reader brings to the word.

Likewise, in retelling a whole story, subjects will fill in missing episodes or even alter episodes to fit more familiar patterns. These experiments go as far back as the famous experiments of Sir Frederic Bartlett in 1932 who got English students to retell African folktales. The English readers thoroughly edited the stories as they remembered them, trying to make them fit Western ideas (Bartlett 1932).

Hypotheses. If you ask people to say into a tape recorder what they are thinking or doing as they interpret a poem or a story, you find a constant stream of hypotheses about the text (Kintgen 1983; Kintgen & Holland 1984). They are hypotheses about the meaning of words, the relations of parts, the recurrences of images and themes, the relationships of sounds, and so on.

Some of these hypotheses are confirmed and lead to further hypotheses. Some hypotheses fail, and the reader must try a new guess. But it all rests on the reader's trying out hypotheses, and these are not just hypotheses about words or about syntactic structures but also about the world in general.

With that in mind, we can answer a question that focuses very precisely on how the squiggles on the page become an experience in your mind. How do ambiguous texts work? Again, the answer is, *They* aren't ambiguous, you are. For example, I give you the sentence, «Rocky slowly got up from the mat, planning his escape» (Anderson 1977). You probably think it refers to someone in prison. Maybe Sylvester Stallone about to elude his Viet Cong captors. But if you are a member of a wrestling team (as in one experiment), you are likely to think the sentence refers to a wrestler trying to break the hold of his opponent. The point is, in a so-called ambiguous text, it is not the text that is ambiguous. The ambiguity arises because we can use two different and inconsistent hypotheses for the text, and we can make sense of it with either. Ordinary people have one hypothesis, wrestlers have another, and it is not the text that decides what the meaning is, but the hypothesis. The answers we get in this world depend on the questions we ask, and the questions we ask depend in part on the kind of people we are.

If we take that idea one step further, we can say that who you are determines what you read. The things you know, like wrestling, the usual ways you construe things, the kind of life you are living and have lived — these give rise to some hypotheses and not others. These hypotheses are the basis from which you make meanings out of texts. Here again, there is evidence, this time from an unexpected source.

Just recently, brain psychologists have been able to photograph the brain activity involved in recalling a word (Hilts 1991). The photographs showed that remembering a word not only comes from the hippocampus, deep in the center of the brain, where memories originate, but from the prefrontal cortex, the center of perception, and from the visual center at the back of the brain. Remembering a word is more like perception than taking something out of a particular storage space.

This discovery is important for understanding reading because it is further evidence that words do not act on a passive human being. Rather, we actively construe what we are newly reading in terms of what we already know. And what we know includes what we know about the world. We do not read with just some specialized language function as Jakobson, for example, thought.

In other words, the hypotheses you carry around determine how you read. In other words, who are determines how you read.

That's why why this line of psychological research connects to important progressive trends in literary criticism. I am thinking of feminist criticism where it is the beginning of wisdom to recognize that a woman is likely to read Ernest Hemingway differently from a man (Flynn & Schweickart 1986). I am thinking of gay criticism which proceeds from the obvious fact that a homosexual man will read Genet differently from a heterosexual man or a homophobe. In general, reader-response theory reinforces the whole movement toward what is called in the United States, cultural diversity.

I might add that reader-response teaching has become very popular with American professors of literature, much more so than I had thought. A recent survey by the Modern Language Association of America showed that some 44% of teachers said they were influenced by reader-response criticism as contrasted to 21% for poststructuralism or 9% for semiotics or, at the more popular end of the scale, 60% by feminism (Modern Language Association 1991).

Let me summarize this vast body of psychological research — and it is vast, believe me. I asked our librarian to run a computer search of the psychological literature for the last eight years on the term «reading». The computer turned up over 5000 items.

Let me summarize this vast body of research by a single memory. The one I would suggest is my favorite example of an unusual reader response, a man described by the sexologist Havelock Ellis. This man said his favorite novel was *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Why? Because he was a sadomasochist, and at every whippng he got an erection. This is not, I think, what Harriet Beecher Stowe intended. Or perhaps you would prefer a single phrase from George Dillon (1978). The words in texts are not *constraints*, but *clues*.

The constructive reader — that is the picture the psychologists give us. I would like to add another part — from psychoanalysis — and of course the psychologists will have none of that, because psychoanalysis, they are convinced. is unscientific. But perhaps the task that psychoanalysis has assigned itself does not admit of being scientific in the ordinary sense (Holland 1985, Part IV).

At any rate, I think one needs to add something to the psychologists' picture to complete it. That is, if who we are determines how we read, how do we talk about that who?

The reason we need to introduce a who is because there is always variation even in the experiments. Not everyone does the work of construction in the same manner or at the same time or with the same result. There is individuality in reading as well as shared constructions. How can we talk about that individuality?

I suggest, as I so often have, that we can take it into account by means of the psychoanalytic

concept of character or identity. As it is ordinarily defined, character means a person's habitual ways of resolving the competing demands of drives, reality, and conscience. The key word is *habitual*. My character is what you recognize in me as unchanging over a long period of time, as I get into the same kind of situation or make the same kind of interpretation over and over.

As I have suggested many times before (Holland 1975, 1985), I find it easiest to think of character as a theme (or several themes) and variations, like a piece of music. The theme is a way of putting into words what a given person repeats: the style that pervades many different aspects of that person's life. The variations are then the many different aspects.

That is, one can understand the variations as applications of different cognitive ways of construing reality or books. One can understand the identity theme as the style that we see pervading all those different writings and readings.

We can then complete the orthodox psychologists' picture of reading by combining the feedback loops from cognitive psychology with identity from psychoanalysis. The reader uses a variety of cognitive techniques for construing the text, and these techniques will be widely shared in any given reading culture. But each member of that culture uses those techniques to serve and express his or her particular identity, that is, the cluster of beliefs, values, needs, and so on, that constitute that particular person's style.

The combination of a psychological with a psychoanalytic approach then leads to the following model of the reader at work. A person with a theme-and-variations identity tries out on a text a variety of hypotheses. Some of these are highly personal, some are cultural, tied to his or that interpretive community, and some are physiological. Then, what the person reads is the feedback from those hypotheses. The reading experience will be like any normal person's if the hypothesis is physiological. The experience will be like that of some interpretive community if the hypothesis is cultural. The experience will be unique if the hypothesis is a highly personal one that others do not share.

You can do things with this identity-governing-feedbacks model. It is powerful. You can explain the similarities and differences in readings as different people read. You can explain the different feelings and meanings different people get from a text. You can take into account the role of culture, history, training, or economic class in introducing differences in response. These shape the hypotheses we bring. The psychological model allows us to address, perhaps even to understand, the individual variations in the different ways we understand a given text. At the same time, the model allows us to explain the similarities in different people's readings.

In short, the model allows us to address in a systematic way, even to answer, many of the questions we ask in what we call literature-and-psychology.

Now we come to the other group of psychologists. As you can see, I have not left much space for the philosophers and literary critics. I am thinking of writers like Derrida, Eco, Barthes, Lacan, and a great many others involved in contemporary «theory». What answer do they give? Without exception, they seem to say that it is literature that controls the act of reading. The test constrains the reader, the text has certain fixed meanings, or the text deconstructs itself, and so on. But in fact it is the reader who constructs all these things.

Where does this contrary idea come from, the idea that texts are active and determine and constrain reading? I think it is what is sometimes called a flat earth theory. It looks that way. It is commonsensical. It must be that way. Since we all agree — unanimously, mind you! — that *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is about the Spanish Civil War, the text — the physical book — must have caused us to think that. Texts must constrain reading. But like the flat earth theory, if you work with it a while, it fails. In fact, the text-active theory flies in the face of common sense. Books aren't active. They just sit there. They don't do anything until someone comes along and starts the process of reading, of experiencing them.

«Theory» people who believe the text determines meaning rely on Saussure, with his idea of the signifier signifying the signified. Saussure himself, however, insisted be was trying for a formal account of language. He set out precisely to create a *non*-psychological account of language. Nevertheless, today's literary critics *re*-psychologize him. They insist that he is describing a psychological process. As though signification went on in the head.

Among liinguists, Saussure is outmoded and wrong. His great influence, in the English-speaking world at least, took place in the first decade of this century. But in 1957, in *Syntactic Structures*, Noam Chomsky proved that theories that did not allow for deep structures — and Saussure specifically ruled deep structures out — were fundamentally inadequate to describe language. This proof, so far as I know, remains unchallenged. I cannot find linguistic books of today that even refer to Saussure (at least in the U.S.). I cannot find literary critics (at least in the U.S.) who refer to any other linguist but Saussure. There is a strange discrepancy between what the linguists and psycholinguists believe and what the literary critics believe.

From my point of view, then, the answer to the question I asked at the outset is forced. Which psychology shall we use in literature-and-psychology? One psychology is the text-active model used by literary critics and philosophers who rely on a Saussurean linguistics. It rests on no empirical evidence whatsoever. What psychology it has is behavioristic, but it is really not psychological or psychoanalytic at all.

The other psychology is the reader-active model used by linguists, psycholinguists, and psychologists who really study the process of reading. Theirs is a model of reading grounded in experiment, based on widely accepted contemporary theories in linguistics, psychology, and psycholinguistics. And it dovetails very usefully with psychoanalysis. Which shall we choose?

I have phrased this non-question in such a one-sided way, because I am puzzled that there is still any doubt. I am puzzled that the question I have asked, What psychology shall we use in literature-and-psychology? — is still a question. It seems to me that, out there in the big wide world of experimentation, psychology, and psycholinguistics, it has been answered. Why have literary critics not heard the answer? I do not know. I write here in a state of perplexity. And perhaps that is the real question we should be asking about the psychology in literatute-and-psychology. Why is literary psychology so different from the psychologists' psychology?

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 11-16

On Desire

ROBERT SILHOL (*)

The notion of desire is central to psychoanalysis; for me, it is one of the words, like «unconscious», or lately, with Lacan, «jouissance», which represent best what the Freudian discovery is about. It is my «psychoanalytic» conviction that the way we understand the concept of desire, and I mean unconscious desire, perfectly describes the way we understand Freud, that is to say defines what we do when it comes to psychoanalytic theory and practice.

As always with psychoanalysis, things aren't what they seem to be, and a lot is to be found behind the simplest of façades. Let us begin, then, with the vocabulary. The title of the third chapter of *Die Traumdeutung* is well-known: «Des Traum ist einer Wunscherfüllung» — the dream is the realisation of a wish. This does not help, if only because we still have to clarify «wunsch» (and also «-füllung», as we shall see). At least, we have a word in English: *wish*, more or less, but it is not exactly desire. Another word Freud uses is «Begierde», which implies envy, covetousness, avidity, and he also uses «Lust» which connotes pleasure and also appetite, with less sensuality, perhaps, than can sometimes be found expressed in Begierde. (The French have had more problems with their translation of Wunsch, and «voeu» or «souhait» have sometimes been suggested. I prefer «Désir», writing it with a capital D, and always try to make sure it is understood that the word represents a concept that is fundamental and also difficult to grasp.) You can see how difficult it is to speak of this concept: not only do we have more than one word standing for the notion, but on top of this, as I shall try to show, none of them (if we take them in their standard acceptation) seems suitable.

Let's get back, now, to the general meaning implied by *wish* and give one of the definitions, one of the explanations, generally accepted by the psychoanalytical community:

> Our unconscious wishes find satisfaction in the symbolical repetition of experiences dating back to the first years of our lives.

The structure that is implied in this first — imperfect — model is that of the *primary process*. It is what we find in dictionaries, and if we keep in mind that we are discussing *unconscious* desire or wish, this definition is not really helpful. Another remark is that the idea that these «symbolical repetitions» (of which the dream is the best example) are the fulfilment of a wish or desire calls for a lot of clarification.[1] In the section on «Wish-fulfilment», (zur Wunscherfüllung) Freud explains:

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[1] This is a point fully developed by Garma in his *Nuevas aportaciones al psicoanalisis de los suenos.*

> An essential component of this experience of satisfaction is a particular perception (that of nourishment, in our example) the mnemic image of which remains associated thenceforward with the memory trace of the excitation produced by the need. As a result of the link that has thus been established next time this need arises a psychical impulse will at once emerge which will seek to re-cathect the mnemic image of the perception (...) that is to say re-establish the situation of the original satisfaction. An impulse of this kind is what we call a wish [I would like to stress, though, that at this point Freud does not write «impulse» but «*Regung*» — «Eine Solche regung ist das was wir einen Wunsch heissen», *Gesammelte Werke*, III, 127-138 — which is more general than «impulse» and can be defined as a movement, a feeling that comes into existence, an emotion, and is not so close to «drive»/trieb as one might have thought]; the reappearance of the perception is the fulfilment of the wish»,

and Freud ends his paragraph thus:

> (...) the aim of this first psychical activity was to produce a «perceptual identity» — a repetition of the perception (...) (*St. Edit.* V, 565-566)

Not bad for 1900! And whatever reading I may suggest of this, whatever re-construction I may feel inclined to produce of it will in fact be a direct consequence of what I have learnt from Freud.

The terms I wish to stress are the following ones:

> satisfaction
> mnemic image/ memory trace, repetition, link
> original (satisfaction)

And we also have «need» of course, but I rather feel like leaving it aside, for the time being, as Lacan prompts me to, because I think its ambiguity — for what is it after all? A need for food or a need for love? — weakens the passage. Besides, Freud also made the distinction between Wunsch and Bedürfnis (bedürfen: need). A Wunsch/wish/desire can therefore be considered as an *attempt* at recapturing an «original satisfaction»: it is a repetition. I say «attempt», but the word is not in Freud's text, yet, and will only appear later on; if I use this term, it is because is enables me to understand a bit better what takes place in this experience of «desiring» we are discussing. And perhaps the passage wants clarification because Freud mainly stresses «satisfaction» in his paragraph, and never takes time to explain that he is *only* speaking of what takes place in our psyche. Indeed, one of the terms he emphasizes is that of «perceptual identity», the «repetition of the perception which was linked with the satisfaction of the need». (*St. Edit.* V, 566)

There will be a correction, however, as so often happens with Freud, a short passage added in 1919. Here it is:

> If we look at unconscious wishes reduced to their most fundamental and truest shape, we shall have to conclude, no doubt, that *psychical* reality is a particular form of existence not to be confused with *material* reality. (620)

These words appear in the last but one page of *Die Traumdeutung*, and I think we can interpret them if not as a correction, at least as a last minute clarification on the nature of unconscious wishes. What happens when we dream is not material or concrete, but psychical, that is to say *hallucinatory*. So that the satisfaction Freud was speaking of is to be understood as the result of (something like) an hallucination. I know this is obvious to you, but it is the only way I have of understanding and accepting Freud's theory that a dream is the realisation of a wish: «realisation» must on no account be taken literally.

This leads us to a further interpretation of the theory we find in The *Interpretation of Dreams*. Freud uses «mnemic image» and «memory trace» and then speaks of the establishing of a «link»; it is «the mnemic image» which will be re-cathected, re-invested with what he calls «the need». I take «image» to be of particular importance. Laplanche and Pontalis, who were lacanians once, have a good sentence about this:

> The search for the object in reality is completely oriented by this relation to signs. It is the organisation (*agencement*) of these signs which constitutes the fantasy (which is) the correlative of (unconscious) desire. (121, my translation)

The «perceptual identity» mentioned by Freud receives a correction here, or at least is clarified: what we have is an identity between a memory trace and a *sign*, so that «perceptual» must be understood as something taking place *within* the psyche/seele/mind. We are not dealing with an ordinary perception, and what I pointed about hallucination further up takes on, I think, an added meaning. This identity between a memory trace and a sign does correspond in fact to what we have in the metaphor: what is repeated is repeated, let's say, in imagination, that is, unconsciously. In a way, desire is an act of representation, the mental recalling of infantile, undestructible memories, traces, or signs...

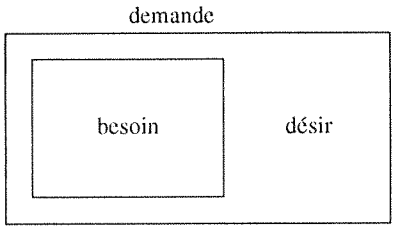
At this point we can introduce what Lacan has taught us about desire. You all know the distinction he makes between «désir», «demande» and «besoin». It is best to start with what he says in «Les formations de l'inconscient», *Bulletin de Psychologie*, 1957-1958. Here is a summary:

> *need* is satisfied by a specific object
> *demand* is addressed to someone and is a request for love (and we shall see also that it is what we think we are asking/desiring)
> *desire* is what we find between need and demand (*naît de l'écart entre besoin et demande*); it cannot be reduced to demand.

Several questions arise, the first which comes to mind being: why introduce a new term, a third factor, that of demand, which we do not have in Freud? I take this to be the central issue of our discussion and can easily sum it up with one word: méconnaissance (unawareness).

All I can do next is give you my interpretation of the notion. I take it to represent: a) our *nostalgia of completeness*; it stands for our desire of the ideal, a desire for fusion, total love — whatever that means — or, in the words of some lacanian commentators, the One. I use the word Desire for this, and explain it is a way of expressing the *ontological* in us, our non-reconciliation to the «lack», the impossibility in which we are to totally accept separation, or, as some say, «castration». In this way, Lacan's formula makes sense to me: «need» and its object situated in reality, and «demand» (that is to say what is ontological in desire) as our desire for «everything»[2] (Fig. 1). b) What is left between the

FIGURE 1



[2] In a way, this could be an acceptation of «desire» for the philosopher.

two is «desire», *désir*, this time with the emphasis on psychology rather than ontology.[3] It corresponds to the way each of us, as a result of his or her history, is led to desire, to symbolize, to act...and this behavior goes hand in hand with *unawareness*. As far as need (*besoin*) is concerned, we have the actual breast, milk, hunger, warmth, the material essentials of life (and even here we see there is no innocent way of feeding or holding a baby, what we do already has «meaning»). As far as desire (*désir*) is concerned, on the other hand, we have the way each of us lives more or less happily, more or less destructively: the kind of object I am, or was, for my Other (parents, determinations that made me what I am). It is of course a concept that is central to psychoanalysis, and this is what I read in Lacan's cryptic formula: «*Ne pas céder sur son désir*» (not to give up on one's desire), which is «not to give up one's desire» but, on the contrary «as far as one's desire is concerned». Unconscious desire should be the only object of the psychoanalytical search: tell me how you desire and I'll tell you who you are (really).

What bearing has all this on our research on literary texts? How does it affect us as psychoanalytic critics? I have chosen three short examples. In each case, we shall see how important unawareness is in the issue. (I do not have enough time to draw a neat distinction between what I call the study of a text as discourse of a sole unconscious subject and the study of the so-called psychology of the characters, but as I have chosen works in which the characters are satisfactory, coherent representations of humans — which is not always the case —, this will not matter so much, I hope).

1. *Hamlet*. Let's first deal with the Oedipal situation, which is well-known nowadays. For indeed we can no longer take Hamlet simply for the hero of a revenge tragedy (I must revenge my father's murder); this would amount to «forgetting» that he wants his uncle's — that is to say his father's — place. Revenge is not Hamlet's prime motive and hides, in fact, the son's wish to do away with his mother's husband, as Jones has successfully shown.[4] In passing however, we cannot help noticing that Shakespeare made sure the father was murdered *before* the play opens, thus «logically» clearing Hamlet of any aggressive desire. Hamlet's admiration for the dead king is another example of unawareness. Such ambiguity is not unusual, of course, and adds to the richness of the play: identification with the parent on the one hand, and jealousy on the other. Beyond the Oedipal theme, then, we discover what very likely constitutes Hamlet's central fantasy: the son's unconscious desire to undo the destruction of the father, the wish to reconstruct him whole (which can certainly be analyzed as a wish to «decastrate» him). Indeed, the «Remember me» of the dead king — which is to become the son's motto — can also be read as an injunction to «re-member» the father. Again, unawareness is at work here, and this time most destructively so, since Hamlet can only carry out his mission of rebuilding the «dead» father by offering his own destruction. I take the ghost scene, where the dead king «pours» his words into his son's ears in a manner which exactly reproduces the pouring of the poison in his own ear, to be a perfect representation of the way parental desire is inscribed into the «subject». From that moment on, Hamlet's strongest and most secret desire will be to submit himself to this fatherly injunction: to manage a reconstruction of the parent at the price of his life. In this case, to become an unconscious victim of the parent's desire can be analyzed as jouissance, that is to say as «pleasureable» repetition or Desire.

2. Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* also stages a repetition of the same kind. Absence constitutes the mainspring of the tragedy. The missing person who is at the center of the mystery

[3] Wich makes the lacanian analyst as much an apprentice philosopher as an apprentice psychologist.
[4] In his *Hamlet and Oedipus*.

is the child's father. And Chillingworth also is absent at the opening of the novel, which not only reinforces the representation of absence but defines Hester's «fault» as precisely a consequence of her husband's absence. This is in any case a good representation of one of the «causes» of the events narrated by Hawthorne. If we accept to go beyond this first «level» of interpretation, however, we soon come to the conclusion that the search for the absent person is only one side of the central fantasy on which the novel rests. For indeed, we are left with a problem in the end and still have to interpret this father's death which closes the tale. This is because — at any rate as far as Dimmesdale is concerned — the unveiling of the identity of the «culprit» acts as a screen and conceals another fantasy to be found at the core of the novel. For it is not enough to show that what is fantasmatically staged in *The Scarlet Letter* is an *encounter* with the missing father: what must be added is that such an encounter can only take place *in his grave*. This seems confirmed by another metaphor in the novel. It concerns the act of speech, the act of speech as revelation. As we remember, Dimmesdale remains silent throughout the story, he keeps his secret; and when he can no longer hide that he is Pearl's father and reveals the truth he dies, Hawthorne, that is, makes him die. I see in Dimmesdale's death — and here I am thinking of Hawthorne as a subject — a perfect example of the way Desire is at work in us. Such is the fantasy we discover in *The Scarlet Letter*: it has to do with Hester's and Dimmesdale's secret, which seems to be the author's too, and concerns the identity of the absent father: who was he? what did he look like? Hawthorne could very well have expressed his fantasy in similar terms: «I would so much like to see my father's image, my father's face (or even his name on a tomb), and I am willing to accompany him into the grave for this». Unless it comes to be revealed by «chance», by «accident» (return of the repressed), desire, by definition, remains unsaid. In *The Scarlet Letter*, we have such a representation of unconscious desire: the absent father, Dimmesdale, eventually comes out of darkness. Following this revelation, however, another representation appears which will carry on the task of repetition: indeed, as he speaks his secret, Dimmesdale dies. Through this death, concealed behind the screen of the character's revealed secret, Desire has found a way of manifesting itself again.

3. I have a third example with *L'Etranger*. Most critics have proved unable to explain the last words of Camus' character, before his execution, at the very end of the novel, and quite a few of them have dismissed the problem by explaining that Meursault was abnormal.

> Pour que tout soit consommé pour que je me sente moins seul,il me restait souhaiter qu'il y ait beaucoup de spectateurs le jour de mon execution et qu'ils m'accueillent avec des cris de haine.
> (In order that all should be consummated, in order that I should feel less alone, it remained for me to wish that a lot of spectators should come the day of my execution and that they greet me with shouts of hatred. (my translation)

What was desired (we can say «masochistically», but it does not help) was this destruction. For me, *L'Etranger* is such an accomplished tragedy because Meursault is kept in ignorance throughout. I think this is a good rendering of the passivity in each of us in front of the unconscious subject. Never is Meursault made to understand what is happening to him: «accidental» murder, trial and execution. Perhaps Camus did not know either, in which case subject and character coincide. Here he was, in any case, thinking he just wished to lead a simple happy life, and now he is to be beheaded!

As a schizophrenic — and Meursault is a correct representation of a schizophrenic — he might pronounce the words I have just quoted above. This reveals how he was «made» to desire the hatred of others (rather than remaining nonexistent, unnoticed, for instance); Camus's character is an excellent representation of a subject and his Desire. And as literary

creation, as discourse, the words «he» pronounces also make sense: they tell us of an unconscious subject and of his Desire to be destroyed.

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 17-24

Questioning the Subject: Reading, Identity Construction, and Psychoanalytic Theories of Subjectivity

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Though recent reader-oriented theories of literature have contested the opposition between text and reader, and have postulated, though in varying degrees, the production of meaning through a dialogical relationship between text and reader, it remains evident that in the critical enterprise, as well as in the classroom, more emphasis is still given to the text than to the reader. In some respects, it may appear that given recent post-structuralist critiques of text-based essentializations of meaning, arguing for the interactive and collaborative role of the reader in shaping meaning is an argument no longer at the cutting edge of critical theory. However, in light of the present multicultural and canonical debates, literary education, particularly in the United States, generally seems caught between preserving the traditional canon as representative of the best that has been thought and written, and replacing (or integrating) canonical texts with those historically relegated to the margins of literary studies in an effort to question the privileged position of the Western canon by pointing to racist, sexist, homophobic, and Eurocentric biases in its construction and in its study. But this latter approach, as radical as it may seem, simply re-invents the humanist myth of transcendence in a new key, where the role of the teacher shifts from being the custodian of culture to the «liberator of the dispossessed», but one who still dispenses knowledge to the uninitiated which is really no transformation at all from institutionalized pedagogical practice. Further, the emphasis here is still on *which* texts are read, on *what* they are thought to signify unmediated by the act of reading. Although Stanley Fish has spoken of the elevation of affective criticism from a fallacy[1] to an institutionally-accepted methodology (344), I find myself conceding to Gerald Graff, who more accurately notes that «though recent reader-centered criticism has taught us that readers appropriate texts

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[1] There is ample evidence in the work of Cleanth Brooks, John Crowe Ransom, T.S. Eliot, and others to suggest that the American New Critics did not completely dismiss what Fish refers to as «affective criticism». See Cleanth Brooks's *The Well Wrought Urn*, T.S. Eliot's *Selected Essays*, John Crowe Ransom's *The World's Body*, and especially Ransom's essay «The Concrete Universal: Observations in the Understanding of Poetry, 1» in *Selected Essays of John Crowe Ransom*, (Thomas Daniel Young & John Hindle, Eds.), LSUP, 1984.

in heterogeneous ways, this lesson tends to be forgotten when the ideology of the canon is at stake» (13). One reason for this may be because reader-oriented theories of literature, though they have certainly challenged text-centered certitudes of reading, have nonetheless ignored the socio-political positions of race, gender, social class, sexuality, and other determinants of positionality in their representations of reading, and have uncritically assumed that reading is a disinterested act performed by a presumed subject or by a presumed community, privileging the reader's individual consciousness and the text as sufficient to theorize the transaction between text and reader, and failing to recognize how interpretive communities are politically produced and positioned.[2]

It seems, then, if we truly aim for a politics of inclusion in the teaching and study of literature, switching the texts that we teach is certainly necessary, but not sufficient in itself. While it is obvious that replacing or integrating canonical texts with literature by and/or «about» women, blacks, gay men, lesbians, and other historically less represented groups assumes a stable referent for identity confined to the text, shifting the locus of interpretive authority from text to reader, or to the interaction between them, may be a methodological and discursive move that is just as reductive as a focus on the cultural product (the text) alone.

My point is that reader-oriented theories of literature remain impoverished by a weak view of the subject constructed in these theories as the unified and centered locus through which the phenomenal world is constituted, where the reader is represented as the conscious and coherent designator of meanings without consideration of the place/position of the subject/reader in relation to discursive practices. Equally troubling, the multicultural debates proposing canonical and curricular reform, for the most part, do not seem to be able to situate the «marginalized» or subaltern subject beyond the historically and epistemologically privileged construction of transcendence. Rather than constructing identity as a pure difference to that which is external to it, I am suggesting that it may be more productive to consider the multiple and contradictory subject positions of race, gender, sexuality, and other positions within more or less specific identity constructions, and to view identity as a site of shifting meaning, and subject positions, particularly the instabilities and contradictions between and within them, as possible spaces for agency and resistance. Speaking in the context of colonialist discourse, which produces the colonized subject as a fixed reality, at once «other», yet entirely knowable, a move that is both logocentric and ethnocentric, Homi K. Bhabha reminds us that in representing «otherness», there can be no inevitable sliding from the semiotic or deconstructionist activity (which critical theorists tend to privilege) to the straightforward and unproblematic reading of other cultural and discursive systems (75-76), a form of (neo-)colonialist appropriation which I think is similar to what is occurring in the multicultural debates proposing canon reform.

With this said, it is important to acknowledge reader-oriented theory as a potentially powerful critique of text-based essentializations of race, gender, social class, and sexuality through accounting for the role of the reading subject in the construction of identity in the act of reading. But I shall also argue that it is not sufficient to merely posit the reader subjectively as source and agent of conscious action or meaning, that is, to take the epistemologically

[2] When I speak of reader-oriented theories of literature, I am speaking of those that developed as a movement during the 1970s and 1980s, including both work of reader *reception* or Rezeptionsästhetik (Iser, Jauss, Riffaterre, Wimmers), which views the role of the reader as instrumental to the production of meaning, and American work on reader *response* (Fish, Bleich, Holland), which shifts the locus of interpretive authority from text to reader, and by extension to the reader's interpretive community in the case of Fish and Bleich. I make this distinction later in my own text. I would also add that Norman Holland's work with individual readers and his study of how their identity themes inform their reading may not be as open to the charge of a presumed subject I levy against reader-oriented theory though he does privilege a centered subject.

privileged status of the subject as a given. Rather, we need to theorize the conditions of its possibility by considering the various and contingent subject positions readers may occupy in relation to texts.

Psychoanalytically-informed theories of subjectivity, especially Lacan's and Kristeva's theories of the split subject, have opened up a much needed space for problematizing the complexity of subjectivity and theorizing the subject's relation to the social formations it inhabits as mediated by language. (I am not implying that Lacan's and Kristeva's theories themselves solve the problem of the subject, but that they help open more theoretical spaces to prolong discussion on subjectivity.) Lacan's positioning of the subject in the symbolic order predisposes it toward language, toward the signifier, where desire becomes the perpetual effect of symbolic articulation. Lacan notes that at the formative mirror stage, the subject both assumes a discrete image that enables it to theorize relations of equivalence between the world of objects as well as relations of difference which manifest themselves in narcissism and aggressivity. He writes:

> In any case, what the subject finds in this altered image of his (or her) body is the paradigm of all the forms of resemblance that will bring over on to the world of objects a tinge of hostility, by projecting on them the manifestation of the narcissistic image, which, from the pleasure derived from meeting himself in the mirror, becomes when confrontating his fellow man an outlet for his most intimate aggressivity.... The promotion of consciousness as being essential to the subject in the historical after-effects of the Cartesian *cogito* is for me the deceptive accentuation of the transparency of the I in action at the expense of the opacity of the signifier that determines the I... (307; parentheses mine)

What I believe one can imply from Lacan is that identity construction (in oneself, in others, in reading) is a pseudo-identification, a phantasy, a presence and an absence marked by desire; it is duplicitous as it acknowledges difference while at the same time disavowing it. In other words, if reading identity produces a coherent, undivided, essential self (through the structuring projections of the reader's imagoes), reading is operating in the space of the imaginary. But the reader's acknowledgment or recognition of the aporia, the gap which mediates between signifier and signified (in much the same way that the unconscious mediates between the subject and the symbolic, thus both constituting the subject and splitting it), and his or her process of parrying this lack, situates the reader in the symbolic. As Gayatri Spivak summarizes, the subject is inevitably positioned and characterized by its place in the symbolic world of discourse, but nonetheless *desires* to touch the «real» by constructing object-images of that «real» world *and of itself* (the latter of which I will address when I discuss the reader as subject later), and that all discourse harbors the production of the imaginary (10).[3] I think it would be safe to suggest, then, that identity construction in reading the text (or the world) is not a pure difference to that which is external to it, which ignores play and aligns it more with a fetishistic mode of representation, but is a *subject position contingent* upon a momentary and specific act of reading the text and the political or discursive formations one inhabits.

If Spivak's observation I mentioned a moment ago is accurate, it is important to note that this same narrative of the imaginary marks much of the critical discourse on multiculturalism that argues for the inclusion of more texts by and «about» less represented groups, and the valorization and positive representations of these groups through the reading of these texts. American feminist Elaine Showalter, for example, in her anthology *The New Feminist Criticism*, argues for a move away from the dependency on and adaptation of male models

[3] Jane Gallop explains it differently; she notes that «[t]he imaginary would seem real. It is the imaginary as imaginary which constitutes the symbolic» (62).

and theories of criticism and focuses instead on the newly visible world of female culture and female experience (131). Similarly, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar have tried to show how nineteenth century female novelists have «managed the difficult task of achieving *true* female literary authority by simultaneously conforming to and subverting patriarchal literary standards,» and claim that the madwoman represented is an image of the female author's anxiety and rage (73, 78; emphasis added). Not only does this imply a somewhat limited role of the reader because of such strong leanings to a mimetic view of literature, but what seems to be operating here as well is an essentialization of female experience and female authority centered on biological sex rather than on socially, politically, and culturally constructed gender, which, in turn, also seems somewhat complicit in the patriarchal appropriation of feminine subjectivity the feminist criticism of Showalter and Gilbert and Gubar aims to subvert. In addressing this, Toril Moi points out that if we believe women's experience is directly available in texts written by women, we leave unquestioned the view of the text as a transmitter of authentic human experience, which has been the traditional emphasis of Western patriarchal humanism. She further notes that the emphasis on totality in the reading of women's writing is a phallic construct centered on the phallic signifier as whole, unitary, undivided, and authoritative (76, 67), though I would add, a phallic construct situated in the imaginary.[4] As Lacan writes: «The phallus is the privileged signifier of that mark in which the role of the logos is joined with the advent of desire» (287).

The marking off of boundaries and the construction of gender as totalized seems to sew up feminine identity so tightly that one must wonder where spaces of resistance may be played out since the praxis of reading that is implied puts the text in a position of authority and the reader in one of lack — a re-inscription of patriarchal models of reading. The problem with Showalter's and Gilbert and Gubar's feminist theory, besides smacking of formalism, is that new hierarchies and new oppressions may be perpetuated and the margin/center opposition left in tact if one does not take into account the interlocking subject positions of race, sexual orientation, geographic location, social class, and other positions from which women may speak in particular contexts. Audre Lorde, in addressing this very point, has written that within feminism white women focus upon their oppression as women and ignore differences of race, sexual preference, class, and age. She criticizes a pretense to a homogeneity of experience («sisterhood») in feminism that, according to her, does not in fact exist (282).

For this reason, it seems to me that Julia Kristeva (along with other French feminists) has theorized feminine subjectivity in terms of *positionality*, the way in which one is positioned in relation to the patriarchal (which is not specifically gendered), as a political position from which to speak instead of in terms of biological difference alone, thus effecting a split between the body and subjectivity. This is quite different from essentializing identity or textuality as inherently female which predicates the possibility of knowledge on identity alone and obscures the idea that knowledge is sustained by irreducible difference, not identity (Spivak 254). Rather than rejecting the symbolic order, which Kristeva acknowledges as patriarchal, the subject is always already inserted into the symbolic as this is the only space from which one can speak. She proposes that women theorize their relation to the symbolic, and explore how the symbolic is constituted «starting less from the knowledge accumulated about it (anthropology, psychoanalysis, linguistics) than from the very personal affect experienced when facing it as subject and as a woman» in an effort «to break the code, to shatter language, to find a specific discourse closer to the body and emotions, to the unnameable

[4] It is not clear how Moi is referring to totality as phallic; I believe her to be referring to the phallus as gender-specific here while I am speaking of it as a signifier, as a mark of desire (for the fixing of meaning), which, it could be argued, is a patriarchal construct if it does not include the slippage of meaning which is also part of Lacan's theory of the phallus and of signification.

repressed by the social contract» («Women's Time» 200). Theories of meaning for Kristeva, taking into account the dialectic between bio-physiological processes (unconscious drives) and the signifying social structures in which the subject is caught, further assume a split subject because the body is rigorously theorized as part of the heterogeneity of language, as jouissance, as a negativity introduced into the symbolic order as the transgression of that order («Revolution» 118). Theorizing one's relation to the symbolic may help to create new spaces of resistance not only through acknowledging the multiplicities of female expressions by women, which can rupture the symbolic, but at the same time theorizing difference and creating new spaces of resistance from *within* feminine subjectivity as lesbian theory, for instance, has dismantled some feminist constructions of (feminine) gender as heterosexist.

To further elaborate on the problem of centered, coherent subjectivity, Henry Louis Gates, in a move similar to Showalter's, challenges African-American studies to develop theories of criticism indigenous to black literature rather than simply mastering the Eurocentric canons of criticism and applying these to African-American texts. He challenges African-American criticism to isolate what he refers to as «the signifying black difference» (27). But this difference, as well as any notion of a «black text» and «blackness» itself, is once again essentialized, ignoring the differences within the boundaries it constructs, and is reduced to a feature of the text alone. Speaking of the consequences of this, African-American critic, Deborah McDowell, has argued that an almost exclusive focus on race, that is, a preoccupation with positive racial representation, and the grounding of the work in «the black experience», both inscribes the «black self» as male and marginalizes black women (54, 59).

Though it is clear that Gates and other African-American critics are trying to rupture discursive and epistemological oppression in black literary studies through self-consciously rejecting what Anthony Appiah has termed the «Naipaul fallacy»,[5] it also becomes clear that the same sins of the oppressor, of patriarchal humanism, of positivism, are being (re-)committed, that the rupture is in fact a repetition, that if the project is correctly pursued some *thing* will be unveiled. For this reason Homi K. Bhabha would disagree to some extent, I think, with Gates's project; Bhabha indicates that he does not consider the practices and discourses of revolutionary struggle as the other/under side of colonial discourse. He says that though these practices and discourses may be historically co-present with colonial discourse, they cannot be read-off merely in terms of their opposition to it, and that «anti-colonialist discourse requires an alternative set of questions, techniques and strategies in order to construct it» (75). What also needs to be pointed out that the construction of (post-)colonial, feminine, or black subjectivity is appropriated to some extent by hegemonic voices by virtue of their institutional positioning, even if these voices can claim to occupy similar subject positions as those they name as oppressed. What alternative strategies and questions, then, might be useful?

Gayatri Spivak acknowledges that new historical scholarship on the subaltern in India, by attempting to specify the subaltern consciousness as such, may fall prey to the metaphysical and methodological moves it supposedly critiques. But she points out that her reading of the work of the Subaltern Studies group helps to reveal the limits of critiquing humanism in the West. Spivak contends that any subaltern consciousness that is constructed is subject to the cathexis of hegemonic spaces and is always askew from its received signifiers, effaced even as it is disclosed, and is irreducibly discursive (202-203), which has interesting implications for Gates's notion of the signifying black difference. Spivak reads this «retrieval» of the subaltern as a *strategic* use of positivistic essentialism to situate the *effect* of the subject as subaltern. She defines a subject-effect as

[5] Appiah defines this as a post-colonial inferiority complex whereby blacks feel compelled to valorize texts by black authors by showing resemblances to European literature and culture (146).

> that which seems to operate as a subject and may be part of an immense discontinuous network («text» in the general sense) of strands that may be termed politics, ideology, economics, history, sexuality, language, and so on.... Different knottings and configurations of these strands, determined by heterogeneous determinations which are themselves dependent upon myriad circumstances, produce the *effect* of an operating subject. Yet the continuist and homogenist deliberative consciousness symptomatically requires a continuous and homogeneous cause for this effect and posits a sovereign and determining subject. (204; emphasis added)

What seems to be at work here, then, is the positioning of the subject in the symbolic, but what Spivak is trying to emphasize is that the Subaltern study group's work on subject restoration is not focusing on the positive subject position of the subaltern, but on the strategies and difficulties being used to posit it, and is therefore perhaps more self-reflexive than it is representational. Evoking Foucault, Spivak reminds us that discourse always involves a positioning of a subject, «the formation of objects, the formation of enunciative modalities, the formation of concepts, the formation of strategies» (Foucault 31-39). What this implies, according to Spivak, is that any reporting, telling, proposing, etc. is linked to subject positioning, which is itself a sign, an «I-slot», such as author, reader, teacher, critic, and so on (Spivak 243).

What I think is important is that Spivak's reading of scholarship on the subaltern helps to efface the either/or split between essentializing and total paralysis or unrepresentability, and her focus on the positioning of the subject, the «I-slot» it reads and assumes, creates a space of agency rather than one of dependency, where, in the latter case, the subaltern is located in pure opposition to its oppression often using the same methods as its oppressor. I think she acknowledges that essentializing is to some extent necessary but one must be aware one is doing it. But I must seriously wonder if the critics I have critiqued for essentializing feminine and African-American subjectivity have thought about the ways in which they re-inscribe the hegemonic order through positing a centered subject and through implying a relationship of similarity between identity and knowledge (thereby foreclosing the place of the other) without accounting for the difficulties of articulating the discursive spaces from which subjects speak. It would seem to me somewhat irresponsible not to launch this critique and assume that these critics are aware that the subjectivities they posit are constructed, irreducibly discursive, and not primordial. But what Spivak's reading and support of the subaltern group enable is a focus on the positioning of the subject in relation to discourse as énonciation rather than as signification/representation alone and has important implications for the reading subject, or, more precisely, a subject positioned as reader.

While it is important to account for the role of the reader in the construction of identity in reading, it is insufficient to posit the reader's role as instrumental or constitutive of textual understanding. Though reader-oriented theorists do not represent a uniform position, I think that in their arguments of how much weight or emphasis should be given to the reader or to the text, they uncritically take meaning as a given, as an assured end to which the reading process is the means, whether they locate interpretative authority in the reader/text interaction, as in the case of reader reception, or in readers themselves (or in readers' interpretive communities), as in the case of reader response. Raising the issue of gender in reader-oriented theory, Jonathan Culler poses the question that «[i]f the experience of literature depends upon the qualities of a reading self, one can ask what difference it would make to the experience of literature and thus to the meaning of literature if this self were, for example, female rather than male» (42). This is, of course, a legitimate question to ask, but I am more interested in the premise Culler has identified, quite accurately, I believe, concerning reader-oriented theory's privileging of the self and its presentness to itself and to things. Equally disturbing is the corollary to this privileging of the self in the constitution

of meaning in reader-oriented theory — the idea that reading is also an activity of self-discovery and self-understanding. Wolfgang Iser writes that the constitution of meaning not only implies the formulation of a totality guided by, but not limited to, the text, but also implies, through this formulation, a formulation of ourselves, whereby we discover an inner world of which we had previously not been conscious (158). As I pointed out in another context, while we are conditioned to believe that all experience leads directly and unobstrusively to self- discovery and self-understanding, work on reading theory needs to further problematize the notion of a unified self and ask whether literary experience makes present a knowable self or merely skirts about this space of uncertainty (Spurlin 737). The positioning of the reading subject in reader-oriented theory seems polemically impoverished and fails to account for the unconscious as the active break between being and meaning and how the subject is implicated in systems of knowledge, power, and ideology; we need to consider the reader, and for that matter subjectivity, as multi-positioned, as situated in relation to signifying practices such as textual production, with the stipulation that in enunciating one subject position we repress others.

In constructing subjectivity as positioned, split, decentered, and divided, it could be argued that the subject positions of race, gender, sexuality, and others are simultaneously dispersed to the vagaries of cultural malleability in the name of pluralism, a move that critics, theorists, and teachers who are already implicated in hegemonic structures, at least by virtue of their institutional positions, can take without risk. Also one could argue that since contradictions among subject positions effect resistance, the construction of the feminine and African-American subjectivities I have critiqued have effectively intervened politically to contest dominating patriarchal structures and appropriations by (op-)positing a more or less centered female or black self. But if such essentializations are viewed as constructions and as positions relative to others, especially in relation to positions within these identity constructions which may be contradictory, new spaces of resistance to hegemonic logic and practices, and neocolonial appropriations of «otherness» (which also inscribe minority and subaltern discourses), are exposed.

Finally, rather than broadly theorizing the reader's habitual relation to the text where meaning is still the more or less guaranteed result of the activity of reading, and despite the feeble stipulation that readers do have a role in producing that meaning, reader-oriented theory needs to more rigorously engage psychoanalytic theories of subjectivity in order to enable the dislocation of fixed desire in reading and to allow the aporias, the gaps, the contradictions to emerge, not only between the opposition of centered subjectivity and the total dispersion of identity, but between the varying subject positions readers themselves occupy in relation to texts, and between the readings they produce, which may create new sites of resistance that enter into, affect, and possibly configure social, political, cultural, and institutional worlds.

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 25-34

The Unbinding Process: The Pedagogy of Listening to the Text with the «Third Ear»

ERIK NAKJAVANI (*)

The literature on applied psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic literary theory is vast and varied. These two areas of research find their genesis in emulation, modification or opposition in their relation to two of Freud's papers: «Delusion and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*» (1907) and «Creative Writers and Daydreaming» (1908). Those who undertake such studies are either literary critics or psychoanalysts. What they all share is a keen interdisciplinary interest in literature and psychoanalysis.

Interdisciplinary work is by definition transcendent; therefore, it is fraught with all the unexpected twists and turns of forays made into unknown territories. Ideally, the psychoanalytic literary critic should be both a critic *and* a psychoanalyst. However, the considerable formal training for such an enterprise is daunting. This is so particularly for psychoanalytic literary critics in the United States, where the teaching of psychoanalysis is not a part of the university curriculum and access to analysis is mostly limited to large metropolitan areas.

In reality, however, one may bring together strands of insights that the study of psychoanalysis and literary criticism reciprocally offer one another. What makes this intertwining of seemingly discrete entities into one strong fabric possible is a shared culture. Literature and psychoanalysis both fundamentally belong to the same culture of listening (oral literature and the «talking-cure»), reading and interpretation of discourse and texts (for instance, Freud's). In such studies, literature and psychoanalysis mutually widen each other's scope and deepen the sense of the truth to which each separately may lay exclusive claim. The possibility of undertaking such an interdisciplinary task is irrefutable, for the simple reason that it has often been brilliantly attempted and accomplished. Consider the works of American psychoanalytic critics all the way from Lionel Trilling to Norman Holland, to Shoshana Felman and Barbara Johnson.

Now the question is, how does one initially arrive at this crucial moment of collation of literature and psychoanalysis? The contiguity of the two fields within a shared culture of hermeneutics, in its most inclusive sense, whereby a radical transformation takes place, is somewhat manifest. Nevertheless, our knowledge of the existence of these common substructures and the transformation that is born within them does not elucidate their operative procedures.

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A significant question still remains to be asked: Does the initial contexture of literature and psychoanalysis represent a unique moment, issuing solely from an exceptional, individual intellect at work in the twin fields? The possibility of establishing a foundation for the pedagogy of psychoanalytic criticism revolves around the central axis that is the answer to this question. Would such a moment be irreproducible because the mixture of extraordinarily sharp, interdisciplinary perception, sensitivity and imagination that produces its generative methodology cannot be duplicated?

If the answer is affirmative, the teaching of psychoanalytic literary criticism would then be clearly impossible. As such, it would approximate the status of the mystic arts. On the other hand, the answer may be quasi-affirmative, or a qualified no. Such an answer would recognize the individual «gift» of a particular psychoanalytic literary critic, but at the same time it would find the elements of the art of psychoanalytic criticism «teachable». The «qualified no» will then become the basis of a pedagogy of psychoanalytic literary criticism. The «how» of the contexture of psychoanalysis and literary criticism, its methodology, can thereby be brought together, articulated and then rigorously formulated as a pedagogical theory. Such formulations will no doubt be crucial to the efforts of those among us who teach psychoanalytic literary criticism and practice it as psychoanalysts or literary critics.

In my view, French psychoanalyst André Green exemplifies the kind of «exceptional intelligence» that simultaneously intertwines literature and psychoanalysis in a transformative adventure and makes the «how» of this enterprise intelligible. A remarkably independent, original thinker and writer, Green is *inspired* by the distinctive theoretical acumen of psychoanalysts such as Jacques Lacan, Wilfred R. Bion and Donald W. Winnicott. Green's own work manifests and advocates a mode of psychoanalytic theorizing that is a veritable intellectual activity. He believes in «A structured psychoanalytic theory, which is coherent, is the product of psychical activity, a 'Durcharbeitung', which is a progress in intellectuality» (OPM 5).

Green makes it clear that this authentic intellectual work in psychoanalysis, Freud's «*Durcharbeitung*», should *resonate* in the mind with clinical insights. Without such resonance, psychoanalytic theory would be mired in abstractions. Green rightly asserts that «what is theoretical, that is to say, intellectual, is at the antipodes of abstraction» (OPM 5). The result is that Green's writings designate a kind of «theoretical-practice», that is, clinical experience become knowledge through its theoretical articulation. What one encounters in Green's writings is, then, a «Theoretical-practice», as Louis Althusser has put it in another context, which «transforms ideology [read *le vécu* or lived experience] to knowledge with theory» (FM 253).

In addition to clinical experience and its theorization, what informs Green's writings is his considerable knowledge of literature and his psychoanalytic critical appreciation of it — particularly the drama. His books such as *Un Oeil en trop: Le Complex d'Oedipe dans la tragédie* (published in 1969 and translated into English in 1979 as *The Tragic Effect: The Oedipus Complex in Tragedy*), *Hamlet et Hamlet : Une interprétation psychanalytique de l'affect* (1982) and the recent collections of essays *La Déliaison: Psychanalyse, anthropologie et la littérature* (1992)[1] all attest to the scope, expanse and acuity of Green's interest in literature and his psychoanalytic contributions to it.

One needs the space of a book to delineate and assess Green's psychoanalytic literary criticism and how it offers a fuller understanding of it. I am *strictly* limiting myself in what follows to a synoptic, probative introduction to the concept of «la déliaison» or «the unbinding process», and its consequent scopophilia of the reading-writing processes as Green's foundational concept in psychoanalytic criticism. I find the lucid theoretical formulation of the unbinding process to be of primary interest to a pedagogy of psychoanalytic criticism.

[1] I would like to thank Professor Yves Thoret of the *Centre de Recherches et d'Etudes Freudiennes of Université de Paris X, Nanterre*, for making André Green's text *La Déliaison* available to me.

THE UNBINDING PROCESS: LISTENING TO THE TEXT WITH THE THIRD EAR

The unbinding process immediately calls forth its dialectical opposite, the «binding process». It finds the ground of its own possibility and development primarily within the literary text itself which the binding process or the writing process has already produced. The unbinding process assumes the literary text's primacy as it transforms its effects and changes the specifically literary text to one of the indeterminate number of its extra-literary modalities — the psychoanalytic critique.[2] Green considers the psychoanalytic critic's task to be a secondary transformative operation, whose object is precisely the text, an act «thereby he [the critic] does not read the text but listens to it». (LD 18).[3] This act of listening to the text converts it to a psychoanalytic one. The psychoanalytic listening act evolves and completes itself without ever losing sight of the text as the originative ground of all interpretative activities that it sets in motion.

It is obvious that the psychoanalytic act of listening to the text is concurrent with the unavoidable act of reading it. The two complementary acts result in a maximally integrated dual reading-listening operation. This double operation corresponds to the notion of possessing «an eye too many» (*un Oeil en trop*) that Hölderlin attributes to King Oedipus.[4] Following Theodore Reik, one may equally, and perhaps more pertinently in the context of our discussion, call it «an ear too many» or the «third ear». For the psychoanalytic critic, there should be an element of wonder, of surprise, of sudden discovery, of uncanny enlightenment in listening by the «third ear» and of seeing with the «third eye».

The psychoanalytic literary critic and teacher need to keep in mind that the concurrent textual reading-listening in no way diminishes the necessity of highly attentive textual reading. To the contrary, it augments the value of such a reading by making it a necessity and therefore deepening its function. Listening to the text searches in the conscious, that is, the textual discourse as it stands, for the myriad of ways that this discourse can and does successfully muffle or make inaudible the voice of the «textual unconscious». A thorough knowledge of the text as a conscious fantasy precedes any comprehension of the textual unconscious. Understood in this strict sense, psychoanalytic listening to the text is impregnable to the criticism that such an activity violates the original integrity of the literary work by making it a secondary phenomenon in relation to the psychoanalytic text.

So far, I have used the term «literary text» as if a general agreement on its definition were available. Such an assumption is undoubtedly naive, at best, and false, at worse. One has to ask the hard ontological question: What is a text, or, more pertinently for the purposes at hand, what constitutes the text for the psychoanalytic critic? Green seeks to answer this question by comparing the text to the text of dream (dream-work) insofar as «they are both presented through secondary elaborations» (LD 19). This comparison endows secondary elaborations with the central role that «presentability» plays in both the «manifest text of the dream» and the literary text. Now we need to grasp fully the definition and function of secondary elaborations within the secondary process.

Let us begin with a definition of the secondary process as a whole. Freud tells us that the secondary process «regulates events in the preconscious and the ego» (146). Within this space that the secondary process as an ensemble of conscious operations opens up, Laplanche and Pontalis formulate the nature and function of secondary elaborations or «revisions» by writing:

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[2] Unless stressed or indicated otherwise, for the purposes of this essay, by «text» I mean the literary text.

[3] All translations from *La Déliaison are mine.*

[4] See Hölderlin's verses quoted by Green in the epigraph to his *The Tragic Effect: The Oedipus Complex in Tragedy.*

> The elimination of the dream's apparent absurdity and incoherence, the filling in of its gaps, the partial or total reorganisation of its elements by means of selection and addition, the attempt to make it into something like a day-dream (Tagtraum) — these, essentially, are what Freud called secondary revisions [elaborations], or, at times, 'considerations of intelligibility' (Rüchsicht auf Verständlichkeit). As the term «sekündare Bearbeitung» suggests, secondary revision (elaboration) constitutes a second stage of dream-work (Arbeit); it therefore operates upon the results of a first revision by the other mechanisms of the dream-work (condensation, displacement, considerations of representability). (412)

The precise explanation of «secondary revisions», or secondary elaborations as «considerations of intelligibility», justifies the claim that the binding process = the writing process = «semantic acceptability» (Freud's «considerations of intelligibility») or textual «literality» (LD 19). Green further characterizes the binding process as «free (unbound) psychical energy seeking release, using the compromises attributed to condensation and displacement» (LD 19), and creating a psychic dialectical process of synthesizing the opposites. The binding process is the «most striking» feature of the secondary process in which «the energy is bound at first and then flows in a controlled manner: ideas are cathected in a more stable fashion while satisfaction is postponed, so allowing for mental experiments which test out the various possible paths leading to satisfaction» (Laplanche and Pontalis 339). Through the mediation of the binding process, unbound psychic energy transforms itself into «bound» energy, «whose release is deferred, contained, and limited according to the laws of logic and temporal succession» (LD 19).

Even though Green finds useful parallels between the manifest text of dream and the literary text, he regards the literary text as more aptly comparable to «a fantasy to the extent that fantasy closely intermingles both primary and *secondary processes*, the latter reshaping the former» (LD 19). Green's comparison between the literary text and the manifest text of dream as the work done by «conscious elaborations» within the secondary process and his further equation of the literary text with conscious fantasy carry a sophisticated reworking of the more useful insights in Freud's paper «Creative Writers and Daydreaming».

The analogy between the literary text, the manifest text of dream and finally conscious fantasy places Green's concept of the binding process in a tradition of psychoanalytic criticism that extends in America from Ernst Kris' work to Simon O. Lesser's, to Norman Holland's. Nevertheless, a radical distinction ought to be made between Green's *specific* theoretical framework of interpretation and conventional Freudian psychoanalytic interpretation that asserts itself as *exhaustive*. In short, Green provides a psychoanalytic definition of the literary text that only serves as a distinctive foundation for the psychoanalytic interpretations of it. This definition does not negate the possibility of an unlimited number of other hermeneutic operations, each of which defines the literary text differently; to the contrary, it affirms it.

Finally, the specificity of the writing process for Green resides in the «scriptural process» (*l'écriture*). The scriptural process has no doubt played a generative role in the shaping of certain cultures, because it is coincidental with the recorded history of their evolution. Accordingly, we refer today to «scriptural» and «oral» traditions, each signifying consequential patterns of its own. However, the implications of the binding process as a general theory are not *entirely* bound up in the specific graphic visibility of writing. They would be similarly at work in the oral process that creates oral literature (as in traditional African literature) — perhaps more so, since secondary elaborations are then augmented as they fall into a repeated pattern of telling stories and may be theorized within the borders of narratophilia. In its widest sense, the binding process would be at work in all the arts. I would suggest that one may be entirely justified in formulating a binding process in, say, the plastic arts.

Through the binding process, dominant clusters of social and cultural structures (lexical, rhetorical, syntactic, semantic, esthetic, poetic and fictional) consciously permeate both fantasy and the literary text, manipulate them and, finally, mold them in a variety of conventional ways. Of course, one must keep in mind that these secondary elaborations themselves are not pure, homogeneous, independent entities. They inevitably carry traces of the primary process, because each one of them is permeated by desire. Unconscious desires always lurk behind the logic of the literary text. Their traces are carried into the text and are interwoven through the binding process into the rich tapestry that we call a work of literature. These unconscious traces make up the «textual unconscious» that can never be effaced.

THE PSYCHOANALYTIC LITERARY CRITIC AS THE ANALIZED OF THE TEXT

Green maintains that in the act of reading the rapid scanning of the conscious eye does not detect the unconscious traces of desire buried in the text by secondary elaborations. It is only within a psychoanalytic reading-listening operation that these unconscious traces intimate themselves as «idea» and «affect». The psychoanalytic reader eventually experiences idea and affect respectively as «enigma» and «fascination» (LD 20). «In short, the analyst [reader-listener] reacts to the text as a product of the unconscious» (LD 20). This is why the psychoanalytic reading-listening operation is a marvelous (in the etymological sense of the word) journey back to the magical psychic domain where primary processes lead us to the revelations of the unconscious. In the primary process «psychical energy flows freely, passing unhindered, by means of mechanisms of condensation and displacement, from one idea to another to completely recathect the ideas attached to those satisfying experiences which are at the root of the unconscious wishes (primitive hallucination) ...» (Laplanche and Pontalis 339). From there the psychoanalytic reading-listening operation may lead the psychoanalytic critic to the buried mother-load of affect and meaning in their condensed, displaced, reversed and dispersed primal state in the primary process.

Green theorizes that the psychoanalytic reading-listening operation in literary criticism hinges on two related and highly consequential psychical mechanisms. First, it makes the reader-listener (analyst-critic) the «*analyzed of the text*» (LD 20). In other words, it is the text that analyzes the psychoanalytic reader rather than the psychoanalytic reader analyzing the text. The concept of the reader-listener as the analyzed of the text has drastic implications for psychoanalytic criticism and its pedagogy. In my view, it is a theoretical gem of immense fruitfulness. One may now assert that in the psychoanalytic reading one *reads* and is *read*, one thinks and is thought, one feels and is felt, one analyzes and is analyzed at one and the same time. Second, the psychoanalytic interpretation of the literary text based on the reading-listening operation is no more and no less than the interpretation that the «reader as text» gives of «the effects of the text» on his or her «own unconscious» (LD 20).

This particular modality of interpretation demands our keen attention to the extent that it indicates the site where the psychoanalytic reader's unconscious coincides with the «textual unconscious». The textual unconscious, a concept of considerable significance to psychoanalytic literary criticism, represents the Other in the reading-listening operation. It is in the interstices of myriad identifications with the textual unconscious that each reader-listener may claim: «I am an Other», as Rimbaud put it. In this particular perspective, the psychoanalytic reading results in a genuine *self-analysis* mediated by the text.

I would say the concept of text-mediated self-analysis, an intricate and sophisticated interpretative activity, is one of the most differentiating and helpful features of the unbinding process that Green proposes. In a number of remarks, Freud declared self-analysis fundamental to psychoanalysis and its practice, even after the practioner's own analysis. In Freud's own unique case as the founder of psychoanalysis, self-analysis allowed him to enter a

zone of knowledge and understanding where none had existed before. Later, Karen Horney, who considered the subject of self-analysis worthy of a book, stated that «On theoretical grounds... I see no stringent reason why self-analysis should not be feasible» (27). The concept of text-mediated self-analysis affirms the theoretical and practical validity of self-analysis. It emerges as a moment of expansion and enrichment in the history of development of self-analysis and its practice.

Since the text-mediated self-analysis surges up from the depth of a singular, individual encounter with and response to a text, it does away with the serious charge leveled at psychoanalytic literary criticism that Alan Roland refers to as «the monster of psychological reduction» (249). Consequently, the text-mediated self-analysis is an endeavor in equating the interpretative act with the effects of the text on the individual reader-listener's unconscious. That is precisely why Green insists, as I indicated earlier, that the psychoanalytic interpretation is *specific* rather than *exhaustive* in its relation to the literary text. The text as the singular-universal analyzes the critic on a parallel plane within the welter of its own latent unconscious traces. Such an analysis or self-analysis initiates a dialectic movement between the singular and the universal and avoids the manifold dangers of psychological reductionism and psychobiography.

Green is aware that there are risks and limitations to psychoanalytic critical interpretation as self-analysis. He supplies examples of such risks: above all, bringing to the surface the interpreter's «own resistance to the unveiling of his unconscious», «missing the unconscious meaning of the text», offering «rationalizations» as an «interpretation that is too superficial», or contriving «artificial constructions» that result in a «'plated-on' interpretation» (LD 20). However, these concomitant risks of psychoanalytic interpretation do not deter Green from affirming the validity of the psychoanalytic interpretation of literary texts. He reminds us that «To interpret is always to take an interpretative risk» (LD 29). He asserts that delirium (*le délire*) holds a truth of its own in critical interpretation and that the psychoanalytic reader-listener may be accused of being delirious in his or her interpretation of the text. The acceptability of an interpretation, however, is not one of the criteria of its validity and value. The work of a psychoanalytic critic does not necessarily have to be excessively persuasive. Green reiterates that the psychoanalytic reader-listener does not merely «read [*lit*] the text, he unbinds [*délit*] it» (LD 20). The reader-listener breaks into the web of the logic of the grammatical-semantical-fictional apparatus that holds the text together. In this way, the reading-listening act transforms the text's conventional, structural bondage within the writing process into a state of psychical «boundlessness» (*la déliaison*) or the unbinding process. The unbinding process is a veritable psychoanalytic act of «breaking and entering» into the conventional structures of the text, an act that inevitably should result in recapturing the primal delirium that dwells in the very origin of every literary work.

Green theorizes that this transformative act of breaking and entering «jerks the text out of its groove (*délirer = mettre hors du sillon*)»; that is to say, it makes the text *skip over* its conventionally and culturally sanctioned structures, its secondary elaborations. Without its formal and conventional structures, the text reverts to its originary delirium within the primary process and rediscovers the free play of its affective and semantic forces. This delirium constitutes «a nucleus of truths» that comprises: (1) «the truth of desire», (2) «the truth of fantasy», (3) «the truth of illusion» and (4) «the truth of history» (LD 21).

1. The truth of desire issues from the text's reliance upon the writer's «desire to write and to be read» and the reader's desire to read as «a remote substitute for the desire to see and to know which is part of all sexual curiosity» (LD 21). Scopophilia as sexual curiosity, then, offers a basis for a psychoanalytic theory of the reading process. At first glance, the reading-listening operation (*regard-écoute*) does not appear to be entirely embraced by scopophilia. What happens, one wonders, to the «listening» component of the psychic operation within scopophilia? I would propose that listening to the text by means of the

«third ear» proposed by Green can be achieved by broadening the scope and deepening the sense of scopophilia to the extent that it integrates within itself the part that epistemophilia and, correlatively, narratophilia play in psychoanalytic literary criticism. In this perspective, one may say the «third ear» = the «third eye».

2. The truth of fantasy «which permeates the text, makes of the text *a pretext* for the fantasy (and vice versa); the pretext of the fantasy shared by the person who writes and the person who reads in a mutually narcissistic relationship, the text being a *trans-narcissistic object*» (LD 21). As I have already explained, this «shared fantasy» between the writer and reader produced by and through the mediation of the text is the basis of a new mode of literary criticism as self-analysis.

3. The truth of illusion creates the possibility of the substitution of *fiction for reality* and the desire to live through the mediation of various features of secondary process — foremost among them, all the lexical, grammatical and literary forms and devices that are available to the writer. Literary forms and devices make reality *reverberate* in the reading process. This reverberation of reality in fiction is achieved through the truth of illusion in such a way as to make fiction appear *more real than the real.* Born of the truth of illusion, the fictional reality acquires a «value to which one may even sacrifice reality and the desire to live» (LD 21). The «big lie» of fiction has been and will always be *more real than the «real»* in its cohesion and coherence; so the bigger the fictional lie (the illusion) the better.

4. Finally, there is the historical truth that «creates a dialogue between the history of the text's producer and the history of its consumer» (LD 21). The historical truth reveals itself at the crossroads of the «relations between a life's history (which is not the same as a biography or even a psychobiography) and a work's history» (LD 21). The historical truth provides a subtle but consequential critique of psychoanalytic literary criticism that following Freud's work on Leonardo da Vinci delves into the artist's life or the lives of artistic and fictional characters in search of hidden clues to the «concealed» psychological meanings in the artist's life.

This nucleus of truth(s), through the mediation of the binding process, creates the original «fabric» of the literary text, and, in due course, the distinctive pretext of its psychoanalytic interpretation. The subsequent psychoanalytic interpretative text is distinct from its literary pretext, because it attempts to reverse the functional direction of the creative writing process (the binding process); that is to say, it tries to *disassemble* the ensemble of assembled forms and devices that keep textual delirium in check. That is why one may claim that the unbinding process always offers a psychoanalytic reading that is both a reader-response *and* a deconstructive reading of the text. The reader-listener's *delirious* response *interprets* and *deconstructs* the text by finding its *aporia* in the possibility of reversing its binding process.

The visibility of the visible and the audibility of the audible (both considered so in a psychoanalytic context) in the text are due to what the writing process has made *invisible* and *inaudible*, through the intimations of the unconscious. According to Green, the writing process, which finds its materiality in the textual graphic representation, lodges itself between a double absence: *the chain of the signified and the unconscious.* Through the agencies of the «third eye» and the «third ear», the psychoanalytic reading-listening seeks to recuperate the invisible and inaudible in the text, thereby giving maximal free play to textual delirium.

The textual invisible and inaudible constitute precisely this delirium of the text that makes the discovery of an unlimited number of truths, among them the truth of psychoanalytic literary criticism, a viable undertaking. The delirium is the domain of logical indeterminacy,

of maximal ambiguity, of opacity and of chthonian forces. Psychoanalytic criticism always and everywhere represents a desire to produce a text that is no longer squarely situated within the province of the binding process. Discovered initially in and through literature, the psychoanalytic critical text eventually becomes *pre-literary* or *nonliterary* and, paradoxically, precedes the literary work. Adopting Freud's term designating delirium, Green refers to it as a «neo-reality» (LD 23).

THE SCOPOPHILIA OF READING

From the point of view of psychoanalysis, Green relegates the reading and writing processes to the category of sublimation. What the process of reading specifically sublimates is desire as sexual curiosity, that is, scopophilia. Green differentiates between scopophilia (voyeurism) and epistemophilia (intellectual curiosity). Since voyeurism in itself is also a kind of desire to know («carnal knowledge»), I would say the two psychic phenomena are inter-related but not identical. Green considers scopophilia as «a drive toward much less inhibited, displaced, or desexualized pleasure» (LD 25), whose sublimated sensuality is nevertheless experienced as an affect. The voyeuristic theory of reading leads Green to ask whether «the necessary criterion for literature is not precisely to produce writings that cannot evade their relation with pleasure» (LD 250). The manifold sensual traces of literary voyeurism found in the reading process enable Green to say that «reading is tied up with the pleasure of seeing» (LD 25).

On the other hand, epistemophilia manifests itself as a «search for an explanatory 'theory', as exemplified by sexual theories created by children to explain how babies come into the world» (LD 25). This differentiation between scopophilia and epistemophilia, between the desire to see and the desire to understand, compels Green to claim that the pleasure in «reading derives from (*relève*) 'voyeurism'» (LD 25). Green adds that the «Specificity of the reading pleasure is due to the mediation of the written word [the scriptural process]» (LD 25). So psychoanalytic literary criticism issues forth from a combination of voyeuristic and epsitemophilic tendencies.

What are precisely the constituents of the scopophilia of the reading process in itself? First, there is the written word, with its graphic system of symbolic representation of the absent object, which is mediated by the agency of imagination. The reader has to imagine the absent objects through their symbolic presentations by seeing the written words and «binding» them together as a «*secondary vision (seconde vue)*... within himself, not in the text» (LD 26). I would call this a «double vision» to the extent that it involves an objective as well as a subjective or, more accurately, psychical act of seeing. One may consider «*seeing within oneself*» in the reading process as a mode of being seen by the text.

Second, at the instant when the «secondary vision» emerges, there also occurs a reversal in the direction of the reader's voyeurism: the reader moves from an active voyeurism to a passive one to the extent that the text now *reads in* the reader. The text «regards the reader, in both senses of the word» (LD 26). It is as if the text were «functioning as a mirror for the reader» (LD 26), bathing the reader in the light of the truth of fantasy and making the reader visible to himself or herself in this crepuscular light. The phenomenon of «double vision» in the act of reading now completes itself in its fullest sense: seeing and being seen.

Enlarging the boundaries of literary scopophilia to include exhibitionism, Green proposes that the relationship between the writer and reader consists simultaneously as an inner dialogue between the two through the mediation of the text. The writer calls out to the reader, «Look at me»; the reader pleads with the writer, «Expose *me*», to which the writer replies, «Look at *yourself*» (LD 28). This triangular scopophilic discourse, now replete

with exhibitionism, makes full use of the polysemic resources of the literary language in the myriad of forms that it can take.

To sum up, the scopophilia of the reading process now permits us to *see* it as a psychical activity in which the seer and the seen become one. As a created and creative symbolic whole, this merger moves toward planes of plurisignificance where other more abstract mergers of this kind may take place. The entire process shows how the preconscious representations transform themselves into preconscious fantasies that, in turn, become fictive entities. From this vantage point one finds all fiction, including realistic fiction, «to be akin to [conscious] fantasy» (LD 28). Finally, the scopophilia of reading indicates the site of another psychical activity, the place where the text's and the reader's unconscious fantasies become conjugates.

THE SCOPOPHILIA OF WRITING

Green reminds us that «At the level of the unconscious fantasy, the object is not representable or, to be more precise, it is only representable on that other stage where we have to look for it by a deductive process...» (LD 28). Consequently, *disguised* object-representation («child-faeces-penis») can only take place at the preconscious level. At the conscious level, the object is simply the text, permeated with the same preconscious wishes in silence imposed upon it by the governing formal, technical and cultural conventions. Even though this object attracts our attention, its power of attraction does not reside on the representational plane. True to his scopophilic theory of the reading process, Green finds the secret of the textual attraction at its scriptural (*l'écriture*) level.

In short, both the writing process and the unconscious fantasy from which it issues forth are nonrepresentational. At the scriptural level, traces of the unconscious fantasy make themselves manifest in the very empty space their absence creates. These traces are not erasable and persist in the text as breaks, shifts, inconsistencies, contradictions, reversals, repetitions, double entendres, absurdities, vagaries, opacities — all the modalities of textual repression. The written word drags along with it these traces into the text as their unconscious signifieds inexorably find their conscious signifiers. The truth of this conscious-unconscious conversion through the linguistic function of signifier/signified clears the way for delineating the principle of its structural design: «to transform something derived from the desiring body into a binding made up exclusively of language of symbols bound together in a determinate chain responding to the laws of grammar» (LD 31). It is noteworthy, however, to point out that «The most unconscious part of the unconscious fantasy is not representable because it is welded to the instinctual motion that constitutes it» (LD 29).

The coexistence of the unconscious fantasy and instinctual motion is fundamental to understanding how Green theorizes the writing process. As I alluded to earlier in passing, for Green, to write is primarily to create a double «non-representation» or a double absence, that is, «to transfer the non-representability of the unconscious fantasy to the non-representabilty of the written word, through the mediation of preconscious representation» (LD 30). The aim of all creative writing is the textual transmission of this double absence by means of writing and its eventual recovery in the reading process, in which the writing process finds its complementary dialectical pole. The reading process in itself comprises two reader-response sub-categories: (1) deciphering the written symbols of the scriptural process; and (2) participating in the recreation of the «planes of preconscious and unconscious representation and their corresponding fantasies» (LD 31). Therefore, reading is a process of deciphering what has been scripturally ciphered and rediscovering all the unconscious fantasies that existed before the writing process concealed them. Reading in general and psychoanalytic reading in particular owe their possibility as dialectical processes to the persistence of the

preconscious representations that move simultaneously in two opposite directions: conscious representation through the writing process and unconscious fantasy by deductive means.

FINAL REMARKS

The foregoing merely represents a few introductive remarks on Green's concept of the unbinding process, its attendant theories of the scopophilia of the reading and writing processes and their import for a pedagogy of psychoanalytic literary criticism. It is my hope that this brief introduction will encourage further detailed studies of this concept and its pedagogical implications and their applicative potentials, drawing their inspiration and strength from Green's work as a whole. Green's contributions to psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic literary criticism are already well known in Europe and South America. In the United States, however, his reception has been somewhat slow and his work remains relatively unknown. Cognizant of this fact, Green himself has complained that «there is a great resistance both to my person and thinking» in North America.[5] This «resistance» is no doubt our loss. Perhaps such resistance to an original thinker and a *provocative* body of work is inevitable: they both have to be understood and appreciated beyond certain preconceptions. Or the resistance may well be due to a lack of available English translations of all of Green's work and therefore the absence of familiarity with it. In any case, Green's analyses of the concept of affect, his theory of narcissism and borderline psychosis are worthy of the highest attention by psychoanalytic critics, indeed literary critics in general. These theoretical insights would make a translation of Green's work into English a valuable intellectual enterprise in itself. On a different but related plane, Green, much like Bion, occupies a place of distinction in the international community of psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic theorists and critics as a figure of mediation between the French and the so-called Anglo-Saxon schools of psychoanalysis. In the words of Frank Kermod, he is a «fervent defender of entente cordiale in psychoanalysis» (OPM 9). This fact should be sufficient in itself to draw scholars in the United States to Green's work.

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[5] In an August 17, 1991 letter to the writer.

Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 35-42

Les Jeux Multidimensionnels du Texte

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Nous souhaitons montrer que les dimensions de l'écrit poétique mettent en jeu certaines propriétés du monde psychique interne. Ces représentations suscitent le même émotion esthétique que celle produite en nous par la beauté du monde, elles favorisent en même temps la réactivation de fantasmes qui mettent en scène des satisfactions pulsionnelles associées aux premières émotions esthétique.

Nous considérons que le plaisir produit par la création et la lecture du texte resulte d'un processus de sublimation des motions pulsionnelles liées aux affects L, H et K (Bion 1962). Nous nous référons au texte de Freud de 1924 (pp. 287-288) pour suggérer que ce plaisir n'est pas le simple résultat d'une réduction des tensions intrapsychiques: «Mais c'est inconsidérément que nous avons identifié le principe de plaisir-déplaisir avec ce principe de Nirvâna... il n'est pas douteux qu'il existe des tensions s'accompagnant de plaisir et des détentes déplaisantes... Plaisir et déplaisir ne peuvent donc pas être rapportés à l'accroissement ou à la diminution d'une quantité que nous appelons quantité d'excitation... Il semble qu'ils ne dépendent pas de ce facteur quantitatif, mais d'un caractère de celui-ci, que nous ne pouvons désigner que comme qualitatif... Peut-être s'agit il du rythme, de l'écoulement temporel des modifications, des montées et des chutes de la quantité d'excitation; nous ne le savons pas.» Ce texte où Freud introduit un facteur qualitatif, anticipe par la référence au rythme et au flux temporel, sur certains aspects de l'émotion esthétique.

AFFECTS ET EMOTIONS ESTHETIQUE

L'émotion esthétique est un phénomène psychique peu exploré par la psychanalyse. La psychanalyse de l'enfant et l'expérience clinique montrent que le sentiment du beau est très précocémment exprimé; de véritables choix d'ordre esthétique se manifestent dès la première année pour les visages, les objets, les vétements. Le sentiment esthétique n'est pas totalement le produit de l'environnement comme croit l'avoir démontré Bourdieu (1992). Nous sommes dotés de pré-conceptions qui permettent l'apparition d'un plaisir de nature esthétique.

D. Meltzer (1988) fait l'hypothèse que dès la naissance le bébé subit un «choc esthétique»: (p. 22) «La mère ordinairement belle et attentive présente à son bébé ordinairement beau,

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un objet complexe qui attire son intéret d'une façon irrésistible, tant sensuellement qu'infra-sensuellement. Sa beauté mise en évidence comme elle doit l'être dans ses seins et son visage, compliquée toujours par ses mamelons et ses yeux, le bombarde d'une expérience émotionnelle de nature passionnelle, ce qui a pour effet que voir ces objets est faire l'expérience de la beauté.»

L'expérience de la beauté dans la relation au monde peut être considérée comme extension métaphorique de ce premier choc. H. Segal (1981) note que la perfection formelle, la complétude, l'harmonie, le rythmique caractérisent les objets naturels sources de plaisir esthétique, mais elle ajoute que le «laid» ayant des caractéristiques opposées est souvent en cause dans l'expérience du «beau» et on peut retenir la pertinence de l'axe «ordre-désordre» dans les situations qui suscitent l'émotion esthétique.

Mais la rencontre avec l'objet esthétique ne s'arrête pas aux qualités de surface, de l'objet. Meltzer continue sa description du choc esthétique (p. 22): «Mais est inconnu pour lui, le sens de la conduite de sa mère, de l'apparition et de la disparitition du sein, de la lumière dans ses yeux, d'un visage sur lequel les émotions passent comme les ombres des nuages sur un paysage.» L'incertitude sur le monde interne de la mère entre en conflit avec les perceptions sensorielles, esthétiques, de surface. Ainsi tout objet esthétique devient un objet au sens de Freud, soumis au jeu pulsionnel, à l'introjection, à la projection: Il n'y a pas d'expérience esthétique pure. On peut noter aussi que chez l'adulte, l'expérience de la beauté du monde n'est pas toujours accessible et pourrait on dire, n'est pas accessible à tous. Il peut y avoir une sorte d'organisation défensive contre cette expérience (une «recherche» concernant la beauté peut être une telle défense).

Les caractéristiques d'ordre et de complétude de l'organisation du monde psychique interne font écho à la structure de l'objet externe source originelle d'émotion esthétique. Des liens s'établissent entre les tensions pulsionnelles, affectives et les émotions esthétiques, conduisant à l'équivalence souvent faite par les enfants entre le bon et le beau ou à la formulation de Keats «Beauty is truth, truth is beauty». Les fantasmes qui sucitent cette émotion sont essentiellement selon Meltzer ceux d'une scène primitive acceptée sans envie, créatrice d'objets idéalisés, ils mettent en jeu les affects-pulsions «Bioniens» L et H mais surtout K.

Cette expérience interne entraine une modalité d'attention particulière au monde, une aptitude à la transfiguration de l'expérience de voir, par une projection sur le monde des fantasmes et de la pensée de rêve qui s'accompagnent d'un plaisir de qualité esthétique. Marion Milner écrit (Pseudonyme J. Field, 1950) «... par la façon dont on regarde une chose, il est possible de faire naitre un sentiment intense, une croyance concernant sa réalité vivante. Une telle façon de regarder produit une transfiguration complète de la perspective de sens commun où à la fois les objets et les personnes existent principalement en terme de leur utilité. Cela conduit à un monde d'êtres existant de leur propre droit et offrant une source de ravissement simplesment par le fait d'être eux mêmes...» (p. 37).

Ainsi dit elle l'artiste produit une transfiguration du monde externe «par un processus qui consiste à lui donner quelque chose qui provient de l'intérieur de soi même.» Et elle suggère que «cette partie de soi-même que l'on peut donner au monde exterieur était faite de l'étoffe de ses propres réves, des souvenirs conservés de son passé, ...». Il y a un retour dans le monde réel des fantasmes et des émotions produites par nos premières interrelations et expériences esthétiques.

LA CREATION ARTISTIQUE

Une condition préalable à la création artistique est l'accès aux fantasmes, aux conflits, aux formes spécifiques du monde interne. Cette condition nécessite une disponibilité qui est à l'opposé des processus d'attention consciente. Elle pourrait être rapprochée de l'état

qui favorise la libre association, ou l'attention flottante du psychanalyste, le «devenir O» de Bion (*Attention et Interprétation*, 1970). Pour A. Ehrenzweig (1967) la création nécessite l'accès à des processus primaires. «On peut établir comme loi psychologique générale que toute recherche créatrice suppose que l'oeil interne fixe une multitude de choix possibles, qui mettraient en échec total la compréhension consciente. La créativité garde ses relations étroites avec le chaos du processus primaire — que nous ayons alors le sentiment d'un chaos ou bien d'un ordre créateur élaboré, cela dépend entièrement de la réaction de nos facultés rationnelles. Si elles sont capables de laisser leur controle dériver de la focalisation consciente au scanning inconscient, la perturbation de la conscience se fait à peine sentir.» (p. 69)

L'artiste est celui qui crée des objets réels à partir de ses expériences de la beauté et du plaisir esthétique originel mêlé aux affects et aux fantasmes suscités par ces expériences. Paul Klee (1924) a proposé le modèle de l'arbre pour illustrer le processus de la création. L'artiste est en relation avec «ce fleuve d'images et d'expériences qu'il organise»... «Je compare aux racines de l'arbre ce mouvement de la nature et de la vie qui s'étend et se répand. A partir des racines, la sève coule vers l'artiste, coule à travers lui, coule vers ses yeux. Ainsi il se tient comme le tronc d'un arbre. Meurtri et secoué par la violence du flot, il moule dans son oeuvre sa vision. La courone des arbres se développe et se répand dans le temps et l'espace à la vue du monde, comme son oeuvre.» (p. 13)

Pour D. Meltzer (1988) l'objet esthétique crée est un objet externe, qui symbolise certains aspects des relations entre objets internes; les processus de réparation des objets internes (scéne primitive heureuse productrice de bébés ou d'idées) s'accompagnent non seulement d'une réaction affective mais aussi de réaction esthétique. La création est une réalisation symbolique qui s'appuie sur un fantasme de scène primitive productrice de belles oeuvres, elle satisfait «un désir de restaurer et de recréer un objet d'amour perdu à l'extérieur comme à l'intérieur du moi» H. Segal (1981). Ainsi on peut penser que si la tache de l'artiste «réside dans la création d'un monde qui lui soit propre», ce monde est une réplique partielle et restaurée de son propre monde interne. Souvent, comme chez Proust, il s'agit de renoncement pulsionel dans un processus de deuil avec création de symboles.

L'émotion esthétique nait des qualités formelles de objet ou de leur restauration. Il y a représentation symbolique de l'oscillation entre la destruction persécutrice et la position dépressive. Le désordre, la fragmentation qui correspond au malaise produit par ce qui est «laid» anticipe le mouvement de reconstruction qui aboutit au «beau» et parfois de ce fait, le laid seul est explicite.

Contrairement au travail inconscient de la disponibilité à «l'inspiration», le temps de la rédaction nécessite une activité d'organisation (H. Segal). L'oeuvre d'Antonin Artaud en est l'exemple dramatique par les contrastes entre les réalisations qui coincident soit avec des structurations soit avec des décompensations.

LA DIMENSION DIVINE: LE POETE DEMIURGE

Ces processus éclairent la fréquence des identifications des poètes avec Dieu. Le poète n'a qu'une conscience partielle de l'origine de ce qui le fait écrire et il se réfère à l'inspiration, écrit Littré qui «est un mouvement de l'âme, des pensées, actions qui sont dues à une insufflation divine.» Le poète se rapproche aussi de Dieu par le fait qu'il crée un monde en projetant sur des objets réels son monde interne.

René Char décrit son pouvoir mystérieux:

> «Voici que l'obscurité s'écarte et que Vivre devient, sous la forme d'un âpre ascétisme allégorique, la conquète du pouvoir extraordinaire dont nous nous

sentons profusément traversés mais que nous n'exprimons qu'incomplètement faute de loyauté, de discernement cruel et de persévérance.
Compagnons pathétique qui murmurez à peine, allez la lampe éteinte et rendez les bijoux. Un mystère chante dans vos os. Développez votre étrangeté légitime».
(Fureur et mystère XXII)

Le poète démiurge, interlocuteur privilégié de la divinité, transmet une sorte de message crypté destiné à l'ensemble de l'humanité, il est créateur de mythes. Il satisfait ainsi à une tendance universelle de transmission d'une pensée créatrice sous forme de mythe (Bion 1963). Paradoxalement ce message qui transforme le quotidien en expérience esthétique hors du temps a une qualité d'intimité qui fait echo au monde interne du lecteur. Dans certains poèmes le passage d'un récit personnel, à un mythe universel se fait sans transition. Dans le *Mal Aimé* d'Appolonaire:

C'était son regard d'inhumaine
La cicatrice à son cou nu
Sortir saoule d'une taverne
Au moment où je reconnus
La fausseté de l'amour même

Lorsqu'il fut de retour enfin
Dans sa patrie la sage Ulysse
Son vieux chien de lui se souvint
Près d'un tapis de haute lisse
Sa femme attendait qu'il revint

Mêmes surgissements du mythe chez T. S. Elliot (Tiresias dans «The Waste Land»). Dans tous ces exemples, l'ensemble du texte, par le fait de son origine (le monde interne) qui demeure mystérieuse pour son auteur même, a la dimension du mythe.

A l'inverse de ces poètes inspirés, on pourrait citer Paul Valery comme exemple d'un poète qui prétend acquérir par la réflexion, la connaissance des processus psychiques qui sont à l'origine de l'émotion esthétique. Chez lui pas d'illusion concernant l'inspiration et pas de prétention à la divinité. Mais en contre partie, la qualité des émotions que ses poèmes suscitent s'apparente à l'éclat froid des pierreries qu'il évoque si souvent et qui consttue un passage du vivant au minéral, qui symbolise bien sa recherche.

LES DIMENSIONS FORMES/CODE LEXICAL

Pour susciter les émotions affectives et esthétiques mêlées, l'écrivain dispose de deux modes d'expression, mais il n'est pas maitre des liens qui sont établis entre eux. Le langage analogique qui apparait dans la forme du texte et particulièrement dans sa diction, qui fait appel aux premiers modes de communications sonores de l'enfant est spécifiquement porteur d'éléments esthétiques mais il peut être en même temps expression intense des pulsions. Le langage dialogique, le code lexical, est le mode privilégié d'expression des fantasmes, mais il est également porteur d'émotion esthétique par la qualité en quelque sorte architecturale de la construction de la pensée qu'il peut reflèter. Julia Kristeva (1977) a traité des rapports entre ces deux dimensions «Le flux sonore du futur parlant est déjà organisé par certains modèles rythmiques et intonationnels. Innés ou développés dans le raport à la mère... ces modèles servent en partie de base aux règles proprement syntaxiques qui se développeront ultérieurement et en partie les dépassent et les excèdent pour constituer un registre supra grammatical du discours, propre à tout énoncé, mais qui s'actualise en particulier... en

langage poètique.» (p. 438) Ses recherches sur la lecture par Antonin Artaud et James Joyce de leurs écrits confirment l'hypothèse qum nous avions faite, d'une possible dissociation entre les deux modes de communications, prenant la forme d'une destruction du code par le rythme.

Tout texte est habituellement un complexe où ces dimensions sont intriquées dans chacun des deux niveaux du langage. Mais nous disposons de plusieurs exemples d'abandon du code lexical et d'utilisation exclusive des éléments formels. Il faut avoir entendu la diction de l'Ursonate par son auteur Kurt Schwitters pour en reconnaitre toute l'intensité esthétique et émotionnelle, mais la lecture renvoie à un message codé, étrange et fascinant, qui évoque sans doute notre pré-langage.

Fümms bö wö tää zää Uu,
pögiff,
kvii Ee.
Ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo,

dll rrrrrr beeeee bö,
dll rrrrrr beeeee bö fümms bö,
rrrrrr beeeee bö fümms bö wô,
beeeee bö fümms bö wô tää,
bö fümms bö wô tää zää,
fümms bö wô tää zää Uu:

Dans ses commentaires Schwitters (1920) écrit: «Les éléments de l'art poétique sont les lettres, les syllabes, les mots les phrases. De l'épanouissement réciproque de ces éléments nait la poésie. Le sens n'est importante que mis en valeur au même titre que chacun des facteurs. Je mêts en valeur le sens en fonction du non-sens. Je préfère le non-sens mais il s'agit là d'une affaire tout à fait personnelle». (p. 57)

Il est significatif que dans un poéme dramatique d'Álvaro de Campos, hétéronyme de Pessoa, surgisse une forme similaire, comme si le cri devait suppléer aux mots devenus insuffisants, le procédé est une onomatopée des hurlements:

Mais cela sur la mer, sur la me-e-er, sur la ME-E-ER!
Eh-eh-eh-eh-eh. Eh-eh-eh-eh-eh-eh.
.....
Yeh-eh-eh-eh-eh. Yeh-eh-eh-eh-eh
..... (Álvaro de Campos, *Ode Marítima*)

Tandis que pour certains, la recherche de la forme peut conduire au jeu du non sens (Robert Desnos) on trouve avec Victor Hugo l'exploit de la fore sonore et typographique alliée au sens verbal. Dans les Djinns (Les orientales), la tempête enfle, s'installe et disparait. Nous n'en citerons ici que les deux premières strophes:

Murs, ville,
Et port,
Asile
De mort,
Mer grise
Où brise
La brise,
Tout dort

Dans la plaine

Naît un bruit
C'est l'haleine
De la nuit.
Elle brame
Comme une âme
Qu'une flamme
Toujours suit!

A l'exception de ces recherches, le poème utilise tous les registres, et les analyses habituelles de la littérature se rapprochent, au vocabulaire près, des commentaires que nous proposerons, mais avec un point de vue différent. Soit la dernière strophe de l'«Automme malade» d'Appolinaire:

Et que j'aime ô saison que j'aime tes rumeurs
Les fruits tombant sans qu'on les cueille
Le vent et la forêt qui pleurent
Toutes larmes en automme feuille à feuille
Les feuilles
Qu'on foule
Un train
Qui roule
La vie
S'écoule

La recherche de mise en harmonie de la forme avec la pensée verbale, qui se manifeste dans le choix des sonorités, du rythme, des répétitions, du tempo (cf. la lente énonciation «Toute larmes en automme feuille à feuille») est sans doute toujours partiellement insatisfaite du fait de la rareté des adéquations entre la sonorité d'un mot et son sens lexical. Mais il y a des repères décelables dans le choix des termes, l'utilisation du rituel des rimes, et des rythmes qui nous confrontent à une construction ordonnée. Cet ordre est déterminé par une recherche créative ayant des résonnances avec les caractéristiques de l'expérience esthétique interne. Le sens lexical apparait comme contenu, produit de cette forme.

Nous noterons l'opposition des thèmes concernant les objets externes et internes: la prédominance d'évocations d'objets externes est évidente mais le monde psychique interne est mis en place soit directement: «j'aime» soit par attribution projective: «pleurent-larmes-la vie s'écoule».

La genèse du poème peut être rattachée à un ensemble d'expériences antérieures ayant des effets esthétiques et affectifs.

Expérience fondatrice: (Objet réel: le cycle des saisons, l'automme) → (Objet externe: automme malade) → (Objets internes: Séparation, temps, mort et réparation par l'éternel retour).

Pensée créatrice à l'oeuvre dans l'écriture: la dynamique pulsionnelle du monde interne permet la représentation d'objets externes qui explicitent certains aspects du self, et qu'on pourrait qualifier de transitionnels (moi/non moi) et cette représentation aboutit à la formation de l'objet réel-écriture.

Le texte reflète l'effet de la rencontre primordiale avec l'objet réel, suceptible de produire affects et sentiment esthétique. Ainsi il y a organisation en écho de ce qui est à l'origine du poéme. Les thèmes explicites sont ceux de la perte, de la mort et de la chute. Chacun des termes fait l'objet d'un choix dont les déterminations sont à la fois inconscientes et conscientes, liées à la recherche d'une coïncidence entre une forme et l'évocation verbale. Les défenses contre l'angoisse de mort sont à l'oeuvre, on peut mettre sur le compte d'un déni le gout pour l'automne, la confrontation à la mort surmontée par l'attente du renouveau et une conception cyclique du temps.

Tandis que la période de mise en relation avec le monde interne nécessite la suspension

de l'attention consciente, l'élaboration précédant l'écrit correspond au passage d'une pensée du rêve à une pensée consciente et permêt la recherche d'une construction verbale adéquate. Ce passage peut entrainer une prise de conscience partielle de la problématique liée à l'histoire du poète. Comme dans le cours d'un rêve, ou dans soon récit à soi-même au réveil, il y a un travail pour affronter les conflits. La recherche de la réparation, de l'ordre qui suscite le sentiment esthétique est un processus qui se rapproche d'une auto-analyse ayant des effets thérapeutiques.

LA DIMENSION OBJETS EXTERNES/OBJETS INTERNES

L'exemple du poème d'Appolinaire nous a fait évoquer une dimension qui concerne l'opposition entre la qualité externe/interne des objets. Les cas extrêmes sont instructifs et nous citerons l'exemple bien connu de la littérature japonaise. Les Haiku recherchent la représentation de l'objet externe en s'abstenant généralement de toute évocation subjective, reflet du monde interne du poète. Deux exemples:

Soleil couchant
A travers les chanvres moissonnés
La pluie
(Shiki)

Marché à la baleine
Le bruit des coutelas
Que les pêcheurs dégainent
(Buson)

La perspective du Boudhisme Zen qui inspire cette poésie converge sensiblement avec les concepts que nous avons utilisés pour décrire l'expérience esthétique. L'unité entre le sujet et l'objet dans «La Réalité ultime» a pour conséquence que l'objet externe est le moi. T. Izutsu (1978) commente ainsi la perception d'une fleur: «Regarde cette fleur épanouie. Par sa seule existence, elle atteste que toutes choses ne font qu'un avec le 'Soi' que nous sommes, dans l'unité fondamentale de la Réalité ultime» (pp. 55-56). Notre tentative de reconstruction des organisations intrapsychiques liées à l'expérience esthétique produit des projections dans l'objet externe qui transferent dans cet objet certaines parties du monde interne. Ceci entraine l'illusion d'une unité fondamentale, commune à l'état de «prajnâ» et à l'expérience de l'artiste. Dans les deux cas cette illumination est compatible avec une perception réaliste du monde.

Pour le poète occidental, il y a souvent passage continu de l'évocation des objets externes aux objets internes. On peut noter que l'objet externe du poète est à la fois l'objet originel de l'émotion esthétique (métaphore de la rencontre maternelle) et l'objet sur lequel se projette des fantasmes. La valeur poétique résulte de l'ordre que la forme évoque en même temps que les représentations qui renvoient chacun à son expérience interne. L'évocation directe des affects, des conflits, des fantasmes, qui caractérise par exemple le style romantique, insiste sur l'expérience personnelle du poète qui occupe le devant de la scène en laissant moins de place à l'expérience intime du lecteur.

POUR CONCLURE: DIMENSION CONSCIENT/INCONSCIENT

Nous souhaitions montrer que la structure du langage et sa genèse en deux étapes permettait la mise en forme du jeu fondamental du texte. La recherche de création d'un

monde qui soit à l'image du monde interne dans sa part mystérieusement rattachée aux premières émotions esthétiques, puise son inspiration dans l'inconscient.

Le jeu pulsionnel (L, H et K), par la dérivation de la sublimation est l'élément dynamique essentiel qui fait naître le plaisir de la création et de la lecture poétique. Mais nous suggérons que le plaisir résulte aussi d'un changement de «position» intra-psychique, du passage de la destruction à la réparation et à l'ordre, ordre perceptible par l'organisation de la pensée et du rythme par exemple. Ce passage correspond à ce que Bion (1963) a schématisé comme Ps → D passage du morcellement à la mise en lien.

Les mécanismes de refoulement qui peuvent être mis en évidence nous paraissent peu déterminants pour susciter le plaisir esthétique. La beauté poétique du texte célèbre de Jocaste dans Oedipe Roi «La menace de l'inceste ne doit pas t'effrayer: plus d'un mortel a partagé en songe le lit de sa mère» pourrait être rattachée à la toute puissance et à l'angoisse sucitées par un savoir interdit. Dans son étude sur Léonard de Vinci, Freud a suggéré l'opposition entre les mécanismes névrotiques et la créativité. Dans la perspective de Bion et de Meltzer, la créativité résulte d'un jeu pulsionnel qui affronte le risque de la souffrance et des conflits, tandis que les défenses, et en particulier le refoulement, constituent une non vérité «poison psychique» pour la pensée.

Pour autant la prise de conscience par l'auteur de la nature des mécanismes qui sont à l'origine de sa création demeure partielle et la disponibilité aux fantasmes exige un mode d'accès aux pensées de rêves, partiellement incompatible avec la conscience. Le travail qui utilise ces expériences internes pour organiser l'écriture peut s'accompagner d'insight, et la conscience, l'organe des sens chargé de la «perception des qualités psychiques» (Freud) peut éclairer une part plus ou moins importante du complexe formé par les fantasmes et les émotions affectives et esthétiques, sans que cette variation de la prise de conscience modific la qualité poétique... Mais dans les cas où la recherche de l'insight domine, le risque est grand de voir menacé le respect nécessaire des intuitions qui décèlent les liens mystérieux entre le monde interne et l'objet externe et qui conduisent à la création de l'objet réel qu'est le texte.

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 43-51

Psychological Structures in Biblical Narrative and Psychoanalysis

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INTRODUCTION

Several authors (Bakan, 1958; Grollmann, 1965; Robert, 1974; Klein, 1981; Gay, 1987; Rice, 1990; Yerushalmi, 1991) have discussed the influence of the jewish tradition and of the interpretation of biblical texts on the psychoanalytic method of interpretation, as formulated by Sigmund Freud. Although the opinions about this matter differ widely, I think there are enough indications that there might have been a substantial influence. Contrary to the opinion of most people, the Bible is not an unchangeable, rigid, holy object, that is authorized by an invisible board of scriptural fathers and written as such for once and for all. In fact, Torah (the first part of the Hebrew Bible) means «teaching», and in the rabbinical tradition teaching stands for dialogue, discussion (Visotzky, 1991).

Of course, a text exists, that we call The Bible, The Book. However, only a small group of orthodox jews and christians still believes in the unique authorship by Moses or someone else. And even between them, there is debate about the true canon, textual differences and so on. Historical and literary research has demonstrated that the Bible is composed as an assembly of different texts, with their own particular histories of authorships, interpretations and re-interpretations over more than two thousand years. Interpretations and re-interpretations by which one tried to bridge gaps and misunderstandings in former texts.

When we read the Bible and search its words for meaning today, we do midrash. Midrash (deriving from the Hebrew verb DaRaSJ; Van Tijn, 1988) is in the first place: to search out, to explore, to explain, the process of interpreting, in particular of the Bible or other sacred texts (Holtz, 1984). The earliest translation of Scripture, the Septuagint translation of the Torah into Greek, is a kind of midrash, since all translation perse interprets (Visotzky, 1991). But even most biblical texts are midrashim, explanations of former or even later biblical texts. The New Testament is midrash of the Old Testament, and vice versa.

In the second place, midrash refers to the particular corpus of work that has collected many interpretations, for example the Midrash Rabbah (Holtz, 1984). In this lecture I shall use the first, more general meaning of midrash. The whole Bible and related — what we are used to call — sacred texts, are characterized by their laconic style. Midrash comes to fill in the gaps, to tell us details that the particular text in the Bible leaves out. For

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example: what did Isaac think as his father took him to be sacrificed? The Genesis-text doesn't tell us, but midrash fills in with varied descriptions.

This type of hermeneutic, this ability to open the text to new meaning, allows us to open ourselves to the possibility of finding meaning. However, for the intepretation and revelation of the text, we must interpret and reveal ourselves as well. That is probably the main reason why in the jewish tradition the Oral Torah is as important as the Written Torah. The continuing reading, interpretation and revelation of the text is always accompanied by the reading, interpretation and revelation of ourselves. In this respect, midrash is dialogue. It is a specimen of human wisdom that some rabbi's advise to read the Bible always with another.

This dialogual way of interpretation is also characteristic for psychoanalysis. As Freud said: «Psychoanalysis is nothing more than an exchange of words between the patient and the doctor» («In der analytische Behandlung geht nichts anderes vor als ein Austausch von Worten zwischen dem Analysierten und dem Artzt»; Freud, 1916).

Paradoxically, this statement is true and not true: psychoanalysis is much more than only an exchange of words, because words arouse affects that go beyond those words or refer to experiences we can't even express in words. Moreover, every psychoanalytic treatment evokes both revelation of the analysand, and of the psychoanalyst (Reik, 1948).

Both psychoanalysis and midrash are meant to bridge, to explain, not only by rational or logical interpretations, but also by dreams, by stories, by aphorisms or even by jokes. Midrash of biblical texts, like the hermeneutics of Greek Tragedy, may teach us the essence of psychoanalytic interpretation. As psychoanalysis may teach us the essence of midrash.

In this lecture I hope to demonstrate that midrash and psychoanalytic interpretation are related in their method of filling in the gaps of texts — spoken or written — and that the Abraham-Isaac story in Genesis and some alternative readings and legends about Abraham and his family may reveal psychological structures that are similar to those in the psychoanalytic *Familienroman*.

Clinical examples from psychoanalytic treatment and stories in psychological tests will be presented in order to emphasize the connection between literature and clinical practice.

TWO TEXT-RESPONSES

Psychoanalytic practice and literature are both concerned with narration, with stories.

At this point I would like to give you some examples of responses to a psychological test, that we use at the Psychoanalytic Institute and the St. Luke's Hospital in Amsterdam to diagnose the suitability for psychoanalysis. In this way I hope I am able to demonstrate the importance of the capacity to tell a story for psychoanalysis.

(Slide 1) Here you see the first picture of the socalled Thematic Apperception Test, invented by Murray — a well known projective test (Murray, 1943; Bellak, 1986). I shall give you the responses of two patients to the question: «Can you tell me a story about what is happening on the picture?»

TAT-1 story patient 1

«This is a photograph... or maybe it is not a photograph, maybe it is a picture, a painting, anyhow, a photograph or a painting made long ago, let's say in the fifties. That's it. [Psychologist: Can you tell me what is happening?] What is happening? Well, I don't know, you can't see that on the picture, can you? It's just a boy and an instrument, probably a table and a chair, but I can't see that exactly. No, a story is not possible, that would be phantasy. [Psychologist: Maybe you can tell me what you think could happen, even when you can't see it exactly?]... [silence of the patient]... No, I don't have any idea. Maybe it is a picture of a famous young violin-player, if it is a photograph, but no, that's all.»

TAT-1 story patient 2

«This a little boy, he is looking sad... yes he is looking very sad, and he is thinking... or no, more, he is worrying... he is worrying about something. But about what?... Maybe he has received this violin from his parents for his birthday, some time ago... And now he is rethinking, thinking back at that time... he is feeling lost a bit, alone... maybe he is a bit disappointed too, disappointed about the world, about life... He feels so helpless now... and I can imagine that he has lost his father, for example... his father is ill, perhaps, or maybe he has even died, and now the boy is depressed... he is thinking about his father... his father once took him to the concerthall... to be with his father, together... How do I ever become happy again, that's what he is thinking now... Well, I think he can cope with it, maybe not now, but in the future».

I am sure you have noticed some differences between those two responses. The first one is very descriptive, in a more technical, objective way. The patient gives only the most limited information about what he can see, not about inner thoughts or feelings.

The second reaction is much more elaborate and introspective. Maybe the feelings of the boy on the picture are the same as those of the patient at this very moment, maybe they are not. But anyhow, this patient is able to show his *possible* feelings, in particular his feelings of sadness and helplesness, and his feelings about his father. Moreover, this patient can talk about a possible future, about changes in the psychological world of the protagonist in the story.

From a literary, artistic point of view, it may be a very simple story, even a boring story. But it is a story with a plot, with an internal structure — and that is precisely what is missing in the response of the first patient.

The first story is not a real story: it is a superficial description of objects. The reference to the fifties might have been the beginning of a story. But now it seems no more than an attempt to take temporal distance from the picture, as a defense against emotional involvement. A second possible start for a story could have been the description of the picture as a photograph of a famous violin player. But the patient doesn't want or doesn't dare to tell anything more. And therefore it seems likely that we here again observe a defense mechanism to keep distance: that of the narcissistic identification with a famous person, in order to protect one's own feelings of insufficiency.

The second response becomes a story by the revelation of particular relations between the parts of the narrative: for example between the behavior of the boy (the way he is sitting and looking at his violin) and his inner feelings; or: between the past, the present and the future; and: between the visible boy and his invisible father. All those relations, on the surface and under the surface of the picture as formulated in the words of the patient, seem to be interconnected in some complicated way that is not immediately clear. And just because it is not immediately clear, because there is only the beginning of a revelation of a particular life history, there is suspense, there is a tension, that refers to a dynamic inner world. All together, those relations may be called the plot of the story — in particular: the plot of the story of this very patient.

This does not mean that we know enough of this patient. On the contrary. This particular story, this particular plot evokes many questions. For example: Why does the patient first talk about parents, and later only about father? Where is the mother, for example, in his story? Those questions are aroused by the revelations in this story: not only revelations of what is said, but also of what is not said. This single response, this particular story must be complemented by further stories: that is what goes on in psychoanalytic treatment, but also in biblical narrative and its continuing interpretation.

It is important to realize, that testing is a dialogue. Of course a very particular form of dialogue, in which the psychologist doesn't say very much and doesn't give anwers to

certain questions of the patient. In this respect the testing situation is similar to the psychoanalytic situation. In both settings transference and counter-transference play an important role. Possibly the first patient would have reacted differently, had he been asked to write a story, without the presence of somebody else in the same room. In fact, there exists a picture test with the instruction to write a story (Van Lennep, 1948). But even in that case, the patient would have reacted to the — at least phantasied presence — of another person. Writing, too, is a dialogue, and determined by transference, as well.

However, the fact that this first patient doesn't seem able to associate freely and to tell his phantasies in this particular situation, does not implicate that there is no inner story or plot. Probably, the last line of his response, referring to a famous violin-player, may reveal the core of his personality. As with all patients, we need, of course, much more information before we can draw such a conclusion.

THE STORIES OF A PATIENT

I want to present to you some stories and dreams that a patient of mine told me during his therapy. I shal call him patient 3.

Let me first give you some information about this patient. He is a very succesfull businessman in his forties. When he came for the first time, he complained about several somatic symptoms, feelings of insufficiency, and in particular about sudden moments of panic. Characteristic was his rational, philosophical, abstract way of talking during the first hours. I got the idea that he wanted to impress me as being an intelligent man. He seemed to avoid expressions of personal feelings or phantasies, he was very anxious and suspicious, and he couldn't relax during our conversation.

This inability to let himself go, to talk about his phantasies, might be seen as an indication that this patient was not suited for psychoanalysis. Because psychoanalysis — and I mean in this case: psychoanalysis as a treatment in the most proper way, a treatment in which the patient lies on a couch for three quarters of an hour, five days a week, on average for a period of five years, and says everything that comes into her or his mind —; because psychoanalysis demands a certain ability to regress, to give up one's characteristic defense mechanisms and to tell everything that presents itself in the mind.

When he was tested, this patient reacted first in a similar way to patient number 1. He didn't dare to tell his feelings, and he reacted to the test with cynical jokes. Nevertheless, he knew that he reacted with cynicism and told me so. I took him into psychotherapy on analytic lines — a more limited and focused form of therapy than psychoanalysis proper.

During the first two years he talked mostly about his work and his women in the same superficial way as during our first meeting. Only gradually did his distrust diminsh slightly and from time to time he showed me his feelings of anxiety and panic. After two years of therapy he told me a dream for the first time.

Dream 1

«There was a battle, and I was in it. I was struggling with another man, or a boy. And I had a spear, or no, it was shorter, a sort of sword in my hand... and the other man, too. And we fought... and I was afraid, but I didn't fly. And when I woke up, I was entirely wet, and panicking.»

Some weeks later he told me another dream.

Dream 2

«I was a boy of fifteen or sixteen, maybe a bit younger, I am not sure. There was

a whole group of boys. And I was fighting with another boy. And I had a sort of corset, a plastic form, around my hips and belly [at this moment my patient begins to stutter and he gets red in his face]... very strange... there was a plastic sort of bulge... and I was afraid that the boy with whom I fought would touch it.»

When my patient told me those two dreams, he, for the first time, showed me his feelings of helplesness and panic in relation to other men. Both times he remembered certain occasions during his youth, when he had felt himself threatened by boys and had felt a sudden panic. He was surprised, he told me much later, that I didn't find him ridiculous. And from that moment he told me much more. The blockade to tell stories about his life gradually diminished. What he initially only partly dared to reveal in his first dream, he was gradually able to tell more directly in his second dream. And this development continued, as we could see in other stories. For example, the following story.

Story 1

«During the weekend I visited my father. It was very nice, we went for a walk and later I went with him to the supermarket to do some shopping. He needed a particular piece of meat, but they didn't have the right bit there. So I advised him to go to the butcher on the other side of the street. But he even didn't seem to listen to me. I had the feeling that he was joking about me with the butcher in the supermarket. I was really feeling like a beast, like a young cow or a lamb they are discussing how to slaughter. And I felt that same panic I have felt so often when I was a young boy in the village...»

From the moment this patient told me his first dream, about the battle with other men and boys, two years ago, he has told me many other dreams. But nearly all of them are related to the same theme: the struggle with other men and boys. And it always arouses the same sort of panic.

This story about his father and the butcher is clearly an elaboration of the same theme. So I can't but conclude that the struggle with his father and other men must be a central theme in his life. One might be tempted to say: it is the plot of the story of his life. But probably that is not totally true. Because in psychoanalysis the attention must not only be focused upon topics that are told repeatedly, but even more on subjects that appear to be hidden again and again. The most important subject that did not appear in the manifest stories of this patient, was his mother. In this respect, there is a similarity in the first stories of all three patients.

ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND THE ABSENT SARAH

When I heard the story about his father and the butcher in the supermarket, I immediately thought of the Abraham-Isaac story, where Isaac nearly gets slaughtered by his father on the mountain of Moriah. I can't resist the temptation to tell you the story, that we all probably have heard and read already many times. Why does it fascinate us so much?

> «And Abraham took the wood of the whole-burnt-offering, and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hands both the fire and the knife, and the two went together. And Isaac said to Abraham his father, Father. And he said, What is it, son? And he said, Behold the fire and the wood, where is the sheep for a whole-burnt-offering? And Abraham said, God will provide himself a sheep for a whole-burnt-offering, my son. And both having gone together, came to the place which God spoke of to him; and there Abraham

built the altar, and laid the wood on it, and having bound the feet of Isaac his son together, he laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand to take the knife to slay his son. And an angel of the Lord called him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Behold, I am here. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the child, neither do anything to him, for now I know that thou fearest God, and for my sake thou hast not spared thy beloved son. And Abraham lifted his eyes and beheld, and lo! a ram caught by his horns in a plant of Sabec; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a whole-burnt-offering in the place of Isaac his son.» (Genesis XXII: 6-13)

Three men in the story of my patient, and three men in the biblical story. Both the butcher and the father are father-figures, like, in the biblical story God and Abraham. And the son is in both stories depicted as a sacrifice. The fathers are discussing something, and there is a threatening atmosphere. But this threatening atmosphere is in sharp contrast with the closeness between father and son: my patient tells me that he was feeling so close to his father, when they walked together, shopping; and Isaac said to Abraham, Father, and they went also together, shopping, looking for meat.

Deeply embedded in both stories is a mixture of love and aggression, of ambivalence of both the father and the son, as Freud has described in *Totem and Taboo* (1912-1913). In both stories one has the impression that something is going to happen, some atrocious thing. And even when it doesn't happen, it could still happen — maybe not now, but later.

On could say: there are two plots in those stories. One is the plot of the actual occurrence, at that particular moment; for example: the threatening mockery by the father of my patient, that could result in murdering his son, but still doesn't occur. The other plot is the everlasting and repetitive threatening by fathers of their sons. A repetition that is even more tragic, because the son as a possible future father bears in him the same threatening story. The similarity with the tragedy of Oedipus may be evident.

This anticipation of possible future tragic events — in other words: the suspense and dynamics of the story — is exactly what characterizes the biblical stories and makes of them one story, one book.

The same is true of all the stories told by a patient in psychoanalytic treatment: telling those stories about old events gives new meaning and coherence to the life of the patient. The repetitive style of the phrases in biblical narrative is emphasized by many literary critics (e.g. Alter, 1981; Josipovici, 1988). But the repetition of other components is not less characteristic, both in the Bible and in clinical practice. The double structure of manifest and hidden content, of the obvious and the occult, of actual events and possible future or past events, of temporality and timelesness, determines both biblical and psychoanalytic narrative.

The structure of the dream is the paradigm of all narrative. In this respect Freud and his midrash' ancestors shared the same opinion: interpreting dreams brings redemption (Visotzky, 1991).

There is another similarity between the stories of my patient and the Abraham-Isaac story: the absence or near-absence of the mother. In both cases the most important relationship seem to be the one between father and son, although in both stories the father has been split into two figures: God and Abraham, and father and the butcher. Splitting is a special form of the defense mechanism of displacement (Verschiebung). Displacement is the most important mechanism in the process of transference. Patient 3 displaced many of his feelings about his mother towards other women, because there was too much rage towards the pre-oedipal, archaic mother. However, we could discuss more and more why he always fled from one bed into another. Gradually he developed a relationship with one woman,

and some time ago he told me she was — unexpectedly — pregnant by him. A week later he told me the following dream.

Dream 3

«I was in my bed in the attic, and under the bed there were thousands of mice. I am not sure they were mice, but, anyhow, there were thousands of small, crawling, swarming little beasts. And I wanted to kill them. They were very nasty and filthy.»

My patient immediately saw a relationship between the dream and the pregnancy of his friend, and in particular between the mice and babies and embryos. We could discuss his jealousy of the future baby and the difficulty he has with sharing the attention of his wife. In his phantasy the baby will be a boy. The mice seemed both a displacement and a condensation: they represented not only a future baby, but also my patient's sibs and the boys in his native village of whom he was so afraid. Again, the mother is absent, or in any case: not immediately visible in the dream.

Another example of jewish literature may demonstrate how this last story of my patient is linked to his first dreams. It is the legend of *The Cave of Father Abraham*, a story from Kurdistan.

> «After Father Abraham broke his father's idols with a stick, wicked King Nimrod seized him and said, 'If you don't bow down before me, I'll cast you into the fire.' Abraham refused to bow down, so Nimrod brought him to a cave that had a furnace and cast him into it. Yet God sent an angel to rescue him, and Abraham was saved. And when he stepped back out of the cave, he saw three stars in the sky shining with an unusual light. 'My Lord', he asked the angel accompanying him, 'what stars are those?' And the angel replied, 'Those stars are you, your son Isaac, and your grandson Jacob.' The burning coals that Abraham was cast upon did him no harm because the angel turned them all to fish. And so that the fish might have water to swim in, a spring burst forth in that cave. Eventually, the furnace crumbled away, but vegetables grow in the cave to this day, watered by the flow of the spring. And from the cave's ceiling hangs a stone. If one is lucky, it glows in all the colors of the rainbow when one enters. If one is not, it does not glow at all, and one does not even notice it.» (Sadeh, 1990, pp. 34-35)

A possible interpretation of this story of *The Cave of Father Abraham* is that of Abraham's conception, birth and further development as the generator of his son and grandson. A comparison with the birth stories about Jesus, where the father is split into the threatening and wicked Herodes and the good and nourishing Joseph, may be clarifying. In many birth narratives the cave is a symbol for the womb and the bright stars refer to the light outside the dark womb. Even in medicine, the womb is often indicated as a cave by technical specialists, who certainly cannot be suspected of speculative psychological interpretations. The hollow attic in the dream of my patient may be a defensive reference to the mother. The fish swimming in the water of the cave remind me of some dreams of other patients of mine, who dreamed about fish as symbols of embryos or babies. In anatomical and embryological research fish are often used in order to demonstrate the development of the human embryo, because of the similarity between them. I don't know what you are thinking about the glowing stone that hangs from the cave's ceiling, but it might be a beautiful example of displacement and condensation: as a representation of both the feeding breast and the potent phallus.

However, more important for the unconscious meaning of the story may be the absence of the mother. Only by symbols the mother is present: the cave, the spring that gives water and nourishment, and perhaps the protecting angel. In this respect the legend resembles

the Abraham-Isaac story in Genesis, where Sarah plays only a minor role. Is the obvious oedipal content of the story — the fight between men — a defense against unconscious fear of the oedipal or pre-oedipal mother? Is that the main reason why women in the biblical stories generally play a minor role? Possibly, other biblical stories might give us some midrash, some explanation about this question.

There is another story about Abraham, in which not only king Nimrod, but also the real father of Abraham, Terach, is threatening his wife, Emtelai, and his future son (Fuks-Mansfeld, 1991). The visible presence of both the father and the mother in this last story, and the overt description of their conflict, might be understood as a revelation of childhood phantasies, that remain repressed in the first stories. A further unfolding of those phantasies can be seen in the development of similar stories in the New Testament and christian literature, in particular the birth stories about Jesus. Gradually the emphasis on the wicked and threatening father and his relationship with the son — in the jewish, Old Testament stories — seems to shift to the loving and caring mother and her relationship with her son. This shift towards the repressed female part of the *Familienroman* becomes most obvious in literature and art of the twelfth century in France and other parts of Europe, when the Mary cult reaches the summit of catholic devotion (cf. Baneke, 1992).

CONCLUSION

What all those stories — the responses to the tests, the dreams and stories of my patient, the story of Abraham and Isaac, the story of the Cave of Father Abraham, and the last story about Terach, Emtelai and Abraham — have in common, is, that they can be seen as repressions and revelations of the same underlying plot of oedipal and pre-oedipal conflicts. They are all interpretations of the *Familienroman*, but they differ in their developmental level, in the balance of defense and coping, in the rigidity and flexibility of the repression, and so on. I don't have the time to elaborate and give details about those particular processes now (cf. Baneke, 1993). Still, I hope I have been able to demonstrate that the continuing attempt to fill the gaps of narrative with new interpretations, is characteristic of both midrash and psychoanalysis.

Of course, the scientific and theoretical framework of psychoanalysis is different from the religious background of midrash. However, I don't think that this difference is essential for psychoanalysis, in particular not for psychoanalytic treatment. The continuing dialogue by which one recovers the past, is, in my opinion, the essence of both midrash and psychoanalysis. With the psychoanalyst Leavy (1980) one may say: «Just as all speaking is interpreting, so all speaking is historizing, and thereby is a recovery of the past.» A recovery that will continue and may be interminable.

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 53-58

Transference and the Voice in Psychoanalysis: Freud and Dora

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«Hearing is a physiological phenomenon; listening is a psychological act.»
Roland Barthes

I want first to set the context for my return to Freud and Dora, a return many psychoanalytic feminists have made. I am writing a book on hysteria and narrative voice, for which Freud's Dora case not only provides a central illustration of the paradigmatic issues, but also theorizes those issues. I am tracing a hysterical narrative voice and its effects on fictional structures in certain late 19th and early 20th century texts. In these texts, the narrative voice loses control of the story it is telling, especially when the story evokes the figure of a speaking woman. My point of departure is that the subversion of gender boundaries promoted especially by feminism in the late 19th century had a profundly unsettling effect on narrative voice. In particular, the emergent figure of the New Woman as speaking subject by confounding Victorian gender distinctions challenged the narrator's very ability to tell a familiar story in which gender determined the character's desire and potential patterns of action. To give a few cursory examples, Florence Nightingale attempted to write an autobiographical fiction, but it foundered on her inability to create a convincing diversity of gendered voices that fiction required. Ultimately, it metamorphosed into a fractured polemic about women's inability to claim the power of the voice. The narrator of Henry James's *The Bostonians*, describing the feminists as engaged in «a war to the knife» with the «real man», himself breaks into his narrative in the first person to attack an age effeminized by women orators while defensively asserting his neutrality. My understanding of these fictions and their historical moment comes out of my reading of Freud's Dora case, and the transferential structures of hysteria that he both performed and interpreted.

Psychoanalysis begins with hysteria, with a derangement of heterosexual imperatives manifest in a corporeal derangement which converted symbol into symptom. For Freud the content of the conversion was an unconscious scene of sexual seduction in which the hysterical subject, articulating a conflictual splitting of sexual position across the body

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rather than in language, performed both the masculine and feminine parts. This displacement from language to the body allowed a dissociation of the subject from what it knew. However, as the story of Anna O. made clear, the symptom was embodied also in language. By cutting up the symbolic structures of her native language, forgetting the grammar and syntax of German and replacing it with a grotesque synthesis of foreign tongues, Anna O. symptomatically announced her self-alienation through speech. Indeed, in a voice fissured by «absences», she explicitly performed a dissociation of the subject from its action by substituting infinitives for the normal syntax os subject and verb.[1] If, as Julia Kristeva suggests («Women's Time», 1986, 192), the enunciation of noun plus verb places the subject in linear time, Anna O.'s enunciation through the infinitive refused both agengy and the temporality of history.

Breuer ran from this derangement of the voice and body, but Freud remained with his hysterics, finding a way to restrain, retrain, their desire and his, by containing and homeopathically deploying it in language. Through the talking cure, Freud provoked a repetition of a prior desire, a transference mediated by and worked through in speech, compelling his hysterics for the sake of the cure, but even more for his stake in his new science, to enter a conversation about sexual matters that itself evoked desire: especially the embodied dialogue between a masterful doctor and a vulnerable patient provoked erotic effects through and in the circulation of the voice. As articulated sound, the voice circulates between two interiorities, constituting the intersubjective dialogue of analysis. Uncanny is its ability to transgress bodily boundaries, the speaking voice evokes both the mother's unlocalized voice in all its resonance — the subject's first link to its environment — and the cultural laws that constitute language. Psychoanalysis describes the primal speaker as the mother, the primal listener the child (Silverman, 1988).

> One can imagine the voice of the Mother, which is woven around the child, and which originates from all points in space as her form enters and leaves the visual field, as a matrix of places to which we are tempted to give the name «umbilical net» (1982, 57).

Thus the maternal voice has been called a blanket of sound, a sonorous envelope which surrounds and sustains (Rosolato 1974, 81), a bath of sounds (Anzieu 1976, 173), but in its sinister aspect an entrapment, a net (Silverman 1988, 72). But that heterogeneous field of the voice very quickly takes on the discriminations and differentiations that mark its relation to language. Indeed, the speaking voice is the site of a division in language itself, conveying the traces of maternal presence through its materiality — tone, timbre, rhythm, what Barthes calls the «grain of the voice», or Kristeva the semiotic register, while its semantic register signifies a system of representation subtended by maternal absence. Through manipulations of this double register of the voice, of absence and presence, the analyst as doctor-healer, functions as a combined parent figure, an imaginary ideal other, father-mother, who has it, knows it, all.[2]

Freud and his hysterics both spoke; both listened; but in the room where women come and go, the dialogic position of analyst and analysand was neither symmetrical nor fixed. The effects of that intersubjective dialogue depended in large part on who had the voice, who the ear. Although the hysteric was the ostensible subject enunciating her history, she

[1] See Dianne Hunter's excellent discussion of the meaning of Anna O.'s hysteria in *The M/Other Tongue*, 1985.

[2] Janet Malcolm refers to the double role of analyst, analogous to Leo Stone's distinction between the physical doctor and the psychoanalyst: one is the omnipotent mother, with her emotional bond and physical ministrations; the analyst, Malcolm says, has a «verbal closeness and emotional distance». I would qualify this reading, for it seems to me the analyst, as a combined parent figure, conveys the father's language and authority with the mother's intimacy. Perhaps for this reason, Freud said he couldn't play the mother in analysis.

told a piecemeal story to a privileged ear, to a custodian of meanings whose very silence functioned as ideal Other. Moreover, while her voice issued from a body that was under the analyst's scrutiny, controlled by his gaze and read for its symptomatic acts, she spoke to an unseen interlocutor, whose disembodied vocal interventions could too easily be experienced as an internal demand. As Kaja Silverman points out, «By destabilizing the configuration of body/speaker, dissociating the voice from a particular body, psychoanalysis allows the analyst's speech to be attached to the analysand's interior objects» (1988). The analyst's voice thus privileged could serve as the bridge to a desired identification with an ideal Other, or, in the negative transference, as an intrusive and undesirable violation of boundaries.

But if Freud as bearer of this transgressive voice and privileged ear seemed especially empowered to influence the internal script of the hysteric, he was himself subject to the voice: his primary task was to listen to the hysteric's story with the third ear. What does it mean to listen with the third ear? Where is this third ear situated? What can it hear? One can think of that ear as similar to the ear of the poet or musician, as in «he has a good ear», that is to say, a sensibility for catching the semantic and phonemic play of speech. Freud had a good ear for pursuing the disguises and dispersions of the subject in language. Reading his case histories, one can observe him on the track of those switchwords that led toward the hysteric's secret center. Yet his position as analyst-listener-pursuer of truth was not the position of a mastery he initially claimed for analysis, but the position of a submission to the story of the other. For the third ear is a fantasmatic ear located in the domain of the other. To listen to his patient's stories with that ear, Freud had to be literally receptive, to be open, to allow an emphatic identification with the speaking subject of a narrative, to assume that is to say the speaker's narrative voice as his own. In the analytic dialogue, the permeable boundaries of the ear became the zone of exchange for the introjection of mobile fantasies carried by the voice of the speaker and the tale it told. Thus as Lacan pointed out, Freud could not avoid participating in what the hysteric was telling him.

If the very act of listening to the hysteric's voice and probing its secrets destabilizes the analyst's subject position, Freud complicated the effects of listening by theorizing that listening had an inevitable history. Doubling the temporality of the listening act, Freud linked listening in the present to a prior fantasy of listening, in which a hapless passive subject «discovers» sexuality by overhearing sounds in the night. Freud thoerized that these sounds are narrativized into a drama of parental intercourse by the listener who assumes the various parts of that primal drama through identifications. Listening thus acquires the value of mapping one's way into a subject position through an enigma. What's going on? Who is doing what to whom? These are the questions of the primal scene listener; there are the questions that Freud pursues in the case histories. Just as the subject in a dream is dispersed across the dreamscape, so Freud's case histories suggest that he as analyst listener is caught up in the analysand's sexual scenario at different points.

In short, the effects of the voice in analysis emerge from a scenario in which the intersubjective dimension is multiplied; the speaking voice of the analysand narrating a story of identification, desire and transgression acts as a medium for the identifications and desires of the analyst. This countertransference is especially provoked by the demands of narrativization in Freud's case histories. For narrative depends for its power upon transgressive identifications that are not required in Freud's more theoretical constructions. Thus not surprisingly, after writing the case history, Freud himself complained that this new scientific genre sounded more like fiction than fact.

If in the psychoanalytic dialogue, identification with the other through the voice is a condition of interpretation, what did it mean for Freud the writer to assume the desires of a voice when it belonged to Dora, an 18 year old hysterical girl, and the only female subject of a major case history? Various critics have played out Freud's identifications

with Dora, noting in particular the excessive defensive digressions and gaps that mark his narrative.[3] But equally significant is the fact that Freud's tale of erotically ambiguous family relations is plotted in the oral register, narratively constructed as a series of seductive oral exchanges, ranging from eroticized conversations that have actually occurred — Herr K. and Dora, Frau K. and Dora, the governess and Dora — to the primal fantasy of the case, Freud's analytic construction of an imaginary act of fellatio that reverberates with the dynamics of the talking cure in which he and Dora were engaged.

Freud isolates as a crucial scene in Dora's hysteria a conversation in which Herr K. propositioned her in words that repeated a phrase Dora had heard before — «I get nothing out of my wife» — the very phrase she knew Herr K. used to seduce a governess before her. Freud writes essentially this same phrase as a direct quotation of Dora's father.[4] In assigning both Dora's father and Herr K. the same sentence, Freud makes both the linguistic subject of a paternal complaint that is also a justification of paternal seduction, thus constituting a chain of fathers that includes himself.

For Freud also wants something out of Dora that he doesn't get, wants her to open herself to his collection of picklocks, wants her to satisfy his theorical desire to know. Indeed, the phrase «I get nothing out of my wife» is a nodal point in Freud's narration, an overdetermined phrase of oral desire, deprivation and impotence that resonates with ambiguity about who has get and who can it to give, who is allowed to get and who to give.

Reappearing in Freud's text at significant junctures, this paternal complaint resonates with the fantasmatic fellatio fantasy, a scene imagined by Freud of sexual relations between «a man without means», who «gets nothing out of his wife», Dora's impotent father, and Frau K., the idealized sexual mother of Dora's family romance who gives him the means. Freud's fellatio fantasy can thus be read as an overdetermined linguistic reversal, moving from paternal lack to fulfillment, in which the question of who has «the means» remains open.[5] Indeed, Freud concludes his analysis of fellatio with an image of the sexual indeterminacy of *the phallus itself* characteristic of hysteria and its overwhelming question, Who has «it» to give?

> In most instances the udder of a cow has aptly played the part of an image intermediate between a nipple and a penis. (*SE* 7, 52)

If this sexual ambiguity at the very site of Freud's primal scene is covered over by the insistent plotting of heterosexual romance, that plotting is made manifestly problematic in the narrative voice which interprets Dora's two dreams. In the first dream, Freud uses direct discourse, and as in the novelistic use of direct quotation, which implies a reality external to the narrator's voice, allows Dora's voice to be heard, even though he directs its plot. In the second dream, however, after the presentation of Dora's dream, there is no dialogue, no direct representation of his technique or of Dora's voice. Instead, maintaining monological mastery, Freud narrates both his interventions and Dora's associations by indirect discourse. Why the difference in narrative voice?

In elaborating the meaning of the first dream, in which Dora's father saves her from

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[3] See for exemple, the papers by Neil Hertz, Jane Gallop, and Suzanne Gearhardt in *In Dora's Case*, ed. Charles Bernheimer and Claire Kahane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

[4] Freud also remarks that Dora must have heard this phrase many times from her father. Interestingly, the German text differs from the English translation, in that her father is made to say, «I get nothing out of my own wife». The differential modifier, *own*, constitutes an admission of adultery lacking in Herr K.'s use of the phrase to seduce. In Strachey's translation, the phrases are made identical.

[5] See Madelon's Sprengnether's excellent reading of this passage in «Enforcing Oedipus: Freud and Dora», *In Dora's Cases* (1985). As she points out, Freud's interpretation of fellatio as a repetition of the erotics of sucking at the breast transforms the impotent father into the nursing phallic mother, virtually eliminating maleness from the scene.

a burning house, Freud allows Dora to speak because he hears — as he reports — Dora's oedipal desire for the father: recall, for example, his interpretation of the smell of smoke as Dora's longing for a kiss from a smoker, Herr K., after which he concludes,

> Taking into consideration ... the indication which seemed to point to there having been a transference on to me — since I am a smoker too — I came to the conclusion that the idea had probably occured to her once day during a sitting that she would like to have a kiss from me. (*SE* 7, 74)

The dream and its associations confirm Freud as father, upholding oedipal desire and sexual difference. But the second dream is more problematic; it presents a maternal letter which announces the death of the father; it is a dream of rage rather than love, of Dora's desire for revenge rather than submission. More significantly, Dora's associations to this dream lead to women: to the governess, to an aunt, to tha adored Madonna, to Frau K., with her «adorable white body» — all potential maternal figures of desire and identification. Rather than trace these displacements, Freud asks Dora and the reader to follow a different track, his associations to the dream, which lead to a medical discourse that as he himself points out «is known to physicians though not to laymen» (*SE* 7, 99). From his professinal discourse he derives Dora's fantasy of entering a woman's body, a «defloration» that marks her subject position as masculine. Then Freud again switches tracks by inserting a question into her dream as logically necessary, «Which way to Herr K's house?» — which shifts the narrative quest from mother to father and restores her to heterosexual romance. In both instances, whether he defines her subject position as masculine or feminine, oedipal desire *for* an object is foregrounded, and identification, the more primal desire to be the object, is foreclosed.

Yet Dora's dream can be heard to articulate the problematics of being as well as having, to question the very relation between identification, identity and desire. A literal diacritical question mark is the primary figure of the second dream, disrupting the normal syntax of a sentence, in the phrase «if you like?» that appears both in her mother's dream-letter, and in her association to a letter from Frau K. inviting her to the lake. Although Freud questions the appearance of the question mark, he does not question it as a signifier. But it is precisely the question of her desire as an invitation from the mother that is at issue in the hysteric's question — if you like? What is the relation between desire for and identification with the mother? How is sexual identity constituted? How is it represented? Is «gynecophilic», Freud's initial term for Dora's desire, the same as «masculine» — his term for her identity? Freud's conclusion, that underlying Dora's dream is a fantasy of a *man* seeking to force entrance into a woman not only erases the question of the dream and its larger implications for theory, but also compounds hysterical conflict by constituting heterosexuality as a forced entrance of an active man into a passive woman, fixing passivity as the signifier of femininity and obliterating the ambiguities of identity and desire.

Yet in turning away from the maternal letter, Freud did not exclude it from his story or eliminate its effects from the psychoanalytic exchange. The corporeal remainder of the voice continued to assert the body's presence in the utterance, and especially when a woman was speaking her secrets, to remind Freud of the mother, to lead him as the receptive ear through evocative articulations into an unconscious where the line between his and hers was obscured. Through what Garret Stewart calls «the verbal stream in which otherness mutters to us» (1990, 33) — mutters, mutter, matter, mother — the evocative, provocative and evocative, of the analytic dialogue repeatedly opened into a feminine alterity that required a filling in. Thus Freud writes of his narrative, «Part of this material I was able to obtain directly from the analysis, but the rest required supplementing» (*SE* 7, 80). Narrativization enacted that supplementation; if in constructing the fellatio fantasy, Freud insisted that the «true sexual object» was «the penis», the semiotics of his text suggests a more indeterminate

object of desire. Freud's narrative unveiled the voice itself as the desired object of the hysteric and of psychoanalysis. Who has the voice? Who does what with it? To whom does it belong? These are the questions that haunt the fictions I am pursuing elsewhere.

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 59-68

Sigmund Freud and Arnold Zweig: A Literary Friendship

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In «Creative Writers and Daydreaming», Freud wrote, «Before the problem of the creative artist, analysis must alas, lay down its arms».[1] Of creative artists he wrote, «psychoanalysis cannot say how the artist achieves his innermost secret».[2]

Freud remained in awe of artists, novelists, and poets throughout his life and admired not only classic authors such as Shakespeare and Goethe, but also contemporary writers, among them Arthur Schnitzler, Romain Rolland, the poet H.D. whom he analysed, Thomas Mann, Merrill Moore, a Boston psychiatrist who wrote sonnets, Arnold Zweig and Stefan Zweig. He was drawn to realistic novels, especially those of Charles Dickens and George Eliot, and admired fictionalized biographies, particularly Dimitry Mereschkowski's, whose novel of Michelangelo he drew on for his own study of the artist.[3]

It was not unusual for writers to seek Freud out, for, as Ernest Jones reports, «Freud was no captious hermit and numerous eminent contemporaries, especially in the literary world, sought his acquaintance and met or corresponded with him».[4]

But of all the contemporary artists he knew, it was Arnold Zweig alone with whom he had a close relationship, even though it was carried out primarily through letters. Their corrrespondence began on 18 March 1927 and continued until 9 September 1939, a few days before Freud's death. The two men discussed many subjects: health problems, the vicissitudes of old age, exile, Zionism, Germans, Jewishness, psychoanalysis, as well as Zweig's own analysis. Additionally, the letters contained frequent exchanges between them about books they were reading and writing, including Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* and Zweig's novel *Education before Verdun*.

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[1] Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works* (London: The Hogarth and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, tr. from Gesammelte Werke, Vols 1-XVIII, London and Frankfurt: 1940-68), XXI, p. 177. Cited hereafter as *SE*.

[2] *SE*, IX, pp. 141-54.

[3] Edward Timms, «Freud's Library and His Private Reading», pgs. 65-79 in Edward Timms and Naomi Segal, editors, *Freud in Exile Psychoanalysis and its Vicissitudes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988). For an additional account of Freud's reeading see Peter Brückner, *Sigmund Freuds Privatlekture* (Cologne: Verlag, 1975), especially pp. 145-8.

[4] Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud* (New York: Basic Books, 1953-57), Vol. 1, pp. 425-6.

In the letters Freud and Zweig discussed, too, the nature of biography including Zweig's proposed biographies of Nietzsche and of Freud. For while the bond between the psychoanalyst and the author was strong because of their shared Jewish birth and because both faced the possibility of and eventually went into exile, Zweig's in Palestine, and Freud's in England, their mutual interest in literature, and the historical novel in particular, formed the root of their closeness. In this essay I argue that their letters construct an autobiographical text while creating a literary discourse. I discuss the relationship between the two men by considering the transference and counter-transference as it emerges through their epistolary exchange, examine the literary critiques they offer each other and their responses to each other's reading to render a portrait of two writers engaging in a work-in-progress dialogue. My aim is to tell the story of a literary friendship which I believe is unique among Freud's correspondences.

Arnold Zweig began his friendship with Sigmund Freud in 1927 by asking Freud's permission to dedicate his book *Caliban* to him. Zweig wrote in this first letter of their correspondence on 18 March 1927 , «I still cherish the hope of being able to make your personal acquaintance, which he eventually did in 1936».[5] (Z, 1) Zweig's adulation of Freud, the dominant tone of his letters, is set in his March 18, 1927 letter when he enumerates the reasons:

> Firstly,... without your system of thought, your basic ideas and your new principles (the reintroduction of the psyche into psychology), without your creative philosophic method my own oldest contribution to theoretic knowlegde would never have been possible. Secondly, because anti-semitism, which you must have experienced in all its aspects, owes you an obeisance. And thirdly, because I personally owe to your psychological therapy the restoration of my whole personality, the discovery that I was suffering from a neurosis and finally the curing of this neurosis by your method of treatment. (Z, 1)

The letter's salutation, «Dear Professor Freud» is formal and proper while the closing, «Your faithful admirer», seems obsequious. Salutations and closings of both men's letters can be seen as a means of working out the transference and counter-transference. Freud's salutation, «Dear Sir», and his closing, «Yours very sincerely», in his March 20, 1927 reply thanking Zweig for his dedication of *Caliban* to him is equally formal. But unlike Zweig, he adopts a dry, humorous,and personal tone in his remark, «Please fulfill your promise to visit me one day. (Don't wait too long, I shall soon be 71.)» (F, 2) The dominant paternal tone of Freud's letters to Zweig can be seen in his support for Zweig's analysis, concern for his health, and in his candid critiques of Zweig's work. Patrick Mahoney points out that «Freud's private correspondence manifests a remarkable ability to adapt his style to the addressee».[6] Zweig's frequent complaints about his health, about living in Palestine, and about his analyst were a plea for paternal guidance. Freud empathically responds to his need, while undercutting his paternal tone through humorous self-deprecation of his own situation — an old man in declining health, a Jew living in Austria facing the threat of Hitler, an imminent and then actual exile.

This first exchange of letters marks the emotional tenor of their relationship, the hero worship of the younger writer for the mature psychoanalyst and the self-indulgence of the older one who knows he can do no wrong in his admirer's eyes. It also marks the beginning of their literary dialogue. Freud complains that he was annoyed at Zweig's «obeissance

[5] *The Letters of Sigmund Freud and Arnold Zweig*, edited by Ernst L. Freud, translated by Elaine and William Robson-Scott (Washington Square, New York: New York University Press, 1970). All quotation citations are from this text with Freud's letters cited as F. and Zweig's as Z. My essay is based entirely on the English translation and problems of what the German might have been have mot been addressed. For example, salutations and closings such as «very sincerely yours» may have an entirely different connotation in German.

[6] Patrick J. Mahoney, *Freud as a Writer*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 56.

to Karl Kraus who stands at the very bottom of my ladder of esteem». (F, 3) Kraus, the editor of *Die Fackel*, is the first of the many writers about whom Freud and Zweig will exchange ideas. As subjective as Freud's complaint, is the letter's saluation, «Dr. Zweig», which Freud repeats on August 8, 1930, thanking «Dr. Zweig» for his congratulations on receiving the Goethe Prize. That forms of address were particularly important to the Freudian circle can be seen in Ernest Jones's report of how members of the famous committee of Freud's closest colleagues to whom he entrusted the future of psychoanalysis, decided to address each other as «du» rather than as «sie» as they had done for years, and also to use first names to consolidate their intimacy. Previously, according to Jones, Freud with a few exceptions had addressed them by their surnames both in conversation and letters.[7]

Zweig tries to rectify Freud's mistake in his letter's salutation «Mr. Freud» explaining, «This removal of your title is the immediate result of your bestowal upon me of the rank of doctor — something which I would sooner receive at your hand than at anyone else's, but to which I am not by right entitled». (Z, 9) Zweig quotes Goethe and alludes to the Austrian writer, Adalbert Stifter, an author familiar to Freud. In doing so he relies on his and Freud's common literary background. In addition, he comments on Andre Malraux's *The Conquerors*, while describing to Freud a particularly upsetting dream about Jewish faces, thus establishing simultaneous roles as Freud's contemporary literature mentor and as analysand.

Freud's reply introduces an additional element into the transference with the intrusion of Stefan Zweig, who although he had the same surname was not related to Arnold Zweig. He was, however, like Arnold Zweig, a novelist and biographer who wrote about psychoanalysis in *Die Heilung durch den Geist*, and who also became Freud's friend. Freud explained his slip of ascribing Stefan's title to Arnold as motivated by annoyance with Stefan Zweig's writing about him:

> ... this *fehlleistung* (slip of mine) naturally led on to delicate ground; it revealed as the disturbing factor the other Zweig, whom I knew to be engaged at this moment in Hamburg in working me into an essay which is to bring me into public notice alongside Mesmer and Mary Baker Eddy. During the last six months he has given me great concern for annoyance; my original strong desire for vengeance has now been completely banished into the unconscious, and so it is quite possible that I wanted to make a comparison and establish a compensation. (F, 14)

By September of 1930 a pattern of psychological and literary discourse has been established in Zweig's letters to Freud with concern about his own symptoms uppermost in his mind. Writing about his analysis for depression and work inhibitions, he makes Freud into master analyst and master writer. «My analyst, Dr. K. is a splendid and excellent fellow», Zweig writes to Freud, after complimenting him on the self-analysis that led to Freud's recognition of his vengeful feelings toward Stefan Zweig, «but he has not learnt how to perceive carefully nor to classify all the minute details which must be taken into account if one is going to interpret a phenomenon really thoroughly». (Z, 16) After complimenting Freud on his great psychological insight, Zweig gives him the highest praise imaginable for his literary talent:

> ... it was you who snuffed out the light of Viennese literature, whose raison d'etre lay in its psychological insight and its joy in linguistic innovations. You have shown that the human soul has, as it were, seven storeys and that the Viennese writers had done nothing more than describe nicely the color of the roof. But with incomparably greater perspicacity, accuracy and vividness

[7] Jones, Vol. 1, p. 24.

than anyone else — including Arthur Schnitzler, whom I like and admire warmly as man and writer — you have given expression to what was hitherto hidden from our knowledge. (Z, 17)

Zweig's reference to Schnitzler, the novelist and physician, is filled with meaning for Freud because Schnitzler was the only man he acknowledged as a double.[8] Recognized as a scientist, Freud wanted to be, like Schnitzler, a man of both science and letters. Undoubtedly, Zweig knew of Freud's admiration for Schnitzler from his reading of «The Uncanny», so one could construe the comparison as an aspect of his transferential worship. Ernst Freud's statement as editor of the Freud-Zweig correspondence, that he had to cut the «all too frequent and exaggerated eulogies of my father». (F. Ernst, vii) further suggest Zweig's reverence.[9] Since Zweig knew about Freud's receiving the Goethe prize one might say that in praising Freud he was merely one among many who recognized his artistic genius. For, Patrick Mahoney points out that the only prize Freud received from Germany in his life was the Goethe prize.[10] And ironically, this recognition of Freud's achievement was for his writing, not his science. But in his overpraising of Freud, Zweig demonstrated an uncritical view of Freud's writing and a lack of objectivity when judging writers with whom Freud had an interest or a relationship. His bias can be seen in his remarks about Stefan Zweig who, as already noted, annoyed Freud by comparing psychoanalysis to mesmerism and Christian Science. Arnold Zweig appears to be trying to win Freud's approval and show that he is the perfect son when he writes that his book of essays *Lessing, Kleist, Brüchner* is «very much better» than Stefan Zweig's *Nietzsche, Kleist, Holderin*. He implies that this is because, unlike Stefan Zweig, he has access to his unconscious through psychoanalysis. He also makes a veiled threat against Stefan Zweig saying that he will not let his work go unchallenged. «I carry on an irregular correspondence with Stefan Zweig. I expressed his criticism of his book on Neitzsche quite frankly, but in public I was silent. That will, I fear, not be possible in the future». (Z, 18) Once more, Arnold Zweig is acting the part of the good son who will defend his wronged father from the bad son.

Zweig, for the first time, makes explicit his feelings for Freud as a father, calling Freud's letter «paternal» and saying Freud is the only person to whom he would continually send treatises and books and to whom «I dare speak so openly». (Z, 18) Freud, for his part, is totally candid in his opinion of Zweig's *Laubleu und keine Bleibe*, the book which Zweig sent to him, commenting that «it was not to my taste, above all I did not find it at all funny». (F, 19) He hopes Zweig will «not take my objections amiss; at least you will know that when I next praise passionately something you have sent me, it will be meant seriously». (F, 19) Freud is clearly less emotionally involved in his evaluation of Zweig's writing than Zweig is of his, maintaining his detachment toward the work, like a true analyst, in spite of any fatherly feelings he may have for its author.

Zweig repeats his exaggerated praise for Freud's work in a letter dated December 2, 1930 introducing the idea of writing an essay about Freud's relationship to Nietzsche. Zweig observes that Freud has «achieved everything that Nietzsche intuitively felt to be his task, without his being really able to achieve it with his poetic idealism and brilliant inspirations». (Z, 23) Nietzsche, Zweig comments, «longed for good and evil», but analysis «discovered a world to which this phrase actually applies.

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[8] Letter of 14.5.22 to Schnitzler in *Letters of Sigmund Freud*, edited by E. Freud (London: Hogarth Press, 1961), pp. 344-45.

[9] Ernst Freud's statement raises the issue of the reliability of the letters. Ironically, it seems to me, this is the very issue the two correspondents address in their discussions of literary biographies, namely, what is historical truth and how can we know it if the very sources from which we ssek it are unreliable.

[10] Mahoney, p. 1.

In Freud's December 7 response he alludes to his own work, an introduction to a book he describes as «an analysis and at the same time very much a matter of contemporary interest, almost political». (F, 25) which will be the study of Woodrow Wilson he wrote with W.C. Bullit. We can see that the literary interests of the two men are beginning to dominate their correspondence, with Freud less open than Zweig about what he is working on. But he critiques Zweig's work in almost every letter, for example, praising Zweig's *Knaben und Männer* by saying «Every little chapter is a delicious morsel». (F, 29)

Was it Freud's compliment that causes the salutation of Zweig's December 11, 1931, letter to become «Dear Mr. and Father Freud?» By January 8, 1932, a letter in which Zweig remarks, «You have no idea how close I feel to you just now. I have taken up my analysis again...» the tone escalates to «Dear and reverend Mr. Freud». (Z, 33) Zweig transfers his feelings about his own analysis onto Freud as if Freud were his father-analyst. His salutations become more reverential, «Dear and honored man» and by November 16, 1932 he consistently calls Freud «Father». On Freud's side, beginning on November 18, 1932 he uses the salutation «Dear Meister Arnold», saying «I think you shall keep this name». (F, 44) So Freud is now the father-artist, Zweig is the master-artist. The relationship, at least in the literary sphere, is becoming more equal.

From December, 1931, to the close of their correspondence on September 9, 1939, shortly before Freud's death, they discussed; Lou Andreas-Salomé, the psychoanalyst; Jakob Wassermann, German novelist; Richard Beer-Hoffmann, Austrian poet and playwright; Lion Feuchtwanger, German novelist; Thomas Mann and his brother, Heinrich, the German novelists; Rene Schickele, Alsatian novelist, dramatist, poet, and Karl Schönherr, Austrian writer with the topic of Freud's Moses book dominating their conversation.

For the writers who occupy them are those in whom they have a biographical interest, not only Moses, but Nietzsche and Shakespeare. Thus, their discussions are valuable because they illuminate the nature of biography and because they touch upon the subject I would like to turn to next, the two writers' descriptions of their works-in-progress. These analyses provide us with a focused behind-the-scenes view of Freud as a writer and as a literary critic in greater depth than in any of Freud's other correspondences. Zweig is not on as firm ground with Freud about the nature of biography in the Nietsche correspondence as he will be in the Shakespeare correspondence. In fact, Zweig's proposed biography of Nietzsche is deeply painful to Freud becauseof Zweig's attempts to take advantage of his relationship with Freud to learn about Freud's close friend, Lou Andreas Salomé's intimate relationship with Nietzsche. On April 28, 1934, he asks Freud if he or «Frau Lou» would be interested in helping him and promises Freud «your name would stand on the dedicatory page». (Z,76)

Freud's reply is extremely direct. Zweig has entered forbidden territory when it comes to first hand disclosure by Lou Andreas-Salomé to whom Freud is loyal and protective:

> Our friend Lou is over 70 years old and as far as I can judge from this distance, not in the best of health. She never writes about herself in her letters and she never complains. She must be one of the few people alive who know anything intimate about him. And she is not given to telling it. (F, 76)

After speculating as to whether he should advise Zweig against his proposal and concluding that it will not matter what he says because «The poetic urge, if it's strong enough, will prove itself stronger», (F, 77) Freud goes into a long analysis of poetic licence versus historical truth citing Shakespeare's and George Bernard Shaw's filling in history's gaps in their plays which he believes worked for Shakespeare and not as successfully for Shaw. In the case of a figure closer in time, like Friedrich Nietzsche, however, «a description of his character and his destiny should aim at the same result as a portrait does». (F,78) Freud attempts to persuade Zweig that he must know whether there is enough material available and that

even if there is «It is the case-history of a sick man, and this is much more difficult to guess or reconstruct». (F, 78) It would seem that Zweig has a problem in justifying his biography because he treads not only on Freud's personal feelings about Lou-Andreas Salomé as well as asking him to breach a confidence.

In addition, he has offended Freud by writing about him in *Bilanz*. «I hope it has done you good to write it», Freud tells Zweig, «and that it has enabled you to let off steam, for I am almost stifled with suppressed rancour and fury. Of course, I do not believe half what you write about me in *Bilanz*». (F, 78)

Recognizing that he cannot be objective about Zweig's proposed biography and that «dissuading someone is not the proper behavior for a friend» (F, 79) Freud asks Lou-Andreas Salomé if her cooperation would be available. Her reply is a definitive no to which she adds, «how right you are to dissuade him altogether from his Nietzsche plan!»[11] The discussion of the Nietzsche biography continues from June 6, 1934, to September 30, 1934, with Zweig continuing to explain his aims to Freud and to try to overcome Freud's objections. He tells Freud that «my opinion about historical truth coincides exactly with yours. I have absolutely no intention of making up, of fabricating or reconstructing a Nietzsche», and assures Freud that «Frau Lou herself shall not appear in the story at all, (Z, 80) adding that though «Lou could be of wonderful help... I do not really need this unique help». (Z, 81) This rationalization does not seem terribly satisfactory for even as he says, «Naturally I shall no longer venture to approach Frau Lou», he asks Freud for «some tips to make some shortcuts». (Z, 85)

Once more Freud refuses to help, saying, «You very much overestimate my knowledge of Nietzsche. And for that reason I cannot tell you anything that might be useful to you». (F, 85) He cites two more obstacles to Zweig's study; one must know Nietzsche's sexual constitution, and because Nietzsche suffered from a paralysis, his conflicts receded. Freud asks, «Should writers be allowed to weave such a web of fantasy round the crude pathological facts? I do not know. Writers are not usually very amenable creatures». (F, 85-6) With this observation Freud adds to his aesthetic formulations of the artist as a «strange being» who is «not far removed from neurosis».[12]

Unpersuaded, Zweig persists in seeking advice, asking Freud on August 12, 1934, «What should I read in order to study your theory of psychosis... Where in particular can I find something on paralysis itself?» (Z, 89) But first he gives Freud a lengthy far-fetched psychological analysis of Nietsche's neurotic relations with his Mother and sister. When Freud doesn't reply he writes him, «I think I know why». (Z, 90)

However, it turns out that Freud's failure to respond is unrelated to Zweig's Nietzsche project, but is because, as he drily writes from Vienna, on September 30, 1934, «I have written something myself». (F, 91) Freud refers to *Moses an Egyptian*, later enlarged to *Moses and Monotheism*, arguably his most controversial work, published in London in 1939.[13] his correspondence with Zweig gives more first-hand knowledge of his writing of *Moses* than any other source. «For not much longer» before the letter's address, Vienna XIX Strassergasse 47, highlights the subject of persecution that is one of the book's catalysts and which both men lived through during the Hitler years. In Zweig he found a sympathetic

[11] *Sigmund Freud and Lou-Andreas Salomé Letters*, edited by Ernst Pfeiffer translated by William and Elaine Robson-Scott (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.), p. 203.

[12] *SE*, XIV, p. 36.

[13] For the most thorough and thoughtful study of *Moses and Monotheism* see Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991). A less cogent discussion can be found in David Bakan's *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition* (London: Free Association Books, 1990) in Which Bakan says «the book is a bad book), p. 142. I cite it to observe how Freud's misgivings about his writing of it, expressed in detail to Arnold Zweig, have indeed come true.

sounding board, not only because of his admiration for him as an analyst and writer, but because as Freud writes to him:

> The starting point of my work is familiar to you — it was the same as that of your *Bilanz*. Faced with the new persecutions, one asks onself again how the Jews have come to be what they are and why they have attracted this undying hatred. (F, 91)

Thus, the historical questions which Freud invoked, another catalyst for his book, are questions that Zweig has confronted. We also learn that Freud originally conceived of the book as historical fiction, giving it the title, *The Man Moses, a Historical Novel*, and that from the beginning he was doubtful about the project. He outlines his plan for the book and his hesitation about completing it:

> The material fits into three sections. The first part is like an interesting novel; the second is laborious and boring; the third is full of content and makes exact reading. The whole enterprise broke down on this third section, for it involved a theory of religion — certainly nothing new for me after *Totem and Taboo*, but something new and fundamental for the uninitiated. It is the thought of these unitiated readers that makes me hold over the finished work. For we live here in an atmosphere of Catholic orthodoxy. (F, 91-92)

Freud continued to worry about an adverse reaction to his *Moses* work, even after he fled to England in 1938 where he worried that the British public might object because of their reverence for the Bible.

Additionally, he worried about the book's reception early on because of its problematical thesis that Moses was an Egyptian. Thus, even though he finds Arnold Zweig a sympathetic reader, not wanting to be reminded of a project that has caused him a lot of disappointment, he tells him, on December 16, 1934, «Don't say anything more about the Moses book». (F, 98)

Besides the book's anticipated effect on its readers, we learn about Freud's capacity to critque his own work: «... this historical novel won't stand up to my own criticism. I need more certainty and I should not like to endanger the final formula of the whole book, which I regard as valuable, by founding it on a base of clay». (F, 97) Unlike, Zweig, who continues to ask Freud for help with Neitzsche even after he refuses, Freud wants to rely on himself. Or can it be that he has difficulty accepting literary criticism? The fact that Freud is old, sick, and discouraged, as we see from his December 16, 1934 letter, also contributes to his rejection of Zweig's criticism:

> The fact that this, probably my last creative effort, should have come to grief depresses me enough as it is. Not that I can shake him off. The man and what I wanted to make of him pursue me everywhere... I think my memory of recent events is no longer reliable. (F, 98)

And he again points out the untenability of the Moses thesis, saying that he was «obliged to construct so imposing a statue upon feet of clay, so that any fool could topple it». (F, 98)

The subject of *Mose and Monotheism* is not closed with this letter and Zweig in his persistent manner continues to offer Freud advice suggesting, for example, that he read Elias Auerbach's *Desert and Promised Land* which Freud finds traditional,saying, «His Moses is not my Moses». (F, 104) And on May 2, 1935 Freud tells Arnold, «*Moses* will not let go of my imagination. I picture myself reading it aloud to you when you come to Vienna», (F, 106) which in fact he does when Zweig visits him in Vienna in 1936. Allusions to *Moses and Monotheism* continue in the correspondence until the last letter on September

9, 1939 with Zweig as supportive reader. Freud's awareness of the book's unorthodoxy and his need for Zweig when he writes him on December 20, 1937:

> I will be sending a copy of *Moses* to you before the year is up. It will certainly cause a stir in the world that is hungry for sensation... I recognise the fact that I am not famous, but I am «notorious». (F, 154)

A somewhat less emotionally painful dialogue between Freud and Zweig about the nature of historical truth, and whether an artist can distort the biographical facts of great men for the sake of their creative work, occurs between June, 1936 and July 1938 in their speculations about Shakespeare's life. Freud theorizes that the Earl of Oxford was the real author of Shakespeare's plays while Zweig tries to persuade Freud that Shakespeare was from the middle class, not an aristocrat as proposed by Thomas Looney, whose book about Shakespeare's origins impressed Freud. This discussion goes to the heart of Freud's ambivalence about biography, a form which attracted him all of his life even though he was suspicious of its usefulness. He writes to Zweig from Vienna on May 31, 1936 after Zweig proposes that he write a biography of him, «Anyone who writes a biography is committed to lies, concealments, hypocrisy, flattery, and even to hiding his own lack of understanding, for biographical truth does not exist, and if it did we could not use it». (F, 127) This is perhaps why he is willing to indulge in a hypothesis about Shakespeare's biography, whereas Zweig says he wants «to learn the biographical data». (Z, 136)

The basic disagreement between them about Shakespeare, which demonstrates each man's stance on biography, can be seen in the following exchange. Zweig writes to Freud from Carmel, Palestine on March 21, 1937:

> I am still no subscriber to the Oxford theory, and if it were not you who had drawn my attention to it I would have arrived at the following conclusion: the Oxford researches provide the best, indeed the only, contribution to a biography of Shakespeare we possess. Certainly Oxford had a profound influence on Sh., indeed regenerated him... He is, however, not the author of Shakespeare's work, but the begetter... The feminine element in the poet thus comes into its own. He is able to conceive, is made to vibrate and by way of the short cuts of the imagination, he lives through the life of others. Even Shakespeare's aristocratic element is «begot» in this way. (Z, 138)

On April 4, 1937 Freud responds from Vienna:

> I do not know what still attracts you to the man of Stratford. he seems to have nothing at all to justify his claim, whereas Oxford has almost everything. It is quite inconceivable to me that Shakespeare should have gotten everything secondhand — Hamlet's neurosis, Lear's madness, Macbeth's defiance and the character of Lady Macbeth, Othello's jealousy, etc. It almost irritates me that you should support the notion. (F, 140)

Besides their differences about Shakespeare's life, what is of interest in their disagreement is the more even-handed tone in this literary dialogue. Zweig, while continuing to be respectful of Freud, is firm in his convictions, which, after first giving Freud credit for his position, he expresses in his letter of July 3, 1937:

> There can be no question that anything of yours has ever met with lack of success with me. Firstly, you have completely destroyed my naive pedagogic certainty in matters relating to W. Sh. Secondly, through your intervention you have made Oxford an important figure for me, an heir-apparent to the highest poetic rank... And thirdly,... you have tempted me to create a Shakespeare

> character of such a kind that in the last weeks of his life he struggles with the shade of Oxford and... wishes to confess: My plays are not by me at all, they're by him. But I cannot decide — as yet whether this should be a genuine confession or whether it is just a delusion. (Z, 144)

Zweig goes on to state his own position about Shakespeare's authorship with certainty and, it seems to me, lectures Freud about the relationship between creativity and biography:

> I am simply not convinced that the works are not by W. Sh. of Str. Why should they not be? Because we have no proof that he ever went to schoool? Or because he made money and bought land? Dear Father Freud, what do we know about Shakespeare's contemporaries — Kyd, Peele, Greene, Webster and Massinger? Two generations of Civil War swept away all record. And the fact that Shakespeare tells us he carried the baldachin well? Dante tells us that he has been in Hell. The poet's idea of truth is is peculiar; it refers to the reality of his ideas, not to the content of experienced reality behind these ideas. (Z, 144)

According to Ernest Jones, Freud read «Shakespeare over and over again and was always ready with an apt quotation from his plays»,[14] and the pleasure he derived from reading Shakespeare manifests itself as pleasure in his dialogue with Zweig. It is not surprising, therefore, that after Freud's arrival in England in 1938, Zweig picked up the thread of their exchange, when he walked past his volumes of Shakespeare and wondered how Freud's «vision of him is taking shape in London». (Z, 167)

What emerges from these letters is a narrative with gaps and spaces brought about by time lapses, distances between the correspondents (Zweig in Germany and Palestine, Freud in Vienna and England) which informs their responses. Yet another gap in the text is Ernst Freud's editing. While he left out letters that overpraised his father, he fails to mention any letters that might be construed as unfavorable to Freud's character. For example, after Alfred Adler died unexpectedly in Scotland, Zweig was sympathetic and wrote to Freud saying so. Freud wrote back:

> I don't understand your sympathy for Adler. For a Jew boy out of a Viennese sunurb, a death in Aberdeen is an unheard of career in itself and a proof of how far he had got on. The world really awarded him richly for his service in having contradicted psychoanalysis.

Jones included Freud's comment in his biography but Ernst Freud omitted the passage without acknowledging the fact.[15] I would argue that in his letters, Freud's resistance to Zweig's writing biographies of him and of Nietzsche makes clear his notion that biographical truth does not exist. He complains about Zweig's overestimation of him. «I find it hard to adapt myself to the role of the hero suffering for mankind, which you kindly assign to me». (F, 101) Throughout the correspondence, Freud tries to persuade Zweig that «Truth is unobtainable»; (F, 129) Zweig resists, as when he tells Freud that it is important for him to write about the breaks he has had with former friends and pupils «in order to clarify objectively what really happened». (Z, 129) He never seems to understand that Freud can be no more objective about these events than his former followers can. On the other hand, Freud, who knows that he cannot have access to facts for a biography which have

[14] Jones, Vol. 1, p. 204.

[15] Quoted in Paul Roazen, *Freud and His Followers* (New York: Knopf & Co., 1974), p. 209. I want to note here that this is a case of the English translation rendering a different connotation from from the German since «Judenknabe», which Freud may have written, does not carry the anti-semitism of the English.

been lost because of the intervening years, is not immune from trying to interpret those facts, as evidenced by his writing of *Moses and Monotheism*.

As I have pointed out the discourse between Freud and Zweig resembles the transference between analyst and analysand; Zweig's overestimation of Freud contains emotional elements of which he is apparently unaware. Freud, on his side, repeatedly tries to correct or neutralize Zweig's idealization of him, and one could suspect that he protests too much. While we do not have an objective emotional picture of the friendship, what we do have is a portrait of Freud, as writer, reader, and literary critic, that critics have begun to write about only recently. His advice to Zweig is analytic as well as practical, as when he advises him to hurry up with his new war novel *Verdun* before it misses the interest claimed by the next war. Zweig seems to appreciate practical direct advice, telling Freud, «I look forward to your criticism; your judgement is simply vital to me, as public criticism does not exist anymore», (Z, 94) after Freud «condemned *Laubheu* so clearly and precisely» that Zweig decided it would be a waste of time to continue work on the book. (Z, 94)

While Zweig's and Freud's correspondence contains many sub-plots and digressions on Jewishness, German identity, health, old age, I have concerned myself essentially with the story of two writers struggling with the creative process, particularly in the writing of biography. For me, their significance lies in discovering Freud grappling with those problems of biographical truth that his biographers confront.

Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 69-82

Reason Versus Mystery: On the Philosophical Import of Lacan's Revision of Freud's Concepts of the Id, Ego, and Superego

KAY STOCKHOLDER (*)

Though Lacan equates his mirror stage to Freud's conception of narcissism when he refers to the ego as the «golem of narcissism»[1], or of being seduced and captured in «the veil of the narcissistic image» (195), in fact the two are based on and lead to radically opposed world views. On the surface Lacan's formulation of the mirror stage may sound like an adaptation of Freud's argument in «On Narcissism» that,

> the individual does actually carry on a twofold existence: one to serve his own purposes and the other as a link in a chain, which he serves against his will, or at least involuntarily. The individual himself regards sexuality as one of his own ends; whereas from another point of view he is an appendage to his germ-plasm[2].

However, Freud contrasts the libido instincts to the ego instincts, which have to do with the individual's drive for self-preservation. In contrast, Lacan omits the latter entirely from his theory, as is clear from his scornful comments on Darwinism. His exclusion of any trace of a Darwinian drive for survival from the human psyche collapses the distinction Freud makes between primary and secondary narcissism. This distinction is an important one for Freud, who arrives at the theory of narcissism as a consequence of finding that some people whose «libidinal development has suffered some disturbance... have taken as a model not their mother but their own selves. They are plainly seeking *themselves* as a love-object, and are exhibiting a type of object choice which must be termed 'narcissistic'» (italics Freud's, 81). Freud relates this attachment to the self at the expense of others to a primary narcissism that, he claims, is common to all people. Seeing it as an aspect of infantile auto-eroticism that will in the course of time shape the ego, he says,

> The first auto-erotic sexual satisfactions are experienced in connection with

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[1] Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, tr. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), p. 124. Page references to this work will hereafter appear in the text.

[2] Sigmund Freud, *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, tr. James Strachey (New York, Penguin, 1984) 70-71. Page references to this work will hereafter appear in the text.

> vital functions which serve the purpose of self-preservation. The sexual instincts are at the outset attached to the satisfaction of the ego-instincts; only later do they become independent of these, and even then we have an indication of that original attachment in the fact that the persons who are concerned with a child's feeding, care, and protection become his earliest sexual objects...(80-81).

For Freud, then, primary narcissism consists in an infant's visceral sense of its satisfactions, which unites what will become erotic and self-preservative drives with its perceptual sense of other persons and its developing capacity to love them. There is no sharp division between the state at which it does not distinguish itself from the world, and that at which it does; rather the two stages shade into each other as the child's pleasure in itself extends to its perceptions of others who are from the beginning associated with that pleasure. Further, its ego, or a nascent form of it, is already in place, and primary narcissism involves the child's erotic drives taking for their object its self, including its own self-preservative drives. The ego then is not constituted, as it is for Lacan, in mistaking an image for reality, but rather it is founded in those aspects of our organic relation to our environment, eating and being protected from falling and injury, that are in reality crucial to our survival.

Secondary narcissism develops only later, after the child has passed through the Oedipal stage and developed an ego-ideal, or what Freud later calls a super-ego. A narcissistic personality is then one that suffers from secondary narcissism. Such people cannot love other persons, but either remain exclusively attached to their own ego-ideals, or choose other persons exclusively for the degree to which they compensate for what they feel as their failures to live up to their ego ideal, or who replicate the kind of person they take themselves to be. It is this condition, one that Freud considers pathological, that Lacan posits as the human norm.

It is this secondary narcissism that is most closely related to Lacan's mirror stage, but with two important differences. First, Freud here describes only one kind of person. While elements of narcissism may enter all relations, they do not define all relations for all people. Second, even for this kind of person, secondary narcissism develops on a continuum with and incorporates primary narcissism. Therefore both persons who love narcissistically, and those whose self-images are less involved in their love relationships in one form or another incorporate their infantile experience into their adult choices and in some degree achieve one form or another of real gratification. Such gratification may not be permanent and it may not be complete; it may not fill all of our heart's desires, but it is nonetheless real in that it is deeply connected to our profound and inward sense of our bodily well-being. This view of love relationships contrasts sharply with Lacan's. For Freud «we must begin to love in order not to fall ill, and we are bound to fall ill if, in consequence of frustration, we are unable to love» (78). Freud adds, «a real happy love corresponds to the primal condition in which object-libido and ego-libido cannot be distinguished» (95). With with the exception of the word «real», Lacan might agree with this, but it is an important exception. For Freud the merger of one's self-love with love for another is the foundation of whatever happiness is available for human beings, but Lacan's redefinition of the Freudian ego as constituted in a misrecognition, or an illusion, renders the love experience merely one form of the Hegelian nightmare. In Lacan's formulation such gratifications are not real, because, as we will see, in erasing the distinction between primary and secondary narcissism, he also erases the distinction between the ego and the super-ego, with the consequence not only that he profoundly alters the conception of love, but he also transforms the conception of castration, the death drive, the Oedipal drama, the conception of therapy, and the totality of the individual's relation to the world.

For Freud the ego, grounded in survival instincts, is most closely bound up with rational action, whereas for Lacan it is the source of all individual and collective human ills. In

order to bring out the full import of Lacan's revamping of the Freudian ego, as well as its relationship to the related conceptions of the superego or ego-ideal, I will first supply the necessary Freudian conceptual context. As we have seen in the discussion of primary narcissism, Freud locates the formation of the ego, «a coherent organization of mental processes» in the infant's experience of its own body.[3] Freud conceives psychological ego functions, the sense of one's self as an entity, as an extension of, and structured in analogy to, the organism's perceptual systems. «The ego is first and foremost a bodily ego» (364); it develops as the child becomes aware of itself as a bounded entity and is a psychic extension of the senses by which the child negotiates itself in the world of objects. Though Freud emphasizes sight and hearing in speaking of the perceptual system, he could logically include the kinetic sense by which the child knows when it has bumped into a table. On this level the ego is that which coordinates the child's awareness of things outside of itself to its internal sense of its body, to its pleasure and pain. It is the psychic equivalent of the proprioceptive senses. The ego is constituted in the organism's drive to preserve itself, and in Freud's formulation initially is distinct from erotic drives, which, as we have seen, he thinks of as manifestations in us of a kind of species survival instinct, embedded in our germ plasm.[4] By the agency of primary narcissism, however, the two fuse, and Freud describes them as essentially working as one. All drives pass through the id and manifest themselves in the ego, as they must if the ego is to fulfill its task of ensuring our survival in an external world. Therefore the ego is not constituted in a misrecognition as it is for Lacan; rather it serves the drives as their emissary.

As the child develops more complex emotions, and as some of its pleasures cause it the distress of parental disapproval, the ego's task of negotiating or mediating between the external and internal world grows more complex. Therefore, as we noted before, in Freud's model other persons are involved in the earliest development of primary narcissism, and human survival depends as much on other persons as it does on awareness of physical dangers. The fusion of the internal and external stimulae is so complete that Freud describes the ego as «a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes», one that «contains the history of those object-choices» (E.I. 368). Some of the desires and drives that compose the id and are realized in the child's attachments to other people are driven into repression insofar as they jeopardize survival. Though repression of those drives that are presented in ways that are not «ego syntonic» makes a divide between the ego and the id, Freud emphasizes that this divide is not absolute. The ego in Freud's formulation «is not sharply separated from the id; its lower portion merges into it». But «the repressed merges into the id as well» (E.I.362), so that the ego serves as a conduit whereby the erotic drives blend with the survival drives as both are shaped in relation to actual people in the world. Adapting the analogy of a horse and rider that Plato uses for reason's relationship to passion, Freud says that the difference for the ego is that while «the rider tries to [guide the horse] with his own strength,... the ego uses borrowed forces». And he emphasizes the integral connection between these sometimes contending forces in saying that a rider,

> if he is not to be parted from his horse, is obliged to guide it where it wants to go; so in the same way the ego is in the habit of transforming the id's will into action as if it were its own (E.I. 364).

In this formulation, to have a strong ego is to have sufficient psychic energy to employ

[3] Sigmund Freud, «The Ego and the Id», *On Methapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 11 Pelican Freud Library (New York: Viking Penguin, Inc., 1964) 355. All further references will appear in the text as E and I.

[4] Desire, therefore, is not in Freud's theory free of need, as Lacan claims it is. Rather it is rooted in a kind of transindividual need, even though as individuals, we are able to reroute it from its species function.

one's intelligence and reason in the search for means to satisfy one's drives and desires as fully as possible in ways that do not jeopardize one's ordinary well- being. The ego «transforms the object-cathexes of the id into ego-structures». Therefore, «psychoanalysis is an instrument to enable the ego to achieve a progressive conquest of the id» (E.I.397).

While it is true that Freud condemned any version of psychoanalysis that ignored instinctual drives and libido theory, Lacan's diatribes against American ego psychology as subversive of the true Freud distort the picture. Ego psychology distorts Freudian theory by omitting analysis of developmental stages and of the ways in which erotic drives permeate all aspects of Freud's topography, but it does not distort Freud's conception of the ego in seeing it as related to the rational faculty that allows us to assess the world around us. And though, as we will see, Lacan condemns the American emphasis on adaptation in this tradition, its implications are far less conservative than is Lacan's formulation. Seeing the ego as that which assesses what is possible does not entail a therapy of submission, though on occasion submission may be rational. It is rather the mode by which one assesses what is necessary, what freedoms are possible, and what one has to do in order to accomplish one's purposes in the world one finds oneself. It is the ego's function to decide whether to change the world when that is possible, or conform to it when it is not.

For Lacan the ego has its genesis in the child's misrecognition of its image of itself. Equating it with the «I» that is generated by the child's taking itself to be the unified and spatially located mirror image, Lacan argues that it is necessarily aggressive because it is always angry at the alienation which constituted it. He argues that all human aggressivity can be understood as arising from the ego's erotic claims on the objects that it needs in order to confirm itself in its false autonomy. Lacan says that,

> It is in this erotic relation, in which the human individual fixes upon himself an image that alienates him from himself, that are to be found the energy and the form on which this organization of the passions that he will call his ego is based (19).

Therefore, human aggression and competitiveness do not arise, as they do for Freud, from the frustrations civilization imposes on man's animal instincts; on the contrary Lacan asserts that aggressivity «has nothing to do with the animal aggressivity of frustrated desire» (42). The mirror image constitutes the first transference, and is the basis for all other transference relationships, either in the therapeutic situation, or in falling in love. In the register of the Imaginary, the mental correlate of the Mirror stage, all ego relations are antagonistic in two directions. On the one hand the subject projects onto the person who stands in for his mirror image his own rage at his alienated state. On the other hand, the mirror image or the person who substitutes for it constitutes a challenge to the subject to be in reality the self-contained and unified entity it takes the image, or now the other, to be. Since it lacks such inner unity, it seeks to achieve it by mastering the other, and fears that its failure to do so will catapult it back into its fragmented and disjointed reality, Lacan offers as proof his patients' dreams of dismemberment that reproduce the nightmare images portrayed by Hieronymus Bosch whose works form «an atlas of all the aggressive images that torment mankind» (11). This primordial nightmare includes as well

> the imago of the mother's body... [her] internal empire, the historical atlas of the intestinal divisions in which the imagos of the father and brothers (virtual or real), in which the voracious aggression of the subject himself, dispute their deleterious dominance over her sacred regions (20-21).

To lose the struggle with the other constitutes falling into the «madness that lies behind the walls of asylums» (7). It is to be psychotic, like Schreber, who, because he defined his ego as victim, experienced himself paranoiacally attacked by God (124), and returned

to the mirror stage «at which his body was merely a collection of colonies of foreign 'nerves', a sort of sump for fragments detached from the identities of his persecutors» (209). Since, for fear of falling into a Boschian nightmare or psychosis, each person must force the other to recognize her as the unified being she is not, ego relations are by definition locked in Kojève's version of Hegel's master/slave struggle.

On the one hand, then, the ego is the specular image that functions as an ever retreating lure of maturity, in relation to which the person will forever be found wanting. On the other hand, Lacan transfers to the ego formation the production of guilt that Freud, as we will see, assigns to the super-ego. In an oblique reference to original sin, Lacan sees modern man locked in ego-relations that cause «isolation of the soul ever more akin to its 'original dereliction'» (27). The task of therapy is to release the analysand from the symptoms generated by his refusal to abandon false egoic images and enter the symbolic. Guilt, in Lacan's conception a psychological analogue to original sin, is bound up in the act of alienation by which the ego is constituted, and is carried forward in all the aggressive acts that flow from it. Guilt does not arise, as it does for Freud, from the failure to meet specific parental and social norms that one has introjected; rather it is the corollary of having an ego.

For Lacan, in therapeutic as well as ordinary dialogue «opposition, negation, ostentation, and lying [are] the characteristic modes of the agency of the ego» (15). The triumph of the ego is responsible for what he sees as the distortion of psychoanalytic practice by North American Ego analysts who, in the name of an adaptive theory of cure, substitute Master/Slave relations with their analysands for one that Lacan would have as a relation of guru to initiate. On the historical level ego manifests itself in the Darwinian world view that is responsible for

> the economic euphoria that sanctioned for that society the social devastation that it initiated on a planetary scale, and to the fact that it justified its predations by the image of a *laissez-faire* of the strongest predators in competition for their natural prey (26).

The emancipated man of modern society and all advances in scientific knowledge and technological control are aspects of the ego, which «structures human knowledge as paranoiac» (3). In short, the unchecked proliferation of ego structures is responsible for «the utilitarian conception of man that reinforces it, in an ever more advanced realization of man as individual» (27), exactly the realization that was Freud's therapeutic goal. Lacan argues that he brings out Freud's true meaning by rewriting «Where the id was, there the ego shall be» to mean that «'There where it was... it is my duty that I should come to being'» (129) because he replaces the concept of the id with a mystical pre-lapsarian plenitude that he calls the Real. But Freud's conception of the id and ego, and their relation to the superego, permits no such interpretation. One can see that Lacan's exalted claims for himself as the true heir of Freud's mantle depend upon totally subverting Freud's values.

Lacan advocates, as a means of recovery from the original sin of ego, formation a pre-Enlightenment, anti-individualistic, antirational, and authoritarian conception of human life and society. In a passage that is seldom quoted but which expresses attitudes that pervade all of his work, Lacan deplores,

> the increasing absence of all those saturations of the super-ego and ego-ideal that are realized in all kinds of organic forms in traditional societies, forms that extend from the rituals of everyday intimacy to the periodical festivals in which the community manifests itself. We no longer know them except in their most obviously degraded aspects. Furthermore, in abolishing the cosmic polarity of the male and female principles, our society undergoes all the psychological

> effects proper to the modern phenomenon known as the «battle between the sexes» — a vast community of such effects, at the limit between the «democratic» anarchy of the passions and their desperate leveling down by the «great winged hornet» of narcissistic tyranny (26-27).

In order to recover from the «barbarism» that results from «the relativizaion of our sociology by the scientific collection of cultural forms that we are destroying in the world» (E. 26) we need «the wisdom of Plato» to restore us to the «rituals of everyday intimacy» of traditional society. These views on man and society, and this conception of authority are logically related to Lacan's separation of human psychology from his species and physical existence that he laid down in the theory of the mirror stage. If people are psychologically constituted as Lacan claims, if our sense of physical well being is unrelated to our sense of ourselves in the world, if there is no inner structure of selfrestraint deriving from a our own needs to survive, then it would follow that we should be subject to the kind of Platonic authoritarianism that Lacan evokes. Given Lacan's understanding of what the ego is, his therapeutic goal must necessarily be to circumvent it by positing a «subject» that exists apart from any Freudian component of the human psyche.

It therefore follows that Lacan should deplore ego-psychology, whether or not it ignores Freud's libido theory, because if the ego is as Lacan claims, then to make it stronger is to intensify the deadliness of competitive relationships. The best one could do with such an ego would be to get it to adapt to its world, as Lacan suggests in the passage quoted above. Lacan deplores adaptation as a therapeutic goal, but logically he should be content with such a goal for those who are not among the chosen few who are worthy of the glimpse of Diana that Lacan uses as a figure of Truth (124).[5]

Lacan admits that his conception of the ego departs from, at least, what the ego psychologists have made from the topographic model of «The Ego and the Id». However, he suggests that Freud in this work distorted and rigidified his own earlier views which, by implication, are closer to his own.[6] While it is true that Freud emphasizes the importance of the ego in this relatively late work, it is not the case that this topographical model supersedes his earlier dynamic model. Rather, the three terms create a kind of grid, on which the energies associated with them interact, and Freud is at pains frequently to remind his readers not only of their interaction, but that the boundaries between them are indistinct and permeable. It is true that the ego does get more sharply defined, as Freud attributes some of the functions that he formerly included in the ego to the id, or the superego. The merger between the ego and id appears as early as 1914, in «On Narcissism», in which Freud says that in illness the ego interests, ordinarily turned towards the outer world, and the libido, ordinarily turned toward a loved person, become «indistinguishable from each other» (Narc. 76) when both converge on the body. In *Instincts and their Vicissitudes* (1915) Freud attributes to the ego some of the properties that later characterize the id:

> The ego hates, abhors and pursues with intent to destroy all objects which are a source of pleasurable feeling for it, without taking into account whether

[5] I am not arguing that Lacan secretly espoused religious belief despite his declared atheism. But the drift of his theory is towards an amorphous eastern mysticism that he suggests by drawing on western allusions. Elizabeth Roudinesco, in *Jacques Lacan & Co* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) notes the way this contradiction appears on the institutional level. She argues that Lacan's conception of the ego entails ending up with «a cult of the master, or with the ardor of a mystic, which amounts to replacing the illusory freedom of individual speech with a religious adherence to the imaginary person of a leader of a cause (224). She also discusses the atraction Lacan had for previously Freudian priests (205).

[6] See Ellie Ragland-Sullivan, *Jacques Lacan and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis*, 17.

they mean a frustration of sexual satisfaction or of the satisfaction of self-preservative needs (136).

The later work that more firmly hooks the ego to the perceptual system and to self-preservation clears up this somewhat confusing statement that seems to derive from an earlier formulation (1911) in which Freud distinguishes between a «pleasure-ego [which] can do nothing but *wish*... [and the] reality-ego», which has to do with self-preservation (*Two Principles of Mental Functioning*, 40, italics Freud's). This kind of split ego also appears in *Mourning and Melancholia* (1915), in which Freud says that the «libidinal cathexes» withdraw back «to the place in the ego from which [they] had proceeded» and become subject to the «critical agency». This agency seems part of the ego when he adds that «the ego debases itself and rages against itself» (266-67). As we have seen, these multiple aspects of the ego divide off later, and one may prefer Freud's earlier formulation to the later more schematic version. But the point here is that no Freudian formulation accords with Lacan's. As we will see, Lacan's ego has most in common with the superego of the later formulation. However, Lacan's theory of primal alienation deprives his conception of the ego of the Freudian link to the libidinous passions. Therefore, no matter which Freudian formulation one has in mind, Lacan's revision of the concept does not bring out the true Freud, as he claims; it totally undermines Freud's world-views.[7]

Lacan's concept of the ego, in which the subject is structured as «a rival with himself» (22), merges into it most of what Freud attributes to the superego. In Freudian theory the superego considerably complicates and darkens the psychological landscape, which seems deceptively fair when the ego is discussed in isolation from the drama that occurs with the introduction of this term. While the ego represents one portion of the id, another dynamic generates the superego or ego-ideal. The latter term is one he uses in his earlier writings, but later it merges with the former. In «On Narcissism» the ego-ideal is that which the child «substitutes for the lost narcissism of his childhood in which he was his own ideal» (N 88). Here the term is used to represent what the person feels he ought to be; it is part of a secondary narcissism in which the image of the self one believes one should be, rather than other persons, is taken as an object of love. This function later becomes one side of a two-sided coin. In the topographical model, the term retains its first meaning, but merges with the superego, which emphasizes the guilt produced by the person's failure to live up to that ideal self-image. Since in this later work Freud uses the two terms interchangeably, I will here simplify matters by confining myself to the term superego.

The superego has its origins in relation to the other persons, usually parents, who are a part of the child's earliest experience of the world. As we have seen in discussing the ego, its self-love incorporates its experience of those other persons. As it enters into the Oedipal phase, it perceives its mother and father as separate persons, and both loves and competes with both of them. To simplify matters I will leave aside the complexities of what Freud calls the complete or two-phased Oedipal configuration, in which his theory of bisexuality has both the boy and the girl taking the position of the other sex as well as its own and identifying at different times with both the mother and with the father. The most significant aspect of the superego lies in its genesis in the Oedipal drama. In simplified terms, the boy's nascent eroticism intensifies his already affectionate relation to his mother, so that he enters into an ambivalent and potentially competitive relation with his father, with whom he identifies himself and whose place he covets. The girl's identification with her mother acquires ambivalence and hostility when her nascent eroticism

[7] Roudinesco is wrong in claiming that Freud's Talmudic tradition plays a parallel role in his work as the Christianity from which Lacan derives (124). In whatever ways his style can be related to the Jewish tradition, his theory is totally opposed to the religious conceptual framework in a way that Lacan's is not.

intensifies her affection for her father. The child's ego incorporates these parental identifications, but when the child succumbs to the parental prohibitions, the portion of the ego that renounces its erotic claims on one or the other parent «*confronts the other contents of the ego as an ego-ideal or super-ego*» (italics Freud's, 373). Since the superego is initially part of the ego, it carries forward the «earliest object-choices of the id», but in it the residual feelings that derive from those early choices merge with the fear and anxiety consequent upon their prohibition. It «represents an energetic reaction-formation» (374) against those same loved persons. The child's compensation for giving up his or her Oedipal claim is to reaffirm an identification with one or the other parent, and in doing so to introject, to make its own, the parental prohibition. But that identification has a double valence; on the one hand the child develops its image of the kind of person it wishes to become on the basis of it, but on the other hand, the child is prohibited from being that kind of person — that is, the child may not take the place of its same-sex parent in relation to the parent of the opposite sex.

There are two important, and to some extent contradictory, attributes that follow from this description of the superego. First, the development of the superego is what brings the Oedipal stage to a close. Under pressure of castration fears, along with «the influence of authority, religious teaching, schooling and reading» (E.I. 374), the child relinquishes its Oedipal claims, bonds with his father, in the process internalizing the cultural standards along with parental prohibitions. In this way the child forms a conscience in accord with the «moral and aesthetic» trends of his world, and establishes in himself the potential of becoming a self-regulating member of society. In a somewhat ironical move to appease those of his audience who are distressed by his bleak assessment of the human condition, Freud says that «here we have that higher nature..., the representative of our relation to our parents» (E.I. 375). The source of the irony becomes clear when he develops the more forbidding aspects of the superego, but the positive importance of it lies in its marking the stage at which the child, at least the boy, establishes himself as an autonomous being.[8]

Having given to the ego the major attributes of the Freudian superego, Lacan seldom uses the latter term. When he does, he associates the superego with the Imaginary and pre-linguistic, rather than the Symbolic or social and linguistic. With a reference to Melanie Klein's theory of the child's introjection of «bad internal objects», he relates the superego to the «subjective function of identification», that is to the earliest infantile *meconnaissance* of the mirror stage, which, he says, «enables us to situate as perfectly original the first formation of the super-ego» (21). The superego then becomes an image of negative forms of infantile identification, which «in the broken link of the symbolic chain, raise from the imaginary that obscene, ferocious figure in which we must see the true signification of the super-ego» (143). Elsewhere he uses the term somewhat differently. The superego becomes that which condemns the son to reproduce the mistakes of his father (Seminar II, 89), that is, to carry from the Imaginary images of the father that distort the subject's apprehension of the Law of the Symbolic. Lacan associates the superego with Freud's notion of censorship, that which inhibits or distorts the expression of the unconscious (Seminar II, 130). He also describes it as a «disruptive, almost demonic» extension of the interiorized

[8] It should be noted that, though Freud in his normative discussion of women, describes the girl as developing a less powerful superego, and therefore of being less under the sway of conscience. Though he says this in a negative way, this could be read as a compliment, considering what he says later about the superego. He did not however, intend it to be so. Despite that, in his discussion of the complete Oedipus complex in which each sex undergoes the experience of the other, he makes it clear that many women, especially those who are not typically beautiful, do not conform to the norm. He may regard this failure as an illness, but his formulation is such as to allow present day women to accept his formulation and disregard his valuation of those who depart from what he regards as the norm.

images of the rejecting and desiring mother (Seminar II, 251), and refers to a character in Moliere's Amphitryon as «a man of the super-ego, who is always wanting to elevate himself to the dignity of the ideals of the father, of the master, and who imagines that is how he will attain the object of his desire» (Seminar II, 266). This reference seems closer to a Freudian use, but still locates the superego in the pre-Oedipal imaginary. Lacan associates it with the Law (that is, the realm of language in the symbolic) but only as a distorting carryover that has been translated into language in the form of senseless and blind prohibitions (Seminar I, 102). Located somewhere between the id and the ego, it is related to the child's introjection of the form of the mirror image (Seminar I, 169-70). Lacan distinguishes the ego-ideal from the superego, but they end up being the positive and negative sides of a single coin. The ego-ideal is what the child first saw «appearing in the form of the parent holding him up before the mirror»[9]. Therefore, logically the term overlaps with the unified image of mirror stage with which the child identifies, attempts to emulate and loves in the only way possible within the Lacanian system (Seminar I, 138-39).

Since Lacan roots the superego in the Imaginary where it functions as a distorted mirror of the social, moral, and cultural norms that constitute the Symbolic, and since the ego-ideal functions as an aspect of the ego, Lacan's separation of this relatively benign psychic component from his characterization of the ego allows him to retain his insistence that the ego is characterized by nothing but aggressivity, and is the single source of all manifestations of human aggressive and competitive behavior.

However, the most crucial aspect of Lacan's revision of the Freudian supergo lies in his reversing the chronological order of the development of the superego and the Oedipal stage. As we have seen, Lacan relates both the ego and superego to the presymbolic, that is, pre-Oedipal, Imaginary register. Either out of deference to Freud, or as a way of concealing the full import of his revisions, he obscures the issue in saying that the superego exists in language, but as a distortion imposed from the monstrous image that derives from the earlier stage. The importance of this is that since the superego does not bring the Oedipal phase to a close, nothing does. Lacan does not see the Oedipal phase as having a resolution. He does not, as Freud does, locate neurotic ills in an individual's failure to cast off the fear, guilts and inadequacies associated with the filial state, and assume the fullness of mature individualistic self-reliance. Rather Lacan considers psychic ills to arise not from the failure to end, but rather the failure to inaugurate the Oedipal configuration. Taking the «*failures* of Oedipal identification» as the source of neurotic symptoms, he thinks it is an error that «the effects of the complex were first perceived in *failures* to resolve it» (24-25, italics his). Therefore, since for Lacan entry into the Oedipal triad is synonymous with entry into the Symbolic, the world of Law, culture and traditions, there can be no question of resolution. The correct or normative state for Lacan is one in which the person continues to define himself as subject to, not only authority in an abstract sense, but to a paternally imbued image of authority. There is no moment at which the fear of castration underwrites an internalized form of parental prohibitions (399) to constitute a personal conscience that invests the person with some measure of personal autonomy, with a sense of being self-restraining rather than merely obedient to others.

Connected to this revision of the Oedipus complex is Lacan's revision of the castration complex. For Freud, the fear of castration comes into play at the time the boy realizes that the girl lacks a penis, and this fear is mobilized when the Oedipal phase brings him into competition with his father. A castration complex occurs when an unsatisfactorily resolved Oedipal configuration leaves the person in a continuing fear that deprives him of his powers, either of his actual sexual potency, or of the psychic extension of potency

[9] Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. Alan Sheridan (New York, W.W. Norton, Inc., 1973) 257. Hereafter cited in text as FFC.

as confidence in his powers in relation to authority. The therapeutic goal is to diminish the fear that is itself castrating. Lacan, however, moves castration back to the primordial gap of the mirror stage. That is, the human condition is to be castrated, and the possession of a penis misleads the male into pretending to himself that he isn't. Therefore, to fail to enter into the Oedipal phase is to hold onto the mirage of phallic power given by ego images, and the goal of therapy is for the subject to realize his castration, so that he will submit to paternal authority in the Oedipal stage as a precondition for submission to the Law. The Oedipal phase and the father's prohibition constitute the Symbolic Law in which the actual father of the pre-Oedipal Imaginary stage is transformed into the Name of the Father of the «field of culture», which is identical to the «field of the Other — which, strictly speaking, is the Oedipus complex». (204) Therefore one takes one's place as «subject» in the double and interdependent senses in which Lacan intends the term.[10]

This revamping of Freud's conception of castration and of the Oedipal configuration coheres with Lacan's valorization of authoritarianism and traditional society that we have seen in the previously quoted passage, for only such a society could contain the violence of ego forces. Therefore Lacan expresses the principle of authority as the Name of the Father. In this formulation Lacan equates social and cultural authority with a paternal image that renders it an extension of family authority, as in pre-industrial societies. Despite the fact that Lacan sees the over-laying of the Symbolic order with vestiges of earlier experience as the source of individual psychic ills, in insisting on a gendered version of social authority, he in fact wants a perpetuation of a familial conception of social order. This conception underlays his vision of those traditional festivals that he equates with «a cultural normativity bound up from the dawn of history with the imago of the father» (E 22), as well as his scorn for those emigré therapists «on the other side of the Atlantic» who, in espousing «the autonomous *ego*», sold out to the abstract positivism and objectification of that world (E 230, italics his).

In contrast, Freud's ideal involves an abstract conception of authority that wins the consent of reason. This is why Freud sees the superego as coming into existence only as the concluding phase of the Oedipal constellation. Though he equates the formation of the superego with conscience, it is not in terms of its role that Freud formulates whatever hopes he has for the human species. Being, as Freud puts it, the heir of the Oedipus complex, the superego not only carries forward the cultural norms of the society on the basis of which social feelings develop; it also expresses «the most powerful impulses and most important libidinal vicissitudes of the id» (E. and I. 376). In order to understand the full force of Freud's conception of the superego, and the full consequences of Lacan's absorption of it into the ego, it is necessary to discuss the relations of the superego to the id. These relations involve the death instinct, another Freudian formulation that Lacan renegotiates.

In Freud's conception the infantile id combines representations of life-preservative instincts that later, with the help of the senses and intelligence that Freud calls the «system *Pcpt.*», become the ego, with representations of erotic drives that are manifested in various ways as the child passes through the infantile sexual stages. In time the id becomes the locus as well of desires that have been repressed under the weight of social prohibition where they combine with anger generated by that repression, and the «impulses of jealous rivalry against... brother and sisters» (E. and I. 378). The ego's task is to master the id because,

[10] Charles E. Scott's «Pathology of the Father's Rule», an essay in *Lacan and Theological Discourse*, ed. Edith Wyschogrod, David Crownfield, and Carl A. Rasche (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989) 76-91, touches on the religious implication of this terminology. He writes that in discussing the Name of the Father, «Lacan's myth, so thoroughly a part of the Freudian discourse, has a controlling image of, as it were, Deity» (87). Like other commentators, (see Roudinesco in note below) he assumes that Lacan is correct in asserting that this theory reveals what Freud really intended.

> if the ego has not succeeded in properly mastering the Oedipus complex, the energetic cathexis of the latter, springing from the id will come into operation once more in the reaction-formation of the ego-ideal (E. and I 378).

However, from the time of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* the erotic drives include a death instinct that complicates the picture. By this Freud means that life itself has a tendency to rid itself of the tension that constitutes it and return to the inertness of matter. This conception is related to his view that sexual pleasure consists in a reduction or release of tension.

In addition, then, to retaining these residues of personal history and intensifying them, the id also incorporates the death instinct and passes it onto the ego. As an aspect of the ego the death drive manifests itself first as aggression towards others. Meeting prohibitions from the superego, this aggression can turn back on the self in the form of self-denigration and self-punitive guilt. Furthermore, «the *instinct of destruction* is habitually brought into the service of Eros» (E. and I. 382, italics his) when in various forms of regression it transforms love into hate and joins the pre-genital sexual phases to manifest itself as sadism and masochism.

On the one side of the ego then is a libidinous id that has no regard for reality or for the ordinary pleasures that can be derived in relation to it. Blindly, it carries forward the earliest identifications of the infant ego, as well as «the phylogenetic acquisitions... [that make it] a reincarnation of former ego-structures which have left their precipitates behind» (E. and I. 390). On the other side stands the superego, which draws on those early identifications, along with energies of the death instinct, or instinct for destruction, and unites them with parental and social prohibitions. Therefore, «as the child was once under a compulsion to obey its parents, so the ego submits to the categorical imperative of its super-ego» (E. and I. 389). In various forms of pathology the superego holds the ego responsible for and chastises the drives it has repudiated. It becomes a «pure culture of the death instinct», that «often enough succeeds in driving the ego into death» (394). «Helpless in both directions, the ego defends itself vainly, alike against the instigations of the murderous id and against the reproaches of the punishing conscience» (E. and I. 395). The id, then is «totally non-moral», while the superego «can be super-moral and then become as cruel as only the id can be» (E. and I. 395). All that is left is the ego, which «strives to be moral» (E. and I. 395) while being besieged by the demands of the id's libido, the demands of the external world, and the superego's morally transformed version of blind libido.

Throughout this entire discussion it is clear that Freud at every stage grounds his theory of psychic phenomena in bodily experience. It is the ego that has its origin initially as a «body ego» and is later associated with perception and intelligence that finally can be looked to, if anything can, for rational assessment of those elements in the external world that can contribute to our pleasure and help us avoid pain. It is the ego, and its extension in intelligence, that can assess the traditions of the past that, through our earliest identifications with our parents, we carry in our Ids and that manifest themselves in superego demands. It is the ego that, by taking up some of the id energies into itself and desexualizing, or sublimating them into cultural activity, prevents the death drive from having free play with us after we have carried out Eros' reproductive purposes (EI 388). It is only the ego that can, if anything can, carve out some space for the exercise of human freedom between, on the one hand, our biological species drives that are concerned neither with our individual well-being nor the quality of our social lives, and, on the other hand, from the sediments in our psyches of past modes of adaptation that no longer are relevant to our present individual or collective well-being. It follows that psychoanalytic therapy should be conceived as «an instrument to enable the ego to achieve a progressive conquest of the id» (E. and I. 397).

Lacan's reversal of Freud's values appears most clearly in his rewriting of Freud's death instinct in spiritual terms. He sees it as the ultimate confrontation, as the only means

by which the subject gains release from the overlay of the frozen images that compose the ego. Drawing on Kojève's lectures on Hegel, he emphasizes that in the Hegelian dialectic the master and slave take their positions by virtue of the former's courage to confront death, while the latter remains slave to mirror images because he does not. Death is what exists in the void opened with the onset of the mirror stage; it exists in gaps, gaps that are analogous to the gaps in Saussaurean linguistic theory; it exists in the gap between the subject and the ego to which it is, as Lacan often says, eccentric. Since the true self, one's subjecthood, does not exist in any of the known categories that constitute life, it can exist only in confrontation with death, for as a kind of non-being the subject can know itself, be rid of all the mirror mirages of the ego, only when confronted with the blank emptiness of complete negation. This is what the blank face of the analyst is designed to elicit in the analysand, who thereby confronts his own being in relation to Death. Therapy becomes a spiritual journey and the therapist a spiritual healer who, «may accompany the patient to the ecstatic limit of the '*Thou art that*', in which is revealed to him the cipher of his mortal destiny, but it is not in our mere power as practitioners to bring him to that point where the real journey begins» (7). This «real journey» is a version of a Platonic journey from true opinion to Truth (Seminar II, 20), and it is begun not in the company of Socrates as therapist, but of Diotima, Socrates' teacher. As Lacan puts it in his enigmatic way, «Castration means that jouissance must be refused in the Symposium, so that it can be reached on the inverted ladder (*l'chelle renversée*) of the Law of desire.

In Lacan's formulation, death is not biological death, but is rather the primordial void that Lacan has posited as opening in the mirror stage. In line with this conception, and in accord with his revision of the Oedipus complex, he posits *Oedipus at Colonus* rather than *Oedipus Rex* as his founding literary text.[11] Because a resolution to Oedipal conflicts cannot be sought in life, it merges into a confrontation with death, a confrontation that distinguishes human from animal life in that it reveals man's «being for death» (104). Furthermore, Oedipus' entry into the grove outside of Athens, accompanied only by Athens' king, Theseus, represents in the play the spiritual founding of Athenian civilization. Lacan equates himself with this figure in having the figure of «Truth» say that Sophocles did not have Oedipus pursued by the «bleeding hounds» that followed Orestes, «certain as he was of finding with him at the sinister meeting at Colonus the hour of truth» (123). Having in this way spiritualized what for Freud is a psychological concomitant of a biological drive, Lacan redefines the therapist from a Freudian man of science to a wise man who combines Christ-like love with Hegelian knowledge:

> Of all the undertakings that have been proposed in this century, that of the psychoanalyst is perhaps the loftiest, because the undertaking of the psychoanalyst acts in our time as a mediator between the man of care and the subject of absolute knowledge (105).

But Lacan also revises Hegel, who equates absolute knowledge with consciousness. Criticizing Hegel for, like modern science, neglecting mystic states, he says that «the hour of truth must strike» elsewhere than in consciousness, so that the therapeutic mystic initiation also becomes part of a mystic historical unfolding (297).

This spiritualized conception of the death instinct relates back to Lacan's conception of the ego, which for Lacan is the source of all illness and guilt, and looks forward to Lacan's conception of language in which the spiritual and mystic motifs we have been discussing culminate. I cannot here go on to contrast Lacan's views on language to Freud's, but I want to conclude by clarifying in what sense the Freudian ego can be called autonomous,

[11] Shoshana Felman, in *Jacques Lacan and the Adventure of Insight* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1987), develops this in her last chapter.

and to dismantle a false dichotomy between an autonomous and reified ego and a true self that Lacan draws when he mockingly equates the ego to a speaking desk (131-35). This dichotomy also lies behind various post-modern accounts of the ego's social construction, which seem to render the Freudian ego naive. This dichotomy rests on a simplification and falsification of the autonomy that Freud attributes to the ego. His conception of autonomy does not mean that the ego is self-originating or all of a piece. As we have seen, Freud conceived of it as being composed initially of sediments of infantile identifications, and later of identifications and introjections remaining from lost love relationships (*Mourning and Melancholia*). Though it is thus formulated as a composite, it is not a collection of disjointed fragments. Freud's conception of ego autonomy emerges most clearly in analogy to the body, and to what I discussed earlier as proprioceptive senses. At conception, our bodies take form from the genetic materials of our parents, and they grow from the nutrients we imbibe in the maternal womb. As we are told from many quarters, and as Lacan points out, our adult bodies contain not a single cell of our infantile bodies, and our bodies seven years from this moment will contain not a single cell that now compose them. Nonetheless, that we generally remain recognizable to ourselves and others throughout these changes suggests that our bodies are constituted by an organizing principle, inscribed in our DNA, that arranges the matter we ingest from outside ourselves. But even if one's bodily appearance changes so radically as to render one unrecognizable to a friend from the deep past, the body's integrity is confirmed by the immune system. That is, though we may all eat roughly the same diet, and even if we ate the identical diet, our parts would not be interchangeable. The body recognizes organs that are foreign to it, and rejects them. That it does so suggests that one might reasonably talk about a body identity beyond the level of consciousness.[12]

Whether the unique organization and inner integration of our bodies on this biological level has any bearing on the uniqueness of each person's proprioceptive awareness obviously cannot be known, for we have no way of comparing our normal and general internal sense of ourselves to that of other persons. Since it is difficult even to communicate sensations of extreme pain or pleasure, it is clear that we have no way of speaking about the background noise of our body awareness. We do have such a sense however; it is with us every moment as we move around in the world avoiding collisions, seeking pleasure, adjusting the distance at which we stand in relation to those with whom we converse. That we may lose it under pathological conditions, and that it will dissolve in time, in no way challenges its reality in an ordinary sense. It is only from a religious or mystical perspective that the standards for reality and autonomy become more stringent. Similarly, on the psychic level the ego, initially composed of the sediments of diverse experiences, acquires a mode of taking in new ones. As it matures, it increasingly has power to select the encounters and experiences that will later contribute to its composition. To use Holland's apt formulation, it has in analogy to the proprioceptive sense and to the body's immune response, an identity theme.[13] That there can be variations on this theme, that it can unravel in time, does not thereby challenge its existence while it exists. That it is capable of different orchestrations, and that its different strands may come apart does not logically entail the claim that it is therefore, at bottom, or really, a disjointed collection of fragments. Its reality for the time it exists is as secure as the reality of a symphony while it is being played. The symphony cannot exist without the score that gives evidence of a composer, the musicians, the instruments, the hall, and all the vast network of social institutions that produce and maintain them. But the music is not reducible to all that is needed to generate it. Between the discord

[12] The fact that the immune system can be suppressed does not alter the force of the argument. The fact that an identity can be altered, or even that it may change in time, does not mean that it does not exist at a given time.

[13] See Holland, *Five Readers Reading* and *The I.* (complete reference).

the musicians create in tuning their instruments and the silence of the emptying hall, the music has its distinct reality. This kind of autonomy, andthis kind of identity, is sufficient to support a Freudian conception of the ego.

Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 83-88

«A Short Course in Psychology»: David Mamet's *House of Games* and the Popular Conception of Self-Help Psychology

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A pervasive trend in American publishing today is the self-help psychology book. Originally a peripheral realm of contemporary writing, these books have grown and increased in significance to the extent that they now account for a major proportion of the entire number of books published annually. These formulaic volumes not only reflect the popular cultural conception of defensive and neurotic behaviors, they dominate the non-fiction bestseller lists and their authors become objects of major media attention. The resulting audience for popular self-help psychology is larger than a purely literary or reading audience: not only do people buy the books, but newspaper and magazine articles are devoted to capsule summaries and highlights of the books; the self-help authors travel across the nation, appearing on radio talk shows, television interview programs, and signing copies at bookstores. Indeed, it has become a subgenre of the television talk show for an entire program to be devoted to a particular «issue» — namely, the psychological problem that is the focus of the self-help book: the program will open with actual «cases» (individuals with the particular malady in question) who tell their stories; then, the «expert» (the author of the self-help book who is on a cross-country publicity tour) appears to interpret the confessed behaviors of the previous guests and to present how his or her self-help volume will «cure» the particular malady. In the process of discussing the problems of Phil's or Oprah's guests, the expert self-help author will use the phrases, «in the book», «my book describes this in more detail, of course», «we call this in the book», and «later in the book» — all of this publicity is ostensibly to help the troubled patients on the television program: if thousands of additional troubled viewers in the television audience also purchased the book, why, the unfortunate malady would become a thing of the past. The purpose is asserted to be therapeutic: the self-help author is not really selling a mere book, the author is disseminating a message of hope and mental health — at long last, there is something you can do to break the cycle of your... (and here you may fill in the blank with the particular psychological disorder of your choice).

As early as 1929, there were sufficient indications for what would emerge in full force

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as our contemporary popular self-help psychology. Freud, in response to a query from Ernest Jones about an idea that Jones should edit a concise primer on Freud's writings for an American audience, replied: «Fundamentally, the whole thing is, being authentically American, quite repellent to me. One can rely on it: if such a source book were available, no American would ever go to the original. Perhaps he would not do so without it, but take his information from the muddiest of popular sources» (in Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Time*, 566). Central to Freud's description was the concept of «shortcutting» — finding a solution to a problem that does not involve a major commitment of time, energy, or personal attention.

And central to all popular psychological strategies is the notion of the «quick fix»: neurotic behavior may be cured easily by following a number of prescribed steps. These, typically, have been discovered «for the first time» in the particular self-help volume, but often sound suspiciously like the list of steps to recovery that are advocated within the Alcoholics Anonymous program. Indeed, a recent actual occurrence may be examined to perceive the enormous effect of popular self-help psychology on the American psyche. A few years ago, it was exposed in the press that Wade Boggs, the hardhitting Boston Red Sox infielder, was traveling on the road with the team in the company of a woman that he claimed was his wife — but the real Mrs. Boggs remained at home. Once exposed, the false Mrs. Boggs revealed her identity and the precise nature of her arrangement with the ballplayer. Essentially, she was a «kept woman», a mistress, and Boggs had been involved for several years in an adulterous extramarital affair.

In the wake of the revelation, it appeared that Boggs's status with the team was in question. One might have presumed, at the very least, that Boggs would enter personal or marital psychotherapy and that he would take public responsibility for his actions. But at his press conference (and at subsequent interviews), Boggs tearfully presented himself as the victim of the harassment perpetrated by his mistress. He was not at fault, he maintained. He was suffering from S.A.S., «Sexual Addiction Syndrome», a medical condition that afflicted his «normal» functioning. Wade Boggs did not do these terrible things: someone other than Wade Boggs did them — the pseudo-Wade Boggs suffering from «Sexual Addiction Syndrome». Since adultery is something that Wade Boggs would not do, the individual who did commit adultery was not Boggs but a sick, diseased, and distressed wreck of a man. Standing beside him was his wife and family. Boggs indicated that he was in the midst of recovery: it would be a difficult process, but he would take things one day at a time. His family commented that it was wonderful to have the «real» Wade Boggs back with them again. The response of the American public was overwhelming: give the guy a break! He's suffering, poor guy! He's working to fix his problems, for God's sake — leave him alone already. What is characteristic of this event is the tendency to transform actual behavior that is determined by choice (should I have an affair? imbibe illegal narcotics? murder a senator? steal from an elderly widow? jaywalk?, etc.) into a «syndrome» that is predetermined by mental illness and its associative medical metaphoric qualities. «Officer, it may *appear* that I jaywalked directly in front of you. But I would never do such an illegal and foolhardy thing: my illness made me do it. You see, I have TRADS, 'TRAffic Dysfunctional Syndrome', to a severe degree. As a result, I am inclined to take liberties with the traffic regulations that violate my own good conscience and sense of propriety. But (and you'll be glad to hear this, Officer), I'm getting help!»

Boggs's situation — he chose to commit adultery for an extended period possibly as a result of marital difficulties connected to a job that necessitated prolonged separation — would be characterized in a book as a condition that comes upon one like a disease. Every self-help book has a catchy title; in this case, the book that Wade Boggs might read could be titled, «The Casanova Complex», «The Don Juan Disorder», «The Romeo Ruin», «Men Who Love Too Much (and the Women Who Love Them)», «Addicted to

Love», or a variety of others. (It is my intention to have listed a series of imaginary titles but, for all I know, these may all be actual books that are available for purchase and perusal at your local bookstore.)

Each book presents a confessional admission of neurotic «guilt» (borrowed from religious conversion narratives): in one prototype, the book begins with anonymous «stories» of individuals who suffer from the disorder — «Chuck's Story», «Wilt's Story», «Wade's Story», «Warren's Story»: each case was «cured» as a result of applying the methods that will be described in the book. Or else, the self-help author describes how he or she was a fellow-sufferer until the transcendent solution to the problem was revealed for all time. The resemblance to religious conversion narratives is instructive: «I used to lie, cheat, violate the Ten Commandments, etc., but now I'm saved! People, let me tell you about Kingdom Come!» Past confession is followed by present revelation leading to testifying for the goodness of others — spreading the word, proselytizing. Each book adopts a structural model that encourages the metaphorical transformation of what was ethically problematic behavior, or else a neurotic character disorder, into a simplified medical or mental illness that also contains elements of religious apostasy. A process of dissociation follows in the text wherein the symptomatic behavior is split off as a disease. The individual ego is posited as being separate and distinct from the disease because «reality» is linked to «normalcy»; hence, aberrant behavior is «unreal», occurring in a dream-like realm of other-ness for which the individual is simply not responsible.

Then comes the core of the book: a «program» is presented to produce a cure. The distressed individual will be brought back to health through a regimen of repetitively compulsive steps. The more monotonous, the more simplistic, the more impractical, the more banal, the better — all of this is associated with qualities that the popular culture attributes to «science». Finally, the reformed sinner — the cured patient — «forgives» him-or-herself. «I've taken charge of my life; I can't do anything about the past: tomorrow is a new day — it's time to move on!» «Forgiving oneself» is crucial to the entire self-help movement: by abrogating personal responsibility, the program encourages a facile veneer of recovery based on a self-satisfied belief that anything one happens to do — no matter how terrible — is «O.K.» if one realizes that one did not knowingly do it.

David Mamet's film, *House of Games* (1987), dramatizes the American propensity to believe in the «easy» solution to complex psychological processes. The film focusses on the character of Margaret Ford, M.D., the author of the bestseller, *Driven: Compulsion and Obsession in Everyday Life*. Dr. Ford's self-help volume has made her a celebrity: when we first see her she is being approached in the street by a fan who wants her to sign a copy of «the book», the second copy this admirer has purchased. Nevertheless, Dr. Ford lacks the requisite insight into the condition to identify her own continued susceptibility to the neurotic behaviors she supposedly cured in her book. Early on in the film, she is asked by one of her patients, a female murderess, «Do you think that you're exempt?» (6), and Ford's negative answer is so mechanical and preoccupied that we recognize that the fantasy of being beyond symptom and disorder is very much Dr. Ford's problem.

The underlying conflict in Dr. Ford is revealed when she lunches with her mentor, Dr. Maria Littauer. She commits a parapraxis (verbal slip: one of several in the film), substituting the word «pressures» for «pleasures» in a sentence (8) while admiring Dr. Littauer's cigarette lighter. Her mentor responds: «Listen to me: Slow Down. Give *yourself* all those rewards you would like to have. You see a beautiful gold lighter, *buy* one for yourself» (8). It is emphasized repeatedly and ironically throughout the film that the cases of obsessive-compulsive behavior that Dr. Ford treats are identical to the supposedly «healthy» behavior she displays. For instance, in treating a compulsive gambler, Billy, she makes a note: «Compulsive succeeds in establishing a situation where he is out of control» (11) — this is exactly what Dr. Ford will do to herself later on in the film.

Under the auspices of her treatment of the compulsive gambler, Dr. Ford becomes involved self-destructively with Mike, a confidence man, ostensibly for the purpose of medical research. Dr. Littauer had advised her: «Take your own prescription. If you're driven to do a thing you don't like, do something *else*. What gives you satisfaction» (30). Ford believes she is spending time with Mike for the purpose of researching her next popular self-help book; in a word, she thinks she's detached. But Mike sees that there are fundamental similarities between what he does for a living (as a confidence man) and what she does (as a popular self-help expert): «The basic idea is this: it's called a 'confidence' game. Why? Because you give me your confidence? No. Because I give you *mine*. So what we have here, in addition to 'Adventures in Human Misery', is a short course in psychology» (34). Mamet here plays on the multiple meanings of «confidence» (trust, intelligence, certainty, faith, belief, discretion, support, secrecy, etc.) to establish similarities between the reductive «short course in psychology» that the Dr. Fords of the world offer to their readers and the equally cynical manipulative strategies that the Mikes of the world offer to their marks (victims).

Mamet emphasizes that the self-help popular psychologist and the degenerate con man are both confidence agents whose operations are based on the principal that «everybody gets something out of every transaction» (37). Mike tells Dr. Ford that he is able to «read» her — draw certain inferences from her physical and verbal responses — just as profoundly as she had drawn conclusions earlier about him. Despite their individual reliance on the jargon of their respective professions, they have much in common: «The things we want, we can do them or not do them, but we can't hide them» (38). He is candid about his profession but wonders whether she is equally so about hers: «I'm a con man, I'm a criminal. You don't have to delude yourself. You can call things what they are. You can call yourself what you are» (41). An earlier verbal slip by Dr. Ford had suggested what she might call herself: frustrated by her work with the female murderess, Dr. Ford complains to Dr. Littauer that her work is «a sham, it's a con game.» Then she substitutes «my father» for the phrase «her father» in the sentence: «all her life my father tells her she's a whore» (30). Mamet's artful doubling of the psychologist and the con man parallels his secondary doubling of the psychologist and her patients: by the end of the film, it becomes clear that Dr. Ford, like her female patient, is a murderer, and like her male patient, is an obsessive-compulsive personality. We, the viewers/readers, are able to see through the illusions that the characters maintain about their personalities: the film invites a psychoanalytic mode of interpretation, in which the statements and movements of the characters bear symptomatic significance and it is necessary to maintain a sense of one's own interpretive countertransference. This mode of meaning formation is in stark contrast to the facile and reductive misapprehensions that Dr. Ford, as a popular self-help psychotherapist, clings to regarding her professional and personal behavior.

Thinking she is assembling research data, Dr. Ford accompanies Mike on his rounds. Along the way, she sleeps with him in what she believes is someone else's hotel room that Mike has stolen; just before leaving the room, Dr. Ford steals a penknife that was lying on the hotel dresser. She follows Mike to one too many cons, however, because an undercover cop is apparently killed accidentally in the midst of a confidence job; to make things right, Dr. Ford bails Mike out of trouble by giving him eighty thousand dollars. Later, she is astonished to discover that Mike had created the facade of the undercover cop's death and what she had taken for reality was, in fact, a contrived structure conceived by Mike in order to con *her*. She confronts Mike: «I gave you my trust.» His response is: «Of *course*, you gave me your trust.» That's... you asked me what I *did* for a living... this is it» (67). It had never occurred to Dr. Ford that when she asked Mike, in his words, «to see how a true bad man plies his trade» (33), he would demonstrate his profession using her as his victim.

When Dr. Ford threatens to go the police, Mike answers: «And tell [the cops] *what*?

Whattayagonna tell 'em, Stud? That the author of the best-selling *Driven*, 'A Guide to Compulsive Behavior', gave her cash away to some con man? You see my point?» (67). His recommendation is that she accept her plight: «I'm sorry that it happened. But it *did*, and we've all got to live in an imperfect world» (68). In a sense, both Mike and Dr. Ford, being fraternal practitioners, embody analogous misapprehensions. Both represent the plight of the neurotic, according to Freud: «It is the analyst's task constantly to tear the patient out of his menacing illusion and to show him again and again that what he takes to be new real life is a reflection of the past» (*Outline of Psycho-Analysis*, 177). Dr. Ford mistook Mike's theatrical sting for «new real life» — in a sense, she believed she was truly living and exempt at the same time; she did not anticipate that Mike was «playing her», manipulating her in accordance with his street sense of her inner conflicts — conflicts he had surmised after reading her book or seeing one of her public relations appearances. Mike, on the other hand, believed that Dr. Ford's conflicts made her vulnerable to his con, but he did not anticipate that they made her dangerous. In a sense, Mike believed himself to be exempt from the emotional turbulence that seethed within Dr. Ford.

Mike certainly never expected that his confidence game would so enrage Dr. Ford that she would confront him, seeking vengeance. When she demands that he demean himself by begging for forgiveness, he responds antagonisticallhy: «Hey, fuck *you*. This is what you always *wanted* — you crooked bitch...you thief» (69). And indeed, Mike's words have struck a nerve: Dr. Ford did steal the penknife and she did identify with the murderous rage of her female patient — when defied and insulted, she shoots Mike with the gun he used to initially con her. Mike's defiance reveals his own uncontrollable fury: rather than continue to «play» Dr. Ford, he responds to her with hostile passion — thus insuring that the fate he most wanted to avoid (being killed) will occur. Mike and Dr. Ford are seen as kindred spirits: both smugly believing in their exemption, and both subject to the obsessive-compulsive behavior that is so self-destructive.

Mamet ends his film with a chilling ironic detail. We see Dr. Ford, as we first viewed her, signing a copy of her book for a fan. But this time, she adds the inscription: «Forgive yourself» (7O). We discover, as she lunches with Dr. Littauer, that she is applying her own popular self-help formulations to her personal situation: she has forgiven herself for murdering Mike. In the final scene, Dr. Ford notices a woman at the next table with a particularly desirable cigarette lighter. Recalling Dr. Littauer's suggestion that she «give [herself] all those rewards [she] would like to have» but ignoring her admonition to «buy» the lighter (8), Dr. Ford creates a diversion and steals the lighter from the woman at the next table. Her action also recalls an earlier statement that Mike made: «if you're fired from your job, take something, take a pencil, something, to assert yourself, take something from life» (41). Our last view of Dr. Ford is of her guilty pleasure as she uses the lighter she has just stolen. Her stealthy smile does not appear to be the smile of a person who has gained insight and control over her obsessive-compulsive behavior. Rather, she seems to reflect Mike's particular philosophy of life: «there's many sides to each of us: good blood,bad blood, and somehow all those parts have got to speak» (41). Dr. Ford, in stealing the lighter, is allowing her «bad blood... part... to speak.» She has rationalized and justified the particular choices she has made — kleptomania, fraud, deception, murder — and she has forgiven herself for her immoral behavior. She is the ideal beneficiary of popular self-help psychology, according to Mamet: nothing has changed, but the patient is pronounced «cured».

Mamet's darkly ironic presentation of popular culture reveals the extent to which popular self-help books are themselves a form of obsessive-compulsivity: their quasi-magical formulae for self-improvement insist on the repetition compulsion: when, according to Freud, compulsions to repeat «act in opposition to the pleasure principle, [they] give the appearance of some 'daemonic' force at work... 'the aim of all life is death'» (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 35, 38). These morbid and ritualistic bestselling volumes may be read and interpreted as

literary texts by a skilled confidence artist or interpreter: the popular resistance to substantive psychological analysis is embodied in a powerful and disturbing manner.

Now one last point, since I am about to end this paper: It may be observed that my remarks have focussed on Mamet's text without making the obligatory literary connections to Voltaire's *Candide*, Melville's *The Confidence Man*, Mark Twain's «The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg» and «The Mysterious Stranger» — to cite a mere few. Having overcome my denial and confronted the problem, I would like to confess that I suffer from S.C.A.M. — «Syndromic Citation Amnesia Morbidity» — a debilitating and crippling ailment that is triggered by the severe time limitations and spatial anxiety associated with international conferences and their published proceedings. I want you to know that I'm in treatment for my condition (I'm reading «A Short Course in Psychology»), I'm making real strides toward improvement, and I'm living life one day at a time. Most important of all, I forgive myself for my lapses — and I love all of you very much.

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 89-95

Object Choice and Interchangeability in Peter Hall's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

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For years, one of the givens students have been taught about *A Midsummer Night's Dream* involves the interchangeability, the sameness, of the pairs of lovers; that Demetrius and Lysander, spotted and inconstant men, could so easily switch their undying affections from one maiden to the other has been taken as, among other things, a sign of the lack of reason in love, winged Cupid painted blind. Ostensibly, the indistinguishability of the love-struck couples somehow symbolizes the eternal passion of youth, driven by it knows not what, that invests the beloved with an imagined valorization. Given this frame, the symmetry and philosophical underpinnings of the play dictate that Hermia and Helena, Lysander and Demetrius be equally attractive and not particularly individualized, so that the change in affections seems baseless, motivated by no discernible «human» or conscious force. Elijah Moshinsky's 1981 production, made for BBC television, violates this conventional equivalence by depicting a Helena who is much less attractive than Hermia (partly through costuming and make-up, partially through expressions, style, and deportment). This break from tradition throws a wrench into the expected critical machinery: if it seems likely for Demetrius to be attracted to Hermia rather than to Helena, what is the point of Helena's soliloquy that she is thought through Athens to be as fair as Hermia, or of the whole «love is blind» motif? Lysander and Demetrius' switch to loving Helena becomes not so much comic as grotesque; Demetrius also becomes somewhat ennobled when he returns (via magic, of course) to his original (bewitched?) love for Helena.

In psychoanalytic terms, Shakespeare's play dramatizes the relative ease with which unconscious influences determine choice of object by presenting the adult's bewildered blindness to the roots of love. But, as Freud pointed out, creative writers before psychoanalysis could not produce the reality of unconscious mechanisms unchanged. Through «poetic license» they filled in the gaps left over from their acute observations of apparent human behavior, explaining object-choice as love's irrationality or the caprice of forest spirits, whatever was a culturally acceptable theory. But how would an artist in the post-Freudian 1960's represent these elisions? I argue that Peter Hall's 1968 film version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is designed to challenge the mythic quality of object-choice. The two pairs of lovers, though differentiated physically, are of relatively equal attractiveness (Helen Mirren's blond, petite Hermia and Diana Rigg's tall, brunette Helena, coupled with David Warner's tall,

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lanky, fair Lysander and Michael Jayston's average-height, strong-jawed, dark haired Demetrius). But Hall alters the convention of the lovers' interchangeability through his repeated use of close-ups (the film was made under the assumption that it would be shown on television), believing the «close shot... seems to me the only way to scrutinize coolly the marked ambiguity of the text, and the cinema can do this better than the theatre». If audiences customarily read close-ups as invitations to think about the psychology of the characters, then in a play like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where the traditional interest «lies in the overall pattern and not in the characters» (Jorgens 65), close-ups highlight individuality, creating a tension between what is individual and what is universal in human psychology. What should the audience attend to? My analysis will explore how Hall's production in fact gains in richness by urging us to confront the possibility that Shakespeare's play employs both open-ended and closed views of character. Is Hall beckoning the audience to heal the split between Freudian explanations of object-choice and an individual's conscious choices, or to recognize that healing is impossible, and that human beings must live on two dimensions?

Hall's constant use of close-ups and jump-cuts effectively undercuts the old saw of the lovers' exchangeability and hence their existence as types rather than individual characters, essentially deconstructing the interchangeability tradition has bestowed on them. To illustrate Hall's method, I will briefly examine the mis-en-scene, shooting, and editing of a section of Act one, scene one. Left alone in the austere, gray palace of Theseus, Hermia and Lysander are dismal figures in a stark landscape that symbolizes the severity of Theseus' patriarchal law: that Hermia must marry the man her father chooses, become a nun, or «die the death» (I.i.65). As Jack Jorgens has noted, the «oppressive blandness» of the court combines with «harsh lighting, cruel close-ups, and unflattering angles» to highlight that even young lovers in Theseus' court are «without spontaneity, joy, grace, physical beauty» (54, 55). They must escape their confining environment — and do so first to the outside, where their plan is hatched, and then to the natural supernaturality of the woods. The transition between inside and outside comes in a quick jump cut to an exterior setting: Lysander rows Hermia in a boat on a pond surrounded by greenery while they continue discussing their fate. The swift change in location foreshadows Hall's method in the forest scenes: numerous shots, cuts, and unmatched juxtapositions combine in true dream fashion. Yet more «union in partition» (III.ii.210) occurs in this first sequence than the continuous flow of verse; a number of visual patterns anticipate those in the rest of the film.

When Lysander and Hermia first begin their exchange — «How now, my love! Why is your cheek so pale?» (I.i.128) — they are physically separated, Hermia to the left, Lysander to the right, with Theseus and Hippolyta's thrones between them, an obvious allusion to the Athenian law that threatens to divide them. After a line and shot each, Hermia runs to Lysander. Warner's Lysander towers over Mirren's Hermia and stands to her right as he iterates the beautiful, convention-ridden speech of how «The course of true love never did run smooth» (134). The rapid cutting from one face to another corresponds to the stychomythic lines and phrases, giving a sense of movement in stillness. Yet Warner's unanimated face and almost bored declamation somehow dampen the movement until he delivers the prophetic line, «So quick, bright things come to confusion» (149). The middle shot of the lovers, Hermia with her back slightly to the camera, Lysander with his hands on her shoulders, is solemn and static.

Then suddenly Hall jump cuts to the boat, the natural world, and illustrates visually the quick, bright confusion. The gray court is replaced by a high contrast landscape lit so that the water looks white and glaring in contrast to the darker woodlands in the background and green bank in the foreground; the lovers in light are partly framed in darkness. Ripples move across the lake. Hermia and Lysander's positions in the boat match their placement at the sequence's start and foreshadow their later arrangement with Hermia to the left and Lysander to the right as they sleep in the forest before Lysander's magic-induced inconstancy

(II.ii.). A bird cries as the boat drifts. The jump cut momentarily confuses the viewer, while the dialogue continues with the next shot.

The lovers, particularly Hermia, become more animated in this outside setting. Having abandoned their gray, enveloping cloaks, they seem to have partially shaken off the severe court as well. The dry grass glimpsed in the bottom of the boat as Hermia, hands pressed wistfully against her face, speaks of their «edict in destiny» (151) parallels the dry grass and twigs Puck scatters on the exhausted couples as they collapse at the end of Act III, each Jack reunited with his Jill. Hermia's hand position cupping her face will be echoed at several later notable points: in this same sequence, when she comforts Helena with a hand to Helena's face; by Oberon, when he argues with Titania and cups her face in an effort to control her («Tarry, rash wanton» [II.i.53]); and when the newly enraptured Lysander lays his hand upon the confused Helena's cheek. The laying on of hands produces no comfort in the first three acts.

As in the earlier part of the sequence, Hall continues to shoot back and forth between Hermia and Lysander at the end of poetic lines or at natural pauses in clause or phrase until the point when Hermia swears «By all the vows that ever men have broke» (175), an admittedly odd idea to swear by (recalling Juliet's chiding of Romeo for swearing by the inconstant moon); then Hall cuts to Lysander's reacting face, then mid-verse back to Hermia's. The sudden shift in rhythm foreshadows Lysander's own breaking of his vows.

Obvious jump cutting occurs in the lovers' discussion with Helena. First Lysander sees her, and a jump cut shows both sitting up in the boat, Hermia's arm quickly waving in greeting. Then the shot switches to Diana Rigg's Helena standing tall on the grass before Theseus' palace, her vertical slim line replicated by the parallel brickwork behind her which, as she moves forward, frames her like prison bars, just as she is imprisoned by doting love. Helena walks towards the lovers, who ostensibly are still on the boat, and Hermia joins her sitting on the grass in less than twenty seconds, a compression of the real time it would take her to reach the pond's edge and move more than half-way up the bank. Helena's speech continues in normal verse time. With Helena to the left and Hermia to the right, Hermia now takes Lysander's previous position, yet Helena too exceeds her in height. Helena is given visual prominence because she is delivering her first, love-sick speech and also because the height discrepancy foreshadows the later comparison between their statures — the «painted maypole» and the «dwarf» (III.ii.296, 328). As in the first two sections of the sequence, Hall continues to use jump cuts and seemingly intentionally mis-matched shots, as when in three consecutive shots Hermia's hand is down, then on Helena's cheek, then missing from the close-up of Helena, or when Hall shoots the two from one angle and then abruptly from almost the opposite angle, while varying their pose. All of these devices speed up the action, giving an impression of ritualized complaints intercut with young love's haste.

Tall and thin like Helena, to whom he later will swear undying love, Lysander appears first alone, and then quickly, snake-like, he lies down so that his head, facing us, is low between them, with Hermia to our left and Helena to our right, their backs partially to the camera. Ostensibly he has been put in the subordinate position — he must look up and turn his head to address each — yet his vertical line falling to the center obviously invokes the phallic male authority separating the two maids, prefiguring Helena's later speech to Hermia of their «school days friendship, childhood innocence». Heterosexual love does «rent [their] ancient love asunder» (III.ii.202, 215). Lysander seems to slither slightly and wiggle his head as he unfolds their plan to Helena, in contrast to the almost motionless, stoic manner we have seen him use with Hermia... perhaps foreshadowing his shift in love. Obvious jump cutting and mis-matching characterize the rest of the three-way conversation; Hermia's arm again is down, then up, then down. Hermia and Lysander appear more brightly lit and the melancholy Helena, in the foreground, darker.

At the close of the sequence, first Hermia and then Lysander depart rapidly out of the frame, with a barely perceptible swish, and Helena too stands quickly, with the aid of cutting, to begin her soliloquy, looking — for the first time in the film — directly into the camera. Both the quick movements and direct address will be adumbrated in the play's middle acts. Hall is easing our transition to the forest where the lovers, fairies, mechanicals, and even some in the film audience feel «wood within this wood» (II.i.193) until Oberon — male authority again — makes «all things... peace» (III.ii.377). Or does he? Hall's disjointed method problematizes that evocation of comic resolution and social reintegration.

Throughout the movie, Mirren portrays Hermia as more serious, less self-indulgent, than Helena — understandable since her situation is the graver. Anguish and distress are evident in her first scene before Theseus and in the exchange with Lysander about the course of true love. Once the setting shifts outside, away from the unnatural restrictions of Theseus' court, she appears prettier, less strained, more animated, seeming to take comfort in the «edict in destiny» (I.i.151) that teaches true lovers patience. She brightens considerably at Lysander's plan of escape, sounding happy when she waves to Helena. Hall's judicious exclusion of portions of the exchange between the two women makes Hermia appear more understanding towards her friend, and the elimination of «Before this time...» (204-08) speeds the action — quick bright things rush to confusion — and gives Hermia fewer complaints.

Spurned by Demetrius, Helena as portrayed by Rigg possesses a sly masochism, speaking her soliloquy directly to the camera and, through a series of jump cuts, Hall shows her traversing the grass, clinging onto phallic tree trunks, and generally seeming to take a certain pleasure in her pain. The same self-dramatizing occurs when she pursues Demetrius to the woods in II.i., where her protestations that Demetrius is «all the world» and her urging that he «spurn me, strike me,/Neglect me, lose me» (II.i.226, 205-06) elicits only his impatience and weariness. When he threatens her for committing herself «Into the hands of one that loves you not» (216), she replies, batting her lashes, «Your virtue is my privilege for that» (as opposed to «privilege. For that» as in the text), prompting him to roll his eyes in disgust. Rigg makes Helena's frantic chasing of Demetrius and her melodramatic poses comically pathetic; she undercuts the high sentiment of her decree «to die upon the hand I love so well» by wiping her nose with the back of her muddy hand and sniffling away; Oberon's «Fare thee well, nymph» (245) seems laughably misapplied.

In contrast to Helena, Hermia (like Lysander) has been played as relatively controlled and self-contained. So too when she and Lysander lose their way in the woods, she quite gently persuades him to «Lie further off» (II.ii.44). As they take their separate places on the ground, the camera shifts into soft, gauzy focus, though the picture of blissful young love is almost immediately blurred by Lysander's unintentional falling down, as if into a hole — an obvious foreshadowing of the trouble to come. Then, through the gaze of Puck, the lovers' «bed» becomes «the dank and dirty ground» (75). Giving up on her «fond chase» of Demetrius, Helena speaks once more to the camera as she bemoans her monstrous face, and when she spies Lysander, she again includes the camera/audience in her «On the ground!» (100) Her puzzled reaction to Lysander's declaration of love soon returns to her accustomed self-pity. She exits in a stumbling huff, quickly followed by her newly avowed lover. At this point, Hermia wakens in fear from her portentous nightmare. Cowering on the ground in long-shot, her position mirrors that of Titania a scene later when, sitting on the ground, she receives her «translated» lover, Bottom. The emptiness caused by the departing beastly Lysander of Hermia's dream is filled in the corresponding scene with beastliness indeed. Left alone with her nightmare, Hermia cringes against the tree, and only in closing — «Either death or you I'll find immediately» (156) — does she look into the camera. Thus far, Helena and Hermia's relationships with the audience/camera are quite different: Helena woos it, flirts with it, appeals to it, whereas Hermia acknowledges it only in fear. Hall effectively transfers the special actor-audience relationship of soliloquy

to the screen. Because we have been privy to far fewer of Hermia's machinations, we tend to see her situation as less self-inflicted and thereby potentially graver.

The young women continue to show far more individuality than the men. In the next scene, involving two, three, then all four lovers, Helena and Hermia exhibit the patterns established earlier: Helena wheedles and pleads, while Hermia first denies her situation and then alternately crumbles and angers in the face of Lysander's inconstancy. As before Helena chided Demetrius for his callous treatment of her, she here berates Lysander, then Demetrius, then finally Hermia for exploiting her misery. The close-ups allow the audience to participate in — even to concentrate on (Eidsvick 244) — the confusion quite effectively, as when the scoffing Demetrius parries Lysander's protestations of devotion with «yonder is thy dear» (II.ii.176) as Hermia, covered with mud but skipping joyfully at the sight/sound of Lysander, runs straight at him and the camera. Helena's nostalgic recollections of the two girls' days of childhood innocence and friendship — a beautiful set piece — is blocked in the same pose and Helena and Hermia earlier held on the river banks in I.i. Here, obviously, the sunlight of young love has turned to indeterminate night, the young, defiant lovers to grime-spattered, confused pawns (one wonders in whose game).

In the scope of Hall's production, it seems psychologically valid that Helena turn first against Hermia, and then Hermia finally, once she has perceived her loss, against Helena. On stage it sometimes seems stereotypically misogynistic for Helena and Hermia to blame each other rather than their inconstant men: after all, women never trust other women. Given the close-ups, we better understand how Helena misinterprets Hermia's joining in a confederacy against her; Lysander's unwelcome attention and then Demetrius' welcome, though unexpected, avowals of love render her speechless and hurt. Hermia's confusion seems more poignant because of the situation's seeming incredibility, which is underlined by a significant word change Hall makes from the text. To Lysander's assertion «Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so», she replies «... I am as fair now as I was erewhile./ Since night you loved me; yet since night you left me./ Why, then you left me — O the gods forbid! — / In earnest, shall I say?» (III.ii.274-77) Aside from the obvious irony that, muddy and disheveled, she is scarcely as fair as she was, Hall has changed the «loved» to «left»: «Since night you *left* me». When Hermia repeats «left» three times in two lines, each time we see a heavier sense of it weigh her down. This, along with Lysander's matter of fact avowal of hatred, makes her turning to attack Helena more understandable.

And Helena, as played by Rigg, protesting coyly and running for protection between the two men with their drawn and wavering swords, and finally up a tree (in a sense retreating to the phallus, slender and shaky though it be), might well provoke Hermia's anger. We feel her genuine anguish when she asks if Helena is leaving her heart with Lysander, and her brief happiness when told Helena still loves Demetrius. But that is quickly crushed by Lysander's insults: «Get you gone, you dwarf;/ You minimus, of hind'ring knotgrass made;/ You bead, you acorn!» (328-30) Each insult beats her a step backwards, and the hurt and despair reflected in her face stifle the laughter the words often evoke on stage. When, finally left alone, she speaks to the camera «I am amazed, and know not what to say» (344), we feel empathy for her confusion. Puck's laughter at the «sport» rings hollow. A bit later, when Puck puts each lover to sleep at the scene's end, only Hermia mentions her beloved: «Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!» (477) are her last words, generous in the circumstances.

Aside from a few lines in the wake-up scene, neither Hermia nor Helena speaks in the rest of the play, nor in the film — perhaps symbolizing the return of male-dominated order with the reintegration of the couples into society through marriage. In the last act, Demetrius speaks more, mostly exchanging quips with Theseus about the mechanics' dreadful acting. The camera does flash occasionally on the happy couples, placed on each side of Theseus and Hippolyta, and even to a casual eye Demetrius and Helena are more cheerful

and lively than Lysander and Hermia. Although both couples laugh at times at the actors' attempts, Helena is more inclined to laugh than Hermia, while Demetrius, in spite of a pruning of his lines, makes steady fun of the players with the Duke; Lysander's jibes have been excised so that he says very little. When the Prologue explains that Pyramus and Thisbe thought «no scorn/ To meet at Ninus' tomb» (V.i.134-35), Hall jump cuts to Hermia looking worried (perhaps remembering her original fearlessness in meeting Lysander in the woods). When Wall confuses «right and sinister» (163), the camera cuts to Helena laughing and Demetrius rolling his eyes, then cuts to crestfallen Wall, who is cheered by the cut to Hermia's anxious applause of encouragement. Similarly, when Lion «roars» (very softly), Hall cuts to Helena laughing and covering her mouth with her hand, then cuts to Lion gasping and covering his mouth in the same way, and cuts again to Hermia drawing back in fear. Even Lysander is shown as being sympathetic when, at Hippolyta's words that she hopes Thisbe will be brief, he encourages the offended Thisbe with, «She has spied him already with those sweet eyes» (323-24), delivering the lines seriously and gently. Hal's film makes clear that Hermia and Lysander have been more affected by their night in the woods, more shaken by their dream, which is only fitting since they had the most at stake. In a sense, Helena and Demetrius have been brought together by the night's magic — Demetrius, though returned to his «natural taste» (IV.i.77), is, after all, still enchanted — so their high spirits reign. Only Hermia and Lysander seem aware of the dark side of their adventure, bungled yet evident in «Pyramus and Thisbe».

Geared for intimate perusal of the characters rather than for the obvious types or patterns that stand out in the theatre, Hall's film gives *A Midsummer Night's Dream* a solemn, wrenching intensity staged comedies seldom achieve. The film's ending resists the closure that traditional performances of the play use to make good Puck's ingenuous epilogue. Hall does not mend Shakespeare's divisions with enchantment or fate but instead foregrounds these divisions as an essential component of individuality. Difference cannot be elided with a magic potion or the promised fusion of love.

Though I am not a Lacanian, it seems to me that Hall is working towards a Lacanian perspective on object choice. Indeed, the camera plays the part of a Lacanian analyst who foreswears direct interpretation by punctuating (44) the discourse of the analysand in order to highlight the elisions, discrepancies, and contradictions inserted into the *je's parole* by the *Autre(A)*, the Other. Hall preserves Shakespeare's text but uses the media of the camera and editing machine to undercut what Puck promises to «mend» together — a comforting, ego-building philosophy of love.

Perhaps a Lacanian analysis of the film would prove useful, but here I'm interested in praxis: the camera can punctuate the discourse of the text whether the filmmaker intends to or not. Ideally, Hall should let the voice of the Other speak in Shakespeare's text, but, as Lacan warns us, transference is everything and everywhere. Is it even possible to distinguish Hall's Other's voice from Shakespeare's Other's voice? Would we want to? Perhaps watching Shakespeare reenacted is compelling because we cannot prevent our being implicated in the text. Playwright, actor, filmaker, audience — all benefit because we are implicated, because we cannot filter out what we have contributed to our apprehension of the play. We are, thus, all in love, all enchanted, all asses.

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 97-101

The Love of Reading: «A Postcard from the Volcano» (*)

NICHOLAS ROYLE (**)

Twenty minutes is short.[1] But it may be long enough to read a postcard, or to read *some* of a postcard, and to say something about shortness or brevity — a sense of brevity which is associated with the discourse of the postcard, but also with what Freud called — in his suitably brief essay on that subject — «transience». The focus, then, is Wallace Stevens's «A Postcard from the Volcano» (1936) and Freud's 1916 essay «On Transience», in relation to the love of reading. The «love of reading» which I wish to propose here is linked in some respects with the work of Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, and in particular his book (which I take to be one of the most provoking readings of Freud in the past ten years), *The Freudian Subject* (1982; trans. 1988). But it also touches on the work of speakers at the present Conference, among others Kathleen Woodward and Anne Wyatt-Brown.

Let us try to read this postcard:

> Children picking up our bones
> Will never know that these were once
> As quick as foxes on the hill;
>
> And that in autumn, when the grapes
> Made sharp air sharper by their smell
> These had a being, breathing frost;
>
> And least will guess that with our bones
> We left much more, left what still is
> The look of things, left what we felt
>
> At what we saw. The spring clouds blow
> Above the shuttered mansion-house,
> Beyond our gate and the windy sky

(*) I would like to record my indebtedness to Andrew Bennett and J. Hillis Miller for their stimulating comments and suggestions in earlier discussions of Stevens's poem, at the University of Tampere, Finland, in 1991.

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[1] In keeping with its focus on brevity and transience, this paper is presented here in what may be called its original spoken form.

Cries out a literate despair.
We knew for long the mansion's look
And what we said of it became

A part of what it is... Children,
Still weaving budded aureoles,
Will speak our speech and never know,

Will say of the mansion that it seems
As if he that lived there left behind
A spirit storming in blank walls,

A dirty house in a gutted world,
A tatter of shadows peaked to white,
Smeared with the gold of the opulent sun.

I hope you will forgive the postcard-like style of my remarks regarding this amazing poem. «A Postcard from the Volcano» is about what remains, about transience and what remains of us after we die. This concern is inscribed in the figure of the mansion-house: this «mansion» is inhabited, etymologically and otherwise, by a sense of the Latin *manere*, «to remain», «to stay». Stevens's poem would seem to constitute a response to Wordsworth's question, in Book 5 of *The Prelude* (1805):

Oh, why hath not the mind
Some element to stamp her image on
In nature somewhat nearer to her own?
Why, gifted with such powers to send abroad
Her spirit, must it lodge in shrines so frail? (44-8)

Why must the powers of human expression be constrained and confined by something as transient and insubstantial as the written or printed word? Stevens's poem is also about a «spirit» — «A spirit storming in blank walls» — and about the frailty of «shrines», in other words the frailty of writing or books. The frail shrine of Stevens's poem is a postcard. More particularly, however, the poem implies — in some respects apparently *against* Wordsworth — that the mind does have «Some element to stamp her image on», that the mind can in some sense stamp a postcard, that there is the stamping and sending abroad of a postcard, that «nature» in fact might itself be described as a postcard-effect. All of these things would be true, it may be added, even though this postcard does not reach its destination, indeed cannot be read, remains still to be read. We have been sent a postcard from a hot place, a volcano, and we will never be through with reading it, or with being read by it.

When we love we love till death: «A Postcard from the Volcano» is a love-poem. But this love-poem — like any other, an uncanny postcard — has a strikingly posthumous character. It is prosopopoeia in the strong sense — a postcard from the dead. Like Samuel Beckett's last published work, «what is the word», Wallace Stevens's poem is intimately concerned with the sensuous and phenomenal, with what Beckett calls «this this» — «seeing all this... this this here». «A Postcard» is about «this this» — about «these» bones, the «sharp air» of autumn, «the look of things». It is about what we touch, smell, feel, hear and see. It is about the quickness of «being» («As quick as foxes on the hill») — both the quickness of being alive and the speed, brevity, transience of life. «A Postcard from the Volcano» is an affirmative proclamation concerning what remains: it states that after our deaths we will have left behind not only «our bones» but «left much more, left what

still is / The look of things, left what we felt / At what we saw». The poem, in other words, proposes a logic of survival, a sense in which future generations (the «children» of this poem) will be affected, inhabited, inscribed by our feelings and our speech. This is not simply a matter of what is transmitted from one generation to the next in genetic, psychological or ideological terms. Rather, «A Postcard from the Volcano» presents the «storming» affirmation of a radical unconscious, a sense of what is not known, of what one «will never know». This unconscious cannot be straightforwardly «enshrined» (to adopt Wordsworth's term) even if it does have to do with fiction, with a certain literariness.

What can never be known — this curious «unconscious» — incorporates the reader. That is to say, the logic of survival traced here extends beyond the poem itself and includes the space of reading, the experience of being a reader. In this way it draws any reading of this postcard into being a part of itself, «a part of what it is». What is so enigmatic but inevitable here is that we are at once identified with the «we» of the poem and with the «children». Like the children in the poem who pick up the bones of the dead, we pick up this postcard from the dead. Insofar as we are figured as both the «we» of the poem and the «children», it would seem that there is no such thing as «our speech», our own speech, our own perceptions and feelings. As «children», the «we» of the poem (and «we» its readers) are in turn affected, inhabited, inscribed by what we will «never know». The postcard logic of this unconscious is a work of survival which traverses *us*, traverses every speaker, every writer or reader. This inscription and traversal cannot be assimilated to a logic of linear, transgenerational links between unitary subjects: rather it concerns a kind of haunting and apocalyptic fictionality. This is figured by the closing lines of the poem — among the strangest in Stevens's work, I think — in which we read that these children «will speak our speech and never know», but *still* they «Will say of the mansion that it seems...» The children will speak without knowing; they will speak what they will never know. The last six lines present the eerie, apocalyptic drama of «A spirit storming in blank walls, / A dirty house in a gutted world». These last six lines present us with a phantasmagoric, fictive «speech» — a speech which is nevertheless never known. Prosopopoeia — a voice from the dead — is here doubled: this posthumous postcard ends with the eerie evocation of a phantomatic «tatter», a «peaked» volcanic «spirit» which has itself been created, woven, budded or brought forth within a speech that its speakers will «never know». The figure brought forth in the last six lines of this poem has no place to be — except in this unconscious speech, this fiction and phantasmagoria of «blank walls» and «a gutted world, /... / Smeared with the gold of the opulent sun» — yet at the same time these lines fold in, double back, haunt what has gone before, in such a way as to imply that this doubling and haunting has constitutive force. There is no speech which is not inscribed by the posthumous. But this irrevocably duplicitous posthumous speech is not the voicing of something that is simply nihilistic, abject or morbid. Its affirmative, unceasing, indeed beautiful qualities are indicated by a sense of what is *still* happening — a sense of the children «Still weaving budded aureoles».[2]

What does all this suggest about the love of reading? Stevens's poem seems to be proposing that there is no perception, no feeling, no speech or writing which is not phantomized, brought forth by a kind of radically fictional, literary unconscious. Reading is doubled, haunted, inscribed by postcard-effects of what we will «never know». We can never be at one with ourselves, with our speech or our feelings. In this respect the poem suggests a notion of the love of reading irreducible to any mastery, possession or authority. It suggests

[2] The various kinds of doubling of «we» and the «children» are evoked in the very figure of an aureole, as a halo or ring of light surrounding a figure, doubling its outline. The most apposite form of the aureole in this context would perhaps be the *vesica piscis*, «a halo in the form of two circular arcs each (properly) passing through the other's centre, enclosing the whole figure» (*Chambers*).

a theory of reading opposed to the very equation of identity-as-authority, at odds with everything in our cultures which upholds the identity and authority of the self and the identity and authority of its speech.[3]

It suggests finally, I think, something more particular about the love of reading in relation to death. In her book *Aging and Its Discontents: Freud and Other Fictions* (1991), Kathleen Woodward explores the opposition between being «old» and being «young». She seeks to question and disturb among other things the privileging of «youth» that is a theoretical basis of Freud's thought and consequently of psychoanalysis in general. «But», she says, «to completely rewrite the ideology of the aging body in the West, we would have to rewrite the meaning of death. And this we are not likely to do easily» (19). I am not sure about «the meaning of death». To the extent that «A Postcard from the Volcano» works with an opposition of being young (being «children») and being old (being those who «knew for long the mansion's look», being associated with what is «peaked» or in tatters), it also reverses, doubles, splits and dissolves this opposition. Unconscious parents, these children bring us forth, they «speak our speech», they are our precursors, our creators. The children are at once the future and they are ourselves, they *are* «we». How might this affect our thinking about what Woodward calls «the meaning of death»?

In his essay «On Transience» Freud writes:

> A time may indeed come when the pictures and statues which we admire today will crumble to dust, or a race of men may follow us who no longer understand the works of our poets and thinkers, or a geological epoch may even arrive when all animate life upon the earth ceases; but since the value of all this beauty and perfection is only determined by its significance for our own emotional lives, it has no need to survive us and is therefore independent of absolute duration. (288)

Freud goes on to assert that all of this is «incontestable» (288). It seems to me, however, to be profoundly questionable in a number of respects, and not only from the late twentieth-century ecological and political perspective of living on a planet the beauties and very existence of which are imperilled in ways that Freud was simply unable to foresee. Times have moved on since «On Transience». Above all this passage from «On Transience» presents a classic instance of what might be called the Freudian egotistical sublime: the transience of «all this beauty and perfection» need be conceived and theorized only in terms of «our own emotional lives» and (as Freud's essay goes on to suggest) in terms of our own «mourning» for its anticipated loss. It is in this essay too, we may recall, that Freud makes the remarkable corollary claim that «Mourning... however painful it may be, comes to a spontaneous end» (290). It is not just that Freud's conception of mourning is, as Kathleen Woodward points out, rigidly teleological, that it involves what she describes as «a peculiar kind of piety, an almost ethical injunction to kill the dead and to adjust ourselves to 'reality'» (116). It is also a matter (I would like to suggest) of an exhumation of the very grounds of mourning, especially insofar as mourning is construed as «merely» supplementary to the identity and experience of the subject. In this respect we could suggest that «A Postcard from the Volcano» erupts, disrupts, burns up every notion of «love» or of «mourning» or of «the meaning of death» that would be formulated on the basis of a self-identical subject. Stevens's poem would seem to correspond with Borch-Jacobsen's argument that the Freudian subject is a fiction, that Freud's contention that «dreams are completely egoistic» is a fiction, that there is no ego, no subject, prior to a relation to otherness, and thus there is no ego, no subject, except in fictive dream, phanstasmagoria, apocalyptic drama. Or, as Borch-Jacobsen puts it in a more recent essay: «'I am death', 'I am the other'... 'I am not myself',

[3] The term «identity as authority» is from Leo Bersani: see *The Culture of Redemption*, 3.

'I am not subject'» («The Freudian Subject, from Politics to Ethics», 76). As children or as post-children — «picking up... bones», «breathing frost», «weaving budded aureoles» — we *are* death: such would be the «storming» affirmation, the condition of a love of reading.

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 103-115

L'Amour et la Mémoire: A Polymorphous-Perverse Love Song

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L'Amour et la mémoire or *Love and Memory* (Éditions surréalistes 1931), a major poetic text by Salvador Dalí, is, indeed, a love song to Gala Eluard, who shared Dalí's life since 1930. It constitutes an attempt on Dalí's part to give form to a psychosexual self-portrait, and thereby define in broad outline his process of liberation from the exigencies of the super-ego, as well as from all other affective ties connected to his ealier life. The poem reflects themes underlying the paintings done since 1929, and, together with some of his theoretical texts, it heralds his adoption of infantile sexuality in its anal and oral pregential disposition both as an aesthetic of libidinal gratification and as a philosophical stance. My contention is that Freud's thought exists in it (as indeed in most of Dalí's works in these years) as a sub-text, and reflects Dalí's knowledge of some of Freud's works that, by that time, had already been translated into French.[1] It should be noted that, while Dalí's system of motifs in his art and writing is based on Freudian insights, my commentary regarding the poem and the related art works does not involve an application of Freudian analysis, as much as it focuses on Dalí's own conscious elaboration of his psychosexual material. This elaboration is generally far from simple, with Dalí at times reading Freud against the grain and forming his own pseudo-Freudian or, at times, anti-Freudian elaborations.

What might also be discerned in Dalí's art and writing in the period leading to *Love and Memory* is a growing tendency to adopt infantile sexuality in its anal and oral pregential disposition both as a structuring principle underlying an aesthetic of libidinal gratification and as a philosophical stance. This general program is intrinsically related to the manner in which he perceived his own sexual and emotional situation at a time in which two momentous events took place — the meeting with Gala Eluard and his banishment from his father's house. While Dalí's own autobiographies are notoriously inaccurate and misleading, it is still possible to glean from them some pertinent information regarding his state of mind at the time. In *Secret Life* (1942), for instance, he describes the beginning of his relationship

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[1] Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* undoubtedly had a seminal influence on Dalí's thought since the early Madrid days. However, by 1930 Dalí would have read a few other of Freud's works that had already been translated into French: *Three Essays*, trans. 1923; *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. 1927; *Leonardo*, trans. 1927; *The Ego and the Id*, trans. 1927. To these works might be added also Otto Rank's *The Trauma of Birth* (trans. 1928).

with Gala as being «marked by permanent character of diseased abnormality, and by very distinct and pronounced psychopathological symptoms», as well as by «regression to the infantile period».[2] There might be some exaggeration in these claims, which were part of Dalí's retrospective views regarding this earlier period. We may assume, however, that these had also some basis in reality, and that Dalí's intuition regarding his own mental situation — in the early 1930s as much as in the early 1940s, when he wrote *The Secret Life* — was, at least partially, based on his own faithful observation of his disturbed emotional and sexual make-up. There is no question, however, as to its having been provoked also by his reading of Freud. Or, to put it differently, Dalí's reading of Freud may have endowed with a somewhat more distinct form and meaning what was otherwise felt to be a chaotic pattern of desires, anxieties, and all kinds of conflicting claims, of which Dalí was only partially conscious. Thus we cannot expect Dalí's works or writings of the early 1930s to divulge a fully consistent psychoanalytic pattern, although the basic attitude is coherent enough.

Freudian motifs in the 1929 works (such as, for instance, *The Illuminated Pleasures*) appear, at first, to be quite obvious — too obvious, at times. This, however, does not make the paintings themselves any less enigmatic, since, consideration of their full ramifications might end up ultimately by defying any pat symbolical schemes. It is often the combination or permutations of the symbols which endow them with a specific significance, or, at least, add another layer of meaning by introducing some form of ambiguity or duality. At times, indeed, he appears to adopt procedures that parallel dream mechanisms such as displacement or condensation. In other words, the context in which the symbols are placed may transform their character or identity, with these symbols forming an intricate mesh of connections — both within the painting and in relation to other paintings executed at the time — which, indeed, transcends, in the more successful instances, the more obvious psychoanalytical reading of the paintings. These psychosexual Oedipal «dramas» are heavily laden with quite explicit symbolic representations referring to the threat of castration, masturbation, shame and guilt. The lion's head appearing in a great many of these paintings — in *Accommodations of Desire*, for instance — seems to represent desire, but it is also associated with the father in his role of a punishing super-ego and a castrating agent. The father is alternately shown also as a bearded man (*Illuminated Pleasures*), or, in later paintings, as a William Tell figure. The culprit is the son who dares indulge in incestuous wishes, but, consequently, finds a safer recourse in masturbation, often symbolized by a large hand (*The Hand or Less remords de conscience*). This results in a sense of shame embodied by the figure of a young man hiding his face in his hand or resting his head on his father's shoulder (*Illuminated Pleasures, Accommodations of Desire*). The crux, however, is the sexual ambiguity thus perceived regarding the «protagonists» — human or non-human — which is not at all apparent in a reading that defines the Oedipal context in terms of clearly separate sexual identities. Thus the father may possess female attributes (*The Lugubrious Game*), while the woman with her sharp and threatening teeth — often presented in the form a jug, a common enough Freudian symbol for the female — appears to be a castrating agent too. The sense of threat is implied even where the mouth remains closed, as in *The Great Masturbator*. The threat lies in the close proximity of the mouth to the male genitalia — which seems

[2] Salvador Dalí, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, trans. Haakon M. Chevalier, (London: Vision Press, 1973), pp. 233. His autobiographies are full of childhood memories, augmented by anecdotes recounted by other members of his family, attesting to his marked infantilism, and we can conjure up an image of a precocious child who was pampered by his doting parents. He says of his mother that she «adored me with a love so whole and so proud that she could not be wrong — my wickedness, too, must be something marvelous!» (*Secret Life* 153). Her death in 1921 left him to fend off by himself. And «wicked» he was — if we are to believe only a small part of what he himself tells us — with his wild and perverse antics, his spiteful bed-wetting habit until his seventh or eighth year, his playful hiding of his stools around the house.

already atrophied or mutilated — with an obvious reference to an act of fellatio. The bisexual nature of both parents seems to be paralleled by the bisexual dimension underlying the young «masturbator» himself. We may perceive this quality in Dalí's various self-images as represented in these works. To list some of the more obvious ones, the sculpture of a young man with and enormous hand found in *Lugubrious Game* clearly displays a female breast; the young man depicted in some of the «family» groups — together with the woman-jug, father, or lion — combines the features of a young woman, adorned with long hair or braids, with a manly mustache (*Illuminated Pleasures*). In fact, the «masturbator» image itself, with is long eye-lids and the colorful plumage cropping out of its cheek, exhibits a very pronounced female quality too.

What we may perceive — and the works of 1929-30, as we have seen, offer ample evidence — is an emotional state characterized by anxiety and guilt, associated with what is basically an Oedipal situation. The «psychic reality» (to use Freud's concept) defined by these works (Dalí himself may not have known all these terms at the time) implies lack of sexual maturity characterized by an unintegrated genital phase, or a not fully-dissolved Oedipal complex, bound up with auto-erotic and pregenital aims. I have pointed to the prevalence in these works of a sense of guilt or mortification associated with the «lugubrious game», with hints regarding anal eroticism and indeterminate sexual identity. To these might be added castration anxieties associated with a combined parental figure — the «mother» with the penis (the «phallic woman») or the «father» with breasts. The latter also gives rise to anxieties related to fantasies of incorporation regarding the father's penis which are given a threatening cannibalistic interpretation.

It would be difficult to tell to what extent Dalí reproduces in these works anxieties, frustrations and phobias associated with recollected childhood experiences or impressions, and to what extent these are fantasies reflecting his «psychic reality». If these are, indeed, fantasies, they do not appear to be truly pleasurable, in the sense alluded to by Freud in «The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming» (1908), or in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, where fantasies are defined as «forms in which repressed libidinal components find satisfaction».[3] However, also applicable in Dalí's case would be Freud's assertion that, «even under the dominance of the pleasure principle, there are ways and means enough of making what is in itself unpleasurable into a subject to be recollected and worked over in the mind», with this accomplished through the repetition of repressed material as a «contemporary experience».[4] Be it as it may, Dalí's whole oeuvre in the early 1930s reveals a growing tendency to tap pleasure directly at its sources by liberating himself from an anxiety-ridden «psychic reality» and returning to the «land of treasures» and the «golden ages» found, as he argues in «L'Ane pourri», behind the «ignominious scatological simulacra» (*Oui 1* 159).[5] Or, in other words, by regressing to the paradisiacal situation of pregenital sexuality.

The theory underlying this project is based on two basic notions: perversion and the regression of the libido. The word «perversion» or the verb «pervert», commonly perceived in the sense of diverting or turning away from what is generally acceptable as normal or morally right, began appearing in these years with increasing frequency in his writings and public statements. In his artice «Objects surréalistes» (1931) Dalí declared that man's «true spiritual culture» was a function of his «capacity for percerting his thought» (*Oui 1* 179). Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905) seems to have had the greatest

[3] Sigmound Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Trans. and Revised by James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 1986), p. 92.

[4] Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Trans. and Newly Edited by James Strachey (New York: Liveright, 1970), pp. 11-12.

[5] The most easily accessible collections of Dalí's writing, to which I have made my references, are Salvador Dalí, *Oui 1. La révolution paranoiaque-critique* and *Oui 2. L'archangélisme scientifique* (Paris: Edition Denoel/Gonthier, 1972).

impact on Dalí with respectto perversion, with traces of this influence found everywhere in his writings of the early 1930s. Dalí did not have to adopt or even condone the most pathological forms of perversion in order to concur with Freud's assertion, regarding such perversions, that «the sexual instinct goes to asthonishing lengths in successfully overriding the resistances of shame, disgust, horror or pain», and that the mental work in such cases is «the equivalent of an idealization of the instinct» (*Three Essays* 27). Dalí, indeed, often appears to echo Freud's claim that the «omnipotence of love» is best proven by such perversions, or that the «highest and the lowest are always closest to each other in the sphere of sexuality» (27-8).

Of particular importance for Dalí are Freud's observations that the disposition to perversion is to be found, at least partially, in «what passes as the normal constitution»; that there is in everyone «something innate lying behind the perversions» (37), and, most importantly, that it is only in children that such a constitution, «containing the germs of all the perversions», is to be found. Or, as Freud expressed it more conclusively in his *Introductory Lectures to Psychanalysis*, «perverse sexuality is nothing else than a magnified infantile sexuality split up into its separate impulses».[6] Recognizing in himself a disposition to perversion,[7] Dalí saw in infantile sexuality, especially in its pregenital phase,[8] a true model for a pursuit of pleasure that is both sexual and normal, and, moreover, free of the «mental dams» of «disgust, shame and morality». These mental dams, as pointed out by Freud, are responsible for the «diversion of sexual instinctual forces from sexual aims» which underlies both cultural achievement and the development of the individual (*Three Essays* 44). However, whereas Freud cautiously noted that, while we may tend to view the construction of these dams as dependent upon education, «in reality this development is organically determined and fixed by heredity» (43),[9] Dalí tended to see these developments more in terms of strictures and interdictions imposed by any kind of authority, social, religious or familial.

Following Freud, Dalí started viewing these interdictions as inextricably related to the notion of the super-ego or the ego ideal, especially as developed by Freud in *The Ego and the Id*.[10] And it is Freud's notion of regression and the schemata proposed by him regarding the development of the libido, as well as the dissolution of the Oedipus complex and the formation of the super-ego, that served Dalí as theoretical justification for his

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[6] Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Trans. and Edited by James Strachey (New York: Norton, Liveright Paperback, 1970), pp. 311.

[7] In the writings of the early 1930s Dalí made no specific reference to the concept of the «polymorphously perverse disposition», introduced by Freud in *Three Essays* with regard to infants. In later years, however, Dalí freely described himself as the «prototype *par excellence* of the phenomenally retarded 'polymorphous perverse', having kept almost intact all the reminiscences of the nursling's erogeneous paradises» (*Secret Life 2*); and I believe that Dalí's memories have not strayed too far from what could be described as his frame of mind in the early 1930s. Dalí may also have discovered in his disposition other impulses, described by Freud as distinct from erotogenic sexual activity and involving other people as sexual objects. These include scopophilia (curiosity with regard to the genitals of playmates), exhibitionism, and cruelty (*Three Essays 58*).

[8] Freud saw the stage which precedes the primacy of the genital zone in terms of sadistic-anal organization connected with the rectal erotogenic zone, and defined an earlier, more primitive, phase of libido-development in which the erotogenic mouth zone plays the central part. In the latter phase, referred to as the oral or cannibalistic pregenital sexual stage, the sexual activity is seen in terms of ingestion of food or sucking (*Three Essays* 64; *Introductory Lectures* 327).

[9] As Steven Marcus notes, «the *Three Essays* is Freud's most truly Darwinian work. It occupies the boundary that both separates and connects the biological and the psychological realms of existence, and it touches unavoidably upon the complex relations that obtain between phylogenesis and ontogenesis. It is about 'origins' in more ways than one, and is written from a consistently evolutionary point of view» («Introduction», *Three Essays*, XXII).

[10] Before Dalí, it is Breton's reference in the *Second Manifesto* to Freud's «ever-increasing emphasis on the primacy of the superego» (*Manifestoes* 139) which exemplifies the growing interest in the concept of the super-ego in Surrealist circles.

project of regression at the service of the libido. Freud sees the origin of the super-ego in the individual's first identification with his parents.[11] The super-ego is a «precipitate in the ego» consisting of the identification with both father and mother, with the father, however, taking the lead. It has the task of repressing the Oedipus complex and, as Freud points out, has a double aspect: it elevates the father as a model, but also warns against being like him in the sense of doing all that he does. The infantile ego strengthens itself for the carrying out of this repression of the Oedipus complex by erecting the father as an obstacle within itself. Thus the super-ego retains the character of the father.[12] As «heir of the Oedipus complex», as Freud puts it, the super-ego is also «the expression of the most powerful impulses and most important libidinal vicissitudes of the id» (26). Insofar as Dalí is concerned, the problem lies precisely in Freud's assertion that the super-ego «answers to everything that is expected of the higher nature of man. As a substitute for a longing for the father, in contains the germ from which all religions have evolved... As a child grows up, the role of father is carried on by teachers and others in authority; their injunctions and prohibitions remain powerful in the ego ideal and continue, in the form of conscience, to exercise the moral censorship. The tension between the demands of conscience and the actual performance of the ego is experienced as a sense of guilt» (27).

Seeking freedom from guilt and the demands of conscience, and, in fact, from any form of social responsibility, entails a liberation from this dreaded internal object, the super-ego; all the more dreaded, since Dalí viewed himself with enough clarity to know that he had not attained the phase of culturally acceptable and fully-integrated genital sexual organization. He need not have been fully aware of all the ramifications of Freud's notions of fixation of the libido or regression, as Freud developed them around 1915, to recognize in himself various regressive tendencies. He could have read in *Three Essays* some succint references to the regression to infantile tendencies when the normal sexual current is being blocked.[13] What could have very well appealed to him was Freud's contention that pathological manifestation or, in other words, symptoms, represent a substitute for sexual instincts that are both normal and perverse. «Thus symptoms are formed in part at the cost of *abnormal* sexuality; *neuroses are, so to speak, the negative of perversions*» (*Three Essays* 31). Since neurosis is produced by repression, with culture itself as a symptom of sorts, perversion represented for Dalí freedom both from repression and neurosis. And it is in this light that we should view his assertion, in «L'Amour», that the considers «perversion and vice to the most revolutionary forms of thought and activity» (*Femme visible* 68).

To go by the evidence of Dalí's paintings, we may observe that in 1929-30 he still placed himself mostly in an Oedipal situation, with regressive tendencies to oral and anal concerns (involving images of incorporation, cannibalism, and sadism). However, already by 1930 he had shifted his interest to the super-ego, embodied, as I am about to show, in the figure of William Tell, which served as a means of pinpointing the locus of his troubled psychic reality and as the area in which he would wage his battle of liberation,

[11] In Freud's scheme, when a person has to give up a sexual object, there ensues an alteration of his ego, with the object being set up inside the ego. It makes it possible to suppose that the character of the ego is a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes and that it contains the history of those object-choices (*The Ego and the Id* 19). Freud considers the detachment of the individual from his parents during puberty with two factors in mind: the triangular character of the Oedipus situation and the constitutional bisexuality of each individual (21). With regard to the male child, this bisexuality accounts for the fact that the Oedipus Complex does not merely consist of an ambivalent attitude toward the father and an affectionate object-choice toward the mother, but also the displaying of an affectionate feminine attitude toward the father and a corresponding jealousy and hostility toward the mother (23).

[12] Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, trans. Joan Riviere. Revised and Newly Edited by James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1990), pp. 24.

[13] See footnotes on pages 98 and 103 of *Three Essays*.

his revolt. The interdictions or repressions represented by the super-ego were at that time associated by him primarily with his father (or anything that his father represented), especially since his provocations brought about a growing alienation from his father's house. A drawing on which he wrote the inscription «Sometimes I spit with plesure on my mother's portrait», and his association with a married woman, Gala Eluard, were at least the outward causes for the final rupture with his father leading to his banishment from home.[14]

Clearly evident in his paintings after 1929 is the intention of dramatizing the Freudian insights — applied by implication to his own personal situation — through a form of staging, so to speak, with the space of the painting providing an arena in which Freudian concepts and symbols, conflicts and anxieties, are played out. This involves personifying the entities acting within the mental map traced by Freud at times by relating them to real persons. The frequent appearance of various types or figures in his work — for instance, the hermaphrodite, the woman with sharp teeth, the young man, in his 1929 works — also reflects Dalí's effort, in a sense, to mythologize his materials.[15] I should add that expressions such as «land of treasures» and «golden ages», as applied to what Dalí considers to be the paradisiacal situation of pregenital sexuality, are also a mark of these mythologizing efforts. Consideregd in this light, the figure of William Tell combines, indeed, the notion of the super-ego with Dalí's image of the father within the aura formed by the original legend. In his autobiography, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, Dalí relates how, after his banishment from his father's house, «I had balanced on my head William Tell's apple, which is the symbol of the passionate cannibalistic ambivalence which sooner or later ends with the drawing of the atavistic and ritualistic fury of the bow of paternal vengeance that shoots the final arrow of the expiatory sacrifice — the eternal theme of the father sacrificing his son...» (319). As Dalí's friend, the Surrealist René Crevel, noted: Tell «puts an aplle on his son's head (headdresses in Freudian symbolism, always have a phallic meaning) in order to perforate it with an arrow, as if the son is all at once castrated, sodomized, and would shortly also be eaten up» (*L'Esprit contre la raison*).

The painting entitled *William Tell* (1930)[16] is probably Dalí's first depiction of this legendary figure. William Tell is depicted with his penis hanging out of his fly, vulnerable to the threatening scissors suggestively held next to it, although the anxiety hinted at might be easily translated to the cowering figure of the son who covers his face in shame (as in the 1929 works) and points back with his finger toward the extended finger of the «father». This echo of Michelangelo's Creation of Man, to which is added the fig leaf covering the genitals of the son, refers perhaps to the biblical story of the expulsion from the Garden of Eden. While these images are tied to the banishment of Dalí from his home, there is a basic duality at work here. William Tell, the father, appears to point with his finger rather than chase away; his eyes, unseeing and bleeding, in what might be viewed as a

[14] These are, at least, the reasons for the banishment given by his father in a letter to Lorca dated January 1930, or, possibly 1931. See *Salvador Dalí, Frederico Garcia Lorca, Correspondance 1925-1936*, Notes et chronologie de Rafael Santos Toroella (Editions Carrere, 1987), pp. 138-141. In his lecture «The Moral Position of Surrealism», Dalí attempted to explain this inscription as a «moral conflict similar to that present in dreams, where we often kill those who are dear to us» (*Oui I* 151). It would appear, however, that Dalí's father was far from satisfied by this explanation.

[15] Dalí's mythology, in this case, implies a formation of a pantheon of prominent figural motifs that do not fit comfortably in any clear-cut allegorical scheme and do not represent any finite or consistent attributes. I should note, at this point, the evolution, in Dalí's art and writing of the late 1920s and well into the 1930s, of a personal myth. Myth-making, an innate tendency of the exhibitionistic and narcissistic Dalí, also reflects his need to endow his individual situation with the exemplary and universal aura of a full-fledged myth. The evolution of the early phase of Dalí's myth can be seen in the framewirk of four major poetic texts: «Sant Sebastià» (1927), «Le Grand masturbateur» (1930), «L'Amour et la mémoire» (1931) and «The Metamorphosis of Narcissus» (1937).

[16] Shown at the Pierre Colle exhibition in June 1931, the painting was acquired by Breton.

reference to the Oedipus theme, would be more obviously associated with the son. Dalí, it should be emphasized, does not allegorize his personal situation, but creates a dramatic scene obeying the form of the discourse of the unconscious in which such reversals are the rule. Thus the father, shedding tears of blood and threatening castration, is also the self-immolating son, while both of them also connote a desire as blind as that of the combined image of the blind pianist and the lion, or the blind white stallion with its large penis.

Some of these motifs point backwards to the 1929 works (pants spattered with shit; lion; the putrefied donkey lying on the grand piano, as an obvious evocation of his and Buñuel's film *Un Chien andalou*; the all too explicit depiction of phallic images), while others indicate things to come (the combined image of white stallion and cypress; the onanistic «liquid desires» gushing out of a phallic «tombstone»). What is still missing in this 1930 painting is the evocation of Gala, who, as one of the causes for the father's anger, was intrinsically bound to Dalí's traumatic confrontation with his father, and was also considered by Dalí to be the instrument of his progressive liberation from the deep-seated conflicts afflicting his emotional development in the repressive atmosphere of his father's house. In *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, as well as in *The Tragic Myth of Millet's Angelus* (1963) and in later autobiographical writings, Dalí tended to describe Gala as both a mother («my little boy») and lover, who cured him, like Jensen's and Freud's Gradiva, «with the corporeal reality of her love» (*Secret Life* 349).

Examining the role played by Gala in the early 1930s at this point, even without going into a consideration of her role in Dalí's a later myth-making apparatus, we have no difficulty locating her at the core of Dalí's erotic existence. Thus, for instance, by the end of Rêverie» (1931), a long and involved erotic daydream described by Dalí in great detail, Dalí is about to sodomize a young girl who is lying naked in a stable, together with her naked mother and chaperon, «surrounded by excrement and rotting straw» (*Oui I* 200). But it is ultimately Gala who, even in his fantasy, becomes the recipient of his shameful, incestuous pleasure. Thus, by subsuming all of Dalí's secret desires, as well an anxieties and terrors, Gala becomes a formidable opponent to anything which Dalí's dreaded super-ego might represent. And it is largely in that capacity that she is represented in Dalí's love poem *L'Amour et la mémoire.*

In view of Dalí's bent for dramatization and personification of psychoanalytical insights, we would expect Gala's role to be dramatized as a struggle between opposing forces. A cursory glance at the poem might tempt us to view it in such a light. This view would be further enhanced by the opening stanzas, in which Dalí appears to provide a background for some dramatic nerrative by referring to places that are being «quickly and civilly divested of their character/predisposed to colonial influences» (*L'Amour et la mémoire* 5).[17] These expectations are somewhat deflated, however, when the «colonial locality», inhabited by «several departmental long rolls», appears to serve as a point of departure for a series of unrelated images involving a tear, the image of a nest, a word emblem, borders, knobs and handles, etc. — in short, Dalí's version of an automatic (in the Surrealist sense), and quite gratuitous, thought process. Such a method of deflating expectations serves as a rhetorical device that shifts the reader's attention elsewhere, hinting at a wholly different textual approach.

It is my contention, indeed, that the poem should be viewed as conceptual whole in which Gala's «pure and unique representation» is placed in opposition to all other affective representations that governed Dalí until he met her. Thus the colonial background, rather than serving a narrative purpose, might be viewed as an ideological framework defining the forces of oppression as embodied in Western civilization.[18] Integrated into this conceptual

[17] My references are to *L'Amour et la mémoire*, Editions surréalistes, 1931.

[18] The «colonial» aspect may have been provoked by the anti-colonialist pamphlets that appeared in 1931 calling for a boycott of the Colonial Exhibition that opened in May 1931. Dalí, with his keen senses, could not have remained oblivious to these sentiments, which were also associated with

framework, Dalí's evocation of his sister's image, with its bizarre bisexual combination of male and female genitalia — «half erect» penis, testicles, the «two external lips of her sex», etc. (8-9) — should not be viewed at face value but as a form of conceptualization. Indeed, Dalí appears to literalize psychoanalytical insights gained from Freud's *The Ego and the Id*, especially with regard to Freud's exposition of the formation of the super-ego as a «precipitate in the ego» consisting of the identification with both father and mother. Why has Dalí chosen his sister for this role? It is quite possible that in spite of the estrangement from his father, Dalí still felt somewhat inhibited with regard to a blatant display of filial disrespect (he had no such inhibitions in later writings, even after he was reconciled with his father). He felt no restraints of this nature with regard to his sister, who chose to side with his father and thus placed herself on the side of the oppressive and critical super-ego. Furthermore, although younger than he, following their mother's death, she had assumed the role of surrogate mother. Thus, in view of Dalí's involved feeling toward her, as reflected in the many portraits painted around the mid- 1920s, she may also have served as an incestuous object in her capacity as both sister and mother.

This is well attested to by the iconography used by Dalí in this «portrait». «Tepid milk», straw, flour, corn are materials that recur often in his writings. Their various permutations in the poem parallel to some extent the descriptions of surrealist objects, made by Dalí himself and by other Surrealists, which Dalí appended to his article «Objets surrélistes», published in December 1931, during the same period as the publication of *L'Amour et la mémoire*. The actual handling of these objects and of the materials comprising them consists, in Dalí's scheme, of symbolic realization of perverse fantasies and desires. It is in this light that we should view the milk glass placed inside a woman's shoe (an obvious fetish object), or the bundles, attached under each armpit, that are filled with shit or stuffed with cooked corn permeated with the urine of a horse (8-10). The obvious scatological dimension underlying this «portrait», defines, then, the shameful desire related to his sister-mother, and the joint effect of repugnance and attraction associated with it, as well as the sense of threat connected with this desire (the «anus red with bloody shit» might be construed as, perhaps, a mark of castration, referrring to the anxiety provoked by the absence of a phallus in the mother-sister). The portrait thus turns out to be Dalí's own, since it is an embodiment of his mental state under the sway of the super-ego; that is to say, around the time he met Gala.

Opposed to the sister («Far from my sister's image»), Gala represents a perverse equalization or interchangeability of all parts of the desired body:

> her eyes resembling her anus
> her anus resembling her knees
> her knees resembling her ears
> her ears resembling her breasts
> her breasts resembling the large lips of her sex
> the large lips of her sex resembling her navel
> .....
> her clitoris resembling her mirror
> her mirror resembling her gait
> her gait resembling her cedars (10-11).[19]

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anti-war and anti-religious feelings. See Helena Lewis, *The Politics of Surrealism* (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 19888), pp. 95-6.

[19] There is some affinity between Dalí's enumeration of parts of Gala's body and Breton's poem «L'union libre» (1931), which was probably known to Dalí when he wrote his poem. In «L'union libre» Breton evokes a vision of

> My wife with the mouth of cockade and clustering maximal stars

Gala, thus, appears to satisfy Dalí's vision of infantile sexuality, a kind of polymorphously-perverse daydream, which appears to be completely free of the repressive aspects of the super-ego.[20] Not that she had necessarily helped actualize Dalí's perverse fantasies — if anything, she had, by his own admission, initiated him to «normal» sex. Rather, he needed her as an anchor for his perverse «represerntations» and fantasies; she could fulfill his needs precisely because she subsumed for him a promise of voyeuristic, incestuous, and shameful pleasure.[21]

Gala subsists for Dalí as a vision of total liberation. Nothing exists for Dalí besides her; she is, indeed, an anchor, a fixed point of reference. And he contemplates, one by one, all the affective, aesthetic or erotic categories from which, in his scheme, she remains aloof. She is, to begin with, beyond morality and pity, with nothing besides her vitally touching him:

> [I]f I am allowed to witness
> the most atrocious torture
> of my most admired friend
> I'd sense my cock's readiness for erection
> more than be troubled in soul by the tiniest moral anguish (12).[22]

In her role as a fixed point of reference, she exists beyond memory and chage. Dalí enlists Bergson's theory of time and memory, as it appears in *Matière et mémoire* (Matter and Memory),[23] to corroborate this contention, with the conclusion that,

> my loves makes good
> the memories I have of you

> With teeth like the spoor of white mice on white earth
> With a tongue of rubbed amber and glass
> With a tongue like a daggered host.

See André Breton, *Selected Poems*, Trans. Kenneth White (London, Jonathan Cape, 1969), p. 31. Clearly, however, Breton utilizes a free and unlimited play of analogies, while Dalí's «resemblances» invoke an unlimited instinctual freedom.

[20] In drawing a distinction perverse sexuality and infantile sexuality, Freud indeed argues that while perverse sexuality is generally centered, with its actions directed to a single aim, infantile sexuality «lacks any such centring and organization; its separate component instincts have equal rights, each of them goes its own way to obtaining pleasure» (*Introductory Lectures* 323).

[21] There were many reasons for Dalí's attachment to her at this point in his life, some of which were quite practical. As secrest suggests, her allure for Dalí resided partially in her status in Surrealist circles, as well as in the financial security she symbolized. See Maryle Secrest, *Salvador Dalí* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1986), p. 108. It might be conjectured also that Dalí found an irresistible voyeuristic attraction in the fact that, before meeting him and while being married to Eluard, she had had a relationship with Max Ernest, with the three of them at some point living together.

[22] In 1934, Breton wrote a letter to Dalí in which he accused him, among other things, of «anti-humanitarianism». To prove his allegations, Breton cited Dalí's «frequent declarations» — specifying that he found Dalí's tone «not ironical at all» — to the effect that «a railroad catastrophy would give you great satisfaction, the more so if the those affected are particularly third-class passangers». Dalí responded to this by saying that «anti-humanitarianism, humanitarianism, semi-humanitarianism» are all the same to him. That the misfortune of others — to paraphrase his argument — be it even of his friends, provoked in him a sexual excitement is a fact that could be experimentally verifiable. This perversion, Dalí went on to say, corresponded exactly to the ideas of the Marquis de Sade, to whom he, Dalí, referred himself more than ever; and it was Sade who said that the pleasure experienced is directly proportional to the beauty, innocence and purity of the victims, for experiencing sadistic feelings toward ones enemies is no perversion et all. See the exhibition catalogue *André Breton, La beauté convulsive* (Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 1991), p. 197.

[23] In fact, Dalí does not refer to Bergson by name, but the quoted lines are very close in tone and meaning to Bergson's thought, as promulgated in *Matière et mémoire* (I admit to not being able to locate the exact source of this quotation, and it might indeed refer to some other source in Bergson's *oeuvre*, if this is indeed a direct quotation from him).

since I do not remember you
you don't change
you are beyond my memory
since you are my life (13).

As Dalí would have it, she is «fair beyond the base curve of harmony» (12) and free from any methods of affective representation, as these were defined in cultural history on the basis, for example, of Hellenistic scultpure (14-5). He envisions her, rather, as existing in a sterile (in the positive sense) mathematical time and space, as these became perceptible in art with the invention of perspective (16). She exists beyond subjective time, on which all «sentimental representations» depend, as well as beyond feeling, since, «feelings imply the absence of love» (17).

I have argued before that Dalí needed Gala as am anchor for his perverse «representations» and fantasies, and it is to this that Dalí devotes the last part of his poem. Dalí considers Gala's «pure and unique representation of my desires» as the factor underlying his erotic life, a factor that «provokes an erection and makes me come» (17). Significantly, Gala does not have to be there in person for Dalí to experience a full measure of sexual excitement. The masturbatory element is quite different, however, from any form of sexual excitation indulged in before. Thus, the sexuality implied by her «pure and unique representation» ranges beyond «supplementary hypnagogic images of masturbation», beyond «perverse commomplaces» (17), even beyond the coprophilic pleasure implied by the

... narcissistic fixation
on my own body odors
hierarchically
the odor of my feet
the odor of my balls
the odor of my glans
the odor of my armpits
the odor of my own shit. (18)[24]

That Gala also liberates him from the exigencies of the super-ego is well attested to by the fact that her «pure and unique representation» proves to be even stronger than an «indecent scene» which holds a great fascination for him — the scene of William Tell climbing a tree. To summarize this rather extensive and perhaps overlong evocation of this action, William Tell is described scaling a tree while clasping in his teeth a piece of cloth surrounding, «like a girdle», a long loaf of bread. Dalí emphasizes the great effort, the leaps and bounds, the «jerky and convulsive muscular contractions/resulting from/lack of practice and training» (22). What makes the climb even more difficult is the necessity of throwing the head back in order to allow the bread to rest on his collar bones; otherwise, the bread will get stuck between the body and the bark. Having reached the point where the trunk forks into two branches, Tell begins to climb faster, until finally he places the bread «upright in the midst of a nest» (25).

Images found in this description, such as the tree and the nest, might refer back to Dalí's painting *William Tell*. Peter Gorsen points to what he considers to be an amazing resemblance between Dalí's scene and a painting by the insane artist Ernest Josephson (1851-1906), whose work was shown in Paris around that time, in which William Tell is

[24] In a footnote added to *Three Essays on Sexuality* in 1910, Freud refers to the «importance, as regards the choice of a fetish, of a coprophilic pleasure in smelling which has disappeared owing to repression. Both the feet and the hair are objects with a strong smell which have been exalted into fetishes after the olfactory sensation has become unpleasurable and been abandoned» (21).

depicted in the act of climbing a tree.[25] Quite obviously, Dalí also makes use of dream symbolism, clearly derived from Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, which associates the act of climbing with sexual intercourse. The very detailed description of the climbing, with all its hardships, might also reflect the sadistic view of sexual intercourse that little children often hold. Freud, indeed, also mentions dreams at the basis of which lie fantasies of intauterine life, with spying on parental intercourse from within the womb, so to speak, and Dalí could have found references to this also in Rank's *The Traumma of Birth*.[26] It is there that he may have found references to another fantasy, the stork fable, applying it in the poem in the image of the girdle made of cloth holding a loaf of bread. The bread is the child; it is both phallic and edible, thus combining, again, cannibalism and castration, as the two prominent wishes underlying William Tell's action in Dalí's interpretation. Thus Dalí assumes in his fantasy a state of willed regression to early childhood, with its sexual researches and theores; in particular, those concerning parental intercourse and the begetting of children. Indeed, he recreates the scene of his own begetting.

If indeed Dalí evokes here a repressed childhood memory — or, possibly, a fantasy — of parental intercourse, *The Old Age of William Tell*, probably painted around the time he worked on the poem, should be considered as offering a pictorial parallel. William Tell is seen tended by two women (possibly representing the mother and the aunt who replaced her in the Dalí household), with some secret but obviously quite obscene sexual activity taking place behind the sheet, on which there is also a large silhouette of a lion, Dalí's symbol of desire. A similar evocation of an obscene and quite sickening family secret might be perceived in the drawing entitled *The Butterfly Chase* (1929-30), in which the bearded man and the two women appear to encompass two innocent children within their perverse aura.

The Old Age of William Tell, similarly to *William Tell*, may also be viewed as a vision of banishment from paradise, although this interpretation is not fully sustained by all narrative elements. Dalí and Gala are shown twice (as in the late medieval or early Renaissance conventions), once tied to a column (in a reference to the martydom of St. Sebastian), and then sent away in shame. It may be argued, however, that William Tell does not appear to be chasing them away, and that, in fact, thay are retreating in horror from what they have witnessed.[27] As I have argued with regard to *William Tell*, this ambiguity implies an analogy with the discourse of the unconscious, which seldom follows the form of a direct allegory. This applies also to the figure of William Tell, which appears to possess breasts (there is a suggestion of small breasts in *William Tell* too), similarly to the image of Dalí's sister in the poem, with its combination of male and female attributes. This bisexuality might refer, again, to the formation of the super-ego, or to the fantasies of children regarding

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[25] Peter Gorsen, «Der kritische Paranoiker», Kommentar und Rückblick». In *Salvador Dalí: Unabhängigkeitserklärung der Phantasie und Erklärung der Rechte des Menschen auf seine Verrücktheit: Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Axel Matthes and Tilbert Diego Stegmann (München, Rogner & Bernhard Verlag, 1974), p. 470.

[26] *In Secret Life* (26), Dalí attests to the fact that Rank's *The Trauma of Birth* had corroborated his personal memories of the intra-uterine period, and that «in there» it was «paradise». Whatever credence this attestation should be given, it is probable that by 1930 Dalí must have read the book, which was translated into French in 1928, since there are many references in his writings of the time that clearly bear the stamp of Rank's thought. In his essay «L'Amour», for instance, he argues that the «growing significance of the intra-uterine life has become more and more central to the study of dreams», and refers to the attitudes of annihilation implied by the intra-urine curvature of lovers during sleep. See Salvador Dalí, *La Femme visible* (Paris: Editions surréalistes, 1930), p. 66.

[27] Secrest, who offers this reading, argues that the roses hanging on the pillar, and seen against the body of one of the women shown grappling in the background, imply a drama of defloration (131). One might also suggest, however, that the bleesing roses associated with the female figure in the background, similarly to those found in the 1930 work *The Bleeding Roses*, refer to Gala's womb operation, which had a traumatic effect on Dalí.

the sexual union of their parents. Dalí returned to the William Tell motif in 1932 in a painting entiled *Memory of the Child-Woman*, and a related study, again endowing William Tell with breasts (or, rather, with roses replacing one breasts). In both, the William Tell figure seems to represent the climactic moment in *L'Amour et la mémoire*, in which William Tell is seen with «his face dazzled by the setting sun/the eyes furious and bloodshot/the netherlip gnawed and bleeding...» (25). Another work of that year in which William Tell figure appears is *The Birth of Liquid Desires*. Here again he is shown with breasts, a loaf of bread over his head, holding a woman with a head of flowers, with one of his legs dipped in a large saucer. A naked young man is shown dipping his hand in a dark pool seen through what seems to be the doorway to a cave — with a distinct womb-like character — found within the biomorphic and liquified central architectural element. Again, the two women might represent the mother and the aunt, with the mother unwillingly contributing «liquid desires» to the couple.[28] The son thus dips his hand in forbidden and incestuous «liquid desires» too, with these associated also with masturbation. Indeed, here, too, the son appears to identify himself with the father, as illustred by the fact that he is wearing a sock held by a garter which is associated in some works with the father.[29]

Let us recall that the whole purpose of the William Tell scene in *Love and Memory* is to suggest that Gala's «pure and unique representations» of desire, to quote Dalí, «provoke an erection and make me come *beyond* this indecent scene» (p. 5). In other words, Gala's «representations» prove to be more potent than the earlier from of masturbation that Dalí indulged in, which, in the light of the William Tell scene and the paintings considered above, seems to be related to Oedipal fantasies and incestuous desires. It should be noted that there is one thing missing in the William Tell scene as a representation of parental intercourse and that is the mother. This might easily be accounted for, if, indeed, we view this scene as an intrauterine fantasy, in which the mother is found all around the subject.[30] Far more significantly, however, Gala asserting herself «beyond» («en dehors») this scene appears to replace this lost object. She also comes to replace the father. Her «representation» goes beyond the «not too ancient corporate allegory of love and memory» to which Dalí formerly felt bound. As Dalí relates this «allegory»,

> this naked woman
> who saws wood
> on top of the staircase
> and the beast
> that passes by without looking at her
> tells her

[28] Secrest sees a connection between the woman with the head of flowers and the aunt who was a milliner (131).

[29] William Tell, in the role of an authoritarian super-ego, reappears in *The Enigma of William Tell* (1933), a painting in which Dalí also asserted his liberation from the authority of the Surrealist group and Breton, as well as from the Communist party with which the Surrealists were for a time associated. William Tell appears with Lenin's face, holding the baby Dalí in his arms. The cutlet placed on the baby's head represents the cannibal intentions of the father, while the little walnut shell and the minute cradle and baby represent, according to Dalí's own later, somewhat simplistic, reading of the painting, Dalí's future life with Gala who will eventually save Dalí from the clutches of his super-ego. See «A propos de 'L'énigme de Guillaume Tell'», in *XXe Siècle* 36 (June 1971).

[30] It is interesting to consider, in this respect, Spector's speculation (in reference to Freud's *Leonardo*) that «for Freud there was a great temptation to 'become' (identify with) his mother, the all-powerful being who sustained and nursed him, and that the homosexual component [in Freud] was related to his desire not to have her in the manner of the later Oedipal impulses he describes, but to be inside her as a child, fusing with her body; therefore, 'dying' or going back where you came from (the womb) would be the psychological equivalent of orgasm». See Jack J. Spector, *The Aesthetics of Freud: A Study in Psychoanalysis and Art* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), p. 63.

Madame
I haven't got many teeth. (26)

The symbolism is quite obvious, and Dalí must have been well aware of its accepted meaning. The staircase, a very prominent Freudian dream symbol, stands for copulation, while wood symbolizes the female «material». Teeth, as Freud interprets this symbol, refer to masturbation.[31] With Dalí not offering any allegory in this poem, least of all a «corporate allegory», one may surmise that the Beauty and the Beast motif would also be somewhat twisted. One may, indeed, consider the Beast as having lost its teeth, or, in other words, having depleted its sexual resources through masturbation. But while representing Dalí himself, the beast also doubles up as the lion of desire, a «precipitate» of the father, or, in other words, Dalí's dreaded super-ego. With these forces harnessed by Gala — as *L'Amour et la mémoire* seems to imply — this «allegory» is for Dalí yet another way of indicating the effect Gala would have, in his scheme, on the re-channelling of his libido.

[31] See Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Avon Books, 1968), pp. 391; 420-28.

Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 117-128

Le [SujetObjet] et l'Abjectionnisme

FREDERICO PEREIRA (*)

Un des esprits fous de notre siécle écrivait en 1945 à un de ses amis: «Moi aussi j'ai été trés impressionné lorsque j'ai lu Freud pour la prémière fois. Il est extraordinaire (...) Il souligne toujours quelles grandes forces dans l'esprit (...) travaillent contre l'idée de la psychanalyse, mais il ne dit jamais quel charme énorme cette idée a pour les gens (...) Il peut y avoir de puissants préjugés qui vont contre l'idée de découvrir quelque chose de dégoutant, *mais c'est parfois infiniment plus attrayant que repoussant* (...).»

Voici donc ce que disait en 1945 Wittgenstein à son ami Malcolm.

En quelque sorte, quoique dans un contexte trés différent, c'est ce que Freud a énoncé, lui aussi, dans le célebre mot: «ce que nous leur apportons c'est la peste».

Mais on pourrait dire que, depuis lors, cette «peste», cette «bête», cette confrontation à ce qui, d'un certain point de vue, est «l'horreur», la «saleté», le «repoussant», la psychanalyse, en même temps qu'elle cherche à le *voir*, cherche aussi à l'*oublier*, c'est à dire, à le rendre *domestique* par rapport à la connaissance. *Et alors ce qui blesse l'orgueil de la pensée est rejeté dans le territoire de l'ainsi nommé instinct.*

Au fond de l'homme, circule la bête. À la frontière du Moi, voilà l'innommable Ça. L'absolument illogique, l'absolument contradictoire, ainsi disparait. L'homme c'est la pensée — la non pensée c'est la bête, ou, comme on disait au XVIII siécle, les «esprits animaux».

Mais quand la Psychanalyse est libérée de toute entreprise de *domestication*, c'est justement sur du *non pensable* qu'elle travaille, sur ce qui se présente comme l'*horreur* de la pensée, saboteur permanent de l'équilibre, de la raison, de l' esthétique...

Voilà ce qui a bien vu Wittgenstein; voilà aussi ce qu'évoquait en permanence Freud lui-même, dans des mouvements où l' on a pu voir le *pessimisme d'un homme agé, cancéreux de plus, victime aussi des derniers sursauts et déséspoirs de la crise finale de l'âme romantique.*

La «peste», le «repoussant», c'est l'humiliation de la pensée impuissante à saisir ce qui par essence est du *non pensable et pourtant existe* — non pas au fond de l'homme, mais partout, au fond et à la surface, au milieu et à la périphérie, dans le solide qui est saisi par la perception et dans le diaphane qui traverse l'être comme de l'air: l'air dont il est dit que seulement on le respire...

C'est la fuite devant l'*horrible* qui anime une partie d'une psychanalyse, qui, faute de mieux, on pourrait désigner de classique ou *médicalisée* — fuite qui va de pair avec la recherche des avatars de l'Amour... Mais découvrir l'Amour n'implique pas necessairement rejeter le non-pensable à la périphérie de l'être...

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Et bien entendu, l'*horrible* n'est pas en premier lieu le «mauvais», le «malpropre», le «violent», ou le «destructif»; cela n'est pas de l'horrible puisqu'il est déja pensée de plusieurs pensées. L'horrible c'est la *faille*. La faille *constitutive* de l'humain, puisque de cette faille nait la béance qui produit le sens et la production de sens.

Cette production de sens peut être animée par la *défaillance objectale* qui produit une émmergence du Sujet dans le [SujetObjet] — et c'est là le processus le plus courant. Ou alors, dans le champ même de la défaillance *s'inscrit un trop d'absence*, ce qui origine des processus de construction du sujet troublés, ou *anime une recherche indéfinie de la chose même dont tout signe signifie l'absence*. Ce dernier cas est, bien entendu, le cas *des expériences exceptionnelles* dont en particulier la littérature parfois nous rend compte.

Il est possible d'identifier quatre réactions, outre la mort ou la pure folie, face a cet excès d'absence originaire:

- corriger l'absence en passant outre l'absence par une infinie présence de mots qui sans faille aucune s'enchainent: c'est le cas de Sade, qui finit dans l'*apathie libertine*, le *ne rien dire* et le *ne rien faire*, silence radical;
- associer le dépassement de l'absence avec un *appel* du fond de l'être, appel avec destruction du signe de l'appel, recherche impossible du mot unique qui pourrait restaurer l'Objet du [SujetObjet] et avec lui le Sujet. C'est le cas d'Artaud;
- recherche du vide de signes pour ne pas trahir l'Objet du [SujetObjet], en recherchant l'unité préthématique, qui à se dire se thématise, pour rechercher ensuite l'Objet par un remplissage de signes d'une présence si pléthorique qui à la fin il n'y aurait plus de signes mais seulement un Signe qui signifierait le flux ininterrompu de signes. C'est le cas de Pessoa;
- recherche de la souveraineté du Sujet par une totale identification à l'Objet du [SujetObjet], ce qui ferait disparaître toute différence, donc tout conflit, donc toute absence — en réstaurant une complementarité préthématique [SujetObjet], dans un effort jamais couroné de succès, puisqu'il faut répéter à l'infini que l'autre, l'horreur, c'est le beau, et que «tu — horrible — veux justement ce que je veux». C'est le cas du culte de l'Abjection, où le grain de Triomphe est toujours illusoire: ni Roi ni Reine ont, à la fin, de couronne.

Dans ces recherches que je mêne plutôt mal que bien, depuis un certain temps, sur les expériences d'exception qui consistent à se coller à l'indisible en tant qu'indisible pour cependant essayer de le dire jusqu'au bout, à prononcer des paroles non pas interdites mais non existentes, à faire advenir à la pensée chargée de sens ce qui apparait comme inévitablement en deça du sens, c'est à l'Abject et à l'Abjection que je me confronte maintenant — dans un mouvement qui, personnellement, m'apparait comme plus difficile, et surtout plus délicat, puisque dans l'Abject la dimension métaphysique s'affirme moins; c'est, au contraire, la dimension psychologique qui apparait comme nucléaire. L'Abject est aussi plus près de nous, même si nous voulons l'éviter. Plus près que la pensée des grands libertins de Sade, la demande du Mot chez Artaud ou le Self circulaire de Pessoa.

Dans l'Abjection il y a certes un effort pour faire rentrer dans l'inévitable du penser une expérience tout à fait en marge — une expérience qui en plus doit rester en marge, ou plutôt *sur* les marges. Mais cet effort est condamné à un échec, non seulement à cause de la dialectique qui l'anime, mais surtout à cause du fait que le projet esthétique de l'Abjection est contaminé par des mouvements mentaux qui en même temps l'abiment.

En effet, dans l'Abjection il y a de l'hétérogène, de la discontinuité permanente: les raisons métaphysiques que le Sujet se donne sont trop souvent de fausses raisons qui servent seulement à couvrir une expérience psychique douloureuse et quasi impossible à vivre. C'est

sans doute par un immense travail psychique que l'Abject sort de l'*hébétude* pour se constituer en Objet esthétique: la beauté de la laideur...

En entrant maintenant plus dans le vif du sujet, j'ai encore une remarque préliminaire pour préciser que ce que j'aurais voulu faire c'est un essai d'analyse de deux personnages: *un de mes malades* et le *voleur* du *Journal du Voleur*.

Analyse de deux «cas» donc, Jean, le malade, et Genet, que j'aurais voulu associer dans une double spirale où l'un permettrait l'approfondissement de la compréhension de l'autre. Il sera évident que je ne suis pas arrivé à cette double spirale et dans ce que je pourrais ici donner on verra davantage comment le rapport avec Jean a facilité le rapport avec le Voleur, que l'inverse...

Jean est un homme dans la vintaigne. Homosexuel, il fréquente assidûment les W.C. publics. Il préfére les plus sales, les plus mal odorants, et aussi les plus anonymes: ceux des gares de train, par exemple. Il est sensible non seulement à la profonde dégradation des locaux, mais aussi à l'odeur: une odeur fétide s'en dégage, et c'est cette odeur, aussi, qu'il aime. Odeur fécale mélangé à l'odeur d'urine: une odeur qui entoure, qui enveloppe, qui est une enveloppe, une limite flottante du Soi et du scénario qui à chaque fois va s'y reproduire. De ce scénario il faut évoquer la masturbation, associée étroitement à la perception *des pénis* qui urinent, à la masturbation mutuelle, à la fellation d'autant plus attirante que le pénis est sale.

Ces lieux et ces pratiques, curieusement, ont un effet surtout calmant.

En parallele, Jean «*ne pense pas*», il «*a oublié ce que c'est penser*». Il se voit comme «*un vers sur le lambris*».

Magistralement, dans la scène analytique, lui, qui à l'extérieur ne sait pas penser et est près d'une infinie *hébétude*, décrit sa pensée comme du «*spaghetti melangé avec des morceaux de viande*».

Sa vie c'est du néant. Mais, d'un autre coté, il veut un amoureux, un ami qui puisse rester près de lui. Aussi, de ce pénis-objet-partiel, il n'en sait rien: il ne cherche *rien* et il en veut *tout*: *il veut ce qui est pure partie en refusant le tout qui intégre la partie, et il veut le tout tout en ne désirant que la partie.* Il veut un autre qui reste auprès de lui, mais de cet *autre* il ne désire que le *pénis*, le reste ne pouvant être autre chose que *rien*, peau vide, corps vide, être essentiellement *permutable, nul.*

L'*autre* qu'il veut, aussi il le craint, il le déforme jusqu'au minimum d'être. De son psychanalyste, il dit qu'il n'est q'une machine à sous: on y met des piéces de monnaie, il en sort des mots...

Le voir comme machine à sous c'est horrible, mais n'est il pas vrai que plus horrible serait de ne pas le voir ainsi? Si le psychanalyste se fait trop présent dans son opacité, dans un mouvement qui énonce le possible de sa défaillance sinon de son absence, alors c'est la parole de l'analyste qui est attaquée. Jean coupera alors la parole en morceaux, en mots, qui isolés perdent leur sens, et si du sens il y reste quelque aspect, il coupe alors les mots en de nouveaux morceaux, en syllabes, en pures sonorités, et alors il est content — et angoissé parce qu'il ne comprend plus rien. «C'est comme si j'avais des ciseaux dans mon oreille», dit-il.

Et pourtant il parle et décrit parfois avec d'amples détails les scènes qui l'animent auprès de l'abject, dans une position où une pointe de subjectivité lumineuse et non pas distordue s'affirme.

Une pointe de subjectivité...

Avec lui j'apprends que l'Abjection est une position délicate du Sujet. Délicate au sens fort du terme: délicate car difficile à maintenir, mais aussi délicate comme on dit de quelq'un qu'il est plein de délicatesse.

Une position où le Sujet disparait tout en étant là, s'abaisse tout en regardant à partir du bas, s'offre à l'autre tout en subsistant dans le mouvement même de son offrande de soi.

Plein de délicatesse, en ce sens, aussi, où Jean permet l'intuition de ce que l'Abject est une position esthétique plus qu'éthique.

Dans ses descriptions, Jean ne veut nullement choquer, épater; il veut essentiellement créer des formes et définir des positions. Ce n'est pas de l'Éthique qui y circule; c'est surtout de l'Esthétique.

Souvent il décrit des scénes, dont on pourrait dire qu'elles sont choquantes d'un point de vue qui pourtant *n'est pas le sien*: des scènes homosexuelles où, *de l'extérieur*, il serait possible de voir de l'impropre, du malpropre.

Par exemple, par une nuit de pluie, il est dans un jardin public (toujours un lieu public); il y a de la boue partout, et il rencontre un partenaire anonyme. Le rencontre s'organise, il s'agenouille pour une nouvelle fellation, mais il glisse dans la boue, tombe à plat, et découvre que ce qui l'avait fait glisser ce n'était pas de la boue mais des excréments. Il rentre chez lui, les vêtemnts collés au corps et, la saleté collée aussi au corps, il dégage une indescriptible odeur.

Il racconte cela avec un état d'esprit trés particulier. Ce n'est pas d'une forme quelconque d'exibitionisme devant le «normophate con de psychanalyste» que j'aurais pu être, qu'il s'agit; ce n'est pas de la provocation, et cela ne semble pas être du destiné à m'exciter, moi, son *autre* qu'est son psychanalyste-machine-à-sous; ce n'est pas non plus une stratégie pour me pousser à le rejeter, pris de dégout, qui est en jeu... C'est quoi, alors?

Jean va plus loin, à ses yeux plus loin, et probablement il a raison. Il établit un rapport ponctuel avec un autre anonyme, mais maintenant, de surcroit, étranger. Ses pratiques avec lui ne sont plus centrées sur les odeurs répugnantes ou des morceaux de déchets qui flottent dans l'espace et sont son espace. L'espace avec l'étranger, au contraire, est propre, beau, élegant, riche. Mais voici que l'étranger exige de Jean qu'il urine dans sa bouche, alors que lui, l'étranger, est couché sur le dos. Maintenant c'est Jean et non pas l'autre, son autre, qui est debout, et c'est l'autre qui est couché. Jean alors s'enfuit, pris d'horreur: «Cela non! C'est trop!»

Et il retourne aux W.C. publics *pour se calmer*.

C'est bien le mot: *se calmer*. L'abjection qu'il décrit, l'abjection qu'il y découvre, l'abject avec lequel par moments il se confond, *ont cet étrange pouvoir de calmer. De calmer et de refaire*: pour lui l'abject c'est de la nourriture de l'âme, ses vitamines, tout aussi bien que ses tranquillisants.

Pendant ces descriptions, qui occupent une part considérable de sa parole et de mon écoute jusqu'au moment où l'abject céde la place à ce qu'il camufle et en même temps réalise, c'est à dire, une position subjective à la lumiére du jour — pendant ces descriptions Jean n'a ni honte, ni inhibition, et il n'hésite pas, lui qui hésite tellement à proférer une insulte, à affirmer une position personnelle, c'est à dire, à se décoller de l'autre. Lui, justement, qui beaucoup plus tard arrivera à détester ses parents ensorcellants, sa mère qualifiée de nazie, et à prononcer les mots qui assurent la bifurcation de son chemin vers ce qui n'est plus de l'abject: «mes parents, dit-il, à vrai dire je les déteste» — pour ajouter dans un mouvement où se profile la figure du psychanalyste: «et ce ne sont pas tous les psychanalystes du monde qui me convaincront du contraire et je vous prie de m'excuser.»

«Excusez-moi», «je vous en prie de m'excuser», repetera-t-il souvent, chaque fois non pas qu'il décrit de l'Abject, mais chaque fois qu'il énonce une position clairement Subjective.

Il passe en ces moments du champ de la création-rencontre de formes, champ esthétique, au champ éthique du devoir être. Il passe de l'abject à l'intuition de l'objectalité de l'objet.

C'est à dire, en somme, qu'il n'est plus une pensée melangée et confuse, que le sens n'habite pas; il n'est plus essentiellement en face d'objets objectifs mais pourvus d'une

objectalité bien fragile; il n'est plus plongé dans l'abjection, lui qui maintenant découvre ce que c'est *d'objecter*.

Car maintenant il *objecte* en face d'un *autre* ouvert lui aussi au territoire possible de l'*objection*.

L'objet objectal prend ainsi progressivement la place du pur Abject.

C'est d'ailleurs pourquoi il est bien absurde de dire que l'abject est une création du surmoi. En le pensant, on confond trés évidement l'Abject avec le simplement sale, dêgoutant, impropre.

Or l'Abject n'est pas le sale, même s'il peut lui emprunter sa *phénomenologie*. Il est avant tout une recherche, *signe* d'une recherche d'un type singulier de complementarité [SujetObjet]: *unité dans la quasi différence, ou différence dans la quasi unité*. Ce n'est pas d'une union qu'il s'agit ou d'une symbiose sans différentiation. Il s'agit d'une semi-différentiation, position trés délicate que le sujet s'épuise à maintenir. Ou d'une région trés particuliére de l'être où la rencontre avec l'*autre* en tant qu'*autre* determine l'évanouissement de l'*autre* par la possession du Sujet par l'*autre*, non dans le triomphe, mais dans un état où l'autre se transforme en Objet *subtil*, présent dans l'absence de ses limites.

Et c'est ainsi que de toutes les qualités fondamentales de l'être, celles de la Terre, de l'Eau, de l'Air et du Feu, l'Abject s'installe dans de l'aérien aussi pur que possible. Il est ce qui permet d'être et pourtant il est une forme diaphane.

C'est pourquoi, dans l'Abjection, l'*odeur* a une présence quasi violente. L'odeur n'est pas une forme avec un dedans fini et un dehors éventuellement infini. Il n'a pas le mince trait, frontiére, peau projetée qui *délimite* dans le monde des choses. *Il est* — et l'être est traversée de part en part par ses qualités.

Jean n'est pas attiré, on l'a vu, par *une chose* quelconque, même pas, essentiellement, par un acte. Certes, l'exercice du regard l'intérèsse, et il cherche la vision du pénis alors qu'il se masturbe. Certes il essaye d'incorporer oralement les pénis pour les perdre aussitôt dans l'absence de nom.

Mais son *centre d'intêret* c'est l'*odeur* des égouts, l'odeur du dégout. Là, et il le dit, il se sent Roi.

Or il se trouve que la dynamique de l'odeur est difficile à saisir, surtout dans notre civilisation qui de l'odeur ne supporte que celui, non-corporel, du parfum... D'un autre coté, le rapport entre l'odeur et l'Abject est aussi apparement lointain. Les premiéres qualités du Monde auxquelles nous pensons sont orales-gustatives. Alors on dit de l'Abject: c'est une chose à faire vomir. Comme, secondairement, la crême sur le lait peut faire vomir, ou le jus de tomate, ou le gras... Entre le *solide* — et non l'aérien — maternel et l'Abject une ligne de continuité est par nous établie qui, cependant, est une fausse ligue. Disons qu'entre l'Abject et le signe «crême sur le lait» il y a une presque infinie distance.

Aux difficultés avec l'odeur il faut encore ajouter le manque de mots pour *désigner* — mots perdus ou jamais créés. Dans notre monde les odeurs sont *mauvaises* ou *bonnes*, et rapportées à des objets, quand elles sont bonnes surtout, par exemple aux fleurs.

Et pourtant, à y reflechir, on découvre que l'odeur signale un rapport spécifique au monde: *non objectal et non objectif, le rapport odorifique au monde n'est pourtant pas anobjectal ni pré-objectal*. L'odeur, transporté par l'air, n'est pas dehors, n'est pas dedans, il est partout et il est à la lisière de l'Être.

Certes, l'odeur est secondairement objectalisé, objectivé: l'odeur par excellence, l'odeur de toutes les odeurs devient l'odeur de ce qui produit le rejet maternel. À un moment donné, l'oreille écoute: «non! c'est du caca!», enoncé vehiculé par la mére et qui fait de l'odeur odeur de chose.

Mais en parallèle avec cette construction de l'odeur de chose, une autre ligne se developpe, qui normalement est oubliée: *la ligne de l'odeur du corps maternel*, auquel, d'ailleurs, le bebé humain est si sensible.

Dans le cas où la différentiation de la représentation du corps maternel est insuffisante, ce corps reste un *corps cloacal*, dont le *signe* devient la mauvaise odeur. Et corps-cloaque, c'est vers lui que sont conduits tous les déchets, c'est en lui qui habitent tous les déchets, et aussi le Sujet-déchet, dans une interpenétration [SujetObjet] qui est en même temps garant de non absence et de non défaillance.

Ainsi, Jean *est à l'intérieur de la mére* quand il est rempli de ces odeurs de cloaque, et c'est d'être à l'intérieur de la mére que sa vie est la recherche.

Mais de cette présence qui calme, on peut dire qu'elle angoisse dans son évanouissement et étouffe dans son excés: Jean alors se sent *écrasé*, comme s'il était enduit de goudron.

Le *corps-cloacal-odeur-qui-calme* est, à ce moment lá, en voie de s'objectaliser. Il devient moins *odeur horrible* et davantage *goudron qui écrase*. Pour respirer il faut alors sortir du corps-cloaque maternel — et Jean, dans cette période de son analyse multiplie, eveillé ou en rêve, des images où il est à moitié sorti de quelque chose: sa tête et une partie du tronc dehors, son ventre et ses jambes dedans... Il se différencie, il n'a plus la tête vide, il ne court plus en direction des toilletes publiques, il s'eloigne de l'Abject et affronte le Conflit. Mais il paye un prix, pendant un temps: il devient *bègue*, il se voit inapte à la communication orale, afin de na pas pouvoir dire sa subjectivité émmergeante, qui, toutefois, se dit sans trouble dans la scnène analytique...

Jean présente un des trois destins possibles *à partir* de l'Abjection:

- sombrer dans l'hébétude et finalement mourir;
- abandonner le corps cloacal en affrontant la terreur de la différentiation, avec l'eventualité de l'ataque par l'autre dans le conflit;
- théoriser les derivés du corps-cloaque maternel et du rapport à ce corps, en le constituant comme «summum», dans une inversion où pointe, très marginalement, un petit air de triomphe.

Si le deuxième parcours a été celui de Jean, le troisième est celui de Genet. Jean a réussi à construire le possible d'un mouvement horizontal propre du développement. Genet a mené jusqu'à ses limites le *mouvement vertical d'ascension* par lequel l'Abject devient l'«impossible Nullité». Mais ce que je crois avoir compris chez Genet, je le dois essentiellement à Jean...

Ce mouvement d'ascension, chez Genet, a un mécanisme qui l'éloigne, lui aussi, de hébétude, et s'organise autour de quelques axes fondamentaux:

- le rapport à l'autre dans la *différentiation-indifférentiation*, état à mi chemin entre la quasi fusion de l'hébétude et de la distance induite par l'activité consciente;
- la Gratuité de l'Acte ou une pseudo-morale du desintérêt;
- le Triomphe de la Souveraineté.

Le rapport à l'autre, on l'a vu chez Jean, est marqué par l'évitement du conflit, par éffacement de toute différence. Si Jean est un *vers*, Genet est une conscience qui appéhende et développe à l'infini son être comme *êtrevers*. Au point de départ, dans la quasi fusion non consciente à l'autre, Genet ne pense rien, il traine, il est dans la stupeur, il est comme *une feuille portée par le vent*; *mais il a des rêves*, des *rêves d'enfant*, des *rêveries d'enfant — absolument contrariées*.

Il explique lui-même le mécanisme psychique qui chez lui a contrarié ces rêveries tout en les *maintenant — mais inversées* — c'est à dire, il explique clairement la part psychique de la dialectique de sa constituition comme être abject.

Dit-il: «Cette précipitation presque joyeuse vers les situations les plus humiliées tire peut-être son besoin de mon imagination d'*enfant* qui m'inventait, afin que j'y promène la personne menue et hautaine d'un petit garçon abandonné, des châteaux, des parcs peuplés

de gardes plus que de statues, de robes de mariées, de deuils, de noces, et plus tard, mais à peine plus tard, quand les rêveries seront contrariées à l'extrême, jusqu'à l'*épuisement* dans une vie misérable, par les pénitenciers, par les prisons, par les vols, les insultes, la prostituition, tout naturellement ces ornements (et le language rare s'y attachant) qui paraient mes habitudes mentales, les objets de mon désir, j'en parai ma réèlle condition d'homme mais d'*abord d'enfant trop humilié* que ma connaissance des prisons comblera. Au détenu la prison offre le même sentiment de sécurité qu'un palais à l'invité du roi.»[1]

Nous pourrions peut-être dire: au détenu la prison peut offrir le même sentiment de securité qu'un palais offre au Prince, fils d'un Roi...

Prince dans l'imaginaire, il devient, par l'imaginaire contrarié, Prince dans l'Abjection. Prince — et après: Roi.

C'est d'ailleurs sûr, il me semble, que l'épisode où Genet se déclare «Reine, quand même», est secondaire, et animé par le ridicule et le grotesque et non par le *devenir Souverain*. Misérable, avec une peruque et se prostituant, entouré de comparses et paré d'un tortil de fausses perles, voilá que le tortil tombe. Il sort de sa bouche un dentier, le met sur la tête, et s'écrie: «Et bien Mesdames, je serais reine quand même!»

Ce genre d'attitudes a peu à voir avec la dialectique de l'ascension, et avec le *recherche de la Subjectivité absolue dans la perte de toute Subjectivité*. Cela fait penser plutôt à une caricature «gay»: gestes éfféminés et grotesques par lesquels le sujet s'identifie à la femme pour la rendre ridicule, nulle, grotesque. Cette femme qui... fait vomir...

Jean, d'ailleurs, me raccontait aussi des épisodes semblables, toute différence gardée: à 3 h du matin, avec ses comparses à lui, dans un jeu qu'il qualifie de «gay». Dégradation de la femme-mère, qui est, aussi, elle, Reine. Reine qu'il faut exorciser, sinon détroner par moments, par ce mouvement extraordinaire où l'on «fait la femme» tout en sachant qu'on ne l'est pas, preuves à l'appui si nécessaire...

Le «Eh bien Mesdames, je serai Reine quand même» est signe de triomphe et non de souveraineté. C'est du *faux assumé*, du *jeu* glacé — et l'Abjection a peu de choses a voir avec un jeu: glacé.

C'est a devenir Roi que l'Abject aspire-non à devenir une caricature de Reine...

Comment fait-il, alors?

Étrangement, en détruisant l'autre par un mouvement mental que j'hésite à designer du terme *identification*. C'est une identification massive, *qui va au devant de l'autre*, et qui fait de l'autre rien que de l'air, ou même de l'air parfumé d'une exécrable odeur.

En face de l'autre, le Voleur apprend à dire, tout le temps, à tout moment: *ma verité c'est la parole (mais ta parole c'est moi qui l'invente)*.

Dire cela c'est exactement *un dire*, et non pas un faire *comme* si cela était. Le *dire*, c'est le *rechercher*, et c'est dans cette recherche que le Sujet Abject *va au delá de l'autre*, c'est à dire, le dépasse, c'est à dire, devient Roi face à l'autre qui, lui, se juge Roi. «...en moi-même je sentais le besoin de devenir ce qu'on m'avait accusé d'être. J'avais 16 ans. On m'a compris: dans mon coeur je n'avais aucune place où se put loger le sentiment de mon innocence. Je me reconnaissais le lâche, le traître, le voleur, le pédé, qu'on voyait en moi. Une accusation peut être portée sans preuve, mais afin de me trouver coupable il semblera que j'eusse dû comettre les actes qui font le traître, le voleur, le lâche, or *il n'en était rien*: en moi-même, avec un peu de patience, *par la réflexion*, je découvrais assez de raison d'être nommé de ces noms. Et j'avais la stupeur de me savoir composé d'immondices. Je deviens abject.»[2]

«*Substance pétrifiée*», de ces crimes dont il est accusé, le voleur n'exige pas l'administration de la preuve. *Il réflechit*. Et sa conscience reflexive découvre des thèmes qui justifient les

[1] Jean Genet, *Le Journal du Voleur*, Paris: Gallimard, pp. 97-98.
[2] Jean Genet, Idem, p. 199.

accusations dont il est victime — même si ces thèmes n'ont, *dans le champ du concret*, aucun rapport avec ce dont il est accusé.

La *conscience ascensionnelle* dont il fait preuve le rend, à ses yeux, souverain, car à peine l'accusation annoncée, déjà il va au delà de celui qui l'accuse.

Mais ce mouvement dialectique de dépassement de l'autre n'est pas homogène et tout le temps présent. Parfois il céde la place à l'Orgueil, et, dans ces oscillations, c'est de *l'être-entre-deux* qui se manifeste.

C'est que, à mon sens, la Souveraineté Abjecte a peu de rapport avec la conscience Orgueilleuse, dans laquelle, de temps en temps, le Voleur se réfugie.

> «J'ai été donc ce petit misérable qui ne connut que la faim, l'humiliation du corps, la pauvreté, la peur, la bassesse... Sans doute suis-je cela, me disais-je, mais au moins j'ai conscience de l'être et tant de conscience détruit la honte et m'accorde un sentiment que l'on connait peu: l'Orgueil.
> Vous qui me méprisez n'êtes pas fait d'autres choses que de pareilles misères, mais vous n'en aurez jamais la conscience, et par elle l'orgueil, c'est à dire, la connaissance d'une force qui vous permet de tenir tête à la misére — non à votre propre misére, mais à celle dont l'humanité est composée.»[3]

Voici donc que Genet sort de l'Abject en direction à la conscience Orgueilleuse. Pour y revenir ensuite, et s'en éloigner à nouveau, dans une permanente oscillation entre la recherche de la souveraineté — qui n'a pas de raisons — et l'Orgueil — qui lui même est déja une raison.

On pourrait dire qu'il est finalement *assez humain* pour ainsi évoluer — ce qui, entre autres, le distingue par exemple de la *bête raisonnante* que fut Sade...

Outre l'Orgueil, une autre position propre de ce mouvement pendulaire de l'être Subjectif de Genet est *l'inversion de la Culpabilité*, et la *construction* du crime comme rédompteur.

> «...plus ma culpabilité serait grande, à vos yeux, entière, totalement assurée, plus grande sera ma liberté. *Plus parfaite ma solitude et mon unicité. Par ma culpabilité encore je gagnais droit à l'intelligence.* Trop de gens, me disais-je, *pensent et qui n'en ont pas le droit. Ils ne l'on pas payé d'une entreprise telle que penser devient indispensable à votre salut*».

C'est la Culpabilité qui nourrit la Pensée. Penser c'est *donner des noms* au devenir coupable, et la culpabilité organise la rédomption en fournissant la matière prémière de la conscience.

Mais Culpabilité peut désigner *aussi* ce par quoi l'Être-Sujet se *purifie*.

L'acte coupable est alors non seulement nouricier de l'âme, mais ce par quoi l'Ame est sauvée, ce par quoi elle peut évoluer dans le sens de son Absolue Liberté.

> «Sur la route d'Alicante, grâce à la résistance que je dus combattre, grâce à ce que je dus mettre en oeuvre pour abolir ce qu'on nomme le remords, le vol que je commis devint à mes yeux un *acte très dur, très pur, presque lumineux*. En l'accomplissant j'avais détruit une fois de plus (...) les chers liens de la fraternité.»[4]

Dans la solitude absolue ainsi atteinte, il peut vouloir proliférer dans le monde, devenir monde, remplir le monde de ce que, en lui, est abject: Ce vol «est lâche, veule, bas... aucun des éléments qui le composent ne me laisse une chance de le magnifier. Pourtant je ne renie pas le plus monstrueux de mes fils. *Je veux couvrir le monde d'une prôgéniture abominable.*»[5]

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[3] Jean Genet, *Le Journal du Voleur*, Paris: Gallimard, p. 124.
[4] Idem, p. 91.
[5] Ibidem, p. 91.

Couvrir le monde, assurer son expansion dans le monde, *faire le monde devenir soi.*

Images cependant bien douteuses, celles-ci, propres des mouvements oscillatoires caractéristiques du Voleur, mais qui à mon oreille sonnent faux...

Car, il me semble, ce qui nourrit la recherche du Voleur c'est le désir *d'être couvert par le monde et non pas de le couvrir*, de devenir l'autre en s'y logeant. *Être c'est habiter à l'intérieur de l'autre, qui pourtant à chaque fois est recréé par les mouvements expansifs du Soi.*

Les images de l'autre les plus véhémentes sont celles où le Soi et l'Autre se recrèent mutuellement, dans une interdépendance qui n'est ni fusionnelle ni symbiotique...

Une interdépendance qui définit une position particuliére du [SujetObjet].

Rien n'est plus clair, à ce propos, que le rapport au propriétaire pendant le vol:

> «*Je ne songe pas précisément au propriétaire du lieu, mais tous mes gestes l'évoquent à mesure qu'ils le voient. Je baigne dans une idée de propriété quand je saccage une propriété. Je recrèe le propriétaire absent.* Il vit non en face, *mais autour de moi. C'est un élément fluide que je respire, qui entre en moi, qui gonfle mes poumons.*»[6]

Pas d'absence, pas de défaillance. L'autre est partout et toujours, en tant que fluide, chose diaphane qui pénètre partout dans le Soi, et en même temps l'entoure, l'enveloppe — et l'étreint.

Les *images aéréennes* se multiplient, en effet, chez Genet comme chez Jean:

> «Mes amis (prétextes à mon irisation — puis à ma transparence — à mon absence enfin) ces garçons dont je parle s'évaporent. *Il ne demeure d'eux que ce qui de moi demeure: je ne suis que par eux qui ne sont rien, n'étant que par moi.* Ils m'éclairent, mais je suis la zone d'interférence. Les Garçons: ma garde crépusculaire.»[7]

Texte magnifique, où le principe de l'interpénétration [*SujetObjet*] dans une mutuelle recréation, mais en tant que fluides, acquiert la plus profonde luminosité!

Et les Êtres sont tellement fluides, qu'il faut bien *une enveloppe qui les contienne.*

L'enveloppe est ce premier lieu le *chateau* où le Sujet devient Roi dans un état cependant de pure *objectalité.*

L'enveloppe est en second lieu le corps cloacal, que nous avons déjà rencontré chez Jean.

Le chateau est le bagne-lucide, ou la Centrale, pleine d'ombre.

> «La grave et lente agonie du bagne était de l'abjection un épanouissment le plus parfait... son abolition me prive à ce point qu'en moi même et pour moi tout seul recompose un bagne, plus méchant que celui de la Guyanne. J'ajoute que des Centrales on peut dire 'à l'Ombre'. Le bagne est au Soleil. C'est dans une lumière cruelle que tout se passe, et je ne puis m'empécher de la choisir comme signe de lucidité.»

Du *Corps Cloacal*, on retrouvera la dialectique, déjà rencontrée chez Jean, de la *protection* et de l'*emprisonnement* que la conscience veut à chaque fois dépasser en tant qu'emprisonnement.

Les références à l'*odeur*, chez Genet comme chez Jean, sont multiples. Genet rend plus lumineux encore ce rapport à l'odeur:

> «La maison ne sentait ni plus ni moins mauvais que toutes les autres de Barriochino,

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[6] Jean Genet, *Le Journal du Voleur*, Paris: Gallimard, p. 174.

[7] Idem, p. 106.

> mais de celle-ci *l'odeur épouvantable demeure à jamais pour moi celle-là même non seulement de l'amour, mais de la tendresse et de la confiance.* L'odeur de Stilitano, l'odeur de ses aiselles, l'odeur de sa bouche, quand mon odorat s'en souvient, s'il le retrouve tout à coup avec une verité inquiétante, je le crois capable de me donner les plus folles audaces.»[8]

Dans ce cas, c'est le corps cloacal qui est déjà lá, il s' agit d'y vivre, d'y retourner, d'y nourrir ce qui est appelé confiance, tendresse, amour.

Mais s'il n'est pas là en tant qu'objet-espace, il est possible de le recréer, imaginairement, en reconstruisant le Sujet-qui-est-entouré-par-le-cloaque-maternel...

Le Voleur a un «ami». Il a gardé son argent en pensant lui envoyer cet argent alors que cet ami est en prison. Voici une bonne occasion de réaliser une nouvelle *ascension*: le Voleur déchire les billets et les jette: que l'ami crêve! Mais la chose n'est pas bien faite, ou alors est insuffisante. Ayant jeté les billets dans une *bouche d'égouts, il en reprend les morceaux, les recolle... et s'offre un déjeuner somptueux*!

Les richesses jetées et reprises dans les égouts deviennet somptueusement nourricières.

La réalité ne lui fournissant un espace cloacal tout préparé, le Voleur le recrée par un geste magnifique qui le reconstruit de part en part, en faisant de lui en même temps le Sujet Abject qui se nourrit de l'espace abject enveloppant.

Parfois, cependant, l'idée n'est pas de le recréer mais de s'y enfermer, d'y rester indéfiniment, de s'y emprisonner en compagnie de son bourreau *mal odorant*.

Stilitano le frappe: «La clé est sur la porte, pensais-je. Entre l'équerre des jambes qui me cognaient avec rage, je la voyais prise dans la serrure, et j'eusse voulu la tourner d'un double tour afin *d'être enfermé par moi même avec mon bourreau.*»

Évidemment, il faut un énorme travail et une permanente vigilance pour maintenir la présence des images cloacales qui protégent, sans doute, mais, chez Genet comme chez Jean, écrasent aussi.

Le Voleur entend parler d'Uranus, et un désir s'organise chez lui d'y vivre à jamais:

> «Dans la planète Uranus, parait-il, l'atmosphère serait si lourde que les fougères sont rampantes; les bêtes se trainent écrasées par le poids des gaz. A ces *humiliés* toujours sur le ventre je me veux melé. Si la metempsychose m' accorde une nouvelle demeure, je choisis cette planète maudite, je l'habite avec les bagnards de ma race.»[9]

Mais pendant que la metempsychose ne lui accorde pas cette faveur, le Voleur organise des rencontres où à chaque fois l'autre est *construit* comme Absolu Souverain.

Il ne rampe pas sous le poids des gaz, mais rampe devant l'autre, et d'autant plus émerveillé que les actes *sont inutiles*, ne produisant aucun gain sinon psychique: *des Actes en pure Perte*.

Stilitano passe de l'opium de Hollande en France. Il demande au voleur de transporter, clandestinement, un paquet, alors que lui, Stilitano, reste dans le train comme un voyageur qui se promène. Le Voleur découvre la machination. *Il ne se révolte pas.* Il remercie son traire de camarade/amant/ami. Il cogite: «grâce [à Stilitano] je n'allais pas passer une frontière pour une mesquine nécessité mais par Obéissance, *par soumission à une Puissance Souveraine.*»

Nous savons cependant que la dialectique que le Voleur s'est construit lui permet d'aller au devant de l'autre, et maintenant, aller au devant de l'autre, dans cette rencontre avec la Puissance Souveraine, c'est de se constituer lui comme Puissance Souveraine.

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[8] Jean Genet, *Le Journal du Voleur*, Paris: Gallimard, p. 48.
[9] Idem, p. 23.

La rencontre avec la Puissance Souveraine lui permet de dire, tout bas certainement: «'Je serais Roi quand même', moi, qui suis tout près de ma Reine... *Mére*... cloaque.»

En fait, d'une conscience aussi aigüe que celle du Voleur, on s'étonnerait que la Mère soit entiérement absente.

Dans *Le Journal du Voleur*, elle aparait: deux fois!

Et les détours de sa construction imaginaire pour arriver à l'image de la Reine sont d'un extraordinaire interêt.

Le Voleur est pris en Espagne par la Police, et porte en lui un *tube de vaseline*. Il dit: «je savais que toute la nuit mon tube de vaseline serait exposé au mépris — *l' inverse d'une Adoration Perpétuelle* — d'un groupe de policiers beaux, forts, solides...»

«Ce chétif objet si humble... saurait mettre dans tous ses états toutes les polices du monde, il attirerait sur soi le mépris, la haine, les rages blanches...» Mais il était par là même aussi indestructible que le Voleur, fidèle à son bonheur et *fier*...

Mais alors, en se rappelant de l'*Adoration Perpétuelle* du tube de vaseline dont la saleté, le ridicule, l'être comme être-d'humiliation, nous assurent qu' il représente le Voleur lui-même ou est plutôt une extension de lui, en se rappelant donc de l'Adoration Perpétuelle dont il est lui-même l'objet, *il se rapelle de la Mére*.

> «...voici qu'intervient une image: sous un réverbère, dans une rue de la ville où j'écris, le visage blafard d'une *petite vieille*, un visage plat et rond comme la lune, très pâle, dont je ne saurais dire s'il était triste ou hipocrite. Elle m'aborde, me dit qu'elle est très pauvre et me demande un peu d'argent. La douceur de ce visage de poisson-lune me renseigne tout de suite: *la vieille sortait de prison. — C'est une voleuse*, me dis-je. En m'éloignant d'elle, une sorte de rêverie aigüe, *vivant à l'intérieur de moi et non au bord de mon esprit*, m'entraine à penser que c'était peut-être *ma mére que je venais de rencontrer*. Je ne sais rien d'elle qui m'abandonna au berceau, mais j'espèrais que c'était cette vieille voleuse qui mendiait la nuit.
>
> — Si c'était elle... ah! Si c'était elle! J'irais la couvrir de fleurs, de glaieuls, de baisers! J'irais pleurer de tendresse sur les yeux de ce poisson-lune, sur cette face ronde et nette.»

Ces images sont rapidement corrigés. Il y a là trop de tendresse trop humaine, trop de baisers, et surtout *trop de formes, rondes et nettes*.

Le Voleur ajoute:

> «Il a fallu peu de temps à mon esprit pour qu'il remplaça ces marques habituelles de la tendresse par n'importe quel geste, et même les plus décriés, les plus vils, que je changeais de significations autant que les baisers, ou les larmes ou les fleurs. — *Je me contenterai de baver sur elle*, pensais-je en débordant d'amour... de *baver sur ses cheveux et de vomir dans ses mais. Mais je l'adorerais cette voleuse qui est ma mére*.»[10]

Extrême mouvement d'images, celui-ci, images entrelacées autour de l'idée même de l'Adoration. Les policiers *adorent* le chétif et scandaleux tube de vaseline, c'est à dire, ils adorent le Voleur même, qui y séjourne, tout comme le Voleur *adore* sa voleuse de mère, qui à son tour l'adore, lui, dédoublée qu'elle est dans les policiers enragés. Dans l'Abjection démultipliée, tout le monde adore tout le monde...

C'est dans cette extrême humiliation que le Voleur rencontre la Mère-image, comme plus tard, *dans un mouvement d'aspiration vers la plus misérable stagnation*, il la rencontre à nouveau, et avec elle «l'amour le plus parfait».

[10] Jean Genet, *Le Journal du Voleur*, Paris: Gallimard, p. 22.

En parlant d'un autre, il dit que «sa mendicité était stagnante. Elle était devenue un lac immobile, transparent, jamais troublé par le souffle, et ce pauvre honteux était l'image parfaite de ce que j'eusse voulu être. *C'est alors*, peut-être, *que rencontrant ma mére, et qu'elle fut plus humble que moi, avec elle nous eussions poursuivis l'ascension* — encore que le langage semble vouloir le mot déchéance ou tout autre indiquant un mouvement vers le bas — l'ascension, dis-je, difficile, douloureuse, qui conduit à l'humiliation. Avec elle j'eusse mené cette aventure, je l'eusse écrite afin de magnifier les termes — gestes ou vocables — les plus abjects grâce à l'amour.»[11]

Alors, dans la plus radicale déchéance, et *entouré d'elle, avec elle, autour d'elle, la respirant*, plus humiliée que lui, lui Sujet elle Objet, elle Sujet lui Objet, *différents et identiques*, alors le Voleur serait enfin Roi des Rois, objet de légitime et universelle Adoration.

Roi des Rois enfin, car enfin devenu l'«impossible Nullité».

[11] Jean Genet, *Le Journal du Voleur*, Paris: Gallimard, p. 102.

Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 129-135

Lawrence Durrell's *Mountolive* (1958): Merger, Abjection, and a Better Union

JULIUS ROWAN RAPER (*)

Having separated the emotional structure of *Balthazar* (the second volume of *The Alexandria Quartet*) from the dramatic structure — in effect having deconstructed the novel — Durrell through Darley used the free play of the imagination thus liberated as his technique for discovering a deeper psychological structure that while confounding the logical mind nonetheless satisfied the need of the emotions for deep mirroring. In *Mountolive*, Darley reconstructs the novel by recombining the dramatic and psychological structures. In the process, he demonstrates the power of the imagination available to a novelist mature enough to accept the truth of artifice as more profound than the truth of life that Darley had sought in assembling *Justine*, his first effort to recapture his experiences in Alexandria. For, although *Mountolive* presents itself in the conventions of a naturalistic novel (*Balthazar* [9]), it is, in truth, the most artificial or «purely imaginary» (*Mountolive* [9]) novel in the *Quartet*. Because its nature is pure artifice, it convincingly demonstates one of the major axioms of the *Quartet* and of postmodern fiction, that our natural(istic) reality may be the most deceptive fiction we in the postmodern world have to learn to frame and thereby limit.

In *Balthazar* Darley worked through imagination to reconstruct the inner worlds, the feelings and motives (98), of a number of his friends, especially Narouz. He may have focused on Nessim's brother because of all the characters Narouz seemed driven by the most elemental motives and appeared the most unlike Darley. Because the character, in turn, farthest removed from Narouz culturally is Mountolive, reconstructing the latter's inward space is the logical step — both aesthetically speaking and to provide a parallax view of his subject — for Darley to take as he builds on the imaginative momentum generated in *Balthazar*[1]. For, in the way that Narouz is the most exotically «Egyptian» major character

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[1] Eugene Hollahan has effectively summarized the conclusions of earlier scholars about «who wrote *Mountolive*» (169-70) and has concluded himself that Darley begins «his novelistic career by 'writing' a novel about David Mountolive» (177) in much the way Proust's Marcel begins his as a writer by creating «Swann in Love», a section of *Swann's Way* that parallels *Mountolive* both in theme and «rhetorical-ontological status» (174). My argument, although independently developed, parallels Hollahan's view that «Mountolive gives us [the] 'true answers'... of imaginative realistic fictionality» — «not of objective factuality» (171), as commonly thought (169-70). But I would stress the greater «fictionality» of programmatic and deterministic naturalism (Durrell's label for the volume) relative to the factual reportage that the subjective realism of many modernist novels, including *Justine*, employ. My distinction

— as an Englishman might project the image of an Egyptian — so is Mountolive the most typically «English» — as an Egyptian might imagine an Englishman. In the way that Narouz represents the heart of Egyptian culture and his story captures the pathos of much Egyptian life, so Mountolive stands at the head of English culture in Egypt and his story symbolizes the tragedy of the English empire's endeavor in its «oriental» colonies. In short, in choosing Mountolive as his central figure, Darley has freed himself well enough from his former subjective realism to employ the artifice of high tragedy. For he dramatizes the psychological catastrophe of colonialism in the person of its most visible representative, the English ambassador himself.

To do so, Darley has had to await the maturity and information that the passing of fifteen or more years can bring. For, while we must imagine the reconstructions in *Balthazar* — and probably the writing down of them — as occurring on the eve of the Second World War (*Balthazar* 242), the narrator of *Mountolive* clearly states that the third novel is being written «To-day in the fifties» (*Mountolive* 254). The perspective of time allows the unnamed (but present) narrator to speak with the «detachment of an entomologist» that Darley began to achieve in the previous volume (*Balthazar* 221, *Mountolive* 253). This detachment allows the narrator, who aesthetically and logically must be the mature Darley, to take as his theme the conflict between the public and private worlds of the representative Englishman as he encounters the complexities of Egypt, the orient, and their otherness. In *Balthazar* the conflict between the public reality (captured in the dramatic structure) and private reality (represented in the psychological structure) led not to a resolution but to the deconstruction of the novel. In this volume, the psychological structure dovetails perfectly with the dramatic at the moment when the public life of Mountolive swallows his private. Although this dovetailing of structures is pure artifice, it demonstrates that the art of the imagination captures a more profound truth than the truth of life Darley scrupulously reported in *Justine*.

The dramatic structure of *Mountolive* is the clearest thus far in the *Quartet*. The situation emerges as young Mountolive falls in love with the older Leila Hosnani (36), a passion that puts him in conflict with her husband and with Narouz, her son (38). The situation is defined when Mountolive, now older, stationed in Russia, and the British Ambassador Designate to Egypt, learns from Pursewarden that Leila's other son Nessim may be involved in «a large and complicated plot against the Egyptian Royal House» (108 ff). The turning point occurs when Pursewarden, formerly scornful of the evidence against Nessim, hears Melissa confirm the plot and its intention of throwing out the English (178), conveys his discovery in a secret report to Mountolive, and punctuates its importance by committing suicide (180-81). The denouement of the novel describes the game of political chess played by Mountolive, acting from his official duty, and by Nessim, desperately protecting his own neck, a game in which Narouz is finally the knight sacrificed to defend the king and queen, Nessim and Justine. The game ends in a stalemate, the novel in an Egyptian lamentation, old as Isis and Osiris, for Narouz (314-18).

The psychological structure is almost as clear as the dramatic, although the events that embody it are not presented in chronological order. For the nature of Mountolive's attachment to the older Leila is not defined until we see the grown man, now an Ambassador, with his mother — both of them neurotically regressing to a behavior pattern learned in his childhood. On his brief return home, mother and son fall «ill together, as if by sympathy. Was it so that they might lie in adjoining rooms talking to each other, reading to each other, sharing the luxury of a common convalescence?» (100). Although Mountolive does not know what brings on his «crushing ear-ache», «this onslaught of the Petit Mal» (100),

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here seems to accord with Hollahan's insight that «ontologically, within the admitted fiction of *The Alexandria Quartet*, [*Mountolive*] has the peculiar status of a fiction within the context of a set of facts, i.e., Darley's actual life as narrated» in the other three volumes (169).

the psychological pattern of his life indicates that, because his father had absented himself from the family to carry on his Indian scholarship (97-99), Mountolive and his mother continued in an infantile attachment never intruded upon by either Kristeva's «imaginary father» or Freud's oedipal father. This infantile need Mountolive effectively *transferred* to the older Leila and an even older Egypt (22). The transference of the mother image onto Leila helps explain the illusory power of his attachment and the sense he has of being reborn in Egypt. As he begins to «feel himself really penetrating a foreign country, foreign *moeurs*, for the first time», he also experiences «the vertiginous pleasure of losing an old self and growing a new one to replace it» (22). He calls this transformation «education» but has the sense that it includes «transplanting a whole huge intact world from his imagination into the soil of his new life» (22). By blurring rebirth, education, and sexual intercourse, the language Durrell uses here brilliantly underscores the incestuous nature of his tie to Leila.

When Mountolive is called away from Leila and Egypt, this new life becomes a «buried stream flowing on underground» (56). Nonetheless, it, rather than his diplomatic existence, is what he takes to be «his real life» (56). Consequently, when he is called back to Egypt, he feels «that his real life now [stretches] before him; he [is] about to be reborn» (74) — an expectation that he will repeat the experience of new life he formerly sensed with Leila (22), itself a regression to his attachment to his mother. Rather than having his real and private life restored to him, however, his return in an official uniform gives him the sense of being trapped in an isolating public role that restrains him like «the dog-collar» of the secondhand uniform he wears (78, 132). Because Leila, trapped in her own imaginary scenario of their relationship, refuses to see him (145), «Egypt itself [cannot] fully come alive for him» (148). For, to his mind, Leila represents «something like a second, almost mythical image of the reality which he [is] experiencing» (148). In his unconscious, however, she is in fact a repetition of the reality he knew with his mother, a repetition from which he has now been separated by his public duties. If his public self has all along kept him from his private self, once he reads Pursewarden's secret report on the Hosnanis, the public Mountolive destroys the private completely. For at this point, the dramatic structure of the novel swallows the psychological: «Unwittingly, ... Pursewarden had, he reflected, separated him forever from Leila» (190). Disillusioned with the Hosnanis and his private life, he begins to escape from his pain and emptiness into «the aridities of his official duty,» which for «the first time now... seemed almost delightful, almost enticing» (237).

As his public life consumes his private, he becomes convinced that he is trapped by «naked providence» (270), by what he «now knew to be not merely chance, but in fact destiny» (271). In these speculations, Mountolive is apparently seeing the source of his predicament as a large *external* force — Providence, destiny — over which neither he nor his Mission nor the Foreign Service has any control. The novel itself shows, however, that Mountolive's *character* is in fact his destiny — that the split between his public self and his private has rendered him unable to take meaningful action. For, in having «disinherited» his «private humours and impulses», he has brought upon himself a «stagnation», «excruciating headaches», and a series of «etiolated projections» that drain the life around him of its meaning and leave the other actors in his outward drama «empty as suits of clothes» (270). When he visits Nur to have the Egyptian Foreign Minister put pressure on Memlik, the Egyptian Minister of the Interior, to investigate and suppress Nessim's plot, he is both alienated from his private life and feels ashamed of his public duties as well. Separated from both parts of his personality, he has become as lifeless as «some fretful mummy» (271).

Though devoured by the dramatic structure of the novel, Mountolive's psychological development belongs to a pattern that, over the span of the *Quartet*, frames the drama of the individual volume. For Mountolive twice attempts to revitalize himself in ways that echo quietly in the reader's unconscious. When, in his first attempt at revitalization, he agrees to meet Leila in her «horse-drawn cab», it is with a «queer mixture of feelings»,

a mixture that is not defined because it is queer — that is, uncanny, by virtue of still not being fully conscious. Even though, after Pursewarden's revelation, Mountolive suspected that Leila had initiated the political plot (248), he is willing to believe her when she writes that she «knew nothing about it till carnival» (275). Reading between the lines, we can infer that the «incoherent relief» he feels here comes from the hope that he can now restore the current of his private life, while the «edge of indignation» he also feels arises from the sense that she will use her private connection to influence his public duty (275). Even so, he knows that the meeting will «determine... the psychic meaning of [his return to Egypt] in relation to his inner life», that it constellates «a puberty of the feelings which [has] to be outgrown», that it is a «sort of barrier in himself which [has] to be crossed» (276).

What he discovers with Leila, however, is neither a lover, nor Egypt, nor his lost private self, but a woman who is old, motherly, and foreign — «some old Arab lady!» scented with «orange-water, mint, Eau de Cologne, ... sesame», and whisky (280). That she is less a lover than a mother pleading for her own son (283) brings Mountolive face to face with the mix of «anger and surprise and disgust» that he believes comes from her effort to make him «discuss an official matter with a private person» (283). In truth, his emotional reaction is so deepseated because her motherly plea in fact brings him for the first time up against the unacceptable element of incest in their love affair.

The failure with Leila leaves him without direction, impulse, desire — until he hits upon the notion of replacing the symbol of Egypt, Leila, with the public reality of Egypt itself (284). But his second attempt at renewing his vitality, his descent, disguised as an invisible man, totally anonymous (285), into Alexandria, leads to the most blatant possible revelation of the regressive, latently incestuous nature of his longing for Leila and Egypt. His quest for spiritual enlightenment is unmasked in the house of child prostitutes when he is swarmed over by the children and faintingly recalls the image of himself «sitting beside his mother in front of a roaring fire» studying a plate of Gulliver, the adult Englishman, «fallen into the hands of the little people of Lilliput» (293). To Mountolive's colonialist mind, the little people of Lilliput prefigure the prostitutes of Egypt, including Leila, his faithless lover as mother surrogate. Confused and defeated in his inner life, Mountolive's destiny in the volume bearing his name proves to be that of the empty public man who wears the uniform with a dog-collar. He ends as a «*garde malade*, a male nurse to [the] short-legged lap dog», *Fluke*, «a dispirited-looking sausage-dog» given him by the concerned Chancery wives (298-99).

Mountolive's pattern of merger, separation, emptiness, attempted restoration of merger, disillusionment, and defeat both echoes and expands the course of Pursewarden's emotional development in the period immediately preceding his own death. Pursewarden's initial and lasting merger — his Check — is his tie to his blind sister Liza (162). From this incestuous connection most likely comes the guilt that, Mountolive intuits, is the cause of his «robust scolding manners» (69). After two years in Egypt, Pursewarden's general alienation leaves him eager for a transfer (101, 103, 108). Nonetheless, he, like Mountolive, has come so completely under the spell of Nessim's family (68) that he too wishes to protect them from British Brigadier Maskelyne's report on their conspiring against the Egyptian throne, and so suspends Maskelyne's paper, even though he knows part of the evidence comes from Nessim's suborned secretary, Selim (108-09).

After Pursewarden's affection for the Hosnanis has caused Mountolive to have Maskelyne transferred from Egypt to Jerusalem, Pursewarden, again like Mountolive, descends at dusk into Alexandria (160). Unlike Mountolive, however, his emotion is largely one of triumph over Maskelyne. Even though he feels he has «something to crow about», his victory, like his life, is likely edged with guilt because he has «advanced [his] own position by a large notch» (157) and with remorse because he has a writer's empathy for Maskelyne's failure and ignominy (159). But it is basically with enjoyment and happiness that he dances

with Melissa (Greek for «honeybee», suggesting here the «sweetness of being») and hums the tune of *Jamais de la Vie* (French for «Not on your life!,» suggesting here «Not in life») (167). Initially his merger with Melissa feels so successful that he behaves like a brother (168) and, after she reads his secret in his hand, confesses to his sister-of-the-night that his ability to love has been «checked» by his early sexual relationship with his own sister (174-75). After this full confession comes the wise, tender enjoyment of making love with Melissa (176-77), followed by her jealous boast that her now-dead lover Cohen had helped Nessim Hosnani smuggle arms into Palestine to topple the English power in the Middle East (178).

Pursewarden's response to Melissa's boast — his sense that «the whole city [has] crashed about his ears» (178) — not only parallels the disillusionment that Mountolive felt after his meeting with Leila and after being locked in the house of child prostitutes, but echoes word for word the despair the narrator of *Justine* felt when he learned that Justine had left Egypt without him (*Justine* 199). Thus the pattern of merger and disillusionment is larger than the career of Mountolive, larger that the psychological development of Mountolive and Pursewarden both. It pervades the *Quartet* and contains important implications for the vision and aesthetic of the entire series.

In fact, Mountolive's experiences in Egypt are a distillation of Darley's and Pursewarden's, a paradigm of every introspective Englishman's in the Middle East, a region that cannot help but seduce them when they arrive from a cold, repressive nation where, in Pursewarden's words, «all the really delicious things you can do to a woman are criminal offences, grounds for divorce» (176). Pursewarden's joy with Melissa takes us back to the joy Darley felt at the start of the series when he too was merged with her and, through her, with the city:

> Melissa! ... It was good to stand there, ... breathing quickly because we knew what we wanted of each other. The messages passing beyond conscience, directly through flesh-lips, eyes, water-ices, the coloured stall. To stand lightly there, our little fingers linked, drinking in the deep camphor-scented afternoon, a part of [the] city. (*Justine* 5).

This is the oneness Mountolive knew with his mother and sought to recover through union with Leila and Egypt, that Pursewarden knew with his sister and recovered briefly with Melissa, that Darley knew with Melissa, surrendered for Justine, felt he recovered with Justine, then lost when she broke their merger by fleeing Egypt for Palestine.

This oneness, in accord with the aesthetic implied in *Balthazar*, Darley must also, like Mountolive, have known with his mother. Otherwise, how would he, as the probable narrator of *Mountolive*, have had the deftness to make it the source of the title character's transference of mother-son love to Leila? For in *Balthazar*, where we witness him learning to imagine his friends' feelings from their actions (*Balthazar* 98), we also see him reconstructing the lives of his friends/characters out of his own empathetic knowledge, knowledge that tells as much about Darley as about the characters. In this manner, Mountolive's attachment to and disillusionment with Leila project onto the highest levels of Anglo-Egyptian relations lowly Darley's own attachment to and separation from Justine.

But the fictional reworking in the third volume affords an aesthetic distance that permits Darley to elaborate the pattern of merger and separation by tracing it directly back to an earlier mother attachment, by moving the abjection of Justine out of the realm of misdirected murder (of Toto) into the «real» throwing out of Leila and Egypt from the private life of Mountolive when the «Third Party», his masculine duty to throne, crown, and king, comes between Leila and himself[2]. The pattern, though given a childhood beginning in

[2] Here I follow the terminology of Julia Kristeva (*Tales*, 34, 40-42; *Powers* 37) as elsewhere I apply it to Darley's behavior in *Balthazar* (Raper).

the third volume, is not completed there. The novel offers a clue, however, to what may lie ahead — not, of course, for the dead Pursewarden but — for Mountolive and Darley when Pursewarden, at the moment of his triumph over Maskelyne, reflects on the writer's (and everyone's) problem in responding to the people he or she comes to know well: «'Growing up means separation in the interests of a better, more lucid joining up. ... Bah!'» (160). Although Pursewarden's dismissal of the thought is characteristic of the man, the series nonetheless illustrates the aptness of the pattern of merger, separation, improved joining up, and growth he has articulated. For neither Mountolive's nor Darley's story has ended.

Structurally, the repetitions of this complex pattern give the effect of a *mise en abyme*, of mirroring realities embedded in other realities, that Gide identified and that has since become one of the signs of the postmodern. Pursewarden's story captures in a nutshell the tragic side of the British colonial attempt to maintain the empire's position in the older, seemingly more complex and cunning social and political culture. Mountolive's seduction and disillusionment repeat and frame Pursewarden's tragedy, and, through Mountolive's social standing, raise it to the level of high drama. Darley's similar pattern frames Mountolive's, which is itself the symbolic distillation of Darley's. The sense of the richness and complexity of Alexandria and of modern life grows with the internal duplications of this pattern.

Aesthetically and thematically, the repetitions work like jazz improvisations. For Durrell, himself once a jazz pianist at the London night club The Blue Peter, has through Darley reworked a finite set of variables through a potentially infinite number of variations — much the way a familiar theme is repeated, varied, and stretched to the limit of recognizability in a composition by Miles Davis, Dave Brubeck, or any jazz musician. Here, however, the reworked materials are the psychological patterns, sometimes called complexes or archetypes, that are said by modern psychology, to recur in a potentially infinite number of arrangements to create a possible infinity of individual personalities. The final volume of the series *Clea* will push the improvisation of a limited set of variables to its limit.

But the payoff for Darley of such repetitions lies in their psychological potential. For his reconstructions of the parallel stories of Pursewarden and Mountolive constitute imaginative acts that compulsively repeat the tragedy of his own involvement with Justine. Such reconstructions represent Darley's efforts to discover through the powers of the imagination a pattern with a beginning, a middle, and an end that would enable him to comprehend as completely as possible the shape of his own experience in Egypt — and, by so comprehending, to work through his own Check, whether with Justine or, like Mountolive, with his mother or with both, and so, as Pursewarden put it, grow up through separation in order to move to a «better, more lucid joining up» (160). Without this working through, he like his countrymen is destined to repeat compulsively the pattern of neurotic merger and disillusionment. For the alternative to The Check that governed Justine in the first volume appears to be effective separation, emotional growth, and a better union.

This is knowledge that Darley could not have achieved through the literature of memory that he practiced when he wrote *Justine*. Only the disruption created by Balthazar's interlinear could derail him from the modernist tracks on which he had set his literary freight and push him over the border into the kingdom of the imagination where he finds the power to invent the coherent story of Mountolive. Although *Mountolive* pretends to be a naturalistic novel, it is as far from Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* as *The Winter's Tale* is from Shakespeare's history plays. It is artifice in the best sense of the term: it brings us to a perception of the large patterns that govern modest lives.

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 137-142

An Aesthetics of Disgust: A Symptomatic Reading of Elfriede Jelinek's *Die Klavierspierlerin (The Piano Teacher)* (*)

ELIZABETH WRIGHT (**)

> Erica, the meadow flower. That's how she got her name: erica. Her pregnant mother had visions of something timid and tender. Then, seeing the lump of clay that shot out of her body, she promptly began to mould it relentlessly to keep it pure and fine. Remove a bit here, a bit there. Every child instinctively heads towards dirt and filth unless you pull it back.[1] (23-4)

The text proclaims its dialectics: a fixated cultural ideal versus the stubborn materiality of life. The clay resists the ideal despite the insistence of the letter, the naming as delicate flower. This dialectic exceeds the speech and thoughts of the text's individual figures, who are spoken for and about by a heterogeneous narrative voice that continually changes perspective, luring the reader by blatantly pointing towards recognizable scenarios and pathologies. It is a text which at first sight offers itself for a psychoanalytic reading but subsequently proves curiously resistant.

There is undoubtedly a «mother-daughter plot»,[2] which has provoked persuasive psychoanalytic readings,[3] the more so, since the text flaunts its own metacommentary:

(*) I would like to thank the following for their help in supplying much useful material: Allyson Fiddler, Helga Gallas, Annegret Mahler-Bungers, Margaret Whitford, Jill Hughes, and the Taylor Library, Oxford. Special thanks to Ellie Ragland-Sullivan for the insight that the axis upon which the text can be structured is that of psychosis.

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[1] Elfriede Jelinek, *Die Klavierspielerin* (Hamburg, Rowohlt Taschenbouch Verlag, 1986). The English versions are from the translation by Joachim Neugroschel, *The Piano Teacher* (London, Serpent's Tail, Weidenfeld and Nicholson).

[2] In her book *The Mother/Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism* (Bloomongton and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1989), Marianne Hirsch investigates the construction of femininity in the discourses of mother-and-daughterhood, tracing the «plots» of the Freudian family romance and nothing their changes and vicissitudes in selected nineteenth- and twentieth-century tests (Siogmund Freud, «Family Romances» (1909), *Standard Edition*, ed. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London, The Hogarth Press, 1953-75), I, pp. 281-397). Hirsch writes: «The family romance is a structure of fantasy — the imaginary construction of plots according to the principles of wish-fulfilment. The notion of family romance can thus accommodate the discrepancies between *social reality* and *fantasy construction*, which are basic to the experience and institution of family» (p. 10). Jelinek's «plot»

> Erika is in the pink of health — a well-nourished fish in her mother's amniotic fluid. (56)

She knows that her mother's embrace will completely devour and digest her yet she is magically drawn to it. (58)

Erika Kohut is a piano teacher, a fact unambiguously states in the English translation of the title. The German title, «Die Klavierspielerin», insinuates that she might have achieved the status of concert pianist designed for her by her mother, instead of remaining in the lower ranks of piano teacher at the Vienna Conservatoire. Erika is in late thirties and lives with her mother, sharing the ex-parental bed: soon after Erika's birth the father had become feeble-minded and had been transferred to an institution. Mother and daughter are fused in a symbiotic union, undisturbed by any third party, with Mother (spelt in capitals throughout) vetoing every male approach. Undeterred by her daughter's artistic failure, Mother continues to tempt her with narcissistic identification.[4] She constantly reinforces her claim to the daughter, yet at the same time she endeavours to instil in her a sense of her own uniqueness and superiority, textually encoded by the intermittent capitalization of the third person singular:

> The hawk mother and the buzzard grandmother order the child, their charge, not to leave the eyrie. They cut off Her life in thick slices. (34)

> She is the exception to the norm that surrounds her so repulsively. (15)

The symbiotic union of Mother and daughter is classically undermined by a double--bind which extends into a general textual strategy. For while the text insistently proffers the pathology of its individual characters, its intertextuality and narrative undecidability repeatedly undermine the search for character — or author — viewpoints whereby a reader might position herself. Hence, the reader, too, is caught in a double-bind, hysterized by the textual strategies, unable to find a firm vantage-point. The German reader, in particular, will be implicated in how the text irreverently incorporates the most canonized of national idealist thinkers, poets and composers, only to spit them out again, together with their notions of the bourgeois liberated subject. Goethe's idea that salvation is ruled out if the Faustian subject attains the Faustian object of desire and stops striving for the ultimate experience is relentlessly parodied, appropriated at an (im)pertinent moment, just when

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revises the basic paradigm of the traditional «family romance» by focusing on the daughter's story, but, significantly, *not* the mother's.

[3] See Annegret Mahler-Bungers, «Der Trauer auf der Spur — zu Elfriede Jelineks *Die Klavierspielerin*», *Freiburger literaturpsychologische Gespräche*, vol. 7 (Würzburg, 1988), pp. 80-95. Mahler-Bungers provides a brilliantly persuasive reading which argues that the text, written in the present tense throughout, enacts the fixation of the central figure in a timeless maternal symbiosis, which forces her to disavow sexual difference. Mahler-Bungers wishes to preserve the notion of castration as Symbolic process from the mutilation scenarios enacted in the text. She reveals how the text incorporates snatches of the lyrics from Schubert's «Die Winterreise», a song-cycle which grieves for a «lost object», and she connects the omission of reference to certain lyrics with the failure to mourn the absence and death of the feebleminded father in the text. See also Hedwig Appelt, *Die leibhaftige Literatur: Das Phantasma und die Präsenz der Trauer der Frau in der Schrift* (Weinheim and Berlin, Quadriga, 1989), pp. 111-32, for a Lacanian reading. Appelt argues that Erika sustains a permanent narcissistic wound in being forced by her mother to take up two crucial functions of the father, that of partner in the matrimonial bed and that of breadwinner, since she is thereby called upon simultaneously to be the phallus and to have the phallus. She is thus caught in the dilemma of her contradictory desires, «eine Frau im Sinne der Lust, doch nicht der Normalität zu sein» («to be a woman in relation to pleasure, but not in relation to normality», p.123. my translation).

[4] The name «Kohut» inscribes a connection with the American psychologist of the self and analyst of narcissistic disorders. See Ernst Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self* (New York, International Universities Press, 1971).

the young Erika is caught up in the lecherous play of a favoured male cousin: «the red genital pouch sways and dangles, it swings seductively before her eyes... She is the addressee of this package... She peers and peers... Just let this moment linger, it's so good»[5] (42-3), this final phrase denoting the ultimate (and forbidden) moment of comsummation. Canonized cultural institutions are similarly desacralized, in particular, music, the most idealized symbolic discourse, and Germany/Austria, its holiest of shrines:

> Erika jeers at the student's Bach. It is a muddy creek, faltering over obstacles like small rocks and mounds, stumbling along in its dirty bed... Deliberately trying to humiliate the student, Erica praises Bach's work to the skies. She claims that Bach rebuilds gothic cathedrals wherever his music is played. Erika feels a tingling between her legs, something felt only by those chosen by and for art when they talk about art. (101-1)

The text gleefully reveals the silent workings of the material in what is presumed ideal. Instead of luring the subject with a vision of unity between mind and body, spirit and matter, freedom and determinism, the text deconstructs the old metaphysics of nature, love and sexuality. It subverts the ideology of the traditional aesthetic, discerning in it a stale Imaginary, a fantasy of primary narcissism, and reveals that, to take Terry Eagleton's words, «there is something in the body which can revolt against the power which inscribes it».[6] For Eagleton, «the aesthetic concerns this most gross and palpable dimension of the human... the body's long inarticulate rebellion against the tyranny of the theoretical».[7]

A psychoanalytic reading which might therefore be appropriate for this text would draw in those theories of theory which stress that at the level of lived experience there is something unrepresentable which remains and which does not necessarily appear solely in pathological symptoms. There is Lacan's insistence, after Kojève, that «the symbol manifests itself first of all in the murder of the thing»,[8] by which he indicates that the very abstraction of the concept must retreat from sensible reality, leaving out the unrepresentable. However, this unrepresentable is not some mystical essence which would refer back to the very idealism the text throws out and throws up in disgust, but the very residue of brute nature, an excess. For just as physical bodies exhibit symptoms of civilization's discontents, so do textual bodies. The unconscious of the text might then be sought at the level of the textual body — the letter — rather than at the level of its individual characters. A reading of the textual body can work at a greater level of generality than a literary case-history reading, for it can show that the unconscious is irrepressible even in a text which plots the capture of the subject in the symbolic — the «music teacher».

In *Die Klavierspielerin* there is an invitation to participate in the pleasure of disgust. An excess of libido shows itself in alarming and disgusting overflows of every kind of bodily fluid, with a constant erosion of boundaries:

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[5] See Goethe, *Faust*, I, lines 1699-1702:

> Werd ich zum Augenblicke sagen:
> Verweile doch! du bist so schön!
> Dann magst du mich in Fesseln schlagen,
> Dann will ich gern zugrunde gehen.
> (If to the fleeting hour I say
> «Remain, so fair thou art, remain!»
> Then bind me with your fatal chain,
> For I will perish in that day.)

Faust, Part One, translated by Philip Wayne (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1971), p. 87.

[6] Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1971), p. 28.

[7] ibid, p. 12.

[8] Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, translated by Alan Sheridan (London, Tavistock Publications, 1977; orig. pub. *Écrits*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1966), p. 104.

> For an instant, a slit gapes in the previously intact tissue; then the arduously tamed blood rushes out from behind the barrier... Bright red blood trickles and trails from the wounds, sullying everything as it flows. It oozes, warm, silent, and the sensation is not unpleasant. It's so liquid. It runs incessantly... on and on. It runs and runs and runs and runs. (44)

> The aperture gapes, terrified at the change, and blood pours out... The drops ooze, run, blend with their comrades, turning into a red trickle, then a soothingly steady red stream when the individual trickles unite. The blood prevents HER from seeing what she has sliced open. It was her own body, but it was dreadfully alien to her. (86-7)

The body is fragmented, refusing borders and limits:

> She neatly trims the frazzled edges of nearby objects that explode, detonate, or simply lie still, and she takes them home. Then, alone or with Mother, she turns them over and over, combing their seams, looking for crumbs, dirt, or torn-off bits to analyze, if possible before their lives are taken to the cleaners. There's so much to seek and find. For Erika, these chips and snips are the true gist. (127)

Jelinek writes in an effort to explain the Real of the body, its excessive presence. The explosion and detonation of these objects figure both a fearful and a terroristic rejection. Seams are boundaries where something has been sewn together, but these bear evidence of failure, signifying what Julia Kristeva calls «fluid demarcations of yet unstable territories».[9] They are being inspected for the repulsive waste material that lodges there, disturbing «identity, system, order»[10] which are presumed to be in the service of life and the failure of which is to be associated with death:

> Erika hates that porous, rancid fruit that marks the bottom of her abdomen... Soon the decay will progress, encroaching upon the larger parts of her body. Then she will die in torment. Dismayed, Erika pictures herself as a numb hole, six feet of space, disintegrating in the earth. The hole that she despised and neglected has now taken full possession of her. She is nothing. And there is nothing left for her. (198)

The corpse is «the utmost of abjection»,[11] here linked with sexual difference. The figure in the text that conjoins death, gender and sexuality is a hole. Jelinek's text seems to ask for a reduction of the body: there is abjection of the reproductive function itself, as a «rancid fruit» and hence, elsewhere, not surprisingly, a rejection of romantic love as sublimation of that function:

> Walter Klemmer is truly in love... His love, however, is unrequited... This turns his stomach, and he proves his disgust by hawking up mucus and noisily placing it in the sink. Klemmer's love placenta... Since Klemmer doesn't rinse the sink, his clams linger at the drain hole. (122)

Slime, spit, semen, mucus, urine, etc. are all boundary phenomena in two senses: (1) they are amorphous: (2) they are produced at the rims of the body, through a hole. There is both horror of the differentiated and a revelling in disgust. *Jouissance*, the field of

[9] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: an Essay on Abjection*, translated by Leon S. Roudiez (New York, Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 11.
[10] Ibid., p. 4.
[11] Ibid.

libido, challenges the phallic proscription and rends apart the textual body in a defiant gesture: the body sends a symptomatic message to the Symbolic that it rejects sexual difference, while the lack of a signifier for the sexual nonrapport produces anxiety.

The text presents in a display of psychotic symptoms an excessive figuration of dissolution, of dis-figuration, a pleasure in dissolving bodily substance. Poetic language is thereby deprived of its «normal» aesthetic and instead assumes the form of a psychotic-aesthetic language where pleasure is taken in disgust. Since the Symbolic has so little to ofter, the text refuses to invest it with libido except via disgust. As noted already, a prime target in the Symbolic is German idealist thinking. The sacrilege of disgust is performed upon every aspect of it, in particular its constitution of a second, a higher nature. This inaugurates a series of subversive turns, whereby the old binaries of natural/unnatural, real/unreal, art/commodity are shown to be ideological constructs. For example, on their nature walk in the outskirts of Vienna Mother and daughter «delight in nature whenever they catch sight of it. If they stumble upon a rippling brook, they instantly drink water from it. Let's hope no deer has pissed into it. If they come to a thick tree truunk or dense underbrush, they can take a piss themselves, and the non-pisser stands guard to ward off any impudent peepers» (32). Nature is not «pure» in the way ideology perceives it, since its organic processes make it unfit for human consumption, while the human subject is «free» to pollute it as long as it observes the proprieties fitting for its higher nature. Culture thus redefines nature, installing a Symboic which turns out to be Imaginary: nature is in fact nothing but a pathetic fallacy, indifferent to the fervent endeavours of the human subject to find itself confirmed in it. Thus the bungled sexual efforts of Erica and her would-be student-lover:

> A low treetop beyond the widow. A chestnut tree. The tastelessness of Klemmer's sourballs inside her oral cavity, as the man, moaning senselessly, presses his all into her face. Erika sees an almost imperceptible swaying of the branches down below as they start to get besieged by raindrops... Next, an inaudible patter, then a downpour... The man is still stuffing himself into the woman's mouth, clutching her hair and her ears, while on the outside, natural forces rule with overwhelming power. She still wants and he still can't. (245)

This indifference of nature, dimly recognized, is elsewhere compensated for by the greater glories of culture: culture is proclaimed as more nature than nature itself. When summer guests complain of the piano teacher's impromptu recitals, Mother ingenuously blurts out the truth that aesthetic and natural ideals have been turned into commodities, insisting that the guests «are getting genuinely grade-A music, delivered along with their genuinely grade-A milk, still warm from the cow». (36).

However, the text's most compelling move does not, as one has come to expect, reside strictly in its masterful ideological turning of the tables, but in those abundant places where the text compulsively turns disgust into perverse pleasure. Culture has failed in its endeavour to impress itself on nature. The sadomasochistic rituals prescribed by Erika in the letters she sends to Klemmer, her student and would-be-lover, perform exactly this failure. They enact a fantasized severity of the Symbolic, the orders given miming the dreaded Other, in a vain attempt to present it complicit with desire:

> Her most haunting wish — the adored Herr Klemmer reads — is for you to punish me. She would like Klemmer as a punishment. And in such a way that he ties her up with the ropes I've collected, also the leather straps and even the chains! Hogtie her, bind her up as throroughly as he can — solidly, intensely, artifully, cruelly, tormentingly, cunningly. He should bore his knees into her abdomen, if you'll be so kind. (215)

The fluctuation in the pronouns in this passage, indicating that the enunciation changes

from third person to first, signals Erika's ambivalence towards her fantasy tormentor. She wants to be in two incompatible positions, to achieve the perfect repression, determined («punished» and «him») and determining (giving orders to «you»), the classic masochist manoeuvre. The Kantian imperative, to achieve by a voluntary act a perfect match of duty and inclination, is here stood on its head: the harshest repression («bore his knees into her abdomen») must guarantee the most intense bliss («If you'll be so kind»), turning the imperative, the command, into a sadomasochistic contract. According to Lacan, Kant has carried the moral duty embodied in the Symbolic Order to its logical conclusion, virtually arguing that there is no Good to pursue, no happiness to reach, morality only guaranteeing itself by an ideal represssion, one carried to infinity. Lacan is showing up the paradox of the Symbolic, that it hides its driving force, the unconscious pursuit of an (obscene) enjoyment, by denying happiness to all.[12] The Real is being hidden in perfect rigidity under the Symbolic for the purpose of an unmentionable but infinite joy. Erika's Kathian acceptance of Symbolic repression is the warrant for her bliss: her freedom in issuing the orders demonstrates her desire to submit to Symbolic authority. This dilemma leads to the climax of the «plot», where the fantasy is shattered through turning into actual violence in a scene of rape, bodily harm and total abandonment.

It is here that the text disturbingly transmogrifies into an allegory of the suffering single bourgeois subject, as if the perverse pleasure the reader is invited to share depended on the satire of old Vienna and its outworn shibboleths, whereas the book performs a violent attack on the Symbolic Order *per se*. Even though the text within itself shows a blatant self-reflexive awareness of the dynamics of psychosis at the level of character, at the level of allegory it shows a indulgence in the very excess it castigates. It presents a world, an historical wasteland despite all its «history», constructed around the daughter, excluding the subjectivities of mothers, fathers, sons and lovers. Instead of confronting the problematic of the Body's Real and Imaginary relations to the Symbolic, the text perversely uses the narrative of its own symptomology to allegorize the destruction of the bourgeois subject. The old boundaries excite a violent disgust which turns into *jouissance* as blockage of libido is released, but, instead of creating new signifiers, the pleasure is then perversely used to turn back on itself for a renewed onslaught in an orgy of destruction. This anarchic destructiveness takes place without any attempt at an Imaginary reconstitution of society.[13] Neither the Symbolic nor the Imaginary offer any ideals, goals or visions to internalize: the Law is discredited and rejected, and there are no new subjective models wherewith to construct an alternative.[14] The aesthetics of disgust remains trapped in a foreclosure of a signifier for law. Thus, ultimately, the «lump of clay» the text, although it has taken the radical mould, bears the mark of reactionary deformation.

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[12] Jacques Lacan, «Kant avec Sade», in *Écrits* (Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1966), pp. 765-790.

[13] Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, translated by Kathleen Blamey (Cambridge, Policy Press, 1987; orig. pub. *L'Institution imaginaire de la société*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1975). Castoriadis, although he sees the subject as always to some degree undefined by society, nevertheless stresses the «inherence of the individual in the social», this being «the ground upon which freedom and alienation can exist, and which only the delirium of an absolute narcissism would wish to abolish, to deplore, or to see as a 'negative condition'».

[14] Jelinek, a Marxist and a member of the Austrian Communist Party, admits to a feeling of defeat when it comes to her literary engagement: «My writing is probably too pessimistic and too decadent. That's why the left reacts to it with some suspicion. I don't blame them. I just don't write with optimism or revolutionary zeal, as one might expect of me». See the interview by Georg Biron «Wahrscheinlich wäre ich ein Lustmörder» («I could very easily be a sex murderer»), *Die Zeit*, 24th September, 1984, p. 47. (My translation).

Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 143-147

«She was really too perverse»: a Winnicottian View of Catherine Sloper's Predicament in Henry James's *Washington Square*

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The American novelist Henry James and the British psycho-analyst Donald Winnicott have one remarkable thing in common. In the words of Adam Phillips, author of an outstanding monograph on Winnicott, both were «interested in what was elusively absent». For Winnicott what is «absent» in the setting-the family setting, or the setting of the consultation room-may be as important, or even more important as signifying an unconscious communication, than what is «present». Henry James himself wrote: «The artist is present in every page of every book from which he sought so assiduously to eliminate himself.» This could be taken in one sense as a paradigm of the analytic situation, in which the «self elimination» of the client/patient from his «material» can be said to represent active unconscious functioning[1].

But I am concerned with the character of Catherine Sloper and of how she might be viewed in a Winnicottian perspective. Whilst serving on a destroyer as a young man during the first World War, Donald Winnicott included Henry James in his reading. Did he read Washington Square I wonder? If so, his heart would surely have gone out to the beleaguered Catherine Sloper, who suffers such a multitude of impingements — to use one of Winnicott's favourite words — from her circle. The words I have quoted in my title — «She was really too perverse» — are spoken by Catherine's aunt Lavinia in a moment of exasperation with what she regards as Catherine's wilfulness and obstinacy. They are of course used in an ironic sense, as James uses them. But James does not always view Catherine in an ironic way. When Catherine returns from her trip to Europe with her father she brings presents to distribute. «These [the presents] were rich and abundant; and Catherine had brought home a present to every one — to every one save Morris, to whom she had brought simply her undiverted heart.» Here Catherine's «wilfulness» or «obstinacy» is presented as emotional constancy. And James uses his authorial voice to indicate this, as distinct from expressing the way Catherine is perceived by another character.

Consider this description of Catherine:

> «Catherine had made a discovery... that there was a great excitement in trying

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[1] In this context I would cite, for example, Jung's concept of the shadow which he states as: «the thing a person has no wish to be.»

to be a good daughter. She had an entirely new feeling which may be described as a state of expectant suspense about her own actions.»

This accords with Winnicott's account of «The Manic Defence»:

> «Manic defence is intended to cover a person's capacity to deny the depressive anxiety that is inherent in emotional development, anxiety that belongs to the capacity of the individual to feel guilt, and also to acknowledge responsibility for instinctual experiences, and for the aggression in the fantasy that goes with the instinctual experience.»

Catherine is experiencing the internal strain of feeling «active» in relation to Morris, as she is beginning to fall in love with him, and «passive» in relation to her father whom she believes loves her and to whom she feels bound by filial loyalty. It would appear that this is the first major conflict she has ever experienced. Her excitement can be seen as a sign of her incipient guilt in «trying» to be good. Her «expectant suspense» hints at her conflict: she cannot remain equally loyal to both her father and her lover. She is, as it were, poised on the brink of making a choice, of having to be ruthless. But this she never quite gets to. Or, expressing this as a developmental phenomenon, it is something she never quite achieves.

I believe there are two, inter-related, concepts which enable us to understand Catherine's personality and behaviour at this point. To remind you of her characteristics they are: shyness, irresponsiveness, stolidity, obstinacy, silence and patience.

The first Winnicottian concept is that of «the period of hesitation». In his paper *Observation of Infants in a Set Situation* (1941) Winnicott describes a pattern of an infant's behaviour vis-a-vis a spatula in the setting of a conversation between him, the mother and the infant.

«**Stage 1.** The baby puts his hand to the spatula, but at this moment discovers unexpectedly that the situation must be given thought. He is in a fix. With his hand resting on the spatula and his body quite still, he looks at me and his mother with big eyes, and watches and waits...

Stage 2. All the time, in «the period of hesitation [as I call it], the baby holds his body still [but not rigid]. Gradually he becomes brave enough to let his feelings develop, and the picture changes quite quickly... The change in the baby's behaviour is a striking feature. Instead of expectancy and stillness there now develops self-confidence, and there is free bodily movement...»

Masud Khan, Winnicott's editor, comments:

> «The period of hesitation is an important concept for psychoanalytical theory in general and our clinical work with adults in particular. The concept adds something new to the classical concept of resistance. Quite often in analytical writings, one comes across interpretation of resistance in a patient where in fact the reality is that the patient is in 'the period of hesitation'; or, in other words, the patient is groping to find a kind of intimacy in the analytical situation where he can gradually make his first verbal or gestural contribution.»

The other concept of Winnicott I want to introduce here is linked with that of the period of hesitation. It is that of being «in a state of not having to react» as formulated in *Birth Memories, Birth Trauma and Anxiety* (1949). It is not easy to precis Winnicott's thinking. I quote two paragraphs. The first might be said to be an account of «normal» birth experience; the second a description of birth experience which is psychologically traumatic.

«Before birth, and especially if there is delay, there can quite easily be repeated experiences for an infant in which, for the time being, the stress is on environment rather than on self, and it is likely that the unborn infant becomes more and more caught up in this sort

of intercourse with the environment as the time for birth arrives. Thus, in the natural process, the birth experience is an exaggerated example of something already known to the infant. For the time being, during birth, the infant is a reactor and the important thing is the environment; and then, after birth, there is a return to a state of affairs in which the important thing is the infant... In health, the infant is prepared before birth for some environmental impingement, and already has had the experience of a natural return from reacting to a state of not having to react, which is the only state in which the self can begin to be... Normal birth process is a temporary phase of reaction and therefore of loss of identity: a major example, for which the infant has already been prepared, of interference with the personal 'going along,' being but not so powerful or so prolonged as to snap the thread of the infant's continuous personal process... Normal birth is non-traumatic by virtue of its non-significance.»

Winnicott contrasts this with a «traumatic» birth experience:

> «It is precisely by reason of its being significant to the infant that experience of the birth trauma is psychologically traumatic. The individual's personal 'going along' is interrupted by reactions to prolonged impingements... It may be pointed out that the most important thing is the trauma represented by the need to react. Reacting at this stage of human development means a temporary loss of identity... The infant that is disturbed by being forced to react is disturbed out of a state of 'being'... When reacting, an infant is not 'being'.»

To return to the novel, I would argue that Catherine's qualities accord with her being in a state of «not having to react»; and, further that — at this point in her life — this is an indication of some emotional health and potential well-being. But her dilemma, as we know, evokes little sympathy or imaginative understanding in those closest to her. On the contrary, it elicits either amused irony laced with contempt from her father, which hurts her deeply, or a kind of sentimental manoeuvring from her aunt, which repels her. One example of this gross lack of understanding occurs when her father, irritated by Catherine's «dumb eloquence», persuades himself — despite his medical expertise — that she is «a simpleton». From a Winnicottian perspective, however, Catherine's patience, obstinacy and irresponsiveness might be construed not so much as resistance in a conscious, deliberately rebellious sense, but more as a plea for time: a kind of «groping to discover intimacy». This indeed she does discover — for a brief, precious period — with Morris. In Winnicottian terms her silence can be seen as «simple non-communication which can be a positive contribution», rather than as «active non-communication».

Right up to the climax of the novel Catherine has displayed a kind of integrity of «not reacting» — because of not needing, internally, to react — to her environment and its impingements. Implicit in this is Catherine's almost complete freedom from a false self personality organisation, of which reacting compliantly is the hall-mark. This is movingly illustrated in the scene in which, having told Catherine that he will never consent to Morris marrying her, her father mentions that she can wait until his death if she likes:

> «Your engagement [he says] will have one delightful effect on you; it will make you extremely impatient for that event.»

It is as if her father is trying to goad Catherine into reacting. She responds by saying that she would rather not marry if that were true. Her father now appears to lay a trap for her, by asking her to give him proof of this declaration. She is anguished by this but eventually assures him that if she doesn't marry before his death she will not do so after. Although she feels «miserably helpless and hopeless», Catherine considers it is wrong to act upon and influence her father's feelings.

What is striking in this scene between Catherine and her father is *his* irresponsiveness. He accuses her of being ungrateful and cruel if she persists in seeing Morris:

«This was more than the poor girl could bear; her tears overflowed, and she moved toward her grimly consistent parent with a pitiful cry. Her hands were raised in supplication, but he sternly evaded this appeal. Instead of letting her sob out her misery on his shoulder, he simply took her by the arm and directed her course across the threshold, closing the door gently but firmly behind her.»

Here we have a fore-shadowing of the final scene of the novel where the door, literally and figuratively, shuts upon Morris. This can be seen as a reversal of the scene with her father: Morris is now the supplicant.

I want now to consider the climactic scene in which Morris, very mindful of her father's objections to him, seeks to back off from Catherine. He presents his intention to find a job in New Orleans (where he may earn six thousand dollars), which would involve a separation from Catherine, as motivated by concern for her and her social position. She is not convinced by this and, pained by his prevarication, protests. Although Catherine is eager to accompany Morris he demurs, warning her that yellow-fever is active in New Orleans. Catherine takes this up by saying: «Why shouldn't you catch yellow-fever quite as easily as I? I am every bit as strong as you, and not in the least afraid of a fever?» To Catherine, who genuinely loves Morris, the money he may earn means nothing if he were to die. But for Morris, whose love for Catherine is suspect, *her* fortune means so much that he doesn't want her if he can't enjoy her money. Morris seeks to lay his guilt on to Catherine by accusing her of making a scene, «as all women do!» He also wants to provoke a quarrel as it «might help him; but the question was how to quarrel with a young woman who had such treasures of concession». He adjures her to be calmer the next time he comes. At this point Catherine is overwhelmed by fear which is only reinforced when Morris hesitates and complains of Catherine making conditions. He tells her, sententiously, that when she is quiet she is perfection, but when she is violent she is not in character. Doubtless she perceives, as he does not, that her «violence» only proceeds from his passivity and unwillingness to commit himself to a firm proposal. At the end of the scene Catherine voices her anxiety that he is going to leave her. Morris assents, saying that it is for a little while «until you are reasonable again». Catherine retorts that she will never be reasonable «in that way» and bursts into tears: «It was almost the last outbreak of passion of her life... It was long and terrible... She felt a wound... it seemed to her that a mask had suddenly fallen from his face.»

Catherine is terribly disillusioned. For the dilemma which she is experiencing is that her emotional directness and the revealing of her passionate feelings — «her indiverted heart» — leads to a confrontation in which she feels she is trapped. Dissimulation is entirely alien to her. She wears no mask, has no false self. To invoke Winnicott once again, Catherine's «continuity of being» is under threat.

There is a sense in which the image of the mask falling from a face is a paradigm of Catherine's experiences not only with Morris but also with her father and her aunt at this critical time. In the above episode, Morris wants to provoke a quarrel with her. In a scene immediately following this, aunt Penniman «pounces» upon Catherine, demanding to know where she has been and to be entrusted with «your secret — your sorrow». When Catherine declines to do this, it elicits the reaction which I have quoted in my title: «She was really too perverse». The text continues: «A certain amount of perversity was to be allowed for in a young lady whose lover had thrown her over; but not such an amount as would prove inconvenient to his apologists.»

At this point the narrative tone is both ironic and compassionate. It is ironic in representing how Catherine is perceived by her aunt. But Catherine's strength is that, as in the scene with Morris, her perception of herself — Winnicott would call it apperception — is different,

and does not accord with that of her interlocutors. Aunt Penniman in this scene joins with Morris and her father in exhorting Catherine to «be reasonable». But it is as if Catherine has little comprehension of what being reasonable really means, except as a euphemism for being submissive and compliant. Catherine has only lately discovered in her relationship with her father that a life-long attitude of devotion to him has not made her lovable in his eyes. Her awareness of this has made her more dependent on Morris with whom she pleads not to make a further appeal to her father for his blessing on their engagement. But the effect of this appeal is, ironically, to deepen the division between her and Morris. So it is that, by being true to her own feelings, Catherine's world begins to fall apart: darkened by her father's underlying anger and contempt, her lover's procrastination and betrayal and her aunt's prying and meddlesomeness.

Thus the predicament for Catherine now is that maintenance of her continuity of being spells betrayal and manipulation. The alternative is «to react». But «reacting interrupts being and annihilates». Being or annihilation: these are the two alternatives. The prospect of annihilation mobilises «primitive agonies» in Catherine including isolation because of there being no means of communication. Catherine is indeed in a terrible bind. She slowly regresses into a sterile, though stable, life style. In Winnicottian language this might be expressed as: «If the need [of the patient] is not met, the result is *not anger*, only a reproduction of the environmental failure situation which stopped the processes of self growth. The individual capacity to 'wish' has become interfered with, and we witness the reappearance of the original cause of a sense of futility.»

James expresses it thus:

> «The great facts of her career were that Morris Townsend had trifled with her affections, and that her father had broken its spring. Nothing could ever alter these facts: they were always there like her name, her age, her plain face. Nothing could ever undo the wrong or cure the pain that Morris had inflicted on her, and nothing could ever make her feel towards her father as she felt in her younger years. There was something dead in her life, and her duty was to try and fill the void.»

And concludes, memorably, with:

> «Catherine, meanwhile, in the parlour, picking up her morsel of fancy-work, had seated herself with it again — for life, as it were.»

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 149-153

The Demon Therapist and Other Dangers: Jonathan Demme's *The Silence of the Lambs*

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Jonathan Demme's *The Silence of the Lambs* immerses us from the start in a disorienting stew of ambiguity and grotesque violence. Clarice Starling, played by Jodie Foster, is an ambitious trainee at the F.B.I. academy. Jack Crawford, chief of the «behavioral science» section, chooses her to help track down a serial killer, nicknamed Buffalo Bill; Bill skins his victims, all of whom are women, after he kills them. Crawford sends Starling to pick the brains of another serial killer, Dr. Hannibal Lecter, played by Anthony Hopkins. Lecter («Hannibal the Cannibal») specialized in eating various parts of his victims. However, Crawford tells his protegee, Lecter was also a brilliant psychiatrist, and he may possess information or insights about Buffalo Bill which could help the F.B.I.

Starling visits Lecter in the asylum where he is imprisoned in a plexiglass cage. He tests her poise with shrewd guesses about her character and flashes of highbrow savagery («I ate his liver with some fava beans»); he then gives her a cryptic lead about Buffalo Bill, thereby assuring another visit. In fact, Starling returns several times, and the encounters between the mad psychiatrist and the apprentice agent provide the film's most compelling scenes.

The Silence of the Lambs won favorable reviews in *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker*, went on to enormous commercial success, and dominated the 1992 Academy Awards. However, the approval is by no means universal. Some gay critics have taken offense at the character of Buffalo Bill, a would-be transexual. Others charged the film with sexism, a charge Jodie Foster seemed to address in her Academy Award acceptance speech which praised the «strong feminist» heroine she portrayed. Perhaps the most sweeping attack appeared in *The Nation*, which harrumphed just after the Awards that the film «trumpets sadomasochism, homophobia, misogyny and worse» — in *The Nation*'s assessment, «yucky stuff».[1]

No one would deny that *The Silence of the Lambs* is grisly and disturbing, but this criticism confuses art and advocacy. Demme's film is neither sexist nor feminist, neither homophobic nor homophilic. Rather, it is a vivid and melancholy exploration of concerns about individual development and gender identity that are currently at the heart of American

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[1] *The Nation*, April 20, 1992, pp. 507-508.

culture. Related to these concerns, and a theme to which critics have paid surprisingly little attention, is Demme's obvious interest in psychotherapy, Dr. Lecter's former profession.

Lecter's role in the film is perfectly ambiguous. On the one hand, Demme turns conventionally hostile cliches about therapy and therapists into nightmare. The film equates Lecter's physical hunger for human flesh with his more-than-professional hunger for the details of other lives, his ferocious voyeurism. Lecter's plexiglass cell allows visitors to inspect him like a caged animal, but he turns the tables on Starling with an unnerving stare that makes her feel more exposed than he is. He agrees to help her by providing clues about Buffalo's Bill's identity, but only if she will gratify his hunger with revelations about her past and her inner life. After she reveals a particularly important and painful memory, he murmurs «Thank you, Clarice»; not much later, having managed to evade his restraints, he turns two of his guards into bloody carcasses.

Nothing can be hidden from Dr. Lecter's x-ray vision, and those who visit him sacrifice the last shred of their emotional privacy. The penetrating stare connects him thematically with Buffalo Bill, who stalks his victims, and eventually Starling, with special night-vision goggles that allow him to see without being seen. Lecter has similar powers: he seems to know that Starling is there even when his back is turned and she cannot see his face.

In addition to their privacy, Lecter's patients sacrifice their independent will. «You don't want Hannibal Lecter inside your head», the asylum chief warns Starling, and with good reason. The film implies that Lecter can make a patient do anything: merely by whispering to him, the good doctor coaxes a fellow-inmate whose behavior has offended him into committing suicide by swallowing his tongue. Lecter is clearly much crazier and more dangerous than any of his patients. One of his awestruck guards asks Starling if Lecter is «a kind of vampire», and the question seems only reasonable. Lecter is in fact an updated, «behavioral science» Dracula — elegant, voracious and unkillable — and also a ferocious Houdini who escapes seemingly escape-proof fetters to wreak havoc on his former captors.

On the other hand, what Lecter does with Starling is not unlike a successful psychotherapy. He helps her to confront and conquer the external challenges which, like the obstacle course we see her tackling in the opening scene, stand in the way of her professional success. The pursuit of Buffalo Bill takes Starling into a series of dark and menacing rooms, starting with the storage facility where she finds the severed head of a murder victim. With Lecter's help, she enters the darkness and sees what it conceals; in the end, she survives her terrifying initiation and graduates from the academy.

Starling's journey is also interior. The creepy storage room with the mournfully elegant owner (is his accent meant to sound Viennese?) is called — a bit crudely, perhaps — Your Self Storage. Lecter sends her to explore that room. Moreover, Lecter connects her quest for Buffalo Bill with her own early experience and helps her to integrate that experience into a mature identity, or at least what passes for one in the film. Lecter coaxes Starling into telling him about her father's death. Later, she talks about her horror on the ranch where she was sent as an orphan when she heard the crying of the lambs awaiting slaughter and about the nightmares in which she still hears them cry. Lecter makes what one could call an interpretation: he articulates Starling's belief that if she catches Buffalo Bill and rescues the senator's daughter he has kidnapped, she will silence the crying of the lambs. He thus makes Starling's unconscious purpose fully conscious, even as his hints about Buffalo Bill help her to achieve her practical goal.

Starling's fear and revulsion soon give way to something like a positive transference toward Lecter. Even after he escapes, leaving a trail of mangled corpses, she tells a colleague that she is not afraid of an attack. The film's version of countertransference is more explicit. Lecter warns Starling about Crawford's sexual intentions and punishes the inmate who offends her. After Starling's final revelations to him about her childhood, he momentarily and tenderly caresses one of her fingers when handing her some documents, and sketches

her cradling a lamb in her arms. At the end of the film, after she has found and killed Buffalo Bill and rescued the senator's daughter, there is a party for Starling and the other new full-fledged agents. In the middle of the celebration, Starling is summoned to the telephone: it is Lecter, calling to congratulate her, to say good-by, and to assure her that she has nothing to fear from him, even though he is still on the loose.

The exception to Lecter's usual wolfish behavior is brought about, we are given to believe, by his response to Starling's courage and emotional integrity: her ability to look without flinching at terrors both past and present. Beneath this rationale lurks a narcissistic fantasy (and an accompanying fear): I am my therapist's favorite patient. But for my charm, his omnipotent magic would destroy me, as it may destroy his other, less wonderful patients. In this film, the fantasy also seems to have a more primitive meaning, the kind we find in fairy tales like «Little Red Ridinghood» or «Hansel and Gretel». I will be the only child my father does not eat. I am his only true child, and my perfect purity and love will redeem him from his usually savage ways.

Lecter makes no such interpretation about the «transference», but ambivalence toward fathers is everywhere in the film. Lecter is only the most vivid of the various fathers and father-figures, beginning with the small-town West Virginia sheriff who was Starling's actual, beloved father. This father was heroic but vulnerable. He raised Starling alone (her mother died when she was little, she tells Lecter) and then was killed by a pair of burglars when Starling was about ten. In a flashback, we see Starling as a girl tenderly embraced by her father. Later, in a beautifully understated scene, Demme suggests her wish to master the loss of that father by taking charge of it. Crawford brings her to West Virginia where a new victim has been found. Before the autopsy begins (and without any instruction from Crawford), Starling clears the mortuary of large, silent West Virginia state troopers, as if banishing a roomful of fathers so that she can do their work by herself.

At the same time, Demme surrounds her with other would-be fathers, each of them less tractable and more ambiguous than the troopers: Crawford, who advances her career but endangers her life and who may or may not want to sleep with her, Dr. Chilton, the comically arrogant and vindictive chief of the asylum where Lecter is imprisoned, and Lecter himself. All three show a sexual interest in Starling. There are ambiguous moments in a car returning from a murder investigation, where Crawford rests his head close to hers in the darkness, and when he shakes her hand after she graduates from the academy. The interest is more overt when Lecter caresses Starling's finger (and in his wish to penetrate her inner life), and crudest in the asylum director, who makes an explicit, leering pass («Baltimore can be quite a fun town with the right guide»). The theme is taken further when Starling visits the father of one of Buffalo Bill's victims and finds that he keeps nude photos of his daughter hidden in her bedroom: no father in this film is entirely to be trusted.

In addition, there is something disturbing about each of these fathers beyond their seductiveness: an effeminate cast that is most pronounced in Lecter, with his sinister purr and occasional bitchiness, but is also apparent in Crawford. Several minor characters come from the same epicene mold, including the pair of biologists Starling consults about Buffalo Bill's interest in unusual insects. The one who asks Starling for a date is also cross-eyed, and Demme uses a distorting perspective that makes him look elongated and anemic. These characters are not exceptions: the film has few attractive or clearly masculine men. Buffalo Bill, who was rejected for transexual surgery and then tries to become a woman in his own peculiar way, is only the most flamboyant of a generally androgynous crew.

Along with the seductive fathers who continually menace Starling are still darker fantasies about sexuality. Sex in the film is manifestly dirty and assaultive, like the semen flung at Starling by a masturbating inmate named Miggs when she first goes to visit Lecter. The Miggs episode disgusts and frightens Starling, and what Buffalo Bill does frightens her even more. However, neither character prepares an audience for the most horrifying

attacks, which are all directed against men: the series of victims Lecter destroys with what look like voracious kisses after he escapes from his restraints. Gay critics may be too quick to reject the film as a whole, but they are responding to something important. This sequence dramatizes with power and macabre wit Freud's classic formulation in the Schreber case: paranoia arises from an attempt to fend off homosexual impulses.[2] With the murderous kisses, Demme compresses both the paranoia and the homosexuality into a single gesture.

Homosexuality is also consistent with the film's ambivalent fantasies about women. Instead of men who desire women, we get men who hate and envy them. Hatred and envy of women's biological ability are both apparent when Lecter meets the woman senator whose daughter Buffalo Bill has kidnapped (she is there to offer him a more comfortable prison in exchange for information about the kidnapper). Lecter startles her and us with what seems at first hearing just one of his peculiar taunts: «Did you nurse your daughter? Toughens the nipples.»

«I want to see my mother», sobs the senator's daughter, but Demme sets out to punish this one mother of the film, whom her daughter describes as «a real important woman» but who, for all her status, can do nothing to save that daughter's life. Lecter articulates the hostility and directs it explicitly at the senator as a mother. After the sneer about nursing, he tells her about the phantom feeling experienced by amputees, and then flings a savage follow-up question: «When your girl is on the slab, where will it tickle you?» In Lecter's fantasy, a child's death is painful to her mother but is also sexually exciting. It is surely no accident that except for Starling herself and Buffalo Bill's victims, women scarcely exist in the film, and that Starling was raised without a mother.

Both Lecter and Buffalo Bill destroy women in order to replace them. Lecter's cannibalism expresses a wish to do what only women do — to have another life inside his body — and a primitive fantasy about how to satisfy that wish. On a less primitive level, he wants Starling to need him, to need his advice and his hints about Buffalo Bill, and his final taunt to the senator («Love your suit!») is a bit of camp intended to show that he is a better woman than his somewhat mannish adversary. Buffalo Bill acts out a complementary and equally primitive fantasy. If Lecter will become a woman by putting his victims inside him, Bill will do the same by putting himself inside his victims — that is, by wearing their skin.

Starling's solitary path may be the only safe one in Demme's menacing landscape. Except for the errant semen, Demme keeps sex away from his heroine; Starling seems like a cross between Little Red Ridinghood and Joan of Arc. The film emphasizes her girlishness not just in the friendly joshing with which she dismisses every sexual approach but in its emphasis on her diminutive size. In several scenes, Demme gets a laugh by surrounding Jodie Foster with large, lumbering men. The real joke, of course, is that, just as Lecter is a better woman than the senator or Starling's absent mother, Starling herself is a better man than any of her male colleagues. She is the one who finds Buffalo Bill, after all, and uses her oversized F.B.I. revolver to end his career.

At such moments, the film seems like an unusually violent fairy tale for girls: a perverse, 1990's sequel to Nancy Drew, Girl Detective. There are other echoes as well: Little Starling (as Lecter calls her at the end of their first meeting) grows up at last, and Beauty transforms the Beast. In the end, however, Demme's fairy tale is ironic. The Beast is transformed only for a moment and soon reverts to his savagery with undiminished gusto.

Moreover, Little Starling's new identity holds only a limited promise of fulfillment. In social terms, Demme leaves her little ground between the working-class deprivation she escapes and the cultural pretensions associated with Lecter, who butchers and eats his victims to the sound of Bach. Psychologically, the resolution is hardly more satisfying. Starling

[2] Freud, S. (1911). Psycho-Analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia. *Standard Edition*, 12: 1-82.

is no longer tormented (presumably, the death of Buffalo Bill has silenced the lambs) but she becomes both less and more than a woman. Lecter may picture her witha lamb in her arms, but she will have no human lamb of her own to cradle. The safe limits of physical and emotional connection are defined in this film by the handshake Starling gets from her mentor Crawford after she graduates, a handshake that briefly takes up the entire screen. Her training and initiation complete, our heroine is Special Agent Starling, an androgyne like Crawford, Bill, and Lecter. Perhaps her father would be proud, as Crawford tells her, but she is no less alone than in the opening scene on the obstacle course.

The Silence of the Lambs intensifies and finally moves beyond its thriller material. Demme shatters a film audience's comfortable detachment; he imposes on us, however briefly, both the predator's and the victim's point of view. By forcing us to share Buffalo Bill's sinister night vision, Demme makes us aware of voyeurism's ugly potential. At the same time, the film's prevailing darkness and Lecter's demonic stare straight into the camera leave us feeling uncertain and exposed, like Starling.

The film is more than just technique, however. The critic C. L. Barber (1976) has suggested that the strong heroines and savage misogyny in Jacobean tragedy are related to Protestant destruction of the cult of the Virgin Mary — the benign Holy Mother.[3] In Demme's film, similarly, one might find an ambivalent response to the pressures of feminism: a pushy, self-reliant heroine on one hand and savage resentment of women on the other. One might also find fear of homosexuality, as I have suggested, although that fear is only one aspect of the film's general suspicion of human connection. Demme makes us, like Starling, look unflinchingly at some of the «yucky stuff» in our own nightmares. These nightmares are about the therapists we need and fear, the loss of sexual difference that jeopardizes our sense of who we and others are, and the isolation to which our terrors may condemn us.

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[3] Barber, C.L. (1976). The Family in Shakespeare's Development: Tragedy and Sacredness. In *Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytic Essays* (Murray M. Schwartz & Coppelia Kahn, Eds.), Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1980, 188-202.

Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 155-158

Incest in Casanova's *Memoirs*

NANCY BLAKE (*)

This paper takes advantage of two points by now familiar to students of Lacanian theory: (1) his distinction between the represented self or «I» and the subjectivity it both represents and misunderstands and (2) his theorizing of desire, especially the gap between need and desire. The autobiographical «I» we encounter in Casanova's *Memoirs* is a formation or self image resulting from that early split. This «I» is struggling, in the course of the writing of the narrative, to maintain an imaginary wholeness, a sense of identity, and women provide the mirrors which supposedly enable him to do so.

As for the incest theme, which is common in the 18th century libertine tradition, its significance may allow us to come closer to some understanding of the specificity of Casanova's message. One of the first questions which presents itself is to what extent can we accept at face value the stories presented in the *Memoirs*? Casanova fooled many people, firstly himself. In the Author's preface he insists «...indeed, why should I not be veracious? A man can have no object in deceiving himself, and it is for myself that I chiefly write».

The writer of Casanova's *Memoirs* spends a lot of time trying to convince his reader that he is not a writer, that his work is not a work of art or artifice. Casanova's passion for ignorance was probably more imperious than his passion for women. In fact he wrote more the three thousand pages in order not to understand himself.

In *Die Don-Juan Gestalt*, 1924, Otto Rank advanced a mainline Freudian interpretation of what has since come to be called the Casanova Complex. According to Rank the hero's fickleness is caused by an Oedipus complex: «The many women who must be replaced represent for him the one irreplaceable mother; while the deceived, betrayed, and attacked opponents, who are finally killed, represent the one invincible deadly enemy: the father».

Perhaps the most striking difference between the Don Juan legend and Casanova's case history is the absence, in the later, of the figure of the commander, or the father figure. Casanova lost his father at an early age. He suggests that he was probably the illegitimate son of a nobleman anyway, so his lack of filial sentiments should not really be surprising. Casanova's protector and adoptive father Bragadin, the senator he dupes with perfect equanimity, is more a maternal, nurturing figure than a paternal representative of the Law, and this in spite of his social position.

For Rank, as for Freud in «Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming», the artist is someone

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«disappointed by experience and by reality in general», who then in fantasy «creates for himself the experiences that reality has denied him and that, in a deeper sense, it can in no way provide». The paradigm for art, even before the daydream, is thus masturbation: «From these masturbation fantasies and their forbidden objects and from intense self-reproach and self-punishment, a broad path leads to artistic fantasy activity». As is inevitable given its date of composition, Rank's model in «The Incest Theme» presupposes Freud's theory of the drives. From this standpoint, he maintains that «the tragic conflicts (the writer) continually attempts to resolve in his works simply correspond to his inner conflict between drive and repression».

A theory challenging Freud's drive theory, one which appeals a great deal in American intellectual circles, is the Fairbairn, Winnicott object relations theory. In brief, the crucial point is that the greatest need of human beings is not for sex but for attachment, and hence Freud's model of behavior is seen as solipsistic. According to object relations theory, behavior is motivated, not so much by the desire to reduce instinctual tensions as by object-seeking. The prototype for art would then no longer be masturbation, but play.

The essentially tragic figure of Don Juan, corresponds to the structural demands of the instinctual drive theory, while the Casanova figure seems to treat seduction as play and thus seems concerned with transitional objects in a variation on Winnicottian themes.

For much of the first part of his *Memoirs*, Casanova seems to be the hero of exogamy. His work is a typical eighteenth century fantasy of expansion and exploration characterized by an omnivorous appetite and an insatiable wunderlust. It is only in the later portions of his life story, that incest is introduced as Casanova rediscovers former lovers and meets their sons and daughters who are presented as his own. It sometimes seems as though the world were shrinking. The gay disponibility of Casanova's early life is replaced by an increasing need to flee as possibilities are reduced. The world, once a smorgesbord of difference, is now reduced to a hall of mirrors in which every woman is a copy of the self, every adventure a repetition of another.

In 1761, Casanova goes to Naples, a city he has visited several times before. He is received by the duke of Matalona who introduces him to his titular mistress, a girl of eighteen named Leonilda. The duke keeps her «only for the sake of appearances», since he claims to be impotent with all women save his spouse. Casanova wastes no time in falling in love with Leonilda. He decides to marry her, with the blessings of his friend the duke. They send for the notary and await only Leonilda's mother. By a dramatic, or melodramatic turn of events, this mother turns out to be none other than Donna Lucrezia, whom Casanova had already met with her husband and sister, during his first visit to Naples. With dates in hand, Donna Lucrezia proves to Casanova that Leonilda is his daughter. The marriage is broken off but Casanova has the duke elaborate on a typical enlightenment view of incest. «There is no philosopher who would dare say that the union of father with his daughter is something inherently horrible... incest is only a prejudice». However, in love there should be equality and «at first sight one does not find this equality between father and daughter. The respect that she owes him who gave her life poses an obstacle to the kind of tenderness she must feel for a lover». However, if the two could only be unaware of their relationship, all objections would be lifted. What Casanova says about incest can also be read as a critique of the essential element in Classical tragedy. When incest, or any other crime, for that matter, occurs there, it is only through ignorance «...so rather than making me cry, incest — the eternal subject of Greek tragedies — makes me laugh, and if I cry at Phèdre, it is purely because of Racine's art».

In a little known pamphlet criticizing Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's best-seller *Paul and Virginie* Casanova remarks that the only thing that the story can be read as illustrating is the fact that a word means nothing except by convention. Long before Saussure and Lacan, the great seducer was convinced of the arbitrary nature of the signifier. In a more

general way, Casanova's relationship to the Law lacks coherence. He condemns card sharps, and crooks of all kinds, but he is not above having a good time with them and occasionally striking up a business relationship with a «corrector of fortune». He mostly likes to live on the frontier between order and disorder, between legality and illegality, but this is a frontier which he will not hesitate to cross, like any other.

Casanova is not, of course, Don Juan because he is incapable of making any woman suffer. Not so much, we suppose, on her own account as on his. He would not be able to renounce anyone's love. Each parting, each break-up must signify the increased fortune and happiness of the partner, in order that Casanova leave, foot-loose and fancy free, basking in the gratitude of his victims.

Casanova is not Don Juan, could never be Don Juan, for he has no sense of the tragic. He never suspects the consequences of his actions and never has to assume them. For him, there is no statue of the commander, no father, no true law to face, he only deals with conventions, costumes, flabby legality, and the endless capacities for financial solutions to questions of honor, morality and love. Casanova's fear of women obliges him to leave them on good terms; he will never be the enemy of one of them, for nothing could protect him from the power of their violence.

After a failure to seduce a woman who made a fool of him in London, Casanova recuperates by offering himself the luxury of five Hanoverian sisters. This escapade provides the occasion for further musings on the theme of incest:

> If I had been rich, these Hanoverians would have kept me in their clutches until my dying day. I seemed to love them not as a lover, but as a father, and the thought that I was sleeping with them posed no obstacle to this sentiment, since I have never been able to understand how a father could feel a truly tender love for his charming daughter without having slept with her at least once. My inability to conceive of the idea always convinced me — and convinces me even more forcefully today — that my mind and body are made of a single substance.

In this passage, Casanova suggests one of the reasons underlying his fascination with incest as the juncture point of several crucial problems. The «at least once» forces us to wonder if desire can exist without being already realized in part, without becoming effective. Casanova has never been able to conceive of the possibility of love without sexual desire or of sexual desire without realization, because he cannot conceive of a dichotomy between body and soul.

The problem is the same when Casanova considers the possibility of life after death in the introduction to his *Memoirs*. Speaking of himself in the third person Casanova says that he believes in his own existence because he has «felt» therefore he believes he will have ceased to exist when he feels no longer. «If he happens, after death to feel again, he will think that fact quite amusing, but will never agree that he is really dead».

In 1770, Casanova is forty-five years old. He is about to leave Naples when he learns that Donna Lucrezia and her daughter Leonilda, now marquise de la C. are in Salerno and he decides to pay them a visit. Mother and daughter are installed in sumptuous surroundings, but their situation is precarious since once more the beautiful Leonilda is being kept by a free-thinking but impotent man.

What everyone needs is an heir. Casanova's task is made clear, he is to make everyone happy and to suffer no repercussions, since appearances will be saved. Casanova's love scene with his daughter Leonilda and Donna Lucrezia, recalls his first sexual experience with two sisters. And in fact the doubling of the woman is characteristic of the *Memoirs*. In all cases the confusion of two women, hesitation and the appearance of an act committed involuntarily, seems necessary to maintain desire. In this case, the mother, Donna Lucrezia,

would like to believe that her daughter and her former lover, «went no further than childish games».

Casanova notes that Leonilda gave birth to a boy in May. He never wonders if incest is monstrous, on the contrary it is a fine thing, because its consequences ensure hereditary succession and fortune, in a word the stability of the social body.

Casanova does not then espouse incest as would any Enlightenment thinker intent on abolishing prejudice. What he espouses is the arbitrary nature of the signifier, convention, optimal hypocrisy as the foundation of all human relations. He is intent on muddying all difference, all identity — generations, genders and individuals. While finally the general purpose of the *Memoirs* becomes clear. «If I still feel, I will find the fact extremely amusing, but will never admit that I am dead».

Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 159-164

The Novels of Eça de Queiroz and the Giving Away of Children

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The novels of the portuguese writer Eça de Queiroz are considered by Peter Gay to be among the most representative of the literature on love in Victorian times. In his book *The Tender Passion*[1] Gay (1986) summarises several of the novels by Queiroz, giving him credit for an understanding of both attitudes to love, *tender* and *sensual*, not easily found alsewhere before the introduction of Freud's theories.

In our work we went somewhat further. Love in Queiroz'novels is present towards a younger figure equivalent to a sibling — as in Freud's *Gradiva* or in *The Woman Judge* analysed in the *Letters to Fliess*.[2] The criteria for object choice is narcissistic, like the ones existing towards the pre-oedipal mother. The mother-figures throughout our writer's fiction are harshly treated. Father figures get away much better, even if they are disposed of in an obssessive way, at the begininn of several novels (dying of natural ilness, suicide). The main complaint towards the mother *imagos* seems to be the fact that they are incapable of giving love and care. Their children are rejected first, then given away or *ceded*. (Term udes by Rallo to designate a special form of giving up of children).

Now we are going to go through some facts in Eça de Queiroz biography, trying to see if they are somehow connected to what is depicted on his novels.

Noteworthy facts in the biography of Eça de Queiroz (who lived between 1845 and 1900) are: he was the illegitimate son of parents who subsequently married and had more children; he was brought up by grandparents and uncles and aunts who in sucession adopted him. The phenomenon of intra-familiar and often mulitple adoption has been called by Spanish authors *handing over* or *cession*.[3] Handing over is a variety of adoption, differs

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[1] P. Gay (1986), *The Bourgeois Experience, Victoria to Freud*, Vol. II: *The Tender Passion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[2] The relationship to a younger woman equivalent to a sibling comes out clearly in *Os Maias*. In this novel an involuntary brother-sister incest occurs which becomes a real love affair. When the incest comes out in the open and the lovers part, there is more sorrow than tragedy or guilt. Queiroz himself had a romantic connection to a first cousin with whom he grew, who was almost a sister. See Luzes (1990), Fact and Fiction in Brother-Sister Incest, *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, 17: 97-112.

[3] J. Rallo (1974), A discussion of the paper by G.H. Allison and J.C. Ulman on the «Intuitive

from it in so far as parental rights are not vested in another person, unknown to the family, but on the contrary in people who have affective ties with parents or even belong to the same biological family. Apart from the fact that this termination of rights of the original parents is never made formal nor official. The psychological basis of this phenomenon is a rejection of maternity (as in the case of unmarried women) and the delegation of maternity to another person, usually the grand-mother, or an infertile aunt of the child. The cession also implies extended families, often living like a clan. In its most benign forms, the handing over leads the child to feel his/her adoptive mother as his «real» mother, with whom he/she has lived since early years. In some other more malignant cases there is no real cession of the infant, and the child is placed between two fires, at the center of rivalries and serious family problems, which will in the end influence negatively on the development of his/her personality. There are also cases of *covert cessions*, that later on may lead to disclosures where the true origin of the child is revealed, thus, creating innumerable conflicts.

Some professional critics (like Gaspar Simões)[4] have considered that the most important trauma suffered by Eça was his illegitimate birth, a trauma he had to carry throughout his all life, would make him choose a diplomatic carreer, (he started when he was 27 years old) and that would turn into a voluntary exile. Studying this matter more closely I have come to the conclusion that, without desmissing the problems caused by his irregular birth, the real issue lies on Eça's multiple intrafamiliar adoption.

For the first 22 years of his life Queiroz grew away from his parents, who would get married 4 years after his birth, have other children, and who would always «forget» to legitimize their eldest son as being part of the same lienage. Only on finishing his studies of law at the University of Coimbra did he finally come to live in his parents home, in Lisbon. There it seemed he felt restless. He somehow managed to shorten his stay to half the time and be away from his parents home, by taking diferents jobs like director of a provincial newspaper, several posts in local administration, and travelling to the east for several months.

As I have written elsewhere[5] Eça was pratically an adopted child, but adopted three times. From now I shall use instead of adoption, the terms *cession* or *handing over* which seem more adequate.

The first time Queiroz was *ceded* was immediately after his birth. Born secretly in a fishing village (Póvoa do Varzim) in the north of Portugal, he was given to suckle to a poor woman married to a tailor in Vila do Conde. This first handing over ended when he was weaned at the age of one year.

Immediately after, comes the second cession that lasts until he is 10. He went to live with his paternal grand-parents, in Verdemilho, near Aveiro, and also near the place where he was born and where his wet nurse had lived. The main figure of attachment at this time seems to have been his grand-father, whose idealized portrait is given in *Os Maias*, as Afonso the family patriarch.

After the death of both his grand-parents he was placed in a boarding-school, near Porto. This boarding-school *O Colégio da Lapa*, belonged to the family of Ramalho Ortigão, who was working there at the time as a tutor. Ramalho who was later to grow into well-known critic and writer, became his close friend since that period.

Because his father was a judge and was given assignements to different districts throughout his carreer, his parents kept changing their dwelling place in Portugal. Therefore, if and

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psychoanalytic perspective of Galdos» in *Fortunata and Jacinta*, International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 55: 345-347.

[4] J. Gaspar Simões (1945), *Eça de Queiroz, o homem e o artista*, Lisboa, Rio de Janeiro: Edições Dois Mundos.

[5] P. Luzes (1988), *Dicionário de Eça de Queiroz*, Lisboa: Editorial Caminho. See the article on Adopção.

when they saw their son, in this period of the boarding school, it must have been in a very irregular basis. The person who really supervised his education was an uncle, Afonso de Albuquerque, married to a sister of his mother, Carlota. Eça lives with his uncle and aunt, and with their children, during vacations. In the summer he returns to the place of his irregular birth, Póvoa do Varzim, which was not only a fisherman's village but also a bathing resort.

This third cession ends when he finishes Law School and finally joins his parents and his siblings. To work out how long his parents had been married for, must have been very difficult. His appearance of a young lawyer brought up by an uncle in Porto, couldn't have called the attention of a social *milieu* of a bigger town like Lisbon.

Eça intended when he wrote his first novel, *The Sin of Father Amaro*[6] in order to introduce in Portugal the new school of Realism or Naturalism, which had been established in France by Flaubert and Zola.

The *Amaro* novel was written between 1871-1874 but Eça was not pleased with the first edition, which he considered an unauthorized edition (1985), published by his friends, who took advantage of his absence in Havana, as Consul. He revised the *Amaro* novel fully in two new editions, published in 1876 and 1880.

In his view the modern novel should study «temperament» and «character» and he also felt motivated to write by a spirit of corrective justice, liberative truth, and social criticism. All these elements are present in his first novels, but more than his French models he uses a dramatic technique, where action takes precedence over discription, the change of fortune (reversal or peripety), and recognition (change from ignorance to knowledge) play an important part, as in ancient tragedy. The end, when it comes, is a necessary sequel to the events presented. More than any other contemporary novelist, more than Dickens, for instance, he used irony and different forms of the comic: humor, caricature understatement. Some critics consider irony and caricature in Eça as a way of furthering laughter, complicity, indulgency, even tenderness (in the same way as it was described by Konrad Lorenz in what concerns infantilism and the imitation of childish manners, conductive to sympathy, in a public of adult individuals.)

The main figure of *The Sin of Father Amaro* is the cleric himself. Amaro Vieira was born in Lisbon, in the house of the Marqueza d'Alegros. His father was valet to the marquez; his mother was chambermaid, almost a friend of the marqueza. He had an elder sister, who, since her childhood, had been sent to live with her grandmother in Coimbra. At the age of 6, he became an orphan of both father and mother. From his mother he inherited only a book, with *naïve* ilustrations, called *The Boy of the Jungle*. The marqueza who became a widow at 43, was attached to Amaro, kept him in her house, adopting him tacitly...

The marqueza made up her mind from the beginning that Amaro should become a priest, because of his thin body seemed to call for a destiny of reclusion. He hardly played, and he was already attached to things of the church. He was affraid of death and of dark rooms and his greatest pleasure was to nestle on the maids' skirts. The maids mada him girlish; thinking he was a pretty boy they hugged him amongst them, kissing and tickling him; he rolled up their skirts, making contact with their bodies, with little cries of enjoyment. Sometimes when the marqueza went out, amid peals of laughter dressed him up as a woman, in their own clothes; he abandoned himself, half naked, with his languid ways, weakly closing his eyes, feeling his cheeks blushing and burning.

When he was 13 the marqueza dropped dead of apoplexy, and on her will she left a legacy to Amaro and recommended Joana's son, her maid, should enter the seminary at 15 and that in due time he should take the Holy Orders. Whilst he waited to be 15, the marqueza's daughters sent him to live with an uncle and an aunt, who were grocers

[6] Eça de Queiroz (1962), *The Sin of Father Amaro* (translation by Nan Flanagan), London: Reinhardt.

in Lisbon. The aunt hardly noticed him and the grocer took him to work in the shop. Amaro got thinner and wept every night. He knew that at 15 he should enter the seminary and he looked forward to it as a way to escape.

When he finaly entered the seminary he did not identify with the other boys, who perpetually lamented the melancholic life of the cloister, talking about the life they had left behind and longing for it. These other boys had memories of family meals, different from the monotonous food at the refectory. Amaro had not only left his beloved ones behind, he had only left his uncle's brutality and his aunt's bored face. Neither could be understand his sanctimonious companions, who loved the seminary, who wore their knees out with constant praying, nor the ambitious ones who aspired to be bishop's train-bearers in sumptuous episcopal palaces, or an aristocratic churches to hold services in front of the devout rich.

He bahaved like an indolent sheep, submitting meekly to the seminary rules. He felt antagonism to the church, because having become a priest, the church prevented him from getting married. In his cell there was a picture of the Virgin, resting her feet on the sphere and crowned with stars. Her gaze wandered towards the immortal light as she crushed the serpent under her heel. Amaro turned to her for a refuge, praying Hail Marys to her: but when he made a pause to contemplate the print, he forgot the sanctity of the Virgin, and saw a pretty blonde girl in front of him. He sighed for her and as he undressed himself he turned and looked lewdly at her, over his shoulder... In his imagination he even lift up the chaste folds of the blue robes of the Virgin and imagined her delicious and white flesh. Afterwards he was afraid and thought he could see the eyes of the Tempter shining out in the dark room; he sprinkled his bed with Holy Water; but he did not dare to reveal these deliriums when he went to confession on Sundays.

When at last he was ordained, when he was 25, after having been in a poor parish in the mountains for six months, he suffers a sudden metamorphosis. There is in him a return of the demands of reality, he feels a determination to satisfy his senses, to get in touch with the real world, in touch with material things. But everything he had learned, all hos values, seemed to him useless to conquer the new life he desired. He then looked on the feminine society with which he had been familiar in his childhood, in the house of the Marqueza d'Alegros. Through them he could perhaps get promoted in his clerical career. He made a petition to be transfered, and sees it granted through the influence of Joana, daughter to the marqueza. He is appointed to the populous parish of Leiria, populous and rich in eclesiastical revenues. Soon after his arrival in the provincial town, the young parish priest is very much admired by the pious ladies of the local society. But in his relationship to them he is not going to continue to behave like an indolent sheep. His passive easily-dominated nature has changed, now he will show them who the master is. He will achieve control of the pious ladies, now that he, as a priest, has the power to rule over their petty souls. He also tries to seduce Amélia, a young woman of 23 years, belonging to this feminine group that sorrounded him, geing at the same time a virgin and the prettiest girl in Leiria. Not being able to push the social machine that crushed him he will put all his ambitions on love and he will exploit to the utmost the authority obtained over women.

Because of his inexperience, of his position in life which only allowshim the ghost of power, but not real power, he is condemned to faillure and crime. Amélia his loved one will try to help him in his fight for freedom and power, but it will be of no avail.

We shall leave the summary of Eça's first novel, to consider some points that have to do with psycho-analysis. In *The Sin of Father Amaro* we see Eça, many years before Freud, assigning to childhood, to the primitive relations with parents, or people taking their place, determining influence in the building up of their personality. Social realities, the upbringing given by the community, are not the real agents on the formation of character. Affective relationships in childhood take precedence over social modalities of upbringing

and over the future role or functions for which the individual is shaped. We can see this not only in *Amaro*, but also other novels by Queiroz, for instance in *Os Maias* and in *The City and the Mountains*.

All the changes that Eça describes in the *milieu* sorrounding Amaro are family events, and we can see them as belonging to the category called *cessions*. The parents disappear leaving him to survive in a sort of jungle (like the title of the book his mother left him, he was *The Boy of the Jungle*). After the disappearance of his parents, Amaro is brought up by the masters of the house where the parents worked (they can be equated with Eça's grandparents or uncles). Afterwards he falls in the hand of paternal uncle and aunt, and last but not least he is given to the Church, who acts like a substitute mother. Amaro responds to these *cessions* with phobias (fear of death and of dark rooms) dependent clinging in relation to the marqueza and her maids, idealisation of the lost mother (becoming pious and a Virgin devotee), He also shows depression, (made evident through crying and lack of appetite) and a passive disposition when he is entering in seminary. As an adult, turns the traumatic experiences he had suffered to his advantage, developing a pitiless and vengeful atitude, especially against women who had denied him of his personal and sexual identity-treating him like a girl, dressing hi in feminine clothes. From a humble and shy person he turns into a domineering tyrant, from an effeminate boy he changes into a *don Juan*, leading Amélia to death in his attempt to obtain a compensation for his past, a sweeping reversal of fortune, as well as revenge over the entire female sex.

Amélia in this first novel written by Queiroz has a destiny similar to the one that befalls the heroine of Goethe's Faust, Gretchen. She becomes pregnant and dies soon after giving birth. The baby also dies because it is transferred to a «wet-nurse» who is supposed to look after illegitame babies. But this one is a «weaver of angels», meaning that category of women who receive babies to be brought up — but without exception the babies die. She makes a living out of filicide because she always receives in the begining the money for the child's keep for a whole year. Filicide as a domestic industry had taken the place, so Queiroz thought, of the *roda* or turning box of the foundling homes, where unwanted children were left.

Filicide is an extreme form of rejection. If a mother gives up her baby, if she lies about her ties with the baby, it is as if she was killing him psysically, or killing his soul. The rejection or filicide of unwanted babies is the theme of this first novel.

Because of the cessions he himself went through, Queiroz shows us some changes of the usual family romance which plays such an important part in the construction of novels.[7] The usual form of the family romance is to imagine that the real parents are not the true parents. The toung child or the adolescent, because of frustations or disillusions with his natural parents, devalue them, as too poor, or to simple, to be the ancestors of the exceptional beings they want to be. They dream or fantasise that they were stolen, or separated for other reasons, from aristocratic and highly placed parents. the rediscovery, later on, of the exalted parents will replace the child in his rights, and bring him t6o superior forms of existence.

The family romance of the ceded child that Queiroz was, follows a different course. The parents that received the child, when he was handed over, can not be devalued, because this will signify ending the only security that exists. It is the coming back of the biological parents that will be the real desillusion and calamity. The natural parents have already left their child behind and they are later capable of commiting the worst felonies. This is described in *Tragédia da Rua das Flores* in *Os Maias* where the reappearance of the lost natural parents will mean the resurrection of a mother of ill-repute (pratically a prostitute) or of a sister whose existence will mean the ruin of all the prospects that the ceded child had.

In the case of the *Amaro* novel there is no return of the biological parents (both dead)

[7] M. Robert (1972), *Roman des origines et origines du roman*, Paris: Grasset.

but Amaro in any case never considers going back to his humble family. He has nothing to go back to.

In *The Sin of Father Amaro* the priest is a sort of androgyne (consider his pleasure of being, when young, among women as being one of them) lacking emotional courage to fight for his child. Amélia is the victim of seduction, a mizture of Ophelia and Gretchen. They are not real killers. The real authors of filicide are the «weaver of angels», the maidservant women, enemies of sex: the marqueza who condemned Amaro to Chastity, and all the feminine bigotry of Leiria, gathered aroung the priests, labelling as evil everything pertaining to lust.

In Queiroz' novels mothers play the part of Jocasta, of the Theban sphinx, lacking the «milk of human kindness». The novelist either kills them soon after birth of the central character (*The Sin of Father Amaro, The Relic*) or exposes them, or condemns them after ruining them (*Os Maias, A Tragédia da Rua das Flores*).

Besides the exposing of «Mothers» we see progressively more and more in Queiroz novels the appearance of men with powerful fantasies of wealth, of knowledge, of trickery (*The Mandarim, The Illustrious House of Ramires, The Relic, The City and The Mountains*).

Through force of will, through his artistic work, Queiroz was able to change his feelings towards himself and his life. He turned from someone vulnerable and submissive to «Mothers» (like Amaro) into an artist who was recognized in his lifetime as the most articulate and elegant writer of prose that ever existed in Portugal. Instead of feeling depressive moods, instead of constant denigration of his work and self-deprecations he now felt like the heroes of his last novels. Living as the Portuguese Consul in Paris, at this time capital of Europe, for the last 12 years of his life he was a sort of figure-head of all Portuguese literature.

In his parents, outwardly respectable, he could see the forms of social and psychological pathology. He continued to depict this pathology in his fiction, despite the fact that he no longer identified with it, as before in *The Sin of Father Amaro*.

Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 165-170

Macbeth and the Primal Horde

YVES THORET (*)

When Freud described the primal horde myth, he did not mention Shakespeare's play, *Macbeth*. I think he inspired himself unconsciously of the Scottish Play to construct this primal horde myth. I shall try in this paper to examine this hypothesis. I shall first recall briefly the main points of the freudian myth of the primal horde and of the killing of the primal father.

1. THE PRIMAL HORDE

Freud tried to find explanations to exogamy and totemism in the works of three anthropologists, Darwin, Atkinson and Robertson Smith.

«Darwin», writes Freud, «deduced from the habits of the higher apes that men, too, originally lived in small hordes within which the jealousy of the oldest and strongest male prevented sexual promiscuity. (...) When the young male grows up, a contest takes place for mastery, and the strongest, by killing and driving out the others, establishes himself as the head of the community» (Freud, 1913, p. 125).

Another antropologist, Atkinson, living in New Calidonia, «pointed out that the conditions which Darwin assumed to prevail in the primal horde may easily be observed in herds of wild oxen and horses and regularly lead to the killing of the father of the herd. He further supposed that, after the father had been disposed of, the herd would be disintegrated by a bitter struggle between the victorious sons. Thus any new organization of society would be precluded: there would be «an ever-recurring violent succession to the solitary paternal tyrant, by sons whose parricidal hands were so soon again clenched in fratricidal strife» (p. 142, note 1). It was absolutely necessary to *preclude the endless repetition of such crimes*, parricide and fratricide, in order to set up a new organization of society. Atkinson believed that these groups could find a less violent transition to a peacable social state through the intervention of mother love; «the sons were allowed to remain with the horde» under the condition to renounce to any sexual relation with their mother and sisters.

Freud noticed the *correspondence* «between the two taboo-ordinances of totemism (not to kill the totem and not to have sexual relations with any woman of the same totem clan) and the two elements of the Oedipus complex (getting rid of the father and taking the

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mother to wife)». Freud concluded: «I was therefore tempted to equate the totem-animal with the father» (1925, p. 67).

He achieved to «recognize the killing of the father as the nucleus of totemism» when he read W. Robertson Smith's book, *The religion of the Semites*. He was much impressed by the description of the *totem meal*: «once a year the totem animal, which was at other times regarded as sacred, was solemnly killed in the presence of all the members of the clan, was devoured and was then mourned over. The mourning was followed by a great festival» (p. 67).

Therefore, Freud took into account «Darwin's conjecture that men originally lived in hordes, each under the domination of a single powerful, violent and jealous male». Freud composed then his hypothesis or rather his «vision» of the primal horde myth (p. 67-68).

Freud insisted upon a double rule quoted by Robertson Smith: «the rule that every participant at the meal must eat a share of the flesh of the victim has the same meaning as the provision that the execution of a guilty tribesman must be carried out by the tribe as a whole» (Freud, 1913, pp. 132-8). This is a main point of the freudian analysis of totemism; on one hand, the members of the tribe, their god (or gods) and their totem-animal have the same blood; on the other hand, a single person may not give death; the right to kill belongs only to the community, acting jointly (Freud, 1925, pp. 67-68; Ritvo, pp. 165-169).

Inspired by the suggestive text of Robertson Smith, Freud presented his own construction of the primal horde myth; the primal father behaved like a despot; «one day, however, the sons came together and united to overwhelm, kill and devour their father. (...) After the deed, they were unable to take over their heritage since they stood in one another's way. Under the influence of failure and remorse, they learned to come to an agreement among themselves; they banded themselves into a clan of brothers. (...) The totem meal was the festival commemorating the fearful deed from which sprang man's sense of guilt» (1925, p. 68). The father had actually been eliminated and, in no real sense, could the deed be undone. The totem meal ritual was «the commemoration of a mythical tragedy» (1913, p. 152).

2. MACBETH

I shall now interpret some aspects of Shakespeare's play, and I shall study their relation with the myth of the primal horde.

2.1. *The plot*

In the play, we can distinguish two parts: the murder of King Duncan by Macbeth and the revenge of the Thanes of Scotland.

In the first part, the murder of Duncan is evoked by the witches, prepared by Macbeth and his wife, committed by Macbeth himself, discovered and proclaimed by Macduff and the complete groupe of Thanes of Scotland. They all swear to «question this most bloody piece of work, to know it further». (Acte II, scene 3, v. 125-127).

The second part of the play begins with the banquet scene, in Macbeth's castle. We can interpret this scene as a totem meal. Till his death, the new king Macbeth is obsessed by the potential rivalry of his companions. This sounds like these Atkinson's lines: «The patriarch had only one enemy whom he should dread, (...) a youthful band of brothers living together.» This group of young rebels would «inevitably wrench by combined attacks, (...) both wife and life from the paternal tyrant» (Freud, 1913, p. 142, note 1).

Macbeth, guilty of regicide, behaves like the patriarch leading the primal horde, killing

or driving out his rivals: Banquo, Fleance, Macduff, Malcolm, Donalbain, etc..... We can observe the progressive constitution of a new group of exiled Thanes, rebelling themselves together against their new tyrant and acting jointly to kill him. It reminds us what Atkinson described: «one day, the brothers who had been driven out came together, killed and devoured their father and so, made an end of the patriarchal horde. (...) United, they had the courage to do and succeeded in doing what would have been impossible for them individually» (p. 141).

2.2. *The king's horses*

Shakespeare mentions some unnatural and strange events occuring during the night of the crime: the king's horses turned wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out and even ate each other (act II, scene 4, v. 14-16). A scenic metaphor of Duncan's death can hardly be closen to Atkinson's descriptions of the wild herds of horses or oxen, whose fights lead these animals to kill the primal father.

2.3. *The banquet scene*

Macbeth invites all the Thanes of Scotland to celebrate his new kingship. When he cheers his guests good appetite or toasts, the Ghost of Banquo enters, sits in Macbeth's place and shakes his hair at him. We can interpret this scene as a representation of the totem meal which symbolizes the killing of the primal father and the constitution of a clan.

Duncan never appears again after his death; we can suppose King Duncan represented here by the meat and wine served at the court by the new King Macbeth. When the Ghost of Banquo sits in Macbeth's place, Macbeth checks that the table is full up. When he sees the Ghost, he asks his guests, the members of the horde: «which of you have done this?»

What deed Macbeth means by this plural «have» instead of «has»? What collective deed is he thinking of? Is it the murder of Banquo or rather the regicide of Duncan? I think it is interesting to analyse why Macbeth, at the end of the banquet scene, confesses his crimes to his peers. It reminds me the rule quoted by Robertson Smith: every member of the community must share the totem meal; this rule prescribes, too, that a guilty member of the tribe must be executed by the whole group, acting jointly. We can also interpret the last part of the banquet scene as a symbolic representation of the identification of the murderer with his victim and even with his tragic guilt itself; Macbeth becomes, in the same time, hero, rebel, new tyrant, regicide, redeemer of the group and, at last, scapegoat (D. Hunter, 1988; Freud, 1913, pp. 155-161).

2.4. *The ever-recurring violent succession*

Malcolm, the leader of the conspiration, warns Macduff that he might reveal himself a new tyrant after Macbeth's death:

> «When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,
> Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country
> Shall have more vices than it had before,
> More suffer, and more sundry ways than ever,
> By him that shall succeed.»
> (act IV, scene 3, v. 45-49)

Freud was much impressed by the shakespearian accents of this sentence written by Atkinson:

> «There would be an ever-recurring violent succession to the solitary paternal tyrant, by sons whose parricidal hands were so soon again clenched in fratricidal strife» (Freud, 1913, p. 142, note 1). He quoted it in English in *Totem and Taboo.*

The totem meal is the necessary ritualization of the constitution of a blood-tie between the brothers, in order to preclude other crimes.

2.5. *The forest of Birnham*

The mobilization of the Birnham forest, marching against the castle of Dunsiname, may also symbolize the mob of the banished brothers, hiding themselves under the camouflage of branches, decided to kill together the tyrant Macbeth. As soon as they get close enough to the Macbeth's castle, Malcolm, the leader of the band, orders them:

> «Now, near enough: your leavy screens throw down,
> And show like those you are.»
> (act V, scene 6, v. 1-2).

I could continue to enumerate representations of the primal horde in this play.

We can interpret the main parts of this play as follows: (a) Macbeth commits an oedipian regicide-parricide; (b) The new king Macbeth invites all the Thanes of Scotland to a banquet, a totem meal. But Macbeth is excluded of the *clan* by the Ghost of Banquo. Macbeth confesses his crimes in vain to the group of brothers. Guilty of individuals acts of violence, Macbeth may not share the totem meal; (c) Macbeth behaves then like a primal father, violent and jealous, killing for fun, leading the *horde* like an unlimited despot; (d) The *band* of Thanes, threatened by Macbeth, exile itself in England and raise an army against the new tyrant; (e) They attack him jointly. Macduff kills Macbeth and becomes a new regicide, a tragic hero; (f) Malcolm is claimed the new king of Scotland after the battle. He should be wary to be on his guard, in spite of having been acclaimed by all his companions.

3. THE EFFECT OF THE SCOTTISH PLAY ON THE AUDIENCE

For André Green, *Macbeth* is an enigmatic play but the spectators perceive a very important psychological density in it (Green, 1992, pp. 210-256). Somehow, the Scottish Play establishes a strong connivance between the actors on the stage and the audience.

For instance, I was attending once a performance of this play in Regent's Park, in the Open Air Theater. It was raining hard during the performance and the audience stood there stoically, under a forest of umbrellas. During the porter scene, the actor should have said:

> «This place is too *cold* for Hell!»
> (act II, scene 3, v. 17)

Taking into account the climate of the performance, he said:

> «This place is too *wet* for Hell!»

Was he a post-modern Porter?

The story of Macbeth, full of sound and fury, evokes the paradox of desire and the facticity of its objets.

Macbeth and his Lady accept to kill their guest, king and kinsman in order to fulfil the poisoned prediction of the witches. At first, they are fascinated by their desire of power and glory.

The great portuguese poet, Bocage, wrote these verses about the mysteries of love:

> «Quando te logro mais, mais te desejo,
> Quando te encontro mais, mais te procuro...»
> (Bocage, 1989, p. 62).

I shall try to translate this text in the following way:

> «The time I possess you the most, the most I desire you,
> Then, when I find you the most, the most I look for you...»

Later on, comes for Macbeth and Lady Macbeth the time of disillusion. Lady Macbeth has lost her rage to live:

> «Nought's had, all's spent,
> Where our desire is got without content:
> 'Tis safer to be that which we destroy,
> Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.»
> (act III, scene 2, v. 4-7).

We could find a correspondence with this anxiety of vacuity («without content») in the etymology of the portuguese words signifying witch (*feitiço*) or witchcraft (*feitiçaria*). For some authors, these words derive from the latin word *fatum* meaning fate. For others, *feitiço* comes from the latin words *factum*, meaning fact, or *factitium*, meaning factitious. This hypothesis corresponds to very classical types of transformation of words from one language to another (the open voyel sound *fa-* into a closed voyel sound *fe-*, for instance). For this second group of etymologists, the portuguese word *feitiço* comes from the latin word *factitium* meaning factitious.

At the end of *Totem and taboo*, Freud insists on the necessity to admit the *confusion*, in some archaic cultures as well as during childhood, *between wishes and facts*: «If wishes and impulses have the full value of facts for primitive men, it is our business to give their attitude our understanding attention instead of correcting it in accordance with our own standards. (...) In their childhood, they (the obsessional neurotics) had these evil impulses pure and simple, and turned them into acts so far as the impotence of childhood allowed.» (Freud, 1913, pp. 160-161).

This might explain why, in this tragedy, the most fantastic figures, the witches, drive Macbeth to discover, as the end of the play, the most factitious aspects of existence, when he wispers:

> «Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more.»
> (act V, scene 5, v. 24-26).

This Shakespeare's play induces a strong reaction in the audience, a spectator's response. The reliving of the primal horde myth recalls our most infantile images (act II, scene 2, v. 53-54):

> «'Tis the eye of childhood
> That fears a painted devil.»

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 171-175

Commentary on Phallocentricity in Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV*: «But Yet a Woman» (*)

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In the following, I explore the inner life of «Hotspur», a character in Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV*. In creating the fictive character of Hotspur, Shakespeare retained the impetuous and belligerent quality of the historic Hotspur (Sir Henry Percy). I intend to study his character in an area *entirely of Shakespeare's creation*: Hotspur's attitude toward women — an attitude contemporary critics might describe as «phallocentric». I shall try to show how Hotspur's attitude toward women is shaped by the same unconscious dynamic that determines his behavior on the battlefield: his struggle against unacceptable parts of himself.

In this first encounter with a woman, his wife, Kate (II, iii, 1. 106-112) Hotspur reveals his problematic attitude toward women. He is secretly planning his latest insurrection and has been neglecting Kate. Perplexed, Kate asks why but Hotspur pushes her away with:

I know you wise, but yet no farther wise
Than Harry Percy's wife; constant you are,
But yet a woman, and for secrecy,
No lady closer, for I well believe
Thou wilt not utter what thou dost not know,
So far will I trust thee, gentle Kate.
(II, iii, 1. 106-112)

Three times in six lines, he vacillates: he knows Kate is wise, but no wiser than a wife can be; he knows she's constant and reliable but yet a woman and therefor inconstant; he knows she is close with secret, but as a lady, she is apt to utter what she knows. Only so far can gentle Kate be trusted... and on he goes. He seems to be saying he respects and trusts her but with a reservation; she is but yet a woman.

Throughout the text, Hotspur denonstrates this ambivalent attitudes about Kate — and feminity in general. Although he is attracted to women (certainly he is draw to Kate),

(*) My gratitude to the many who helped with this paper, especialy Drs. Ruth Cope, Fred Ehrlich, David Blau, Max Day, and Mr. Adam Krims.

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he patronizes and devalues them. Of course, his insensitivity and gender prejudice are partly attributable to cultural influences. But his words need also to be explored for inner conflicts of a much more personal nature.

Although the text clearly represents *the men* as treacherous and therefor unreliable, Hotspur shows little conscious awareness of this. Indeed earlier in the same scene in which he tells Kate «constant you are but —», he learns of a new defection from the conspiracy. Although furious, he nevertheless insists on the trustworthiness of his fellow conspirators; he even uses the word «constant!»:

> By the Lord, our plot is a good plot as ever was laid, our
> friends true and constant: a good plot, and full of
> expectation; an excellent plot, very good friends.
> (II, iii, 1. 16-20)

Three times in a single line of prose — in counterpoint to his triple devaluation of women — he iterates, with rising certainty, the reliability of the men. He seems to be trying to assure himself that men are true and constant and it is the women who are, well, but yet women. This invites reader inquiry: What might be the source, within Hotspur, of this prejudice against women?

Early in the text (I, iii, 1. 43-52), before Kate or any woman appears on the scene, the reader begins to learn about the substructure of this prejudice. Hotspur is confronting the king, trying to excuse his refusal to surrender his prisoners. Hotspur excuses focus on the personality of the messenger sent by the king to demand the prisoners. Hotspur describes his battlefield encounter with the messenger:

> And as the soldiers bore dead bodies by,
> He [the messenger] called them untaught knaves, unmannerly,
> To bring a slovenly and unhandsone corse
> Betwixt the wind and his nobility.
> With many holiday and lady terms
> He questioned me, amongst the rest demanded
> My prisioners in your Majesty's behalf.
> I then, all smarting with my wounds being cold,
> Be so bothered with a popingay,
> Out of my grief and impatience
> Answer'd neglectingly, I know not what —
> He should, or he should not, — for he made me mad
> To see him shine so brisk and smell so sweet,
> And talk so like a waiting-gentlewoman
> Of guns, of drums, and wounds, God save the mark!
> And telling me the sovereignest thing on earth
> Was parmaciti for an inward bruise,
> (I, iii, 1. 43-52)

Hotspur considers the messenger's demeanor sufficient provocation for his defiance. And Hotspur had really encountered a «popinjay» [lit. a parrot, here a talkative, conceited person] — but then Hotspur fits the description!

But to Hotspur, the messenger is not simply a popinjay; Hotspur perceives him as *an effeminate popinjay*. The messenger «talks so like a waiting-gentlewoman... with many holoday and lady terms», — words and mannerisms that «made Hotspur mad» («mad» I read here as «crazed» or «threatened»). The messenger exhibits — perhaps even flaunts — his femininity. This conveys a more covert message: Man is partly woman — and this

is intolerable to a Hotspur. His contemptuous dismissal of the messenger reflects contempt for femininity in a man, and by extension, Hotspur rejects the femininity within himself.

In this reading then, Hotspur's contempt for the man who is «so like a waiting gentlewoman» reflects his contempt for the gentle woman, waiting, repressed deep within himself. When he sees this reflected in another man, he must promptly disown it. Thus, his hot-tempered dismissal of the womanly man on the battlefield mirrors Hotspur's own inner dynamics and suggests a defensive meaning to his devaluation of women; he devalues women as a way of dismissing his own inner femininity.

Shakespeare selects exactly the right words to create panic in Hotspur by having the messenger recommend «parmaciti» (a salve thought to be derived from whale sperm) for Hotspur's «inward bruise».

Hotspur's next encounters femininity is the person of his wife, Lady Kate. [Here, I retur to the scene in which he told her that she is «but yet a woman»]. Now, Kate asks why he neglects her:

For what offense have I this fortnight been
A banish'd woman from my Harry's bed?
Tell me, Sweet lord, what is't that takes from thee
Thy stomach, pleasure, and thy golden sleep?
Why dost thou bend thine eyes upon the earth,
And start so often when thou sit'st slone?
Why hast thou lost the fresh blood in thy cheeks,
And given my treasures and my rights of thee
To thick-ey'd musing and curst melancholy?
(II, iii, 1. 37-48)

Kate reveals that for a fortnight now Hotspur has been preoccupied and has not made love with her. Hotspur's avoidance not only puzzles Kate, it invites further reader inquiry. Why *has* Kate been «A banish'd woman from my Harry's bed?» Is it simply preoccupation with the fighting ahead (as Hotspur would have Kate believe)? After all, soldiers need not avoid love for a fortnight before combat. Or is Hotspur's avoidance of love-making another manifestation of his problem with femininity?

On the surface, Hotspur's reply to Kate is partly an attempt to confide and partly more evasion:

Away,
Away, you trifler! Love, I love thee not,
I care not for thee, Kate. This is no world
To play with mammets and to tilt with lips.
We must have bloody noses and cracked crowns,
And pass them current too. God's me, my horse!
(II, iii, 1. 89-95)

His «Love, I love thee not» and «we must have crack'd crowns and bloody noses» tells Kate what he consciously feels: he loves her but now he is too preoccupied with the impending violence to make love. But other less obvious factors are hidden within the subtext of Hotspur's words.

His «this is no world to play with mammets» suggests he has banished Kate from his bed because he associates love-making with playing with «*mammets*» — literally «puppets or dolls», but glossed by some editors as Hotspur's bawdy word-play on «mamma», Elizabethan slan (and Latin) for a woman's breasts. Puppets, dolls, or breasts — «this is no world» for Hotspur.

Giving the more literal reading to the «mammets» as puppets or dolls suggests Hotspur

associates love-making with children playing with dolls. This association may have become intensified because of regression caused by Hotspur's anxiety (which Kate has noticed) over the deadly events about to unfold. Perhaps, he could tolerate the idea of playing toy soldiers, but playing with Kate evokes playing dolls with a girl — feminine in Elizabethan convention. Considered in light of his disgust with femininity identification in a man (as revealed with the messenger), this can be no world for a Hotspur.

Doll play also includes doll family play — often mother («mamma») and baby. This resonates with the gloss of «mammets» as word-play on «mamma» for breasts. The onomatopoeic quality of both «mammet» and «mamma» echoes the «ma»-sound signifier instinctively uttered by babies for mother. Both readings of mammets then lead to mother. Accordingly, Hotspur's «play with mammets» refers to the mother, the baby playing at her breast, and, most regressed, the fused mother and baby.

His «to tilt with lips» can be read not only in the sense of tilting but also «to tilt with labia [female genitals]», another reference to the threat of fusion and identification with the woman (and her imago, mother) during the process of genital union. Hotspur's anxiety about this regressive imagery compels him to avoid closeness with Kate and to defensively devalue women.

Additional disclosure is provided in the privacy of the Percy's bedroom. Kate tells Hotspur about his dreams:

> In thy faint slumbers I have by thee watch'd'
> And heard thee murmur tales of iron wars,
> Speak terms of manage to thy bounding steed,
> Cry «Courage! to the field!» And thou hast talk'd
> Of sallies and retires, of trenches, tents,
> Of pallisadoes, frontiers, parapets,
> Of basiliks, of canon, culverin,
> Of prisioner's ransom, of soldiers slain,
> (II, iii, 1. 46-57)

The *manifest* content of Hotspur's dreams reflects his familiar characterological armament: the military trappings of the warrior parading about the text. But dreams, even dreams in texts, disguise their latent contents. It is the *latent* content of Hotspur's dream that resonates with what has already been interpreted about Hotspur's inner life.

Hotspur cries out in his sleep «Courage, to the field!» — presumeably to encourage frightened soldiers. But Hotspur not does allow himself to experience fear, so the soldiers could be a dream disguise for this disowned aspect of himself — a role he usually assigns women during waking hours.

His «of prisioners ransom» may contain another disguised reference to himself: his own infantile wish to surrender to his fears and give himself up to the enemy. The emergence of these unconscious wishes into dream content carries with it all the anxiety of living them out on the battlefield. No wonder his slumbers have been faint!

All these formulations center on Hotspur's defenses against inner femininity and infantile wishes as the primary agents shaping his character. However, the «lesson» of Shakespeare's Histories — and of history itself — indicates that still more is needed to account for the aggression that men like Hotspur can exhibit towars women and other men.

In addition to these defenses, the very intensity of Hotspur's aggressive behavior suggests that *aggression itself, as an independent entity*, together with the defenses it in turn generates, play a crucial role in determining his behavior. According to this interpretation, Hotspur's earlier «We must have bloody noses and crack'd crowns», refers directly to his aggressive wishes, which Hotspur seems comfortable with — perhaps too comfortable. However, the

plural «we» indicates that he also includes himself among the casualities; he defends against his aggression by turning it back onto himself. This then would suggest that beneath the bellingerency of the manifest content of Hotspur's dreams is just the opposite: passive wishes *to be* the prisioner, bloodied, and the soldier slain — finally lived out when he recklessly joins battle and is slain by Prince Hal.

Thus, multiple layers are hidden beneath the cloak of this military man. In this respect, Hotspur is the mirror image of the messenger whose aggression is obscured by feminine tapestry. Hotspur parades his aggression to conceal his femininity, fearfulness, and self-directed aggression, cloaking it all banner «of basiliks, of canon, culverin». Sadly for him (and the world), this further propels aggressive drive to suppress woman and destroy men.

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 177-188

Grief-Work in Contemporary American Cultural Criticism

KATHLEEN WOODWARD (*)

PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY OF MOURNING AND DISCOURSES OF THE EMOTIONS: FROM FREUD TO KRISTEVA

«In the work of mourning, it is not grief that works: grief keeps watch. ... Grief, incising, dissecting, exposing a hurt which can no longer be endured, or even remembered».

Maurice Blanchot

In *Studies in Hysteria* (1893), Freud articulated a theory of affect which resonates with the dominant tradition in western culture of the emotions as negative: the emotions are associated with woman — and with death — and they are something to be gotten rid of. In Freud's hysterical women, affect is represented as «strangulated» and «cut off» from the memory to which it was attached (SE 2: xviii). Affect, unable to speak in its own language, is transcribed into another language, the bodily symptoms of hysteria which Freud later described in *Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1910) as «precipitates» of emotional experiences (SE 11: 14). The goal of analysis, however, is not so much to give affect voice — a subtle vocabulary, a rich poetics — as to purge it once it has been remembered. Affect in short is represented as pathogenic, often «paralyzing» (SE 2: 11), something that needs to be «discharged» or, in that strange Freudian word, «abreacted» through the labor of analysis or «work», Freud's preferred term. Freud's basic model of the functioning of the mental apparatus — not the *emotional* apparatus — is thus homeostatic, quietistic, and economic: the mental apparatus works to free itself from excitation and disturbance, both of which are associated with scenes of emotional trauma.

It is well known that in *Studies in Hysteria* Freud associates affect with the erotic desires which «his» hysterical women find themselves unable to express. In addition, however,

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in the stories of these women affect is also linked definitively with illness, death, and grief — although Freud does not analyze this aspect of their histories. Crucial to Fräulein Elisabeth von R.'s story, for example, is that she had devoted herself to nursing her ill father for eighteen months before he died, that after her father's death she had nursed her mother for an eye ailment, and, finally, that one of her sisters, recently married, had died. Freud, however, dismisses these events as but occasions for «commonplace emotional upheavals» (144), concluding that the exciting cause of her hysterical symptoms was her desire for her dead sister's husband. The famous Anna O., who was treated by Freud's colleague Josef Breuer (with whom Freud co-authored *Studies in Hysteria*), developed her hysterical symptoms while she was nursing her father, «of whom she was passionately fond», wrote Breuer (22). Her father's death ten months later was, Breuer concluded, «the most severe psychical trauma that she could possibly have experienced» (26). Yet because Breuer terminated his sessions with Anna O. on account of her reportedly erotic, positive transference to him, this case too is understood within the history of psychoanalysis as a story of erotic desire, not one of death and grief. I will note too that the celebrated story of Dora, which Freud published under the title *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* (1905) and which he analyzed in terms of her «forbidden» sexual desire — as have countless commentators since — also contains similar scenes of illness and death, including «the death of the aunt of whom she [Dora] had been so fond» (SE 7: 22), the very aunt whom «ever since she had fallen ill she had taken as her model» (20).

In the Freudian world, affect is always understood as complex and charged with the conflict of ambivalence (neither «oceanic feeling», a spiritual or religious feeling of oneness with the world, nor sentimentality, for example, are contained in the Freudian discourse of the emotions). In the context of Freud's own theory, then, it would seem appropriate to, at the very least, read the emotional conflict in these women as a conflict between desire and grief — between an attachment to the living, that is to say, to desire, and an attachment to the dead and dying, to one's grief. Freud insisted, however, that the etiology of hysteria was sexual trauma, more specifically, repressed sexual desire. He thus overlooked bereavement or loss as a contributing, if not primary, cause of such distress. Instead he understood the disturbance to be connected with the repressed reminiscence of sexual desire, which he represented as a blockage that needed to be excised. (Interestingly enough, in *Studies in Hysteria* two of Freud's patients found fault with his theory and method. Emmy von N. lost her emotional memory to Freud through hypnosis, the technique he was then using; he reports that she, wanting her memory back, reproached him for her loss (SE 2: 84). The case of Lucy R. I find equally fascinating. Freud learns one day after he had stopped seeing her that she is suddenly cured; she gives an astonishingly unpsychoanalytic explanation of her recovery: «I can have thoughts and feelings to myself», she declares (SE 2: 121). Rather than «discharge» her feelings, that is, rather than confess them to Freud, she prefers to keep them to herself, a decidedly un-Freudian view of the emotions.

Notwithstanding Freud's predominantly negative view of the emotions in his early work with hysterical women, I want also to acknowledge the *importance* of affect itself in these very texts: it is not recovering the repressed memory that is significant in itself, rather what is critical is recovering the emotion associated with the memory. As Freud wrote later about these early cases, «it was found that no result was produced by the recollection of a scene in the doctor's presence if for some reason the recollection took place without any generation of affect» (SE 11: 18). In these early texts, then, it is not the codes of representation with which Freud is concerned, as he is later in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). To the contrary. Without the affect, the memory — the scene of representation — is meaningless. From this perspective the narrative of analysis is thus to work long and hard to instantly recover and re-experience a past affect in a moment of sudden feeling, which as suddenly will fade, yielding in its place insight and understanding, that is, cognition.

How different this is from the process of «normal» mourning as Freud theorizes it in «Mourning and Melancholia» (1917), where the goal is the gradual diminishing of painful affect over time. Fundamentally, however, the desired end result is the same: affect itself must die. I have elsewhere discussed «Mourning and Melancholia» which, as many have remarked, is in fact not so much about mourning as it is a theoretical meditation on psychological processes, so much so (and so influential has been Freud's essay) that the two terms «mourning» and «grief» have become blurred and are often used interchangeably. Here I want to distinguish carefully between «grief», that word we use to describe our anguish over loss (our emotional pain), and «mourning», which denotes a metapsychological process of coming to terms with death (social rituals and ceremonies I set aside). In «Mourning and Melancholia» grief is decidedly not Freud's subject.

We can see this all the more clearly if we briefly compare Freud's 1917 essay with Melanie Klein's «Mourning and Its Relation to Manic-Depressive States» (1940). In her essay Klein integrates what I am suggesting are two separate discourses — a discourse of the emotions and an analytical/theoretical discourse on mourning as a process of accommodating oneself to loss. Indeed, it is precisely a turbulent discourse of the emotions which sets Klein's psychoanalytic world in its wildly spinning motion. In her essay Klein theorizes mourning as a constitutive process in the development of the infant, dissecting grief into so many various and emphatic emotions — including hatred, guilt, distrust, elation, revenge, anxiety, despair, triumph, jealousy, sorrow, and fear. In the process she affirms the value of a rich if volatile emotional life. If for Freud the goal of mourning is to detach oneself from the lost object, thus freeing one's energy to invest it in another person (we see here the inflection of the language of economics), for Klein one emotion will yield another in the normal course of mourning. For Klein mourning is a process of transformation if not addition or multiplication of emotions, not the Freudian process of slow subtraction of units of energy. In the Kleinian world triumph yields to guilt, and guilt to love, which accompanies the desire for reparation. Mourning for Klein is a binding, not an unbinding process, one which generates a complex, dynamic, and textured emotional world. Thus her emphasis in the case history of Mrs. A. is on her devastating *lack* of affect: surely nothing could be worse in Klein's world (Freud does not give us any such analytical portraits of grieving patients in «Mourning and Melancholia» which would have compelled him to describe them novelistically in terms of their feelings, as he does in *Dora*, for example). Melanie Klein's Mrs. A.? Her small son had died. Mrs. A.'s affective response? Klein reports: «In the first week after her son died she did not cry much, and tears did not bring her the relief they would later on. She felt numbed and closed up, and physically broken» (158). The very point of the Kleinian model of mourning is to experience the emotions, to experience a suffering which, Klein believes, «can become productive» — and productive in many ways: one may become creative, one may become indeed «wiser» (164), a formulation we do not often enough associate with Klein. What is pathological is the lack of affect, not affect itself.

The American psychoanalyst Susan Kavaler-Adler in *The Compulsion to Create* (forthcoming) describes Klein's theory as an «affective phenomenology, which displays the self in process through developmental mourning» (1). Kavaler-Adler herself builds on Klein's model of mourning, arguing that «mourning is the essential affective process that promotes self integration, and also promotes ongoing healthy internalization» (1). For Kavaler-Adler mourning is not only a primary developmental process but one which extends over the life course. Like Klein too, Kavaler-Adler is concerned to produce not just a theoretical model of mourning as a psychological process but also a phenomenology of grief. However, the affective register of her clinical and literary world — she studies the work of several women writers in English from different centuries, including Emily Brönte and Charlotte Brönte as well as Sylvia Plath, in addition to presenting case material in her final chapter — is decidedly less vehement

and tumultuous than Klein's: Kavaler-Adler's emphasis instead is on sorrow in its many manifestations, sadness often gentle and tender, and remorse.

Melanie Klein's Mrs. A. and the absence of her grief:[1] I propose that we allow this «numbed», «closed up» figure of a woman to stand as a prototype of the psychoanalytic patient of the past fifty years, the patient who has succeeded, historically, the turn-of-the-century Freudian hysteric. Mrs. A. would thus be an instance of the historical type generally labeled a borderline patient who is diagnosed as suffering from narcissistic personality disorders and described as lacking in affect, as being empty inside, as wounded. In this schematic narrative of a cultural history of psychoanalysis the heir to Klein's Mrs. A. is Julia Kristeva's Helen and Isabel, about whom we read in *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (1978). This is a remarkable book which follows in the Kleinian tradition of being a double discourse — a theory of melancholia as well as a discourse of the emotions (and a theory of the emotions as well). Significantly, it is also a text which performs an evocative writing of melancholia, intertwining the clinical, theoretical, and literary. In Kristeva's *Black Sun* these women are presented as somehow sublime in their suffering. In them affect is not simply absent, it has imploded. Isabel: she experiences no grief, describing her state as one of «numbed sorrow» (87). Kristeva writes of Isabel's melancholy mood — a dispersion of what once might have been or will be grief (we are not surprised to learn that Isabel experienced no grief after her mother died) — as a «nothingness that is neither repression nor simply the mark of affect but condenses into a black hole... [the] ill-being of abandonments and disappointments» (87). Kristeva writes that Helen is a woman who disavowed loss, whose feverish activity «blocked all possibility of symbolization for the negative affects — fear, sorrow, pain» (77). These depressive women restrain themselves emotionally, they are «anesthetized, as if 'dead'» (82).

In *Black Sun* Kristeva, like Freud in «Mourning and Melancholia», privileges melancholia over mourning but she does not so neatly separate the two as Freud sought to do. The goal of analysis is in part to make sadness «signifiable» (83), to disengage the person from sadness itself, the melancholic affect itself being the sole object to which such a person clings — this is a brilliant formulation of affect itself as an object. «For such narcissistic depressed persons», Kristeva writes, «sadness is really the sole object; more precisely, it is a substitute object they become attached to, an object they tame and cherish for lack of another» (12). For Kristeva an emotion in this context is understood as a defense; a living death is sustained by melancholy, which implodes into numbness, vanishing into itself. Both mourning and melancholia, in Kristeva's view, are characterized by «intolerance for object loss and the signifier's failure to insure a compensating way out of the states of withdrawal in which the subject takes refuge to the point of inaction (pretending to be dead) or even suicide» (10). Benjaminian in mood if not in theory, Kristeva insists nonetheless that «loss, bereavement, and absence trigger the imagination» (9). Her theory of mourning and melancholy is thus paradoxical, not dialectical.

In *Black Sun* Kristeva opens her last chapter, which focuses on the work of Marguerite Duras, with an evocation of the historicity of what Kristeva calls our contemporary malady of grief. Since the First World War but more particularly since the Holocaust, «psychic grief», as she calls it, is the emotion appropriate to our time, characterized as it is by death worldwide and the corresponding crisis in representation and in psychic identity (222). The writing of Duras, she argues, is not cathartic. Duras's texts work not to purge her readers of emotions but on the contrary to spread the pain that subtends our culture of death. From this perspective mourning decidedly should not come to an end, affect should

[1] I am alluding here to Helene Deutsch's essay «Absence of Grief» which was published in 1937, three years before Klein's «Mourning and Its Relation to Manic-Depressive States».

not be discharged as in the Freudian model. Kristeva enjoins us to live in our grief which is our emotional testament to and heritage of our time.

I have argued elsewhere, and in a way that resonates somewhat with Kristeva here, that Freud cut the distinction between mourning and melancholia too sharply, leaving us no place between a crippling melancholy and the necessary end of grief as the telos of mourning. In that essay I took Barthes's *Camera Lucida* as my countertext to Freud's «Mourning and Melancholia». Barthes, refusing the Freudian model of mourning, seeks instead to sustain the strength of his grief, but not out of a depressive melancholia. I was concerned there, as I am here, to critique Freud's fundamental view of the emotions in general as pathogenic and as excitations to be calmed, and of grief in particular as something to be given up in the normal course of things. I was interested in the uses of grief, especially in the way in which it suffuses our very sense of ourselves as being, precisely, alive, not dead.

THE CULTURAL FORCE OF GRIEF: FISHER ON HAMLET, CRIMP ON AIDS, BREITWIESER ON MARY WHITE ROWLANDSON, SANTNER ON POST-HOLOCAUST GERMANY

In this project I find that I am not alone. Several literary and cultural critics in the United States have turned to grief as their subject — and largely unbeknowst to one another. Their work has appeared virtually simultaneously, constituting what I call «grief-work» in contemporary cultural studies, a body of criticism that I would argue names grief as the constitutive emotion of postmodernism. I emphasize grief rather than mourning because taken together these books and essays are concerned to sanction a discourse of grief rather than to censure it. Further, the emphasis in this work is not on a gradual giving up of those lost but on remembering them in a sustainable grief. I leave aside here Jacques Derrida's work on and of mourning in *Memoires for Paul de Man* which has already received considerable attention, including a fine essay by Nicholas Royle (Derrida's text certainly can be considered a piece of American cultural criticism not only because of de Man's long career in the United States but also because Derrida's long essay is itself in great part a defense of deconstruction in the American academy). I consider four pieces of work, all of which engage quite different bodies of material: Philip Fisher's essay «Thinking about Killing: Hamlet and the Path among the Passions» (1991), Mitchell Breitwieser's *American Puritanism and the Defense of Mourning: Religion, Grief, and Ethnology in Mary White Rowlandson's Captivity Narrative* (1990), Douglas Crimp's essay «Mourning and Militancy» (1989), and Eric Santner's *Stranded Objects: Mourning, Memory, and Film in Postwar Germany* (1990). Interestingly enough, the backdrop for all four is, in one form or another, war, conflict between competing worlds. In addition, all the authors explicitly link what we may call private grief to the larger social and political context.

Philip Fisher's essay on *Hamlet* promises what I will call a catastrophe theory of the «passions», which as we will see are not at all the same as the «emotions». Fisher is concerned to investigate the «mystery», as he calls it, of how one emotion leads to another. Of the several trajectories of the passions, «the most essential and also the most mysterious of them», he asserts, «is the path that leads from wrath to mourning» (43). This is, of course, precisely the trajectory theorized by Klein (whom Fisher does not mention), and indeed in his emphasis on the vehement emotions — that is what Fisher means by the passions — Fisher's discourse of the emotions resembles hers. Yet his model of mourning is a mixed economy: he also draws on the Freudian view of an emotion as an expenditure of a quantity of energy over time which will end in quietude or exhaustion. For me the intriguing turn in Fisher's essay is that he proposes that *Hamlet* represents precisely the reversal of this common if «mysterious» path of the emotions: as Fisher shows, the character Hamlet moves from «vehement inactivity» to rage. For Fisher this is not a regression of a natural path.

Quite the opposite. It is as if a river running to the sea instantly reversed itself (the metaphor is mine, not Fisher's). The retroversion of the path is, then, quite an extraordinary event, the possibility of which, I speculate, gives Fisher solace (I will return to this in a moment).

Fisher adopts the Freudian notion that mourning is associated with inactivity, with paralysis, with immobility. Rage he separates concisely from grief, and therefore the passion of vengeance is for him disassociated from grief. Note again that for Fisher all the emotions in his purview are what I call the strong emotions; he does not provide us with an inventory of the quiet emotions — of a tranquil sorrow or tenderness, for example. Grief too, then, is a passion, but somehow one which in Fisher's view does not lend itself to action.

In what at first appears to be a predictable reading, Fisher understands Hamlet's modernity as the exemplification of doubt, hesitation, and ratiocination — characterized by an «and yet», a mode of thought which so thoroughly inhabits western culture since *Hamlet* itself that we refer to it as Hamletic. Grief, a passion, is privatized in *Hamlet*, turned in upon itself rather than expressed openly on a public stage. This is what I take to be the important if latent argument or implication of Fisher's essay: the privatized passion of grief — that is, grief itself — appears at a certain historical moment when the western world was moving from a kingly economy of the passions (anger and wonder, among them, with courage and certainty as their concomitant virtues), characterized by grand public drama, to a bourgeois economy «drained» (59) of the passions and characterized by the sexual and commercial interests of the nuclear family (Fisher draws here on Albert Hirschman's fascinating study *The Passions and the Interests*). Hamlet finds himself, then, in this new world in which his grief is not compatible with the vengeance which the ghost of his father, that denizen of a now vanishing, if not vanished, royal world, would exact of him.

If Fisher begins his essay by virtually reproaching Hamlet for not feeling grief appropriate to Ophelia's death, among others (Fisher privileges vehemence), he later reads *Hamlet* through Hamlet's intervention in his own thought. «And yet?» Fisher asks of his own reading thus far. (Indeed there is a curious repetitiveness in Fisher's essay. It is as if he must keep retelling the story until, in due time, he comes to a watershed «and yet» and can tell it otherwise.) Fisher has succeeded, then, in naming grief as a passion, one which is marked by a praiseworthy stubbornness: the now salutary Hamlet is determined to pursue the course of his feeling to the end (we will see this also in Breitwieser's characterization of the seventeenth-century Puritan Mary Rowlandson). Further, Hamlet's grief is so absorbing that it cancels all the other passions in him — including erotic desire and wonder, or awe. It is therefore a great passion, indeed the only passion.

But as we are now in a world of secret, private dramas, Hamlet's «peculiar» actions must finally be explained by a psychology of grief: here, too, Fisher's point of departure is well taken (I will not go into his argument, which turns on a blurring of time, consonant with the two times of the locus of two worlds, and the very Freudian suggestion that Hamlet somehow feels responsible for having done nothing to prevent his father's death). Mourning, as Fisher puts it feelingly (it is with this phrase I think that Fisher does himself know something of the experience of grief), «regards all experience across a similar tear with time» (76), here not just the tear opened up by the split between the kingly world and the bourgeois world, passions deflated, but all such tears, all. *Hamlet* is, Fisher concludes beautifully, «a mourning for the passions themselves» (77), as is his own essay a lament for the strong emotions which have left, he suggests, only grief in their wake. Thus the reversibility of the trajectory of grief to rage which Fisher promised in the beginning of his essay remains only a figure of possibility, glimpsed in Fisher's own reading of Hamlet's grief as a profound and historically final passion.

The Freudian opposition between mourning and action which Fisher seeks to overcome but does not challenge is confronted directly by Douglas Crimp in his essay «Mourning and Militancy», a sensitive thinking through of the experience of the gay community with

grief — or should I say in grief? — in the last decade of deaths from AIDS. Crimp reminds us that Freud theorized mourning as a purely private affair, not a shared activity (a privacy taken up, as we have just seen, in Fisher's essay which turns on the distinction between the public and the inauguration of the private as the instituting mark of modernity, and on the figure of Hamlet as a man apart in his solitary grief). In mourning that is «profound», Freud wrote, there is a «cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of capacity to love, inhibition of all activity»; there is no energy left over «for other purposes or other interests» (244). But in the gay community, already set apart by the homophobia of the culture at large, there are, as Crimp notes, shared if not truly public mourning rituals (the AIDS quilt is an example). And many people in the gay community are actively involved in protesting American society's callous and prejudicial behavior towards it. The lack of «public support» for this community is outrageous, moving many to an anger in their grief, action which Fisher found impossible in Hamlet's world. Crimp: «Because this violence also desecrates the memories of our dead, we rise in anger to vindicate them. For many of us, mourning *becomes* militancy» (9). Thus one of the considerable achievements of Crimp's essay is that it questions the separation of mourning from militancy, tracing a path Fisher could not finally take from grief to rage in the sixteenth century. Yet Crimp does not flatly dismiss Freud but also uses Freud's essay to reflect on what he understands as the distinct ambivalence toward mourning in the gay community (I realize as I write that no other name seems accessible to me other than the «gay community», which seems somehow to connote a homogeneous group): «mourning troubles us; by 'us' I mean gay men confronting AIDS» (4). Thus it is not militancy that requires an explanation but rather quietism in the face of a devastating grief.

Early in his essay Crimp tells a compelling and unnerving story — at least it is so to me — about his own «ambivalent mourning», as he calls it, outside the sphere of the gay community. When his father died, we learn, Crimp felt no grief but soon the sign of his loss surfaced on his body in a glaring fashion — a huge boil closed his left eye shut as if (I add this) to compel him to look inside. Why does Crimp tell us this story? In part to suggest that he holds to the general principles of Freudian psychoanalysis. «I have never since doubted the force of the unconscious», he affirms (4-5). Thus Crimp can ask a question made possible by psychoanalysis: how can the «impatience», the ambivalence, of the gay community with mourning be explained, an ambivalence which appears not just personally (privately) but in the stance of gay activists who want to disassociate the movement from public mourning rites. And in turn Crimp gives an answer made possible by Freudian psychoanalysis. Freud on mourning: «the ego, confronted as it were with the question whether it will share this fate [death], is persuaded by the sum of its narcissistic satisfactions it derives from being alive to sever its attachment to the object that has been abolished» (SE 16: 255).

But the historical moment of AIDS renders such psychological detachment from those lost not only more difficult but dangerous, amounting to a violent and self-destructive denial seen, for example, in «ambivalence about being tested, or, if seropositive, about making treatment decisions» (17). On this point I find Crimp very smart, considered, indeed wise — both critically and emotionally. There is violence in public culture, yes. There is also internal violence, what I would call a kind of Kleinian psychic turmoil. Crimp names the emotions called up by AIDS and its death-toll, both past and present, emotions which are sometimes deadened — and that is worse: «[f]rustration, anger, rage, and outrage, anxiety, fear, and terror, shame and guilt, sadness and despair — it is not surprising that we feel these things; what is surprising is that we often don't... only a deadening numbness or constant depression» (16). For Crimp grief is, as it is for Fisher, the master emotion. But for Crimp it does not represent the emptiness of the passions, rather it entails them all. In the drama of vengeance, as Fisher so clearly elucidates it, there is a «militant alliance

between avenger and the victim», an identification which later breaks down: «Hamlet's inability to carry out revenge is in part a sign of his rejection of the simplification offered by anger to the deepest internal problem of grief, the inescapable feeling of responsibility and even the sense of having done nothing to prevent death» (66). The sobering implication of Crimp's analysis is that in the world of AIDS the sense of responsibility for someone else's death extends to include complicity in one's own death. To echo Kristeva on Duras, there is no catharsis possible but an inevitable spreading of the pain of grief.

But Crimp's essay does not end on this note of pathos or depression. Crimp: «Militancy, of course, then, but mourning too: mourning and militancy» (18). Crimp politicizes grief to the extent he sees possible, which is precisely the impulse of Mitchell Breitwieser's eloquent and many-faceted reading of the Puritan Mary White Rowlandson's account of her three-month captivity (along with three of her children, one of whom died) by the Algonquin Indians in 1676 during King Philip's War. Rowlandson's narrative, the first sustained prose work by a woman in the New World, represents for Breitwieser «the critical potential of a mournfulness» (36). As he tells the story: in her extreme distress, finding not only her own world broken apart but herself in the strange new world of a nomadic Indian culture, Rowlandson's experience and her act of writing lead her to implicitly if not explicitly resist the Puritan ideology to sublimate grief. From the perspective of Fisher's essay there is something thus exemplarily Hamletic about her: she refuses to relinquish her grief, to give up the very singularity of her little daughter's death (she was my daughter!) to the Puritan abstractness of exemplification. One hundred and some seventy-five years after Hamlet we are far from the world of the then vanishing drama of revenge. In the New World, ironically, death was so commonplace as to require a rigorous administration of mourning so that there was the necessary energy, Breitwieser provocatively suggests, at the State's disposal to maintain itself. As he argues, through an adjacent reading of the Puritan sermon, its purpose may have been, perversely, *to produce* melancholia, that is, to halt grieving unconsciously (and unconscionably) so that the «subterraneanized misery of grief is... constituted as a perpetual reservoir of energy» (65), or as he puts it alternatively, «so that it might be diverted into the State's bank account» (44). Thus Rowlandson, whom Mitchell much admires, keeps her grief as her own. Others may read her book but it belongs to her! Breitwieser too understands all this in terms of the distinction between the private and the public, as Rowlandson's private mode of being in a political drama which Breitwieser implicitly constructs as the Individual versus the State, where public time reigns. Breitwieser's defense of mourning is therefore a defense of a certain kind of privacy as resistance to the State. Thus, so far, these three recent considerations of grief can be read as writing a history of the fluctuating shift between the public and the private in western history: in Fisher's *Hamlet* a private bourgeois world is just being instituted; in Breitwieser's reading of Rowlandson's *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, it is fully established; and in Crimp's essay the distinction is complicated, coming apart.

Although Breitwieser draws on Freud's distinction between mourning and melancholia he nonetheless insists that even after Rowlandson's captivity was over and in the writing of it, Rowlandson's mourning — her grief — does not come to an end. Breitwieser thus posits what I have called «the in-between of mourning and melancholia». His strong reading of Hegel's interpretation of *Antigone* provides him with the paradigm for mourning as resistance to the State and the State's appropriation of mourning as the fuel upon which it is built. Breitwieser asserts a zero-zone where grief does its work of representation but is not complete: «The area of zero or space left by Polyneices's departure is not closed in postmourning subjectivity, but neither is it an impassible obstacle to the capacity to form representations and engage in purposive living» (40). He thus concludes that «the exemplary state depends on a sublimation of mourning, rather than on the sublimation of eros that Freud will describe in *Civilization and Its Discontents* and *The Future of an Illusion*» (42).

For me one of the real contributions of Breitwieser's study is that he is intent not just to insist that mourning in seventeenth-century New England is dissonant to the dominant ideology — this itself could be an empty enough abstraction — but also to show in a fascinating chapter how the pain of such suffering itself, wrenched from the monolithic context of Puritan culture, could produce a new phenomenology of grief and thus a new language for its contradictory motions — its dizzying velocity, its fixed immobility. Note, for example, the emphasis on verbs and their participles in Rowlandson's representation of her grief through metaphors of movement: Rowlandson will '*go out and shake*' herself (75), she 'went up and down mourning and lamenting' (77), she was «hurried up and down» by the Indians (they consistently moved her from place to place), a shuttling about which Breitwieser describes as «satanic» (121).

What made this new feeling and new language for it possible? Here Breitwieser, in a kind of ethnographic poetics of otherness that gestures toward the nomadic (anti)identity politics of Deleuze and Guattari, suggests that in Rowlandson's experience of «becoming-an-Indian» the Indians «taught her how to mourn» (166). Thus Breitwieser's defense of mourning is not just that it provides the ground for dissent from Puritan culture — that is, served to demystify dominant ideology — but that it was an agent in producing a new knowledge of something else. Rowlandson's life, he insists, was «remarkable for all the vanishings and for the struggle to which they consigned her; and remarkable for the startling things that appeared to her in places where the vanished things had been» (4).

Here Breitwieser's essay recalls to my mind the anthropologist Renato Rosaldo's essay «Grief and a Headhunter's Rage: On the Cultural Force of the Emotions», which was first published in 1984 and to which Breitwieser himself refers. Rosaldo's story — as remarkable, harrowing, and painful as is Rowlandson's — is one I have not forgotten since reading it. In Rosaldo's life as an anthropologist of the emotions the personal and professional come to intertwine in an explosive way. His experience underwrites an epistemology of the emotions, a contradiction in terms in western culture. Rosaldo had studied the Ilongots of the Philippines for many years and had never understood why in their rage in grief at the death of a person close to them (as we have seen, this is a decidedly non-Freudian formulation), they hunted heads from a neighboring tribe (not even vengeance was at stake). He was on a fieldtrip in the Philippines years later with his wife the anthropologist Michelle Rosaldo, when she suddenly fell accidentally to her death, a death which he witnessed. He experienced, he tells us, rage — and just as suddenly understood not the logic of the discourse of the emotions of the Ilongots but the force of this passion. Within a western framework we cannot defend this epistemologically. Indeed we don't even know what to call it: identification? But for me the point is precisely that Rosaldo's experience calls into question the western dominant tradition of epistemology as ways of knowing that are bound up with critical thought, not emotion. Tangentially, one of the gifts, if I may call it that, of Breitwieser's book is his own often sublime language which gives grief dignity, at times almost endows it with a mystery and *force* — the term is Rosaldo's — which Fisher, I suspect, would have wished for *Hamlet*.

At the same time I feel that *American Puritanism and the Defense of Mourning* speaks very much to us from the present, although across texts from a faraway seventeenth century. *Defense of Mourning* affirms that grief if kept to itself may have serious political consequences even though the emotion itself is not directly political. Breitwieser thus presents us with an argument for the cultural force of the emotions. Therefore he can conclude that Increase Mather, the major theorist of King Philip's War, feeling it necessary to control the meaning of the war, did so in part by containing as best he could the implications of Rowlandson's text: he wrote an introduction to it, framing it in monolithic Puritan terms. In an astute note to his own book, Breitwieser considers the implications of his analysis for contemporary American culture. «The continuing utility of the sublimation of grief is manifest in Ronald

Reagan's speech after the Challenger disaster», he asserts, «which constructed the exemplarity of the victims in such a way as to fortify a national commitment to the renewed militarization of space so that their deaths would not have been in vain.... The American public's abiding desire to know about those awful moments may betoken a survival of mourning» (208). More radically, Breitwieser suggests that Reaganism itself may have been at base a sublimation of grief, with Vietnam its very ground. In this light we can understand the critical potential of a mournfulness in the recent opening up in this election year of the case of the American POW-MIAs in Vietnam. An editorial in the June 30, 1992 *International Herald Tribune* speaks precisely to his point, indicting the 1973 denial of the Nixon administration that any Americans were or might be still alive in Indochina. Today the Bush administration refuses to release documents associated with this coverup. The editorial concludes, knowing the power of mournfulness: «That is perverse, for at last Americans have a chance to learn the truth about this painful legacy of a painful war. It may be too late to bring back any prisoners. It is not too late to bring back the truth» (6).

Painful wars and their equally painful legacies: this too is the subject of Eric L. Santner's intelligent *Stranded Objects: Mourning, Memory, and Film in Postwar Germany*. Like Breitwieser's book, Santner's too is written under the sign of remembrance, but unlike *Defense of Mourning*, the psychoanalytic concept of sublimation of mourning proves insufficient for him in understanding the workings of post-Holocaust Germany. The problem is precisely to develop the capacity to mourn, which here means to remember, not to forget. Santner's point of departure is, appropriately, the important book by Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich entitled *The Inability to Mourn*, published a quarter of a century ago, a book which, in Santner's words, called attention to «the apparent absence of any sustained emotional confrontation with the Nazi past in postwar German society» (1). There was neither mourning nor melancholia, concluded the Mitscherlichs brilliantly, in part because the economic boom injected a quick and continual narcissistic fix.

Santer continues this emphasis on narcissism, elaborating a suggestive if peculiarly ungainly model of infantile wounded narcissism to help explain the situation. Drawing on psychoanalytic theory important in the last twenty-five years (Lacan, Kohut, and Winnicott are among those named), Santner thinks through postwar Germany in terms of mourning not in the Freudian sense of detaching oneself from a lost object of love but rather in terms «of performing a more primitive elegiac procedure whereby an infantile sense of primary narcissism — is fragmented» (19). Santner's focus, in consonance with much postwar psychoanalysis itself, is on the preoedipal. I quote him at some length:

> Mourning, as its structure and rhythms first emerge in the work/play of constituting the self, is in essence a ritual of de-auratization. The self emerges out of the ruins of the primitive auratic symbiosis with the mother. But this can happen only if the process is empathically witnessed by a mother's gaze or that of some other significant person. Otherwise mourning cannot take place and the thereby dangerously depleted and unstable self will permanently hunger not for the gaze that bears witness to one's grief over the necessary local spoilings of the auratic gaze but for the archaic aura of prelapsarian eyes, eyes that offered themselves before the need to mourn and to become a self became necessary.... (126)

Here we have a rather odd mixture, I think, of normal developmental processes and simultaneously their impairment: of the Kohutian emphasis on the need for empathic support by a «mother» (an analyst) to constitute if not repair narcissistic structures, and the severe and stringent Lacanian emphasis on mourning as itself structural to the constitution of the self — along with Benjaminian ambivalence toward what is lost in the past, that Benjaminian aura.

From this model (which I have only partially sketched in Santner's own words), Santner draws several intriguing conclusions, among them: the *fort-da* as a paradigm for a homeopathic strategy of mastering loss; the need for an empathic witness, who is a delegate of society as it were, to testify to that very effort to come to terms with loss (this I find one of Santner's most compelling points — he is in the psychoanalytic world of object relations here); and the necessity of «symbolic figures of power, with whom the mourner identifies, thereby anchoring him — or herself in a legacy that allows part of the loss to be survived» (6).

But ultimately, as I have already suggested, this specular model of a wounded narcissism (what the self needs, Santner writes, punning on Winnicott's notion of the good-enough mother, is a good-enough gaze — I don't see what the difference is here) betrays a tension if not a contradiction in *Stranded Objects* which belies one of Santner's finest and strongest points. In his opening chapter, Santner observes that in general the discourse of poststructuralism is itself a rhetoric of mourning. He cites the pervasive and familiar tropes of fragments and gaps, of wounds and ruptures as its signs, and in particular both the Derridean notion that mourning is located inside language itself and the Lacanian axiom that mourning is structural to the self, which is split from the beginning. It is in the context of poststructuralism that Santner asks what I consider to be the most important question: is this discourse of mourning adequate to or commensurate with the catastrophic magnitude of the suffering of the Holocaust? Appropriately, Santner considers the life and writings of Paul de Man as a kind of test case, and he correctly if with unnecessary reserve answers: no. In effect he concludes — and with him I agree — that such a model is ahistorical, aridly abstract, lacking in an emotional connection to lived experience. De Man, Santner ultimately judges, «sought to displace and disperse the particular, historical tasks of mourning which for him, as is now well known, were substantial and complex, with what might be called structural mourning, that is, mourning for those «catastrophes» that are inseparable from beings-in-language» (29).

Santner's emphasis, then, like the other critics I have been discussing, is on the efficacy of affect — without which discursive procedures (critical writing on literature, for example) in the face of a loss real to us are meaningless, doomed to repeat themselves endlessly, to rehearse the same scene of representation over and over to no effect (we are here returned to the Freud I invoked at the beginning of this essay, the Freud who understands that representation of the traumatic scene without its affect is useless). Here Santner can rise to an incisively damning eloquence. Referring to de Man's «radical dissociation and abstraction of mourning from lived human experience», Santner writes, «depleted of affect, unfolding in the polar stillness of an exquisite isolation, mourning can never be anything but a repetitive looping through the abstract procedures of so many purely structural operations» (28-29). Santner's most powerful point is a sobering one, and in this too he is really at odds with the postmodern ethos of play he identifies in the beginning of his book but cannot quite seem to give up theoretically. For the serious and important conclusion of his book has nothing to do with mourning being «a matter of learning to live as a nomad», as he suggests early on (8).

THE REDISTRIBUTION OF EMOTIONAL LABOR

In Plato's *Republic* Socrates refers to the inferior, irrational part of the soul as the «lamenting part» that «hungers for tears and a good cry» (606 a-b). The «lamenting part» has historically been the woman's part: women have been designated to do the emotional labor of grieving. This is why Hamlet's scorning injunction to his mother — «Leave wringing of your hands. Peace, sit you down/And let me wring your heart» — had such force: Gertrude was considered unnatural in her lack of affect.

In the last section all the recent cultural and literary criticism I have discussed is by men. While women in the United States are also contributing to work on grief, most of the work is being produced by men. I find it fascinating that men are taking the woman's part, politicizing grief in the process and endowing it with a kind of public force even as it is theorized as private. At the same time feminists in literary and cultural studies in the United States have also been involved in a discourse of the emotions which is politicized — but the emotion of preference has been anger. I take this academic work to be part of the more general redistribution of roles — and the emotions — in the sex-gender system in the United States. Anger and grief are in the process of being redistributed in a new economy of the emotions.

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 189-196

Aging, Depression, and the Decision to Die (*)

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Nothing invites or defies closure so well as suicide. Selfdestruction illustrates the theoretical challenge that the biological sciences present to psychobiographical readings of an artist's life because many facets of a subject's decision to die resist a «meaningful» analysis. This is especially true of any artist who commits suicide under pressure of age or illness, be it medical or mental. Suicide is at once a personal and an impersonal event, an intended act — at the very least, it is an attempt to escape one's pain — but it is also one that occurs when psychosis, depression, dementia, or any of a number of age-related, physical conditions may have undermined the intention-mediating neural circuits in the brain. Here brain and mind intersect and must be evaluated together: how does each affect the other? Unfortunately, psychobiographers tend to look exclusively for a reductionistic, thematic consistency in describing/explaining the last years of their subjects' lives, as in Alma Bond's recent book in which she argues that Woolf's suicide at age 59 stemmed from unresolved, unconscious conflicts in childhood. Literary conventions require that old age and death be seen as the conclusive final act, not the beginning of a new one, and critics prefer that the protagonist remain in character. But such speculations, made from the safe haven of healthy or young scholarly brains, ignore the very real changes aging or diseased bodies can bring to bear on an individual's mental capacities and desires, even the most basic desire for life itself. Biology plays an important role in how the depressed, impaired or aged artist faces the end. Yet the body is seldom given significance in psychobiography because it is «anti-narrative», an unpleasant intrusion upon the apparent continuity of our psychic lives and our egotistical conviction that we have created ourselves and our destinies out of the «story» of our thoughts. Not so for the artists who lived in those bodies and struggled to cope with physical and mental deterioration intractably independent of character, free will, or desire.

Studies suggest that 95% of suicide victims suffer from a psychiatric illness, namely affective disorders, conduct disorders, schizophrenia, and organic brain disorders. Of these

(*) An expanded version of this essay will appear in *Aging and Gender in Literature: Studies in Creativity*, eds. Janice Rossen and Anne Wyatt-Brown, forthcoming in 1993 from the University of Virginia Press.

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four groups, affective disorders (such as depression and manic-depressive illness) accounts for the largest number of suicides, between 45% and 70%, depending on the study. About 25% of suicide victims are officially diagnosed as alcoholic, but roughly three-quarters of them also suffer from concurrent major depression. Overall, individuals who are both alcoholics and depressives carry the highest risk for suicide of any group (Blumenthal and Kupfer 26-29). In the elderly (age 65 or over), clinical depression has been reported to be as high as 13%; but among those with a concurrent medical illness, that number doubles. Although persons over age 65 account for about 11% of the U.S. population, they commit 25% of the suicides. Others decline without overt violence: untreated major depression lowers life expectancy, carries a greater risk of cardiac disease, and often leads to malnourishment, which in turn can cause further medical and psychological difficulties (Albert and Moss 115).

So before we begin exploring our subject's decision to die, first we must decide if he or she suffered from a psychiatric illness: is there evidence of a major depression or an organic brain disorder? If so, we must deal with the strong possibility that suicidal ideas and feeling were not symptoms or products of infantile conflict that we can decode (Caramagno). But even if our subject wasn't depressive, even if we can show clear evidence of early trauma in a life history that ends in suicide, privileging the power of early experiences will serve us poorly if it unduly draws attention away from the problems that the older suicidal person must deal with in the «here and now». Clinical studies have not proven the Freudian causal connection between early traumas and later suicides: some adult suicides experienced early trauma, others did not, so the wise psychotherapist does not neglect the patient's present motives in favor of hypothesizing oral rage directed at the mother's bad breast when trying to estimate the patient's potential for suicide. For the most part, the stressful events that precipitate suicide in older adults occur close to the attempt date: the primary fears of the elderly, suicidal or not, relate to the day-to-day problems of living and coping with physical hardship, loneliness, and personal suffering, not necessarily abstract or infantile issues but those encountered in everyday functioning. They fear sensory deprivation, mental decline, mental illness (especially senility), and segregation from their loved ones. These are realistic concerns. Although the majority of the elderly will not suffer serious mental impairment, fear can magnify even slight changes and inspire suicidal thoughts, especially when worried elders know that dementia can strike individuals younger than themselves (Blumenthal and Kupfer 67-70; P. S. Fry 21-24).

Age does count, especially for those who suffer from depression and manic-depressive illness. Studies suggest that manic-depressive relapses increase with age, that depressive episodes in older patients sometimes last longer, and that patients who have had more total episodes in their lifetime are at greatest risk for suicide, so perhaps our subject was «pushed over the edge» by nothing more meaningful than the fact that the biochemical changes of age may have intensified his or her depression. Or perhaps it was the season: suppose our subject committed suicide in late winter or early spring; there is a striking increase in the numbers of suicides in May, a rise that begins in March as do the rates of hospital admissions for depression (Goodwin and Jamison 136, 243; Georgotas and Cancro 72, 337; Roy-Byrne et al.; Barraclough and Pallis). Affective disorders can be profoundly influenced by the body's seasonal rhythms; a biographer, then, has to consider that perhaps both age and season combined to exacerbate a subject's depression. Another possibility exists: 35% of all manic-depressives medicate themselves with alcohol; the neurochemical changes that result from drinking (such as decreased serotonin levels, which appear to regulate the sleep/wake cycle and mood tone) could contribute to the severity of a depression, diminishing impulse control, impairing judgement, and so increasing the risk of suicide (Goodwin and Jamison 213, 242, 765-77; Maris 173-74).

Although manic-depressives are at high risk for suicide, thirty times more so than the general population, the association between suicide and chemical changes in the brain

must be considered in any case of self-destruction. As post-mortem laboratory tests become more refined, and as more suicidal artists receive medical evaluations, biographers will find themselves pouring through biochemical data that has a direct bearing on the subject's state of mind. For instance, one of the most replicated findings in biological psychiatry today is that suicides show low levels of a serotonin-metabolite, known as 5-HIAA, in their cerebrospinal fluid; this has lead researchers to speculate that «a low 5-HIAA level is correlated with a tendency to act impulsively and violently while in acute emotional or psychiatric turmoil» (Goodwin and Jamison 493). Suicidal states of mind are also associated with elevated levels of urinary 17-hydroxycorticosterone, a plasma cortisol level higher than 20 mcg%, a positive dexamethasone suppression test (revealing a hormone imbalance), a blunted or absent response of thyroid-stimulating hormone, low urinary norepinephrine-epinephrine (like serotonin, a major neurotransmitter in the brain) ratio, low levels of magnesium in cerebrospinal fluid, paroxysmal EEG dysrhythmia, and high monozygotic twin suicide concordance rates (i.e., if one twin commits suicide, the other runs an 18% chance of committing suicide too; that figure drops to 4.5% if the twins are raised apart by adopted parents, but this is still 900% higher than the risk of suicide for the general population). Some researchers believe that there may be a genetic factor in suicide independent of the genetic transmission of psychiatric disorders such as manic-depressive illness. This genetic inheritance would, presumably, create the biochemical conditions conducive to suicidal thinking (Maris; Blumenthal and Kupfer 128-29; Colt 202).

Until more data comes in, we cannot tell whether the chemical changes cited above cause suicidal thoughts or whether the emotional distress of suicidal thoughts causes the brain's chemistry to change; but clearly, whatever the cause-effect relationship at work here, the brain's operating systems are intimately responsive to and involved in such patterns of thinking. Since this is so, we must conclude that any physical condition that impairs the brain's ability to function must be considered if we are to evaluate a patient's decision to die. For when biochemistry falters, the brain's ability to process and evaluate perceptions is diminished. In manic-depressive illness, for instance, interpretations become either predominantly positive or negative, depending upon mood. If they are negative, the self feels impotent and pointless, unable to summon up the strength to survive a future now perceived as grim (Blaney; Georgotas and Cancro 70). Reviewing past happiness seldom helps: the depressed brain is unable to integrate the full spectrum of the individual's feelings and desires, past or present, and so overly negativized perceptions feel the most «true,» frustrating attempts by the therapist or the family to dissolve their power and reassure the patient that things are not as gloomy as they seem. Thinking is further hampered in depression by poor concentration, distractibility, learning deficits, slowed reaction time to stimuli, impaired memory, confusion, «poverty of content» (repetitive use of ideas without development, or stereotyped thinking), illogicality, and failure to follow a chain of thought through to a conclusion. Depression limits the individual's abilities to deal creatively with new or stressful circumstances: studies show that when depressives are exposed to new material, they are less likely to link novel information to pre-existing knowledge, hindering the fundamental, human capacity to recognize significance consistently across time. Their memory of events becomes jumbled, unintegrative habit begins to dominate thought, and they fall back upon uncreative and inflexible routines, which feeds their developing nihilism and pessimism; life does indeed become empty and fragmented for them (Cornell et al.; Goodwin and Jamison 38, 270; Whybrow et al. 9). No wonder that depressed artists, who rely so much on elastic, creative thinking, commit suicide.

Patients will usually rely on their «will power» to resist suicidal impulses; family too will urge patients to do so. But will power depends upon many things, some them purely physical. Depression can reduce food intake, activity, and immune response, which can lead to infection and further weaken the body and the will. Age and each succeeding breakdown can sap the depressive's capacity to hope for recovery. Even when an episode does finally

end, the patient may come to dread the next breakdown, fearing that sooner or later depression will triumph. One study suggests that patients become increasingly less tolerant of the pain and disruptions of depression with each new episode, and that the risk of suicide increases with the duration of the illness. If the depressed patient experiences delusions, he or she is five times more likely to commit suicide than nondelusional depressives; psychotic thinking is impaired, and it does not have the flexibility or integrative creativity that patients need to resolve conflicting feelings about the value of their lives (Goodwin and Jamison 239, 241; Georgotas and Cancro 82).

Because depression can significantly alter a patient's perceptions, feelings, and cognition, we cannot judge a suicide's character by what he said or did when depressed. Even seemingly strong people with a wide range of personal assets may, when depressed, reinterpret those assets as liabilities (e.g., ambition is no longer seen as a positive sign of success but as an empty gesture or rude pushiness or an act of vanity at the expense of others). Suicide itself is not a reliable indicator of one's strength of character or neuroticism or the quality of one's previous life or the support and love of one's family and friends. For some patients, in fact, it is the memory of happiness and success once known that makes their present despair seem unendurable (Goodwin and Jamison 771; Jamison 116; Goodwin and Jamison 236). Pointing out a depressive's available resources may only exacerbate his sense of the internal abyss that separates him from what he feels he needs most.

At some point anyone's will power or self-control can be contravened by bodily processes. Take, for example, the cyclothymic Winston Churchill, who successfully fought his tendency toward depressions by engaging in great political enterprises, pitting himself against external embodiments of his blackest moods, such as Adolf Hitler, and feeling reassured that he had the will power to survive. But in the last five years of his life, when cerebral arteriosclerosis restricted blood flow to his brain, Churchill succumbed to a final, debilitating, depressive stupor. Arteriosclerosis sapped his will by undermining the very organ that mediates intention, that organizes and executes what we experience as «moral fiber» (Storr 49). Nothing he did or desired or thought had so drastic effect as the «unmeaningful» constriction of blood vessels. This is what aging and illness teach us. *The body counts.*

Even without the complication of manic-depressive illness, old age is always accompanied by profound modifications in the central nervous system. All older brains decrease in size, weight, and volume. Many studies have shown that the brain loses 5% of its weight by age 70, 10% by 80, and 20% by 90. Levels of neurotransmitters decrease, cell death increases, and many individual neurons diminish in size. Now that the average life expectancy has increased in the 20th century by more than 25 years (from 47 years in 1900 to 75 in 1980 for North Americans), psychobiographers must become more aware of what physiological changes occur in the brains of increasingly aging writers if they are to accurately assess their accomplishments and their limitations (de Leo and Diekstra 53-68; Bloom and Lazerson 81; Albert and Moss 3).

The very first difficulty in making such assessments is that psychobiographers should never apply a stereotypical, «aged» profile of a general decline to their subjects without specific, corroborating evidence. Some brain changes result in cognitive impairment, but others do not, and it is important to remember that age-related declines are not uniform from individual to individual: some people seem to age more quickly than others, some experience only minor impairments as they grow older, and specific cognitive disabilities vary greatly. For instance, on the average, skills involving language production, syntax, vocabulary, comprehension, information retention, seeing similarities between objects or situations, and arithmetic show little or no decline until the mid-seventies. Similarly, tests of sustained attention (the ability to focus on a task without losing track of its goal), selective attention (ability to ignore irrelevant information) remain intact (Bloom and Lazerson 82). Neither sensory memory (e.g., identifying a single letter from the alphabet when it is shown

to them) nor primary memory (e.g., remembering a series of words or numbers) deteriorates with age in healthy brains, but secondary memory-the ability to retain relatively large amounts of information over long periods of time-begins showing significant impairment at age 50 (Albert and Moss 40-41). Older individuals tend to have difficulty with the semantic aspects of word retrieval: the most common error committed in naming items appears in choosing a semantically related associate, such as saying «dice» when shown dominoes. Verbal fluency declines, such as when elderly subjects are asked to name as many examples of a category (e.g., animals or vegetables) as they can or when asked to draw inferences from statements made to them. Cognitive deficits can even extend to purely visual tasks: the elderly are less able to handle complex visual tasks: for instance, they have more difficulty identifying incomplete figures and embedded figures than do younger subjects. They are also impaired in depicting and perceiving three-dimensional drawings.

But such impairments are probably not a problem of storage capacity, as is popularly believed: the forgetting rate of healthy older subjects is roughly the same as in younger persons, so age-related declines in secondary memory are thought to be the result of inadequate encoding or retrieval of the material to be remembered. The young seem to be more adept at using encoding strategies to organize and retrieve what they learn. When elderly subjects are given taught these strategies, differences in scores are minimized (Albert and Moss 38-47). So some aged writers may do poorly in unstructured activities but well in more structured projects.

However, age often brings with it increased susceptibility to disease, and here mental functioning can be significantly affected. It is estimated that 15% of those over 65 suffer from some form of dementia (impairment or loss of mental powers), and one to two percent are severely impaired (Albert and Moss 145; Bloom and Lazerson 82-83). In Alzheimer's disease, for instance, individual neurons are destroyed by clump-like deposits and tangled neural elements, several neurotransmitters are lost, and the brain's utilization of glucose and oxygen declines significantly. Alzheimer's disease affects not only memory, verbal fluency, and abstract thinking but also frequently produces psychiatric symptoms, such as hallucinations, delusions, and depression, which psychobiographers should not confuse with schizophrenia or manic-depressive illness. And the rate of progression for Alzheimer's disease varies enormously: some patients become moderately impaired after only two years, while others remain only mildly impaired after six years, but it may be important for a biographer to know whether his subject exhibited any symptoms at all (Albert and Moss 147-48, 153-56). Both severe cardiac disease and atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries of the brain) can restrict blood flow by as much as half and so reduce the oxygenation of cells; if complicated by other factors, such as small strokes, dementia may result, mental ability will deteriorate and even personality can change. Severe obstruction of a blood vessel can produce an infarct, the death of brain cells; but even an infarct may be so limited in area that its effect on the patient's cognitive skills or personality may be too subtle for anyone to notice until a series of infarcts have occurred. All of these changes, however subtle, can affect the way our subjects write books, view life, or approach death (Albert and Moss 199).

Some psychiatric symptoms are complications of seemingly unrelated medical problems, and for these psychobiographers must be particularly alert and careful. Depressive symptoms, for instance, can be triggered or caused by influenza, viral hepatitis, infectious mononucleosis, vitamin B12 deficiency, general paresis (in the last stage of syphilis), tuberculosis, cirrhosis, AIDS (HIV), Cushing's disease, Addison's disease, hypothyroidism, occult abdominal malignancies, multiple sclerosis, cerebral tumors, sleep apnea, dementia, Parkinson's disease, nondominant temporal lobe lesions, pernicious anemia, pellagra, antihypertensive drugs, alcohol, sedative-hypnotics, female hormone supplements, corticosteroids, and amphetamine, barbiturate or cocaine withdrawal (Whybrow et al. 176; Goodwin and Jamison 112; Breslau and Haug 11). Anxiety can be linked to hyperthyroidism, dementia to Parkinson's disease or vitamin

B12 deficiency; both can result from cardiovascular problems. Besides B12, thiamine and folic acid deficiencies can also cause intellectual dysfunction. Physicians must look for any chronic illness that reduces food intake (e.g. alcoholism, depression, dementia), and they must remember that elderly patients may not benefit from standard dosages of oral vitamin supplements: one study of 226 elderly subjects showed that almost 40% had vitamin levels that were two standard deviations below the mean obtained by younger subjects who took the same dosage (Albert and Moss 86, 110). The physical well-being of our subjects is as important to psychobiography as their personalities.

Mental functioning in the elderly can be affected by numerous physical conditions, especially when they occur in combination. Acute Confusional States — attention deficits, disorientation, sleep disturbances, incoherent speech, delusions, hallucinations, or paranoia — can result from cardiovascular disorders, infection (ranging from urinary tract infections to pneumonia), fever, drug intoxication, metabolic and nutritional disorders, neurological disorders, sleep loss, or excessive or deficient sensory input. The multifactorial nature of ACS has led some researchers to hypothesize that age-related changes in the brain and other organs reduce the functional reserve of the elderly to withstand assaults that younger patients endure without cognitive impairment. And since roughly 85% of the aged have a chronic disease or disability, repercussions can be common. Psychological difficulties can also arise from lack of sleep; it is estimated that 25 to 40% of the elderly experience sleep disturbances that appear to increase with age (Albert and Moss 106-111; Breslau and Haug 116). Do we know how much Ernest Hemingway slept before he committed suicide? Or Virginia Woolf? Or Bruno Bettelheim? It could be important to know.

Drugs and alcohol are a significant problem for the elderly because older bodies metabolize differently. The excretion of drugs from the body is slowed. Kidney function drops 50% between the ages of 30 and 80, which means that more of the drug remains in the system longer. With less muscle and more fat per pound, the older body absorbs a greater amount of fat-soluble drugs in proportion to the body mass. Serum albumin (a plasma protein) levels are reduced by 15% to 25% in the elderly, and since many psychotropic drugs bind to albumin, reduced binding frees up greater amounts of these drugs for absorption into body tissues. In some cases, elderly patients require only one-tenth the dosage a younger patient would need for the same effect. In older brains, neurons usually become more sensitive to drugs; this seems especially true for drugs that depress the central nervous system. Thus, drugs and alcohol that produce few disturbing side-effects in the young can create serious problems in mental functioning for the elderly, especially since the elderly are by far the largest users of sedative-hypnotics and tranquilizers, and perhaps as many as 10% of adults over 60 years of age abuse alcohol (Albert and Moss 121-22, 88-89; Fry 408-09).

Although studies suggest that the elderly exhibit no changes in their personality scores (indeed, older subjects score slightly lower in neuroticism compared to younger), a psychiatric illness is more likely to produce serious cognitive changes in the elderly than in the young, and it is probable that their increased vulnerability is related to the substantial neurological changes that occur with age. Even though not morally or psychologically merited, major depression afflicts the elderly in areas in which they are already suffering deficits and so can magnify their sense of vulnerability. Motor performance deteriorates, and some aspects of secondary memory, attention, motivation, and drive are impaired. As psychiatric patients age, personality traits that in the past may have helped them cope with life's stresses and strains can become exaggerated or defensive under the additional stress of a biologically induced psychiatric disorder. Pessimism that once helped individuals detect and critically scrutinize unrealistic ideas in their youth may, in old age, produce such a gloomy and nihilistic outlook upon life that suicide can seem a preferable option. Loss of visual, auditory, and olfactory acuity may so isolate older persons that their previous hypersensitivity and suspiciousness (which once might have served to protect them from others' aggression)

can be exacerbated into a paranoia that denies them comfort and aid when they need them most. Perfectionistic tendencies that in the past drove individuals to do their best work may become so rigid and inhibiting that they interfere with productivity and decision-making. Loss of mobility and energy may undermine the fragile sense of self-esteem of narcissist personalities if they coped by physically seeking out support from others (Albert and Moss 83; Fry 131, 18-19.

Even «normal» persons must reorganize their previous coping mechanisms when they age: high-energy solutions for stressful events (e.g., working overtime to earn more money) must be replaced by low-energy solutions (e.g., spending less), or perhaps even resignation to and acceptance of inescapable limitations. Low-energy individuals may either find their old coping styles inadequate, or they may exaggerate their passivity if old age reinforces dependency. Some may get so desperate about not being able to solve their problems quickly that they act impulsively beyond their physical endurance or their judicious control. Frustration may diminish the elder's self-esteem; this in turn can exacerbate a fear of future stressful events, making them much worse than they really are. All these factors may also increase the risk of suicide. But whatever coping measures are applied, aging gradually reduces the number of options we can choose from, and individuals vary enormously in their beliefs about what options are acceptable to them (Fry 180-86). Environmental pressures can combine with biological ones: the impact of multiple personal losses, loss of mobility, social isolation, drops in income, and loss of status can be magnified by a reduced capacity to deal with trauma. Here, again, is where brain and mind intersect.

In the end, we cannot explain suicide in a subject's life solely by means of early events we can tie together thematically. Depression alters the patient's perception and evaluation of the «storyline» and the significance of those events, aging can increase one's vulnerability to depression's insidious whisper, and it would be a matter of blind luck if we could empathize so completely as to see death with the suicide's eyes. It is tempting to approach psychotic or suicidal thinking as if it were just a matter of conflicted thinking resolvable by therapeutic insight. But such a perspective obliterates the troubling *differance* of insanity. If suicides cannot see any other way out, shouldn't we be more worried about our own motivations when we arbitrarily reconstruct their intentions by cloaking them in the word «unconscious»? As Colt reminds us, survivors of suicides typically feel two things: an intense need to find out «why» their loved ones decided to end their life, and «guilt» that they and their wisdom were not there to prevent tragedy: «Guilt», Colt concludes, «is a way of bringing control back into a situation that seems out of control» (Colt 447-49). It becomes part of the motivation to explain the «why» we think we are discovering. Are we not acting from an unconscious guilt when we try to rearrange a subject's felt options or to moralize on his or her lack of self-control? And what other unexamined emotions or cultural attitudes drive us? Historically, suicides have generally elicited considerable fear and anger. Although the Greeks and Romans considered it an honorable and even rational act under proper circumstances (such as painful illness or intolerable constraint), in Christian Europe the bodies of suicides were degraded, hanged by the feet, dragged through the streets, burned and thrown on the public garbage heap, their hands cut off. In England, an unsuccessful suicide was imprisoned as a felon as late as 1961. Why should there be such intense, emotional reactions to someone else's private despair? Suicide, as Wittgenstein reasoned, is the primal challenge to all ethical systems because it undermines the general consensus that life is good, just as psychosis challenges our notions of rationality and free will (Alvarez 58, 58, 45-46, 212). More to the point, loss of self-control, which both affective illness and aging can impose upon us without our permission, is so fearful that we blame suicides (or their parents, family, spouses, lovers, etc.), for their failure to conquer what we ourselves find so easy to deny.

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 197-202

Types of Depression in Three Southern Writers: Will Percy, James Agee and W. J. Cash — The Class of '41 (*)

BERTRAM WYATT-BROWN (**)

So universal is the intimacy between creativity and depression that their interconnectedness might seem to have little relationship to historical cultural patterns. Yet, at least with regard to the American South, the regional dimension helps to explain the acuteness of the emotional agony and the character of the art created. Political scientist V. O. Key once noted that «a depressingly high rate of self-destruction prevails among those who ponder about the South and put down their reflections in books. A fatal frustration seems to come from the struggle to find a way through the unfathomable maze formed by tradition, caste, race, poverty».[1]

Bearing out Key's diagnosis, the three authors under discussion — Will Percy, James Agee, and W. J. Cash — wrote works which reflected not only their alienation from the region they ardently loved and hated but also their common self-despising tendencies. In addition, they reveal how varied cultural influences can affect the artistic outcome. Those using psychoanalytic insights need to be reminded that it is not enough to explore the psychological roots of creativity alone. We must also bear in mind the interaction of cultural history and the individual artist, without, however, forgetting the psychological element in the creative impulse. Two of the three — Will Percy and W. J. Cash — though separated by geography, class, and temperament — had in common an attachment to their cultural roots that held them, as it did William Faulkner, forever captive to their homeland, however critical they were of their surroundings. The same was not true, however, for James Agee. The consequences of that distinction will be revealed later.

The subject can be divided into three parts: first, the common psychological roots of these writers' artistry; second, the psychological and cultural problems attending composition

(*) The author wishes to thank the Earhart Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Humanities Center, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, for making the research for this essay possible. I also thank Anne Wyatt-Brown for contributing many of the insights herein and David H. Fischer for a variety of helpful suggestions.

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[1] V. O. Key, Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), 664.

that in each case contributed to the death or near death of the author; and third, the effect of regional influences and experiences upon the quality and character of their work.

Despite the differences that divided the trio of writers, they had similarities in background and interests well beyond the obvious fact that their most significant works all appeared in the same year, 1941. Even though only one of them actually killed himself, the other two were both depressives, one of them with clearly self-destructive tendencies. Moreover, despite their low self-esteem and despondency, W. J. Cash, James Agee, and William Alexander Percy have been perennially popular writers. After slow beginnings for all these works, *Lanterns on the Levee, Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, and *The Mind of the South* are still in stock after 50 years.[2]

Although devoted to revealing the inner structures of Southern culture, each projected an ideologically distinctive image that was related to a common problem: early paternal abandonment. Will Percy's *Lanterns on the Levee* is an evocative memoir. Son of a Mississippi Delta political leader and onetime Senator, its author directs his anger at lower class whites who, he insists, destroyed the power and eroded the values of the old planter aristocracy. According to the worshipful son, LeRoy Percy, his father, was almost literally a semi-divine model. Yet that exercise of veneration, on a much deeper level, aroused an anger that Will Percy directed at himself rather than at his autocratic father, a source of tension he never fully recognized.

East Tennessee James Agee linked his subject and memory of his father in a pattern parallel to Percy's approach. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, with its poignant photographs by Walker Evans, extolled the virtues of the lower-class whites about whom,as mentioned, Will Percy had little good to say. Unlike Percy, Agee directed his indignation at the indifference of the Southern upper class and the rest of world to the plight of the 1930s tenantry, with whom he identified because of his father's farmer origins in Tennessee. Yet, as in Percy's case, he, too, was resentful of a father whom he felt had betrayed him.

No less disaffected than the other two, W. J. Cash, from the South Carolina piedmont, in *The Mind of the South* probed the social and ethical assumptions upon which Southern culture rested. Violent and deeply troubled himself, Cash described a South that was devoted to what he called the *Savage Ideal* which he identified as a hyper-masculine truculence with origins in a primitive frontier environment and an age-old insistence upon black inferiority. As a beleaguered intellectual, he despised the ignorance, crudity, and narrow-mindedness of the ordinary white Southern agrarian, «the Man at the Center». Not surprisingly, «the Man at the Center» was, in many respects, his own father. Like the others, Cash felt the pangs of paternal rejection.[3] Though cast in different forms, these works are all impassioned literary classics in which the writers wrestled obsessively with the *idea* of the South. They each saw it as a region of intractable habits — mostly bad ones — deviancy from national norms, and deplorable limitations. Like their vision of themselves and their families, they looked upon their native land with varying degrees of loathing and with love.

The biographical roots of such views lie in their psychological development from an early age. In Agee's case his warm-hearted father had died in a drunken auto crash in 1916 when his son James was a worshipful six-year old. The trauma permanently scarred the angry little boy and left him in the hands of an intensely religious mother whom he could never wholly please.[4] Unlike the senior Agee, neither Cash's store clerk upcountry father in Boiling Springs, South Carolina, nor Will Percy's wellborn father were alcoholics,

[2] William Alexander Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee: Recollections of a Planter's Son* (1941; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974); James Agee, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1941); and W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941).

[3] See Bruce Clayton, *W. J. Cash: A Life* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991).

[4] Laurence Bergreen, *James Agee: A Life* (New York: Penguin, 1984), 6-19.

but despite their class differences, they were both traditional Southern men, ill-equipped to empathize with their poetry-reading, physically awkward, puny sons. Once as a little boy, Cash had run home from a schoolyard fight, defeated, only to be told by his father to return and acquit himself like a man. Years later, Cash's poorly educated father confessed, «I never did want him to think that he was smarter than most other people». No wonder Cash later denounced the anti-intellectual character of the South where the «hell of a fellow complex» dominated.[5]

Senator LeRoy Percy much preferred his second son, LeRoy Percy, Jr., an outgoing, naturally athletic child who seemed to be, as the saying went, a chip off the old block. Little LeRoy, however, was killed in an accident with a gun his father had given him for his tenth birthday. The loss did not bring the Senator and his remaining son Will closer together but rather widened the chasm. Will Percy, however, did not rebel by openly challenging his parents but in classically oedipal ways tried to win their favor by being particularly good, never deviating from his father's political or social opinions, and fulfilling his promise to them both never to leave home.[6]

A further element in these writers' sense of differentness that permitted an original, controversial view of the South and of their work as artists was their unconventional sexuality. Will Percy discovered his homoerotic feelings probably while in Paris during a Grand Tour after graduating from the University of South in Tennessee at the precocious age of nineteen. In an autobiographical, unpublished sketch, he recounts, «My father and mother looked at me strangely. My mother gave thanks to God that I was untouched by sin, but she would stop in the midst of her words and weep bitterly. My father said, «It is in the spring that the seed is eager, is it not?» But my mother would cover his lips with her hands. «Do not speak», she would say, «We do not know what we may be saying». Then, he retired to his room to «smoke cigarettes in the darkness» until the dawn. He knew he could not change his homoerotic longings. He would always be, as he put it, «stricken and confused with memory».[7] Will Percy felt enslaved to the Southern code of silence on such matters. He knew what the perils of exposure were: the horrors of contempt, ostracism, or worse. But certainly a factor in his idiosyncracy was his hidden desire to establish an independence from a father who always managed somehow to make him feel inadequate.

Though heterosexual, James Agee was no less self-loathing than Will Percy. In his teens, anger and guilt, he recognized, accompanied his sexual awakening. Perhaps he did not know exactly how he felt. At some level, as grieving children sometimes do, he thought himself responsible for his father's death, a problem that analysts John Bowlby, Stanley Cath and others have illuminated.[8] Furtive masturbation simply accentuated his frustration.

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[5] Clayton, *Cash*, 23.

[6] See Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *The House of Percy: Honor, Mind and Melancholy in a Southern Family* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming); Richard H. King, *A Southern Renaissance: The Cultural Awakening of the American South, 1930-1955* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 85-98.

[7] «The Fifth Autumn», n.d., William Alexander Percy Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

[8] See John Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss.* Volume One: *Attachement* (New York: Basic Books, 1969), 30; John Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss Volume Three: Loss, Sadness, and Depression* (3 vols.; New York: Basic Books, 1980), 3: 14-16, 276, 290-91, and especially 159-60; Sigmund Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, trans. A. A. Brill (New York: MacMillan 1915), 57-68; George H. Pollock, «Mourning and Adaptation», *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 433 (July-Octobre 1962): 341-61; Felix Brown, «Depression and Childhood Bereavement», *Journal of Mental Science* 107 (1961): 754-77; Felix Brown, «Bereavement and the Lack of a Parent in Childhood», in E. Miller, *Foundations of Child Psychology* (London: Pergamon 1968), 436; Charles A. Sarnoff, «The Father's Role in Latency», Stanley H. Cath, Albert R. Gurwit, and John Munder Ross, eds., *Father and Child: Developmental and Clinical Perspectives* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 253-63.

He recalled seeing himself as a «half shaped child pressing between the sharp hip bone and the floor my erection». When it was over, he would fall back «nearly crying, striking over and over again the heel of my bruised hand against the sooty floor and sweating and shaking my head in a sexual and murderous anger and despair».[9] As a student at Phillips Exeter Academy, he fell in love with a boy named Fred Lowenstein, but Lowenstein could not understand his friend's intensity. When Agee confessed his love, the relationship was broken forever, and Agee was left so humiliated and self-disgusted that he thought many times of suicide. The young Exeter student vowed, instead, to turn his melancholia into art.[10] Even in his three marriages, Agee's guilt, and rebellion took almost pathological forms of sexual insatiability. He once disgusted himself, his second wife Alma, and Walker Evans by insisting that he be allowed to watch from the foot of the bed as Evans, his best friend, made love to her. The sight had a devastating effect. Afterwards, Agee writhed in self-imposed guilt, jealousy, pain, and denial.[11]

So far as anyone knows, W. J. Cash was celibate until he reached his forties when he married. The delay was occasioned by an early sexual failure. The year after graduation from Wake Forest College, Cash, then teaching at another little college in Kentucky, fell for Peggy Ann, a freshman, but on their sole attempt at love-making, he did not perform successfully. The experience would have been humiliating for any rather chaste young man. For someone who grew up in the honor-conscious South it was particularly shameful. The incident «haunted him for years».[12]

Thus, early in their lives, all three authors discovered their singular apartness from their fellow Southerners — as intellectuals and as sexual beings, a perspective that would make possible their profound discernment of a South that conventional Southerners could not have obtained. Both homophobic and homoerotic, Agee, for instance, constantly had to prove to himself his normality, a circumstance that drove the chaos of his life and the intrusiveness of his study of the three families.

The second factor drawing these writers together was the degree of personal dysfunction that affected the style and nature of their composition. Cash, for instance, began *The Mind of the South* in 1929 but could not complete it until eleven years later. According to analyst Marion Milner, D. W. Winnicott has argued that «the actual work of art, the finished creation, never heals an underlying lack of sense of self».[13] That mood of inner emptiness and loss was doubtlessly Cash's experience before his act of fatal madness. Completing the text, in other words, prompted grave misgivings of future capacity.[14] To the alarm of his wife, he began to hallucinate that he heard the whisperings of Nazi agents preparing to assassinate him. To end his distraught state of mind and to kill his writer's block, he hanged himself on a hotel bathroom door-hook before his wife could reach him with medical help.[15]

Superficially, a reading of *The Mind of the South* would not reveal the psychotic depression from which Cash suffered. But the internal voices with which he imaginatively populated

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[9] Bergreen, *Agee*, 22-23.

[10] Bergreen, *Agee*, 42-47.

[11] Bergreen, *Agee*, 238-39.

[12] Katherine Grantham Rogers to Morrison, September 30, 1964, Morrison, SHC; Bruce Clayton, *W. J. Cash: A Life* (Baton Rouge: Luisiana State University Press, 1991), 40, 46.

[13] Quotation in Marion Milner, «1977: Winnicott and Overlapping Circles», in idem, *The Suppressed Madness of Sane Men: Forty-Four Years of Exploring Psychoanalysis* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1987), 283.

[14] See Rogers to Morrison, September 30, 1964, Morrison, SHC.

[15] See Bertram Wyatt-Brown, «W. J. Cash: Creativity and Suffering in a Southern Writer», in Paul D. Escott, *The Mind of W. J. Cash: Commemorative Essays* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 38-66.

his story — religious bigots, dirt-farmers who became big planters, textile mill bosses, racists, demagogues and others were really voices that Cash had heard as child and man in the rural piedmont and had incorporated into his own psychological realm. By means of these ghosts, as it were, he sought to dramatize the world he knew and exorcise its worst elements from its people as well as from himself.

James Agee had similar but less acute problems of depression while writing *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, but thoroughly despondent as he turned the book over to the publishers, Agee wrote his friend Father Flye at Sewanee, «I realize that I have an enormously strong drive, on a universally broad front, toward self-destruction; and that I know little if anything about its sources or control».[16] Will Percy also had trouble completing *Lanterns on the Levee*. He died from a series of small strokes shortly after within a year of its appearance.

These remarks lead to the final and crucial point: the relation of depression to Southern regional culture. Although all three writers were idiosyncratic by Southern standards in their intellectuality, temperaments, sexuality, and depressive tendencies, they exhibited in their writings and lives the essential features of the regional ethic: its violence, extreme concern for appearances of manhood, and its sense of fatalism. For all his outward effeminacy, Will Percy, for instance, extolled the virtues of violent action — in righteous causes — what he called the «broad-sword virtues». A much decorated veteran of the First World War, he threatened the life of a leader of the local Ku Klux Klan in 1922 should any harm coming to his father, then deeply engaged in a crusade against the hooded order. Warfare, he wrote in *Lanterns on the Levee*, «had meaning, and daily life hasn't: it was part of a common endeavor, and daily life is isolated and lonely».[17] His credo of manly Stoicism, a refutation in part of his own sexual inclinations, would much influence his adopted son, Walker Percy. But conservative in taste, thanks to a subservience to his father, he did not experiment with form. He created in the memoir a life review of a family, a region, and a subculture of class, built largely upon old-fashioned legend. Fortunately, a strong undertow of irony saves it from banality.

Cash was more venturesome. He combined a sociological style with a Southern country attorney's rhetorical persuasiveness to create a rich panorama of themes. He revealed a streak of violence in his work — his deploring yet celebrating the Savage Ideal — a violence that echoed in his own life of anger against himself and against a father who would never accept him as he was. Yet, somehow both Percy and Cash, having never left the South stayed within the cultural confines that they knew — the memoir and the lawyer's brief. Percy had graduated from the University of the South, Cash from Wake Forest College — both respectable and rigorous schools but not places that could challenge the assumptions of Southern life.

Agee's experiences at Phillips Exeter and Harvard, as well as his journalistic career at *Fortune* and *Time* amidst New York's literary circles, provided the means to escape the South. His strangely postmodernist work exhibited a fascination with the problem of time and its effects on perceptions. Whereas Percy dwelt in dreams, and Cash in expressive abstractions, Agee offered everything from sweepingly poetic lists of things to histrionic effusions about everydayness. His unsentimental and sad evocation of country folk invades the privacy of their grimly narrow world. Even their houses and bedclothes come under the camera's eye and writer's magnifying glass. The result was a work about the South but also about the art of writing itself.

For all their differences, however, a common thread of hopelessness runs through

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[16] Cohn, «Eighteenth-Century Cavalier», 561; *Agee*, 125; James Agee to James Harold Flye, September 21, 1941, in *Letters of James Agee to Father Flye* (New York: George Brazilier, 1962), 127; see also *ibid.*, August 14, 1932, 56-57.

[17] Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee*, 223.

the works of the three authors. Percy and Cash both looked backward — to history and legend which they either celebrated or lamented. Agee, the permanent outsider, looked solely upon the here and now and anticipated a future bleak and sour. But they all reached the same conclusion: the expectation of an irreversible poverty in body, soul, and mind for the South as a whole. That outlook not only paralleled their own melancholy but also the very ethos of a tragic region.

Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 203-208

Creativity: Defense Against Death (*)

ANNE M. WYATT-BROWN (**)

Ernest Becker (1975) emphasizes in The Denial of Death that we suffer from a pervasive but almost completely repressed fear of death. Denial, however, is not the most useful method of fending off one's fears about growing old and dying. In contrast, the creative impulse helps many to endure life's trials, even the knowledge of impending death itself. The fact that Becker wrote his study while he was dying of cancer provides an initial example. Although he claimed in an interview (Keen, 1974) that he had no inkling of his mortal illness when he was writing, one cannot help speculating that his body was conveying a message that his conscious mind rejected. Indeed he died at forty-nine, shortly after the interview was published.

Becker's response to bodily decline and imminent death is not unique. The last year of Barbara Pym, an English novelist whose career spanned the decades of the 1950s to the 1970s, provides another example of death-inspired creativity. Not only did composition provide an important outlet for her feelings throughout her life, but the satisfaction of being able to write a swan song, *A Few Green Leaves*, sustained her in the final dark days of her death from cancer. Although one finds evidence of depression at various points in Pym's earlier life, she showed little sign of melancholy in her last year. The peace she found in her final days had several sources: her religious beliefs, her feeling that she had returned home at the end of her life, and her ability to continue to write, albeit indirectly, about the crisis that awaited her. Pym's creativity constituted a constructive means of self-defense that allowed her to face death, a phenomenon which literary specialists, and perhaps psychoanalysts as well, have not sufficiently explored. Pym's ability to convert the ultimate loss — that of life itself — into what Kathleen Woodward (1993) calls «a love-story, a death-story, a writing-story», offered her the opportunity to die with dignity and grace.

Since facing death is a final act, the last days often reflect the quality of a person's character. Throughout Pym's life her imagination compensated her for failures in other arenas. Literary talent, however, did not remove the sting of sexual failure, and from girlhood on, Pym had little luck with men. As a young girl she wanted to marry, but she consistently rejected those who found her attractive, in favor of the hopeless pursuit of men who did not find her an object of desire. Even Pym's earliest attempt at a novel, *Young Men in Fancy Dress* (PYM MS. 1), written at the age of sixteen, describes the anguish of unrequited

(*) Some material is reprinted from *Barbara Pym: A Critical Biography* (1992) with permission of the University of Missouri Press.

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love. At the risk of sounding facetious, young Pym had moments when she sounded exactly like Michael, the teenage son in «For Better or For Worse», a Canadian comic strip. In a June 25, 1992 episode, Michael writes about the pain suffered when his girl friend Martha dumps him. As soon as the pleasure of writing cheers him up, he wonders if one can be «famous and happy at the same time» (Johnston, 1992, p. D4). Much of Pym's juvenilia sounds a similar note.

Despite Pym's innate talents, she did not immediately become a successful writer. During her Oxford years and for a few years before his marriage, Pym's energies went into the hopeless pursuit of Henry Harvey, an attractive undergraduate who was willing to use her sexually but refused to take her seriously. She wrote little besides frivolous and naive diary entries, in a style that hardly indicated that she would one day develop a decided gift for comic irony. Then in June 1934, after the emotional upheaval of Oxford, she retreated to her parents, to a protected environment at a moment when the stimulus of new friends and a new locale might have improved her writing. As early as July 1934, Pym began a narrative that gave the traditional Oxford novel a new twist: she projected her account of herself, her sister, Henry Harvey, and their Oxford friends into an idealized old age (Wyatt-Brown, 1984). At the same time she chose Robert Liddell, Harvey's flatmate and Pym's rival, for a literary mentor. Following Liddell's example, in January 1936 she began submerging herself in Victorian fiction (PYM MS. 153, fols. 78-89, 95, 155) — reading Charlotte Yonge, whose stories of vicarage life sought to provide moral uplift for young people. Eventually in 1950, at the age of thirty-seven, Pym published the Oxford story as *Some Tame Gazelle*, but throughout the 1930s, her renditions of village life seemed entirely too reminiscent of Yonge's novels to please publishers.

The problem was twofold: Pym had insufficient emotional distance from her Oxford friends to write about them with much irony. Secondly, in her twenties Pym was trying too hard to please Robert Liddell, who insisted that she abandon any hope of marriage in favor of becoming a spinster novelist, one who would represent the sanity of middle age. Needless to say, such an agenda seemed very unpromising to a young woman.

Eventually, however, Pym resolved what sociologist Jaber Gubrium calls the «crisis» of marriage (Gubrium, 1975). She abandoned serious husband-hunting after a second humiliating failure in love that took place in her late twenties (Wyatt-Brown, 1992). She took the rejection hard, but shortly thereafter her writing began to improve. Moreover, after World War II, when she was in her early thirties, she at last settled into a position working for Africa, an anthropological journal. That environment provided the attraction of the unfamiliar and sufficient copy for six comic novels written between 1950-1961. They all received some critical success; at last she had found an audience. At the same time her personal life improved. Her sister's war-time marriage failed, and the two women established a «life-long coresidence» (Rubinstein, 1987).

Throughout this early part of Pym's life, she was no isolate: family, friends, and religious feeling provided important sources of support. Yet helpful as all these can be at any time in our lives, and especially in old age, as Sarah Matthews (1986) and Doris Francis (1990) have suggested, in Pym's case they were never quite enough. Happiness, for her, involved having a novel in progress that would eventually be published. Moreover, in her late forties the satisfactions of life began to dwindle, and by her own account Pym found it more and more difficult to write (Pym, 1978). Gerontologist Robert Atchley (1989) has demonstrated the difficulty of maintaining a balance between continuity and change in later life. Unfortunately Pym's social and literary life contained too much continuity and not enough change. As a result just before her fiftieth birthday, her publishers turned down her seventh novel. They feared that her characteristically mild plot — which featured spinsters, clergymen, and other socially marginal characters — would not sell well enough to justify the expense.

Pym did not discover a new topic until repeated ill-health made it impossible to continue

working. First breast cancer, and then a stroke forced her to retire to Finstock, a village outside of Oxford. Although initially she feared that retirement would signify death, after she adjusted to her change in status, she found residence in Finstock much to her liking. She revelled in the sense of belonging. The villagers accepted the two elderly sisters, whereas the more anonymous city had simply tolerated them. Moreover, the residents operated by immutable and familiar laws of social distinctiveness, like the unspoken rules that governed the social life of her childhood. It did not take her long to discover where each person fit in the social chain. All this gave her a sense that she had come home. As a result, she finished *Quartet in Autumn*, even though she had little reason to think that any publisher would accept it.

Then an unexpected stroke of good luck occurred. Two critics named her as an undervalued novelist in the *Times Literary Supplement* on January 21, 1977 (Reputations Revisited, 1977). The publicity encouraged Macmillan, a major publisher, to consider her latest manuscript, even though they had previously turned down an earlier work. *Quartet in Autumn*, her masterpiece on aging, appeared in September, 1977, when she was sixty-four, and was quickly followed by the publication of *The Sweet Dove Died*, the novel Macmillan had rejected.

After Pym was rediscovered, many readers were horrified to think that a person of such talent had been suppressed. Not only were her new publishers, Macmillan, far more enthusiastic about her writing than her old ones had been, but she had the pleasure of being famous for the first time in her life. As a result she began her final novel, *A Few Green Leaves*, feeling confident that it would be published and with reasonable hope that readers and critics would appreciate it.

From the first inception of *A Few Green Leaves*, the novel Pym began after her rediscovery, she realized that it represented a return of some kind. At long last she was going to write about village life, which she had tried to chronicle when she was in her twenties. June 28, 1975, she reported in her notebook, «When I wrote *Some Tame Gazelle* I didn't know nearly so much about village life as I do now» (Pym, 1984, 283). She began drafting a mild little story about a rather aimless, mid-thirtyish, female anthropologist named Emma, who out of desperation comes to a village, much like Finstock, Pym's place of retirement. There she finds professional data, as well as a potential husband, Tom, the widowed rector. Fate, however, provided one more twist to Pym's life. January 13, 1979, at the age of sixty-six, just before she completed the first draft of *A Few Green Leaves*, she discovered that her earlier breast cancer had metastasized. Her doctor warned her that the stomach cancer would be fatal. She spent her time revising her final novel. Thus the manuscripts reflect her changing attitudes toward death and her writing. Pym did not change the novel's basic plot. Instead she continued to incorporate new material from her own life, including some of the unpleasant details connected with her impending death. Pym's detached tone, however, withholds from the uninformed reader any inkling of personal involvement.

Although it has many traces of nostalgia and a valedictory air, *A Few Green Leaves* is not bleak. Pym obviously felt consoled by her sense of belonging to institutions, the church and the village, each with its own corporate life. She was delighted to learn that country attitudes towards life and death were more ritualized than city ways. She recorded in a literary notebook that many of the villagers attended funerals, and the births of children and animals were celebrated. Therefore, when the Pyms' tabby cat produced kittens on April 11, 1979, about eight months before she died, she wrote a close friend that villagers, including many children, came to see the litter (Pym, 1984, 327). Like an old doctor in the novel, who delights in pregnant mothers and signs of burgeoning life, the dying woman rejoiced over such evidence of continuity. In a very real sense, Pym felt that moving to Finstock represented a return home, not to her childhood dwelling, but to the mythical village that first captivated her imagination in youth.

What Pym feared about dying was the possibility that the process would be unduly

protracted. In the middle of January 1979, she reported that rarely was the struggle to hold on to the last vestiges of dignity in the hospital worth it (Pym, 1984, p. 323). August 5, she expressed the hope that death itself would not be as fearsome as the preliminary discomfort, her «swollen body» and lack of «interest in food or drink» (Pym, 1984, p. 331). She wrote a friend on October 28, that she was grateful for small mercies, being «quite cheerful» and mentally alert, «even if physically weaker. (Better that way round)» (Pym, 1984, p. 332). Reports on her health were interspersed with literary gossip and news of the progress of her novel.

Pym's attitudes have much in common with those of aging protagonists in elder tales, so movingly described by Allan Chinen, a Jungian psychiatrist. He points out that dying at peace necessitates some sense of success in life; «Only after developing a self is self-transcendence possible, and only after experiencing material satisfactions can the individual truly give them up» (Chinen, 1989, p. 61). Thanks to Pym's unexpected literary resurrection, she was able to see herself as part of a larger process. Then she, like the elders in the folk tales, felt prepared to accept personal death as «a simple fact..., part of the natural life cycle» (Chinen, 1989, p. 63).

This attitude helps to explain some of Pym's decisions about the novel. On the one hand, the novel is what Constance Rooke has called a «*Vollendungsroman*, the novel of 'completion' or 'winding up'» (Rooke, 1988, p. 31). Indeed the element of closure is emphasized in a rather obvious fashion. Pym reports the death of several characters from earlier novels. Yet, even though the aura of dying pervades A Few Green Leaves, its heroine is quite young, and none of the main characters dies. The young are not obsessed with the subject at all, but attend to other things.

A Few Green Leaves also represents what Margaret Gullette (1988) has called a midlife progress novel, which may seem a rather unexpected genre for a dying writer to pick. Its two middle-aged protagonists, the anthropologist Emma and the rector Tom, are rescued from their inanition by the intervention of an elderly governess, who in many ways is Pym's covert heroine. In a key scene, the governess, Miss Vereker, returns to the village to revisit the place where she spent her happiest days. In a state of exhaustion brought on by a lowgrade illness and her uncharacteristic exertion, she falls asleep on a pile of stones. There she is discovered by Emma. Subsequently Tom identifies the stones as the Deserted Medieval Village, the traces of which he has been hunting for many years. As a result, he is released from his obsession, which had distracted him from seeking another wife. In a reversal of a familiar fairy tale, an elderly sleeping beauty (Miss Vereker) frees the middle-aged hero so that he can recognize his heart's desire.

Artistic work produced by individuals who know they are dying is inevitably assumed to be a swansong. After all, it represents the writer's final message to the world, and while Victorian death bed scenes are not popular today, we still hope for some reassurance or guidance. *A Few Green Leaves*, like all of Pym's work, sounds a remarkably honest note. Elliott Jaques, a psychoanalyst, has commented that when an artist reflects seriously upon death, once again «the quality and content of creativity change to the tragic, reflective, and philosophical». Obviously Pym was able to develop what Jaques calls «constructive resignation», a feeling «that then imparts serenity to life and work» (Jaques, 1981, p. 9). Jaques's insights illuminate Pym's achievement. Thanks to the successful outcome of her reflections upon death, she found it possible to emphasize the consolation of rituals and village ties, such as births and funerals. She celebrates a paradox. Although her plot makes clear that one's faith can be shaken, at least for a time, by the challenge of facing death, in the long run the comfort of familiar liturgies and acts of service are sustaining. In *A Few Green Leaves* when death occurs it is treated as a fact of life, not something to be bemoaned. For example, when Miss Lickerish dies — she is a minor character who lives in a cottage surrounded by flea-infested hedgehogs and a cat — her funeral provides an

important moment for village ritual, as well as an opportunity for Pym to anticipate at some remove and with humor her own funeral, by describing the service in detail down to the hymns.

The threat of death did not stop Pym from working. Not only was she hurrying to finish *A Few Green Leaves* — indeed both Macmillan in England and Dutton in the U. S. accepted the manuscript shortly before she died (PYM MS. 165, fols. 148-164) — but ideas for a new novel began to percolate in March, 1979 (Pym, 1984, 329). Of course, she was never well enoug to expand on these initial thoughts. Instead, she finished the editorial work on *A Few Green Leaves* and continued to keep active as long as possible. She died January 8, 1980, before the novel was published.

Pym's situation has bearing on the lives of all of us, especially for those who fall ill at a relatively early age and can no longer work. Indeed, when psychotherapists in their prime experience a life-threatening illness they have a special problem, for in many cases it is counterproductive to continue to see patients when one expects to die at any moment. In some instances, therapists in extremis have turned to writing for relief. For example, Gloria Friedman (1991), a well-known analyst, and Claire Philip (Philip & Stevens, in press; Philip, in press), have both written about the ethical problems of disclosure facing dying therapists. Philip had been in private practice when she fell ill, but began to write for publication when severe symptoms forced her to terminate her practice at an early age. Being able to contribute to her profession in a new way has compensated her considerably for the difficulties of the last few years. My contention is that by learning about the case of a writer like Barbara Pym, we can better understand and support the variety of means that ill people employ to give their lives meaning and a sense of continuity. Not only do these narratives teach us respect for human initiative, but they offer some hope for our own problematic futures.

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 209-219

«Who's dead, you or the old man?» Beethoven's Oedipal Conflict with Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and the composition of the *Moonlight Sonata* A Critical Narrative *Quasi una Fantasia* in the Manner of Freud's «Wolf Man» and «Shreber» cases

MARCIA GREEN (*)

Beethoven's journey to Vienna in April of 1787 «was not a propitious time for forming anything but the most superficial contact with Mozart, who had just returned from Prague, was worried about his father's poor health (his father died on May 28), and was deeply immersed in executing the commission which Prague had bestowed on him after the sucess of *Figaro*, the composition of *Don Giovanni*. He was worried about finances as well; at the end of April he moved to a cheaper house.» (Marek 74)

Upon the young Beethoven's arrival, and despite all these concerns, at Mozart's request Beethoven «played something for him which he, taking it for granted was a show-piece prepared for the occasion, praised in a rather cool manner. Beethoven, observing this, begged Mozart to give him a theme for improvisation. He always played admirably when excited, and now he was inspired, too, by the presence of the master whom he reverenced greatly; he played in such a style that Mozart whose attention and interest grew more and more, finally went silently to some friends who were sitting in an adjoining room, and said, vivaciously, 'Keep your eyes on him; someday he will give the world something to talk about.'» (Marek 75)

It is within this chaotic, domestic environment that the young Beethoven, hailed as «a second Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart», by Christian Gottlob Neefe in *Magazin der Musik* (Solomon 26) meets «the master». As heir to Mozart's musical legacy he travels to Vienna

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to receive the endorsement of his artistic father. He hopes to be received as an integral presence within the musical environment they both share. For this epic event and in order to make a noticeable impression and gain Mozart's attention, Beethoven prepares a «show-piece».

The act of preparing and performing the music of another composer is not simply a matter of reproducing sounds through reading the notes on the staff. It is a means of experiencing and communicating feelings and emotions. It may also be a way of experiencing the composer's emotions — especially those emotions present at the time of composition — and consequently establishing a bond with the composer through the music. For in re-creating the written music we are forming an intimate union with the composer: our eyes gaze at the music; our fingers touch the instrument in the same way the composer's fingers touched the instrument and we produce the same sounds the composer heard. The music constitutes a seduction: it lures the performer into exploring a privileged and private region which once resided solely in the composer's mind. True, it is a relatively safe seduction. Since the notes have already been written and the end result is known, hardly any risk is involved. The performer need only manipulate the pre-existing materials through practice and display his talents.

Why then did Mozart respond «in a cool manner»? Did Beethoven not choose a piece by Mozart? Did Mozart not like Beethoven's choice of composer? Did Beethoven (as artistic son) not perform the prepared piece to Mozart's satisfaction? Or was it that Mozart, as artistic father, was more interested in Beethoven's ability to create an original piece of music than his abilities to play an existing piece of music?

Imagine what a confusing moment that must have been for the young Beethoven. In that instant did he perhaps remember how his own natural father, Johann, had tried to stifle his first attempts at creativity? «[The] first steps toward expression of Beethoven's genius were manifested in free fantasies [or] improvisations which were quickly silenced by his father: 'Once he was playing without notes; his father happened in and said: «What silly trash are you scraping away at now? You know that I can't bear that; scrape according to the notes; otherwise your scraping won't be of much use.»' This [however] was not an isolated incident.» (Solomon 17) It may be possible that he instead remembered the physical danger associated with the act of improvisation. According to a childhood friend, «Beethoven's father used violence when it came to making him start his musical studies, and... there were few days when he was not beaten in order to compel him to set himself at the piano.» (cited in Solomon 16) «When Johann van Beethoven happened to have visitors and Ludwig came into the room, he was wont to edge up to the piano and play chords with his right hand. Then his father would say: 'More of your fooling around? Go away, or I'll box your ears.'» (cited in Solomom 17) Or what if he remembered when he was playing without notes and seeking his father's approval, asked: «Now isn't that beautiful?» His own father responded rather coolly: «That is something... which you made up yourself. You are not to do that yet... I won't have you doing it now, you're not ready for it yet.» (cited in Solomon 17-18) In the presence of his natural father, who was also his teacher, Beethoven was only permitted to «scrape according to the notes» but not to create the music. Perhaps Johann was not willing to allow his son the freedom to create since the process of composing music would be tantamount to Beethoven's surpassing the limited talents of his teacher/father. Beethoven, on the other hand, in exploring music through fantasy would be able to free himself from the musical domination of his natural father. This then was precisely what was not be allowed.

Now, in the presence of his artistic father, Mozart, Beethoven finds himself in a similar dilemma — a dilemma which may have been exaggerated by the confusing domestic and musical circumstances in which Beethoven meets his artistic father. With *The Marriage of Figaro* a success, Mozart begins producing an heir to this successful marriage — *Don Giovanni* — an opera which for Mozart revives Oedipal conflicts with his own father,

Leopold. While Beethoven's natural father had criticized him for attempting access into the creative world, his artistic father was currently possessing that forbidden world. Mozart was involved in a very private and passionate affair. The object of his yearnings? The recipient of his erotic overtures? The focus of this intimate relationship? It was his true love, his beloved and ever faithful confidante in all matters of musical creation — his artistic mistress — his Muse.

In an attempt to grasp the implications of this musically oriented Oedipal situation, let us hypothesize that the young Beethoven enters into a room in Mozart's house as «the master» is in the process of composing. Since Mozart's passion as well as his means of financial support is composing, he accepts a commission to write the opera *Don Giovanni* — an opera whose plot contains themes of seduction, betrayal, murder and revenge. «While at work... he would often joke and chatter.» (Solomon *Essays* 131) It is possible that Mozart was so involved in this erotic escapade of musical composition — so totally enamored by his Muse (the eroticism compounded by the content of the libretto) that he may not even have noticed that his young artistic son was watching — watching as his artistic father experienced the forbidden pleasures of intimacy with the seductive Muse and wishing he, too, could enjoy her favors. What psychologically furtive impressions are being formed in his memory?

In this Oedipal scenario Mozart is Beethoven's artisic father and in that capacity he has the privilege of indulging in intercourse with the Muse. This was also a desire for the young Beethoven. However, as a child, his natural father had alerted him to the danger involved in indulging in this fantasy. If the «fooling around» or masturbation — in this case the desire to compose — did not cease, then the older Beethoven as father/teacher would threaten his son with castration in the form of having his «ears boxed».

With these incidents of childhood memories etched in his subconscious and compounded by the imminent possibility that his childhood fantasy — of making something... so beautiful (with the Muse) that his father would have to approve of his becoming a composer, these wishes may, in the presence of Mozart, become a reality. However, Beethoven must decide whether to disobey and thereby disassociate himself from his natural father in order to gain the favor and approval of his artistic father. With this decision he also risks the possibility of alienating his artistic father if he, too, does not approve of his «free fantasy», his «improvisation». The moment has finally arrived. Instead of precipitately improvising a composition using his own original melody, Beethoven asks Mozart to give him a theme. In this way, he appeases his natural father, since the notes of the musical theme were not of his own creation. He also appeases his artistic father, since the «free fantasy» (while assimilating the artistic father's musical theme) represents Beethoven's unique creative abilities independent from Mozart's. Beethoven, in that one moment, defers his dilemma, thereby conditionally gaining access to the object of desire — the Muse.

These Oedipal interactions in life and art, combined with Harold Bloom's Oedipal theory of the anxiety of influence (here applied to the attitudes of a younger composer to an older one) reveal much about the psychoanalytic origins of Beethoven's musical compositions. Freud points out in *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, that «... the human individual has to devote himself to the great task of detaching himself from his parents... [yet] it is remarkable how seldom [the task is] dealt with in an ideal manner — that is, in one which is correct both psychologically and socially.» (*SE* 16, 337)

In his first and only meeting with Mozart, Beethoven was able to elicit a temporary social and psychological truce within his Oedipal situation. But his desire to become «Beethoven», an individual, independent creative entity, was again emerging and «the great task» of freeing himself from the constraints of his artistic father had surfaced.

Beginning around 1800, with the piano sonatas opus 26 to opus 31, Beethoven was embarking on a compositional adventure which would be «simultaneously an epilogue or

farewell to the standard high-Classic sonata [which reached its peak of development with Mozart] and [creating] a transition toward a new line of development.... [Beethoven] found this [archaic] sonata form a hindrance to his desire 'to give free rein to his fancy, to improvise... with absolute freedom...' [and to represent musically] the character of [his] dreamlike improvisation.» (Solomon 104-105)

In an attempt to supplement his income and free himself from total dependence on his patrons, he frequently took on piano students. One pupil in particular caught his fancy. She was the sixteen year old Countess Giulietta Guicciardi. The unmarried, thirty year old composer's emotional involvement with his flirtatious pupil, who «enjoyed exerting her charm on distinguished men», (Marek 230) was so intense that in his letters to Giulietta, Beethoven nurtured fantasies of romance, rescue and revenge. He writes: «Can our love endure otherwise than through sacrifices, through restraint in longing... love demands everything... My heart is full of the many things I have to say to thee — ah! — there are moments in which I feel that speech is powerless.» (cited in Beethoven, *Letters* 31) «Thou sufferest... I will arrange for myself and Thee. I will manage so that I can live with thee; and what a life!!!!... However much thou lovest me, my love for thee is stronger, but never conceal thy thoughts from me... Our love, is it not a true heavenly edifice, firm as heaven's vault.» (cited in Beethoven, *Letters* 32)

«[Beethoven's] life had become ameliorated 'by a dear and enchanting girl who [he writes] loves me and whom I love.'» (Marek 230) So enamoured was Beethoven of Giulietta that he dedicated one of his piano sonatas to her — the «Moonlight». Beethoven did not give it that title. He did, however, give it a more provocatively psychological one. Beethoven titled sonata opus 27 number 2 in C-sharp minor, «Sonata quasi una Fantasia».

It may be argued that the dedication of a sonata was a common practice during this time and as such would not contain any significant insight into either Beethoven's emotional or creative faculties. But Freud reminds us in «Creative Writers and Day-dreaming» that... «in young men egoistic and ambitious wishes come to the fore clearly enough alongside of erotic ones... and in the majority of ambitious phantasies, we can discover in some corner or other the lady for whom the creator of the phantasy performs all his heroic deeds and at whose feet all his triumphs are laid.» (*SE* 9, 147) The dedication, then, provides further insight into: first, Beethoven's egoistic and ambitious wishes concerning the creation of his own musical identity, plus those concerning his erotic desires involving Giulietta.

In this particular situation his creative and emotional lives were so intimately entangled that «the great task» — which emerged during his natural father's attempts to stop Beethoven's desire to create «free fantasies», and emerges during his meeting with Mozart — once again manifests itself. In fact, «when [ever] his creativity itself and his emotional survival were at stake, he seems to have found sustenance in fantasy... [and] the center of Beethoven's fantasy life... was his music.» (Solomon 20) So it is natural that the resolution of his present creative and emotional dilemma would in part stem from his innate ability to work through his emotional feelings by conceiving the «free fantasy» as a new form for his piano sonatas. «The second Mozart» is on the verge of becoming Beethoven, a self-defined composer. In order to achieve this independence he must transfer his libidinal desires from *the* Muse of his artistic father to a new socially and psychologically accepted object of desire — *his* Muse.

For Giulietta, Beethoven writes: «My heart is full of the many things I have to say to thee — ah! — there are moments in which I feel that speech is powerless.» For her he also writes the «Sonata quasi una Fantasia». What is Beethoven trying to convey to her, through his «free fantasy» piano sonata, that he is not able to put into words?

When he dedicated this sonata to her, did he desire to play it for her or perhaps fantasize that she would ask him to play it so that she could hear his music? Did he wish that she would desire to study the piece in order to perpetually re-create through performance the music written especially for her? Did he fantasize that her eyes would not only gaze at

his music but at how their names were cojoined on the page? Did he imagine the feel of her fingers as they would tantalizingly caress the piano keys — the same keys he had lovingly touched while composing the sonata? Were his sensual sounds, as engendered through her performance, indeed impregnating her with his most intimate heartfelt thoughts, those thoughts for which his words were powerless? And by participating in his fantasy by playing his sonata was she embracing his true emotions and thus revealing her true emotions which she must never conceal from him?

The opening sounds of the «Sonata quasi una Fantasia» are dark, mysterious and seductive. The gentle, restrained yet consistent triplet figures induce a state of reverie. (Example 1)

ONE TWO THREE/**TWO** TWO THREE/**THREE** TWO THREE/**FOUR** TWO THREE

Smoldering beneath are deep, low, long, profound sounds. Above, a languorous melody seems to hover in abeyance. His tempo markings desire that she play slowly and to hold back any temptation to hurry the music, *Adagio sostenuto*, and that his music should always be very soft — muted, *Sempre pp e senza sordini*. The musical seduction is complete. The two lovers have been able to secretly fantasize a consummation of their union.

Beethoven's erotic seduction of Giulietta was fulfilled discreetly through his «Sonata quasi una Fantasia» in lieu of the reality — that his romantic seduction of her was never to be consummated. «Beethoven, [it is conjectured] 'did make an offer of marriage... [and] she was not indisposed to accept it,' but her father opposed the marriage to a man 'without rank, fortune, or permanent engagement.'» (Marek 230)

And Freud writes that «the motive forces of phantasies are unsatisfied wishes and every single phantasy is the fulfillment of a wish, a correction of unsatisfying reality.» («Day-dreaming», *SE* 9, 146) Beethoven's reality, then, must have been doubly unsatisfying because «at the same time that she was flirting with Beethoven, [Giulietta] was involved on a more serious level with a young[er] composer, Count Wenzel Robert Gallenberg, with whom she had been intimate... and whom she [then] married. Beethoven was well aware of her affair with Gallenberg.» (Solomon 151)

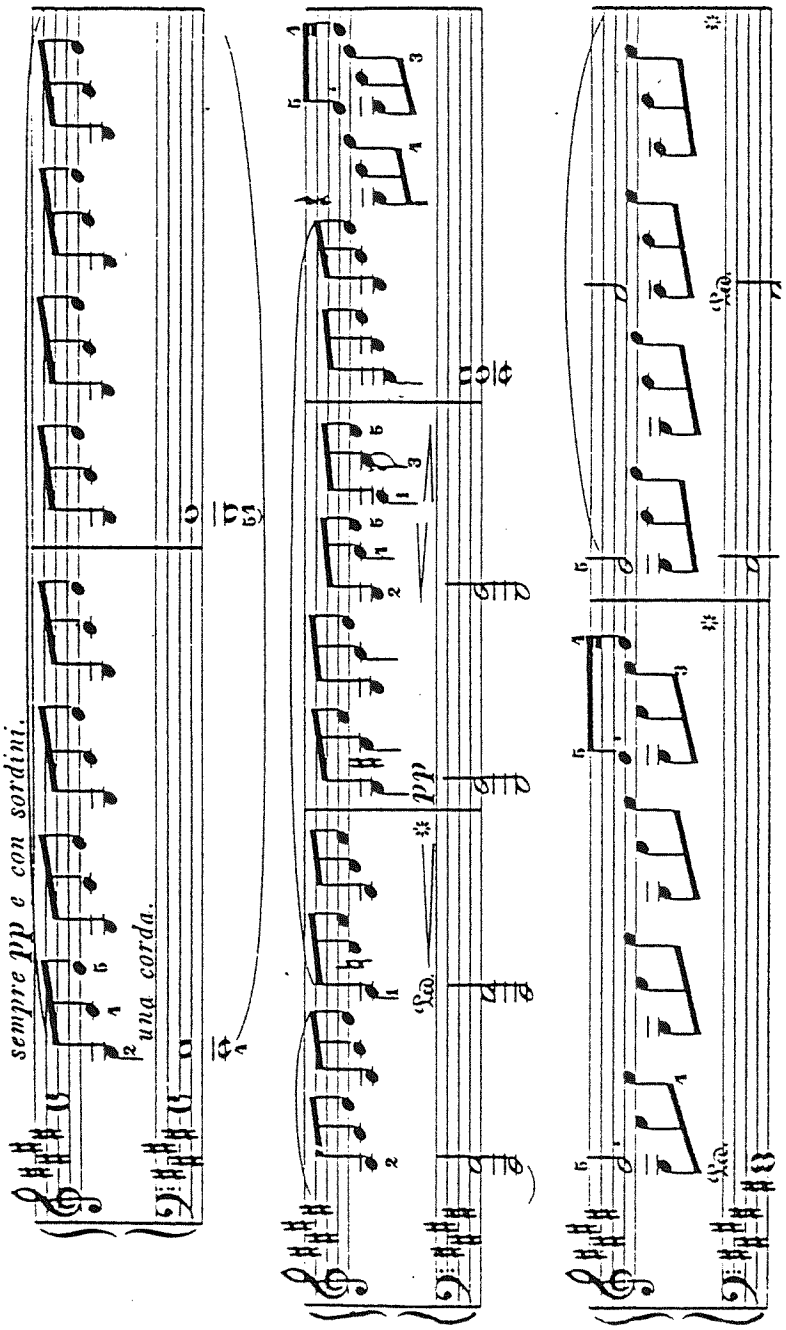
Yet, «[i]t is beyond dispute that among all the women who had a place in Beethoven's heart, it was the Countess Gallenberg-Guicciardi alone in whom, even after the separation, he showed constant interest...» (Beethoven, *Letters* 34). Anton Schindler recalls in the Conversation Book the following conversation with Beethoven who said: «I was much loved by her and more than ever her spouse... He, meanwhile, was more her lover than I... He was always my enemy, and that is precisely the reason I did him as much good as possible...» (Beethoven, *Letters* 36, translated from the French by Stephen Arkin).

«We have, then, in sharply delineated form, an example of the standard pattern of Beethoven's love affairs: his attraction to a woman who is firmly attached to another man, so that he may participate vicariously in their relationship. The unacknowledged libidinal ties with Gallenberg (his 'enemy', whom he lavishly assisted) implicit in this triangle may have placed great strains on Beethoven's perception of his own sexuality. And Giulietta's rejection of him in favor of Gallenberg may well have revived Oedipal issues — thwarted desires for his mother's love, submissive attitudes toward his father, resentment of more 'favored' siblings — which intensified Beethoven's anxieties during this critical period.» (Solomon 151)

But there was another incident which accompanied his emotional turmoil and threatened his creativity. Beethoven, in a letter dated June 1801 writes of another serious concern: «... [M]y ears continue to hum and buzz day and night... I find it impossible to say to people: I am deaf.» (cited in Solomon 113)

These Oedipal constraints: rivalry with Giulietta's father and husband; his battle for

EXAMPLE 1



individual artistic expression free from the «hindrance» of his artistic father plus the realization that he was going deaf [I mean to suggest that in addition to a physical condition a psychological link may exist between Beethoven's artistic expression and his deafness which harks back to having his ears boxed (also see Solomon *Essays* 93-97)] — all together these images provide enough themes of seduction, betrayal and revenge to constitute an opera plot. However, *Don Giovanni* had already been composed by Mozart and portions of it were created in the presence of Beethoven.

There are even striking similarities between these two Mozartian siblings — Beethoven and Giovanni: neither one ever married; both had affairs with women of all rank and station and each had his life chronicled — Don Giovanni kept a list while Beethoven kept a Conversation Book. So why did Beethoven dislike this opera? Was it a case of sibling rivalry? Unlike the character Don Giovanni, Beethoven was not of noble birth. Nevertheless, this did not prevent him from entertaining a «nobility pretense»: «Through this pretense, he sought transcendence of his parentage and his humble origins; through it, he could, perhaps, pursue his quest for a mythical, noble father to replace the mediocre [one] who had begotten him. The nobility pretense, then, may well have been a form through which Beethoven 'lived out' his Family Romance. Perhaps we have here the materialization of an archaic daydream, an attempt to transform reality as the only 'sure' way of fulfilling a deeply held wish.» (Solomon 89-90) Not only was Don Giovanni of noble lineage, but during his conception he was the main focus of their artistic father's affections.

Though these suppositions are possible within the unconscious realm of the «anxiety of influence», Beethoven's public statements about this opera are also revealing of his creative conflict with Mozart. «He confessed that he would not have been able to set... *Don Giovanni*... to music, [this subject] being too immoral for his taste.» (Marek 354) Paradoxically, «[t]hough Beethoven professed his dislike for the ethos of *Don Giovanni* it [was] of crucial importance that [his] conditioning included an intimate knowledge of Mozart's stage works. It was the 'given' of his creative problem to which he would add the sum of his experience to create a new totality.» (Kolodin 207) And it is precisely this «intimate knowledge» and his desire «to create a new totality» which was simultaneously a «hindrance» and an inspiration.

How do these insights about Mozart's Oedipal opera and its relation to Beethoven help with an understanding of why Beethoven needed to compose and to dedicate this «Sonata quasi una Fantasia» to the Countess Guicciardi? It has been suggested, by William Mann in *The Operas of Mozart*, that the opening triplets of Beethoven's 'Moonlight' Sonata recall the uncanny operatic scene where Don Giovanni, having mortally wounded the Commendatore (Donna Anna's father) watches with his servant Leporello as the old man dies. But Mann also writes that «Mozart's triplets have quite a different expressive effect... [T]he pouring-out of [the old man's] blood,... the suspense and anxiety of the other two men, [give the opera a sense of]... a more generalized tension on tenterhooks, none of... [this (he believes) is] relevant to the Beethoven [sonata]». (465-466) Here is the operatic scene in question.

Leporello paces nervously outside a palacial residence waiting for Don Giovanni to complete another amorous escapade. He sings about what it would be like to be the master and not the servant. His fantasy is interrupted by the screams of Donna Anna, the object of Don Giovanni's seduction. As she pursues him, her cries for help are answered by her father, the Commendatore, who challenges Don Giovanni to a duel. During the fight the Commendatore falls — mortally wounded.

The scene begins with consistent, undulating strings which pervade the atmosphere. There is a sense of the suspension of time. The action seems to be taking place in slow motion.

ONE TWO THREE; **TWO** TWO THREE; **THREE** TWO THREE; **FOUR** TWO THREE

The Commendatore, Leporello, Don Giovanni — one by one the three characters enter into this reverie intensifying it as their voices superimpose a melody of duplet figures upon the consistent triplet figures of the strings.

Sotto Voce:	In a low subdued voice:
	COMMENDATORE
Ah! soccorso! son tradito!	Ah! Help! I am betrayed!
l'assassino m'ha ferito,	The assassin has wounded me,
e dal seno palpitante	from my throbbing heart
sento l'anima partir.	I feel my soul depart.
	LEPORELLO
Qual misfatto! Qual eccesso!	What a mess! What excess!
Entro il sen, dallo spavento,	Within my breast, with fright,
palpitar il cor mi sento.	I feel the throbbing of my heart.
Io non so che far, che dir.	I don't know what to do, what to say.
	DON GIOVANNI
Ah! gia cade il sciagurato	Ah! the unfortunate has fallen
affannosa e agonizzante	with anguish and agony
gia dal seno palpitante	from his throbbing heart
veggo l'anima partir.	I see his soul depart.

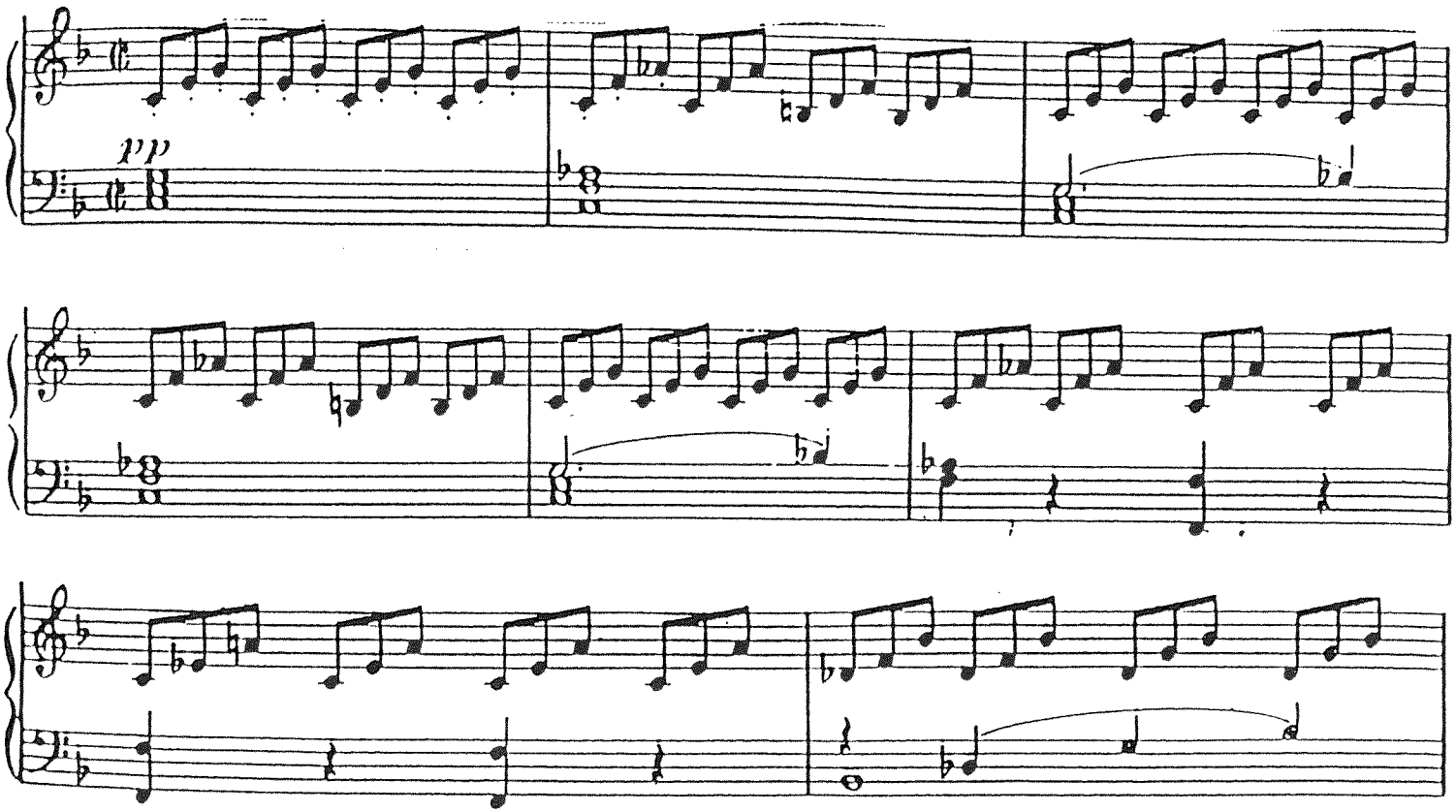
ONE two three; TWO two three; THREE two three; FOUR two three

	DON GIOVANNI
Leporello, ove sei?	Leporello, where are you?
	LEPORELLO
Son qui, per mia disgrazia.	Here, unluckily for me.
E voi?	And you?
	DON GIOVANNI
Son qui.	Here.
	LEPORELLO
Chi e morto, voi, o il vecchio?	Who's dead, you or the old man?
	DON GIOVANNI
Che domanda da bestia! Il vecchio.	What an idiotic question! The old man.
	LEPORELLO
Bravo!	Bravo!
Due imprese leggiadre:	Two charming exploits:
sforzar la figlia, ed	forcing the daughter and
ammazzar il padre!	killing the father!
(Librettist Lorenzo da Ponte)	(Translation by Patricia Losey)

«Who's dead, you or the old man?» Leporello's words break the reverie. The dream is over. Reality has returned. However, the nightmare continues. For as Leporello observes, not only has Don Giovanni seduced the daughter but he has also killed her father — fateful actions that will haunt him later when the ghost of the Commendatore returns to confront Don Giovanni for his audacity.

Can these musical triplets be merely a coincidence considering the oedipal situations

EXAMPLE 2



in which Beethoven finds himself? Further, is it also mere coincidence that Beethoven copied out this exact musical passage shortly before composing his sonata? (Mann 466) Not according to Freud who, in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, writes that: «certain seemingly unintentional performances prove, if psycho-analytic methods of investigation are applied to them, to have valid motives and to be determined by motives unknown to consciousness... [In fact, this] phenomena can be traced back to incompletely suppressed psychical material, which, although pushed away by consciousness, has nevertheless not been robbed of all capacity for expressing itself.» (*SE* 6, 239, 279)

«In *Don Giovanni*, one of the greatest and most mysterious creations art has produced, the romantic content — a content dark and profound — pervades the entire work and is sometimes at odds with its enlightened Classicism.» (Marek 142) Beethoven, himself, at odds with enlightened Classicism, must misinterpret *Don Giovanni* as «immoral», consequently pushing it from his consciousness and denying any influence of his artistic father's creation in order to wipe the slate clean and thereby provide himself with the space he needs to write his own fantasy work.

Yet, how he does this is truly revealing. In «A Note upon the 'Mystic Writing-Pad'», Freud states: «If I distrust my memory... I am able to supplement and guarantee its working by making a note in writing. In that case the surface upon which this note is preserved... is as it were a materialized portion of my mnemic apparatus, the rest of which I carry about with me invisible. I have only to bear in mind the place where this 'memory' has been deposited and I can then 'reproduce' it at any time I like, with the certainty that it will have remained unaltered and so have escaped the possible distortions to which it might have been subjected in my actual memory... Moreover, the advantage of this procedure, the fact that it provides a 'permanent trace', may lose its value for me and I no longer want to 'retain it in my memory.'» (*SE* 19, 227)

Example 2 represents the piano version of the orchestral music which accompanies the Commendatore's death scene from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* — music that Beethoven did not wish to retain in his memory.

And Beethoven, as we have found, had many psychological reasons for not wanting to retain the composition, *Don Giovanni*, in his memory. For to do this Beethoven would have had to acknowledge that his sonata (Example 1) and Mozart's opera, (Example 2) in manipulating the formal rules of Classicism, together forged a path towards Romanticism. The sonata, instead of the unique inspiration of his Muse, would become the by-product of an incestuous relationship with Mozart's Muse. Beethoven circumnavigated this situation by choosing a memory he wished erased and displacing it onto the page — thus making it conscious. Perhaps, he did not trust that his mind would be objective in dealing with the profound impression the «moonlight scene» from *Don Giovanni* had made on him. In order to expunge the urge to unconsciously use Mozart's music which was etched in his memory he transcribed it onto paper. Nevertheless, traces of Mozart's music, written in Beethoven's hand, remain as ghostly apparitions on the succeeding pages — pages that conceivably Beethoven could have turned to as the illusory clean slate he needed to begin working on the music to his own fantasy sonata.

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 221-232

«If He were to Wake and Cry, I would Suckle him, too»: The Powerful Mother in Faulkner

INEKE BOCKTING (*)

1. INTRODUCTION

The American novelist William Faulkner reminded his audience again and again, in talks and interviews, that to him his characters were real: «flesh-and-blood people that will stand up and cast a shadow» (Gwynn & Blotner 1959: 47), and he spoke of them as «people that I have known all my life in the country I was born in» (Fant & Ashley 1964: 96-97). He believed in the self-sufficiency of the character. As he put it: «there is always a point in the book where the characters themselves rise up and take charge and finish the job» (Meriwether & Millgate 1980: 244). To him, this extended even beyond the actual work: «when the book is finished, that character is not done, he is still going on at some new devilment that sooner or later I will find out about and write about» (Gwynn & Blotner 1959: 78). Other writers have expressed a similar belief in the independence of the literary character. E.M. Forster's famous passage points to the necessary balance of powers between the author and his character: «the characters arrive when evoked, but full of the spirit of mutiny. For they have these numerous parallels with people like ourselves, they try to live their own lives and are consequently often engaged in treason against the main scheme of the book. They 'run away', they 'get out of hand';... if they are given complete freedom they kick the book to pieces, and if they are kept too sternly in check they revenge themselves by dying» (1988: 72).

The literary theorist William Harvey focussed explicitly on the «personality» of the literary character[1]; as he put it: «the author must accept his characters as asserting their

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[1] Literary theory is hampered by a confusion between «character» as the imaginary «person» of the novel and «character» as his or her psychological make-up or disposition. To avoid this confusion, I will consistently speak of the former as the (literary) character and the latter as his or her personality. The difference between character and personality in psychiatry and psychology has traditionally been that personality is the more consciously presented foreground, superficial mannerism, or social mask — the form — and character the more unconscious background, or core — the content. This question recalls the distinction by Freud (1908) between form as the ego's socially conditioned reworking and content as related to the id. However, since both form and content are to a certain extent socially

human individuality and uniqueness in the face of all ideology (including his own limited point of view» (1965: 25). Ilham Dilman, in the same spirit, argued that the author must consider the character's personality and ask himself questions such as: would this character perform this action that I want him to perform?; would he be able to bear the grief that I must make him suffer? (1984: 112). Faulkner himself suggested that the character ought to have enough personality to shape his own fate, leaving the author «to trot along behind him with a paper and pencil trying to keep up long enough to put down what he says and does» (Fant & Ashley 1964: 111). At the same time, of course, he knew, as we do, that characters are not physical beings, but creations of words. In the case of Faulkner, characters are actually creations of words that are not at all mimetic of real life but highly rhetoric, literary.

Theorists have addressed this artistic feat: the creation of the character «between life and the linguistic sign». Their approaches set out to specify the extent to which the character in fiction resembles the physical and psychological reality of human beings, and can therefore be understood by extending our knowledge of real people. James Phelan, in *Reading People, Reading Plots* (1989), for instance, distinguishes the mimetic, thematic and synthetic components of character in fiction. His work consists of an exploration and discussion of how these different components interrelate: the synthetic is necessarily always present, but can be more or less foregrounded; the mimetic and thematic can be more or less developed. My study, of which I can only present a short sample here, moves in a sense in the opposite direction, and explores how, or to what extent, the real person and the literary person are both «like texts». Although the physical body of a human being is a concrete object of reality (it can be touched, seen and heard), personality, in real life as well as in fiction, is a construction that is theory-dependent. It is the similarity in the ways we understand personality in fiction and in real life, by «reading texts», that makes the literary character so much like the real person.

The study with which I am concerned, then, consists of an exploration of literary characters through what they have most clearly in common with real persons: their personalities. I argue that only if a literary personality is a «possible personality», that is, only if it is a «well-formed text», constructed along the same principles that are believed to be operative in real life, will it give the impression of an authentic «flesh-and-blood» person such as Faulkner set out to create. The importance of the psychological authenticity of the literary character has been stressed, for instance, by Simon Lesser, in his *Fiction and the Unconscious*. As Lesser puts it: while the reader usually «accepts, and even seems to welcome, departures from the literal facts about experience, he insists that the most airy fantasy, no less than a naturalistic novel, have some valid reference to psychological realities» (1957: 193). In Faulkner's modern(istic) characters, in contrast to the character in the earlier «realist» tradition, the complexity, the layeredness, the fluidity, and the paradoxical qualities of identity itself have become a «psychological reality». Faulkner's modernist dismissal of surface appearances in favor of deeper psychological realities — «the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself» — forms a clear link with the Freudian personality construct.

After exploring this «Freudian connection», my paper will discuss Faulkner's fictional mothers, and especially the powerful mother Addie Bundren in the novel *As I Lay Dying*. Through her text, she creates not only her own personality, but actually forms a decisive factor in the creation of the personalities of her children. I will end my discussion with a few remarks on Faulkner's relationship with his own mother.

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determined, the question is where the one ends and the other begins. «Modern ego psychology», Gilbert Rose writes, «sees both id and ego develop out of an undifferentiated matrix rather than ego arising from id... it is no longer tenable to relate id only to content and ego only to form» (1966: 9). The question shows overlap with the form-content debate in stylistics (Leech & Short 1985; Toolan 1990).

2. THE FREUDIAN CONNECTION

While modern personality psychology can be said to have started with Freud, Faulkner's interest in personality in a sense started with Freud as well. This does not mean that Freud's theories, or those of the later Freudians, are used to «explain» the personalities of Faulkner's characters. I would argue rather the reverse. My aim, in any case, is to problematize and elucidate their (self)-creation in the various texts (cf. John Irwin, in *Doubling & Incest, Repetition & Revenge*, who uses Freudian theory this way, but does not focus on this [Self]-creation of the characters through their texts; or the Horneyan approach of Bernard Paris' *A Psychological Approach to Fiction*).

Faulkner's biographer Joseph Blotner has reported one of Faulkner's childhood memories: «I ran away to a doctor in the family and I browsed through his books. I learned plenty from them. I was interested in the brain. I learned that it had parts — a section for speech, for touch, and so on» (1984: 34). Later, as Mick Gidley has argued, Faulkner had access to Freud's early theories in some of the books that his friend and mentor, Phil Stone, ordered in 1922 «with Faulkner 'in mind'» (1971: 79). These included James Harvey Robinson's *The Mind in the Making*; Havelock Ellis's *Little Essays of Love and Virtue*; and Louis Berman's *The Glands Regulating Personality* (cf. Watson 1992: 27). As Susan Snell, in her biography of Phil Stone, puts it, «Whatever else such selections indicate, these inferences appear sound: if there were now a conscious decision by the two men that Faulkner write fiction, they planned to go about it scientifically. The human heart must be dissected for character motivation, hence the new psychology books» (1991: 141).

But Faulkner was, of course, no neurologist, psychiatrist or psychologist. He told interviewers: «what little of psychology I know the characters I have invented and playing poker taught me. Freud I'm not familiar with» (Gwynn & Blotner, 1959: 268). Even so, Carvel Collins writes, «members of the New Orleans group with which [Sherwood] Anderson and Faulkner associated have told me that they naturally were much interested by Freudian theory in those days of its first major impact on American literature and that their talk was full of it» (quoted in Malin 1965: 225-226). Faulkner's unfinished novel *Elmer*, on which he worked in Paris in 1925, includes what Joseph Blotner calls «passages heavy with Freudian imagery» (1979: 710). Some critics consider these so «heavy» that they speak of parody. Faulkner's early novel *Mosquitoes* (1927) features two characters who, while discussing the personality of a third, mention Freud and Havelock Ellis, thus causing John Irwin to observe: «if the author of the novel was not familiar with Freud, his characters certainly were» (1975: 5). Faulkner himself agreed that everybody talked about Freud when he lived in New Orleans, but again added: «I have never read him. Neither did Shakespeare. I doubt if Melville did either, and I'm sure Moby Dick didn't» (Meriwether & Millgate 1980: 251). All playfulness aside, Faulkner seems to say that the real expert on personality does not need a Freud to tell him what he already knows intuitively; perhaps these ostentatious negations also signal a certain fear of the loss of control over his material. It must be noted, incidentally, that Sherwood Anderson expressed the exact same denial (Hoffman 1966: 179).

The connection between Freud and Faulkner, in any case, is a multifaceted one. Faulkner, after all, had what the literary critic Lee Jenkins has called an «intuitive perception of the depth and character of mental aberration and the various modes of mental functioning — as they appear in his characters» (1981: 148). Freud, on the other hand, had an intuitive perception of what made a good story. As Jeffrey Berman writes: «Freud could not recite a case history without transforming it into a story». In addition he remained like a novelist «interested in character for its own sake» (Berman 1987: 277f.).

3. MOTHERS IN FAULKNER'S TEXTS

The mothers in Faulkner's most famous psychological novels, *The Sound and the Fury, As I Lay Dying, Light in August*, and *Absalom, Absalom!* are often absent. Both Rosa Coldfield in *Absalom, Absalom!* and Joe Christmas in *Light in August* have mothers who died in childbirth, while the mother of Addie Bundren in *As I Lay Dying* is never mentioned at all, even though the other parent is, and has a lasting influence on her life. When mothers are present, they are usually seen as insubstantial, empty creatures, like Ellen Sutpen in *Absalom, Absalom!*: «the butterfly, the moth caught in a gale and blown against a wall and clinging there beating feebly, not with any particular stubborn clinging to life, not in particular pain since it was too light to have struck hard, nor even with much rememberance of the bright vacuum before the gale, but just in bewildered and uncomprehending amazement» (1987: 103).

Faulkner's mothers seem to be ineffective, neurotic creatures, who can only exert a certain influence over their families through their powerlessness. One example is Caroline Compson's «fluttery descent into illness» (Schoenberg 1977) in *The Sound and the Fury*. She lies in bed, a cloth folded over her head, crying «I simply cannot bear another day like today» (71), and her paradoxical communication is especially clear in the text of her youngest son, the «idiot» Benjy: «'My poor baby', she said. She let me go» (9)[2]. Mother's verbal message, here, seems a loving one, which demands from Benjy a certain reciprocity that will affirm to her that her behavior is indeed loving. Her nonverbal behavior, however, gives a conflicting message of rejection and retreat. Such conflicting signals easily produce a vicious circle: if the child retreats the caretaker will feel that she fails in being loving to the child, which will cause her to draw the child near. If the child reacts by approaching she will feel her initial anxiety or dissatisfaction and force it to retreat again, and so on in circles (Bateson 1972; Haley 1972). Benjy feels this dilemma; he senses that he cannot rely on his mother and he turns to his sister Caddy for security.

While Benjy thus turns to the concrete «earthliness» of Caddy's voice, her smell, her loving arms, his brother Quentin, to avoid the sin of incest, has to turn to an «idea» of her: the concept of Caddy as a «virgin Goddess». It is clear that he, not being «an idiot», is not «innocent» enough to lie in her arms. As a «half-baked Galahad» (126), Quentin has wanted to court his «Lady»: the idea of purity in the «frail vessel» called Caddy (appendix to the 1946 edition). But contrary to the «virgin Goddess» or the «Lady», Caddy is too accessible, too «normal», too real to function as an icon. When she proves to be made of flesh and blood, Quentin fails to keep her to himself: he fails to merge with her in death, as he drops the knife he holds to her throat; he fails to merge with her in love, the incest that he believes would fly them off to hell together; and he fails even to defend her honor, by passing out when he faces his opponent, her lover Dalton Ames (172-185). All these failures, which Quentin has desperately tried to keep out of his consciousness except in a rationalized or ironic form, crowd in on him at the height of his psychosis

[2] Faulkner himself describes his interest in Benjy in the following way: «I became interested in the relationship of the idiot to the world... and just where could he get the tenderness, the help, to shield him in his innocence» (Blotner 1984: 210). He defines this «innocence» as: «'innocence' in the sense that God had stricken him blind at birth, that is, mindless at birth, there was nothing he could ever do about it» (Jelliffe 1956: 103-104). Still, Benjy is, of course, not really «mindless» in the literal sense; some qualities of his mind are intact or even enhanced. As Oliver Sachs puts it: «What is this quality of mind, this disposition, which characterises the simple, and gives them their poignant innocence, transparency, completeness and dignity...? If we are to use a simple word here, it would have to be «concreteness» — their world is vivid, intense, detailed, yet simple, precisely because it *is* concrete: neither complicated, diluted, nor unified, by abstraction» (1986: 164).

(Bockting 1990: 488f)[3]. Before he drowns himself in the Charles River, however, Quentin is able to voice his grief over his mother's failure to acknowledge him: «*if I'd just had a mother so I could say Mother Mother*» (197).

4. ADDIE BUNDREN AND THE POWER OF WORDS

In contrast to the mothers mentioned above, Addie Bundren, whose text fills the center of the novel *As I Lay Dying* even after her death, is a powerful mother figure. For her sake, the family undertakes its perilous voyage across waters, in order to bury her with her family. It is not only after her death that this mother determines the behavior of her family members; it has been the driving force behind all their behavior, behind the very development of their personalities. This power started already with the names she gave her children. It is important to realize that a child uses its own name to refer to itself before it can use the pronoun «I». It is the name, rather than the concept «I», that initially organizes the «self» (cf. De Levita 1965: 173). If a child receives a name that has a distinct meaning in the world, this meaning becomes a factor in the establishing of its sense of self. Thus, to give a few examples, the name of Addie's oldest son «Cash» comes to fit the character who, while his mother is dying, keeps on sawing on her coffin so as not to waste time, and who, when she has to be buried, takes his carpenter tools along so he can go to work right afterwards. The name «Jewel» seems appropriate for the son who is a «love-child», who dreams of being alone with his mother «on a high hill» (14), and who will become her rescuer from the water and the fire. The name «Dewey Dell» combines the man's name «Dewey» with the visual image «valley with dew», and comes to prefigure the «secret shade» where the «tom-boy girl», who is supposed to be picking cotton, makes love to one of the farmers «simply» because she cannot help it.

Although there are hardly any direct indications of Addie's behavior towards her family members in the novel, her life-story, as she presents it in the one chapter of the book narrated by her, clearly inscribes her relation to all of them. Here I must, for lack of time, limit myself to the verbal forms in Addie's text, whereby she creates the texts of her family members as sub-texts of her own. Each of them, I will show, is provided with a characteristic set of predicates that seems to have fixed this sub-text from the start. Addie presents her marriage to her husband Anse in the following way: «so I took Anse» (15b). Notice the energy of the verb «took», which launches her relationship with Anse, and which clearly brings out its inequality. This relationship is soon to become more unequal, even castrating, when the transitive «took», in Addie's text, is replaced by the transitive «suckle»: «I would think that if he were to wake and cry, I would suckle him, too» (158). This «possible world», in which Addie takes away her husband's maturity, soon evolves into one in which she even takes away his life: «I believed that I would kill Anse» (158), a «possible world» soon presented as if real: «and then he died. He did not know he was dead» (160).

While Addie's castrating anger thus quickly diminishes and destroys its own outlet, certain changes in her life seem, at least for a short while, to work a positive change in her. The birth of her first child Cash teaches Addie the victory of genuine feeling over words: «when he was born I knew that motherhood was invented by someone who had to have a word for it because the ones that had the children didn't care whether there

[3] Joseph Blotner, for instance, calls him Benjy's «psychotic older brother» (1984: 213). As Bruce Kawin puts it, «his stream of consciousness is not just chaotic and allusive, but frankly psychotic — a labyrinth in an earthquake» (1977: 17). John Irwin argues that his narration shows the «bipolarity typical of both compulsion neurosis and schizophrenia» (1975: 29).

was a word for it or not» (157). The text presents the preverbal closeness of mother and child, based on a «motherly discourse» of visual, auditory, gustatory, kinesthetic, tactile, and olfactory stimuli: «Cash did not need to say it to me nor I to him» (158). Addie's feelings of relative peace and fulfillment cannot, however, survive when her second son, Darl, is born. The repeatable character of the experience of childbirth devaluates it for her. This is clear already from the way the text shapes the start of her relationship with Darl: «then I found that I had Darl. At first I would not believe it» (158). If we compare these verbs with those that conceptualized Addie's relationship with her husband — «I *took* Anse» — and those that conceptualized her relationship with her first-born son — «I *knew* that I had Cash» - the diminishing power and decisiveness is obvious. Through the verbal forms «find» and «would not believe it», the text makes clear that Addie does not acknowledge Darl's existence in the same active way in which she took possession of Anse and accepted Cash.

Once having felt her hunger for symbiosis through her first-born, Addie, in a Lacanian way, blames *the word*, repeatable like child-birth, which stands between the subject and experience, signifying even the very absence of the experience[4]. Displacing her disappointment and anger on her husband Anse, she blames «his» word «love», which she considers, like all words, «just a shape to fill a lack» (158). To defend herself against Anse's word, she repeats his name to herself so often that it becomes a receptacle in which the human being is captured and presumably made harmless: «I would think: Anse. Why Anse. Why are you Anse. I would think about his name until after a while I could see the word as a shape, a vessel, and I would watch him liquify and flow into it like cold molasses flowing out of the darkness» (159). While Addie's text once more dehumanizes Anse, this time by immobilizing him inside the senseless shape of his name, she tries, by the same process of repeating her sons' names, to liberate them from the world of words, so that they remain to her pure experience: «and when I would think *Cash* and *Darl* that way until their names would die and solidify into a shape and then fade away, I would say, All right. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter what they call them» (159).

With these operations on words Addie gains a form of mastery over the presence and absence of objects. Thus they constitute Addie's version of Freud's «da-fort» game (1920). They generate two distinct solutions. In the first quote, Addie employs the power of the word to reshape the object into its own form and thus destroy it. In the second, Addie calls up the power of words to loosen themselves from the objects for which they stand, in order to dispel these same words and create a pre-verbal directness of experience. We see here how Addie, paradoxically, needs a profusion of words — many of which are negations of other words that are evoked as well — to create a world in which these words are not necessary, showing how a real return to a pre-verbal situation is impossible. Addie is at least unconsciously aware of this. In a third passage, she complains about the power of words to leave experience behind: «I would think how words go straight up in a thin line, quick and harmless, and how terrible doing goes along the earth, clinging to it, so that after a while the two lines are too far apart for the same person to straddle from one to the other» (160). This is, however, the same power she herself has just made use of to «free» her children.

The text in which Addie acknowledges the presence of her third son Jewel distinguishes

[4] The distrust of words that Faulkner thematizes through the personalities of Addie Bundren and others is a typical modernist characteristic of thought, arising after the First World War, when concepts such as heroism, patriotism and honor seemed to have lost their values. Faulkner spoke of «mouthsounds; the loud and empty words which we have emasculated of all meaning whatever — freedom, democracy, patriotism» (Meriwether 1965: 65-66). Individuals hoped to find, underneath the emptiness of the word, the «real truth» of experience. The complaint, however, is perpetual, as Shakespeare knew he voiced Hamlet's complaint on «words, words, words».

itself in its dreamlike quality: «when I waked to remember to discover it, he was two months gone», as well as its peacefulness: «then there was only the milk, warm and calm, and I lying calm in the slow silence» (162). Addie's feelings are clear from her nonverbal behavior as well, as it is presented by the older brothers: «Ma would sit in the lamplight, holding him on a pillow on her lap. We would wake and find her so» (130). Then, after the birth of this illegitimate child, Addie feels her «duty to the alive» to be over. The two youngest children are not owned by her at all, as the predicates with which she presents their existence indicate: «I gave Anse Dewey Dell to negate Jewel. Then I gave him Vardaman to replace the child I had robbed him of» (162). Vardaman and Dewey Dell are given away to a man who, in her conception, «did not know he was dead» (160), to settle her account with him.

5. THE PERSONALITIES OF BUNDREN CHILDREN

Cash' birth was conceptualized by his mother as a solution to a problem: «when I knew that I had Cash, I knew that living was terrible and that this was the answer to it» (157). Addie's active acceptance of Cash has provided him with a relatively stable position in the world. Her tendency to divorce the word from the deed, in order to rediscover the purity of experience, can be linked to Cash's desire to show his love for his mother through deeds.

Addie's denial of Darl's existence — «I would not believe it» — parallels his precarious sense of self. Darl also lives out his mother's conceptualizations of him, unable to believe in the stability of his own existence, against which he defends himself through generalization and rationalization: «how do our lives ravel out into the no-wind, no-sound» (191). Repetition shows the obsessive element of this rumination: «if you could just ravel out into time. That would be nice. It would be nice if you could just ravel out into time» (193). Here Darl's simultaneous fear of and fascination with annihilation are combined into a life-threatening mixture.

Darl's paradoxical morphological choices — no-wind; no-sound; no-hand; no-string — can be seen as an example of schizophrenic language, which, as Freud argued, is an attempt to preserve, through language, some sort of unified conception of reality, a «means of restitution in the face of psychotic break» (Freud 1915; Laffal 1979; Rosenbaum & Sonne 1986). The outburst of a manifest psychosis occurs when Darl can no longer arrive at such a unity, and breaks off his contact with outer reality entirely (Breuer 1980). As he is transported to the Jackson asylum, Darl addresses himself in the third-person: «Darl has gone to Jackson. They put him on the train, laughing, down the long car laughing, the heads turning like the heads of owls when he passed. 'What are you laughing at?' I said. 'Yes yes yes yes yes'» (235).

Jewel, the child of Addie and the Reverend Whitfield, «coming swift and secret» to her in the woods, embodies the culmination of Addie's «un-reality». Jewel is not real to her, but an icon. She calls him her salvation, and makes him her God. Jewel himself lives out his mother's conceptualization of him through his every posture, gesture and action, and by his exclusive devotion to her, which cannot allow for the existence of others: «It would just be me and her on a high hill and me rolling the rocks down the hill at their faces, picking them up and throwing them down the hill faces and teeth and all by God» (14).

Neither one of the younger children, Vardaman or Dewey Dell, can conceptualize their mother or her death. In life as well as in death, she slips away from them. For the adolescent Dewey Dell, Addie's death is «too soon», like everything in life comes before she has had time to exist: «I heard that my mother is dead. I wish I had time to let her die. I wish I had time to wish I had. It is because in the wild and outraged earth too soon too soon too soon» (106). The child Vardaman has caught a large fish just when his mother dies,

so that now he associates this slippery fish with his mother: «my mother is a fish» (74): «Then it wasn't and she was, and now it is and she wasn't» (60).

6. THEMATIC CONSIDERATIONS

My discussion has shown the paradoxes of Addie's personality. Addie feels that she has been tricked by words; yet, she has always needed them desperately herself, and uses them to trick others. She understands words to be «just a shape to fill a lack», and she conveys her belief that words were invented by people who never had the feeling. Words to her represent the gaps in the lacks were the deeds should have been. Addie's husband Anse seems never to have understood this paradox, but her children, who were created by it, have to some extent. In their different and paradoxical ways, they try to live up to her expectations of them and perform an act for which they can stand: Cash stoically works on her coffin and Jewel saves it from the river and the burning barn, so that the promise made to her can be fulfilled. Darl, who needs words even more desperately than his mother, tries to save her dignity by setting the barn in which her coffin is kept on fire, to burn her and spare her the degradation of the trip with her decomposing body. For the younger children it is more difficult to act out her conception of them, because they never really belonged to her. Yet, the pregnant Dewey Dell will carry out her duty to the world as «a wet seed» in the soil, for the «wild blood» of the earth; and Vardaman, in his magical child's world, recreates his mother as a fish that, like his mother, keeps slipping out of his hands.

Thematically, *As I Lay Dying* can be read as a collection of texts on mourning. Addie's children, each in its personal way, try to come to terms with the death of this powerful woman. Melanie Klein has stressed the importance of the child's first love object — the mother's breast — and its loss at the time of weaning. As she saw it, each subsequent loss that an individual suffers revitalizes the feelings and the developmental tasks associated with the period of weaning. Addie Bundren's text is explicitly violent where this developmental period is concerned; as her text presents the process of weaning, it is a very traumatic experience, in which even her (castrated) husband is included. As the predicate of her text reveals, she «refused» her breast to them «after their time was up» (161).

7. CONCLUSION

«In an author as autobiographical as Faulkner», his biographer Frederick Karl writes, «there must be leads or threads which circle back from life to work and from work to life» (1989: 382). Indeed, when asked where he «got the idea» for his novel *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner once replied: «the actions, the separate actions, I may have seen, remembered. It was the imagination probably that tied the whole thing together into a story... It's like having... three tanks with a collector valve. And you don't know just how much comes from which tank. All you know is a stream of water runs from the valve when you open it, drawn from the three tanks-observation, experience, imagination' (Fant & Ashley 1964: 96-97)[5]. One might ask which losses were revitalized in Faulkner at a time when he, in

[5] In a letter home Faulkner told his mother how he and his fiend Sherwood Anderson would go about making a story: «What really happens, you know, never makes a good yarm. You have to get an impulse from somewhere and then embroider it. And that is what Sherwood did in this case. He has done another about me as I really am, not as a fictitious character. He is now writing a book about childhood, his own childhood; and I have told him several things about my own which

a sense, lost his role of child. *As I Lay Dying*, after all, is the first novel that Faulkner wrote after he had married his childhood sweetheart Estelle Oldham and for the first time found himself obliged to play some sort of father-role to her children, and to work to support a family during the time of the stock-market crash. He had waited for her for many years[6], but the marriage started out disastrously, as Estelle first attempted suicide on their honeymoon.

Even after he had married Estelle, his mother always tried to play the central role in Faulkner's life. As Karl puts it, «Maud never gave up on her sons... The situation, however, went beyond Freud's dictum that the son with his mother's love can go all the way. Maud gave love, but she expected deference and obedience in return. She tried to be the central woman in all her sons' lives» (1989: 380). Maud Falkner-Butler has been described as «a small, slight, even demure woman in appearance» (Karl 1989: 380), but nevertheless a «matriarchal presence.» She disapproved of her husband's drinking, eventually «displaced» (Karl 1989: 389) him from her bedroom, and from then on shared the room with her mother. She disapproved of Estelle for drinking and for having children from a previous marriage, and called her «flighty — a sort of butterfly» (Oates 1987: 88). According to James Watson, she insisted that all her sons write her every week whenever they were away from home (1992: 22). But it was the oldest of the four brothers, William, who was closest to his mother, in physical appearance (he had her small posture[7], her hooded eyes, and her thin lips[8]), in intellectual interest (she read Shakespeare, Balzac, Conrad and others), and emotionally as well.

On absences from his hometown of Oxford during his youth, Faulkner wrote home on average once every five days. The earliest existing letter, of 1912, carries the salutation: «Dear Miss Lady», and conveys a curious form of attachment: «I was going to town the other day and saw a man and I started to yell 'Hello Dad', when I saw his face. I havent seen any one that looks like you 'cause Lady, you're too pretty» (1992: 40). Six years later, he wrote to her from New Haven: «Momsey: I couldn't live here at all but for your letters. I love you darling»; and «I can... realize that home is greater that [sic] war, or lightning or marriage or any other unavoidable thing» (Watson 1992: 53 and 12)[9].

In later letters from the RAF training camp in Toronto, Faulkner showed himself extremely demanding of his mother. In nearly every letter home he asked for, or acknowledged the receipt of, money, food and articles of clothing: «the sweater, socks and cigs came yesterday, and Ive just gotten another package Havent opened it yet, but I have an idea its something to eat» (Watson 1992: 97). Especially the soft articles of clothing that his mother sent pleased him: «I am in my tent... admiring the sweater which came today.

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he is putting in as having happened to him... I am now giving away the secrets of our profession, so be sure not to divulge them. It would be kind of like a Elk or a Mason or a Beaver or something giving away the pass word» (Watson 1992: 194f). Faulkner used the technique also to tell his own adventures, as his «war memories» make clear.

[6] After Estelle Oldham «determined to marry someone else», as Susan Snell puts it, «literature was the only serious 'mistress'» Faulkner would have for almost twelve years (1991: 9).

[7] Maud Falkner was always worried about William's posture. When he was thirteen and fourteen she «made him wear a whalebone corset» to straighten him; and when he was twenty-eight and living in New Orleans, he still felt obliged to write to his mother «my shoulders are all right, moms... I expect I am straighter than I was at home. And I fear I am getting fat» (Watson 1992: 206).

[8] This similarity in appearance with his mother earned Faulkner his father's nickname «snake-lips», which was at the same time a sneer towards his mother.

[9] In his letters to his mother Faulkner does not often write about women that attracted him. An exception in his letter of April 20 1925, when he writes about a Mrs Gumble: «she is the nicest one I have met. She is twenty four and has the most beautiful hair I ever saw. It is really gold — sometimes it looks yellow and sometimes it is red, like a gold coin. There is something about the shape of her forehead and eyes that reminds me of you...» (Watson 1992: 202).

Its the softest thing I ever had on»; «I am sitting in the sun with my shirt open so every one can see my sweater»; «Its still cold. Every so often I feel inside my shirt to touch my sweater, and laugh» (1992: 87, 88). About his mother's food he was extremely possessive: «My tent is full of people now, and as I do not care for people, I'm waiting until they go to open my box... I refuse to give your cakes to every Tom and Dick in the camp here. This crowd hangs about like a crowd of vultures, waiting until some one to get a box from home. If I were not naturally rather unapproachable, they'd take it away from me» (Watson 1992: 97).

Although Watson calls his «a nurturing and sustaining home» (1992: 13), Faulkner had no father who could function as a role model for him as an intellectual. Thus his friend Phil Stone became «Mentor to Bill's (fatherless) Telemachus». Stone, however, preferred to take the mother role and call himself Faulkner's «wet nurse» (Snell 1991: 2). Despite her hold on him, or perhaps because of it, his relation to his mother seems to have been a complex one, determined by admiration, but also by fear and a sense of lack. The psychoanalyst and literary critic Jay Martin quotes Faulkner's brother John: «for the first year of his life 'Bill... had the colic every night. Mother said the only way she could ease him enough to stop his crying was to rock him in a straight chair, the kind you have in the kitchen'». The straight chair, used as if it were a rocking chair, obviously made so much noise that «the neighbors said the Faulkners were the queerest people they ever knew; they spent all night in the kitchen chopping kindling on the floor» (1988: 188f.; Faulkner 1963: 10f.).

Perhaps the baby enjoyed this noisy, bumpy rocking; perhaps the Faulkners did not own a real rocking chair, but Martin sees in this somewhat uncomfortable arrangement «a suggestion of ambivalence about mothering on her part — a commitment to the duty of meeting the infant's needs, rather than softness or tenderness». «The image that emerges», he argues, «is of Maud as a reliable but not warm mother, an impression confirmed by later evidence. Faulkner's mother apparently fulfilled her obligations, but there seems little of the mutuality in feeding and playing necessary to nourish the infant's psyche at its source» (1988: 189). At last year's Faulkner Conference in Oxford, Mississippi, Martin remarked on Faulkner's tendency to form attachments to women who were not very available to him; and he pointed to the remarkable frequency, in Faulkner's work, of «children who seem like orphans even if they have parents».

Martin comments on one of Faulkner's early memories of spending the night with his aunt and cousins. As Faulkner remembered it, the experience left him with «one of those spells of loneliness and nameless sorrow that children suffer, for what or because of what they do not know» (1988: 189). Consequently, the two cousins had to take him home: «Vannye... impersonal; quite aloof... holding the lamp» and «Natalie... quick and dark. She was touching me. She must have carried me». As Martin argues, the «confusing contrast» between the two girls — one «aloof», the other «touching» — may suggest «the confused, fused, ambivalent attitudes he held towards mothering and, ultimately, his mother» (1988: 190).

Whether or not this is so, the image of Faulkner's mother 'rocking' him in a straight kitchen chair brings to mind a scene in *As I Lay Dying*, where Addie Bundren holds her favorite son on a pillow «in the lamplight» (130); like the kitchen chair, not the best place for a baby to sleep. The neurotic need for a constant supply of food and soft clothing manufactured by mother prevalent in Faulkner's letters home brings to mind another scene, where the same fictional mother explains how she weaned her sons: «I refused my breast to Cash and Darl after their time was up» (161). Finally, the 'homesickness-scene', with the conflicting images of young women — suggesting the conflicting emotions in mother — cannot but remind one of the fictional mother in *The Sound and the Fury*, whose verbal behavior is endearing while her nonverbal behavior creates distance.

If I hesitate to draw any clear-cut conclusions from information such as this, I will,

however, agree with Frederick Karl when he characterizes Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* as «the presentation of a mother with a vengeance» (1989: 390): «the purity and sainthood normally associated with mother are lacking. Addie has committed adultery, borne an illegitimate son, and now she lies putrefying in water and sun» (390). As Karl puts it: «what compels us about the work of a man just married is how much this novel becomes the obverse of an epithalamion, the traditional song or lyric in honor of a bride» (1989: 386). Rather than an epithalamion, it seems that *As I Lay Dying* is an elegy for the child Faulkner could no longer be.

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 233-241

Fantasy Structures in Paul Auster's *New York Trilogy*

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In the preface to his novel *Le Blue du Ciel* (1957), Georges Bataille wrote: «Le récit qui révèle les possibilités de la vie n'appelle pas forcément, mais il appelle un moment de rage, sans lequel son auteur serait aveugle à ces possibilités excessives». Paul Auster, who was born in America in 1947, is the author of a fascinating oeuvre including a number of volumes of poetry and essays, translations from French (including *Le Blue du Ciel*), an autobiographical work and six novels. He quotes Bataille's words with approval in an essay of his, *New York Babel* (1974) (in *Ground Work*) and in an interview (with Ron Kaal, 10.12.1988). «I believe», he says in the interview, «that the subject will shape more coherently if you write out of this rage. As long as you keep in touch with that moment of inspiration, [...] some sort of subconscious rhetoric will flow through the book which will always keep the reader and writer, when he is writing the book, in touch with that central idea.»

The narrator says at the end of Auster's *New York Trilogy*: «These three stories are finally the same story but each one represents a different stage in my awareness of what it is about. [...] I have been struggling to say goodbye to something for a long time now, and this struggle is all that really matters. The story is not in the words; it's in the struggle». (LR, 294)

The reader who has become fascinated by Auster's novels and who has read them all — I, for one, have — is apparently attracted by that moment of rage which sparks them off. What sort of rage is it and against whom is it directed? What is the central idea in Auster's stories and what obsessions keep recurring in them? Of what or whom does the author want to take his leave and why is this a struggle?

To answer these questions one should try and stay in touch with one's own reactions and associations as a reader to the material formed by Auster's texts, interviews and reviews, etc. These reactions must somehow be related to Auster's themes, which are obsessive and appeal to particular constellations of emotions in the reader. Presumably, readers must share certain subconscious conflict structures with the author if they are to be moved by his work.

I shall try to summarize my answers to these questions and confine myself to the *New York Trilogy* (1987), Auster's first major achievement in fiction writing after his autobiographical

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work *The Invention of Solitude* (1982). However, much of what I will have to say is also true of his other work, in particular *Moon Palace* (1989).

Let us take a closer look, therefore, at the basic narrative patterns in the three novels of the *New York Trilogy*. Part 1, *City of Glass* (1985) is the story of a writer from New York, Daniel Quinn, who writes mystery novels and who decides to pass himself off as a detective. He is hired to protect a certain Peter Stillman Jr against his father. The father is mentally ill, and it is feared that he will return to New York after a prolonged stay in an institution in order to kill his son. This Stillman Sr, who is — so to say — a humanities variant of the type of the mad scientist, carried out that cruel language experiment which has been documented a number of times since Herodotus: he kept his little son in complete isolation for nine years to find out what language the child would «learn» to speak. Peter was discovered when a fire broke out and his father was sentenced and sent to prison. Thirteen years have elapsed since then and the father, who conceived his linguistic experiment in some sort of brilliant religious mania, has announced his return and has promised his revenge. Quinn, alias Auster, realises that it will be his job to track him down and to protect Peter, this American Kaspar Hauser, against «the man with the dagger, come back to avenge himself on the boy whose life he had destroyed» (CG, 35).

He finds Stillman, follows the man on his walks through New York, which appear to have a secret meaning, talks with him on a number of occasions about his brilliant but lunatic theological and linguistic ideas, loses Stillman again and decides to post himself in front of the block of flats where the son lives together with his wife, speech therapist and carer, Virginia Stillman. Quinn manages to stay there for weeks, day and night, almost continuously, until he looks like one of the many hobo's that roam about the city.

It is a kind of experiment he carries out on himself, an experiment that Paul Auster first described in his essay *The Art of Hunger* (1970) [published in GrW] and which later became one of the main themes of his novel *Moon Palace*. It is, in fact, a determined effort to create an extreme, with the sole purpose of testing himself, of experiencing the extreme possibilities of life by surrendering unconditionally to a game with death. In my opinion, it is the expression of a kind of existential curiosity of the author, which he recognized in Hamsun's novel *Hunger* and in Kafka's story *Der Hungerkünstler* and for which he will have found the appropriate philosophy in Georges Bataille.

Quinn discovers by accident that he has for a long time been watching the building for nothing. Stillman Sr appears to have committed suicide by jumping off a bridge, while his son has disappeared with his wife Virginia without leaving a trace.

One of the keys to the intellectual construction of the novel, which deals with theological speculations about the origin of language (Babel) and about the vision of the New World as a second Garden of Eden, is the essay *New York Babel* (1974) [published in GrW, 119-126], which Auster wrote in reaction to a French book about a schizophrenic man who created his own language, Louis Wolfson's *Le schizo et les langues* (1971).

The second part of the trilogy, *Ghosts*, is also about a private eye, Blue, who is being hired by White to shadow someone called Black and who has to report his findings to his client. The detective discovers at the end that his client is the same man as the one he had to watch from a building across the street. The book makes the impression of a detective novel written by Kafka. It is a kind of parable about the diffusion of identity, about solitude, about the impossibility of really knowing another human being, but above all about writing and reading, full of literary allusions and intertextual references. Here, too, it is a search that is central to the book — namely an attempt of the private eye Blue to find out the identity of his client White. The several anecdotal stories incorporated in it are important too, because of the themes they share.

For example, there is «The Gold Case», the story of a man who, without success, devotes his entire life to solving the murder of a little boy. The story makes a deep impression

on Blue when he realizes that the murderer must have been one of the parents, because they failed to report the child missing. «It could have been me, Blue thinks». (G, 142) This is reminiscent of the Stillmans, and, consequently, again Kaspar Hauser looms up behind them.

Then there is the story of the son who, while skiing in the mountains, finds the corpse of his father, who died in an avalanche many years before. Ice has kept the body in perfect condition. It is not so much the reunion of son and dead father that moves one as the fact that the son is at that time older than his father was at the time of his death. «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». (G, 151) Basically, this is a kind of role reversal between father and son, a theme which will continue to concern us, because many of Auster's fantasies circle round the idea of father/son or son/father identification. This story belongs to the category of plots which — no matter whether they are true or invented — strike us by their mythical aspects and which, because of that, are ready material for literature. For example, German literature knows many adaptations of the true story of a miner living in the Swedish place Falun, who got killed in a mining accident in 1670. Because copper vitriol had preserved the body, it was still perfectly intact when it was found again in 1719. Nobody recognized the young man in his old-fashioned clothes, except an old woman who saw her fiancé again after so many years and with whom she could now finally reunite in the grave. Here, too, the contrast between the man, who stayed young, and the old woman, who remained in love with him, is the central point, and it has been the source of inspiration for numerous poems, novels, plays and even operas, ever since.

In part 3 of *The New York Trilogy*, *The Locked Room*, the narrator is commissioned to both edit the literary oeuvre of his old friend Fanshawe and to have it published. This Fanshawe (a name derived from Hawthorne) has disappeared after having been married for a few years. He abandoned his wife Sophie and his little son Ben and makes every effort to keep his hiding-place a secret. The narrator accepts the job. Fanshawe's work appears to have great qualities and is a literary success, which leads the publisher to offer the narrator a second commission, namely to write Fanshawe's biography. He accepts, but all his attempts to locate Fanshawe come to nothing. In the end, however, a dramatic rendez-vous does take place in Boston, on the initiative of Fanshawe, who remains invisible behind a closed door. Before dying from a poison which he took earlier on, Fanshawe leaves a red notebook, which the reader will still know from *City of Glass*.

If we project the plots of these three novels, as it were, one on top of the other, certain similarities become apparent. These similarities would become even more striking if we included Auster's other novels, *In the Country of Last Things* (1988), *Moon Palace* (1989), — the book which, in my opinion, comes close to the model of the The Great American Novel, a Dickensian story about a son in search of his father, constructed along the lines of the «family romance» described by Freud — and finally *The Music of Chance* (1990).

Already now the *New York Trilogy* is revealing a fundamental structure, which nearly seems to assume the character of an «identity theme»: there is always someone in search of another person who is important to him, who has disappeared or is invisible, who withdraws, someone who sometimes also misleads the other. The search is never crowned with finding the other. There is no happy end. Fanshawe, in particular, repeats the course of action of the writer Wakefield in Hawthorne's short story of the same name (1835), who leaves his house in London to rent a room a few streets further down and stays there for many years without ever being recognized by his wife or others when he is walking around the neighborhood. Wakefield is the literary prototype of the man who withdraws; who makes himself invisible; who shuts himself in his room, as his creator Hawthorne did, who hardly

ever left his room for twelve years to devote himself completely to his authorship. Thoreau's *Walden*, another favourite book of Auster's, has the same theme.

For someone who has read Auster's autobiographical work *The Invention of Solitude* (1982), it is not difficult to trace back this basic structure to its roots in the author's life. This book, which was instigated by the sudden death of his father in 1979, contains many keys to Auster's work. The first part, *Portrait of an Invisible Man* (1979), is an attempt to portray the author's father, although the writer knows that it is impossible to paint a portrait of an invisible man. The short poem *S. A. 1911-1979* [in GrW, 92] also deals with this inability. It is not a portrait of the father, but a son's complaint:

> [...] men die, the world fails, the
> words
>
> have no meaning. And therefore to ask only
> for words.
> [...]

It is reminiscent of the failing attempts of the «I' in *The Locked Room* who wants to reach the withdrawing Fanshawe in order to write his biography. Therefore the book is a sensitive picture of the father-son relationship — or to be exact, of the lack of it, of the unfulfilled desire for it. The description of the elusive «invisible» father and of the son's unsatisfied need for this man's attention («Earliest memory: his absence». — «Later memories: a craving». [IS, 20, 21]) makes us aware of the origin of the obsessive themes in Auster's prose, which is always concerned with the search for the father.

Yet, it is not only a matter of getting even with the father, but also a tender attempt to understand his character and his life in order to find out what made him so elusive. Certainly, there *is* rage, but it is mostly hidden and it gives the father figures in Auster's fiction an ambivalent quality. It appears that the young Sam Auster, Paul's father, witnessed his mother murdering her husband with a number of pistol-shots in January 1919 after a conflict about unfaithfulness and money matters. The mother was acquitted after a few weeks, but not before a brother of the murdered man had attempted to kill her. Paul's father kept this family tragedy a secret all his life and so did his brothers. The grandfather, too, was made literally invisible: there is a family picture in the book, from which the grandfather has been carefully torn out. Consequently, the death of Paul's grandfather kept sparking off different versions all the time. So, on the one hand, Paul Auster divulged the family shame, which his father had wanted to keep a secret — an act of rebellion against the father and as such perhaps an indirect expression of the rage which, according to Auster, incites him to write. On the other hand, this unloyal deed brought about understanding for the traumatic causes of the «invisibility» of Auster's father. Paul Auster compares the newspaper articles about the murder, which fell into his hands much later by accident, with «a cave drawing discovered on the inner walls of my own skull» (IS, 37). In *Portrait of an Invisible Man*, Paul Auster the son is speaking, who, through his writings, raises his father from the dead, but it is also the book of Paul Auster the father, which was written first and foremost for his son Daniel and which deals with Auster's most essential experiences, including his fatherhood. It ends with the image of the little son «as he lies upstairs in his crib asleep. To wonder what he will make of these pages when he is old enough to read them». (IS, 69)

The second part of *The Invention of Solitude*, called *The Book of Memory* (1980/1981), contains some captivating autobiographical and essayistic notes about writing and authorship; about the hidden analogy between writing and walking; about Auster's favorite American authors, such as Hawthorne (whose father died, by the way, when Hawthorne was four), Poe (whose parents died when he was one and who was raised by a foster father), Melville

(whose father died when Melville was thirteen); and about the role of chance in our lives. It also contains a kind of inventory of the author's personal obsessions, which reappear in the works of fiction which were written after this breakthrough.

For example, there is the recurring motif of the small, secluded room into which the writer, a second Wakefield, withdraws from the world. Then there is the theme that deals with the inadequacies of language, but above all there is a whole spectrum of both fictional and historical, usually tragic father-son relationships: Rembrandt and Titus, Sir Walter Raleigh and his eight-year-old son Wat, Mallarmé and his son Anatole, who died at the age of eight. (The poems which the despairing father wrote at the sickbed were translated by Auster and included in *The Book of Memory* (IS, 110/3)). The central motifs, to which the thoughts of the author keep returning, are that of fatherhood and death. Auster's divorce from his wife and the serious illness of his son Daniel made him aware of the very essence of fatherhood: «if dying were necessary to save his son, he would be willing to die. And it was therefore only in that moment of fear that he had become, once and for all, the father of his son». (IS, 10). In his own despair «only one thought brought him any consolation: the thought of his son». (IS, 156) *The Book of Memory*, too, is primarily a document for the son, written as a spiritual testament. In a dream he reports on his own death, the author says to his ex-wife when they are talking about the manuscript of this book: «You finish it for me and then give it to Daniel». (IS, 170)

My first point is that this basic structure of the search for someone who has vanished and cannot be found again has its biographical foundation in the son's longing for the attention and recognition of the «invisible man» who was once his father, and my second point is that this structure has been transformed by defence mechanisms in a few characteristic fantasies in Auster's literary works. These fantasies are of course all related to the familiar structure of the «family romance», Freud's concept of the young child's compensatory fantasies about his parents. It is hardly surprising that Auster prefers the type which Marthe Robert distinguishes in her study of this matter, *Origins of the Novel* (1980), as the «abandoned child», considering Auster's fascination with the Kaspar Hauser figure, with the «child without parents» (LR, 262) in the psychological sense, that is to say the lonely gifted child that does not get enough attention from his parents.

So, the novels are not simply descriptions or repetitions of the biographic father-son constellation, which is characterized by a lack of intimacy and understanding, but are rather like magic attempts to change and improve the constellation, without falling back, however, into wishful thinking. The craving, the disappointment, the loneliness, the unfulfilled longing for the father, this «paternal hunger» (IS, 92) keep priming the writing process. The title *Unfinished Business* — which is one of Daniel Quinn's books — could, therefore, be regarded as a suitable title for Auster's entire oeuvre, because «you do not stop hungering for your father's love, even after you are grown up» (IS, 19). In a certain sense, the writing process puts the author in a powerful position; at least, in the virtual reality of literature. He is not only able to relive in his memory both feelings of worthlessness and past situations in which he felt extremely powerless, but he is also able to transform them now in his imagination in such a way that the story gets a compensatory character.

In *City of Glass* it is said that Stillman Sr with his cruel experiment for which he sacrificed his son, wanted »to undo the fall, to reverse its effects by undoing the fall of language» (CG, 47). This desire, which is explicitly mentioned in what might be called the novel's intellectual superstructure, is also important to the (subconscious) motivation of the main character and, I think, of the author as well. It is the defence mechanism which Freud (and his daughter Anna) characterized as the «magic» undoing (*Ungeschehenmachen*) of what has happened. Magic presupposes that time is not irreversible. The author uses a kind of fictional magic by creating stories which are intended to cancel out other stories that happened before. It is made plausible that Quinn accepts the job of saving Peter Stillman,

the son, because he has lost his own son Peter, of which Peter Stillman reminds him. In a deeper sense, however, he wants to undo the Kaspar Hauser story, which did really happen but has assumed mythical dimensions because of its psychological implications, its many possibilities for identification and its long literary tradition. It ends with Hauser being murdered by an unknown man with a dagger. Quinn wants to interfere in order to save this American Kaspar Hauser. And for the son Auster to write means in a certain sense to undo the death of the father: «I had lost my father. But at the same time I had also found him». (IS, 14)

Chapter 4 of *City of Glass* deals explicitly with the Kaspar Hauser tradition in the form of an inserted essay. It also deals with the theme of the various «savage children», which were brought up by wild animals, such as, for example, Victor d'Aveyron («l'enfant sauvage»). What makes the lonely foundling Kaspar Hauser so fascinating is the (partly subconscious) appeal he has for every reader who has reason to complain about a lack of love and attention from his parents. These possibilities for identification and the connection with the «family romance» — think of the motif of aristocratic descent shrouded in mystery — make Kaspar Hauser's story a basic model for the «tragedy of the gifted child», which Alice Miller's books describe so suggestively. In *The Locked Room* (LR, 298), Peter Stillman Jr reemerges in Paris, flees and is pursued by the narrator. This is a clear reference to the various attacks on the historical Kaspar Hauser, but at the same time, there is undoing again: unlike his model, Peter Stillman not only succeeds in escaping from his enemy unharmed, he also beats him up; he is finally getting even with the unknown man from the Kaspar Hauser story.

Here we see how the defence mechanism of undoing leads to a typical rescue fantasy. It is a case of a father (figure) trying to save his (substitute) son. Strange as it may seem, this constellation is sometimes reversed when the son saves the father. Of course, there is a close psychological relationship between the two constellations. In *The Book of Memory*, Auster devotes a number of pages to Pinocchio (which has the son saving the father as a central motif). The book *Pinocchio* is the bond that unites father Paul and son Daniel Auster (IS, 130/4) and which first and foremost contains «the story of Pinocchio's search for his father — and Gepetto's search for his son» (IS, 132). For Auster, the crucial image of the story — which was left out in the Disney version, by the way — is «Pinocchio swimming through the desolate water, nearly sinking under the weight of Gepetto's body» (IS, 133); the father on his son's back, like Aeneas bearing Anchises on his back from the ruins of Troy. Auster points to the mythical character of the episode in the belly of the big fish, which of course is a reflection of the Biblical story about Jonah and which had already made Auster wonder at an earlier stage in his book: «Is it true that one must dive to the depths of the sea and save one's father to become a real boy?» (IS, 79)

The image of father Gepetto and his son Pinocchio in the belly of the great fish has indeed the power of a mythical primal scene. In my opinion, there is a latent connection, which is held together by associations, with the anecdote Auster heard from his friend M. and which he inserted in *The Invention of Solitude*:

> During the war, M.'s father had hidden out from the Nazis for several months in a Paris *chambre de bonne*. Eventually, he managed to escape, made his way to America, and began a new life. Years passed, more than twenty years. M. had been born, had grown up, and was now going off to study in Paris. Once there, he spent several difficult weeks looking for a place to live. Just when he was about to give up in despair, he found a small *chambre de bonne*. Immediately upon moving in, he wrote a letter to his father to tell him the good news. A week or so later he received a reply: your address, wrote M.'s father, that is the same building I hid out in during the war. He then went

> on to describe the details of the room. It turned out to be the same room his son had rented. (IS, 80)

No wonder that this story made a strong impression on Paul Auster. He presents it in his book as a «commentary on the nature of chance» (IS, 80), but emphasizes a little too ostentatiously «that M.'s story has no meaning». Does it really have no meaning? I think that the story of the son, who ended up in the very room where his father had hidden out many years ago, contains a subconscious memory of this other fantasy structure from the children's book, which reunited father and son in a womb-like space, an episode which caused Auster to say that «there is something deeply satisfying in this passage of reunion» (IS, 131). Paul Auster, moved by these scenes from Carlo Collodi's children's story, devotes some touching passages to them which contain the core of his favorite fantasies. «For this act of saving is in effect what a father does: he saves his little boy from harm» (IS, 134), and the little boy, who dreams of growing up to save lives as Superman does, hears his father reading the story about the little puppet who saves his father «[...] a sublime moment of revelation. The son saves the father. This must be fully imagined from the perspective of the little boy. And this, in the mind of the father who was once a little boy, a son, that is, to his own father, must be fully imagined. *Puer aeternus*. The son saves the father». (IS, 134)

Freud makes a few comments in relation to the prototypic rescue fantasies of children in his *Contributions to the Psychology of Love* [SE, XI, 172/3; GW VIII, 75/6] which seem to have been written with this work, and this passage in particular, in mind. According to Freud, the rescue motif is an independent derivative of the parental complex.

> It as though the boy's defiance were to make him say: «I want nothing from my father; I will give him back all I have cost him. He then forms the fantasy of rescuing his father from danger and saving his life; in this way he puts his account square with him.

«This fantasy», Freud adds, «[...] may even be made use of by creative writers». (SE XI, 172/3) This observation of Freud's can now be formulated much more positively: it is a favorite fantasy of many writers, of which Paul Auster is one. Freud wrote: «All his instincts, those of tenderness, gratitude, lustfulness, defiance and independence, find satisfaction in the single wish to be his own father» (173). This clearly applies to Auster. After this comment of Freud's, it strikes the reader to find the same idea in Auster, this time as a quotation derived from Kierkegaard: «[...] he who is willing to work gives birth to his own father» (IS, 68). It is the death of the father (according to Freud, the most important event in a man's life), which causes, in Auster's view, «the son [to become] his own father and his own son. He looks at his son and sees himself in the face of the boy». (IS, 81)

If a father avoids real intimacy and shrinks from any genuine form of contact, the son will be more inclined to fantasize about the father than in case of a satisfying form of contact. The son will also be looking for substitute fathers for a longer period of time: «From the very beginning, it seems, I was looking for my father, looking frantically for any one who resembled him». (IS, 21) Only much later, when he is a young and still unknown American author in Paris, will his contact with the eccentric Russian composer S. satisfy his «paternal hunger» a little and give him his first experience of «what it felt like to have a father» (IS, 92), because he and S. were able to accept each other for what they were. From this point of view, the double meaning of Isaac Babel's sentence, which Auster quotes in his portrait of the father, becomes apparent: «I want to know whether it is possible to find another father like him anywhere in the world». (IS, 60)

Paul Auster relates how his father for once accepted a request to tell a story and

dished up a fantastic adventure story in grand literary style (IS, 22, 154). For a long time, the son believed that this story really happened, and he wanted to believe it, for «It gave me something to hold on to about my father, and I was reluctant to let go. At last I had an explanation for his mysterious evasions, his indifference to me. He was a romantic figure, a man with a dark and exciting past, and his present life was only a kind of stopping place, [...]». (IS, 22) Through this fantasy, the son is able to hold on to his need to admire the father. It seems to me that this must have been the moment in which the seeds of his future authorship were sown. It is certainly one of the key scenes in the author's life, in which the close relation between the «hunger for stories» and the «paternal hunger», between fantasizing about the father in endless variations along the lines of the «family romance» and the writing of literary fiction later on in his life, is made visible. For Paul Auster writing unconsciously means the magical conjuration of the imagined father figure, who replaces the invisible father of reality. The first time he realised that this was his very own theme was when he wrote his *Portrait of an Invisible Man*, in which he concludes at an early stage that «Instead of burying my father for me, these words kept him alive, perhaps more so than ever». (IS, 32). So on the one hand, writing means for Auster the continuation of the fantastic adventure story of the father as a hero, and, on the other, the complaint of the lonely, emotionally abandoned son. Also, as a writer he assumes the role of the father dishing up an adventure story to his son, but at the same time he takes over his father's invisibility and plays endless games in his novels with mistaken identities and vanishing characters: «Tell me a story, the child says. [...] The father then sits down and tells a story to his son. [The] stories in which the boy himself is the hero are perhaps the most satisfying to him of all. In the same way, A. realizes, as he sits in his room writing *The Book of Memory*, he speaks of himself as another in order to tell the story of himself. He must make himself absent in order to find himself there». (IS, 154)

Childlike fantasies about the father are bound to lead to all sorts of exaggerations, and that Auster knows, for he quotes Proust with approval: «Children have always a tendency either to depreciate or to exalt their parents». (IS, 60) Auster tends to create father figures that are bigger than life and that are in the possession of magical gifts, such as Effing in *Moon Palace*, and uncanny, threatening figures like Stillman and Fanshawe, who are thought of in connection with murder. Here, I think, part of the rage that inspires Auster and that Bataille wrote about is hidden. It is the rage that the disappointed son must have experienced and suppressed, a forbidden anger which will have evoked feelings of guilt and which must also have led, therefore, to images of a punishing, powerful father. Auster does write about these defensive guilt feelings. Referring to Proust's statement that for a good son the father is always the best father in the world, he arrives at the conclusion that he must have been a bad son, who by choosing a literary career must have disappointed his father (IS, 60). This conclusion becomes even more poignant when we read about the favorite nephew, whom Paul's father treated as a son and who showed more grief at the father's funeral than the real son.

In cases like this, which concern fantasies about agressives impulses of a father against his son, psychoanalysts speak of the Laius motif, a reversal of the Oedipal constellation, which also has its roots in Greek myth. In *The Locked Room* in particular, the contours of this conflict constellation become visible: after Fanshawe's total disappearance, the narrator takes his place both as husband to Fanshawe's wife Sophie and as father of his son Ben. Although Fanshawe informs him that he wanted it this way — that, indeed, he had arranged it —, the shadow of the invisible powerful rival still looms over the narrator's happiness, who will not be able to find peace of mind until he will have found Fanshawe. In his study of the Laius motif in Graham Greene, Pierloot relates the aggressive fantasy to the time of life at which the man feels jealous of the younger generation. He sees it as a reaction to involution. It seems to me that in Auster's case this fantasy must have another source:

the «bad», unloyal son experiencing feelings of guilt and fear of the father's revenge.

When we read Auster's novels with a psychoanalytically informed «third eye» it strikes us that his novels rather explicitly and consciously tell the story of the search for the father, but that the figure of the mother seems to be more or less absent. Of course, as every psychoanalyst can tell us, there must also be rage against the mother, but apparently it is warded off, represented only on the symbolic level. The wish to return to the mother is symbolized, for instance, in the leitmotif of the closed or locked room. The aggression against the mother may be hidden in the recurring theme of the man who leaves his wife and family (Quinn [in CG], Fanshawe [in LR], Nashe [in MC]), this being also a form of undoing and late revenge. The loneliness of the abandoned child seems to be disavowed by the self-inflicted solitude of the protagonist.

We can conclude that Paul Auster's oeuvre consists of a world of fathers and sons for whom the «paternal hunger» and the «hunger for stories» tend to coincide. The writer does not tire of emphasizing the contingency and nothingness of our world, but his literary representation of this world is held together by networks of references, analogies, repetitions and synchronistic events. As is so often the case, the «meaningless» and accidental surface structure of the story contrasts with a high degree of consistency in motifs, images and themes in the deep structure. There is a magical suggestion of connectedness in the many coincidences, unexpected turns of fate, etc.

His theme is always, in his own words «the curse of the absent father» (IS, 117). One of the more subconscious motives is without doubt to get in touch with the absent father — or at least with the early fantasies about the father — through and by writing, so as to both finally take leave of him as to finally reach him, in the hope that one day that sentence from Pinocchio may come true, which is quoted in *The Book of Memory* (IS, 131) and which signals the end of the quest for the father: «Oh, Father, dear Father! Have I found you at last? Now I shall never, never leave you again!»

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 243-249

The Anatomy of a Hobby-Horse: Memory and the Imagination in the Late Work of John Hawkes

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«... every movement will reduce to an image of a forgotten experience...»
Djuna Barnes, *Nightwood*

«Surface is illusion but so is depth»
David Hockney

Like painters who often declare — maliciously or not — that they «don't know» what their images represent, John Hawkes refers to the «germs» of his fiction as «a series of *pictures* that literally and actually do come to mind». He stresses the impossibility of assigning them restrictive meaning («I don't know what they mean, but I *feel* and *know* that *they have meaning*»). Yet in talking about these initiatory mental images, he seems to deny their possible connection to memory («I've never seen them before», Hawkes 1966, 452), as though, even if recollected, their mere emergence to surface would imply an act of imagination.

This allegedly conflictual relation between memory and imagination that comes up in all of Hawkes's fiction highlights aspects of the relation between conscious and unconscious work in the creative process. At the beginning of his career John Hawkes constantly emphasized the innovative character of his fiction denying any implication of autobiographical material. On a few occasions however he mentions the importance of certain clusters of images from his early childhood and formative years:

> My earliest pertinent recollections are of childhood and of lying awake wheezing in my nightly asthma attacks and listening to the thumping and snorting of the horses in the riding stable that adjoined our yard...

or:

> I think that my writing has always dependend in one way or another on those

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first configurations of suffocation, faint stirrings of desire, and horses (Hawkes 1984, 51).

Though belonging to a wider range of complex sensations, these memories are, like childhood memories and dream memories in general, basically related to visual images that sustain the creative potential of child perception. In 1979, in an interview with Patrick O'Donnell, Hawkes elaborates at length on some of these images and on their role in the creative process. In 1985, six years after the O'Donnell interview (significantly entitled «Life and Art»), *Adventures in the Alaskan Skin Trade* came out. This novel, narrated by a woman who runs a whorehouse in Juneau (the town of Hawkes's formative years), is an uncanny «bildungsroman» on which the writer comments: «it is intended to be as autobiographical as I can make it». The narrative itself is indeed much unlikely to be autobiographical, yet the «stage», «scenery» and «characters» are in part remembered from Hawkes's autobiographical narrative as he has presented it in several interviews. What strikes the eye when facing the O'Donnell interview with the novel are minute visual details reproduced as «memory pictures» in the novel (the father's camel's-hair coat, the Stutz-Berliz car, the rich desolation of the Alaskan rainy landscape, the Indian with an artificial leg). The interview actually starts from the implicit idea of «photographic memory»[1] and has at its center the image of the horse:

> My father's parents were Irish. Only a year before my father died, he and I went back to Ireland for a week to look at the old homestead. *I had seen this place in photographs from my earliest childhood.* It was a ruin on top of a high hill... The old gates in the photograph are still there. *In the photograph is a carriage being pulled by a horse.* (Hawkes 1979, 107)

The journey is reversible. Memories are stored like photographs (pictures taken by the conscious eye, as it were, and developed by the unconscious), yet these same photographs are also (as in this case) a way of mediating the access to a reality inaccesible but through the agency of memory.

The subtle chemical transformations that its processing involve make of photography a depositary of a tremendous physical energy. Equally tremendous psychical energy is concentrated in these images stored in memory. An extremely rich series of symbolic referents might also be associated with the horse childhood memory turned into a powerful source for fiction. However, reading the recurrence of this image in Hawkes's novels through any of these symbolic filters, would be misleading, depriving the image of its extremely powerful energy: one that concentrates the psychic conflicts and sensual experiences related to childhood. As made visible by the writer in his fiction and in his various statements, this image represents the earliest most intense tensions and aesthetic experiences concentrated in a form and as a form it is endowed with the controlling sense necessary to articulate such an impalpable concept as the imagination.

Whatever it screens, the horse image reemerges in Hawkes's fiction as a kind of union pattern connecting his earliest novels to his latest: the horse statue in *The Cannibal* (1949), the mythic race horse in *The Lime Twig* (1961), the horse participating to an initiation ritual in *Virginie. Her Two Lives* (1982). His latest novel, *Whistlejacket* (1988), presents the reader with two versions of the motif. The «complete» version is the painting that gives the name of the novel, a masterpiece of 18th-century English painter George Stubbs

[1] We should remember that the discovery of photography and that of psychoanalysis were almost contemporary and that both represent basic premises in the 20th century epistemic paradigm. Among the earliest references to the relation between photography and memory/unconscious cf. Hervey de Saint Denis, *Les Rêves et les moyens de les diriger*, Paris: Amyot, 1867; Henri Bergson, *Matière et mémoire. Essai sur la relation du corps à l'esprit* (1896), Paris: PUF, 1990.

representing the powerful life-size image of a «marvelously hostile» horse in rearing stance. Though in its force and ambiguity comparable to Moby-Dick, the image used by Hawkes in his novel has a quite different function: to reveal «the shaping powers of consciousness» in the use of inner life material. The «split» version of that childhood memory is an enormous network of horse imagery, from «live» and fatal horses (who kill their masters) and several of their incarnations in photographs to miniature entries as decorative objects, like that of two fighting stallions on a sea-foam pipe. This latter category, which might seem the most elaborate and artificially constructed aspect of the novel, appears in the writer's perception of own his work as the one that escapes conscious control:

> perhaps the most interesting aspect of this novel, for me, is all those moments when we find the presence of the horse through no conscious effort of mine, so that even now I'm not aware of all of them (Hawkes 1991, 457)

The novel is structured on a double time level. There is the contemporary time level narrated by the photographer involved in the love and crime stories on the Steepleton domain, whose adopted member of the family he is. And there is the second time level, the central section of the three-part novel, located in 18th-century England. This part reconstitutes the making of the «Whistlejacket» canvas and at the same time it appears as a foreshortened recreation of its author's life and method of work. Its function within the novel is to ensure a certain background of unity and continuity to the contemporary «broken-objective» scene.

This section of the novel abounds in the kind of «photographic memories» that occur in *Adventures in the Alaskan Skin Trade*. They refer to images such as the Whistlejacket canvas, but also to other works of George Stubbs (the painting of the horse-back riding couple of John and Sophia Nelthrope being the most exemplary), as well as to physical descriptions of the painter. They also refer to discoursive memories, as for instance the spectacular stories of the dissections Stubbs used to perform or a legendary episode of Whitlejacket's — the horse — revolt in front of its painted double. In some cases actual «snapshots» from Stubbs's *Anatomy of the Horse* (1766) render a particular incantatory tone to the prose writing. The quotations (in italics in the text) are fragmentary, traces of memory as it were used to create a «reality effect».

As is most often the case with his novels that use historical material, Hawkes maintains not to have done extensive research for «The Horse Painter» section. His «secondary source» was the Stubbs Tate Gallery Catalogue (1976), itself a collection of «photographic reproductions» of the original paintings and texts concerning Stubbs's life. Asked if he had worked with actual pictures on his writing table — as, for instance, Claude Simon does, Hawkes answers:

> Upon a moment's reflection and trying to be honest — no easy task! — many of the images, rooms etc in WHISTLEJACKET have their genesis in memory, which is generally not the case in my work. But these too have been extensively transformed, *or came to me transformed, spontaneously — so that I've never worked to merely fictionalize a memory...* (Hawkes 1991, 464)

If not limited to a mere «reality test», a confrontation of the text with its sources would be interesting as a *revelation* of processes of deformation, condensation, displacement that occur in the intercourse between memory and the imagination. Yet such a confrontation would also disclose amazing occurences of «photographic memory». Details from the Grand Salon — an important space center in the novel — appear at different moments in the two narratives. They correspond to an actual photograph of the Whistlejacket Room at Wentworth Woodhouse, Yorkshire, showing another painting exposed on the wall facing that of the horse portrait. That painting is made functional within the narrative through an allegoric interpretation of the image that reveals a love/betrayal intrigue. Several pages later, Hawkes amuses himself with changing that painting, or is it a mere unconscious

displacement? This «de-framing» intervenes at an important moment in the plot and shows something that has to be concealed (Alex's plotting of her husband's «accidental» death).

These correspondences function in the creative process as guide marks for the imaginary development. They might give gratification to the reader willing to find more «reality» in a fictional world inhabited by artifice to saturation. But most of all it gives extreme pleasure to the writer to foil the reader's secret desire to escape from the fictional world for more solid ground. He thus ensnares him in the imaginary world and urges him to participate, imagine, think. The author also seems to take pleasure in frustrating the plot of the psychoanalytic critic's unswerving willingness to pinpoint the «obsession» and assign it specific causes. For, like the dreams, these «photographic memories» are turned — consciously or unconsciously, the border would be difficult to trace — into fictional conventions and therefore into functional formal elements. Hawkes uses historical material in *Whistlejacket* in much a similar way to his use of autobiographic material in *Adventures in the Alaskan Skin Trade* (where, as he says, «I deliberately took the truth from historical fact, or presented distoritions as if they were fact», Hawkes 1991, 470). He actually acknowledges this conscious use of dreams in his fiction locating it around the writing of *The Blood Oranges* (1971):

> I knew I was going to write three kinds of dreams. One kind would be actual dreams of my own. Another would be invented dreams, and a third would be episodes from my life that could phrase as dreams.

and he insists on both the game value of this method as well as on its screen value:

> It gave me an odd, curious pleasure to know that there was a wealth of material on creativiy in these dreams, but that no one would ever be able to know which dreams were mine (Hawkes 1979, 116)

Surprising enough for a writer who avoids any personal implication in his fiction, for the cover of the French version of *Adventures in the Alaskan Skin Trade* Hawkes has given a photograph of his mother taken on a boat in Alaska. And yet it is probably not that surprising.

When he wrote *Adventures in the Alaskan Skin Trade*, his twelfth novel, Hawkes was 56. Both his parents were dead at that time. He had started writing fiction in the explosive post-war period and enjoyed critical success in the '7Os along with other «new fiction» writers. The outspoken polemic statements of the emerging young writer are to be interpreted in that particular context. Each of Hawkes's novels is a long journey into the interior. Imagination and its corrolary, memory, make up the frame of reference for psychic investigation. Repetitive images, union patterns appear as mnemic elements guiding the inner journey. Cannibalizing life experience and writing experience images, details, scraps of memories make their progress from one book to another. What happened in the lapse of 3O years of fiction writing is not a reconciliation with the initial avant-garde stands but probably more of an integration of the past and a more moderate view, coming from a deeper understanding of life, a view that permeates the rhythm and mood of *Adventures in the Alaskan Skin Trade.*

This autobiography in disguise came out almost 10 years after *Travesty* (1976), where Hawkes declares to have wanted to create «an artist as consciously undertaking to render most intensely the unimaginable» (Hawkes 1979, 119). That short and disturbing fiction was followed by another version of the artist: the artist without consciousness embodied in Konrad Vost, the main figure of *The Passion Artist* (1979), a novel where, incidentally, he also for the first time creates powerful female characters. The writing of *Travesty* was followed by a long period of depression. Though not outspokenly autobiographical, in both novels Hawkes feels to have come «closest to dangerous personal involvement». He sees both works of fiction as coming out of «a real desperation in questioning my own

imagination — whether I had used it up». And, in a mirror-construction typical to his thinking he replies to that negative thought: «Of course I don't believe that; intellectually, the imagination could not be used up... because the imagination is infinite, it makes up its own materials». (Hawkes 1979, 117)

If the author thought of *Travesty* as an essay on the imagination, *The Passion Artist* might be considered an essay on memory. As exposed from the perspective of Konrad Vost, Hawkes's «theory of memory» reads as a figurative juxtaposition of two conflicting views: (1) (the common passive view) memory is a *storehouse*; (2) (the most challenging active view) memory is *a railway terminal*:

> ... memory was *an infinitely expanding structure of events* recollected from life, events that had been imagined, imaginary events that had been recollected, dreams that had been recollected, recomposed, dreamt once again, remembered. Yes, he told himself, *the storehouse of memory* was like *a railway terminal* for trains of unlimited destinations. (52)

Hawkes's method of «related and corresponding event, recurring image and recurring action» appears as a constant challenge to the «passive» view of memory. As «an infinitely expanding structure» memory is not a «storehouse» of definite referents, well ranged and neatly layered. It is not, as George Edelman has shown, «a replicative recall of stored psychical descriptions, but an imaginative act, a form of dynamic recategorization» (Edelman, 24).

Published in 1979, *The Passion Artist* represents a maturating of images and themes. «The invisible tracks» of memory are actualized in a passage of the novel where Vost — on a train — literally falls unconsicous. «These rails», comments Hawkes, «come straight from *The Cannibal*, first book». He also considers Vost as an adult version of the child in that first book that finishes with the child being metamorphosed into a fox and literally cannibalized. If an author's work can be seen as a continuum, this is in great part due to specific memory patterns that structure life experience and writing experience, and, most often, the latter as a part of the former. The mnemic patterns governing the process of recall participate in the structuring of the imagination. Preventing thematic obsessions from veering into the obsessional *per se* these repetitions account for how much the writer relies on the organizing powers of the inner life, undoubtedly within the context of conscious control. In a recent interview Hawkes provides a splendid perception of this rather imperceptible process:

> ... finally, my conscious love of language may be what saves my work from being merely obsessional, or repetitious or formless. Words and images come to the mind spontaneously, yet this unbidden presence contains all sorts of possibilities of form and structure, and these begin to persuade the consciousness toward direction and shape, and to submit to the shaping powers of consciousness. (Hawkes 1991, 455)

Several other parameters relate memory to the imagination and define Hawkes's vision as a nexus of complementary forces:

1. *the truth/fiction, reality/fantasy ambiguous status of memory*, defined, like the passive/active view, as opposites coexisting on the same level. Compare, for instance, two of Hawkes's statements during one interview:

> I am interested in the creative process, and anything I can say about my life or *memories — which are probably fictions* — that relates to the creative process must surely be of value... (Hawkes 1991, 454)

versus

> a psychiatrist I once new claimed that even memory is fiction ... To so threaten distinctions is terrifying... (Hawkes 1991, 467).

Far from being mere contradictions, the two statements bear evidence of the difficulty in conferring clear-cut distinctions to a complex process whose functioning (despite the huge advances of neurobiology) we can only infer. The shifting ground where these contradictions meet is fertile ground for the creative writer.

2. *a rebuff of memory coexisting with the anxiety for the loss of memory* (cf. Grand Father Van Fleet in *Whistlejacket*, the refrain of the anonymous narrator in *Travesty*, «do you remember?» a.s.o.). This attitude is related to the «ultimate serious threat and danger» that most of his characters, though mocking, fear: loss of creative power (as either sexual or creative sterility). The same danger naturally threatens the imagination whose obverse is the Grand Blank («annihilation is a twin to the imagination»). The «theory of the imagination» as presented by the narrator in *Travesty* maintains precisely the function of the imagination as defence against the void, against annihilation, against death («my theory tells us that ours is the power to invent the very world we are quitting», 127). Though related to a Romantic ideal, this theory assures a rather down-to-earth function of psychic survival.

3. *memory as a hindrance to the imagination.* With his capacity of storing every sensation and every event, Konrad Vost incarnates a utopia of the mind. This is his greatest quality and misfortune. For being unable to forget, Vost is deprived of imagination. It is precisely this handicap Hawkes refers to when he says that «imagination can be hampered, maimed, inhibited by memory», echoing the preference the narrator in *Travesty* states for imagined life over remembered life (although most of his monologue is made up of memories). As a «prior life», memory has to be bracketed, wiped out, so that it can cathect that energy necessary for the creation of a coherent world made up of odds and ends (Virginie, for instance, watches with great satisfaction the burning up of her diary, so that she can be ready for the initiation to other...more imaginary...worlds: «Mine is an impossible story. My journal burns. My body burns», 1).

Isn't it then surprising how this willing suspension of memory results at times in an extremely keen, photographic rendering of detail? While consciously plotting against memory so as to invoke the powers to «create something out of nothing», the writer delievers himself to his own unconscious, where the borderlines between memory and imagination are blurred. It is precisely this conscious control that allows for the concentration of the energy that brings to light the heart of darkness. As in the case of screen memories, this bracketing of memory represents a forgetting of far deeper significance than the act of recalling itself. Yet it does so not in an overprotective impulse but with the desire to create the illusion of unbridling the self of the burden of the past, an illusion that renders memory accessible (and bearable) in a formative and creative way. The psychic material is shaped with the help of what in self-ironic undertones Hawkes calls «my method of cruel detachment» (1979, 120). Dispassionately he thus approches George Stubbs whose desire to know the «stuff» life is made of would prompt him to endless hours of minute and painstaking dissection. Both an artist and an artisan (his *Anatomy of the Horse* was equally praised for its scientific and artistic values), Stubbs was performing an operation illegal at that time. The horse was probably for him as much an object of fascination as a model for the investigation of the human body and psyche, each in its own way inaccessible... like the unconscious and the imagination.

«The Horse Painter» story within *Whistlejacket* represents a historical backdrop necessary to the structuration of the fictional world. It also stands as a perfect case of literary transference. In the pages that show Stubbs at work (dissecting, drawing, painting) the reader discovers an allegory of Hawkes's own method. Like Stubbs he has to chop off his horse, to expose the entrails of a doe, to undo the tapestry of memoy in order to see «beneath the skin to the flesh and the bone of the horse.» And yet this «cruelty» unscreens a Conradian sense of compassion for the weak, the vulnerable. It also reveals curiosity and love for the mystery of life in its most spectacular and decaying forms. From his earliest novels

Hawkes used to speek of psychic concepts in terms of the body («this double anatomy, this schizophrenic flesh», *Second Skin*, 33). The systematic dissection and re-membering of the body in *Whistlejacket* (and, through the functional use of photography, of the body of the novel itself) epitomizes this attitude and the mental pictures it is associated with. Incidentally, some 25 years before the «encounter» with Stubbs, Hawkes was explaining his notion of «fictional compassion» in terms anticipating the poetic use of anatomy in *Whistlejacket*:

> I think that unless the fiction writer and the reader too can somehow discover before him that last filthy scrap or *ligament of human flesh, substance, blood, tissue* and somehow be drawn to it no matter how filthy or ugly, then we are not really functioning successfully either as people or as writers (Hawkes 1966).

Viewed sometimes as an extremely sophisticated artificial construction, the renewed continuity in Hawkes's late work invites to such a profoundly humane disposition. Supported by self-inflicted irony it pictures the unimaginable in full pursuit of the unforgettable.

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 251-257

The Secret of Telemaque

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Secrets are everywhere when a spiritual, even mystical writer begins to create a novel. The book whose secrets — mystical or not — I would like to consider here, was during the eighteenth century the most read literary work in western Europe, *Télémaque*, an educational novel written about 1695 for the crown prince of France by his tutor François de Fénelon. For rulers and politicians this «school for princes» became a constant source of inspiration. Not only did Frederick of Prussia find many ideas for his *Anti-Machiavelli* in *Télémaque*, Louis XIV had numerous maxims from the book printed on his own presses. For Robespierre, Fénelon was an utopian pre-revolutinary hero.

However the success of the book was above all, a literary one. Before Pamela, Werther, and Julie brought a world of tears and longing to the reading public, *Télémaque* had been an important literary point of reference for them. Goethe admired the book; Rousseau adored it, and even Sade used to illustrate it in his theories. Balzac still refers to it in the opening of his educational novel *Le père Goriot*. Before *Télémaque* only the Bible had appeared in so many printings and translations within such a short period. In importance and influence the book may be compared in our days to Proust's *Recherche*, or to Joyce's *Ulysses*.

When *Télémaque* first appeared, the scandal it aroused also contributed, at least initially, to its success. A month before Fénelon had been condemned by both the pope and the king for a treaty on mystical life, his Explanation of the Maxims of the Saints on the *Inner Life*. This book had been labelled «quietistic», a development that afterwards would be seen as the end of toleration of mystical publications in the Catholic world.

For some three years, from 1697 to 1699, the trial raged around Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambrai. It was reported and discussed in papers and pamphlets throughout Europe, a situation not unlike the Dreyfus affair two centuries later. Fénelon became a highly controversial figure. Many saw him as the victim of absolutism in both the church and the state. Naturally these circumstances affected the reactions to *Télémaque*. The philosophers of the Enlightenment considered Fénelon a hero. Only after the Romantic period was the Archbishop of Cambrai no longer a subject of debate, although in the French Catholic world the conflict between the Fénelon followers and those of his arch-rival Bossuet still simmers.

With these two works — *Explanation of the Maxims of the Saints* and *Télémaque* — Fénelon takes a central place in the history of culture and religion not only in France, but in all of Europe. After a period of relative neglect, *Télémaque* is now once again receiving

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more attention. This year a new edition will appear in the Pléiades series. Since the book's publication, our perceptions have been modified by so many developments inconceivable to the author and his contemporaries, that it is stimulating to take another look at this book, and at its secrets.

About the content of *Télémaque* I shall be brief. The book is an educational treatise cast in the form of a travel narrative. Fénelon wrote it for his pupil, the Duke of Burgundy, grandson of Louis XIV, and heir to the French throne. Though he remained true to his own vision, the author borrowed many facets of his book from Homer, and perhaps even more from Virgil. However, whereas Homer and Virgil had written about Ulysses, Fénelon narrated the adventures and travels of the son of Ulysses, Telemachus. The young man visits various lands and islands in the Meditteranean before finding in the second half of the book, southern Italy. That is Fénelon's Utopia, the Salento of King Idomeneus.

Telemachus is searching for his father Ulysses, therefore his own identity. The future king of France, Fénelon's pupil, was going through the same process. Telemachus is accompanied through thick and thin by Mentor, his tutor, whose name, originally from Homer's Odessey, has become, thanks to Fénelon, a standard noun in many modern languages. Not only Telemachus, but many other figures in the book such as King Idomeneus, later the central figure in Mozart's opera *Idomeneo*, confront the prince with quandaries. How shall he be able to deal with all the affairs of state in war or peace? How shall he recognize which councillors are good, which are bad? And one particular problem: how will he, the future king, be able to control his passions, constrain those aspects of his character that do not suit his status?

Just like Ulysses, Telemachus moves in a world inhabited by divine beings, some benign, some hostile. Neptune guarantees dangers at sea, just as Venus represents the «dangerous» woman. Telemachus is unaware, however, that his best friend and surrogate father, Mentor, is the goddess Minerva disguised.

It becomes obvious that the psychologically curious reader has much food for thought here. But before we investigate the most interesting «secret of *Télémaque*» we may consider briefly three other levels on which secrecy is presented here:

1. secret and secrecy in general as major themes in the entire book
2. the secrets that Fénelon's contemporaries perceived in the text of this controversial novel.
3. the hidden spiritual significance that the priest Fénelon gives to these worldly parables.

Only when these consciously secret aspects of *Télémaque* are clarified, can we try to search for the unconscious secret that lies at the heart of this famous book.

THE SECRET IN *TELEMAQUE*

Fénelon maintains that keeping a secret is one of the highest virtues a good monarch can possess. In Fénelon's version of the myth, when Ulysses, bound for the Trojan War, bids farewell to his son, he makes a statement that is not to be found in Homer:

> «Oh, my son, may my enemies destroy you before the eyes of your mother and myself, if you ever become corrupt and abandon virtue».

Virtue is defined later as

> «being just, honest, and capable of keeping a secret» (104).[1]

[1] The numbers between parentheses refer to the *Télémaque* edition in the Garnier-Flammarion collection, made by Jeanne-Lydie Goré in 1968.

Which secret is being referred to here? That we do not know. But we do know, more clearly than Homer or even Fénelon, that the feeling for secrecy and keeping secrets originates in experiences a child has with his parents and their sexuality. Here this seems doubly true. Telemachus has a wily, but absent father, and his mother is busy resisting numerous suitors: a messy situation!

Mentor does not let any chance go by to remind his disciple of the necessity of keeping a secret, especially relevant for a king. This theme is an obsession for him and for the author. Therefore it is significant that Telemachus, who needs leadership and guidance in most instances, is in this sense, very strong. Where Telemachus excels, others fail, like Nestor and Philoctetus, whose carelessness brings a whole army in danger.

Like Ulysses, Telemachus is eventually found worthy to descend to the Underworld, the realm of secrets. Without the company of Mentor, Telemachus is introduced to the secrets of life and death by Minos. From him the young prince learns many interesting details about the fate of the dead, and particularly of dead rulers. However, the most important secret Minos reveals to him is in this rhetoric question:

> «doesn't one owe his life more to the gods than to his natural father?» (391).

Fénelon's total omission of the mother-figure was «corrected» by a copyist in later editions, but could be interpreted as an almost undisguised rejection of sexuality, and especially of the role women play therein?

THE SECRET OF THE CONTEMPORARIES

To penetrate the secrets of this book, concerned with the challenges of kingship, numerous symbols and codes were detected by Fénelon's contemporaries. Louis XIV himself declared that his regime had been brought into discredit by *Télémaque*. Fénelon thought very differently. Aside from the fact that his book was never intended for publication (only through the indiscretion of a copyist did a publisher gain access to the manuscript) it is clear that the author never intended references to any specific person. An exception is Telemachus himself, depicted as a proud and difficult prince. After all Fénelon stated that

> «kings should be addressed in private by persons who can speak freely and lack ambition» (265).

In this connection another famous text by Fénelon may be recalled, his Letter to Louis XIV which was apparently read only by the intermediary, Madame de Maintenon. In this idealistic, somewhat naive letter Fénelon draws his king's attention to all sorts of errors in government. Just like his grandchild, Louis XIV was «born with an honest and honourable heart». But after a promising beginning to his reign, his longing for honours and fame, the unjustified wars, and his prodigality had made France into a «giant hospital». The king had become not only an object of hate in France, but in all of Europe.

Télémaque was written in the same tone as that well intentioned letter. This time Fénelon certainly did not want to make any direct criticism. In his position that would have been not only unseemly, but foolhardy. However Fénelon made one considerable mistake, in writing that the mother of Telemachus was responsible for the prince's shortcomings. Here, the link with the — deceased — mother of the Duke of Burgundy, Marie-Anne de Bavière, was too clear. However it was impossible for the reader not to draw comparisons with the contemporary reality when reading about the qualities of Fénelons monarch. The contradiction between the ideals held up to his disciple and the behaviour of his grandfather, the king, was more than conspicuous. In the book the numerous failings of Idomeneus were also applicable to Louis XIV. Did this monarch not, like Idomeneus, seem «to be corrupted

to the roots of his heart by power» (461)? And did he not resemble also another king in *Télémaque*, Sesostris of Egypt, who had to accept a modest existence in the Underworld after a life of extraordinary indulgence? It was understandable that the Sun King's subjects found hidden references in *Télémaque* that the author had never consciously intended. One vivid example is the evil queen Astarbe who, in the eyes of ill-thinking readers, could represent Madame de Maintenon, the king's overweening, scheming spouse.

Fénelon certainly regretted all this speculation. For him the real secret of the book, obvious only to the truly perceptive reader, existed at another level, namely, that of the young prince's inner life. Many of the principles in *Télémaque* can be traced back to the — forbidden — Explanation of the Maxims of the Saints. Fortunately for the writer, this fact remained unnoticed by practically all the readers of the book.

THE SECRET ACCORDING TO FENELON

Télémaque was a startlingly new model of education for monarchs. Bossuet, for example, in his earlier writings for the crown prince's father, had always emphasized the objective aspects of government: legislation, jurisprudence, increase in prosperity and population etc. Fénelon was primarily concerned with psychological and moral implications of the monarch's role and presented political or social questions always in that light. In Fénelon's theological writings, the same tendency is evident. The author defines «pure love», that is total selflessness, as man's — and as a king's — highest spiritual goal.

For Fénelon human nature when not directed to such spiritual goals, is worth little, perhaps nothing. Human nature should always yield to that which is divine. And according to him, both divine and human nature are determined by will. Fénelon terms this total surrender of human will to divine will «perfection» or «amour pur». Whatever remains of «nature» or individual will, conflicts in feelings and thoughts, can be ignored. The believer must not be concerned with such matters. He must give himself totally to God. In this sense passivity and repression become the highest expression of will. This belief, which Fénelon shared with Madame Guyon, determined his entire life and output. However, theologians found this radical attitude, that they termed «quietism», unacceptible, especially in the contradiction between man's aspiration to happiness and the demands of total unselfishness.

In *Télémaque*, most of the maxims Mentor teaches his pupil derive from «pure love», from the *Explanation of the Maxims of the Saints*. Telemachus' dependence on Mentor is a consequence or an expression of this «pure love». The young prince is not brought up to be self-sufficient. All his endeavours are evalueted by Mentor, the «true father» who will praise or criticize his deeds, and instruct his «son» in good and evil.

«Pure love» is presented only once in this fiction. One of the first encounters that Telemachus has in the Underworld is with a philosopher who has lived honourably but has forsaken the gods and pure love. He credits only himself for his achievements. There in the land of truth, he finally sees his nature, his nothingness, and that becomes his torment. Fénelon paints here a sort of «huis clos» avant la lettre, a portrait of the person who is doomed to the other soul in himself, to pride, to self-love.

Here we touch the essence of Fénelon's thoughts and feelings. Like Don Quixote he is the nobleman for whom life's goals are magnanimity and selflessness. But this mission is not humanitarian but directed towards the Divine. It can inspire man to acts of will that raise him above his base nature, eroded by evil and greed. Only such endeavours render life worthwhile. Fénelon's mystical ideas take the form of a symbiosis of man and the divine. The problematic consequence of this process is that man does not develop any self-sufficiency. In the traditional, Aristotelian teachings of Thomas of Aquinas, the Divine is a grace which cures and enhances human nature, which also possesses a considerable

degree of self sufficiency. Fénelon's ideal is different: a blending of human nature with the divine so intense in its longing and experience, that one cannot speak of a dichotomy, but more of a total synthesis with the divine. This unity, this «pure love», is accompanied by the annihilation of all that does not serve the synthesis. In this connection, Fénelon often refers to «self-destruction», so attractive to those mystically inclined.

These mystical ideals are at times expressed in symbols and hyperbole that is like the language of a lover. The psychologically trained reader recognizes here regressive phenomena such as yearning for the mother, the source, the symbiotic state. If such behaviour is consequently pursued, the wisdom of the father — and the lessons of King Oedipus — are perverted. Normally, the father has to take us away from the mother, bringing us up to be independent. In the case of regression, one uses the father's presence to get closer to the mother.

In this book, religion-as-regression probably explains why Fénelon imitated Homer and allowed gods and humans to mingle so freely. Such a literary choice would not have aroused any controversy in the Renaissance or first half of the seventeenth century. But many of Fénelon's contemporaries found his approach not only dated, but scandalous. How could a Catholic priest in 1700 include the heathen world of gods and goddesses in the teachings of the Church? Perhaps the answer was that Fénelon had found in this «Telemachus in Wonderland» a fine metaphor for his ideal of the «pure love». His spiritual aspirations as tutor could in this way penetrate almost imperceptibly the heart of the royal pupil.

In *Télémaque* the relationship between teacher and disciple is based on steadily growing intimacy rather than increasing distance. [This theologians would perhaps describe as more «immanent» than «transcendent»]. Such an education Fénelon saw as grace. The disciple is utterly incapable of breaking away from the master. He does not develop a personality, but begins to resemble the master more and more Fénelon saw the growing resemblance of Telemachus to Mentor as an achievement. How different is the manner in which Homer's Athena addresses Telemachus. There both educator and pupil retain their identities:

> «Telemachus, you must forget your diffidence: [...] Go straight up to Nestor [...] you yourself must approach him if you want the truth from his lips [...] Where your native wit fails, heaven will inspire you» (Odyssey, III, 25-30).

In Fénelon we find no «native wit». Instead Telemachus will be constantly reminded that

> «all the honour he receives and does not deserve should be directed to Mentor» (368).

THE SECRET OF TELEMAQUE

Despite all that longing for symbiosis, for return to the maternal world, we should not forget that the principal theme of Fénelon's book is represented by the father figure, Mentor. The prince refers to Mentor as his true father, and throughout the whole book many other surrogate fathers appear.

In earlier studies of *Télémaque* I have indicated how negatively Fénelon portrayed the mother figure, and in her wake, practically all other female characters. This is especially noticeable in relation to Penelope, mother of Telemachus, and Calypso, the half-divine temptress. Homer portrays them much more sympathetically. Incidentally it is interesting to note that Calypso's name, clearly an evocation of «the secret», is the very first word of the book, a reference to the Greek «Kalupto» meaning «to hide away». Another recurring theme is the obsessional fear of being found feminine exhibited by both Mentor and Telemachus. And what of the two young girls with whom Telemachus falls in love? For a close-reader of the text they are revealed as being not particularly interesting for the author, although

these passages of the book were as popular for many generations as the Biblical story of the chaste Susanna. To the seductive Eucharis, Fénelon has Telemachus say «Oh Eucharis, if Mentor leaves me, I have only you» (181).

In contradiction to much of what has been said about this book, the infrequent lyrical passages deal almost exclusively with Mentor and the other surrogate fathers. Like Homer, Fénelon enjoys expounding the attractions of various youths, who usually die during the narrative, or are already dead. He compares them with a selection of glorious young men like Achilles, Ganymed, Adonis, Atys, Alcibiades. All these facts may suggest that one of the secrets of the book is that the sexual desire in the text — not in the story told — is homosexually inspired.

But that conclusion is certainly not the most significant. Most of those men who die so young are princes who give their lives on the battlefield, and are deeply mourned by their fathers and tutors. However throughout *Télémaque* there is an even more heart-rending secret to be perceived; an obsession with situations where a son is sacrificed by his father. King Idomeneus of Salento, the third most important character in *Télémaque*, is banished from Crete because, just like Agamemnon had done with his daughter, he has sacrificed his son to the gods. Fénelon relates the saga in great detail and later reminds the reader more than once of this awful deed. Several other young princes suffer the same fate, and in his childhood, Telemachus himself barely escapes such a death: Fénelon relates in his *Dialogues des morts* (no. 5) how, to avoid fighting in the Trojan War, Ulysses pretends that he has gone insane. Like a madman, swinging a plough-share, he rages through the fields where little Telemachus is playing. This image of a life-threatening plough-share recurs throughout the book. And it is significant that both the son of Idomeneus and Telemachus urge their fathers to commit this grisly act. Telemachus expresses this to Mentor when he cries:

> «Oh, my true father, save me from so much evil! Release me from myself! Give me death!» (183).

Theologians may see a religious expression in such an outburst (though Fénelon hardly ever refers to the sacrifical death of Christ in his large spiritual oeuvre), but psychologists must seek other interpretations. Lurking behind the desire for symbiosis with the Mother we find here the desire for death.

Fénelon was also intrigued by the reverse situation, where the son kills the father, but he probably found these Oedipal fantasies so threatening that he rejected them. A striking example of this rejection seems to occur, when the author originally had the Oedipus legend depicted on the shield of Telemachus, but later chose another subject. Interestingly enough, in that original Oedipus version — which can now be read in a footnote — the emphasis is not on the patricide but on the mother's incestuous marriage.

However this substitution probably occured because five books later, when Telemachus finally meets his father Ulysses, disguised as the mysterious foreigner Cleomenes, Fénelon relates about this so-called Cleomenes another unusual version of the Oedipus myth, going to great lengths to evade the tragic weight of it: according to an oracle Cleomenes will become king if he leaves his fatherland, but if he remains, the defied gods will bring plague to the city. Exiled by his parents, Cleomenes wanders around the world but he is confident he shall eventually solve his quandary with a cunning scheme. The prophecy will be fulfilled; Cleomenes asks to be chosen as king in some remote land, and afterwards may return home (498).

Apparently one cannot write such a weak version of a potent story without retribution. Fénelon made a slip that despite his intentions, reveals the tragedy of the original Oedipus myth. The writer seems to forget that the name Cleomenes, the pseudonym for Ulysses, is given to another figure some sixty pages earlier in the book. That other Cleomenes is a young warrior who is killed by... Telemachus.

Here we come closest to the secret of Fénelon's book, where both mystical and fictional language have their roots: the inner strife of the author to define his feelings towards the Father and the Mother, intimacy and distance, love and hate. His attitudes, projected in the personages that he created, remain ambiguous and seem to change during the course of the book. Perhaps we can assume that this educational novel, unlike most literary works of its sort, does not strive to achieve harmony, reconciliation or even conflict between the paternal and maternal components in a child's mind. The deepest, and essentially, the only need that seems to emerge here, is that for the mother. We recognize this in the radical ideal of the «pure love», in which we lose our sense of self and return to the source.

Paradoxically this return to the mother — even to death — becomes in Fénelon a search for the father. One could say that the child gives himself, in some sort of homosexual fantasy, totally over to the father. Does not the author behind these warriors or young heroes identify himself with the woman, the mother? Or should we conclude that in the human psyche these sorts of roles are mobile? To the reader who not only wants to understand, but also dares to enter this world, the final secret of *Télémaque* is perhaps evident from the beginning. Mentor, the ideal man and father, is the same person as the goddess Minerva, a remote ideal of woman and mother. In this tortuous combining of father and mother one can see a rejection of what Freud calls the «Urscene». The female wins on nearly all fronts. The parental roles are perverted and all sexuality seems excluded.

Despite all the wise lessons Telemachus receives, a self or a personality, that can only develop with the interaction of both parents in some kind of harmony, is not granted to the protagonist. It is probably inside that paradox that we must detect the secret of mystical-fictional creation in Fénelon's *Télémaque*. It is also the way to penetrating the secret of heart and mind of the Archbishop of Cambrai, who played such an important part in the history of both religion and literature in seventeenth century France and whose very complex personality still intrigues us.

Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 259-265

Stratégies de la communication chez Laclos

MARINA MIZZAU (*)

Le chef-d'ouvre de Laclos, *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, est un texte de psychologie extraordinaire. L'affirmation, toutefois, doit être prise dans son sens littéral, donc limitatif (à l'égard de l'affirmation aussi bien que du roman lui-même). On ne saurait en effet parler, dans le cas de Laclos, de caractères à l'élaboration complexe, de personnages fouillés en profondeur. Vingt ans plus tard chez Constant, comme cent ans plus tôt chez Madame de La Fayette, l'asymétrie du rapport amoureux, l'impossibilité d'aimer et d'être aimé est un drame qui fait l'objet de subtiles enquêtes; Laclos y voit, lui, un paradoxe plaisant en dépit des victimes qu'il fait. Dans l'économie du roman, les passions amoureuses de Madame de Tourvel et de Cécile comptent moins que la passion pour la psychologie de ces passions qui animent Valmont, et surtout la Merteuil. «Ce livre, qui ne parle que de passion, l'ignore presque toute».[1]

Les constructions psychologiques de Laclos sont aussi rigoureuses que des théorèmes, et les mécanismes réglant les relations inter-personnelles des héros sont des machineries qui marchent toujours impeccablement. Si quelque chose ne marche pas, si l'imprévu entre en jeu, nous ne pouvons jamais le savoir directement et en toute certitude: c'est quelque chose qui affleure à travers le non-dit, à travers un silence des personnages ou du narrateur, ou encore par le biais d'une lacune, bien entendu calculée, du récit (une lettre non retrouvée, par exemple).

Dans quel sens alors peut-on parler de «roman psychologique» à propos de cette oeuvre? La psychologie de Laclos a beau s'inspirer de la vie, elle n'en ressemble par moins à une psychologie de laboratoire tant la dimension à laquelle elle se ramène est essentielle et épurée: une fois l'hypothèse formulée, les combinaisons possibles sont mises en oeuvre, les variables isolées, et, en l'absence de toute perturbation due au hasard, c'est-à-dire à quelque bouleversement imprévisible, ou prévisible uniquement à partir de lois plus complexes, l'experience réussit, tout marche à merveille. On ne saurait en dire autant de ce qui se passe dans la vie, ou bien dans d'autres romans ayant envie de voir ce qui arriverait si tout, là aussi, tournait rond, c'est-à-dire si la réalité, comme dans le cas des personnages de Laclos, correspondait à une somme d'événements parfaitement calculables et prévisibles.

Je vais donc relire *Les Liaisons dangereuses* comme un essai de *pragmatique de la communication inter-personnelle*, et plus précisément comme un terrain d'analyse des stratégies de la communication mises en oeuvres par les personnages, aux fins de déterminer (ou de chercher à déterminer) leurs actions réciproques.

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[1] André Malraux, *Préface aux Liaisons dangereuses*, Paris, Gallimard, 1970, p. 8.

Ces stratégies se différencient selon la nature de la relation entretenue par les personnages (il s'agit toujours de relations épistolaires, donc dyadiques). Certaines modalités de la communication sont propres aux dyades asymétriques, d'autres aux dyades symétriques. Je rappelerai ici qu'une dyade est dite asymétrique lorsque l'un des deux partenaires a plus de pouvoir que l'autre (Valmont-Tourvel, Valmont — Cécile, par exemple), et qu'elle est dite symétrique lorsque le pouvoir de chacun de partenaires est équivalent (ce qui est le cas du couple Valmont-Merteuil). D'autres stratégies, enfin, concernent à un autre niveau le rapport entre le narrateur et le lecteur.

1) Les couples asymétriques sont caractérisés par une communication *manipulatrice, ou de séduction*. Dans un rapport de séduction — dont le couple Valmont-Tourvel fournit une figure exemplaire présentant les traits fondamentaux du paradigme[2] — c'est essentiellement à travers la parole qu'un individu tente d'en induire un autre à céder sexuellement; plutôt, et surtout, à desirer le faire et à admettre ce désir.

La parole séductrice est une parole oblique, une parole trompeuse qui ne peut dévoiler ses intentions, rendre ses propres fins manifestes. Séduire en laissant paraître la volonté de séduire serait une attitude contradictoire, parce qu'elle risquerait de manquer son propre but. Le projet, formé par Valmont et la Merteuil, de déterminer le comportement des autres s'appuie sur une théorie du changement qui devance les formulations modernes de la science psychologique: l'initiation au changement produit un état de malaise, lequel à son tour déclenche une résistance à ce même changement. Pour surmonter cet obstacle, il faut donc faire en sorte que l'autre, n'ayant pas conscience d'être subjugué et croyant agir de sa propre initiative, change lui-même sans s'en apercevoir. Les deux passages que je cite[3] concernent la relation entre Valmont et Cécile.

> Je ne sais si je vous ai mandé que depuis quatre ou cinq jours j'ai l'honneur d'être sa confidente. Vous devinez bien que d'abord j'ai fait la sévère: mais aussitôt que je me suis aperçue qu'elle croyait m'avoir convaincue par ses mauvaises raisons, j'ai eu l'air de les prendre pour bonnes; et elle est intimement persuadée qu'elle doit ce succès à son éloquence. (Lettre XXXVIII, La Marquise de Merteuil au Vicomte de Vamont)
> (...) et paraissant entrer ainsi dans les vues de la petite personne, je l'ai décidée à donner un rendez-vous à Danceny. (Lettre LI, La Marquise de Merteuil au Vicomte de Valmont)

Les fins du séducteur doivent être déguisées; mais il faut aussi que, une fois l'action parvenue à un certain point, la personne séduite comprenne ce qui se passe, car elle doit lutter et succomber en toute connaisance de cause:

> Celle-ci vient de m'envoyer un projet de capitulation. Toute sa lettre annonce le désir d'être trompée. Il est impossible d'en offrir un moyen plus commode et aussi plus usé. Elle veut que je sois son ami. Mais moi, qui aime les méthodes nouvelles et difficiles, je ne prétends pas l'en tenir quitte à si bon marché; et assurément je n'aurai pas pris tant de peine auprès d'elle, pour terminer par une séduction ordinaire.

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[2] Pour Alain Roger, «la séduction de Mme de Tourvel correspond si parfaitement au modèle qu'elle prend la valeur d'un paradigme» (*Séduire dit-elle*, in *La Séduction*, édité par M. Olender et J. Sojcher, Paris, Aubier, 1980, p. 157). Sur les figures du libertinage que la séduction met en scène, voir aussi Roger Vaillant, *Laclos par lui-même*, Paris, Seuil, 1953.

[3] Les passages cités sont empruntés à l'édition suivante: *Les Liaisons dangeureuses*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, texte établi, présenté et annoté par Lucien Versini, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Paris, Gallimard, 1979.

> Mon projet, au contraire, est qu'elle sente, qu'elle sente bien la valeur et l'étendue de chacun des sacrifices qu'elle me fera; de ne pas la conduire si vite que le remords ne puisse la suivre; de faire expirer sa vertu dans une lente agonie; de la fixer sans cesse sur ce désolant spectacle; et de ne lui accorder le bonheur de m'avoir dans ses bras, qu'après l'avoir forcée à n'en plus dissimuler le désir. (Lettre LXX, Le Vicomte de Valmont à la Marquise de Merteuil)

Ce qui est essentiel à la séduction, comme action ayant en elle-même sa propre fin, c'est qu'il y ait devant elle un obstacle, et qu'il soit surmonté. L'obstacle est la condition même de la naissance du désir.

> Il aurait fallu, pour échauffer notre jeune homme, plus d'obstacles qu'il n'en a rencontrés (Lettre LVII, Le Vicomte de Valmont à la Marquise de Merteuil) Cependant je n'ai pas eu plutôt trouvé un obstacle que je brûlais de le franchir. (Lettre XCIX, Le Vicomte de Valmont à la Marquise de Merteuil)

Je tenterai à présent de montrer comment s'articule l'argumentation mise en oeuvre par Valmont pour amener Madame de Tourvel à l'aimer. Il fait appel tout d'abord à une arme sournoise, parce que faussement rassurante, *l'honnêteté*[4]:

> Vous concevez à présent que mon plus grand bonheur serait de pouvoir vous rendre cette Lettre fatale: me la demander encore serait m'autoriser à ne plus croire ce qu'elle contient; vous ne doutez pas, j'espère, de mon empressement à vous la remettre. (lettre XXXV, Le Vicomte de Valmont à la Présidente de Tourvel) Vous refusez mes lettres aves obstination; vous me les renvoyez avec mépris. Vous me forcez enfin de recourir à la ruse, dans le moment même où mon unique but est de vous convaincre de ma bonne foi. (Lettre XXXVI, Le Vicomte de Valmont à la Présidente de Tourvel)

Et pour la décider à accepter une rencontre, c'est encore l'honnêteté qu'il utilise:

> Oui, je le sens; vous parler encore, c'est vous donner contre moi de plus fortes armes; c'est me soumettre plus entièrement à votre volonté. (Lettre LXXXII, Le Vicomte de Valmont à la Présidente de Tourvel)

tout comme dans cette autre lettre où il enlève à Madame de Tourvel l'alibi que celle-ci tentait de se donner, l'amitié; comme il l'écrit à Madame de Merteuil, Valmont ne veut pas que sa victime en soit «quitte à si bon marché»:

> Quel dommage que, comme vous le dites, je sois reveu de mes erreurs! Avec quels transports de joie j'aurais lu cette même Lettre à laquelle je tremble de répondre aujourd'hui! Vous m'y parlez avec franchise, vous me témoignez de la confiance, vous m'offrez enfin votre amitié: Que de biens, Madame, et quels regrets de ne pouvoir en profiter! Pourquoi ne suis-je plus le même? Si je l'étais en effet; si je n'avais pour vous qu'un goût ordinaire, que ce goût léger, enfant de la séduction et du plaisir, qu'aujourd'hui pourtant on nomme amour, je me hâterais de tirer avantage de tout ce que je pourrais obtenir. Peu délicat sur les moyens, pourvu qu'ils me procurassent le succès, j'encouragerais votre franchise par le besoin de vous deviner; je désirerais votre confiance, dans le dessein de la trahir; j'accepterais votre amitié dans l'espoir de l'égarer... Quoi! Madame, ce tableau vous effraie?... hé bien! il serait pourtant tracé d'après moi, si je vous disais que je consens à n'être que votre ami... (Lettre LXVIII, Le Vicomte de Valmont à la Présidente de Tourvel)

[4] Cf. L. Versini, Introduction à l'édition citée des *Oeuvres complètes*, p. 1148.

Ici Valmont s'amuse en outre, en jouant risqué avec beaucoup de finesse, à décrire ce qu'il ferait réellement, comme s'il s'agissait de quelque chose d'impossible.

En termes de rhétorique classique, ces arguments ont la forme de la rétorsion: on retourne un argument contre celui qui s'en est servi. Le schéma commun à tous les raisonnements de Valmont est à peu près le suivant: prendre au sérieux ce que vous me dites et consentir à ce que vous me demandez m'amènerait précisément à faire le contraire de ce qu'implique le présupposé de vos paroles. De la sorte, la victime est induite à penser que, loin d'agir à l'encontre de ses propes principes en faisant ce que lui demande l'autre, elle ne fait au contraire que leur obéir.

Cependant, il est impossible que la victime (Madame de Tourvel) ne sente pas qu'en faisant ce que l'autre lui demande, elle va aussi dans le sens de ce qu'elle veut tout au fond d'elle-même sans se l'avouer, et qui est contraire à ses principes...

Ces stratégies de communication retorses peuvent avoir un effet dramatique assez similaire à celui d'un *double bind* (terme qui définit une telle situation dans le domaine de la psychopathologie de la communication). Nous ne saurions oublier, en effet, que la Présidente terminera ses jours en sombrant dans une folie que l'on peut aisément diagnostiquer comme l'effet de messages dont l'aspect contradictoire devient de plus en plus brutal vers la fin du livre.

2) Dans les couples symétriques, en particulier celui que constituent les deux metteurs en scène des intrigues, Valmont et la Merteuil, prévaut en revanche un type de *communication par implicites*. Même si, comme l'affirme Malraux, de tous les personnages romanesques «la Marquise et Valmont sont les deux premiers dont les actes déterminés par une idéologie» (*Préface citée*), presque jamais ils n'énoncent explicitement les principles et les finalités qui sous-tendent leurs actions. La fameuse lettre VXXXI fait exception, puisque Madame de Merteuil y raconte son projet existentiel, avec l'élaboration détaillée des apparences qui dissimulent son être authentique, sa volonté de «venger son sexe», et les stratégies raffinées mises en oeuvre pour mener cette lutte.

Mais — à part cette lettre et quelques rares passages —, sous-entendus, allusions, ironie, prétéritions, et présupposés caractérisent le style dans lequel communiquent aussi bien Madame de Merteuil que Valmont. C'est en vertu de l'entente crée par cette communication implicite que les deux héros renforcent leur complicité et leurs pactes collusoires, au moment où ils se communiquent réciproquent et communiquent au lecteur leur postulats axiologiques.

Examinons quelques exemples:

> J'ai bien besoin d'avoir cette femme, pour me sauver du ridicule d'en être amoureux. (Lettre IV, Le Vicomte de Valmont à la Marquise de Merteuil)

Cet énoncé contient l'identification implicite de l'amour avec l'obstacle. En outre, le simple emploi du mot *ridicule* implique le postulat idéologique commun aux deux amis: l'amour est un événement dégradant, et quiconque en est affecté devient un objet de dérision et de compassion.

Ce concept est constamment réaffirmé au moyen d'implicites évoqués par des locutions verbales qui imposent une orientation négative au discours:

> Déjà vous voilà timide et esclave; autant vaudrait être amoureux. (Lettre X, La Marquise de Merteuil au Vicomte de Valmont)
>
> Ainsi, vous me croyez amoureux, subjugué? [...] Ah! grâces au Ciel, je n'en suis pas encore réduit là, et je m'offre à vous le prouver. (Lettre CXXIII, Le Vicomte de Valmont à la Marquise de Merteuil)

Le dénigrement du sentiment est encore plus fort lorsqu'il s'agit du mariage:

> (...) j'ai parlé de lui [Gercourt] hier à la petite personne, et lelui ai si bien peint, que quand elle serait sa femme depuis dix ans, elle ne le hairait pas davantage. (Lettre XXXVIII, La Marquise de Merteuil au Vicomte de Valmont)

La subversion de l'échelle des valeurs, les normes de l'antimorale sont évidentes dans des énoncés tels que celui-ci:

> Sans esprit et sans finesse elle [Cécile] a pourtant une certaine fausseté naturelle, si l'on peut parler ainsi, qui quelquefois m'étonne moi-même, et qui réussira d'autant mieux, que sa figure offre l'image de la candeur et de l'ingénuité. (Lettre XXXVIII, La Marquise de Merteuil au Vicomte de Valmont)

Pourtant introduit une opposition: entre le positif et le négatif. C'est donc la fausseté qui est positive. Cet implicite est contenu également dans l'oxymoron *fausseté naturelle.*

Les lettres de Valmont et de la Merteuil sont imprégnées de cet éloge de l'artifice: on falsifie non seulement par les mots, mais aussi par les gestes:

> Je sentis bien qu'il fallait placer là un soupir et un regard douloureux (Lettre XXV, Le Vicomte de Valmont à la Marquise de Merteuil).
> Vous ne sauriez croire combien la douleur l'embellit! Pour peu qu'elle prenne de coquetterie, je vous garantis qu'elle pleurera souvement. (Lettre LXIII, La Marquise de Merteuil au Vicomte de Valmont)
> Par bonheur je m'étais livré à tel point, que je pleurais aussi; et, reprenant ses mains, je les baignais de pleurs. Cette précaution était bien nécessaire; car elle était si occupée de sa douleur, qu'elle ne se serait pas aperçue de la mienne, si je n'avais pas trouvé ce moyen de l'en avertir. (Lettre XXIII, Le Vicomte de Valmont à La marquise de Merteuil)

Larmes, maladresse, embarras, tout peut se falsifier: le «naturel» est artifice, dans cet univers où la *scission entre l'être et le paraître* est la norme.[5]

Cette scission entre l'être et le paraître s'applique à différents niveaux: elle s'applique aux règles sociales que le roman reflète et qui sanctionnent le devoir de se conformer à des apparences honnêtes, en laissant toute liberté d'action aux infractions occultes; elle s'applique à une manière d'être et de communiquer des personnages, qui se transmettent ces règles à travers des formes complexes de dire sans dire; et elle s'applique aussi à la structure du texte. Todorov parle d'une «*infraction à l'ordre*» perpétrée par les personnages, et «contraignant» le narrateur à commettre à son tour une infraction à son modèle initial de narration. En quoi consiste cette infraction? On peut soupçonner — comme le fait Madame de Mertuil — que Valmont aime vraiment Madame de Tourvel, mais il est impossible de le savoir en toute certitude, parce que la dernière lettre de Valmont à Madame de Tourvel a été «supprimée», non insérée dans le recueil, comme nous l'apprend dans une note le faux «rédacteur». Or, cette infraction au pacte entre Valmont et la Merteuil interrompt le canal d'information qui les reliait: à partir de ce moment, nous ne savons pas ce qui est, mais ce qui paraît (l'informatrice devient Madame de Volanges, qui ne peut nous renseigner que sur les apparences). Donc, quelque chose de l'histoire nous demeure inconnu.

Ce silence sur l'éventuel amour de Valmont pour Madame de Tourvel n'est pas seulement un moyen de construire l'irréductible ambiguïté de l'histoire. C'est aussi une façon de mettre en scène *l'indicibilité de l'amour.* Pour Laclos, et pour toute une tradition occidentale à laquelle la littérature française va donner sa plus haute expression à partir du XVIIe siècle, l'amour *ne se dit* que pour *ce qu'il n'est pas*, en tant que négation ou perte: l'obstacle, la jalousie, la rivalité, la mort. Ou bien il se dit dans ses limites, dans ce avec quoi il ne saurait se concilier: le mariage, l'habitude, les institutions, les règles sociales, peut-être aussi la séduction. Mais pour ce qu'il est, quand il est, l'amour ne se dit pas. Et c'est aussi sous le sceau du silence que s'achève le rapport entre Valmont et Madame de Tourvel, dont la dernière lettre se clôt ainsi:

[5] Je me réfère ici à une distinction faite par Todorov dans «Les catégories du récit littéraire», in *Communication*, 8, Paris, Seuil, 1966.

> Je me tais sur [les torts] de l'amour; votre coeur n'entendrait pas le mien. Adieu, Monsieur. (Lettre CXXXVI, La Présidente de Tourvel au Vicomte de Valmont)

et cette phrase est sans doute la plus émouvante, la plus «sincère» qu'échangent ces raffinés jongleurs de la parole, la seule qui puisse justifier la thèse de Versini, par ailleurs difficile à soutenir, selon laquelle *Les liaisons dangereuses* serait un «roman d'amour».

3) Quelques mots sur l'ironie, autre stratégie linguistique, présente, sous des formes différentes, à la fois dans les couples asymétriques et dans les couples symétriques. Entre la Merteuil et Valmont, elle fonctionne comme un instrument d'agression:

> A merveille, Vicomte, et pour le coup, je vous aime à la fureur! (Lettre CVI, La Marquise de Merteuil au Vicomte de Valmont)
> J'exigerais donc, voyez la cruauté! que cette rare, cette étonnante Madame de Tourvel ne fut plus pour vous qu'une femme ordinaire, une femme telle qu'elle est seulement [...] Ce n'est pas tout encore, je serais capricieuse. Ce sacrifice de la petite Cécile, que vous m'offrez de si bonne grâce, je ne m'en soucierais pas du tout. Je vous demanderais au contraire de continuer ce pénible service, jusqu'à nouvel ordre de ma part [...] ... Mais vous vous souvenez que ceci n'est plus qu'une conversation, un simple récit d'un projet impossible... (Lettre CXXXIV, La Marquise de Merteuil au Vicomte de Valmont)

Dans cette dernière lettre, le parcours antiphrastique est fort tortueux; la Marquise formule des requêtes, mais comme s'il s'agissait de choses irréelles et impossibles, atteignant ainsi un double but: demander, de biais, et faire de l'ironie sur le comportement de Valmont. On trouve de très fréquents exemples de cette ironie sarcastique dans la correspondance entre Valmont et la Marteuil, et ils augmentent à mesure que le récit avance, faisant peu à peu émerger l'agressivité existant entre les deux personnages.

Mais l'ironie fonctionne aussi comme un instrument de coalotion, aux dépens de victimes ne soupçonnant pas que les messages qui leur sont adressés ont un double sens, que Valmont se charge de faire entendre à la Marquise.

Dans certains cas, il n'y a pas d'interprète conscient du sens ironique. Le plaisir de risquer pour risquer entraine souvent Valmont à s'exhiber dans des morceaux de bravoure comme celui-ci:

> Voilà, Madame, quel est ce coeur auquel vous craignez de vous livrer, et sur le sort de qui vous avez à prononcer: mais quel que soit le destin que vous lui réservez, vous ne changerez rien aux sentiments qui l'attachent à vous; ils sont inaltérables *comme les vertus qui les ont fait naitre*. (Lettre LII, Le Vicomte de Valmont à la Présidente de Tourvel)

Ici, Valmont ment en disant la vérité. Autrement dit, ce qui est vrai pour tous deux, c'est l'équivalence entre les vertus et l'inaltérabilité des sentiments. Mais chacun part de présupposés contraires, et en tire donc des conclusions inverses: pour Madame de Tourvel, Valmont est vertueux et ses sentiments sont donc destinés à durer; pour Valmont (et dans les faits), c'est le contraire. Cette antiphrase ironique n'est telle que par rapport à la conscience qu'en a son auteur, qui est donc le seul à jouir de sa tromperie.

4) Le lecteur, naturellement, en jouit lui aussi.

La dimension ironique caractérise en effet un autre niveau d'échange, celui entre le lecteur et le narrateur, sous ses différentes faces. Nous avons en effet une «Préface du rédacteur», qui réaffirme l'authenticité des lettres, publiées «pour rendre service aux moeurs», comme un avertissement à se méfier des «moyens qu'emploient ceux qui en ont de mauvaises

pour corrompre ceux qui en ont de bonnes». Cette Préface du Rédacteur est précédée d'un *Avertissement de l'Editeur* qui nie l'authenticité des lettres, et même leur vraisemblance (et du même coup celle de la préface): les immoralités racontées sont incroyables dans la mesure où elles se réfèrent à «ce siècle de philosophie, où les lumières, répandues de toutes parts, ont rendu, comme chacun sait, tous les hommes si honnêtes et toutes les femmes si modestes et si réservées»; et l'éditeur blâme l'auteur d'avoir ainsi déformé la réalité pour faire naître l'intérêt.

Ce paradoxal entrelacement de vérité et de mensonge, auquel viennent se mêler d'autres éléments parsemés dans le roman — par exemple les «notes» qui contredisent les lettres — contribue à rendre le texte indécidable, en particulier en ce qui concerne les «intentions» du narrateur. Car celui-ci semble reproposer au lecteur les mêmes jeux, les mêmes défis que ceux qui s'échangent entre les personnages. Pour faire face à ces défis, pour repérer le code qui lui livrerait une solution, le lecteur doit découvrir les analogies entre, d'une part, les jeux ambigus auxquels se livrent les héros du récit pour donner une couverture à leur identité, et d'autre part, le même jeu joué de son côté par le narrateur; le lecteur doit de même découvrir des analogies entre le rapport de sujétion que l'acteur cherche à lui imposer à travers l'énigme du texte. Il y a en effet, dans *Les Liaisons*, un parallélisme permanent entre ces deux niveaux: les modalités de la communication entre les personnages et celles de la communication entre narrateur et lecteur sont homologues.

Cette dernière considération ouvre la voie à de nombreuses possibilités de lecture. Entre autres, on pourrait aussi penser que l'éventuelle «infraction à l'ordre» perpétrée par les personnages, tout comme l'infraction au modèle narratif qui s'ensuit, sous-entend une autre infraction. Que le rigoureux déterminisme psychologique dont je parlais au début reçoive un démenti, qu'il soit tourné en dérision par l'irruption des passions dont le texte ne parle pas explicitement, et qui minent l'ordre de la raison. Que le défi au lecteur consiste aussi en une invitation à se diriger vers des régions qui sont celles des profondeurs, au-delà de la surface. Bref, qu'il s'agisse bel et bien d'un «roman d'amour».

Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 267-271

Claudius' Dream

JOSEPH WAGNER (*)

«The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King.»
(Hamlet, 2.2.605-606)[1]

In her landmark study of *Dream in Shakespeare*, Marjorie Garber demonstrates that a dream in a Shakespearean work can sometimes take the form of a play within a play and that the dream can be controlled or fabricated by characters other than the dreamer (216-217). Garber also notices that «The Murder of Gonzago», the play within a play in Act 3, scene 2 of *Hamlet*, might itself be seen as a metaphoric dream in which Hamlet can «exchange the unprofitable musings of John-a-dreams for 'dreams of passion'» (102). But in following the suggestion that «The Murder of Gonzago» is like a dream, one might ask, «*whose* dream?» Garber assumes it is Hamlet's (102-103), but Anne Righter (in *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play*) watches Claudius and Gertrude as they watch this play-within-a-play and sees them «dragged as if by a nightmare into the drama presented for their 'entertainment'» (146). Such an image seems to me to be very consistent with what we believe to be Shakespeare's text, and I propose that we imagine this famous scene in *Hamlet* as the staging of an elaborate metaphor for a dream;[2] it corresponds to psychoanalytic descriptions of dreams, but the dreamer is Claudius, not Hamlet. Hamlet's function is to direct, edit, and even rename the play. In doing so, he creates and manipulates Claudius' bad dream; indeed, he has taken the terrible vision that the Ghost of his father had burned into his own memory in Act 1, scene 5, and he inserts it into Claudius' mind. At first, Claudius seems unmoved; in fact, he has no response at all, but eventually he is terribly threatened and escapes as most of us do when we are troubled by bad dreams. He wakes up, if you will, and calls for lights: «Give me some light. Away!» (3.2.267)

It may be useful to summarize some of the salient points in the sequence that comprise

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[1] Quotations of *Hamlet* are taken from *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, edited by David Bevington, New York: Harper Collins, 1992.

[2] I wish to thank my colleagues, Prof. Sandra Eaglen of Kent State University's Geauga Campus, for first suggesting this concept to me, and Prof. Mark Taylor, of Manhattan College, for sharp critical reading and warm personal encouragement.

the Ghost's visit to Hamlet in Act 1 and «The Murder of Gonzago» itself in Act 3. In the first of these visions, the Ghost makes Hamlet imagine its murder with vivid details. Shakespeare quickly introduces a metaphor highly suggestive of a bad dream, that of sleep being disturbed by poison poured into the sleeper's ear:

> Sleeping within my orchard,
> My custom always of the afternoon,
> Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
> With juice of cursed hebanon in a vial,
> And in the porches of my ears did pour
> The leperous distilment.
> . . . . . .
> Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
> Of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatch'd.
> (1.5.59-74)

Hamlet, of course, is horrified. After the Ghost departs with the injunction, «Remember me», the agonized Hamlet swears to remember nothing else. In the Dumb Show that he stages at the start of his play in Act 3, Hamlet has the actors silently recreate this scene. The stage directions suggest the parallel very strongly:

> Enter a King and a Queen [very lovingly]; the Queen embracing him, and he her. [She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him.] He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck. He lies him down upon a bank of flowers. She, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in another man, takes off his crown, kisses it, pours poison in the sleeper's ears, and leaves him. The Queen returns, finds the King dead, makes passionate action. The Poisoner with some three or four come in again, seem to condole with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner woos the Queen with gifts; she seems harsh awhile, but in the end accepts love. (3.2.133 s.d)

Claudius watches this silent re-enactment of his crime with no response at all. There is conversation between Hamlet and Ophelia immediately after it, but nothing at all from Claudius. Then the Player King and Player Queen re-enter and engage in a long discussion (73 lines) of the possibility that he will die soon and she will remarry. She insists that she will never remarry and asks for «lasting strife/ If, once a widow, ever I be wife!» (3.2.220-221). By now, Claudius is slightly suspicious, asking «Have you heard the argument? Is there no offense in it?» and «What do you call the play?» (3.2.230-234). It is here that Hamlet changes the play's title from «The Murder of Gonzago» to «'The Mousetrap' — marry, how? Tropically» (3.2.235). That is, as both a trap and a metaphor. And he further goads the King by explaining that «This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna. Gonzago is the Duke's name, his wife, Baptista. You shall see anon. 'Tis a knavish piece of work, but what of that? Your Majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not» (3.2.236-240). Now, once again, the murderer enters the play-within-the-play, but this time he has a specific identity, as Hamlet explains to the King: «This is one Lucianus, nephew to the King» (3.2.242). The actor who plays Lucianus is slow and exaggerated in his movements, so Hamlet, the real nephew to the King, impatiently insists, «Begin, murderer; leave thy damnable faces and begin. Come, the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge» (3.2.250-252). Lucianus moves over to the sleeping Player King, speaks six grim and threatening lines, and «pours the poison into the sleeper's ear» (3.2.258 s.d.) In case Claudius is still unmoved, Hamlet explains what is being staged in front of him: he tells him that Lucianus, this nephew to the King, «poisons him i' the garden for his estate. His name's Gonzago. The

story is extant and written in very choice Italian. You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife» (3.2.259-262).

Finally, Claudius can take no more. As Maurice Charney says, Claudius is a «tough villain who can take an enormous amount of psychological punishment» (66), but this is too much. The play is interrupted. Ophelia, Hamlet, Gertrude, Polonius, and Claudius all have very short lines that, as they follow each other in rapid succession, reflect the resultant anxiety:

> Ophelia: The King rises.
> Hamlet: What, frighted with false fire?
> Queen: How fares my lord?
> Polonius: Give o'er the play.
> King: Give me some light. Away!
> Polonius: Lights, lights, lights!
> (3.2.264-268)

At that call for lights, the *Mousetrap* is over, and all the actors in *both* plays, all except Hamlet and Horatio, leave the stage.

The overall effect of this crucial scene in *Hamlet* very credibly suggests the onset of sleep and the staging of a dream which begins with the mesmerizing Dumb Show and concludes with the King starting up as if from a bad dream. As Hamlet says a few lines later, Claudius has been «frighted with false fire» — and that false fire came through the words and actions of Lucianus, the player-nephew, and Hamlet, the real nephew to the King.

In at least three respects, «The Mousetrap» or «The Murder of Gonzago» possesses characteristics that many Freudian analysts see in dreams. First, like plays within plays, dreams are primarily pictorial and frequently silent (Freud *SE* 4, 277; Sharpe 58; Sloane 14). Dreams are also mimetic, and as Rene Girard persuasively argues in *A Theater of Envy*, dreams and the plays within plays that Shakespeare uses have very strong mimetic elements in common (59, 77-79 and 343 ff). In *Hamlet* this is «The Mousetrap's» first part, or the Dumb-Show; the dream is silent, and the dreamer is mesmerized.

Second, two important mechanisms of the dream work are also present in «The Mousetrap»: «Condensation, the fusion of two or more ideas or mental images», and Displacement, whose «function [is] in transposing objects, people, places», and values (Altman 10, 14). Frequently, «displacement results in reversal, a particularly effective means of distortion» (Altman 14) that replaces an object with its totally opposite entity (See Freud, *SE* 11, 155 and Rubinstein 337). In the Dumb Show, the murderer of the Player King is a condensation that Claudius can see as representing himself; since Claudius' superego is inadequately developed, this re-enactment of his crime does not disturb him, and he remains silent and unmoved — as if asleep. But when Hamlet identifies the murderer as «Lucianus, nephew to the King» (3.2.235), the figure is displaced and represents that other nephew to the King, Hamlet himself. Now Claudius is directly threatened; so he «wakes», as it were, from his bad dream.

One need not seek for psychoanalytic perspectives alone to support such an interpretation. Harold Jenkins, the editor of the Arden edition of the play, also suggests that the identity of Lucianus as *nephew* rather than *brother* to the King creates a «duality of the revenger, agent and victim» (144) and will eventually define «Hamlet himself» (508). Jenkins further believes that «when Lucianus becomes the image of Hamlet he does not cease to be Claudius too» (508). If this is so and both Claudius and Hamlet are present in the figure of Lucianus, it may be helpful to see that figure as a composite dream work that includes Hamlet as a superego-component which is at war with Claudius, the ego-component.

It is this distinction between the functions of ego and superego that suggest a third area of similarity between dreams and «The Mousetrap». According to Paul Sloane's *Psychoanalytic*

Understanding of the Dream, a dream is a «compromise between the conflicting demands of the three psychic structures, id, ego, and superego» (Sloane 69). In addition, the superego (or the conscience) is generally recognized as the primary contributor of spoken words in dreams (Altman 38, 219). Within the construct of «The Mousetrap» functioning as a dramatic metaphor for Claudius' dream, the Dumb Show is a product of his id and ego. The spoken words of Hamlet/Lucianus at the end of the play within the play, then, should be heard as the punitive voice of Claudius' superego. In effect, Hamlet and Lucianus have succeeded in giving Claudius an anxiety dream. Sloane describes anxiety dreams in a way that could also be used to describe Claudius' reaction:

> If a forbidden instinctual drive arising in the id, for instance, succeeds in evading the censorship of the superego, and threatens to erupt and make the meaning of the dream too plain, the ego resorts to emergency measures by producing anxiety. The sleeper wakes up, thus interrupting the dream before the wish fulfillment can take place (69).

The forbidden wish, of course, is the wish to be punished, but in Claudius such a wish is not strong enough to allow him to stay asleep. His ego is far more powerful than his superego, and he awakens in a state of anxiety, interrupting his dream before such a wish is fulfilled.

Such an interpretation (which, I repeat, is only metaphoric, not literal) helps to explain how Claudius' different reactions to the two parts of «The Mousetrap» can be visually powerful on the stage. He silently tolerates the Dumb Show during which he is mesmerized by the pictorial, silent re-enactment of his crime; even after the long speeches of the Player King and Player Queen, he is uncomfortable but not shaken. But his superego, which is awakened by threats, rather than ethics, finally responds when he hears Hamlet speak of «we that have free souls» (3.2.236) and when Lucianus, the player-nephew to the King, poisons his victim and speaks of «Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing» (3.2.249). Only then is he truly frightened by his punitive superego, and only then does he wake up and demand, «Give me some light. Away!» This call, especially in its context of the startled comments by those around him, creates the metaphor of a dreamer suddenly snapping back to reality. Maurice Charney describes the moment as an example of Shakespeare's creating «metaphors out of staging... Here Claudius calls for the light of torches to take away the more lurid light of 'The Murder of Gonzago'... (42).»

The concept of a conscience that could be overwhelmingly threatening but only mildly sensitive to ethical concerns is not peculiar to a Freudian age. It was also widely accepted in the Renaissance. In his *Contemplation* on the story of Cain and Abel, that first fratricide that Claudius himself later mentions, Shakespeare's contemporary, Bishop Joseph Hall, says, «Consciences that are without remorse, are not without horror: wickedness makes men desperate» (quoted by Joseph 64-65). And from this point on, Claudius is motivated by desperate fear, not by remorse: Hamlet immediately recognizes his enemy's emotion and taunts him not with a comment about his guilt but about his fear: «What, frighted with false fire?» (3.2.260).

One might object that Claudius' conscience is genuinely remorseful. After all, in the famous prayer scene he acknowledges,

> O, my offense is rank! It smells to heaven.
> It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
> A brother's murder.
>
> (3.3.36-38)

Further, as he and Polonius are preparing to spy on Hamlet and Ophelia, he privately responds to Polonius' remarks on hypocrisy by complaining,

O, 'tis too true!
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!
(3.1.50-51)

But, in truth, Claudius is not capable of genuine contrition or remorse because he is not willing to give up his ill-gotten gains. As he recognizes:

I am still possessed
Of those effects for which I did the murder:
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
. . . . . .
My words fly up, my thoughts remain below.
(3.3.52-97)

However, what he can do is to try to remove the threat of the avenging superego that visited his dream. As an agent of remorse, his superego is still undeveloped, but as an agent of punishment, it has now been awakened. As a result, once «The Mousetrap», has caught him, Claudius is unrestrained in his hostility toward Hamlet. Earlier, he was willing to delay the plan to send Hamlet to England, but now there is to be no delay, and he adds an order for:

The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me.
(4.4.68-70)

When that plan fails, of course, he quickly devises another plot-this one reverting to the heretofore reliable poison — and he enlists the help of Laertes to destroy his nemesis in the duel of Act 5.

If «The Mousetrap», then, succeeds in exposing and frightening the guilty king, it is accomplished on the rather bare Elizabethan stage through a metaphor that suggests a very troubling anxiety dream. In that dream, Hamlet joins with the Player-nephew Lucianus to form a most punitive superego, and he insinuates his own terrible vision from the Ghost sequence into Claudius' mind. He has literally caught «the conscience of the King».

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Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Literature and Psychology: 273-276

Les *Confessions* de S. Augustin et la Psychanalyse

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L'autobiographie de S. Augustin, les *Confessions*, est sans doute un chef-d'oeuvre et une des plus passionantes narrations connues du passage de l'enfance à l'adolescence et de l'adolescence à l'âge mûre.

Ce texte n'a jamais été étudié systématiquement d'un point de vue psychanalytique. Il y a eu plusières contributions sur certains aspects du récit, mais on n'a pas essayé de pousser l'examen de l'oeuvre jusqu'au bout. Je crois que le cas-Augustin nécessite ce gendre d'analyse, pour comprendre les thèmes qui reviennent, les *leit-motiven* de la personnalité de l'auteur.

La première question à poser est celle de la «sincerité» des *Confessions*. Augustin nous dit vraiment tout de soi-même, sans omettre rien? Les historiens ont déjà posé cette question d'un point de vue purement historique: Augustin écrit une autobiographie tendencieuse, manipulant les faits pour la gloire de Dieu et de l'Eglise.

Toutefois les savants partagent l'opinion que le récit augustien est sincère, dans le fond, et que les manipulations n'empêchent pas de reconstituer les événements les plus importants.

Mais cela ne suffit pas pour la psychanalyse: il ne suffit pas qu'un témoin pense d'être sincère et cherche à ne pas tromper son interlocuteur: il est nécessaire qu'il soit sincère au niveau de l'inconscient et ne cherche à se tromper soi-même; qu'il ne cache pas ses sentiments les plus profonds, ses pensées les plus honteuses, ses parties secrètes.

Augustin cherche à effacer tout cela et à nous présenter un portrait de soi-même «agiographique»: mais (heureseument pour nous) il rate son but, en révélant ses conflits, ses tourments, ses divisions intérieures. Comme a dit le grand historien Peter Brown, les *Confessions* sont le livre de l'*affectus*, du coeur d'Augustin. C'est à nous d'intérpreter les «raisons du coeur» de ce grand personnage avec l'aide de la psychanalyse.

Lorsque je parle de psychanalyse, j'entends la méthode freudienne, partagée aujourd'hui par des écoles differentes. Je suis d'accord avec le coraugeux effort mené par Robert Wallerstein[1] et je considère comme lui que les théories psychanalytiques ont souvent valeur de «métaphores»,

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[1] Robert Wallerstein, One psychanalysis or many?, in *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 69 (1987), pp. 5-21.

tandis que le *common ground* des théories c'est la souffrance du patient. Je pense, donc, que mon objet c'est la souffrance d'Augustin, témoignée dans les *Confessions*. Une souffrance qu'on peut intérpreter avec l'aide de M. Klein ou de R. Bion, de D. Winnicott ou d'E. Erikson, d'H. Hartman ou de J. Lacan: écoles differentes avec une même origine.

Quelles sont les voies d'accès à la psychè d'Augustin? Comment procéder dans l'analyse de son témoignage?

A mon avis la granderoute pour arriver à la destination envisagée c'est l'analyse des sentiments d'Augustin. Car l'auteur souligne directement ou indirectement, qu'il éprouve des émotions qui reviennent toujours, véritales «a priori» de la psyché individuelle et de la condition humaine: la honte, le sentiment de l'homme tel qu'il est, selon Augustin: mais, selon nous, c'est enraciné dans l'homme-Augustin tel qu'il fut. Dans son adolescence.

Comme a été mis en evidence recemment par Cristopher Bollas[2] les sentiments gardant une trace mnestique du «vecu» individuel et nous permettent de saisir le parfum fané des troubles de l'enfance.

Examinons donc le texte. Je parlerais de deux épisodes de la vie de S. Augustin: le baptême refusé dans l'enfance; la découverte de la sexualité dans l'adolescence.

Le premier épisode est evoqué dans le premier livre des *Confessions*, au milieu de la narration de l'enfance: Augustin nous dit que son enfance a été heureuse lorsqu'il était très petit, mais qu'il y a eu un grand bouleversement à l'âge de l'école. Il avait été «choisi» par ses parents: il devait étudier et devenir un grand homme. Le saint a vecu trés mal cette situation. L'école était terrible, dure, superficielle, stupide. Les maîtres pratiquaient des véritables tortures en punition des élèves négligeants et la pédagogie du terreur provoquait seulement leur conformisme. Augustin nous dit que toute sa vie était pleine d'angoisse, de rage, de honte, à la recherche du succès et de la louange: il avait la sensation d'avoir perdu le paradis, les sourires, la tendresse de la mère et des nourrices de son enfance.

En effet, la représentation idillyque de l'enfance à la maison opposée à l'enfer de l'école est un peu suspecte. Il semble qu'il y a quelque chose cachée au dessous de la division: famille(bien)-école(mal; intérieur(bien)-exterieur(mal). Cela est confirméé par le recit d'un événement fondamental qui a brisé le paradis de l'enfance et blessé à toujours Augustin: le baptême refusé.

Le saint, tombé malade, était en train de mourir. Il démande à sa mère de lui accorder la permission d'être baptisé. Mais, soudain, la santé du garçon s'améliore et la mère décide de ne pas permettre le baptême de son fils. Augustin est troublé. Il est contraint à avaler un crapaud et nous dit que sa mère avait raison: il est un pêcheur, il sera toujours un pêcheur et pêcher après le baptême c'est plus grave que pêcher avant la purification. Toutefois il dit que c'est une mauvais tradition d'empêcher le baptême aux enfants, car il risquent d'aller à l'enfer.

Pour comprendre ce qui s'était passé il faut rappeler que l'Eglise, dans le premiers siècles du christianisme, était plus sévère qu'aujourd'hui et baptisait à l'ordinaire les adultes. Après le baptême le chrétien n'avait pas le droit de pêcher et c'était très difficile d'avoir la rémission des fautes plus graves, même avec la confession et la penitence publique. Toutefois le temps changeaient et à l'époque d'Augustine, n'était plus normal et habituel de refuser le baptême aux enfants. Il y avait eu Concile à Carthage en 252 a. C., à l'époque de S. Cyprien, dans lequel on avait recommandé de baptiser les enfants et abandonner la tradition. Donc, la position officielle de l'Eglise d'Afrique était contraire à celle de la mère du saint. Et Augustin, si pieux et respectueux à l'egard de sa mère, n'hesite pas à la critiquer ouvertement et à rappeler l'enormité du risque qu'il a couru. En 418 a.C. il interviendra à un autre Concile qui réaffirmera les positions de l'époque de S. Cyprien en matière de baptême aux enfants. Ces positions seront reprise maintes fois dans les oeuvres du saint.

[2] Chistopher Bollas, *L'ombra dell'oggetto. Psicoanalisi del non pensato*, Roma: Borla, 1989, pp. 107-123.

L'insistence d'Augustin sur ce point s'explique bien en rappelant les sentiments éprouvés dans l'enfance, dont les *Confessions* nous ont laissé témoignage. Même en critiquant sur le plan intellectuel et théologique sa mère, en accord avec ses positions officielles, le saint ne peut pas effacer la profonde amertume éprouvé dans le passé. Ses convinctions n'ont pas une origine puremente intellectuelle: elles sont le résultat d'une réflexion nourrie d'angoisse. Sa mère savait qu'il été un pêcheur. Un maudit. Pour elle, fidèle à la tradition, retarder le baptême c'était une bizzare façon de proteger son fils: comme il était pêcheur, mieux valait retarder le baptême, pour empêcher au fils de gaspiller ses effets. Mais pour le fils, qui ne se sentait pas pêcheur, le retard c'était seulement de la cruauté.

Augustin a vécu un veritable drame. D'un côté, il devait se considérer un pêcheur prédestiné au mal: un être mauvais structurellement. De l'autre côté, la religion de sa mère lui imposait de croire à la possibilité de salut et à la libération du pêché.

Le témoignage d'Augustin reflècte ce paradoxe et donne, plus ou moin conscientement, toute la responsabilité des faits à la mère: elle est caractérizée par sa clarvoyance sans pitié.

Je crois que l'épisode du baptême refusé est un «souvenir-ecran» des relations d'Augustin avec sa mère dans l'enfance. Augustin nous suggère que sa mère était très frustrante à son égard: sourtout qu'elle était si aveugle, si prisionnère de ses scrupules réligieux, qu'il aurait pu être anéanti, damné pour toujours. La mère refuse de «sauver» le fils.

Le rôle frustrant de la mère est confirmé par le symbolisme du baptême: dans la tradition chrétienne l'eau du baptême représente la purification, mais aussi la «nourriture», l'eau de vie pour aipaiser la soif, le désir de salut. Dans cette perspective, la mère est l'énnemie de l'oralité. Mais elle est aussi l'ennemie de la libération du fils, car le baptisé est celui qui est libre du pêché.

Tout cela est paradoxale, car au même temps, la mère a accoutumé son fils au christianisme: elle lui inspire ce profond désir de salut qui est destiné a être frustré.

L'impasse est ce qu'on appelle le «double bind», une «double liason».

La mére dit aux fils: «Tu dois te sauver! Mais tu ne peux pas te sauver!» Je crois que l'angoisse d'Augustin s'origine de cette absurdité logique et psychologique. Quelque chose de consubstantielle aux relations avec sa mère et que l'épisode du baptême refusé symbolize. Donc, l'expérience de frustration de l'école a été si décevante puisque ça s'ajoutait à une relation troublée avec sa mére, la frustration archetypique d'une enfance qui n'avait pas été si belle comme Augustin affirme. Le saint avait été lié avec des chaines invisibles à une mère qui ne laisse pas libre son enfant: une mère qui contrôle rigidement l'oralité de son fils et qui ne lui permet pas de se developper et devenir maître de soi.

Tout cela est confirmé par le récit de la découverte de la sexualité dans l'adolescence. Dans le deuxième livre des *Confessions*, Augustin nous dit qu'un jour, lorsqu'il avait seize ans, il était avec son père aux bains publics. Le père découvrit que son fils était dans la puberté. Nous ne savons pas exactement qu'est-ce qui a été découvert, mais on a le soupçon que le saint avait, en jeune homme, des réactions génitales. De toute façon, le père fut très heureux: il était payen et il ne méprisait pas la sexualité.

Il partage sa découverte avec la mère d'Augustin et la femme est choquée. Elle en parle à son fils en secret et lui recommande de ne pas pêcher. Sourtout, de ne pas pêcher avec les femmes mariées.

Tout cela est étonnant. C'est normal de penser qu'un jeune homme va «pêcher» plus aisément avec les filles de son âge que avec les «femmes mariées». Il est légitime se démander: qui était la femme mariée en péril, pour la mère du saint? Peut-être elle même?

En tout cas, Augustin a envie d'exercer sa sexualité et demande à sa mère la permission de se marier. La mère, en accord en cela avec le père, refuse. Et Augustin tombe encore une fois dans l'angoisse. Et commence à pêcher, sans savoir, ni pouvoir s'opposer à son inclination au «pêché».

Ce qui est surprenant dans les souvenirs du saint est l'impossibilité de se faire écouter. Son père, mais sourtout sa mère refusent de lui donner le consentement pour la satisfaction de ses pulsions les plus élémentaires. Il faut souligner qu'à l'ordinaire c'était le père qui donnait le permission au fils de se marier. Le rôle de la mère du saint est donc un peu special dans l'affaire du marriage refusé. Evidemment elle remplissait d'une certaine mesure les functions paternelles. En effet, Augustin nous dit que ses parents, divisés sur le plan religieux, étaient d'accord sur l'avenir de leur fils. Il était destiné à devenir un «grand homme»: donc il devait épouser une femme riche et puissante, au moment donné. Les exigeances du jeune n'avaient pas d'importance.

Encore une fois Augustin est frustré dans son besoin d'émancipation. L'unique voie pratiquable est la voie du «pêché». Le saint est obligé, s'il veut survivre, à être ce que la mère méprise: un pêcheur, un criminel.

Je crois que cela réaffirme la frustration de l'enfance et renforce la scission angoissante dans la psyché entre une partie «bonne» et une partie «mauvaise». Augustin nous a laissé des pages merveilleuses sur la lutte entre les «deux volontés» qui déchirent le coeur de l'homme. Il a été toujours blessé par la faiblesse de la nature humaine et par la force de l'inclination au «mal». Tout cela avait des racines dans sa psyché troublé.

Nous ne pouvons pas suivre ici tout les metamorphoses du conflit originaire d'Augustin dans sa vie.[3] Mais nous pouvons dire qu'il a été obsedé toute la vie à cause de cela.

Les *Confessions* sont le témoignage d'une division interieure, d'un déchirement jamais guéri. En le lisant, il faut se rappeler de cela et saisir, à travers la magie des mots, la souffrance qui a poussé son auteur a se «confésser».

[3] Fabio Troncarelli, *Le Confissioni di Sant'Agostino e la psicanalisi*, Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche, 1993.