

The Anachronist 1995 is intended as an antidote to the gloom created by the many pessimists whose vision is circumscribed by factors subject to change. It is a volume of essays that signals the coming-of-age of students who, in the course of their undergraduate or postgraduate studies, have nurtured a passionate intellectual interest in topics as diverse as the conventions of mediaeval poetry, the feminist thought of Anne Sexton, the philosophy of the Renaissance, the Metaphysicals and Shelley, the religious experience of Milton, Blake and T.S.Eliot, the aesthetics of the Pre-Raphaelites and Greenaway, and the narrative techniques of Sterne, Hardy, Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Burgess. In the following papers attitudes vary, approaches differ, but the voice remains personal, the research reliable, and the touch of originality undeniable.

With so many economic forces at work destructive of what has traditionally been called a university education, it is vital for us to create an intellectual ambiance within our department; an ambiance that would encourage a spirit of adventure, a tolerance for the unorthodox, and a hunger for the new, while preserving a respect for the more traditional scholarly practices still worthy of our attention. For it is certain that only intellectual strength, courage, and discipline will have the persuasive power in the lean years ahead.

Heartfelt thanks is due to those teachers who have spared neither time nor energy in encouraging and guiding students. We can only hope that *The Anachronist 1995* will be followed by *The Anachronist 1996*, and that this collection of student essays will become a watchword for renewal, continuity, and relevance.

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WORD AND IMAGE IN THE GENERAL PROLOGUE TO THE CANTERBURY TALES

To compare visual arts and literature is not a new issue: its theoretical tradition goes back as far as the Antiquity: Simonides of Ceos in the pre-Socratic Greece was the first to analyze the similarity of poetry (at that time almost inseparable from music), and painting, calling poetry painting that speaks and painting silent poetry¹. We all know Lessing's *Laokoon* from the eighteenth century, which is like a late reaction to Simonides' thoughts, illustrating differences between literature and visual arts. There is, nevertheless, an essential similarity between these two, seemingly opposite, theories: they both relate the analysis to the listener or viewer in one way or another. They touch upon the effect produced in the mind of the spectator or his attitude towards the work of art. In this paper I will first paint the theoretical background concerning the mechanism of the human mind where image and sound fuse into one, will analyze the role of rhetoric in the process and finally I will test the method on Chaucer's characters. The emphasis will be on literature as we focus on a poet and a written text, but we shall have some examples from the visual arts and some references to music.

In the Middle Ages we have to think of the receivers of literature rather as audience than as readers. Even if we later see, in the case of Chaucer, that reading becomes more widespread, the influence of the earlier medium, that is listeners and reciter, is essential. Reading makes its approach to our intellect, as compared with listening. Listeners might seem to "lose", for they have to comprehend the work

¹ Yates, 27.

from a greater distance, moreover, they are more dependent on the circumstances; they are, if you like, at the mercy of the reciter or reader. But this drawback is compensated on another level: listening applies more to the senses.

In the *Timaeus* (45b-47) Plato considers sight and hearing the most important senses, with sight preeminent², thus suggesting the importance of the image. In the *Philebus*, Plato compares the mind to a book. Through sense perception, the memory imprints words (logoi) on the mind which are then in recollection illustrated by images (eikones). This theory anticipates Aristotle's more elaborate discussion of the function of the image.³ With Aristotle we can make one step further: through the senses we reach the realm of imagination.

The perceptions brought in by the five senses are first treated or worked upon by the faculty of imagination, and it is the images so formed which become the material of the intellectual faculty. ... It is the image-making part of the soul which makes the work of the higher processes of thought possible.

(Kolve, 1984, 32)

The images formed become the material of the intellectual faculty: as Aristotle says in his *De memoria et reminiscencia*⁴, "the soul never thinks without a mental picture", "the thinking faculty thinks of its forms in mental pictures"; "noone could ever learn or understand anything, if he had not the faculty of perception; even when he thinks speculatively, he must have some mental picture with which to think".⁵

"Visus et auditus fragilis sunt ostia mentis" - this is how the idea developed in the *Timaeus* and *De anima* survived in Gower's *Confessio amantis*: the doors of the frail mind are sight and hearing.⁶

On a miniature illustration at the opening of *Li Bestiaires d'amours* by Richard de Fournival we can see the metaphor turned into a picture. The doors, one being sight, the other one hearing, lead into the castle of the "frail mind". Before the door stands Lady Memory. If we read the following quotation from the *Li Bestiaires* by Richard, we may have the feeling that painting and poetry are

2 Kolve.

3 Eden, 67.

4 Based on the theory of knowledge which he expounds in his *De Anima*, see Yates, 32.

5 *De Anima* 427, 18-22, *ibid.*, 432a 17, *ibid.*, 431b 2, *ibid.*, 432a 9, quoted by Yates, 32.

6 Kolve, 24.

interchangeable. Not the sources of the image but the result, i.e. the mental picture, is important:

And therefore God, who so loves man that he wishes to provide him with all that he needs, has given to man a power and force of the soul that is called memory. This memory has two doors, sight and hearing, and to each of these doors there is a path by which one can reach them; these are painting and speech. Painting serves for the eye, speech for the ear. And the manner in which one may make one's way to the house of memory, both by painting and by speech, is thus made clear: the memory, guardian of the treasure won by man's senses through the excellence of the imagination, makes what is past seem as if it were present. And to this same end, one can come either by painting or by speech.

(Quoted by Kolve, 24-25.)

The eye that sees these images, the inner eye or *oculus imaginationis*, is superior to the "eye of the flesh":

So when you hear yourself invited to "see", it is not the sight of this eye (of the flesh) that I would have you think about. You have another eye within, much clearer than that one, an eye that looks at the past, the present, and the future all at once, which sheds the light and keenness of its vision over all things, which penetrates things hidden and searches into complexities, needing no other light by which to see all this, but seeing by the light that it possesses of itself.⁷

We have to be concerned here with more technical things, investigating the process by which the mental image is created, if the source is not "painting", but "speech", thus: not seeing, but hearing, since our main concern is literature.

What is the means by which words are turned into images? It is a special mode of organizing the words, of putting them together, of linking one sentence to the other, one paragraph or stanza to the other: this is rhetoric. Let us first turn to the "how" of this art. Painting with words applies to the other door of the frail mind, by tickling another sense of the audience, this time hearing. The function of rhetoric to move the audience has a lot in common with music. But the analogue is not only in its function. In his *De artibus ac disciplinis liberalium litterarum* Cassiodorus mentions St. Augustine who wrote that human voice includes in the

⁷ Hugo of St. Victor, *De Vanitate mundi*, quoted by Kolve, 27.

long and short syllables rhythmical sounds and melodious harmony.⁸ Boethius speaks about three kinds of "ars musica", the first being ars instrumentalis, the second the ars carmina, that is singing, and the third one is the art as science, "judging" the "productions" of the first two artes. Poetry belongs according to him to the second category.⁹ If we step further in the Middle Ages, although the classification is different, we can find basically the same idea in Deschamps, who differentiated between *musique naturele*, the art of the spoken word or rhetoric, covering vernacular prosody, as opposed to *musique artificiele*, i.e. as the art of composing music for instrument or for singing.¹⁰ From our point of view it is of great importance that rhetoric is compared to music in both its "how" and "what", that is in both its appearance and function. The link between poet and audience is made by means of rhetoric, or, we might even boldly say that in this human medium, in these Medieval circumstances described above, a unity of the three branches is created. Literature, by means of the music of the spoken word, paints pictures in the mind.

The purpose of rhetoric is identical with that of music: to move the audience. What should the audience be moved to? To action in classical rhetorics. What is the purpose of rhetoric? To persuade the audience to the truth. The contents of "truth" changes throughout the centuries from the Antiquity to the Middle Ages in different genres, ranging from political or juridical speeches through philosophical ones to poetry. In the Middle Ages truth should be printed in memory and "made vivid and striking in accordance with the classical rules, as 'memorial notes' to aid us in reaching Heaven and avoiding Hell".¹¹

In rhetoric books much thought is devoted to memory. But it is treated rather from the point of view of the speaker, the rhetorician, and it is an aid for him to remember the structure of his own speech, to perform in a convincing way. Thoughts and passages of a speech could be remembered through striking images painted in the mind, with the help of imagination. The speaker would "move" in his mind through an imaginable building - the text as a whole - through rooms, seeing these striking images in certain places. Each image is associated with a certain idea or passage of the speech. Walking through the rooms and meeting the images, mainly in the form of human characters in a pre-conceived order, the

8 See *Az Égi és a földi szépről*, 163.

9 See *ibid.* 147.

10 Kelly, 1969, 1.

11 Yates, 60.

speaker can reconstruct and perform the speech in the right way. But, as Yates says, the art of memory "was a creator of imagery which must surely have flowed out into creative works of art and literature"¹², the invisible memory image will become "the hidden generator of externalized imagery"¹³; slowly, the images will move from the mind of the speaker into the mind of the listener. Here is where rhetoric, memory and imagination meet and where rhetoric and poetry are fused together.

What we are most interested in, is the technique of painting the images. In the most frequently used classical work of rhetoric, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*¹⁴, the importance of *propria*, of striking details is accentuated. Generally, the inner techniques described in classical sources depend on these extremely intense visual impressions, involving the psyche as a whole - as music does.

These human figures are active and dramatic, strikingly beautiful or grotesque. They remind one more of figures in some Gothic cathedral than of classical art proper. They appear to be completely amoral, their function being solely to give an emotional impetus to memory by their personal idiosyncrasy or their strangeness.¹⁵

The images created, together with their influence on the soul and imagination, wandered through the centuries and were used according to the actual truth to which the audience had to be persuaded. The Middle Ages wished chiefly to remember the articles of the faith and the roads leading through virtues to salvation and heaven or through vices to damnation and hell. The images of virtues and vices were painted on frescoes and windows and were sculpted in and on the cathedrals. They were the things which viewers and listeners wished to remember by the art of memory. The material of medieval didactic was fixed in the memory by means of this art. As for the techniques, they are very similar to those described in the Antiquity, with the difference that the place where the images are created are now definitely in the mind of the audience. The audience has to be taught. We find the techniques described in *Ad Herennium* in Medieval works on the art of the spoken word. In the early fourteenth century, San

12 *ibid.* 9.

13 *ibid.* 86.

14 The book was for a long time considered to be the work of Cicero, recently Cornificius has generally been accepted as its author.

15 Yates, 4.

Gimignano writes about preaching in his *Summa de exemplis ac similitudinibus rerum*, advising the preacher to use unusual similitudes in order to make people remember things "for these will stick better in memory than the spiritual intention will do, unless clothed in such similitudes"¹⁶. Albertus Magnus gives a very clear explanation to the process: "since *propria* (the literal details) represent a thing more accurately than can *metaphorica* (similitudes, metaphors), why should we not prefer *propria* in a memory system? His answer is in three parts: (1) images by their very nature assist the memory; (2) many *propria* can be remembered through few images; and (3) images are able to move the soul, a power that makes them more memorable still"¹⁷. Thus, according to Albertus, they should be strikingly beautiful or hideous, "dressed in crowns and purple garments, deformed or disfigured with blood or mud, smeared with red paint, comic or ridiculous" : such memories "pertain particularly to the moral man and to the speaker (...) because since the act of human life consists in particulars, it is necessary that it should be in the soul through corporeal images"¹⁸. We find the same idea in the *Summa Theologiae* by Thomas Aquinas: "Man cannot understand without images (*phantasmata*); the image is a similitude of a corporeal thing, but understanding is of universals which are to be abstracted from particulars."

In other words, applying the whole theory to the Middle Ages, the audience should be made to think about the great questions of life and death, of sin and virtue, good and bad, about the most sophisticated things through the most palpable images.

Words become pictures, pictures give birth to words. In the Middle Ages to be audience to an "image" (whether verbal or visual) implied activity, not passivity. It called one to thought, to feeling, to meditation."¹⁹ These literary images present the suprasensual in a form of a moving figure which is to be contemplated with the *oculus imaginationis*. We can see this idea reflected in a medieval poem, written by Deguileville and translated by Lydgate²⁰:

Thyn Erys muste haue Eyen clere
 Taparceyve, in this matere,
 And to conceyven euery thyng.

16 Quoted by Yates, 86.

17 Quoted by Kolve, 48.

18 Quoted by Yates, 66.

19 *ibid.* 30.

20 Quoted by Kolve, 31.

CHAUCER AND RHETORIC

We discussed the importance of images. But what exactly should a rhetorician, a poet, - or a painter, a sculptor, as we shall see -, set before the eyes of the audience? How should a picture be drawn? Which were the theoretical works, the rules and the rhetoricians, whom Chaucer might have known and what kind of pictures did he see? What is worth remembering in a person and how can someone call attention to the characteristics and the ideas behind? Manly states that the incomparable portraiture of the *General Prologue* "is inconceivable as mere vegetative growth" and that Chaucer "had thought long and deeply upon the principles of composition, description, and characterization and numberless other details of the writers art"²¹. According to him, only one rhetorical system was known which drew its precepts from few sources: Horace's *Epistle to the Piso*, the two books of Cicero's *De Inventione*, the *De Rhetorica ad Herennium* and two rhetoric books written in the Middle Ages, the *Ars Versificandi* by Matthew of Vendome and *Poetria Nova* by Geoffrey of Vinsauf.

Although the subject of these books concerning characterization is the same, there are differences in handling it. In the course of the centuries between Cicero and Geoffrey there is a tendency of shifting the accent from the content of character painting to formal, surface aspects. The change can be felt step by step.

In Book I of the *De Inventione*, Cicero enumerates the attributes of persons and actions to which the poet has to pay attention: NAME, NATURE: "we take into consideration such advantages and disadvantages as are given to mind and body by nature, as, for example, whether one is strong or weak, tall or short, handsome or ugly, swift or slow; whether he is bright or dull, retentive or forgetful, affable or unmannerly modest, long-suffering, or the contrary; and in short we shall take into consideration all qualities of mind and body that are bestowed by nature". MANNER OF LIFE: he mentions education, teachers in the seven liberal arts, friendships, occupation, etc. FORTUNE: one inquires, he says, about the social status, whether he acquired his position justly or unjustly, "Whether he is successful, famous or the opposite". HABIT: "the acquisition of some bodily dexterity not given by nature but won by careful training and practice".

²¹ Manly, in Shoek and Taylor, 118.

FEELING: a temporary change in mind or body: desire, fear, vexation, illness, weakness etc. INTERESTS: in philosophy, poetry, geometry, literature. PURPOSE: "a deliberate plan for doing or not doing something. ACHIEVEMENTS, ACCIDENTS and SPEECH: "considered under three tenses of the verb: what he did, what happened to him, what he said: or what he is doing, what is happening to him, what he is saying; or what he is going to do, what is happening to him, what language he is going to use".²²

I have given so much space to Cicero because I intend to show how complex his enumeration is - as if nothing new could actually be added to it. But the content has to be given a form. Horace's remark from his *Epistle to the Piso* adds something more to the content: one has to take one's example from nature. In the *Ad Herennium* we have something that points towards the formal planning of characterization. The author distinguishes between *effictio* which supplies a description of a man's outward appearance and *notatio*, describing the inner characteristics. As for the content, he is not as elaborate as Cicero but adds something very important which will also contribute to the shaping of characters: we should describe a person in such a way that the audience can recognize him, that is, pointing at individual characteristics, e.g. "the one who has a big wound on his chin".²³ Such sketches are very amusing, he says, because they set before our eyes the inclinations of the envious, bumptious, avaricious, pushy, lecherous persons.

Now nature herself teaches us what we should do. When we see in everyday life things that are petty, ordinary, and banal, we generally fail to remember them, because the mind is not being stirred by anything novel or marvellous. But if we see or hear something exceptionally base, dishonourable, unusual, great, unbelievable, or ridiculous, that we are likely to remember for a long time ... We ought, then, to set up images of a kind that can adhere longest in memory. And we shall do so if we establish similitudes as striking as possible; if we set up images that are not many or vague but active (*imagines agentes*); if we assign to them exceptional beauty or singular ugliness; if we ornament some of them, as with crowns or purple cloaks, so that the similitude may be more distinct to us; or if we somehow disfigure them, as by introducing one stained with blood or soiled with mud or smeared with red paint, so that its form is more striking, or by assigning certain comic effects to our images, for that, too, will ensure our remembering them more readily. The things we easily remember when they are real we likewise

²² Cicero, *De Inventione*, 71-75.

²³ Cornificius, 279.

remember when they are figments. But this will be essential - again and again to run over rapidly in the mind all the original places in order to refresh the images.²⁴

Geoffrey of Vinsauf and Matthew of Vendome use the rhetorics of the Antiquity as raw materials and fit them into their age: "Speaking very generally, two tendencies are observable in the cultural life of the twelfth century: first, a tendency towards the systematic organization of materials of every kind, and second, a tendency to make this new organization explicit and to make it functional in the attitudes and lives of the people"²⁵. It is also in the age of Geoffrey and Matthew that rhetorics and poetry have become practically equivalent, with the exception of a branch of rhetoric which split off, developing separately in the ars dictaminis. We can see this in the titles given to their manual of rhetorics like *Poetria Nova*.

Matthew of Vendome uses the *De Inventione* as his chief source and he follows more or less exactly Cicero's enumeration of personal attributes. But he also matches certain characteristics to certain types of persons. One should describe a type, he says, extending the particular to the typical: "... those characteristics which are attributed to a Pope, or to Caesar, or to various persons who are described should be understood, not as peculiar characteristics of those peculiar persons, but as characteristics that may apply to other persons of the same social status, age, rank, office and sex". The writer should create, with other words, boxes in which he can stuff a great many things alarmingly typical. He makes a step further in formal questions: "some epithets ought to be attributed to a fair number of persons, some ought to be attributed to all praiseworthy persons generally"²⁶, (e.g.: rigorous justice = emperor, rigorous strictness + avoidance of sauciness + shunning of incontinence = wife, stern manliness = anyone who is praised...) He goes back to Horace when writing about the credibility of the descriptions, mentions Cornificius's distinction of external and internal characteristics and also speaks about "those qualities which differentiate the person from others".²⁷ We are somewhere between the cool impersonality of Romanesque

²⁴ *Ad Herennium* III, xxii, quoted by Yates, 9-10

²⁵ Robertson, 248.

²⁶ Matthew of Vendome.

²⁷ *ibid.* 34.

paintings and the Gothic grotesque, between personified abstractions and "individuals" or even caricatures.

Geoffrey of Vinsauf is concerned with more technical details. Description is, in his opinion, first of all a means of amplifying the work: "But although the path of description is wide, let it also be wise, let it be both lengthy and lovely. See that the words with due ceremony are wedded to the subject. If description is to be food and ample refreshment of the mind, avoid too curt a brevity as well as trite conventionality"²⁸. Let us just remember the surface pattern of lines and planes governed by an abstract order in Romanesque visual arts. To Matthew's remark about the necessity of describing physical beauty he adds the way, the technique of painting: "Let the radiant description descend from the top of her head to her toe, and the whole be polished to perfection".²⁹

It is interesting to see a parallel to this description in a "rhetoric book" about manuscript illumination. I will quote from a work by Theophilus called *Schedula diversorum artium*, a twelfth-century work, where highly elaborate rules are set out for the colouring of miniatures. These rules were followed even after the twelfth century.

- (1) Prime the bare-skin parts (of the parchment) using skin-colour.
- (2) On this background, using a greenish tone, draw the eye-brows, eyes, nostrils, mouth, chin, the hollows around the nose, the temples, the wrinkles, the outlines of the faces, the young men's beards, the joints of the hands and feet.
- (3) With skin-colour deepened with cinnabar (*rosa prima*) slightly redden the cheeks, the lips, the lower part of the chin, the forehead-wrinkles, the temples, the bridge of the nose, the top of the nostrils, the joints.
- (4) With skin-colour lightened with white lead (*lumina prima*) place light tones on the eyebrows, the nose, and with fine lines, round the eyes and the lower part of the temples, and in the centre of the neck and in the curves of the hands, feet and arms.
- (5) With grey (*veneda*) made of white and black, fill in the pupils; with a lighter grey paint the eyes beside the pupils, and with pure white indicate the borders between this colour and the pupils; then shade with water.
- (6) With dark olive-green red ochre and green earth) fill the area between the eyebrows and the eyes, the lower part of the eyes, the under-chin area, the space between the mouth and chin, the curls of the

²⁸ Geoffrey of Vinsauf, 36.

²⁹ *ibid.* 37.

young men's beards, the middle of the palms of the hands near the thumb, the feet over the minor joints, the faces of children and women from chin to temple.

(7) With red (made with *rosa prima* and *cinnabar*, or *rosa secunda*) outline mouth, cheeks, neck and forehead, and indicate the folds of the palms and the joints of the limbs.

(8) If a face seems too dark, lighten the skin-colours with white (*lumina secunda*), tracing everywhere under the chin.

(9) With two black-and-yellow ochre mixture (the one more ochre, the other more black) prime the hair of the children and youths respectively; heighten with *lumina secunda*. Prime the hair and the beards of the old men with grey a little black and red, and heighten with white lead.

(10) With red-ochre mixed with a little black ... outline the pupils, trace the under the chin, between the mouth and the chin.

(11) With red ochre indicate the eyebrows, finely tracing between eyes and eyebrows and lower part of the eyes; on faces seen frontally trace the nose's shadow, according to whether the light is from right or left; outline the forehead and jawline of old people.

(12) With black make the young men's eye brows, without completely covering up the red outline eyelids, nostrils, the sides of the mouth, ears and fingers.

(13) Outline the body and fingernails with rose-red ochre.

(Bologna, 1988, 34)

We also have model-books made around this period, like for example the one by Ademar de Chabannes from the 11th century. It is a collection of traditional types with useful models which the medieval artist could use for his work. The pages contain examples for whole subjects as well as exempla of figures in motion. The confused order in which they are juxtaposed does not matter as each drawing is a self-contained unit.³⁰ In a later book of models (Tuscany, 1350-75) we can see sketches of draperies and figures in motion.³¹

In the visual arts of the age, it was first and foremost "a sacred writing of which every artist must learn the characters".³² The artist had to be familiar with a multitude of precise details and ignoring the traditional type of the persons they represented were not allowed to be ignored. "St. Peter, for example, must have curly hair, a short, thick beard and a tonsure, while St. Paul must have a bald head and a long beard. Certain details of costume are also unchangeable. Over the head

³⁰ Evans, 35.

³¹ *ibid.*, 41.

³² Male, 1.

the Virgin must wear a veil, symbol of virginity, and the Jews are known by their cone-shaped caps".³³ These types, moreover, had their well-defined place in similarly traditional scenes. Both content and form are subordinated to certain rules, as we have seen in the techniques of description in both branches of art. Here we must not forget either what Kolve points out: the meaning of "image" was in the Middle Ages more complex, it meant "what could be recollected of any sense experience: our ability to remember sound, smell, taste and touch as well".³⁴

The rules that Chaucer may have known are rather strict. It seems that not much freedom is left to the artist. Even the inscriptions of the neat boxes are prescribed. Having had a closer look at the history of character-painting we might think that nothing new can actually be added at Chaucer's time.

Nevertheless, there are four lines in the *Parliament of Fowls* which will lead us a step further, showing us Chaucer as an artist conscious of the values of the past but, at the same time, recognizing the possibility of creating something new (ll.22-25):

For out olde felde, as men seyth,
Cometh al this newe corn from yer to yere,
And out of olde bokes, in good feyth,
Cometh al this newe science that men lere.

CHAUCER AND HIS AUDIENCE

In the rhetorical treatises, above all in the medieval ones, the analysis is one of the structure, the rhetorical background is like a two-dimensional plan, and the medium in which the work was received will elevate the building itself, with all its details, adding a third dimension to it.

Which is the medium in which Chaucer's works were received? The question is rather a difficult one, as Chaucer stands at the borderline of two worlds. He had to write in a style that would apply to senses and intellect at the same time, as he had to keep two kinds of audience in mind, both listeners and readers. We already know the image of the solitary reader, the one depicted by Chaucer himself is

³³ *ibid.*, 2-3.

³⁴ Kolve, 51.

very familiar. In *The House of Fame* the eagle criticizes him, "Geffrey", because of his way of life:

For when thy labour doon al ys,
 And hast mad alle thy rekenynges,
 In stede of reste and newe thynges,
 Thou goost hom to thy hous anoon;
 And, also domb as any stoon,
 Thou sittest at another book,
 Tyl fully daswed ys thy look,
 And lyvest thus as an heremyte,
 Although thyn abstynence is lyte.
 (Book II., ll.652-660)

Nevertheless, there should be no great difference between the two kinds of responses, that is between that of the listener and the reader. In one of his essays, "Stimme und Sprache"³⁵, Hans-Georg Gadamer, speaking about "writing" also means "hearing". Hearing, he says, naturally belongs to everything concerning language, either oral or written.³⁶ According to him, writing is not simply the description of something, just as a painting is not a painting just because something is depicted in it: it becomes a painting if it "calls" us, viewers, if it puts us questions, if a kind of communication is initiated between work and viewer ("Über das Lesen von Bauten und Bildern")³⁷. Similarly, a description is a writing, if the writer, through his style, evens up everything that oral communication, with all its emotional colouring, symbolic gestures, modulation of voice, can give us. In other words, we call a writer a good one, if he or she reaches in writing the same power of language, which an immediate, man-to-man exchange of words possesses.³⁸

We are in a period when hearing engenders seeing and vice versa. In many medieval French poems we encounter the words "je vois" (I see) at the beginning. The Gawain poet "schawes" instead of writing. Stories are painted on walls in *The Knight's Tale* and in *The Parliament of Fowls*. Especially in this latter poem, in the account on the *Aeneid*, we find a natural "synesthetic blend of reading and seeing,

35 Gadamer

36 Gadamer, 169.

37 *ibid.*, 161-62.

38 *ibid.*, 177.

hearing and remembering"³⁹. Generally, Chaucer varies between 'write' and 'say'" and "even when he is 'telling' us he appears to be 'showing' us"⁴⁰. His mental pictures were "animated ... with vivid local detail"⁴¹. The task of the *ante oculo ponere* will be accomplished if the poet is skillful enough in creating imaginative verbal structures and rhythms, if he orders the language of poetry in an inventive way. These orders "might loosely be called meaning and music".⁴² Dante, in his discussion of poetry in *De vulgari eloquentia* defines poetry as "nothing else but rhetorical composition set to music".⁴³ Speaking of the authority of poetry he says: "for what is of greater authority than that which can sway the hearts of men, so as to make an unwilling man willing, and a willing man unwilling, just as this language has done and is doing?"⁴⁴

We have seen how strict the rules of rhetoric were in the tradition familiar to Chaucer - and Chaucer's audience. His audience surely knew the conventions, just as we still know the traditions of folk tales, for instance. The singer or teller of folk-tales, or the writer of poetry, like Chaucer, shared with the audience "a stock of conventional, that is 'self-centered', not naturalistic, motifs and themes, and larger segments of story, down through episodes, stock descriptions of all kinds, to formulaic verbal phrases".⁴⁵ Deschamps says something similar about the effect of music, in his discussion of poetry: "Its delectable and pleasant songs medicine and recreate those who are fatigued, heavy, or bored by thought, imagination, or labor"⁴⁶. We have here the parallel of Aristotle's and Longinus's discussion of the effect of poetry, this time not from the angle of seeing but from that of hearing. Chaucer, like the good singers or speakers of the oral tradition, usually had a better command of the traditional repertoire than his audience, otherwise he would not have been able to perform his function. But the traditional repertoire did not originate with him. Even variations on the set materials, usually followed rules and what was allowable as variants depended on the audience, on the tradition they shared with the poet. Literary qualities resided in imaginative verbal

39 Brewer, 179.

40 Gradon, 297.

41 Brewer, 179.

42 Payne, 54.

43 *Tutte le opere di Dante Alighieri*, ed. E. Moore, Oxford, 1894, Payne's transl., Liber secundus, III, p.393, lines 16-2.

44 *ibid.*, Liber primus, XVII, p.389, lines 26-31.

45 Brewer, 170-71.

46 Quoted by Payne, 55-56.

structures, in the inventive use of rhetoric colours, and "the rhythms with which the act of narration deploys them in order to make them comprehensible"⁴⁷. But, paradoxically enough, it was exactly the restrictions that made medieval literature so unique and exciting if handled by a good poet. In that case, rules did not restrict, but rather liberated them. Convention was something without which communication between poet and audience would not have been possible. They both understood it and the source of a good poet's art resided in violating his audience's expectations in interesting and pleasurable ways⁴⁸. He shocked the audience's confidence in the matter, their eyes and ears which were steadily fixed upon it, thus making them be aware of the presence of the poet and making them sharply remember what the poet felt to be important. This was the source of originality, wit and humour. This was the soil of the "newe corn", the "newe science" of Chaucer, in this sense did he "fynde" "wordes newe", to which he associated emotional effectiveness.

CHAUCER AND THE RHETORIC OF CHARACTER PAINTING AS INFLUENCED BY THE PRESENCE OF THE AUDIENCE

The group of pilgrims can be approached from many directions, we may watch them from a greater distance or may get closer to them: each position will again offer us a different view. Here we shall consider the *Prologue* as a whole, without concentrating upon single characters, pointing out, nevertheless, certain peculiarities. What we see is a series of separate portraits. They seem to act independently, without reference to each other, like in some manuscript illuminations where, when groups of figures appear, they are separated from each other by arcades, or like the portraits of saints on Gothic cathedrals, being subordinated to the concept of either the whole painting or the architecture.

But nathelees, whil I have tyme and space,
 Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
 Me thynketh it acordaunt to resoun
 To telle yow al the condicioun
 Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
 And whiche they weren, and of what degree,

47 *ibid.* 163.

48 Kierman, 1.

And eek of what array that they were inne...
(A.II.35-41)

- promises us Chaucer.⁴⁹ If we gather the attributes used in the *Prologue* we get the complexity of the attributes mentioned by Cicero: we have name, nature, manner of life, fortune, habit, feeling, interests, purpose, achievements, accidents and speech, all scattered around in the whole *Prologue*. He "actualizes" the descriptions through the introduction of a new element, the horse, as the pilgrims travel on horseback. Not all of the attributes appear at the painting of each individual character, Chaucer follows a witty technique: he uses all the prescribed raw materials, mingles them and the game begins. He keeps the rules then as a frame but allows himself to move freely within this space. He distinguishes between *effictio* and *notatio* as Cornificius demands, and takes pleasure in playing with them, which will have one of the most important roles in the artistic game between Chaucer, the poet and his audience. If we take the inner and outer characteristics apart, to the outer ones counting also attire and analyze the relationship between kernel and husk, we can almost distinguish smaller groups, or at least can trace some kind of order in the seemingly haphazard way in which Chaucer put the portraits one next to the other. This order is exactly the one he has promised us in the lines quoted above: "so as it semed me". Having *effictio* and *notatio* at hand, Chaucer variates them by putting the accent on one or the other. This may be either a conscious or an unconscious game, but the result is the same: we, the audience will know who the poet is interested in, we are almost forced to take part emotionally and to respond to Chaucer's voice. We are tactfully manipulated.

In the case of some characters the husk is either not mentioned or it is important just to emphasize positive inner characteristics, to project the quality of the kernel upon the husk. Let us take the Knight first. Chaucer enumerates a whole list of merits, noble deeds, nature:

And though that he was worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meeke as is a mayde.
He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde
In all his lyf unto no maner wight.
(ll.68-71)

⁴⁹ Morgan, ES 59, 385.

and then describes his clothes:

But for to tellen you of his array,
 His horse was goode, but he was nat gay,
 Of fustian he wered a gypon
 Al bismontered with his habergeon,
 For he was late y-come from his viage,
 And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.
 (ll.73-78)

The contrast is also suggested by the use of the conjunction "but". He does not seem to care much about wordly things, he has much nobler tasks to fulfil. The same applies to the Clerk. His horse is "as leene ... as is a rake" (l.287)

And he nas nat right fat, I undertake,
 But looked holwe, and therto sobrelly.
 Ful thredbare was his overste courtepy:
 (ll.288-90)

because he is not "worldly" enough and he had

... litel gold in cofre:
 But al that he myghte of his freendes hente,
 On bookes and on lernynge he it spente.
 (ll.298-300)

He is a perfect clerk, a scholar, "short and quyk and ful of hy sentence" (l.306). Here again, the outer appearance and the inner characteristics complete each other, one is the continuation of the other. In the case of the Parson and the Plowman outer appearance is not even mentioned, we know only about the "mere" of the Plowman at the very end (but I think it is there only to call the rhyme "Millere" in the next verse). The Parson is "povre", and "riche ... of hooly thocht and werk" (ll.179-80), and the description has an obvious conclusion at the end:

He waited for no pompe and reverence,
 Ne maked him a spiced conscience,
 But Cristes loore and his apostles twelve
 He taughte, but first folwed it hymselfe.
 (ll.525-28)

The Plowman is similarly perfect:

A trewe swinker and a good was he,
 Lyvyng in pees and parfit charitee.
 God loved he best with al his hoole herte
 At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte.
 And thanne his neighebor right as hymselfe.
 (ll.531-35)

We can see a process of growing more and more abstract through these four ideal portraits. In that of the Knight there is some dynamism, some space is left around him, in the case of the Clerk the movement slows down and the picture is more motionless; through mentioning their appearance Chaucer suggests that, however minimal, they both have contact with the world here below. But they do not step out of the ideal background, they are like three-dimensional statues perfectly subordinated to the divine structure of the cathedral. With the character of the Parson and the Plowman another step is made: the Parson is on the earth only to connect mortals with the Divine Order, he has lost his worldliness, and the Plowman almost belongs to the world of personified abstractions which is suggested by a nearly word-to-word quotation from the Ten Commandments, here applied to his person. We seem to step back to the two-dimensional Romanesque manuscript illuminations, with the golden, divine background and nearly see their figures surrounded by a halo, getting a glimpse of the divine dimension. This glittering, golden surface in manuscript illuminations "effectively destroys all visual association with this world, it creates a celestial envelope of light, in which bodies have no corporeality"⁵⁰.

Husk and kernel are equally present and strongly linked in the case of some other characters. Here the two parts either determine or sometimes contradict each other, there is tension between them. Here is the Friar, for instance. Chaucer speaks about his deeds, hinting in this way at his inner characteristics:

*For unto swich a worthy man as he
 Acorded nat, as by his facultee
 To have with sike lazars acquaintance.
 It is nat honeste, it may nat avaunce,
 For to deelen with so swich poraille;
 But al with riche and selleres of vitaille.*

50 Salter, 258.

These lines are parallel with the following ones:

*For ther ne was nat lyk a cloysterer
With a thredbar cope, as is a por scolar,
But he was lyk a mayster, or a pope,
Of double worstede was his semicope,
That rounded as a belle out of the presse.*

He uses fine, formal, if you like, musical means, mingling it with contentual ones to make the tension palpable. Chaucer obviously takes pleasure in painting the portraits, creates an atmosphere of expectation and the audience is dragged energetically into participating. These are the most exciting characters (Prioress, Monk, Friar, Squier, Wife of Bath, Pardoner).

There is a third possibility of variation, as if the opposite of the first one. The emphasis is laid on the husk. There are two possibilities to create these portraits: either by a minute description of their appearance or by using one or two striking *propria*, which, like the attributes of the saints on sculptures and paintings, will immediately tell us where they belong and who they are. An example of the first version is the Miller. His appearance is so minutely described, that the audience almost physically feels that one would not be able to lift him above the earth, above the flesh-and-blood reality. This is suggested both formally and contentually; formally it is the accumulation of attributes, contentually their meaning: he is "a stout carl for the nones" (l.545), "short-sholdered, brood, a thikke knarre" (l.549) "ful byg ... of brawn and eek of bones" (l.546), where also a musical device in the form of strong alliteration contributes to the effect. Through this minute description and the density of detail, his worldliness gets an exaggerated weight, he resembles the grotesque figures on the marginalia of manuscripts or the water-spouts, figures on label stops and other details on and in the cathedrals. Moreover, he is also given an attribute, a bagpipe, a symbol of profanity:

*A baggepipe wel koude he blowe and sowne,
And therwithal he broghte us out of towne.
(ll.565-66)*

The *descriptio* is, by nature, "a close focus technique not unlike the pictorial enlargements used in medieval art to emphasise the most important figures

without regard to perspective"⁵¹, even without such exaggerations. Here the Miller gets emphasis among the pilgrims, and, more important, the contrast with the Plowman is sharpened. These two extreme figures are put side by side in the *Prologue*, so much so, that, as we have seen, the portraits are linked by a rhyme (a musical means again!). The jump from the two-dimensional, almost holy Plowman to the three-dimensional, colourful, harsh and loud Miller is sudden and pushes the audience energetically to watching the pilgrims from another perspective. The description of the Summoner is similarly intense, the image of his grotesque figure unites, in the medieval sense of the word, sight, sound, taste, smell and even touch, moving from one to the other:

Sight:

A Somonour was ther with us in that place,
 That hadde a fyr-reed cherubynnes face.
 For saucefleem he was, with eyen narwe.
 As hoot he was and lecherous as a sparwe,
 With scalled browes blake and piled berd.
 Of his visage children were aferd.
 (ll.623-28)

Touch and smell:

Ther nas quyk-silver, lytarge, ne brymstoon,
 Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,
 Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,
 That hum myghte helpen of his whelkes white,
 Nor of the knobbes sittynge on his chekes.
 (ll.629-33)

Smell and taste:

Wel loved he garleeek, oynons, and eek lekes,
 And for to drynken strong wyn, reed as blood;
 (ll.634-35)

Sound:

Thanne wolde he speke and crie as he were wood.
 And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,

51 Gradon, 291-92.

Thanne wolde he speke no word but Latyn.
(ll.636-38)

This auditive aspect is augmented in the following lines, by this device Chaucer creates some space around him, and then, after this circle, we get back to sight:

A gerland hadde he set upon his heed
As greet as it were for an ale-stake.
A bokeleer hadde he maad hym of a cake.
(ll.666-68)

Let us now see examples to the other version. Emphasis is given to the description by both its length and the density of detail but the focus is given by the detail alone. "The more precise a word the more it gives the impression of close focus"⁵². Let us now replace "word" with "image", applying this statement to the image-theory: the more striking the image, the more it moves the audience, that is, the stronger its reaction. Here is the Cook. On first sight we may have the feeling that Chaucer created this character just to show an example to a rhetorical rule pointing maybe back at the *Ad Herennium* where a man with a wound on his chin is mentioned. In the *Ad Herennium* such techniques are said to serve to provoke emotional response from the audience. But why should we be stirred emotionally by a cook? Nevertheless, we do remember him, not only because of the wound itself, but first of all because of the shocking combination of the wound with food, a juxtaposition of seemingly unrelated detail:

But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,
That on his shyne a mormal hadde he.
For blankmanger, that made he with the beste.
(ll.385-87)

We should not forget that the Cook was taken to the pilgrimage by a group of people, the "Haberdasshere, Carpenter, Webbe, Dyere and Tapycer" (ll.351-62). Their clothes are minutely described - Chaucer does not pay attention to them one by one -, the stress being laid thus on the husk again, on the world with other words, and this picture is extended in the portrait of the Cook, who is busy with providing them with mundane pleasures:

⁵² *ibid.*, 291-92.

A Cook they hadde with them for the nones
 To boille the chiknes with the marybones,
 And poudre-marchane tart and galyngale.
 Wel koude he knowe a draughte of Londoun ale.
 He koude rooste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,
 Maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye.
 (ll.379-84)

Chaucer uses an element from Cicero's list, relates it to the Cook, but we connect the description with that worldly group which pays so much attention to appearance. The whole description, both the group's and the Cook's, would not specifically move the audience towards thinking, if finally they did not see the horrible wound, so closely put to the image of delicious foods. Why is that wound there? -we may ask then. Is this the result of vanitas and gluttony? Is this what we should remember?

These are, I think, the three main possibilities of variation in the description of the portraits in the *Prologue*. We have to do with three centres of gravity. The closer we are to the centres the stronger we feel Chaucer's interest and the more intensively we react. The further we get from them, the less tension and expectation we are exposed to, as if the transitional figures were there with the purpose of letting the audience repause and gather strength for the next "round". But even in the case of such figures, where either the husk is missing (Sergeant of the Law, Maunciple) or the link between husk and kernel is not exciting, we have no feeling of want because we can fill in the gaps thanks to the context, to the environment of the figures. For instance, the portrait of the Maunciple is put after the Miller's. The portrait of the Miller, as we have seen, is "shown", whereas that of the Maunciple is "told". This is a proof for Chaucer's good feeling for proportion or for the psychology of the audience: after an intensive visual image the inner eye should have a rest and the ear is put to work.

We can now see, I think, some kind of order in the way Chaucer arranged the portraits in the *Prologue*. This order is dictated by his own interests and the psychology of the audience and it crystalizes at certain places and its means consists both in the witty use of *effictio* and *notatio* and a natural and spontaneous lapse from showing to telling and vice versa. We see the portraits connected formally with each other, depending upon and overlapping or being continued in each other (the Cook and the group), one leading to the next one (Summoner-Pardoner). Sharp contrast is also achieved by a set order (e.g. Plowman and

Miller). At other times a certain process can be detected through their arrangements (the ideal portraits of the Knight, through the Clerk to the Persoun and the Plowman). Or, through the lapse from showing to telling, from one character to the other, an effect of tension and release, of intensive concentration and repause is achieved. This is the role of the "transitional" figures, too. In this order we can trace one of the most important characteristics of medieval iconography, where position and grouping are of extraordinary importance.⁵³ But there are other parallelisms wit the visual arts, too, related to showing and telling. If we are "shown", the picture we get is either static like a two-dimensional painting or it becomes a grotesque where the surface is important. Where the two are combined, we get a late Gothic sculpture, where the stiffness disappears. The late Gothic period is also the one when, for example, the envious person stands in the picture instead of Envy, the gluttonous person instead of Gluttony. The iconographical signs that figures were represented with in Romanesque art, taking place "outside", start now to get internalized, appearing as gestures, facial expressions etc. Besides, the figures are not static any longer, they are in a vivid relationship with the space created around them. In painting, too, beginning with the fourteenth century, the painters started to surround their figures with space, first only a narrow stage was used "to provide free play of movement, so that the figure could be portrayed three dimensionally"⁵⁴. When the accent is on telling, he presents us portraits with perspective, and the characters are given a context of a kind, getting a past, present and even future. To this effect contribute the narrator's comments like

And I seyde his opinion was good
(l. 183).

But let us now step further to see what other rhetorical devices Chaucer applies in the *Prologue*. As for *propria*, he uses plenty of them, and, like in the case of the Summoner, he makes use of them in the Medieval sense of the word "image", using *propria* expressed in visual and auditive effect, taste and smell, plus adds the "telling" side of his technique: we can see the Prioressse "wyping" her "overlippe" "clene", and through these her careful, far much too lady-like and down-to-earth motions, we can smell the "garleek, oynons and eek leekes" and the "strong wyn" when the Summoner passes by and can hear the "goot"-like "voys"

⁵³ Male, 5.

⁵⁴ Deuchler, 133.

of the Pardoner, the Prioress singing "the service dyvyne" "ful weel", "entuned in hir nose ful semely", the "floytinge" of the young Squier and the loud bagpipe of the Miller. It is through these propria that the portraits are made vivid enough to be regarded as individual ones, and one has the impression (or rather illusion, as we shall see later) that they would stand also without each other's support. This makes us again remember the structure of the Gothic motet: the individual voices can be enjoyed both separately and together.

There is a peculiar means Chaucer uses all over the *Prologue*, a line to be found in the case of almost all pilgrims, a summarizing line which appears everywhere in a similar form:

KNIGHT: "He was a verray, parfit, gentil knight". (l.72)

MONK: "Now certainly he was a fair prelat". (l.204)

FRERE: "There was no man nowher so vertuous." (l.251)

MERCHAUNT: "For sothe he was a worthy man with-alle" (l.283)

SERGEANT OF THE LAWE: "So great a purchasour was nowher noon." (l.318)

FRANKELEYN: "Was nowher such a worthy vavasour". (l.360)

SHIPMAN: "And cereinly he was a good fellawe." (l.395)

DOCTOUR OF PHISIK: "In all this world ne was ther noon hym lik." (l.4

12)

"He was a verray, parfit praktisour." (l.422)

PERSOUN: "A bettre preest I trowe that nowher noon ys." (l.524)

SOMONOUR: "A bettre felawe sholde man nought fynde." (l.648)

PARDONER: "Ne was ther such another Pardoner." (l.693)

There are also epithets like "wys", "good", "worthy", "parfit" used as smaller building elements. These lines and epithets become empty, naive or provocative depending on the context, serving as a frame or expectation. They run through the whole *Prologue*, like a musical motif. We might even say that Chaucer creates a kind of tradition with it in the *Prologue*, it becomes a new element belonging to the common stock. Just as in the case of husk and kernel, tension is created. Chaucer is playing on many layers simultaneously: we have the background of the Middle Ages, in the form of the structure, the demands of the divine dimension which is obvious to everyone. Against this stable background we have the characters. Tension is present to a certain extent between these two layers already. We have seen other sources for creating tension above. But he goes further, using the

building elements I have just enumerated: the series of portraits begins with the Knight, the idea of the "parfit" Knight is there in the mind of the audience as element of the common stock they share with the poet. Then the image of this "verray, parfit gentil Knight" follows which fits perfectly into the ideal image of a knight. The audience associates the positive summarizing line and the epithet "parfit" with a positive character. In the following portraits the summarizing line contradicts the image. After some portraits we have the one of the Monk. A fat Monk who likes worldly things like eating, riding wildly "as loude as dooth a chapel belle" (l.171), and is not bookish at all: he seems to be exactly the opposite of the ideal monk. Then, having all this in front of our eye, hearing the funny noise, we are struck by the line:

Now certainly he was a fair prelat.
(l.204)

With this statement we are swung out on the third layer, from where the whole image becomes grotesque. We continue now to associate the line with the grotesque image, and this is enforced by a series of portraits where this association is not disturbing, and then suddenly the nearly holy Parson comes - and we are forced to believe our ears again. Dynamism and excitement is achieved thus on yet another level. "If everything is ironical, nothing is interesting, since the reader has been deprived of those conspiratorial pleasures, those satisfactions of knowing that he has joined an elite fraternity of knowingness, and instead has simply to decode praise as blame and vice versa"⁵⁵.

As we have seen, Chaucer does not bring innovations in the raw material of character-painting. Rhetorical rules are clearly to be seen in his planning. The "ante oculo ponere" worked well, the portraits of the Ellesmere manuscript and Dryden's praise of Chaucer prove that: the pilgrims are easy to distinguish, the propria can clearly be seen; "I see ... all the Pilgrims in the Canterbury Tales, their Humours, their Features, and the very Dress, as distinctly as if I had soup'd ith them at the Tabard in Southwark"⁵⁶. At the level of the plan, or the level of prescriptions, he is then conventional, complying with the expectations of the Middle Ages. But as he "elevates" the *Prologue*, he mingles the compulsory prescriptions and begins a game full of tension and dynamism, of serious and

⁵⁵ Pearsall, 63.

⁵⁶ Quoted by Morgan, *ES* 69, 485.

mocking moments, expectations, tensions and release. It is a pull-and-push game and the audience is asked to take part in it.

We can see here drawings from Villard de Honnecourt's sketch-book from the thirteenth century. He was an architect and, although he was interested in all forms, drawing not only plans but sketches of people and animals too, he conceived human figures also as examples to how they can be constructed out of geometrical shapes, or rather how geometry - the human dimension in our case - underlies art, showing here how his drawings can be reduced to geometric figures. On another page we see two figures fighting, without the underlying geometrical figure, but, our eyes having been "trained", it is easy to see the imaginary lines binding different points together.

"It is indeed our sense of form that enables us to assert (if not to explain) the greatness of any particular work"⁵⁷, and it is our sense of form that enables us to appreciate this joggling with prescribed formal elements.

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András Kiséry:

THE RHETORIC OF WOUNDS: PERSUASION IN *JULIUS CAESAR*

*... blessed are they that have not seen,
and yet have believed.*

The connections among unmediated communication, emotions and the visual are quite striking throughout *Julius Caesar*. Preparing for his speech, Antony remarks on this relationship so vital to his public performance:

Passion, I see, is catching, for mine eyes,
Seeing those beads of sorrow stand in thine,
Began to water.

(*Caes.3.1.282-4*)

His own passion and his tears - "[h]is eyes are red as fire with weeping" (*Caes.3.2.116*) - are caught by his stage audience by the end of his speech: indeed, the oration he is performing is really aimed at infecting the audience with this passion, at transferring the fire of his eyes to the audience, to the city of Rome and in the end, to the houses of the city as well. Antony's tears, quoted above, and the fire of his speech ("It will inflame you, it will make you mad", *Caes.3.2.145*) are actually inflaming the city:

First Plebeian
We'll burn his body in the holy place,
And with the brands fire the traitors' houses.
Second Plebeian
Go fetch fire.

(*Caes.3.2.255-256*)

Both of Antony's aims are achieved by fire: fire will exalt Caesar and fire will revenge him; what is more, it is fire from Caesar's funeral pyre that will burn the houses of the traitors. One of the questions I am trying to answer in this essay could also be formulated along these lines: how is it that Coriolanus, whose eye, we are told, is "[r]ed as 'twould burn Rome" (*Cor.5.1.64*), does not inflame anyone, and how does he come to turn back before he would forge "himself a name o'th'fire / Of burning Rome" (*Cor.5.1.14-5*)? How do his eyes, his fire differ from Antony's?

To catch fire and to catch sight of something are brought into a suggestive relationship with each other in the passages quoted above. To apply the language used by the characters: the fire of Antony's eyes is spreading, as a natural force, one thing catching fire from another. This language seems to imply no conscious intervention whatsoever: passion, of which eye and tears are the outward expression, is caught like fire, unknowingly, by way of contact, without mediation. Like fire, it is elementary and overwhelming; and it is also unlimited and complete in regard to the object inflamed - once caught on fire, the whole is on fire: it is an all-inclusive, presumably irreversible change, transforming, like fire the city into charcoal, the whole personality into something not necessarily rich, but without fail new and strange. The well-known Shakespearean "eye / I" pun is partly suggestive of this expressive property of the eyes, but a passage from Quintilian's *Institutions* can also be helpful in elucidating it: writing about the eloquence of the eyes, and asserting that "by far the greatest influence is exercised by the eye" (XI.iii.72), Quintilian says that "nature has given them tears to serve as interpreters of our feelings [*lacrimas iis natura mentis indices dedit*], tears that will break forth for sorrow or stream for very joy." (XI.iii.75) The conjunction between eyes, tears, and fire can be tracked down as a commonplace, transmitted by classical and Renaissance rhetoric, finding its way into Shakespeare's texts, and becoming what might now be looked upon as verbal echoes in, in this case, *Julius Caesar*. In Quintilian we read: "Will [the judge] shed tears if the pleader's eyes are dry? It is utterly impossible. Fire alone can kindle" (VI.ii.27-28); this seems then to have been remembered by Thomas Wilson, when he writes:

There is no substance of it self, that wil take fire, excepte ye put fire to it. Likewise no mannes nature is so apt, streight to be heated, except the

¹ This is not intended as a tongue-in-cheek remark establishing an institutionalist view of interpretation - not, at least, directly.

Orator himself, be on fire, and brynge his heat with hym. It is a common sayyng, nothyng kyndelet soner than fire. [...] Again, nothing moysteth soner than water. Therefore a weping iye causeth muche moysture, and provoketh teares. (273 / Fol. 73^v)

The metaphor of fire is commonly used with reference to the persuasive impact of emotions expressed, to describe the immediate visual presence of someone's excitement on the audience², thus forging a link between vision and immediacy. However, there is something uncanny about this apparent reliance on direct emotional surge in manuals of rhetoric, that is, in what were manuals instructing speakers to move their audiences by cunning, calculated effects. Before looking into this question more closely, let us briefly consider some of the more disturbing consequences of the imagery of eyes and tears. Tears blur the sight, they distort or at least interfere with what is more often than not supposed to be the organ of objective perception. In spite of this, in *Julius Caesar*, it is Antony, the crying one, who seems to get things right, whose *insights* seem to work and become accepted, whereas the dry-eyed conspirators, who only talk about weeping (cp. Brutus: "As Caesar loved me, I weep for him", *Caes.*3.2.24), in Titinius' words "misconstrue everything" (*Caes.*5.3.84)³. Dry eyes with clear sight, then, may prove to be unable to construe and construct the world sensibly, whereas blurred sight may construct the world in a clearly profitable way. The ability to move depends on the capability of being moved. Once moved, one can transform the world by moving others: once on fire, one can set the world on fire: whereas clear sight, at least according to this metaphor, is bound to be ineffectual. In this context, to be "constant as the northern star" (*Caes.*3.1.60) rings rather ominously, as does the fact that Brutus cannot be moved by Portia - i.e., not well enough to make him actually tell her about his secrets: the only real response she ever gets is "Leave me with haste" (*Caes.*2.1.233-309). Antony cries,

² cp. also Cicero: *De Oratore*, presumably the source for Quintilian, but certainly an earlier example indicating the prevalence of the metaphor: "For just as there is no substance so ready to take fire, as to be generally flame without the application of a spark, so also there is no mind so ready to absorb an orator's influence, as to be inflammable when the assailing speaker is not himself aglow with passion." (II.xlv.190)

³ My argument is not hindered by the fact that earlier in this scene Cassius needs someone to report on the proceeding of the battle because his "sight was ever thick" (*Caes.*5.3.21). Brutus's self-deceit, for example, has long been a stock part of *Julius Caesar*-criticism. And all in all, the tragic fall itself is suggestive of a misunderstanding of the world.

and his tearful eyes not only grasp the situation, but also transform it: so he survives.

Sir Philip Sidney's *Apology for Poetry* is presumably the best-known piece using this language of seeing from among all discursive (i.e. non-poetic) texts of the English Renaissance. Some of Quintilian's rather suggestive passages quoted above are matched closely by Sidney's portrayals of the quasi-visual aspect of poetic communication⁴:

whatsoever the philosopher saith should be done, [the poet] giveth a perfect picture of it in some one by whom he presupposeth it was done, so as he coupleth the general notion with the particular example. A perfect picture I say, for he yieldeth to the powers of the mind an image of that whereof the philosopher bestoweth but a wordish description, which doth neither strike, pierce, nor possess the sight of the soul so much as that other doth.

(Sidney 107. 9-17)

Effects of good poetry are repeatedly described in visual terms: things "lie dark before the imaginative and judging power, if they be not illuminated or figured forth by the speaking picture of poesy" (107. 32-4); "all virtues, vices and passions so in their own natural seats laid to the view, that we seem not to hear of them, but clearly to see through them" (108. 16-8); "me seems I see before my eyes the lost child's disdainful prodigality ..." (109. 7-8), etc.⁵ Instead of the general / generalizing concepts of philosophy, of discursive language, it is the particular, the specific that is considered more effective. Poetic language, with its preference

4 The *Apology* is treated here not as a theory of poetry, but as a text in which a fairly consistent theory of communication is manifesting itself (cp. Robinson 136). For the same reason, only those aspects of Sidney's work which are relevant to our present interest are dealt with here.

5 At this point, I must stress that my interest in Sidney's ideas springs from an interest in the history and the impact of a metaphor prevalent in European thought since at least Plato (cp. Robinson's first two chapters on the history of what he calls "visual epistemology"), and that I have serious doubts about the applicability of these terms as a contemporary critical framework in the stylistic analysis of the "picturesque" aspect of, usually, *The New Arcadia*: in critical exercises rejoicing in pointing out how closely Sidney followed his own ideas. Sidney's terminology does not seem to imply the use of any particular style, and to my mind, the specific verbal, stylistic consequences of his remarks (if any) are far from clear. This is why I consider e.g. Farmer's chapter on Sidney (in this otherwise very informative book) an evident failure: after some really sensitive comments on the *Apology*, he falls back on the well-worn parallelisms between the stylistic ideal (supposedly) outlined in it and the style of Sidney's later prose.

for the particular, the sensual, is the language that can come closest to the ideal form of immediate communication: the poet

beginneth not with obscure definitions, which must blur the margents
with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness; but he
cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion [...] (113. 24-7)

Apart from sights, it is this type of language that can transmit the "*Idea* or fore-conceit of the work", "delivering them in such excellency as he hath imagined them." (101. 4-7) The written, the discursive, the "to be interpreted" is never spoken of in favourable terms: when briefly reflecting on contemporary English literature, he criticizes the songs and sonnets, i.e. love poetry, of his age for not being persuasive enough: he argues that many of these writings,

if I were a mistress, would never persuade me they were in love; so coldly they apply fiery speeches, as man that had rather read lovers' writings [...] than in truth they feel those passions, which easily (as I think) may be betrayed by that same forcibleness or *energia* (as the Greeks call it) of the writer. (137. 33-138. 3)

It is the text, the written, that proves forceless when compared with "true feeling": and true feeling is in turn characterized by that *energia* which (as characterized by Quintilian)

Cicero calls illumination and actuality, which makes us seem not so much to narrate as to exhibit the actual scene, while our emotions will be no less actively stirred than if we were present at the actual occurrence.

(Quintilian VI. ii. 32)

Sidney is here juxtaposing the immediacy of the visual with the secondary characteristic of the text, designating the text as something capable of a certain value as a surrogate, standing in for the missing immediate presence: it only gains importance when it is capable of creating the illusion of the natural sign.⁶ Poetry is the kind of text which transcends its textuality, and its import and efficacy are explained by Sidney as flowing from this ability to transcend. The force of poetry (and similarly, the force of rhetoric) is by no means unique to poetic texts, but

6 cp. Krieger's *Ekphrasis*, an astonishing book on this immense topic.

rather a force no other text but poetry seems to have: it is a force typical for sights and images, shared by no other text but poetry. It is the visual that moves us: what we see, whether with our eyes or inwardly, does definitely affect us. "Whom do not the words of Turnus move, the tale of Turnus having planted his image in the imagination?" (114. 14-6): for "the image of each action stirreth and instructeth the mind" (119. 27-8). Poetry is more powerful than e.g. philosophy - and, since the argument is in fact identical, good oratory is more persuasive than monotonously argumentative talk⁷ - because the text "giveth a perfect picture" instead of a "wordish description", that is, it is able to create an illusion of sights. It is the power to move⁸ that distinguishes poetry from other texts, and this power appears to be flowing from the quasi-visual nature of poetic texts. It is because of this quality that it is said to "strike, pierce" (107. 15-6).

Emotion, vision and persuasion appear to be rather strongly interrelated in Sidney as well as in the claims made by the terminology of Antony's speech (claims not to be mixed up with Antony's personal convictions)⁹. In both texts, in the oration in *Julius Caesar* and in the treatise, the transmission of visual (or quasi-visual) images is treated as the ultimate aim of persuasive communication¹⁰,

7 cp. the first objection against the poetry referred to: "would never persuade me". The argument of the manuals of rhetoric is perceivably present, right beneath the surface of the *Apology*.

8 Poetry is of higher standing than the philosopher, because "no man is so much *philophilosophos* as to compare the philosopher in moving with the poet. And that moving is of a higher degree than teaching, it may by this appear, that it is well nigh the cause and the effect of teaching." (112. 28-32) As with texts and sights, so with *gnosis* and *praxis*: text (*gnosis*) is only useful as an aid, leading to the illusion of a sight, *gnosis* only seems only to be important as something leading to *praxis*.

9 Shakespeare's use of Quintilian was noted early. Baldwin discusses it at length, also drawing attention to the relationship between *Hamlet* and Book VI of Quintilian to the final conclusion that "It was clearly Quintilian who shaped Hamlet's thought here." He quotes the Hecuba-monologue, and juxtaposes it with the following passage, a clue for another essay possibly: "I have often seen actors, both in tragedy and comedy, leave the theatre still drowned in tears after concluding the performance of some moving role. But if the mere delivery of words written by another has the power to set our souls on fire with fictitious emotions, what will the orator do whose duty it is to picture to himself the facts and who has it in his power to feel the same emotion as his client whose interests are at stake?" (Quintilian VI.ii.35) Baldwin points out that "... it is Quintilian on the affections, passions or emotions who is shaping Hamlet's thought throughout this crucial section", but he does not go into the details of this theory, and makes no references to this aspect of *Julius Caesar* either. (Baldwin II.204-6)

10 The claims made in the preceding passages are not, of course, new: cp. e.g. Farmer, who claims that in the *Apology*, "sensible precepts are a key to verbal communication" (9), and Robinson's thorough-going analyses devoted to Sidney's essay and its philosophical contexts.

and verbal communication only as a mere, though unavoidable substitute for them. It is therefore not surprising that at the climax of his speech - of a speech quite obsessed with these issues, with *apocalypse* in the sense previously suggested, i.e. in the sense of unveiling "truth" - Antony is switching from verbal rhetoric to what seems to be direct reference to the visual. The lifting of Caesar's mantle is literally an *apocalypse*, an unveiling of something; and what else could be unveiled, but truth. The truth in this case is Caesar's body and the fact that he has been murdered. It needs no argumentation, no reasoning, everyone can see it, and seeing, as we all know, is believing. All Antony is doing is disclosing the body, and the plebeians respond immediately: "O piteous spectacle! O noble Caesar! O woeful day! O traitors! villains! O most bloody sight! Revenge! About! Seek! Burn! Fire! Kill! Slay! Let not a traitor alive." (3.2.199-206) They seem to be moved by the image just the way Quintilian surmised they would, and Antony wanted them to be. But let us give their lines a self-conscious, or self-referential reading. "O piteous spectacle! [...] O most bloody sight!" That it is, indeed. But is this *the truth*, this spectacle, this sight? In what respect, and how, can a sight be true, or even Truth? And how immediate is the response really?

The power of eloquence and persuasion was often described and praised in the Renaissance.¹¹ To persuade, that is, to move by means of eloquence, was

11 In one of the introductory chapters of the Third Book of Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie*, a character of an anecdote starts to tell an anecdote to "certaine Doctours of the ciuil law":

[...] if perswasions were not very violent, to the minde of man it could not have wrought so strange an effect as we read that it did once in AEgypt, and would haue told the whole tale at large, if the Magistrate had not passed it ouer very pleasantly. Now to tell you the whole matter as the gentleman intended, thus it was. There came into AEgypt a notable Oratour, whose name was *Hegesias* who inueyed so much against the incomodities of this transitory life, and so highly commended death the dispatcher of all euils; as a great number of his hearers destroyed themselues, some with weapon, some with poyson, others by drowning and hanging themselues to be rid out of this vale of misery, in so much as it was feared least many moe of the people would haue miscaried by occasion of his perswasions, if king *Ptolome* had not made a publicke proclamation, that the Oratour should auoyde the countrey, and no more be allowed to speake in any matter. Whether now perswasions, may not be said violent and forcible to simple myndes in speciall, I referre it to all mens iudgements that heare the story. (Puttenham 141)

considered as perhaps the most important of the three traditional aims of rhetoric: *movere, docere & delectare*¹². As for the means to achieve this, Quintilian, one of the major classical authorities on rhetoric in the Renaissance, devotes Chapter 2 of the Sixth Book of his *Institutio* to questions of emotional appeal and its role in persuasion¹³. He ascribes great importance to the link between images (visions) and the effectiveness of eloquence. What follows is an outline of his argument:

The prime essential for stirring the emotions of others is, in my opinion, first to feel those emotions oneself. [...] if we wish to give our words the appearance of sincerity, we must assimilate ourselves to the emotions of those who are genuinely so affected, and our eloquence must spring from the same feeling that we desire to produce in the mind of the judge. [...] But how are we to generate these emotions in ourselves, since emotion is not in our own power? [...] There are certain experiences which the Greeks call *phantasiai* and the Romans *visions*, whereby things absent are presented to our imagination with such extreme vividness that they seem actually to be before our very eyes. It is the man who is really sensitive to such impressions who will have the greatest power over the emotions. [...] it may be possible to turn this form of hallucination to some profit. I am complaining that a man has been murdered. [...] Shall I not bring before my eyes all the circumstances [...]? [...] Shall I not see the fatal blow delivered and the stricken body fall? Will not the blood, the deathly pallor, the groan of agony, the death-rattle, be indelibly impressed upon my mind? From such impressions arises that *enargeia* which Cicero calls illumination and actuality, which makes us seem not so much to narrate as to exhibit the actual scene, while our emotions will be no less actively stirred than if we were present at the actual occurrence.

(Quintilian VI.ii.26-32)

(I have selected this particular passage for the subtly self-reflective closure, which in its attempt to persuade the reader utilizes a "scheme" very similar to the one introduced by Antony's speech, namely that it disclaims authority and thus helps the reader to accommodate the indoctrinated meaning as obvious.) We may find similar stories in many other contemporary works on rhetoric and poetics, most of them anecdotes from the classics, told again and again, as the one on Hercules both by Puttenham (142) and Wilson (19).

¹² "move, teach, please": the three aims are a set list since at least Quintilian (III.V.2); cp. also Vickers 136

¹³ As for the importance of Quintilian: "Erasmus in *De Conscribendis Epistolis* had referred all learned grammarians to Quintilian's as the best treatment of the affects." (Baldwin II.206, note 32)

These passages are to be found in the book dealing with the peroration, the closing part of the oration, which is "the most important part of forensic pleading and in the main consists of appeals to the emotions" (Quintilian VI.ii.1). The argument quoted shall now serve as a guideline for some further remarks about (tacit) assumptions and traditions governing the utilization of the visual.

Quintilian regards (!) visual images as central to persuasion. It appears that the process is something like image-text-image, where text is only used for the transmission of the "real thing", of the visual, which, once "translated" from the text, can be present to the mind without further mediation, and hence exert immense power over emotions, the faculty which is the place of "unmediated", non-discursive processes. In this view, mental processes are evidently visual, and the medium of understanding is identical with that of visual perception. This implies, that visual messages are compatible with, and can enter immediately, the process of thinking. Indeed, the aim even of the non-emotional type of peroration, the enumeration and repetition of the facts, to which Quintilian devotes a single paragraph only, is to "place the whole of the case before [the judge's] eyes." (Quintilian VI.i.1) Even the vulnerable and necessarily imperfect, because verbal, transmission of the image can be supported, and its effects enhanced by visual means, by gestures and by exhibiting strong emotions, suggesting strong involvement. These ideas have become - some of them had probably always been - commonplaces by the Renaissance. In Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique* for example we read:

In movyng affections, and stirryng the judges to be greved, the weight of the matter must be so set forth, as though they saw it plaine before their eyes, ..."

(269 / S4^v)

When discussing the effects and aims of rhetoric, Quintilian suggests that persuasion is not sufficient as a definition of rhetoric, since

many other things have the power of persuasion, such as money, influence, the authority and rank of the speaker, or even some *sight unsupported by language*, when for instance the place of words is supplied by the memory of some individual's great deeds, by his lamentable appearance or the beauty of his person. Thus when Antonius in the course of his defence of Manius Aquilius tore open his client's robe and revealed the honourable scars which he had acquired while facing his country's foes, he relied no longer on the power of his

eloquence, but appealed directly to the eyes of the Roman people. And it is believed that they were so profoundly moved by the sight as to acquit the accused. Again there is a speech of Cato, to mention no other records, which informs us that Servius Galba escaped condemnation solely by the pity which he aroused not only by producing his own young children before the assembly, but by carrying round in his arms the son of Sulpicius Gallus. So also according to general opinion Phryne was saved not by the eloquence of Hyperides, admirable as it was, but by the sight of her exquisite body, which she further revealed by drawing aside her tunic.

(Quintilian II.xv.6-9. italics mine)¹⁴

Quintilian is referring to sights "unsupported by language", and in the concluding part of this chapter he is asserting with Plato that rhetoric and the search for truth cannot be separated. The rhetoric of Platonism relies quite heavily on the metaphorical identification of seeing and knowing. Plato is the fountainhead - or arguably, the first notable representative - of the long and meandering tradition of visual epistemology in European thought. It is in Plato that we first encounter the elaboration of this equation of seeing and knowing,¹⁵ the presumption of an inherence of meanings, and where interpretation and understanding are first conceived as passive processes of unearthing these meanings. Knowledge of something in this view is not a construct, but a mirror-image of the object's idea.¹⁶ Inquiry is at most a process of removing the obstacles potentially disturbing the view: and truth is arrived at by contemplating the object cleared of all misconceptions. This notion of truth and understanding is very common and almost "natural" to us, an instinctual fulfillment of the "logocentric desire", of the desire for the natural sign, for absolute, unquestionable, transcendental meanings. Quintilian seems to be taking a clearly anti-rhetorical stand here: but in fact, despite this theoretical position, we have already cited (and will later cite) some passages which suggest that in rhetorical practice he is actually endorsing the utilization of what is excluded here from the domain of rhetoric proper, from the domain of artful verbal argumentation. Furthermore, his description of these

¹⁴ The same story about Antonius defending Manius Aquilius is narrated in Cicero's dialogue, *De Oratore*, by Antonius himself. NB, this Antonius, also Marcus, is not identical with Shakespeare's Mark Antony, but his grandfather. The two Marcus Antonius were often mixed up or simply identified by 16th century readers.

¹⁵ cp. Robinson 16ff on this issue.

¹⁶ On the conceptual problems arising from the picture-theory of knowledge, cp. Mitchell, Chapter 1.

sights as "unsupported by language" is - at least to some extent - immediately qualified by pointing out the link between the sight and what one might as well interpret as internalized texts: the memory of great deeds. The sights, though not coupled with explicit verbal comments, exert their power over the audience through the texts and contexts they call to the audience's, the judges' mind. First and most importantly, all his examples are from the courtroom, and are instances of moving the judges to decide favourably, so it is not very difficult to see that, rather than advocating the Platonic, anti-rhetorical view of images, rhetoric does indeed utilize the instinctual desire after the "real" by putting sights to action in a rhetorical way. It is in well-calculated moments, with taking related contexts into account, that sights are employed. Their purpose is not conveying truth - which does not mean they are used for concealing it: the criterion of truth simply does not apply in this context -, but obtaining a favourable decision.

It is in this context of forensic pleading that the question of truth and of the relationship between rhetoric and truth is now to be reconsidered. The anti-rhetorical, Platonic concept of truth is perhaps best visualised (?) embodied (?) by the idea of "naked truth", *nuda veritas*, implying that truth is something only to be revealed.¹⁷ In Peacham's *Minerva Britannica*, an important collection of emblems published in 1612, *Veritas* is represented as "A beauteous maide", naked, who is, we are informed by the accompanying text, "of old depainted so". This of course immediately recalls the passage about Phryne disclosing her body which was quoted earlier as Quintilian's example of the efficacy of "sights unsupported by language". But the sight of Phryne's "exquisite body", and the way its disclosure is utilized, are suggestive of an understanding of truth opposing the version we have roughly termed as "Neoplatonic". In our - arguably fallen - world, at least one sense of truth is what the court decides; and more generally, what the consensus of society considers as such. In such a situation, rhetoric is neither the art of deceit, nor a technique of presenting truth in a favourable form,

17 In Christianity, the idea of arriving at truth by revelation has assumed further "metaphysical" relevance, a fact tying in neatly with our claim that it is an idea which is "metaphysical" in the Derridean sense as well, based on the assumption that meaning is somehow inherent, i.e. motivated. Apart from the Book of Revelation, where the final reunion of the fallen world with the Word is revealed, the prefigurations of the Apocalypse are quite revealing: the moment when Jesus is dying on the Cross, all three synoptic Gospels report that "the veil of the Temple was rent twain from the top to the bottom" (Matthew 27,51; cp. Mark 15,38 and Luke 23,45), i.e., the Holy of Holies, never to be entered or seen, was laid bare. The moment of our salvation is the moment of truth.

but the very means by which truth is made. Truth is a social construct, the meaning (or value) commonly attached to something; and Phryne's naked body, in this interpretation, though by no means identical with, is nevertheless certainly related to it: it is the sight of her body that makes the consensus change. Phryne's body is put to double action: on the one hand, by revealing her body, Phryne is staging the very idea exploited by the process of visual persuasion, i.e. that truth is arrived at by revelation or seeing: in front of her judges, her body appears as *nuda veritas*. On the other hand, her sexual appeal is exerting huge manipulative force on the judges. One aspect of her self-exposure is then tropically reasserting the traditional framework of attitudes which contribute to the favourable interpretation of the other, literally seductive aspect.

A closer look at Peacham's emblem may also warn us against an unconditional reliance on sights as true meanings. First of all: there is an explanatory poem establishing the meaning of the image. Seeing Truth does not seem to be enough to recognize her, and, looking at the image, it is easy to see why. Although she is described as "naked", she is not: to put it bluntly, the main point is covered by a veil. Although an image of Truth, it is not quite true, i.e., not quite in accordance with the meaning ascribed to it by the text. A verbal framing seems to be necessary for eliciting the desired effect, the interpretation aimed at. But there is an even more disturbing potentiality lurking around the image itself. It is literally framed by an ornament which is swarming with snakes, framing her as Eve, already conscious of her nudity. If she is Truth, she is Truth after the Fall. And if she is nevertheless presented as Truth, this might imply that Truth can only be fallen, surprised by sin. Satan, as we know, is the arch-rhetorician.¹⁸ It seems that images are fallen with the word: that meaning itself is the result of the Fall.

The latter aspect of Truth's (and Phryne's) nudity takes us to the domain of images. Whenever a distinction was made between the sensual and the intellectual faculties of the mind, images were always supposed to have sensual, emotional, rather than intellectual appeal or influence.¹⁹ Conceptually, the visual was almost invariably coupled with the corporeal as opposed to the intellectual / spiritual.

¹⁸ Fish's favourite point, made both in *Surprised by Sin*, and in his "Rhetoric", in: Fish (1989), 471-502.

¹⁹ The distinction was never made in mysticism, and it was not quite clear the Neoplatonic tradition, either: there, the visual was identified with the intellectual. Cp. Robinson, chapter 1.

The values attached to each were changing, but the general meaning was constant: according to Ben Jonson, e.g., "the pen is more noble than the pencil. For that can speak to the understanding; the other, but to the sense." (*Discoveries* 1872-5)²⁰ Arguably, the most important context of the sensuality of images in 16th century England was the problematics of idolatry. The key text is in Exodus 20, where the creation and adoration of the golden calf is clearly linked with lustfulness and unbridled sensuality, indeed nakedness: coming down from the Mount Sinai, Moses "saw that the people were naked" (Exodus 32,25): and we were also reported previously, that as soon as the idol was ready, they "sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play" (Exodus 32,6).²¹ The golden calf, the idol, is set in clear-cut opposition with the law in these passages, not only with the commandment against graven images, but with the Ten Commandments in general, with the Text of the Law Moses is bringing with him.

The sensual influence of what is seen, of the image, effects destabilization, liberates from deliberation and releases from the control of *prescriptions*. To a certain extent, the iconoclasts' fear of images is also rooted in this conviction: the terminology of their invectives relies quite heavily on contrasting images with the (male) social and moral order and on the exclusion of images from it. Possibly the most common metaphor used is that of whoring.²² Ridley's "Treatise", for example, listing the objections of the scriptures and of other authorities against images, is also falling back upon this discourse of exclusion and also disgust:

They are called in the book of Wisdom, the trap and snare of the feet of the ignorant.

It is said, the invention of them was the beginning of spiritual fornication; [...] Images have their beginning from the heathen [...]

(Ridley 85)

²⁰ It is well-known that Jonson's attitude towards the two types of signification was, to say the least, ambiguous. The value-judgment quoted above is, for example, not to be mistaken for a final word about the issue in the *Discoveries*: a couple of pages later, he goes on to say that "[t]he conceits of the mind are pictures of things, and the tongue is the interpreter of those pictures" (2635-7) For a discussion of Jonson's ambivalent attitude towards images and also towards the word-image relationship, cp. Gilman (1986) 50-4.

²¹ See Freedberg's fascinating book, and on this topic especially the chapter on "Idolatry and Iconoclasm", 378-428. I am fully aware that he would not like my crude textualization of emotional responses: but this dissertation is not meant to be an essay on images and sights, but on the rhetorical and textual uses of sights.

²² cp. Phillips, *passim*, and also Collinson 25, Diehl 55, Gilman (1986) 41 for further examples.

and concludes (indeed, keeps concluding) that

images, being "Meretrices," *id est*, "Whores" - for that the worshipping of them is called in the prophets fornication and adultery - ought to be banished

(Ridley 87)

In Puritanism, images are not the sensual way leading to higher spiritual insights, they are not moments or places of revelation, or manifestations of the transcendental - as they were in medieval (and to a certain extent in post-reformation catholic) Christianity²³ -, but rather whores distracting and seducing honourable citizens by revealing their faithless, marketed bodies. There are, however, several intellectual strands of Protestantism in the 16th-17th centuries, and it is a telling fact that a noticeable proponent of the prominence of the visual, Sir Philip Sidney was of Protestant religion himself. If one is now ready to abandon the dubious dualism of (crypto)catholicism vs. puritan iconoclasm²⁴, a most notable practice and also implicit theory of the contextualization of images and sights can be taken into consideration.

Protestant critics of Catholic images do not normally condemn images in general, or images as evil objects themselves, but their misuse by the beholders.²⁵ Many even of the most ardent iconoclasts, advocating the destruction of all images, made their point claiming that it is better to abolish them all and get rid of the problem categorically only because of the risk of misuse, misinterpretation: because of the danger of abuse, that is. The distinction of abused and unabused images helps to contextualize the whore-metaphor: for puritan fundamentalists, a legitimate, as it were "marital" relationship with images was simply inconceivable, since any sexual and also any sensual relationship was abusive by definition²⁶. But

23 Catholic images were "manifesting the divine by means of tangible material objects. [...] Popular attitudes of the late Middle Ages had identified Catholic images as the repositories of truth that they represented." (King 155) cp. also: Diehl 55-6, and Phillips, *passim*, esp. 27ff.

24 This step is not always taken by surveys of 16th-17th c. intellectual history. One of the instructive exceptions is Collinson's distinction between iconoclasm and iconophobia, the first referring not to the destruction, but to the transformation of images.

25 The discussion of this aspect of iconoclasm is based on the closely argued and extensively illustrated work of Diehl, Gilman (1986), King, and Phillips.

26 The parallel between beholding images and sexuality, between images and femininity is by no means arbitrary here: irrespective of the sides taken in the iconophobia-iconophilia question, there is a long tradition which the identification with whoring is only one manifestation of: cp. e.g. Mitchell 116-149.

the widely accepted notion, perceptively summed up by Phillips, that "it is what we make of images - their implications and their abuses - that makes them idols or not" (92), does conceptually allow for justifiable uses of images as well. Making use of their persuasive power, images can be employed as commemorative aids: as it is that which the viewer makes of images that determines their value, careful contextualization can vouch for their proper use and fend off the danger of idolatry. Conforming to the Law, the Text, the Scriptures can control images much as they control sexuality, allowing and in fact supporting marriage and condemning extramarital sex: women and images are only dangerous when out of control.

Protestant emblematics, as opposed to its Catholic, and in geographical terms southern, Italian counterpart, is characterized by the preeminence of the word over the image following from the position outlined above.²⁷ In the Protestant emblem, the accompanying text is not a secondary aid in approaching the higher realities manifested by the image, but the indispensable means of providing the meaning which is then internalized with the help of the image. Although text and image are mutually interdependent, images are used as arbitrary signs, signifying the invisible by analogy, the meaning of which signification is by no means intrinsic or natural as they were in the medieval / Catholic epistemology, but imposed by interpretation. Rather than the extreme purism of iconophobia, this seems to be the genuine subversion of the Neoplatonic assertion, epitomized by Sidney's *Apology*, according to which thought is a visual process itself, and text only a passive medium transmitting visual meaning.

In the Protestant understanding of emblems, the text is not an interpreter in the sense of mere translation of a preexisting meaning²⁸, but the source of meanings: it establishes the relationship between sign and signified, image and sense. The stability of the meaning of images is only secured by the stability of the

²⁷ Huston Diehl's article, along with other recent inquiries into protestant poetics - such as Barbara K. Lewalski's and Gilman's work -, is crucial for this distinction marked out between the Catholic and the Protestant emblem tradition, left out of consideration by much of the earlier literature on the emblem.

²⁸ In *Discoveries*, Ben Jonson is using the word "interpreter" in this, "neoplatonic" sense: "[t]he conceits of the mind are pictures of things, and the tongue is the interpreter of those pictures. The order of God's creatures in themselves, is not only admirable, and glorious, but eloquent: then he who could apprehend the consequence of things in their truth, and utter his apprehensions as truly, were the best writer, or speaker." (*Discoveries* 2635-43, quoting his friend's, Hoskyns' *Direccons for Speech and Style* 116, in: Loise Brown Osborn: *The Life, Letters, and Writings of John Hoskyns*, Yale Studies in English LXXXVII. YUP, New Haven, 1937).

meaning of the Text, which in turn is safeguarded by the workings of the Holy Spirit. The spiritual does not reside in the image, it is only represented in it: and representation itself is a process carried out by the spiritual. The visual thus ceases to be the source of, and also the instrument of nailing down, textual meanings. Such an understanding of meaning and interpretation has another far-reaching consequence: if it is only the Text, and interpretation conceived as textual meaning-imposition, that can provide meanings, then there is no meaning residing in the World, only in the Word. Images only differ from other objects in their constructedness, and as far as meaning is concerned, their status is identical. The objects surrounding us can only mean something when interpreted, thus, everything can be, and in point of fact is, a sign, but it has to be interpreted, that is, taken to be a sign if it is to mean anything.²⁹ All that is being looked at turns into a visual sign, into an image, i.e., is seen as an image: there are no natural sights. As Ernst Gombrich, and later, quoting him (and also making Gombrich's original point stronger), Nelson Goodman have put it, "there is no innocent eye". Everything that is being looked at is being looked at, and, as a result, is being seen, *as something*, i.e. *in terms of something*, and the way we look and see is determined, or formed by our assumptions and persuasions.

It is common knowledge that the image and the text of the emblem were frequently regarded as body and soul.³⁰ This seems to imply that when lacking a verbal soul, the image is but an inert body: and indeed, we find George Wither, for instance, describing his emblems as "quicken'd with metrical illustrations"³¹, and it is quite easy to see how

[s]uch usage testifies to the enduring strength of the belief, which rhetoric had encouraged, that it was words, not images, which gave the truest representation, and that it was only when pictures spoke that they could come to life.

(Bath 54)

Pictures, however, cannot speak: nor can dead bodies. Somebody must speak for them in such way that we may take those words to be the object's. "They beg the voice and utterance of [our] tongue" (*Caes.*3.1.261) - but once it is made to speak, who could tell, who is speaking for whom: is it the object, the image, that

29 On the problems of visual meanings, Goodman and Danto are immensely suggestive.

30 cp. e.g. Gilman 15, Bath *passim*, esp. 138 ff.

31 cited by Bath 54.

has begged our voice, or is it us, who are now bidding it "speak for [us]" (*Caes.*3.2.226)? This ambiguity and interchangeability of object and subject is crucial to Antony's performance.

Antony's funeral oration over Caesar's corpse can easily be construed along the lines outlined above: the dead body, an object looked at by the market-place, is provided with the text necessary to its understanding. What is seen is made to speak in the way an emblem is. It is framed by words, and these words "quicken" it as Wither's (and others') "metrical illustrations" quicken the picture in the emblem. Addressing the corpse, "the ruins of the noblest man" (*Caes.*3.1.256), Antony is preparing for conjuring up the spirit:

Over thy wounds now I do prophesy -
Which like dumb mouths do ope their ruby lips,
To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue -
A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;
Domestic fury and fierce civil strife
Shall cumber all the parts of Italy;
Blood and destruction shall be so in use,
And dreadful objects so familiar,
That mothers shall but smile when they behold
Their infants quartered with the hands of war,
All pity choked with custom of fell deeds;
And Caesar's spirit, raging for revenge,
With Ate by his side, come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice
Cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war,
That this foul deed shall smell above the earth
With carrion men, groaning for burial.
(*Caes.*3.1.259-75)

The voice given to the wounds, to the corpse of Caesar is going to raise the spirit of Caesar, or rather, it is the voice itself that is to emerge as the spirit itself. Perhaps it is not too far-fetched to argue that Antony's prophecy is in these terms a self-fulfilling one, being a rehearsal of the funeral oration. Although only for himself - at this point, he is alone with the body -, Antony is already seen here as raising the very spirit he is talking about. He addresses the corpse as non-human, as "ruins", a "piece of earth": but through the act of addressing it, through the use of the figure of apostrophe, he is bringing it to life. As Jonathan Culler has pointed out in an essay on this trope, to apostrophize "is to will a state of affairs,

to attempt to call into being by asking inanimate objects to bend themselves to your desire" (139). Somewhat later he is even suggesting that "there is an intimate relation between apostrophes addressed to the dead or the inanimate and prosopopoeia that give the dead or inanimate a voice and make them speak" (153). Uncannily, this suggestion is made by way of citing Paul de Man: citing, that is, summoning the dead master to appear in front of our critical judgment as witness to Culler's case. In Antony's lines, there is an immense power ascribed to voice, to words: the spirit of Caesar, which is itself raised by Antony's voice lent to the corpse, is exerting its power by "a monarch's voice". The final lines of the monologue, or more precisely, of the apostrophe, are short-circuiting the elaboration of the idea: the ghostly voice cries havoc "[t]hat this foul deed shall smell above the earth / With carrion men, groaning for burial": the dead bodies are made to speak by the force of the spirit's voice.

The mischief is afoot, set by Antony's words. Suggestively, Antony addresses it in the second person when the speech is over. ("Mischief, thou art afoot", *Caes.*3.2.262) The mischief is nothing but the "spirit of Caesar raging for revenge", brought to life by the speech, the spirit that has by now overtaken the crowd, raging for revenge:

Second Plebeian: We will be revenged.
All: Revenge! About! Seek! Burn! Fire! Kill! Slay! Let not a traitor live."
 (*Caes.*3.2.204-6)

The spirit does really materialize in the play, as if to confirm its suggested identification with the mischief. The appearance of the spirit, prophesying defeat, is really a metaphorical equivalent of the revenging spirit defeating the conspirators by military force, i.e. in the way Antony has prophesied. The identification of Caesar's ghost, his Spirit, with the crowd's spirit, brings us back to the workings of images, since in Protestant doctrine, the image is only meaningful, that is, alive, if this meaning is conjured up in the beholders' mind from nonexistence by interpretation. The meaning becomes a material force as soon as it is constructed - it is not even the result of a response, but the response itself: it is not uncovered by interpretation, but the interpretation itself. Caesar's spirit is conjured up by Antony's words, and it takes shape as the audience's response. The response, however, is never independent: it is, as protestant emblematics suggests, fashioned by the text surrounding the objects of interpretation: that is, by its contexts, pretexts, intertexts. It is for this reason that Caesar's spirit cannot

be come by, as the conspirators assume (cp. *Caes.*2.1.167-71), by killing the body. Pursuing the metaphor, murder appears rather as releasing the spirit. By separating it from the body, the independence of Caesar's spirit from his body becomes patent.

If one identifies the spirit with the interpretation as we have (in the spirit of Protestantism), the death of the body also opens it up for interpretation and appropriation. Once the body is passed by, once it is made past, it can only speak in someone else's voice: in the voice of the beholder, the interpreter, in the voice of the one who remembers or tries to remember. As Stephen Greenblatt asserted in the Introduction to *Shakespearean Negotiations*: when listening to the dead, all we can hear is ourselves, although in many voices. The closure of a story is the point where interpretation begins, and even the present is interpreted by the imposition of closures.

Based on our preceding sketch of Neoplatonic / Catholic and of Protestant attitudes towards images, it could be argued that Protestantism situates signification and interpretation in the context of history and of the absence of the interpreted object, whereas the Neoplatonic / Catholic view appears to postulate at least a possibility of the unquestionable recovering of real presence. Interpretation conceived as (re)construction thrives on absences, and is debilitated by presence, since what it aims at is re-presentation, the creation of a substitute presence. Although the presence of the represented does not preclude representation, it certainly makes its task difficult. Presence seems to deny any point to interpretation and also to signification or communication in the sense of signifying something by means of something else. However, it also seems to make meaning and understanding impossible, since both "to mean" and "to understand" involve a relationship to something not immediately present. What is right there is not meant by something else, and also: it does not stand for something else, it does not mean anything, because meaning something would involve this "something else" not present: that is, if it meant something, it would make the present a mere sign of the absent. The present is the already understood, and, therefore, what cannot be understood. Presence is meaningless, and as soon as it starts to carry a meaning, it carries the beholder away into the realm of absence, and builds up a distance between the object and the subject. Relying on the age-old metaphor of vision, one might as well say that things touching the eye cannot be seen - to see things requires a focus, and also, a point of view. In this world, however, there only seem to be two situations one could describe as "presences" in this sense: the

moment of one's own death, and the "little death", *la petite mort*. Apart from these, life is full of meanings: even the signals of our bodies are meaning something: that we ought to eat, drink, sleep, or that someone has forgotten a dagger in our back.

Interpretation and understanding work on the past and the absent: but this work consists precisely in creating an illusion of their presence. They represent the absent - they bring it back, as it were, in an illusory way to where they have never been. They uncover a meaning which then looks as if it was "there". Meaning is illusionistic because it is not perceived as an illusion, though it is one. As soon as a meaning is uncovered as illusory, it ceases to be a real meaning. In other words, the mechanism of meaning, of sense-giving is Protestant in principle, but its perception is bound to be idolatrous: meaning has to be taken for "real" or "natural" if it is to work at all, despite the fact that it cannot be "real" or "natural" by its very nature.

If interpretation and understanding represent the absent, the past, they are also affiliated with memory. In these terms, interpretation is the creation of memories, of representations of the past. The two faculties - interpretation or understanding and memory - are also entangled with each other in Antony's oration. He is remembering Caesar, and by remembering and also making others remember him, Antony is re-remembering the dismembered one, and puts together a new Caesar. It is this Caesar, re-remembered, which then materializes as Caesar's spirit. Brutus' lines testify to this insight:

O, that we then could come by Caesar's spirit,
And not dismember Caesar!

(*Caes.*2.1.169-70)

Once dismembered, he can be remembered: and he can indeed be re-remembered in several ways. The arguments of rhetorical and Protestant epistemology, so far parallel, start diverging at this point. Although interpretation is conceived as construction in both, in the Protestant view interpretation can - although only *sub specie aeternitatis* - be evaluated with reference to Truth: the word and the world are judged in the face of the Word. In rhetoric, there is no Word and no world outside the word. The world of *Julius Caesar* is in this respect rhetorical (or, which is here synonymous with it, political) throughout: no view of Caesar can be absolute, any interpretation can be undermined with reference to others. It is for precisely this reason that totalizing interpretations of the play,

that is, interpretations telling us whose tragedy the play really is: Brutus' or Caesar's, are so vulnerable. Once critics take sides in the Caesar vs Brutus debate, their arguments, however cunningly formulated, can easily be undercut by dramatizing them, that is, by placing them in the context of the play itself. As the conflict of *Julius Caesar* is a conflict of interpretations of Caesar, any totalizing interpretation of Caesar will be a critical furthering of the arguments within the play. Although these critical backings can be of high interest, any interpretation of *Julius Caesar* has to take into account the play of interpretations and of the imposition of interpretations within the play.

Antony remembers a Caesar, and this meaning is powerful enough to gain the upper hand over other memories, other versions of Julius Caesar. Antony does everything to imprint this memory, this interpretation, on his audience's mind. As a matter of fact, his actions can be interpreted as closely following the rules of the art of memory, as laid down by - among others - manuals of rhetoric, from the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* on.

In the established method of artificial or place memory, texts and orations are memorized with the help of images. An image is appointed to each proposition and these images are then ordered in *loci*: i.e., the images are ordered spatially, in a building for example, and are recalled in the correct sequence by going over the places one by one in thought:

The artificial memory includes backgrounds [*loci*, i.e. places] and images. [...] An image is, as it were, a figure, mark, or portrait of the object we wish to remember; for example, if we wish to recall a horse, a lion, or an eagle, we must place its image in a definite background. [...] [T]he backgrounds are very much like wax tablets or papyrus, the images like the letters, the arrangement and disposition of the images like the script, and the delivery is like the reading.

(*Ad Herennium* 3.xvi.29-xvii.30)

Antony first chooses Caesar's mantle for his papyrus, and the holes on it for letters. The papyrus, i.e. the *locus* where the images are placed, must be

such scenes as are naturally or artificially set off on a small scale, complete and conspicuous, so that we can grasp and embrace them easily by the natural memory

(*Ad Herennium* 3.xvi.29)

- and the mantle certainly answers this description:

You all do know this mantle. I remember
 The first time ever Caesar put it on;
 'Twas on a summer's evening in his tent,
 That day he overcame the Nervii.

(*Caes.*3.2.171-5)

Now the images that stand for the statements can be mounted on this background:

Look, in this place ran Cassius's dagger through;
 See what a rent the envious Casca made;
 Through this, the well-beloved Brutus stabbed

(*Caes.*3.2.176-8)

The images are also well chosen: the gory wounds on the vesture (*Caes.*3.2.197) are, in these terms, certainly memorable ones:

We ought, then, to set up images of a kind that can adhere longest in the memory. And we shall do so if we establish likenesses as striking as possible; if we set up images that are not many or vague, but doing something; if we assign to them exceptional beauty or singular ugliness; if we dress some of them with crowns or purple cloaks, for example, so that the likeness may be more distinct to us; or if we somehow disfigure them, as by introducing one stained with blood or soiled with mud or smeared with red paint, so that its form is more striking [...]

(*Ad Herennium* 3.xxii.37)

The holes on the toga are striking marks, images that stand for facts: for the daggers piercing through the toga and into Caesar's body. They are images or signs of the murderers, and also of their deeds, one by one. Their power is further enhanced by the fact that they are also the proofs of the murder, so the signs stand for an action they were a part of: as signs, they appear to signify themselves as well, thus, illusorily, abolishing the arbitrariness of signification.³² These signs and proofs are then organized into a narrative whole, they are arranged on the

³² This abolishment is illusory only, as it results from an identification of the sign with the object that signifies: it is like identifying the letter "a" with the pigment on the page. But, although it is easy to point out the difference between the body of the sign and the sign, the fallacy is very common, and its working is essential to an understanding of the market-place scene. Caesar's body is identified with what it signifies in Antony's interpretation in exactly the same way. And this identification of the body of the sign with what it signifies is precisely what Protestants would term "idolatry".

toga, which holds the bits of the story represented by the holes together. Quintilian ascribes great importance to narration as the basic rhetorical process, which contextualizes proofs. It is only against the perspective established in the narrative that proofs become more than "unpersuasive facts"³³: the presentation of facts only becomes meaningful when it is interpreted by a story they prove. The background, the *locus* of the art of memory does precisely this. It frames disparate memories, so that they can be remembered as parts of a larger, visual structure, which - as suggested by Quintilian - can then be read almost as a story. Narrative and memory not only support, but also presuppose each other, and Antony's re-membering of Caesar is a highly suggestive instance of their cooperation. The plot he reveals is really emplotted by his cunning presentation.

Caesar's mantle presents the narrative of Caesar's death, and the daggers that "wounded" both the mantle and his body, seem to pin this story down to the body, contextualizing it. Again, the narrative shroud frames the body much as the text frames the image in the emblem. Caesar is now re-membered, imprinted on the memory of the crowd as the victim of cruel, envious, unkind murder: the mantle is supplied with meaning, and this meaning, the spirit, is ready to emerge from the shrouds. And it does so in the next moment: by transferring the meaning from the "wounded vesture" to the body, the meaning is embodied, and the spirit is set afoot:

Antony: [...]

O, now you weep, and I perceive you feel
The dint of pity. These are gracious drops.
Kind souls, what weep you when you but behold
Our Caesar's vesture wounded? Look you here,
Here is himself, marred, as you see, with traitors.

[Antony plucks off the mantle]

First Plebeian: O piteous spectacle!

Second Plebeian: O noble Caesar!

Third Plebeian: O woeful day!

Fourth Plebeian: O traitors! villains!

First Plebeian: O most bloody sight!

Second Plebeian: We will be revenged.

All: Revenge! About! Seek! Burn! Fire! Kill! Slay! Let not a traitor live.

³³ In stressing the importance of the narrative for Quintilian, I am following John D. O'Banion's account.

Over a dead body, a monument can be erected: whether marble, gilded, or verbal, is in this respect almost irrelevant. The monument is the body created anew, an object provided with meaning, substituting the body and preserving the spirit - the spirit it is designed to preserve. "Even at the base of Pompey's statue, / Which all the while ran blood, great Caesar fell" (*Caes.*3.2.189-90), and Pompey's statue, along with other idols and monuments, is presiding over the first half of the play. It also has a further relevance to us: Plutarch gives a metaphorical interpretation to the fact that Caesar is murdered at its feet:

Thus it seemed that the image took just revenge of Pompey's enemy, being thrown down on the ground at his feet and yielding up his ghost there for a number of wounds he had upon him.

(Plutarch 95)

Against this background it is convenient to draft Antony as erecting another, this time verbal, revenging monument over the body of Caesar. This interpretation raises a further question: what sort of a body is Caesar's, lying in the marketplace?

To answer this we have to look briefly at actual, i.e., marble, funeral monuments of the 15th-17th centuries. In this period, we encounter a series of monuments which look rather unusual to 20th century eyes. Erwin Panofsky describes these as a

strange and fascinating phenomenon [...]: the placing of a "lifelike" effigy, arrayed in a costume befitting the dignity of a prince or princess, a prelate or at least a knight, on top of a "deathly" figure showing the deceased as a mere corpse, wrapped only in a shroud which may conceal his form almost entirely [...], or, conversely, may reveal as much of his nude form as was compatible with modesty, but nearly always divested of all signs of worldly power and wealth and often represented in a state of more or less advanced decomposition.

(Panofsky 63-4)³⁴

The *representacion de la mort*, as Panofsky calls it, quoting 16th century contracts, is a representation of the dead body, of the body that passes away, whereas the upper part of such a monument represents the personality of the deceased, his

³⁴ For English examples, cp. Kantorowitz, figs. 28-31, and also the chapter on effigies, 419-437, elaborating the notion of the two bodies. On the distinction between natural and social bodies cp. also Llewellyn's in places somewhat inaccurate, but nevertheless useful booklet.

social stand: the dead remembered. These monuments enact the construction of the memory by setting the corpse and the social body in opposition; they represent both, but under the dominance of the social, worldly body. It is important to note that both are represented, and both contribute to the meaning of the whole monument. Similarly, Caesar's corpse is not a mere corpse, but an indispensable part of the monument Antony is erecting. The medieval notion of the King's two bodies, as worked out by Kantorowitz, and the representation of the social body on the top of these double monuments elucidates the significance of Caesar's spirit, Caesar's social body that emerges from Antony's oration. In this theory, the living king is only a mortal incarnation of the Dignity, of the immortal idea of the King. The spirit set afoot by Antony is the immortal Caesar, Caesar as a Dignity, which will be incarnated by a long line of caesars in Roman and European history. Caesar is immortalized as an institution by his death and by the rhetoric of Antony, and it takes little effort to see Caesar's revenging spirit manifested in the revenging Octavius, i.e. in the next Caesar, already so called in *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Antony creates a new meaning, a new spirit of Caesar in the market-place, and he makes it accepted by the Plebeians by presenting Caesar's body as the physical basis for this meaning, as the body of the spirit. The revelation of the corpse is embedded in a whole process of exposure, of showing: it is clearly theatrical in its illusory identification of "shadow" (Caesar's spirit or shadow) with "substance", with the actor of the role. Antony is pointing at the holes on Caesar's mantle one by one, and he is thus actually re-enacting the murder of Caesar. It is at the end of this carefully staged performance that the disclosure of the body comes. By then it has been framed, it is part of the performance of *something*: and this undercuts its ontological status as a direct point of access to truth, as the thing that is simply itself - even if we ignore the verbal frame provided by Antony, working heavily on the audience's expectations and forging them so as not to have any other choice but seeing Caesar as they actually do. The body is consciously presented by Antony as something "just there", though it is in fact a character in a stage-play, an actor in a role. It is not "a thing as it is really", but a part of the re-presentation of something. The fact that this something (Caesar's assassination) has actually happened to this particular body is very helpful in blurring the distinction between, or rather equating a hypothetical "original" and a performance, a necessarily interpretative presentation of it.

As we have noted, Antony has been given the cue (though unknowingly) by Cassius' "How many ages hence / Shall this our lofty scene be acted over ..." (*Caes.*3.1.111-2): Shakespeare's play is highly conscious of its theatricality. This self-reflectiveness, in our interpretation, is setting the scene for new interpretations, new versions, new meanings of the "same" scene, already within *Julius Caesar*. In this sense, Shakespeare's play is acting over both Caesar's murder performed by Brutus and Cassius, and also Antony's performance. Prospero can be Shakespeare's greatest stage-playwright, but Antony is his greatest stage-director. Prospero is often seen as Shakespeare's equivalent on stage, creating a new play: but Antony is more like an Elizabethan dramatist, re-writing, re-staging an old play or story.³⁵ This reading of Antony as stage-director, staging Caesar's death in a compelling new performance, is given further relevance by Sidney's lines on tragedy:

So that the right use of Comedy will (I think) by nobody be blamed, and much less of the high and excellent Tragedy, that openeth the greatest wounds, and showeth forth the ulcers that are covered with tissue; that maketh kings fear to be tyrants, and tyrants manifest their tyrannical humours; that, with stirring the affects of admiration and commiseration, teacheth the uncertainty of this world ...
(*Apology* 117.33-118.2)

Acting emerges here as the most powerful form of interpretation: the illusory reality, especially when it manages to trigger off a suspension of disbelief, becomes the image of the past event, and invests it with new meaning. The question differentiating two types of world-views ("serious" and "rhetorical", *à la* Fish, perhaps) is, whether you take an ultimate pretext, the "real thing" for granted, and take all performances for approaches to this fixed centre, or - as Antony does - you decentre interpretation, take interpretations for "texts" or "things" in their own right, with the first performance as possibly of a certain prominence, but only as another interpretation, the first among equals. Antony's performance also gives a hint of how interpretations try to preclude scepticism, although their own very presence - the emergence of different interpretations - would inescapably suggest it. Every interpretation asserts a claim to exclusive validity, to the title of the only

³⁵ These parallels are also supported by the fact that, for all we know, *The Tempest* is an entirely "new" play: there is no *Ur-Tempest*, whereas nobody would consider the plot of *Julius Caesar* as a story invented by Shakespeare.

appropriate or indeed the only possible reading. Each image of something would claim to be the real image, showing the thing itself, and thus to be in direct connection with it. But in fact everything looked at in search of a meaning turns into a sign, and signs are inevitably parts of systems of signs: they are framed, interpreted, shaped by contexts. Thus the thing or image becomes part of a performance, of a re-enactment of something, and is finally determined by that interpretation. Caesar's saying, "for always I am Caesar" (*Caes.*1.2.211) can be true, but what 'being Caesar' actually means, undergoes a wide range of transformations already within *Julius Caesar*, not to mention the interpretations which the play and Caesar as a major historical and literary character have received.

The questions of play, re-enactment and interpretation can persistently be brought into play - throughout the play. The games Cassius is playing with Brutus's self-image, Calphurnia's dream and its two readings by Caesar and Decius Brutus, the scene with Cinna the Poet, or, to bring examples from the end of the play as well, Cassius's shortsightedness, his last appearance where he really misconstrues everything, as Titinius says (*Caes.*5.3.84), are all very accessible for such an approach. Instead of commenting upon them, I will now look at a possible precursor of Act 3 scene 2 of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, or possibly a precursor of this reading of the play, in Quintilian.³⁶

Actions as well as words may be employed to move the court to tears. Hence the custom of bringing persons into court wearing squalid and unkempt attire, and of introducing their children and parents, and it is with this in view that we see blood-stained swords, fragments of bone taken from the wound, and garments spotted with blood, displayed by the accusers, wounds stripped of their dressings, and scourged bodies bared to view. The impression produced by such exhibitions is generally enormous, since they seem to bring the spectators face to face with the cruel facts. For example, the sight of the bloodstains on the purple-bordered toga of Gaius Caesar, which was carried at the head of his funeral procession, aroused the Roman people to fury. They knew that he had been killed; they had even seen his body stretched upon the bier: but his garment, still wet with his blood, brought such a vivid image of the crime before their minds, that Caesar seemed not to have been

³⁶ It is neglected by all the detailed accounts of the play's sources I know of: by Muir, by Bullough, and by all annotated editions of the play I have been able to check - possibly because the short passage describing the events does not really add anything to Plutarch's account of them.

murdered, but to be being murdered before their very eyes.
(Quintilian VI.i.30-31)³⁷

The account of the exposure of Caesar's mantle and the relevance Quintilian ascribes to it correspond quite closely to our reading of their counterparts in Shakespeare. The similarity in the telling of the events is not surprising: Plutarch might well have been the source for this story certainly very well-known in antiquity. But Quintilian's way of putting what the effects were is remarkable. Antony's "staging" of the murder is here matched by an explanation of the crowd's outrage by referring to the idea of visual presence. The passage can be seen not merely as a source in the strict sense, i.e. as a source where the story could have been taken from, but more importantly, as a precursor that Antony's speech can be contrasted and juxtaposed with.

The section quoted is part of a treatise on (mainly public, forensic) persuasion: it is an example of "moulding and transforming the judges to the attitude which we desire." (Quintilian VI.ii.1) Although Quintilian seems most of the time to assume that the pleader is trying to convince the judges of the truth, there is nothing in his treatment of persuasion that would not allow for the use of these same means for ends virtually unrestrained. (cp. VI.i.7) The pleader's task is to defend, to represent his client's case *as if it was true*. It is the judges' task to decide which party's point of view will be accepted as rightful: to decide, that is, what the truth is; and their decision is clearly determined by the orator's performance. At a stage we even read: "the peculiar task of the orator rises when the mind of the judges require force to move them, and their thoughts have actually be lead away from the contemplation of truth." (VI.ii.5) So, the persuasive power of images is actually a tool the orator should use for his particular purposes. Quintilian's examination of the *visions* and of their communicative use (VI.ii.26-32, quoted above at length) is an explanation, first of all, of how to impose those emotions "we want to produce in the mind of the judge" on ourselves: he talks about "the *appearance* of sincerity" (VI.ii.27). In the passage on actors moved by their roles he asks:

But if the mere delivery of *words written by another* has the power to set our souls on fire with fictitious emotion, what will the orator do whose duty it is to *picture to himself the facts* and who has it in his power to fuel

³⁷ cp. also the Benetton poster out in winter 1993/94, a photo of a dead(?) Bosnian/Serbian soldier's blood-stained clothes, with a bullet-hole in the tee-shirt.

the same emotion in his client whose interests are at stake?
 (Quintilian VI.ii.35, italics mine)

In this context, the expression "words written by another" suggests an identification of picturing the facts to oneself and of writing those words oneself. I would here argue that Quintilian's short relation of the effects of the sight of Caesar's blood-stained mantle is contextualized to an effect similar to that of our reading of Antony's speech and his interpretive and interpreted use of visual images. Despite his insistence on the unmediatedness of the visual, and on its power flowing from this unmediatedness, Quintilian does, in fact, evolve a theory where the unmediatedness is the attribute only of that part of the communicative process which goes on between two minds, and does not eventually suggest a real access to truth, only an illusory one. The possibility of unmediated knowledge is just an illusion, but an extremely powerful one. Making the murder of Caesar present to the plebs' mind is not (neither in Shakespeare nor in Quintilian) the presentation of "truth", nor are any of the stagings of this "lofty scene" in "states unborn, and accents yet unknown." Neither is, in fact, the "original" scene of murder: there are two Acts before it, consisting of little other than preparations, portents, and of interpretations preceding their object - belied, transformed, or fulfilled by Caesar's death, which is thus an interpretative act itself.³⁸ All acts and performances are interpretations of other acts and performances without ever having access to an "original", and theatre is the place of making (new) sense of the past. This is not to say that these re-presentations are false - in our reading, the question about the "truth" of the events of history, of the past, is not a very

38 A significant example of this would be Marcus Brutus fashioning himself (or rather Cassius fashioning him) after Junius Brutus, who ousted Tarquinius Superbus. This parallelism has not been given much attention yet, though it has been noted by Girard, for example, who juxtaposes Tarquin and Caesar as "the two founding fathers" (203-4). The recurrent mentioning of the statue is worth further consideration. In Plutarch we read: "Marcus Brutus came of that Junius Brutus for whom the ancient Romans made his statue of brass to be set up in the Capitol with the images of the kings, holding a naked sword in his hand" (102) Brutus is fashioned after this *image* of Junius Brutus, with sword in his hand: and Brutus's fall can possibly be ascribed to this interpretation. Junius Brutus, according the chronicles, founded the Republic by expelling, not by killing the tyrant. Thus, the conspirators are the first to abandon the "original" meaning, in favour of a heavily contextualized visual interpretation of it - but, as they are not conscious enough the labyrinths of interpretations, take it for the only possible reading, and do not even consider options other than murder. So, instead of the intended reiteration of the republican past, the reiteration of the founding act of what they want to return to, they produce a highly independent reading of it - to their own, and to the republicanism's peril.

productive, not even an intelligible one. The view endorsed here is not some sort of a melancholic scepticism, but rather "La gaya scienza" of Nietzsche: this does not suggest that truth is out of our reach, but that the idea of impartial, therefore eternal and unchangeable meaning³⁹ is simply meaningless. Our questions are not about the truth (in this sense), but about the uses and illusions of the past; and so are the questions of *our* Shakespeare, and the point in our excavations in Renaissance concepts of rhetoric and the visual (if any), is that they might help us make more of such a Shakespeare.

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Zsolt Komáromy

BEING AND BECOMING

A BACKGROUND TO THE LOVE POETRY OF JOHN DONNE

*"Feelings live in man; but man lives in his love. This is not a mere metaphor, but reality itself: love does not stick onto the I which then only makes the Thou its 'contents', its object, love is in between the I and the Thou."
(Martin Buber)*

*"For love is not an object 'which' makes one stagger; not weight 'which' hangs itself on beings; not even the ground 'which' the falling body hits. Love is the staggering itself; not a destination but strength; not a state to arrive at but continuous motion."
(László F. Földényi)*

*"Being is intelligible only in terms of Becoming"
(Herakleitus)*

I.

By way of introduction, I would like to explain the title which may sound a trifle pretentious for such a short essay, since Donne-criticism evaluates a number of intellectual and artistic phenomena as backgrounds to Donne's poetry: the Petrarchan tradition, Neoplatonism, the New Philosophy of the age, Counter-Reformation or Mannerism are the most common of these. I shall rely on some of these approaches, but I want to refrain from repeating too many of the established

critical opinions. Instead, I would like to offer the metaphysics of Giordano Bruno as a possible background, and it is also in the light of some elements of Bruno's philosophy that I wish to treat Donne's connection to Mannerism.

As for Donne's works, I limited my scope to his love poetry for the simple reason that regardless of the generalizations philosophical in nature, the focus of this essay is on Donne's approach to love. When reading through the fifty-five poems of *Songs and Sonnets* I found it hard to account for that feeling of constant tension radiating even from the poems celebrating love. Though the collection may be unsystematic and the pieces may have been written on the spur of the moment, they are characterized by a unity of tone which makes it a fair suggestion that beyond the versatility there must be an approach that can somehow be generalized.

My primary concern here is this approach, and what may lie behind it. Thus I allowed myself some disproportionateness on the one hand, and some philological inexactitude on the other. This latter stands in that I do not make any attempt to pin down direct influences when bringing together the philosophical and artistic tendencies of the late sixteenth century, nor when claiming that a very similar attitude can be discerned in Donne's approach to love and in Bruno's metaphysics. My claim is simply that behind the shift that took place in the arts in the decades generally referred to as the age of Mannerism, a late phase of Renaissance art (and regardless of the dubious nature of such labels, the shift itself is quite tangible) there also lies a shift in metaphysical conceptions. Such connections may not have sufficiently surfaced in the age to take the form of direct influences, yet unfolding them may help in interpreting works or understanding the approaches that formed them. Thus, I am not even concerned about the extent to which Donne was familiar with Bruno's thought.

Incidentally, it seems quite impossible that he would not have been familiar with it. The scholarship of the past few decades seems to have been giving increasing importance to the influence of an intellectual elite usually referred to as the Northumberland Circle, the members of which not only knew about Bruno's philosophy, but were in some respects moving along the same lines (as opposed to the dons who dismissed Bruno from Oxford after he defended the Copernican astrological conception in a public debate in 1583). Donne himself was also in a loose and occasional connection with the Northumberland Circle. John Haffenden's lengthy introduction to William Empson's *Donne-studies* thoroughly explores these connections and possible influences, and shows how

Bruno's thought was present in the intellectual climate in England among a certain group of people, which included John Donne¹.

As my interest is not in the unfolding of such connections, but merely in a metaphysical conception (the relation of Being and Becoming) that seems to have appeared (or, rather, reappeared) in Europe roughly in the half century that embraces the twenty-eight years when Bruno and Donne were contemporaries, at no point of this essay do I wish to look at direct influences. I am only concerned with an approach or spirit that I think becomes manifest in the shift that took place in the arts and thinking of the age.

And thus the mentioned disproportionateness: to draw a brief outline of the approach that I believe appears in Bruno's metaphysics and Donne's love poetry, and of the background this approach evolved from, I shall have to deal just as much, if not more, with the mentioned theoretical shifts and their aesthetic consequences or manifestations, as with Donne himself.

This topic evolved from the process of trying to formulate what I felt to be the 'message' of Donne's love poetry in any generalizable way. Thus, I will leave many aspects of Donne-criticism virtually unmentioned and attempt to show instead how the Mannerist context and Bruno's thought might help to answer questions that may arise when reading Donne. The answer given may well be a very simple one - when speaking of love, one cannot help phrasing commonplaces, as a critic remarks² - but the reading itself will hopefully explain why I think it is not unimportant to repeat and emphasize such an answer, simple as it may be.

II.

It seems a critical commonplace that much of the tension of Donne's poetry springs from his vacillation between bodily and spiritual love and that this is the dichotomy he is constantly trying to synthesize. Yet this issue may lead much farther and can be broadened into the question of the attainability of the perfection of the human condition. Full human satisfaction is not only imagined in the terms

1 Cf. John Haffenden, "Introduction" in: William Empson, *Essays on Renaissance Literature* Vol. 1: *Donne and the New Philosophy* ed. John Haffenden Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

2 Földényi F. László: "Az elvesztett egyensúly. A szerelemről." IN: Ortega y Gasset, Jose: *A szerelemről* Ford. Gilicze Gabor. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiado, 1991 p.9.

of love in love poetry - the subject quite naturally offers itself for such an expansion.

A strive for infinity and perfection are basic human desires and they are among the topmost things sought in love. Love is thus likened to divinity; it is given a divine role in the sense that the lover hopes to achieve absolute fulfilment. The washing together of aspirations for infinity (immortality), for reaching God and for fulfilment in love is an age-old phenomenon. According to Plato's Diotima, Eros is a *daimon* and *daimons* are intermediaries between the divine and the human. Plato also speaks of Eros as the desire for the eternal possession of Goodness or as the desire for immortality³. Perfection and infinity in love or God are the tokens of happiness.

Yet in our human, bodily existence we are neither perfect nor infinite. We are spurred by desires, we are bound to change, we are victims of chance and of the multiplicity of the world, we stand defenceless against the twists and turns of fate. Transcending ourselves or our relationships into a realm of mere spirituality thus seems to be something of a paradox, one we nevertheless constantly try to resolve. It is this problem that the confrontation of bodily and spiritual love amounts to in the final analysis. No wonder that in accordance with the conventions of Neoplatonic love poetry that Donne at once drew on and drew away from, he himself often sets up this parallel between love and God, "Since all divinity is love or wonder" ("A Valediction: of the Book"). Thus to find a synthesis between bodily and spiritual love, to resolve the dichotomy that so often denies us access to that divine perfection is an issue that concerns our general chances of happiness and fulfilment. The issue is not merely amorous, but truly metaphysical: it amounts to the question of how we can Be without constantly being annihilated by existential anxiety, or, to say the least, constantly unsettled by a torturing dissatisfaction and fear.

I feel it is this very question *Songs and Sonnets* as a whole circles around. (Of course, not in any theoretical way - and I think the unsystematic nature of the poems in itself has significance which I will later mention.) The art of the Renaissance, very generally speaking, had the means to handle this question, to find ease for pains and hopes for aspirations because it was created in a well ordered universe, in a firm belief of universal harmony. (Which of course is not to say that for instance Sidney did not *experience* pain or joy with the same intensity

3 cf. Plato: *Symposium* esp. 202e, 206a, 207a.

as Donne - yet he for some reason never allowed the same degree of nervousness to enter his poetry.) In Donne's age, however, signs of the falling apart of this harmony started to show. I would first like to summarize what the disruption of the universal order meant for the art-theories of the age.

The Renaissance and its art is usually thought of as the triumph of balance, harmony and synthesis. Yet around the middle of the sixteenth century there were actually two opposing trends in art theory. One of these major trends was the still powerful school of rhetorics, the central concern of which was the theory and practice of effective, fine and high-level composition and expression in speech and writing. It emphasized proportion, clarity, elegance, loftiness, logical reasoning and imitation. Beauty, as a separate concept did not have any role whatsoever.

Beauty only came to the foreground with the rise of Florentine Neoplatonism. For Ficino it is already the symbol of perfection, the reflection of the divine in this world, the visible aspect of truth. The existence of beauty is here due to some divine creative act. Applied to the arts, thus, the artist creates on the basis of a metaphysical inspiration, the *furor poeticus*, and not merely on the basis of practicing his learned profession, the *ars*, and his achievements are not only determined by how well he has learned his profession, as the rhetorical school had it. According to Ficino, the artist creates by conjuring up in matter those ideas that God had planted into his mind and if he has the capability to do this, his art will harmonize with nature.

Despite the differences, the two schools of thought led to similar principles as they appeared in practice: proportionate and harmonious expression and composition, clarity and imitation - though in rhetorics this latter meant the imitation of details, while in Neoplatonism it meant that of ideas. The formal discipline of humanist rhetorics was given philosophical basis by the metaphysical approach to beauty.

The Aristotelian tradition that has enjoyed a certain continuity since the Middle Ages and in Italy actually reached its peak in Renaissance humanism⁴, gave a new slant to metaphysical speculations. Giorgio Valla translated Aristotle's *Poetics* in 1498 and in some thirty years' time it entered the aesthetic consciousness. Its influence shifted the emphasis to the moral and educative role of poetry as opposed to the Neoplatonist spiritualism and metaphysics. The Aristotelians

4 cf. Kristeller 38-74 esp. 39, 56.

worked for giving poetry human and worldly objectives⁵. For them imitation meant the imitation of human and natural reality. This, however, did not contradict the imitation-theory of the ideal beauty. In fact, the coexistence of the two concepts helped in creating the coexistence of ideal beauty and a high degree of realism in the Renaissance artifact.

This is one of the basic feature of the Renaissance synthesis, unifying the Neoplatonist, rhetorical, and Aristotelian traditions and stopping the composition from becoming either empty imitation of detail on the one hand, or empty and hardly comprehensible juggling with form on the other hand. What it achieved was an ideal beauty harmonizing with reality⁶.

This synthesis created an aesthetic realm of beauty which also meant the creation of a new concept of the world. A new order, as it were, which was held together by the formal rules of beauty, by proportion, by the Neoplatonic theories of harmony. The flesh-and-blood suffering man of Gothic art was here placed into a coherent space and perspective. The Renaissance created a cosmos the proportions of which were determined from a fixed view-point.⁷

When we speak of 'realism' in the Renaissance, we must never lose sight of the fact that this was a meticulously created, a constructed realism. 'Reality' and 'nature' are by no means definitive terms. The dominant cosmological conceptions of the age did not differ from those of the Middle Ages, yet on these very same grounds a new art could flourish, one that seems to have been the product of a quite different world. This phenomenon may require a lengthier explanation - here I shall only raise a point or two that can aid my more restricted theme.

The revitalization of classical antiquity and the upsurge of scientific inquiry are no doubt two important factors. Renaissance artists had an increasing knowledge of the anatomy of the body and of the geometrical laws of composition. Yet the humanists learned not only from nature. They were seeking the norms of formal perfection in the texts of Quintilian and Cicero.⁸ The influence of rhetorics and antiquity thus had far-reaching consequences. Baxandall shows in a fascinating work how the way humanists thought and spoke about art was conditioned by the Latin they wrote in and by the classical rhetorics they were practicing. He argues that the system of concepts available for talking about art

5 cf. Vasoli 89-91.

6 Apart from the annotated sections, this summary is based on Klaniczay's essay.

7 cf. Sypher 54-60.

8 Vasoli 31

inevitably focuses the attention in describing and evaluating the artifact, and the "highly formalized verbal behaviour bears, with little interference, on the most sensitive kind of visual experience.⁹

The ideas of Leon Battista Alberti may perhaps serve as an illuminating example of this constructed reality. Among *quattrocento* humanists who put forth significant art-theories, he was perhaps the most rational and scientifically minded. His writings call for an art that is based on naturalism and scientific observation of the material world. According to him, the artist's task is the precise imitation of nature, but this must be paired with the attempt to make it beautiful. Beauty in Alberti is described as the ordered harmony of the parts, and as this is not always found in nature, the artist must select the most beautiful and appropriate parts of his theme and coin them together into a perfection that nature had unsuccessfully attempted to create. Alberti is repeating, in somewhat simplified and mathematicized terms, an Aristotelian precept and arrives at denying the role of individuality from the artist's part.¹⁰ For even the selection the artist was to carry out was to be determined by the strict rules of composition. Alberti's creed was nature, but not as we see it in its accidental multiplicity, but rather as he conceived of its underlying, intrinsic laws, which were the target of imitation and which laws he arrived at by mathematical and geometrical calculations. It is in this sense he is exemplary of how the Renaissance geometrically constructed a reality and selective created nature.¹¹

It is also Alberti who in his *De Pictura* establishes the importance of the idea of 'composition' in painting and his concept derives from rhetorics, where this was a technical term long before it would have been applied to the visual arts. He is, for example, "treating the art of Giotto as if it were a periodic sentence by Cicero." *Compositio* is perhaps the most influential term of Alberti. The emphasis on it shows a definite approach to the arts that are to imitate the world as the Renaissance saw it. Both in rhetorics and painting this emphasis shifted from *disso-lutum*, which was understood as undisciplined style, to *compositum*.¹²

9 Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators* cf. eg. 47-50. Quotation from 7.

10 Cf. Blunt 10, 20-25. Alberti is simplifying Aristotle inasmuch as he arrives at a typical beauty by arithmetical equations, while in Aristotle there is a role for the faculty of the imagination, or at any rate, for more creativity of the artist's own.

11 Cf. Baxandall, *Reneszánsz szemlélet*, p.129. Though his example is not Alberti, Baxandall explicitly states a like conclusion.

12 Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators* 131-139. Quotation from 131.

For as to the world, the cosmos was perceived to be a similar *compositum*. The Christainized Ptolemaic and Aristotelian cosmology, that has gone through some simplification but has remained essentially the same since the Middle Ages, offered a finite universe¹³, harmonically ordered with its perfect correspondences between the spheres, between the different levels of the macrocosm and the microcosm. The Renaissance, constructing its aesthetic realm, perfects perspective and geometrical composition to represent this divine order of things. Divinity itself is expressed in the harmony and symmetrical compositions of the paintings and statues that populate the churches. One can even sense this refined order in the structure of sonnets, say by Spenser, Sidney, or even Shakespeare, where the argument or the point of wit depends on a well-balanced correspondence of similar and opposing concepts.¹⁴

We can thus see that on the basis of the medieval cosmological model the Renaissance was constructing a world, a coherent space, a universe that can be defined by "orthogonal lines converging towards a vanishing point.¹⁵ At this point the universe (and in a like manner, the universe of the painting as well) is closed down. The aesthetic realm corresponds - as it seems it duely should, in this frame of mind - to the finite universe one is tempted to see as bubble within bubble, where everything is well-ordered and perfectly functioning in the eternal tranquillity of the Great Chain of Being.

The point of the matter is that such a finite cosmos *is* comprehensible - like the space of Renaissance art - for the human mind; it is definable and habitable, all phenomena find their niches, and where these niches may lie is deducible with basically complete certainty. As C.S. Lewis puts it,

the spheres of the old [astronomy] present us with an object on which the human mind can rest, overwhelming in its greatness, but satisfying in its harmony, ... Dante never strikes that note [of the baffling and the alien], ... Pascal's *le silence eternel de ces espaces infinis* never entered his mind. He is like a man being conducted through an immense cathedral, not like one lost in a shoreless sea. The modern feeling, I suspect, first appears with Bruno. With Milton, it enters English poetry, when he

13 Cf. Tillyard 5 and 23.

14 Sypher, 62, states this point with far more, and perhaps somewhat arguable, definitiveness when he says that symmetrical structures characterized the syntax of literature as well. Rhetorical training and habit no doubt justifies this, yet when put against the test, I found his point more tangibly applicable to the whole structure of a poem than merely to its syntax.

15 Sypher, 71.

sees the Moon riding "Like one that had bin led astray / Through
Heav'ns pathless way."¹⁶

III.

I quoted Lewis at such lengths because it were these lines that led me to look into Bruno from this aspect and his thought did appear to me to be just as sound a basis for mannerist art as the medieval model was for the Renaissance. Before moving on to elaborating this, I must here mention that in my view this modern feeling entered English poetry just as much with Donne as with Milton. Numerous lines can be found in his works that are very similar to what Lewis quotes from Milton. And though Lewis may discard Donne's significance¹⁷, Donne did see very well that "The world's proportion disfigured is" (*An Anatomy of the World*, 302).

The essence of the modern feeling seems to be just this: the disfigured proportion of the universe, the disruption of the earlier self-confident proportions and harmony. It is this that seems to become manifest in mannerist art. I shall now mention some features of mannerism that I find applicable to Donne.

Of the key term *furor* would have to be twisted a little for such an application. *Maniera*, however, does not need any rough twisting to be applied to Donne, and furthermore, what is understood by this term marks an all-important shift in the arts.

The concept was developed by Vasari who, just like Alberti, saw the fundamentals of painting in the imitation of nature, but he also believed, and explicitly stated, that art can supersede nature. Alberti did not deny that perfect imitation may be insufficient for the creation of perfect beauty, but Vasari went as far as claiming that there can be a direct opposition between the two.¹⁸ The word *maniera* refers to an individual style, traits by which an artist can be told apart from others. To achieve this, the artist needs to have recourse to invention instead

¹⁶ Lewis 99-100.

¹⁷ Lewis devalues Donne's lyrics in his essay "Donne and Love Poetry in the Seventeenth Century." in: Gardner.

¹⁸ Cf. Blunt 77-78.

of, or rather above, imitation. This idea marks the beginning of a less scientific and more free artistic creation.¹⁹

It is at this point that it will be seen why it is so important to be aware of the fact that the Renaissance *constructed* a world with a mind conditioned by classical rhetorics, science, and medieval cosmology. As the new science evolved and began to shatter the old cosmology the construction of the Renaissance began to be altered. What served as a sound basis for imitation started to collapse and thus art-theories moved on to emphasizing invention instead. Imitation (in whichever version or understanding of the term) can only be confident, can only in fact function, where there is a solid object to be imitated. If the object to be represented is the world (and in the system of the corresponding micro- and macrocosms, representation of the *whole* is unavoidable even in the smallest details), then the world must not be elusive, incomprehensible - it must be characterised by the mode of Being instead of continuous Becoming. Invention seems to be a much more suitable artistic counterpart to the mode of Becoming. If the constructed order of the Renaissance falls apart, imitative representation loses the ground from under its feet, and as a consequence, when there is no longer anything tangible enough to represent, the artist may feel freer to invent instead. Of course the issue is far more complex than the above phrasing suggests, and good mannerist art was by far not merely the inventive phantasmagoria of the mind, nor did its theories propose an *inventio ex nihilo*. Nor is, as I shall try to show in the case of Bruno and Donne, Being very simply replaced by Becoming.²⁰

The increasing importance of invention can easily be detected in Donne's poetry as well: one of the first things any reader of his poems is confronted with is his unusual, witty way of arguing, or his inventive, surprising logical processes.

The category of *grazia*, another mannerist key term, is important not only because it can be grasped in Donne, but also because it may direct us to where mannerism was turning its inventive powers. This term refers to a new conception of beauty - a spiritual beauty that is hidden behind perceptible reality, one that does not depend upon rules or ration, but is something undefinable and enigmatic, only understandable for the elect. Bruno, in *De gli eroici furori* (1585), his most Neoplatonic work which is a treatise on love, containing sonnets and

19 Cf. Klaniczay 44-47.

20 Vasari's work was published in 1550, seven years after Copernicus's, but naturally it would be in vain to search for cosmological roots to Vasari's concept of invention. My speculations and conclusions concern a theoretical, not an actual connection.

their explication in prose, states in a very similar vein that beauty and art have no prescriptive rules - there are as many rules as works, which is also to say that the number of rules is infinite. (This, as it will be seen, is something that follows quite naturally from Bruno's metaphysical and cosmological views.)

Donne's poetry can be linked to *grazia* on several points. One is that *grazia* can only be grasped by the elect. Alvarez shows that the formal features of Donne's poetry were not explicitly based on any aesthetic principle, and that these formal features were a way of his saying "Wits only!" His audience (in his lifetime mainly made up of his friends) was one that understood his obscurity - a circle of the "understanders"²¹, the elect who could grasp this wavering, inventive concept of artistic beauty.

A more important link of *grazia* to Donne is the hidden spirituality involved in the term. His love poetry is praised not on the account of this, but rather because of his bold treatment of bodily love and his wit. Murray Roston devoted a book to showing that, like in mannerism, in Donne as well, the disturbance and tension is not so much the mark of insecurity than of the "dislodgement of physical reality by a religious faith that finds its satisfaction in the emotional, rather than the empirical world."²² He convincingly argues that the intent of wit is to reveal a "divine order of the universe which unites the apparently disparate."²³ He proves that Donne's circular logic which often demolishes itself is the rejection of the Renaissance idol of reason and logic, and that "the complex movement of the poems ... is constructed with extraordinary subtlety specifically in order to create a springboard for the leap into the mysterious or the transcendental."²⁴ This deeper meaning of wit and of the curious logic of the poems does very much resemble what is behind the term of *grazia*.

This is an important connections for two reasons. One is that it directs attention to the fact that regardless of his more mundane tones and his sense of dissatisfaction, the spiritual aspiration is always there in Donne's love poetry. The other is that it shows a turning away from physical reality and the empirical world. This may sound somewhat contradictory about a poet who uses metaphors taken from sciences and who treats bodily love in such an outright fashion, yet it does help in explaining the background of his devices and approach,

21 Cf. Alvarez 22-32.

22 Roston 46-47.

23 Roston 76.

24 Roston 74-75.

his own contradictions and tensions. For the turning away from the empirical is quite a logical shift, once the *ordo geometricus* which so far constituted reality seemed no longer tenable. Perceptible reality no longer offers assurance for the individual or rules for the arts. Hence invention, the infinite number of rules, and hence the leap beyond perceptible reality, hence the twisting and turning inside-out of the logical processes that so far offered access to the spiritual.

Plato himself had stated that only what is modelled after firm Being can be beautiful.²⁵ When discussing whether the "model" after which the world was created is characterised by Being or Becoming. He says that if the master looks upon the model that exists in a changeless way (i.e. in the mode of Being), his creation shall be beautiful. Beauty is not possible where the object of creation is characterised by Becoming. Renaissance composition seemed to have accepted this as its underylying principle, just as it shared Plato's precept according to which God created order out of disorderly motion because He thought that order is by all means superior.²⁶

The mannerist concept of beauty thus consequently follows, and is consistent with, the shift from imitation to invention - citing Plato's ideas also shows that underlying this shift is the perception of the world as being in the state of Becoming rather than of Being. Thus we also find here a strong case for giving up reliance on the empirical world which no longer offers a fixed superstructure for art to work with, and also find the explanation of the leap beyond reason that mannerist art manifests. *Grazia* is a conception of beauty that differs from any imitation of an ordered Being; instead it is out to uphold a spiritual reality by positing its ever-changing rules in the flux of Becoming.

But to move back to the disruption of proportion: it is first of all in the works of such mannerist artists as Parmigianino, El Greco or Tintoretto that one can grasp the dissolution of the coherent space of the Renaissance. Sypher shows how for instance in *The Long-Necked Madonna* the relation of the background and the foreground of the picture is undecipherable because of its ambiguity. Well known mannerist techniques, as the narrow and winding spaces, the serpentine lines spiralling nervously in upward directions are also very far from the Renaissance harmony. The over-all effect of these compositions is dissonance and dynamism. Similarly in literature - like in Donne or some Jacobean dramas - the

25 Cf. Plato *Timaeus* 28a, b.

26 Cf. Plato *Timaeus* 30a, b.

logic of the rhetorics is not based on sequences and transitions, but instead it circulates between extremes, it surprises us with unexpected stresses and rhythms which are determined more by psychological than by compositional considerations. In his description of mannerism Sypher quotes Montaigne: "There is no permanent existence, either of our being, or that of the objects."²⁷

Thus, mannerism disrupts the well-ordered space of the Renaissance, its perspective, its fixed vanishing points to where the lines are so assuredly running and from where the world can be viewed as a coherent and comprehensible construction. Beauty now denies the rationalized harmony and becomes something elusive and exceedingly spiritual, oscillating in an unintelligible space. To me it seems that this unintelligibility really means that the stable and closed composition of space of the Renaissance was opened up into infinity. And the thinker who blew up the bubbles of the spheres, opened the closed cosmos and gazed into the infinity of the universe was Giordano Bruno.

IV.

Bruno went much farther in the new philosophy or new science than Copernicus, who only claimed that the Earth revolves around the Sun, but left the universe to be a closed sphere. As opposed to him, Bruno announced that the universe is of infinite space in which countless stars are scattered with countless planets around them - and this experience of infinity is the basic feature of his whole philosophy.

But what does this experience of infinity mean for the arts and for the individual? For such an infinity also implies a human loss: this stand, on the first level, in the fact that our treasured significance in the universe infinitely lessens

²⁷ For comparison of mannerist painting and language, cf. Sypher 108-128. Quotation from 121.

It may be worth mentioning here that as to the rhetorics of metaphysical poetry, opposing opinions exist. Rosemond Tuve in her famous *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1947) argues that Donne's logic and rhetorics follows Ramist precepts and thus are very much straightforward. Without wanting to indulge into this debate, I must take sides with those critics who refute this. In the context of my essay, Donne's use of opposites, paradoxes, of an often self-destructive logic seems to be a formal feature that is well grounded in his general approach.

(On the use of contraries see also footnote 41 below.)

and, on the second level, in that we become completely vulnerable to the accidents of the infinite multiplicity. And these implications carry the further danger that what Lewis calls the "significant form" - i.e. the stability of the medieval model that conditioned the Renaissance to create its self-confident and orderly composition - falls through our fingers like dust. The facts of the history of the arts seem to prove just this: the closed sphere of the aesthetic realm of the Renaissance was torn apart and the space of mannerist art became just as inconceivable as the category of *infinity* is for the human mind. The language of literature and the theories of art seemed to have been moving in the same direction. If so far there existed a closed and static form of wholeness, the implications of Bruno's universe had to replace this with the open and dynamic form of infinity.

The vital question that arises here is how, if at all, can any synthesis be found in the constant dynamism and openness of infinity. And this is by far not merely a theoretical question. For the issue at stake is whether there exists any kind of arrival, fulfilment for man. As opposed to the medieval model where permanent Becoming only characterised the state of affairs within the low sphere of the Earth, here this Becoming characterises the whole universe. And where can this permanent Becoming solidify into Being in an infinite universe? Where can human fulfilment and happiness become more, or more valid, than the passing moment?

With these problems we are back at the initial question concerning the constant and torturing dissatisfaction radiating from *Songs and Sonnets*. It is these above questions Donne's love poetry forces one to consider, for this poetry is mannerist at least in the sense that instead of the security of Being it exposes itself to the insecurity of Becoming in, if we like, Bruno's infinite space.

V.

It is at this point that I must turn to Bruno in a little more detail, for I think his metaphysics implies an answer of a kind to the above questions. There seems to be no need to evaluate the whole of Bruno's philosophy - not only because his oeuvre was left unfinished, or because what he did finish is itself not without contradictions, there being apparently no strong intention in Bruno to create a whole, closed system of thought, but also because for the conclusion I would like

to draw concerning the relation of Being and Becoming the examination of his metaphysical work, *De la Causa, Principio ed Uno* is entirely sufficient. Not only is this work the most explicit exposition of his metaphysics, but it is also here that Bruno makes the first steps towards the bringing down of Neoplatonic subordinations and scales of being.²⁸

The basic question Bruno seems to be facing here is the immanence or transcendence of the primal cause of the universe. In the second dialogue of the five constituting the work he distinguishes an immanent and a transcendent cause in order to later unite them. The first he calls *principle*, which is something immanent, i.e. it works to create things from within them and remains present in the result. The second is what he calls *cause*, which is something transcendental, i.e. it works to create things from the outside and it remains outside the result. Cause and principle are united in his central term of the *world-soul*, which Bruno explains by an analogy from the arts: the cause and the principle of the artifact is the idea or form the artist bears in his soul even before setting down to work. This idea is a cause because it ontologically precedes the artifact and it creates it, and is a principle because it remains present in the result.

Before moving on, one must notice here the strict correspondence of this thought, at least in its terminology, to Vasari's. When dealing with *maniera* and invention, Vasari refers to an idea in the artist's soul that is the prefiguration of his work independent of nature. The inventive artist follows this idea instead of imitating nature. Invention in mannerism thus finds a counterpart, or a very similar conception, in metaphysical terms in Bruno's *world-soul*.

This world-soul contains the idea of all things in the universe and thus it is a cause and principle of it. The world-soul is not something external to the universe: Bruno situates it as something within the material world, inherent to it. One important consequence of this is that if the form of things derives from the world-soul, than all existing things partake in the functioning of the world-soul, just as it partakes in the existence of all things - which is also to say that all things contain this soul. Thus life on the one hand is universal, on the other hand it is eternal. If everything is animated by the soul, then there is no annihilation, only transformation into new forms: the universe is characterised by Becoming.

28 Cf. Nelson 7-8. It is also here that Nelson shows how debatable Felice Tocco's results are in pinning down any system or historical development in Bruno's thought, which Tocco attempts in his *Le opere latini di Giordano Bruno e confrontate con le italiane*.

At this point it may seem that the inherent, potential form is superior to matter, but Bruno does not settle for any hierarchies, he is out to describe an all-embracing Oneness. Thus he proceeds to establish matter as no less substantial than form. Changes, he says, only concern the outer form of things, the individual forms are mere accidents. The matter Bruno posits is an abstract entity, the common concept of the matter of all individual things (just like the world-soul, which is the common concept of all realized forms). According to Aristotle, matter is only a potential which is realized by form and thus the cause of things is the formulation of matter - it is form that is the truly existent of the two. Bruno turns this idea around, though in a peculiar way. The universal matter he posits (*supra-sensual matter*) is the ultimate container and emitter of all forms, not merely a potential, but also the truest reality. Matter, that is capable of creating all forms from within itself, is thus no different from the world-soul, the consequence of which is that matter and form are united into one, which is the One substance of the universe. These speculations are not only significant because they mark a turn in the history of philosophy by restoring life and activity to matter²⁹, but also because it unites possibility and reality as well, which points to the understanding of Being and Becoming in the terms of each other. "As potency, matter is not only predicable of the sensuous world, but of the intelligible world as well, for even in intelligible objects, *being or act implies the power to be*"³⁰ - this is Nelson's comment, which I would like to further interpret and remind that since everything involves a soul, this "being" is within everything and as a consequence the continuous realization of the potency, i.e. continuous Becoming "implies the power" for Being. Which is also to say that Being is constituted by Becoming.

Bruno arrives at his final unification more gradually than I have implied in this very simplified summary. It is only in the fourth dialogue that he creates the term *supra-sensual matter* in which forms exist not in a determinate and sequential way but indeterminately and simultaneously. With this concept Bruno reaches the level of abstraction that can only be conceived of as Existence itself. Thus Bruno has reduced everything to a single cause or substance without positing any transcendent divinity. Yet he was no atheist. In his system, in the final analysis,

29 This evaluation was made by Carrière, qtd. by Szemere in: "Bevezeto tanulmány" pp.41-42.

30 Nelson 246. Italics mine.

divinity is equated with Existence, for if his Oneness was to be absolute enough, it had to include God as well.³¹

Bruno was pushing to higher and higher levels of abstraction, giving his abstractions objective existence, and was expanding his terms all the way into infinity where they coincided in Oneness. He was "attributing an actual infinity to the universe by virtue of the immanence in it of the first cause operating from within as 'principle'."³² Though never stated in Bruno (for a reason I shall presently mention), it seems to me a quite tenable conclusion that in his zeal of unification he also arrives at equating Being and Becoming. His system has many important philosophical implications (for instance pantheism) but here I am only concerned with this relation of Being and Becoming.

There are two paths leading from this work: if we only gaze upon the whole, the One, we arrive into a world without Becoming, change or motion, unified into a fixed and frozen Being where multiplicity has no reality. But if we look at the mechanism that runs this world, we find a universe where this being is defined by the continuous dynamism of Becoming. In his passion for the One Bruno finally walks the former path - when he grants objective reality to unified existence, he renders multiplicity unreal. Yet in what he creates enroute, the latter world-view is inherently present. In his Oneness reality equals possibility, and though the ultimate substance (Existence) is unchanging, what constitutes it is the infinite possibility of Becoming. The infinite space that contains the worlds is, as he term it, just as well contained by all worlds.³³ It may appear odd to argue the case of Becoming in a work the ultimate aim of which is to uphold Oneness, i.e. changeless Being, but I believe Bruno's concept of infinity calls for just such an argument. Though he emphasizes the primacy of the One over multiplicity, there is a very strong element of mutuality in the relationship of the two. *It is this very relation that makes infinity possible*: if the multiplicity of the worlds, the motions, the accidents would not, in Bruno's words "embrace" the Oneness, if Becoming would not embrace Being, we would again need a transcendental point beyond the universe. Yet if we can speak of "beyond" the cosmos is again closed and we cannot speak of infinity. This, perhaps, is the highest level of Bruno's uniting of contrary concepts: his One is grasped in Infinity. This One is the whole of

31 Though my conclusions are different, the analysis of Bruno's work was aided by Szemere's studies.

32 Sidney Greenberg, *The Infinite in Giordano Bruno* qtd. by Nelson p.14.

33 Cf. Bruno 123-124.

Existence, with reference not only to the countless stars, but also to life in general. It is thus that while positing a world of changeless Oneness, with his concept of infinity he defines Being by constant Becoming.³⁴ For Bruno life is not only the product of the universe; the universe as a whole is also the expression of life, in the infinity of both. To him the whole universe, God included, truly pulsates to the same rhythm, merged and sustaining itself in the affirmation of an infinite Existence.

VI.

It is a similar mechanism, a similar relation where the ultimate arrival to the One is only possible, is in fact defined by, being enroute in the world of multiplicity that I think is present in Donne, to whom I now turn. I would like to modify Sypher's claim that in mannerism, or in Donne "there is no Being but only Becoming"³⁵ by saying that in accordance with the analysis above, here Becoming is the mode of Being. In the attempt to show how this applies to love poetry I will enlist some features of *Songs and Sonnets* that I see as justifying this point.

The first of these features is one I have already alluded to and which explains the necessity of generalizing my arguments: it is the fact that Donne does not philosophize about love in any systematic way. This is not very much in keeping with the drift of Elizabethan love poetry; Spenser or Sidney carefully organized theirs into a coherent whole. As opposed to this, Donne's love poetry appears to be a random collection, the pieces springing forth from a concrete situation or a momentary emotion. If this can be taken as an expressive feature, it expresses that the principle of multiplicity is the ruling one in human emotions, as opposed to the constant divine aspirations of Petrarchan or Neoplatonist love poetry.

34 In passing one may mention that Bruno has been held to show affinities with mysticism. Evelyn Underhill, though she does not mention Bruno at all, in the second chapter of her book *Mysticism* (London: Methuen, 1911) states as a *differentia specifica* of mystic thinking that to it Being and Becoming are not mutually exclusive categories; instead, this mode of thought conceives of them in genuine unity.

Bruno's connections to the hermetic school of mysticism are thoroughly analyzed by Frances Yates in her *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1964)

35 Sypher 172.

It is not at all unimportant to briefly examine Donne's relation to this Neoplatonic tradition because to a Neoplatonist conception the higher and higher spheres of being which contain a lesser and lesser degree of multiplicity (being in time and space) and which are the more real the higher we go³⁶ always offer a sense of assurance or universal consolation that Donne seems to lack. Yet this relation is not at all clear-cut. Alvarez calls Donne "anti-Petrarchan", but even he rushes to add that Donne was in no "strict formal opposition to anyone else's aesthetics."³⁷ Anti-Petrarchan at first sight surely does not seem to be the right word for a bulk of poems where we so often run into the idea that the absence of the beloved equals death, where we encounter attitudes of complaint, attacks on the tyranny of love or the unwillingness to objectify the theme to the extent to feel sympathy with other lovers, where we are so often caught up in floods of tears or winds of sighs - for these are all characteristics of Petrarchan love poetry. Neither does Donne refrain from the glorification of love or the beloved, or from the aspiration for the divine through love.

Yet regardless of such similarities, the tone of *Songs and Sonnets* is so markedly different from that of Petrarchan love poetry, that it may even appear to be its disruption or disintegration (and here I am not only referring to Donne's prosody, which is quite evidently a new voice in the tradition). In Donne we find flippancy, cynicism even, we find the accusation and the depreciation of love and women, sentimentality and its smoothly flowing lines are replaced by masculinity and harsh rhythms of ordinary speech. Yes, there is idealization, but Donne is always an equal partner to his beloved and his treatment of physicality also speaks of a more outright relationship.³⁸

Donne apparently used what the tradition of Petrarchan and Elizabethan poetry had to offer - the existence of these conventions was essential to him to be able to deviate from them - but the superstructure of this poetry (i.e. a Neoplatonic world-view) was not satisfactory enough for Donne to offer him a system whereby he would have wanted to discipline his form or sooth his emotions.

No doubt, Neoplatonic terminology and aspirations are very often there in the poems. But beside that there is also something else. AS A.J. Smith so fittingly

36 Cf. the summary of basic Neoplatonist ideas in: Philip Merlan, *From Platonism to Neoplatonism* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960) 1.

37 Alvarez 41.

38 Cf. Redpath 47-88.

phrased it: "Between [Neoplatonic love] and Donne's figure of ecstasy there is a world of difference - the human world."³⁹

And this is the second point in question. For the human world is a world of multiplicity, of change, of Becoming, and Donne is the poet of this world of Becoming. In the Neoplatonic conception of love the beloved is somebody who either leads the mind into divine realms or has such frustrating attraction on the senses that distracts the mind from these realms. Either way, love is somewhat a theological question, putting a qualitative difference between the elements of human nature. Love is a desire for union, but such union or fulfilment is a static entity leading to a merely intellectual contemplation through which we are drawn into a final union - with God. Love thus really becomes full when it rises above the senses and passions, free of particular circumstances, into a stasis beyond time.⁴⁰ Donne's impatience, passion, scorn, masculinity, intimacy and sharp sense for the particular circumstances and situations is very far off from such a stance. "Lovers'Infiniteness" may be a poem showing how Donne does not wish to settle for such stasis.

This poem quite tangibly demonstrates how the relation of the lovers is not to be imagined as a still, centric point, but rather as constant motion. The paradox the poem is trying to overcome is that the speaker wants to have all of the lady's love, yet at the same time wants it to continually increase. This problem in itself points to that of attaining permanence in the happiness of love, Being in the state of Becoming.

In lines 31-32 Donne term what seems to him to be the misconception about "Love's riddles":

... we will have a way more liberal,
Than changing hearts ...

The mere changing of hearts (celebrated by Sidney in his poem "The Bargain") is a static approach to love that, as the poem demonstrates, denies infinity. If they give all their love, nothing will remain to be given the next day; such a relation can at most be a closed unit of wholeness that disallows increase. For should it increase, "This new love may beget new fears (l. 18); if the lady has given all her love, then any new love in her may only be created "by other men".

39 A.J. Smith. "The Dismissal of Love" in: Smith 106.

40 Cf. *ibid* 98-106.

Wholeness is a static category, as opposed to which infinity is by definition a dynamic one. The last lines instead of the exchange of hearts thus suggest

... to join them, so we shall
 Be one and one another's all.
 (ll.32-33)

It is through this that the previous argument makes sense:

...though thy heart depart
 It stays at home, and thou with losing sav'st it.
 (ll.29-30)

Just like Bruno, Donne also very often, like in these lines, has recourse to paradoxes, unites opposites in order to uphold a fixed point as a state of motion.⁴¹

In that bitter poem entitled "Love's Alchemy", attacking both the bodily and the spiritual aspects of love, Donne goes as far as discarding any "centric happiness". In a dynamic line of masculine attitude he claims that he has "loved, and got, and told" all there was about love and he has been convinced that there is no hidden mystery to be found. The conceit that stretches through the first stanza likens this Neoplatonic-sounding essence to the Elixir alchemists seek in vain for "'tis imposture all". The words "hidden mystery" call to mind the mystery the soul has access to in ecstasy, a highly spiritual state Donne in another poem ("The Ecstasy") finds unsatisfactory in itself, and it is this he here bitterly calls "imposture". His reasons for it are significant As the *Elixir Vitae* of the alchemists was supposed to prolong life, so do "lovers dream a ... long delight". But the

⁴¹ This use of opposites would deserve a more detailed explanation here, but the passages quoted from Roston in section III are sufficient allusions to its importance.

Bruno, in the fifth dialogue of *De la Causa* demonstrates Oneness by showing how opposites coincide in unity. This procedure of argument apparently has a long tradition - it came to Bruno from Nicholas of Cusa, but the use of paradoxes already had an eminent role in pre-socratic philosophy (presumably as a way of expressing unresolvable dichotomies, or as a way of resolving them). Underhill in her book on mysticism (cf. footnote 34 above) claims that to the mystic Pure Being reveals itself through the process of evoking contraries in the flux of Becoming. Unity through antinomies is a method that appears in such modern 'mystics' as Blake or W.B. Yeats as well.

This theme is beyond the scope of this essay; yet I would like to remind that Being and Becoming are themselves contraries, the interplay of which upholds Existence as understood by, I believe, Bruno in his metaphysics and by Donne in his wit.

alchemists never found the Elixir - at best they accidentally produce "Some odoriferous thing, or medicinal". Likewise, love's delight will not be very long either. The conceit faces what I think is a logical impossibility in a life of ecstasy. This is a state defined by being different from the ordinary, and should it become permanent it will also come to be the ordinary and thus cease to be ecstasy. Here the hidden mystery is thought of as something that can produce only momentary wonders, joyous by-products of life, as it were. It is not there to prolong life or to stay with the lovers for good.

This is no wonder. The approach I am suggesting implies that there is no "centric happiness" for in infinity there is no centre to arrive at - in the words of Bruno, "quintessence is vanity".⁴² If one was to imagine such a centre spatially, it would no doubt lie halfway between bodily and spiritual fulfilment - just as bodies need to ascend to the state of Spirit and the lovers' souls must descend to the senses in lines 61-62 and 65-66 of "The Ecstasy". In "Love's Alchemy" Donne mocks both bodily and spiritual love and thus does away with the whole geometry that is built around a centre.

The lines

That loving wretch that swears
'Tis not the bodies marry, but the minds
Which he in her angelic finds
Would swear as justly, that he hears
In that day's hoarse minstrelsy, the spheres.
(ll. 18-22)

refer with outright cynicism to the music of the spheres that one is supposed to hear when passing from a lower sphere to a higher one. Here Donne is mocking any 'ascent' through love and thus love's spirituality. But the body has no more to offer either: his scorn is expressed by such overtly sexual lines as "... deeper digged love's mines" or the closing words calling women nothing "but mummy, possessed." The word "possessed" may again be of significance. As "Lover's Infiniteness" showed, the infinity of love requires more than mere possession. Possession is again static, but what is more, it is one-sided. As opposed to that, the merging the previously analysed poem suggested implies continuous mutuality.

⁴² In Bruno's dialogue *De l'Infinito, Universo e Mondi* qtd and trans. by Nelson, p.227.

"The Ecstasy" in a way could be a counter-poem to "Love's Alchemy". Here Donne does conceive of a hidden mystery but, as mentioned, this alone does not suffice: the soul must descend

"T'affection, and to faculties,
Which sense may reach and apprehend
(ll. 66-67)

The Neoplatonic fulfilment of love is likened in the next line to "a great prince" who "in prison lies", which metaphor is quite suggestive of how Donne, in his own way, urges to open up the closed and static spiritual universe of an earlier age, of an earlier approach to love, into the infinite multiplicity of the sensual world. Donne in this poem utilizes great poetic vigour to show how this does not mean surrender to the accidents of passion and desire.

I do not wish to argue that Donne was the exponent of the new science and the new philosophy. While critics are divided on this point, Donne's lamentations over the disfigured world are quite telling in themselves. Yet his approach to love is very different from that of his predecessors. My point is that this difference seems very much to resemble the difference between the universe of the medieval model and that of Bruno. The first instance of this resemblance, which I have been trying to show so far, is that as opposed to earlier ideals, Donne conceives of love as something that is not static and closed but dynamic and open. These are perhaps strange adjectives to be applied to love. The following features I would like to mention will specify and translate them into the terms of human relations.

The features now in question are mutuality and the dramatic element in Donne's lyrics. It is hard to treat them separately, for the dramatic element Pierre Legouis uncovered⁴³ stands in hidden dialogues stretching through the poems and it is first of all this element that is responsible for the feature of mutuality.

Legouis's analyses show how in many poems there always seems to be present a mute listener, whose only indirectly audible reactions shape the logic and, primarily, the emotional attitude of the speaker. He carefully points out how Donne "succeeds in creating a voluptuous atmosphere and calling up in it two flesh-and-blood human beings who act in relation to each other."⁴⁴ Legouis is not

⁴³ Pierre Legouis, *Donne the Craftsman* (Paris, 1928). A part of this work is reprinted in Gardner.

⁴⁴ Legouis, "The Dramatic Element in Donne's Poetry" in: Gardner 41.

alone with his opinion (most of the critics I have consulted emphasize this point). Smith, analysing "Air and Angels", comes to a similar conclusion without bringing up the dramatic element. He writes that this poem really amounts to saying that

"love is neither the worship of form, nor the admiration of beauty, but something that needs an answering love to give it substance ... the proper object of love is not disembodied form, but another human being, and that love is not love even then unless it is returned and mutual.⁴⁵

There are other similarly good examples of this mutuality. In the last stanza of "The Will" there is what seems to be an ontological argument:

... but I'll undo
 The world by dying; because love dies too.
 Then all your beauties will be no more worth
 Than gold in mines where none doth draw it forth
 (l. 46-49)

The lady who neglects both love and the speaker of the poem annihilates "all three" - i.e. love, the wooer and herself. And "all three" can clearly only exist in the mutuality of the lovers' relationship and awareness of the other - Existence requires *relation* and relation requires motion, not fixity.

The "Valediction..." poems show the same kind of awareness, and the conceits of "A Valediction: forbidding Mourning" spatially define this kind of relation. Both in the famous compass conceit and in stanza six which runs

Our two souls therefore, which are one,
 Though I must go, endure not yet
 A breach, but an expansion,
 Like gold to aery thinness beat

we find movement not towards some "centric happiness" but movement away from such a centre. Here we no longer have aspiration for some centric point or "hidden mystery"; instead the bondage granting their love is proposed as the space stretching between them and tying them together even if they be apart. This bondage, this space is not to be imagined as a sphere containing the lovers (or, to allude to Bruno again, it contains, "embraces" them only inasmuch as they

45 A.J. Smith "The Dismissal of Love" in: Smith 128.

also embrace it), but as one they create between themselves - no matter how far they may "roam", as long as there is awareness of the other, this bondage will be sustained. Love is not merely an inner state of the heart but a dramatic bondage between two people which responds and moulds to their movements, which does not tie one up in static wholeness but allows infinity in the mutuality of movement, which dynamism is the very thing upholding the bondage. Just like in Bruno, Being is only possible, Existence is only what it is, as the absolute container of Becoming which constitutes this Being.

One may argue that it is no wonder that the "Valediction ..." poems speak of such a relationship: it is merely due to the poetic situation, which is parting and the fear over it. And this is where I come to my last point.

There are numerous poems in *Songs and Sonnets*, some of the "Valediction ..." poems among them, that speak of fulfilled love, yet even these poems rarely escape a degree of fear, tension or bitterness. It must be treated as a significant fact that some of Donne's most beautiful pieces of fulfilled love are set in a situation of parting. I read this contrast of theme and situation as Donne's awareness of the fact that

... of the stars which boast that they do run
 In circles still, none ends where he begun.
 All their proportion's lame, it sinks, it swells.
 (*An Anatomy of the World* ll. 275-277)

I chose these three lines not only to demonstrate that Donne knew he was living in a universe that had lost its earlier calm proportions, but also because it shows that this amounts to continuous change, sinking and swelling, and that there is no guarantee that the perfect shape of the circle will be completed. No guarantee other than "Thy firmness" which "makes my circle just, / And makes me end, where I begun." ("A Valediction: forbidding Mourning" ll. 35-36) For Plato the science of Eros was astronomy⁴⁶ and Neoplatonist lovers did gaze at the stars just as much as at their beloved, but the firmness Donne here calls for no longer has much to do with the stars, for there is no longer much to accept from

46 Plato, *Symposium* 188b.

them. This firmness now is entirely a human endeavour, granted by the awareness of the relation.⁴⁷

But as Donne very well knows, we are only human and bound to sin. He knows that we are forever vulnerable to our own and to others' passions and thus this firmness is not merely a spiritual/astronomical issue. In "Woman's Constancy", regardless of the more playful tone of the poem, there is the admission that the only constancy of women is their inconsistency and that he "... could / Dispute, and conquer ..." but he himself abstains to do this because, as the last line states, he may chose to be just as inconsistent. He knows that though

... this place may thoroughly be thought
True paradise, I have the serpent brought.
(*"Twickenam Garden"*, ll. 8-9)

And this is perhaps one of the sources of Donne's love poetry: his awareness of our weakness, due to which the seeds of our despair and failure are always there with us, that the human soul is not any frozen or firm Being but much rather something alive and always Becoming. That love is more than a spiritual affair: that it must not only be contemplation but something that is constantly *done*, that is interdependence, a bondage; a drama which needs actors and an action formulating between them. I think it is the awareness of the danger and the responsibility inherent in such a relationship that makes him place his poems of fulfilled love in a situation of parting, that unsettles even his most positive pieces. For no drama can be conceived of in stasis.

47 Compare how different even Shakespeare's awareness is when he in sonnet CXVI claims that love "is an ever-fixed mark" and that "Love's not Time's fool". True, Donne also has such claims when e.g. in "The Sun Rising" he argues with the Sun and affirms that "This bed thy centre is, these walls, thy sphere" (l. 30). Yet even in such a counter-example as "The Sun Rising" he as it were gives himself away. His claim is no triumph, but rather a desperate assertion in the face of facts he is well aware of - the poem opens with a typically Donneian strong line, suggesting debate and tension rather than self-assuredness:

Busie old foole, unruly Sunne,
Why dost thou thus,
Through windowes, and through curtaines call on us?
Must to thy motions lovers seasons run?"

(ll. 1-4)

VII.

When Bruno animates the whole universe and makes its governing principle immanent, he universalizes life, which is a way to overcome the fear of death. Donne also animates love by mobilizing and dramatizing the Neoplatonic contemplation partly also to overcome the fear that the static approach to love denies its infinity. And this is by far not only due to some mundane sense of realism. For Donne strived for the spiritual no less than his predecessors - nor was, similarly, Bruno an atheist, even is his universe consummated the transcendental. Their approach is not any kind of a surrender to the merely earthly, though there is an increased awareness of multiplicity. Yet neither of them give up on capturing infinitude in man's life. It is only the approach that makes them stand apart from their predecessors: as the infinite space and the countless worlds in it embrace each other in Bruno, Donne's infinite love is also granted by the mutual motion and awareness of the lovers.

Donne seems to have been too sensitive, too frank, too restless to have been able to neglect that infinity is by definition open and dynamic, to have been able to do away with the experience that this is a world of change and continuous Becoming. But neither did he settle for this endless instability. To my mind the solution Bruno and Donne offer is very similar: they uphold a firm Being defined as Becoming; the only fixed point is Existence as such, with all its turmoil and drama oscillating within this Oneness.

In this lies the answer to the basic question of this essay. The examples of Bruno and Donne show that after the collapse of the Renaissance synthesis a radically new concept of balance appeared, and that Bruno's metaphysics and Donne's love poetry both show the attempt at achieving this new synthesis. Balance or synthesis are perhaps not the best expressions - what they offer as a fixed point (Being) is one that is sustained by the ceaseless change and dynamism (Becoming) within it. It is a synthesis that can boldly take on the unsettling idea of infinity and can conceive of this idea as the fulness of the human condition.

Roston, moving along different lines, gave a description of Donne's world-view that seems strongly to support these speculations:

Within [Donne's] view of the world, the spiritual ideal was not to be attained by a calm rung-by-rung ascent on the ladder of love, nor by a gently circular movement from the mundane to the divine, but rather the tortuous path which

about must and about must go, a path beset by traps and twisting contradictions.⁴⁸

It is equally manifest in the twisted syntax and logic, in the emotional versatility and in the unceasing restlessness of Donne that his way of grasping the infinite, the spiritual, the ultimate Being, was his going about and about on his tortuous path - an intense and dramatic living of continuous Becoming.

If there is ever to be a fixed point (be this the fulfilment of love or the infinite sphere of the universe), within it there must forever oscillate every element that constitutes the world, every portion of the soul that makes us human - our fears and passions and fallibility just as much as our spirituality.

What stops such a universe, such a love from falling apart into fragments of chance, as one learns from Donne's poetry, is the awareness of interdependence, the awareness that the bondage of love can never be static, that love is a drama to be acted out every moment, that its rules are immanent in the mutuality of movement, in a permanent Becoming that constitutes Being.

For only this immanent rule of mutuality and awareness can ever grant, constitute that firmness without which one cannot run perfect circles. And if existence in such flux, in such a constantly dramatic mode is felt to be beyond man's power, and yet we cannot surrender our fate to mere chance, we must remember Donne's call to suffer this flux:

Be more than man, or thou'art less than an ant
(*An Anatomy of the World* l. 190)

Even if what I claim to be the essence of Donne's approach to love sounds like a truism, I am quite convinced that it is worth repeating it. For if we wish to be more than the ant that is the victim of chance, we cannot miss to continuously learn and re-learn this truism, to continuously be aware of and re-live this drama.

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Gábor Ittzés

TIME IN MILTON'S *PARADISE LOST*

Narration is a temporal phenomenon. The truth value of that statement is so obvious that we often forget about it yet it is true in two significant ways. First, the act of narration takes place in time; as a printed text extends over lines and pages, so speech extends over seconds, minutes or hours, words follow each other along the linear scale of time. The fact that writing transforms the one-dimensional temporality of speech into the three-dimensional spatial reality of books bears indeed witness to the ingenuity of that device. Reading i.e. converting printed words back into [mentally] spoken ones, however, will happen in time again. Second, *what* is narrated, a sequence of events, happens in time. As Dr. Johnson says in his essay on Milton,

History must supply the writer with the rudiments of narration, which he must improve and exalt by a nobler art, must animate by dramatic energy, and diversify by retrospection and anticipation.
(1779:703)

Words like *history*, *retrospection*, and *anticipation* indicate how much narration is bound up in time.

This, of course, ought hardly to be astonishing. Time is a basic dimension of human experience, even human existence, and as such it is a limit to them. Whichever way we talk about life, our definition will by necessity include the notion of change which can only make sense in time. Changelessness means precisely invariability *in time*. The projection of the timeless is possible as a logical enterprise, but it will have to be based on a negation, the negation of time, and will therefore not take us very far. The realm of the timeless cannot

incorporate changes, but the idea of changelessness, as I have said above, is still bound up with time.

Not only narration but language in general is a phenomenon within time, and as *finitum non capax infiniti*, timelessness cannot be confined within the limits of language. Catherine Belsey makes essentially the same point when she says, speaking of God, who is eternal, that "at the heart of the project there lies impossibility. Whatever words are invoked to define him, God cannot be contained there" (1988:38-39). We may talk of, but certainly cannot coherently talk about, timelessness. Eternity i.e. timelessness is, then, a limit to both logic and language.

I believe it is not entirely needless and superfluous to briefly re-assert the above trivia in order to appreciate Milton's difficulty in writing *Paradise Lost*. Given that he wants to deal with this particular subject, he has to write about God and eternity, which is in itself a paradox. Moreover, he has to write about the heavenly kingdom and the visible world, i.e. eternal and temporal, *at the same time*. [Note how much my language is inseparable from time.] He has to create a logical structure that can serve as a framework to carry out his design: another impossible task.

In order that we can speak of 'Milton's solution,' though without a desire to enter into the debate on authorial intention, we first have to find evidence that he was at all aware of the difficulties he had to overcome. It should not surprise us to find that he was. There are numerous instances where Milton makes obvious references or even expressly calls attention to the impossibility of narrating heavenly events in human language.

Raphael faces the same problem when he tells Adam the stories of Satan's fall and of Creation. Trying to describe the duel between Michael and Lucifer, he says,

They ended parle, and both addressed for fight
 Unspeakable; for who, though with the tongue
 Of angels can relate, or to what things
 Liken on Earth conspicuous, that may lift
 Human imagination to such height

Of godlike power.

(VI.297-302)¹

This or the often used "to set forth/Great things by small" (VI.310) interjections, usually followed by a simile of cosmic scale, have, naturally, a function to underline the greatness of the events narrated and thereby demonstrate that *Paradise Lost* does qualify for an epic which must, at least according to seventeenth-century literary theory, deal with a subject matter of immense importance. Milton, however, does not simply magnify things on the earthly scale but puts emphasis on the quantitative difference between the visible world and the heavenly realm. In the passage above *human imagination* and *things on earth* on the one hand are juxtaposed with *tongue of angels* and *godlike power* on the other. Moreover, whatever we think of Milton's language and poetic achievement, his poetry, at least technically speaking, is not written in "the tongue of angels" but in fallen human language, and the permissive *though* unmistakably stresses the difference. To express, therefore, the difficulty of description for Raphael is just another instance of "set[ting] forth/Great things by small."

It might be objected to my last example that although it acknowledges the linguistic problems of talking about Heaven, it does not prove that Milton saw the question posed by time. Michael, cutting short his story of Israel's conquering the Promised Land in Book XII, says that "The rest/Were long to tell" (260-1). Incidentally, his words represent an almost verbatim repetition of Satan's excuse to the other fallen angels not to enlarge on the particulars of his expedition through Chaos into the new world: "Long were to tell/What I have done" (X.469-70). Speech requires time, and this is a difficulty. It is true that neither example is taken from the prelapsarian world, and Raphael and Adam, though not unaware, yet never were 'afraid' of time in their dialogue, on the contrary, they were very much at leisure. Nevertheless, Milton is part of the postlapsarian world and as such, the temporal qualities of narration are equally problematic for him.

The following lines taken from Raphael's relation of the creation cannot be subject to either of the above critical remarks, and it clearly proves that Milton knew quite well what difficulties talking about God entailed.

¹ All quotations are taken from the Hanford edition (see Works Cited), whose notes I have also made extensive use of.

So spake the Almighty, and to what he spake
 His Word, the Filial Godhead, gave effect.
 Immediate are the acts of God, more swift
 Than time or motion, but to human ears
 Cannot without process of speech be told,
 So told as earthly notion can receive.

(VII.174-9)

Here the *process of speech* is opposed to *immediate acts*, and the brilliance of the term "more swift/Than time or motion" cannot be overemphasised. Motion requires space, the other element creating the basic structure for everyday human experience², as well as time, and by coordinating it with time, Milton closes both the temporal and the spatial gaps between God's speech and the creation of the new, i.e. visible, world. God's words which are at the same time acts become a physical entity which move within the co-ordinates of time and space, yet defy those limits. This is necessary for Milton to cut across the paradox of God's infinity and the finitude of the created beings. It is, after all, mind blowing to think that what God says is realized there and then [from God's eternal point of view] yet not quite there and not quite then [from the lesser beings' point of view]. Furthermore, as God created the world by his word, he cannot twice say it because the first will be sufficient. Milton, however, needs him to first make the proposal in Heaven, otherwise there would be confusion among the angels who cannot know God's mind without being told, and then he narrates the actual creation mainly using the text of Genesis 1.

Milton could rely on well established Christian theological doctrine and exegetical practice, which also have to come to terms with the paradoxes of time and language, to employ the Son as the Father's representation on earth and his Word. The visible world is, then, created by God's Word i.e. the Son, and Milton relates the events accordingly. In other words, God's proposal for the creation (VII.152-73) and its actual realization (VII.210-42 and 243-547) are simultaneous, but human language is incapable of simultaneity: precisely what Milton says in the quotation above.

² Despite its far-reaching philosophical consequences, it would seem pointless to me to discuss the niceties of twentieth-century physics here. Matter and space/time may be inseparable, but ordinary human experience of time and space as a framework within which material things exist and move will continue.

Once it is established that Milton was aware of the problems of narration, it is now possible to proceed to investigate what solutions he suggested to overcome them. The most conspicuous, and probably most widely discussed, one is his introduction of an integrated metaphysics based on the projection of the immanent into the transcendental. This ontology is certainly well known from medieval theology, the great hierarchy of beings with God at its top and then neatly organized down to unformed matter (see Lewis 1942:73-77). Milton uses the idea not simply to organize intellectual and spiritual dependence, but creates a spatial and temporal continuum throughout the whole Universe, including the Visible World, Heaven, and Hell as well as Chaos and Night. He only has experience of this world, so he projects what holds true here into the other realms. His angels' corporeal-material qualities including feeding and sexuality have often been treated. What concerns my present enquiry is the existence of time outside the bounds of this world.

After the invocation leading into a brief summary of events in, significantly, reversed chronological order, the epic begins in Hell with the description of the fallen angels re-organizing themselves. Hell is placed in the middle of Chaos by *The Argument*, with an incidental remark that "Heaven and Earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed." The first lines of the narrative proper begin as follows:

Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men, he [Satan] with his horrid crew
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf
Confounded though immortal.

(I.50-3)

The very first thing Milton does in his poem is to give the impression of a temporal setting. He pinpoints the time as a fixed point. He anchors, as it were, the narrative right at the start; this is his first step in organizing a poetic cosmos out of the unformed chaotic material of his subject matter. We now think we know when the action begins. This, of course, is a false impression. Satan lay for nine days, so the action begins nine days after—what? There is a chain, to use my previous metaphor, hanging loose from the upper end of the action, but there is no anchor tied to it.

The setting is in Hell, supposedly before the visible world was created³ and definitely before the Fall, yet in the first four lines there are two references to mortality. The one to *mortal men* seems to be a conscious assertion of the difficulty of introducing time in a realm beyond this world. What Milton does is, to return to my metaphor for this last once, anchor the action in human experience. Or to put it the other way round, he indicates the point where he leaves our world.

Creating the chronology of events in retrospect, it becomes obvious that earth and man are created by the time Satan regains consciousness after his fall from Heaven. Milton adopts the Biblical story of creation with its burden-like repetition of "And there was evening and there was morning—the first day" (Gen 1.5). In retrospect, it is not entirely anachronistic to measure time in human terms for the fallen angels, but the mortality of man is certainly disturbing at this point.

As the narrative proceeds, there are repeated references to a temporal dimension of the entire Universe, making sense outside the limits of the visible world. The very fact of the new world's creation is related to other events on that larger time scale of the Universe. Satan himself mentions "a fame in Heaven that *ere long*" (I.651 - italics mine) a new world will be created. It is often asserted to have been foretold (II.280, 345ff, 830, X.482), and Chaos terms it as "now lately" (II.1004) founded. Moreover, common measurements of time are frequently used in connection with what we would expect to be the sphere of the timeless. Raphael was absent on the day of Adam's creation (VIII.229). Each fallen angel has to kill "The irksome hours, till his great chief return" (II.527). Uriel says that Satan came to him disguised "This day at the height of noon" (IV.564), while Raphael relates his rebellion to have taken place at midnight (V.667). And indeed, the battle in Heaven takes three days (V.675, VI.1-12, 521-24, 539, 699 etc.), and the fallen angels must "undergo/This annual humbling certain numbered days" (X.575-6). They originally hoped that their "supreme foe in time" might remit (II.210), and their "empire [...] might rise/By policy and long process of time" (II.296-7).

Even if we allow, although I cannot justify this standpoint, that examples taken from after the creation might be explained away, not all of the above can be

³ The question of what Milton meant by implying that the setting was before the creation of Heaven remains open, but it need not concern us here. [Cf. also II.1004, VII.230ff.]

dismissed. The unquestionable proof, however, comes from Raphael, who discusses the issues of metaphysics with Adam, including the relevance of time to eternity.

As yet this world was not, and Chaos wild
 Reign'd where these Heavens now roll, where Earth now rests
 Upon her center poised, when on a day
 (For time, though in eternity, applied
 To motion, measures all things durable
 By present, past, and future) on such day
 As Heaven's great year brings forth...

(V.577-82)

The notion is paradoxical, if not a contradiction in terms, and Milton's [in]famous syntax leaves the formulation open to several possible interpretations, but there is no room to doubt that in the Miltonic Universe there is time in eternity.

Once he could not transcend time, Milton projected its validity into the transcendental. With this ingenious manoeuvre he vastly extended the boundaries of the speakable world. He could not, however, overcome the ultimate paradox: his Universe is still time-bound, and he must believe that there is something beyond the limits of time i.e. past the limits of his Universe. For what remains outside, we still have no better words than *God* and *eternity*. Both of them must *per definitionem* be left out of any temporal structure. And so Milton observes these limits. The chronology of his narration begins with the day of the Son's anointing and ends with his Second Coming. Milton says nothing of what happened before that day⁴ or what is to come after the apocalypse: there is timeless eternity.

One more thing needs to be added here. In Milton's concept as outlined by Raphael to Adam in V.469-505 and partly by the Son and God himself in VI.731-3 and VII.154-61, respectively, there is room for development even without the Fall. Man by long persistence in obedience is to become perfected and raised to the same level as the angels, and ultimately God is to be all in all. Such development, i.e. change, can only be possible in time, hence the justification of it

⁴ There are brief references to the creation of Heaven of Heavens [as distinct from Heaven and Earth] and the angels in III.390-1 and V.833-42, respectively, but these, and a few others of similar nature, cannot be located on any time scale on the evidence of the text.

in eternity. The achievement of that unity would have been the alternative ending point of history in Doomsday's stead. What commences that point is the same in both cases, and it cannot really be spoken about; it is in fact unthinkable for time is a limit not only to speaking but also to thinking.

What Milton does to create a logically acceptable framework, in the final analysis, is not too much although it is all he can do. By projecting time into those spheres, he extends the limits of the speakable [or 'narratable'] from the creation to the anointing of the Son in Heaven. Incidentally, Parousia still remains a boundary he cannot overstep.

God also constitutes a problem, even between the Anointing and the Second Coming, by his immutability, infinity, eternity.

Concepts of change—time: past, present, future; movement forward or back, as well as seeming movement; hope and fear—are in man's mind, not God's, whose omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience are unadorned, always the same, unaccommodated. The poem demonstrates the paradox in various ways. (Shawcross 1982:7)

Inasmuch as he tries to manifest God in time Milton is in danger of reducing him: the 'frontal' presentation of God in *Paradise Lost* has been subject to much criticism. There are, however, passages where Milton successfully manages to balance on the edge between silence and error, naturally in the form of paradoxes.

Between Hell and Heaven Satan finds a dark
 Illimitable ocean without bound,
 Without dimension; where length, breadth, and height,
 And time, and place, are lost; where eldest Night
 And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
 Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
 Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.

(II.891-7)

Later in Book VII "God declares that the undifferentiated matter of Chaos is part of his own substance, but a part into which he has chosen not to project his spirit" (Hanford 1956:361n). The "dark/Illimitable ocean" is, then, part of God, and what is said of its dimensionlessness is true of God: in him time and place are lost. For the poem to make sense and to be comprehensible, Milton must of course limit the illimitable, find time and place where they are lost, but to declare something and then carry on contrary to that principle, i.e. to make two

contradictory observations, and yet claim that both sides hold true at the same time, is the best man can do in speaking of the unspeakable God.

Another device Milton can, and indeed often does, resort to is the mixing of spatial and temporal dimensions.

Him [Satan] God beholding from his prospect high,
Wherein past, present, future he beholds,
Thus to his only Son foreseeing spake.

(III.77-9)

In the description preceding these lines, God is confined to his throne on high, a particular spot in space. He has to bend down his eye to see Earth and the wall of Heaven. In this presentation of God his substance does not seem to be present everywhere, but he can see everything, which can be taken as a metaphor for omnipresence. Past, present, future are turned, and not without a pun on *foreseeing*, into spatial realities which can be viewed from high. As up and down, near and far, vertical and horizontal are confused in Chaos as is evident from a careful reading of Satan's flight through it in II.890-1044, so are time and space indistinguishable in God's reality.

The logical framework cannot hold God, but Milton can still speak of him albeit what he says is not strictly rational. What is less than God and does not exceed the temporal limits of the Anointing and Parousia can, however, be treated within the Miltonic structure of *Paradise Lost*. As has been seen above, there is time in this realm, but Milton's treatment of it is not what could be expected. The way is cleared for a linear narration yet the actual narrative of *Paradise Lost* is anything but linear. A decent epic ought certainly to adopt the principle of *in medias res*, but Milton goes much further than that.

The basic narrative structure can be easily outlined with its six pairs of books and three blocks of four, the first two of which are in reverse order. There are six books on the first level of narration and six narrated within the narration. The beginning of the narrative fits in the middle of the structure after Book VI, and the temporal and narrative scales are brought together by the end of Book VIII, so Book IX of the actual Fall of man is again on the first level and the reader has full knowledge of the preceding events. How much this structure owes to classical examples has been the subject of learned studies. My concern here is the possibility to establish a more precise chronology. It is certainly not out of the question. One can attempt to draw up a time line for the events mentioned in

Paradise Lost and locate the relevant line numbers on it. It is nevertheless a very difficult exercise because Milton's text abounds in references forward and backward. A few lines from Book X will illustrate the difficulty.

Meanwhile ere thus was sinned and judged on Earth,
 Within the gates of Hell sat Sin and Death,
 In counterview within the gates, that now
 Stood open wide, belching outrageous flame
 Far into Chaos, since the Fiend passed through,
 Sin opening, who thus now to Death began.

(229-34)

The passage begins with two—mutually exclusive—temporal expressions which can be barely reconciled. What they refer to is again two distinct events, Adam and Eve's fall and the Son's pronouncing judgement on them. After this dubious temporal setting comes a description of what happens in the *now* of the narrative, but very soon there is a reference to what has gone before, Satan's leaving Hell. Although it is uncertain whether the scene should be considered simultaneous with the events in Eden, and if so, with which one of them, or it precedes them, we can successfully try to locate all the incidents referred to on the time scale. Unfortunately, not of the whole of *Paradise Lost* can be said that much. In Book III the Father speaks to the Son as follows.

Man falls, deceived
 By the other first; Man therefore shall find grace,
 The other none. In mercy and justice both,
 Through Heaven and Earth, so shall my glory excel,
 But mercy first and last shall brightest shine.

(130-4)

The deception and fall of man are not very difficult to locate. The following lines, however, include unspecified future reference to his finding grace and mercy shining "first and last." First, as the ensuing dialogue between the two persons of the Godhead indicate, man shall find grace in the Son offering himself to redeem him. It actually happens in the Incarnation and Passion, but ultimately on Doomsday when he is favourably judged. These three events, thousands of years apart on the human time scale, are all brought together, and the Father's words refer to all of them at once. Furthermore, as a prefiguration of the Last

Judgement, man is shown grace by the Son when he is judged, and subsequently clothed, in the Garden of Eden.

Further complicating the linear time scale are those passages that can be interpreted with reference to the political-historical reality of seventeenth-century England. An instance of that can be found in the description of Nimrod, representing the archetypal figure of the tyrant and as such easily interpreted as Charles I:

A mighty hunter thence he shall be styled
 Before the Lord, as in despite of Heaven,
 Or from Heaven claiming second sovranty;
 And from rebellion shall derive his name,
 Though of rebellion others he accuse.

(XII.33-7)

For a seventeenth-century English mind these lines were probably unmistakable. They echo the political-philosophical debates concerning the divine rights of kingship, while rebellion and accusation were very much part of the everyday political reality in the age of Milton. The entire text of *Paradise Lost* has a political message, and in an era which was only sobering up after the unfulfilled millennial expectations, even the eschatological allusions could be understood as referring to the present. As Margarita Stocker observes,

many contemporary readers believed that they were living in that last age and suffering the ravages of Antichrist, the apocalyptic persona of Satan himself. In the dramatic plot-time of *Paradise Lost* the Latter Days lie in the future, but in the reader's horizon of expectation they could be regarded as current time.

(1988:62-3)

It is thus impossible to neatly tidy up the time scale of the narrative because first we should break up the text into minute units, probably words, to disentangle the various temporal threads, and more importantly, that would not work either as the smallest units of meaning would include ambiguous ones with multiple references.

The *in medias res* beginning inevitably results in the discrepancy of the narrative and the temporal scales but this is complicated by one of the most outstanding beauties of *Paradise Lost*, Milton's invention of epic similes. They irredeemably confuse the linearity of the narration. They side step every limit;

retreating into subclauses they slip out of the present of the main clauses and freely wander anywhere in time and space defying their confinement. They, like his identifying the fallen angels with heathen deities, provide an excellent means for Milton to combine classical myth and Christian doctrine as well as meet the 'encyclopedic' requirement of the epic form. He can incorporate an incredible amount of information which would be otherwise impossible to include in his poem. Knowledge about the postlapsarian world and human history provided in the form of epic similes is in fact comparable to that given in Michael's presentation to Adam in Books XI-XII. Numerous examples of historic similes are readily available in the text. One of the most striking ones is in the description of Satan's shield and spear right at the beginning of *Paradise Lost*.

[T]he broad circumference
 Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
 Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
 At evening from the top of Fesole,
 Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,
 Rivers and mountains in her spotty globe.
 His spear, to equal which the tallest pine
 Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
 Of some great ammiral, were but a wand
 He walked with...

(I.286-95)

The reader probably finds nothing astonishing in these similes and can freely admire the beauty of the lines. The reader is, of course, a contemporary or belated successor of Milton. He knows of the moon, Galileo, Norway and the rest. If, however, we bear in mind how far in the poem we have proceeded by this passage, the similes seem rather out of place. The setting is in Hell, and although Heaven and Earth are [probably] already created so the moon, rivers and mountains do exist, none of this information is yet known to the reader. Fiesole, Valdarno, Norway are certainly anachronistic names if we adhere to the logic of the poem. Admirals and huge masts are more relevant to Milton's England than to anything else in the poem though we may concede that they are not strictly located in time. The invention of the telescope and Galileo, the Tuscan artist nonetheless are. They belong to the seventeenth century. To be precise, Galileo died in 1641 i.e. before Milton's writing *Paradise Lost*, yet the verb of the sentence is in the present tense rather than the past.

The effect of these similes is complex. Milton totally relativizes the time scale by equating past and present. He breaks the strict inner logic of the narrative and makes the reader include their knowledge of the world at large into the process of reading and appreciating the poem. In the previous example he does so by simply linguistically presenting images from outside the basic setting and trusting that language is strong enough to bridge the notional gap. Raphael, however, is not so sure of himself when talking to Adam:

As armies at the call
 Of trumpet (for of armies thou hast heard)
 Troop to their standard, so the watery throng...
 (VII.295-7)

This is the second narrative level. The speaking voice is not that of the poet to the reader but of Raphael addressing Adam. More care is required here, and before the reader gets carried away by the same force of the similes as on almost countless occasions before, he—at least as much as Adam—is reminded of the narrative situation by an interjection. The poet and the reader might, and undoubtedly do, know what armies and trumpets are, war imagery is very much part of the ordinary stock in *Paradise Lost*. But it is not only the reader who must understand the simile but also the primary narratee Adam. War has not been part of his experience unlike his sons' after the English Civil War. He must be therefore reminded of the war in Heaven whose story he was related in the previous books. And the reader must be equally reminded that Adam can understand war imagery, and the narrative makes proper sense on its primary level not only on the secondary one.

The geographical location of Eden in Book IV is not an epic simile but bears the same consequence for the time scale. When Satan views Paradise from the Tree of Life, he sees

Eden stretch[.] her line
 From Auran eastward to the royal towers
 Of great Seleucia, built by Grecian kings,
 Or where the sons of Eden long before
 Dwelt in Tassarar.

(210-14)

Again, points wide apart on the time scale are presented as simultaneous. Eden could not stretch to Seleucia because the city did not exist as yet, and by the time Alexander's general came to build it, Paradise—as we learn it from XI.829-35—had been swept away by the Flood. A peculiar twist is given to the description by the term *sons of Eden long before*. To define men to come as 'sons of Eden' in a description of that place obviously creates, at least linguistically, simultaneity. The time reference *long before* is paradoxical for it does not point backward but forward as compared with the present of the narration. Its point of reference is the time of the Grecian kings rather than the time in Eden though the very presence of the word would suggest that. Linearity is concealed, simultaneity created.

What we are left with is, then, a logical structure which enables the author to speak of a great many things inexpressible otherwise and a narrative which repeatedly obscures that framework. As T. S. Eliot said, "the emphasis is on the sound, not the vision, upon the word, not the idea" (1947:270). By projecting time into a significant part of eternity, Milton establishes the possibility of a narrative. The events, however, are far from narrated in their chronological order, nor is simply a section of the linear time scale taken from its original position and placed at the beginning as suggested by my [over]simplified outline above. Throughout the poem Milton endeavours to complicate the time scale in a way that distinct points are brought together as if in the same event, and future and past become simultaneous. It is not only the past and future of the narrated time that become present but, more significantly, they concur with the present of the narration or reading. What is beyond the possibilities of logic is thus not impossible for language. He cannot create a logical structure for eternity, and even if he could it would render narration inconceivable, but in his narrative he manages to linguistically realize eternal present—which by nature is a paradox for logic. As Albert R. Cirillo says,

Milton has embodied in the very structure of his narration the paradox of eternity: the effect is that of a double time scheme whereby events that are being expressed in temporal terms—in sequential action—are simultaneously occurring in the eternal present which is the central setting of the poem.

(1967:215)

There and then become here and now in the poem; everything takes place between God's proclaiming the Son his Anointed One reigning for ever and the—necessarily—immediate realization of those words which is, nevertheless, still a future event from a human point of view. Milton's achievement in creating the poetic reality of eternal present has been acknowledged by several studies. Margarita Stocker underlined the central importance of the heavenly battle which happened once as narrated in the structural and thematic centre of *Paradise Lost* and is happening now and always till the Second Coming. A. R. Cirillo (1967) analyzed the Great Year's single noon and the opposition or equivalence of noon and midday while John Shawcross emphasized the acceptance of ever changing present as the source of happiness.

I talked above about Milton's mixing of temporal and spatial dimensions as a way of expressing the notion of God's eternity. In his presence "time, and place, are lost." As far as timelessness is a reality for man and Satan, it is also expressed in spatial terms: Milton is consistent in his paradoxes throughout. Satan, proudly taking possession of Hell in Book I, exclaims,

Hail horrors, hail
 Infernal world, and thou profoundest Hell
 Receive thy new possessor: one who brings
 A mind not to be changed by place or time.
 The mind is its own place, and in itself
 Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.

(250-5)

He will soon learn that his freedom is limited to the second option, he can only turn heaven into hell because he carries hell with[in] himself. Having left Hell and viewing Paradise he still cannot be happy for

horror and doubt distract
 His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir
 The Hell within him, for within him Hell
 He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
 One step no more than from himself can fly
 By change of place.

(IV.18-23)

His damnation is eternal because Hell is inseparable from him; the temporal infinitude is expressed in terms of spatial identity. His main heresy was to equal

himself with God claiming to have been from all eternity (cf. V.859-63 vs. VII.405-6). His punishment is in turn the fulfilment of that wish, he is doomed to be the same without change; his immortality becomes a curse for him.

Adam and Eve, on the other hand, exactly by their ability to change, which in the postlapsarian world means that they are mortal, can repent and hope to be re-paradised after the Parousia. Till then their happiness, proximity to the eternal God, is also internalized. As Michael promises to Adam,

then wilt thou not be loth
To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
A Paradise within thee, happier far.
(XII.585-7)

Again, spatial identity is the metaphor of eternity. Time and space are essentially the same: a fact which Milton makes use of. What is here is always now. Eternity and omnipresence go hand in hand. By a highly complicated narrative structure confusing the linearity of chronology, Milton earlier created the impression of eternity enveloping time. Freely converting spatial and temporal dimensions one into the other, he now 'visualizes' eternity within time.

Finally, it remains to stress that it is precisely the fallen, i.e. ambiguous, human language that redeems Milton enabling him to overcome the limits of time and space. He capitalizes on the imprecision of meaning, double meaning, and interpretation. The fact that he can linguistically create what logic cannot hold has obvious implications concerning the nature of that language. Fallen though it may be, and albeit its original force is degraded, it no longer coincides with acts, yet it is still creative in the most divine sense of the word. Milton created eternity not only *within Paradise Lost* but also *by* it. His poetic achievement was enough to immortalize him, and the text itself exists changeless. Eternity is encapsulated in it, and, as long as copies of it remain available, hopefully until Doomsday, by reading it we can enter the realm of the eternal.

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Árpád Mibály:

THE NARRATIVE IN DANGER — ENDANGERED
NARRATORS
OR
FOUR SCEPTICAL NARRATIVES

Laurence Sterne: *Tristram Shandy*
&
Samuel Beckett: *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable*

The main and the subtitle should be considered together, for one explains the other. What I mean is that these novels are sceptical not only by virtue of the systematic uncertainty expressed in their thought, but by the narratives themselves; by their form, if you will.

These sceptical narratives make us reevaluate much of what we take to be reality and the role language plays in its construction.

Prose fiction is especially suitable to illustrate these concerns because the world the narrative creates is nothing but words, yet we — or at least the narrators — find it habitable. These pieces of fiction point out the impossibility of the fictional world — and through it that of ours — by undermining the conventions of the traditional novel. How they deal with this impossibility constitutes one of the great differences between the two authors.

RIDDLES AND MYSTERIES

The emphatic *bookness* of *Tristram Shandy* and the narrator's fascination with gesture (both bodily and typographical) seem to manifest a profound scepticism

about language, its capability of conveying emotions or thoughts without a considerable loss. Continuous failure of communication — a major theme in the novel — also calls attention to the shortcomings of a system we so much rely upon.

Sterne's linguistic scepticism — a motif we shall return to — seems to be a sign or even part of a whole, greater uncertainty. Tristram leaves little room for doubt as for his general standpoint: his remarks vary from the light-hearted and mocking (418) through the cautiously reserved (361) to the downright pessimistic (40). And of course, there is Tristram's whole life. A life whose troubles had started "nine months before he ever came into the world" (37), and which is constantly endangered by forceps, sash-windows and what not. Even its very conception was accompanied by ill fortune:

... my poor mother could never hear the said clock wound up, - but the thoughts of some other things unavoidably popped into her head - & *vice versa*: - which strange combination of ideas, the sagacious Locke, who certainly understood the nature of these things better than most men, affirms to have produced more wry actions than all the other sources of prejudice whatsoever.
But all this by the bye.

(39)

Locke's epithet turns out to be more ironic than complementary. In fact, Sterne much more abuses Locke's notions than uses them (Day, 1984: 75-83); his ideas Sterne finds pretentious and void of understanding human nature, so the philosopher cannot avoid the fate of the doctors of the Sorbonne. Sterne's audience read and knew Locke, so they understood the joke, but if not, there were some unambiguous enough remarks to make them take heed.

...for that wit and judgement in this world never go together; inasmuch as they are two operations differing from each other as wide as east from west. — So, says Locke, — so are farting and hickuping, say I.
(202-3)

All the jokes about scientific theories — rendering them ridiculous partly by the context they are set into (Tristram's mother makes her important remark during intercourse) —, the often 'learned' language and name-dropping all seem to aim at mocking man's desire for a complete comprehension of the world and the pretension of having achieved one. Mr Shandy's methodical pursuit of the nose

problem backed by the accumulated wisdom of learned men of all nationalities is a powerful image of the futility of science and pursuit of knowledge in a broader sense. Not to mention the *nose* itself, a symbol of prying and curiosity, which Tristram thrusts into everything that comes his way. Although, the fact that it was crushed so early in his life should have taught him a good lesson.

Tristram's basic experience of the world is that it is "beset on all sides with mysteries and riddles" (596), that is, unfathomable.

...-But mark, Madam, we live amongst riddles and mysteries, which come in our way, have dark sides, which the quickest sights cannot penetrate into; and even the clearest and most exalted understanding among us find ourselves puzzled and at a loss in almost every cranny of nature's works: so that this, like a thousand other things, falls out for us in a way, which though we cannot reason upon it, —yet we find the good of it, may it please your worships — and that's enough for us.

(292)

Sterne and his work are in a great tradition of scepticism, whose closest representative to him was Montaigne, whom he read and cherished. The above passage is in great harmony with the following quote from the French autobiographer-philosopher:

Men do not recognise the natural infirmity of the mind; it does nothing but ferret and search, and is all the time turning, contriving, and entangling itself in its own work, like a silk-worm; and there it suffocates, "a mouse in pitch". It thinks it observes afar off some gleam of light and imaginary truth; but while it is running towards it, so many difficulties cross its path, so many obstacles and so many new quests, that it is driven astray and bewildered.

(Montaigne, 1958:347)

However, Sterne is less elegiac about this "natural infirmity of the mind"; in fact, he hopes we may "find the good of it", which is "enough for us". His characters *love* to implore and ferret: the world is full of challenge, objects are heavy with meaning, that asks to be uncovered — which is no mean occupation for a human mind, and good fun, too! The very choice of words ("riddles and mysteries") is suggestive of an exciting game. And if one's mind is "entangling itself in its own work", one need not despair but "take his teeth or fingers" to the knots, much rather than "whip out his penknife and cut through them" (180).

One of the objects most weighted with 'meaning' in *Tristram Shandy* is the nose. Mr Shandy's search for a solution is futile, but it entertains his mind, gives *meaning* to his life. Slawkenbergius's tale, which is entirely spun around the 'mystery' of a nose, is a fine treatise on how people *make* meaning. Indeed, the primary preoccupation of *Tristram Shandy* as a whole seems to be with the striving of the mind for sense, the construction of meaning. And though trivial are the subject matters these minds deal with, futile is the pursuit itself, Sterne's judgement is as light-hearted as the following passage from Slawkenbergius's tale:

Whilst the unlearned, through these conduits of intelligence, were all busied in getting down to the bottom of the well, where TRUTH keeps her little court — were the learned in their way as busy as pumping her up through the conduits of dialect induction — they concerned themselves not with facts — they reasoned —
(260)

INCURIOUS SEEKERS

The preoccupation of Beckett's narrators and the primary subject of their scepticism or uncertainty undergo a profound change in the course of the trilogy. Nothing marks it more aptly than the shrinking of their worlds, the contraction of the field from which their sensory impressions derive. No small part of the narrative is actually the narrators' trying to validate these impressions, with decreasing success.

There is something disturbing in the way Molloy (and every one of the other M's) mulls over these problems; as if he was doing it out of duty, without the least interest. Sometimes he gives voice to fear or disgust, like when he relates the arrangement of his sucking stones:

But not to go over the heartbreaking stages through which I passed before I came to it [the solution], here it is, in all its hideousness.
(66)

The only occasions when signs of enthusiasm appear and his tone becomes almost passionate are those when he describes objects or incidents he knows he will never understand. For instance a piece of silver, possibly a knife-rest:

This strange instrument I think I still have somewhere, ... for a certain time it inspired me with a certain kind of veneration for there was no doubt in my mind that it was not an object of virtue, but that it had a most specific function always to be hidden from me. I could therefore puzzle over it endlessly without the least risk. For to know nothing is nothing, not to want to know anything likewise, but to be beyond knowing anything, to know you are beyond knowing anything, that is when peace enters in, to the soul of the incurious seeker.

(59)

While the Shandies are happy to seek patterns which they can impose on the material world, for Beckett's characters meaning is a source of apprehension.

As Rosen points out (Rosen, 1976:74), this praise of meaninglessness and imperturbability places the M's in a long tradition, namely, that of *sages*.¹ The inheritors of Pythagoras, Zeno and Heraclitus searched for peace of mind through detachment from the outer world and endorsement of inner life. The paradigmatic sage, of course, is Socrates, with his "I know that I know nothing", which Molloy repeats verbatim (25). Beckett shares many of his views, among them the condemnation of desire and the need to 'contract the spirit', but differs from him as for the result of this intellectual asceticism. Socrates hopes to attain freedom and a sense of reality — for Beckett such hope is ungrounded. This explains the strange opening of the last sentence in the above quotation: "to know nothing is nothing" — nothing in the sense of no great achievement. The *non plus ultra* of imperturbability would be "to be beyond knowing anything", to be utterly desireless, and to know that nothing is left to be desired: "to know you are beyond knowing anything". The only character in the *Trilogy* who achieves this ultimate triumph of not knowing is Worm²; the fact that he is so obviously a *creature*, so weak in his ontological status, shows the possibilities of attaining such peace of mind.

Moran's "report" is the record of a sage's development. A knower and believer initially, he becomes ignorant and faithless by the end. He started out as a man, "who prided [himself] on being a sensible man" (104). He looks back at those times with amazement: "I found it painful at that period not to understand" (94). He arrives at a state where he is "strong enough at last to act no more" (149) and is able to derive pleasure from ignorance (See, for instance, his enchantment at the dance of his bees (156)).

1 And the M's are aware of this. See, for instance Moran: "Ah those *old craftsmen*, their race is extinct and the mold is broken" (100;my italics)

2 "What he does not know is that there is anything to know" (333)

Molloy and Co.'s search for meaning is incurious because there is no meaning to be found. Sisyphuses of the mind, they carry out their task of imploring ambitionless, with the only hope of never having to hope again.

But I do not think even Sisyphus is required to scratch himself, or to groan, or to rejoice, as the fashion is now, always at the same appointed places. And it may even be they are not too particular about the route he takes provided it gets him to his destination safely and on time. And perhaps he thinks each journey is the first. This would keep hope alive, would it not, *hellish hope*. Whereas to see yourself doing the same thing endlessly over and over again fills you with satisfaction.

(123; my italics)

Hope in the M's vocabulary equals aspiration for frustration, for all desire and craving for meaning is *necessarily* thwarted. Hope is hellish because it continuously exposes the soul to frustration and makes imperturbability unattainable.

There is another reason for the M's reluctance to assign meaning to things: absence of meaning is the absence of consoling explanations (Rosen, 1976: Chapter 2). A sage takes pride in rejecting and demolishing consolations. Rosen points out how Beckett attacks all the traditional consolations mankind has come up with to soothe the anxiety of existence³.

There is a purpose in these rejections, however, which Rosen feels to be the need to point out the futility of *any* statement or judgement about life (1976:34).

Also, by refusing to be consoled, one can maintain a sense of integrity, can avoid admitting defeat. On the other hand, consolation is a *threat* to complaint and suffering. And there is a long European tradition, from Dostoevsky to Camus, that realises suffering as a source of consciousness, and which finds the benefits of unconsolated pessimism. By being a pessimist, one can avoid 'annoying trivialities', can simplify in his judgements, can avoid oscillating moods by being moody all the time, and, perhaps most important of all, can ignore fear of death.

Beckett, characteristically, goes beyond this tradition. He rejects consolations *and* the consolation deriving from rejecting them (Rosen, 1976:47). His characters do dread death, including even the Unnamable, who, most probably, *is* dead.

Is Beckett's vision absolutely bleak then, without the least hope? Strangely, it is his *scepticism* that counterpoises his pessimism. And *having* a counterpoise is a

³ The cruel humour with which Beckett attacks optimism puts him in the tradition of Swift, Rousseau, Conrad's *The Secret Agent*.

kind of consolation, however weak. Tone, style and context very often undermine the characters' primarily pessimistic statements. True scepticism is critical about everything; nothing is sacred, not even scepticism. "I do not wish to prove anything. Or so I say", Malone declares (201).

The other important source of a sense of balance is the equal weight of alternatives — Molloy's "mania for symmetry" (59). By levelling life and death, pain is taken out of the latter. If all alternatives are equally bad, none is really so. Hence Molloy's fear of having to come to a conclusion: choosing one alternative is losing all the others.

But one is bound to choose: Beckett's sages fail in their attempt to attain tranquillity. "I shall be neutral and inert", says Malone at the very beginning (165). He promises new sorts of stories, "neither beautiful nor ugly ... almost lifeless, like the teller" (165).

And he manages for a while. But towards the end, in the shadow of impending death, he loses his heart. A typical exclamation amidst one of the last stories:

[Talking about the garden of the asylum.] A stream at long intervals bestrid — but to hell with this fucking scenery. Where could it have risen anyway, tell me that. Underground perhaps. In a word a little Paradise for those who like their nature sloven.

(254)

And the stories themselves cannot help being beautiful or ugly: Pat's cruelty towards MacMann, or Lumier's unmotivated murder of the sailors is anything but "lifeless".

Beckett's scepticism, thus, is similar to Sterne's as far as the futility of the pursuit of knowledge is concerned. They both know that the pursuit is ceaseless — but they differ in their attitude towards this futility. In the long run, that is. Because Molloy, Moran and even Malone receive a sense of heroism out of their never-ending toil. And this sense gives them satisfaction, and however scarce, some consolation. But in *The Unnamable* this consolation is not to be found: suffering is inevitable and futility is only pathetic (Rosen, 1976:104).

We began this part of the discussion by saying that the main concern of Molloy and Co.'s narrative undergoes a change in the trilogy. Beckett verbalises minds coping with phenomena (Szanto, 1972:72), which is a classically

epistemological facet of his preoccupation. What McHale suggests is that this preoccupation turns ontological during *Malone Dies* and is primarily concerned with being in *The Unnamable* (1987:12-3).

This concern is expressed by both content and theme. For the former see, for instance, Malone, who among many other questions brings up that of his own existence:

But what matter whether I was born or not, have lived or not, am dead or merely dying, not knowing what is it I do, nor who I am, nor where I am, nor if I am.

(207)

The Unnamable's narrative is entirely spun around the problem of his being — or rather the indeterminacy of whether he exists at all. Here logic fails:

... it is certain I was grievously mistaken in supposing that death in itself could be regarded as evidence, or even a strong presumption, in support of a preliminary life.

(314-5)

For the theme expressing ontological uncertainty, we must turn to the question of possibility. According to Heidegger, man is an amalgam of facticities and possibilities (St. John Butler, 1984:15). In other words, one's existence is determined by his past and the potentialities hidden in his future. And this is precisely how the M's exist: they build up their present life from past facts and endless possibilities. They even attempt to smuggle these possibilities into the past: they try to undo choices by restoring the original environment of potentialities and the safe position of not-having-chosen.

Angst, man's anxiety about existence, is defined by Heidegger as apprehension in the face of possibilities (St. John Butler, 1984:46). From *Angst* man flees to *inauthentic existence*, a state in which he is under the influence of others, 'They'. To put it crudely, in this state he acts according to others' standards and expectations, not according to the call of his own Self. *Angst* is the condition of authentic existence: it discloses man to himself. The *Trilogy*, in many respects, is the search for the Self, the struggle between authentic and inauthentic existence. Introspection, conscious ignorance, desire for imperturbability all serve this purpose. And the voice Moran becomes aware of is probably the call of his own self, whereas those

the Unnamable can hear might belong to 'They'. His narrative is partly about the tragic impossibility of authentic existence.

Another characteristic of human existence, according to Heidegger, is its being a state preliminary to death (St. John Butler, 1984:51). Death is the moment of truth in the sense that it reveals the totality of man's possibilities. It also exerts pressure on man to exist authentically. It is only in his death that man can totally be himself, without the presence of 'They'.

Beckett's narrators define life relative to death. Malone is, to use Heidegger's term, in the state of *Being-towards-death*. Though it characterises the existence of *all* men, Malone's being is totally subordinated to it. He recognises (or has recognised by the time his narrative begins) that he has to suffer *as long as* he lives. What he attempts, is to escape this condition by 'entertaining' himself, by telling stories. He creates vice-existers, a group of 'They', to lose sight of his own Self.

I have had a visit. Things were going too well. I had forgotten myself, lost myself. I exaggerate. Things were not going too badly. I was elsewhere. Another was suffering. Then I had the visit. To bring me back to dying.

(246)

Advancing in the *Trilogy*, it is increasingly problematic to talk about a preoccupation or a main concern without actually considering the narration, that is, not only what is said but also how it is said. The more so, as the narrative gradually acquires a new subject matter — itself —, assuming more and more reality, and finally becoming the one and only reality.

The uncertainty or scepticism (whether ontological or epistemological) characteristic of both Sterne's and Beckett's worlds is aptly represented in the course the narrative moves on and the dangers the narrator and the text are liable to meet on the way.

DIGRESSIONS, THE SUNSHINE OF READING

The Shandian world is a perilous one. The blue waters of merry carelessness hide lethal reefs. Toby is wounded, Tristram is almost castrated by a sash-window, his brother is killed. This world is beset not only with "riddles and

mysteries" but also with wars, diseases, stupid midwives, negligent maids, etc. Life is in danger, why should the narrative not be?

[It] shows plainly, that when a man sits down to write a history, — though it be but the history of Jack Hickathrift, to Tom Thumb, he knows no more than his heels what lets and confounded hindrances he is to meet with in his way, — or what a dance he may be led, by one excursion or another, before all is over.

(64)

One of the dangers the narrative and the narrator have to face is that it might free itself from the control of its creator and assume a life of its own. Tristram at one point is claiming to be writing a passage "much against my will" (125). On other occasions it is an inexplicable whim that brings the story astray.

... for aught I know, as my father and my uncle Toby are in a talking humour, there may be as many chapters as steps; — let that be as it will, Sir, I can no more help it than my destiny: — A sudden impulse comes across me - drop the curtain, Shandy - I drop it - Strike a line across the paper, Tristram - I strike it - and hey for a new chapter!

(282)

This is no omniscient narrator: he is the prey of his own caprice and outer forces — very much like the reader.

Necessity is turned into virtue: *Tristram Shandy* would not be what it is without the digressions.

Digressions, incontestably, are the sunshine; - they are the life, the soul of reading; ... [it] brings in variety, and forbids the appetite to fail.

(95)

Digression is the art of discovering new patterns and coincidences (Rosenblau, 1977:242). If the world is full of circumstances so should the narrative be. If the mind is fascinated with them and wants to explore them, the narrative should join in the big game of constructing meaning.

In story-telling, in traditional forms of fiction, cause and effect are important organising principles. We love plots — these marvellously constructed causal links — and are quite willing to impose them on our own lives. Now, as life in

Tristram Shandy — in uncle Toby's words — is a "matter of contingency" (541), so are cause and effect substituted by *chance* (Rosenblaum, 1977:241). (See Vol. IV, Ch. 9) Contingency means possibilities, in which, we have seen, the Shandies relish. They are unwilling to miss an opportunity for a chat and they dive into the midst of any perplexity enthusiastically. Similarly, Tristram has the sufficient courage and interest to try in his narrative every path that comes his way (See, for instance, p.589). If he sometimes loses his heart, it is all the funnier.

Frustration is an important theme in *Tristram Shandy*. Trim sets out to relate the story of the king of Bohemia and his seven castles a number of times — and never gets further than the first sentence. Tristram is constantly distressed about the accumulation of material and the shortage of time. Mr Shandy's *Tristrapaedia* is a great memento of futility — the masterpiece never to be finished and put to use. It is not hard to recognise this "INSTITUTE for the government of my youth and adolescence" as a brother of *Tristram Shandy* (Ricks, 1967:26) and in the latter the frustration of never-getting-there — in the sense that the *story* proper starts only on page 332 and the book ends several years before Tristram's birth: slight achievement by a professed autobiography.

We must not forget that *Tristram Shandy* is also a parody of traditional novel forms. And as all good parody, it heavily relies on the exploitation and *frustration* of readerly expectations. Not a single story is finished properly and no conversation can reach its peak without interruption. As for the central narrative, it suffers continuous delay due to other, for Tristram equally important, causes. This is why Patricia Waugh sees "retardation through incompleteness" as the novel's basic strategy (1984:70). Retardation — digression, in other words — is what replaces the causal narrative. Such replacement calls attention to the difference between the raw material, i.e. the story, and the way it is shaped, the plot. Waugh suggests that *Tristram Shandy* is a novel about the transformation of its story into plot (1984:70).

Or, rather, plots. Because the current story, with its endless possibilities for continuation offers an infinite number of new plots. Which, in their turn, breed new stories. For Tristram this is a source of both exhilaration and distress. For he can follow only one plot at a time, but in order to make the plot complete and *credible* he has to introduce new stories.

I declare, I do not recollect any one opinion or passage of my life, where my understanding was more at a loss to make ends meet, and torture

the chapter I had been writing, to service of the chapter following it, than in the present case: one would think I took a pleasure in running into difficulties of this kind, merely to make fresh experiments of getting out of 'em - Inconsiderate soul thou art! What! are not the unavoidable distresses with which, as an author and a man, thou art hemmed in on every side of thee - are they, Tristram not sufficient, but thou must entangle thyself still more?

(520)

Most probably, he *does* "take a pleasure in running into difficulties". He loves the challenge of freedom, even if it is dangerous — to the coherence of the narrative, that is. Nevertheless, his shaggy dog story is readable (what is more, enjoyable), and contingency is not carried to an extreme. He often returns to the main narrative, the story of his birth and childhood, resisting the desire to wander off completely. Or, at least, he keeps the main narrative as a starting point for his wanderings. And the reader is invited to accompany him on his tours, to help him in his ferreting:

The truest aspect that you can pay to the reader's understanding, is to halve this matter amicably, and leave him something to imagine, in his turn, as well as yourself.

(127)

However, these invitations are often withdrawn — that is, he declares his/the narrative's independence in meaning construction.

In books of strict morality and close reasoning, such as this I am engaged in, - the neglect [not to define the meaning of the word *nose*] is inexcusable; and heaven is witness, how the world has revenged itself upon me for leaving so many openings to equivocal strictures, - and for depending so much as I have done, all along, upon the cleanliness of my readers' imaginations.

(225)

This, incidentally, is in many ways a typically Tristramesque sentence: it is about writing; it is addressed to the reader; it is sceptical — even the meanings of single words have to be backed by definitions to avoid dubiousness —; and last but not least, it is funny. Especially, when glancing back from the end of the chapter, where the definition is given:

For by the word *Nose*, throughout this long chapter on noses, and in every other part of my work, where the word *Nose* occurs, - I declare, by that word I mean a Nose, and nothing more, or less.
(225)

A definition that makes us laugh and tells us how unwilling Tristram/Sterne is to do away with uncertainties. Or how incapable.

APORIA PURE AND SIMPLE

Beckett's narrators are all writing stories — either about themselves or others. And when there are no stories left, there is still the story of writing. Indeed, the *Trilogy*, as a whole is the story of the narrative turning on itself, the snake swallowing its tail (Kenner, 1968:79).

For Molloy and Moran there is ample subject matter: their worlds abound in incidents and objects. So much so, that they feel quite at a loss making sense of them. Their distress is eased only when the object or incident is out of the confines of the graspable. Then they relish in the act of description: inventories are drawn up and actions are minutely detailed. If the strategy of *Tristram Shandy* is retardation through incompleteness then the trilogy's is extreme repetition and non-assertiveness.

For the non-fulfilment of generic requirements, *Molloy* offers the best examples. After all, both parts are in the form of an autobiographical novel. The plot (tracing the path that has led to the present activity of tracing the path that...) is given beforehand in both cases and is observed rigorously. What the form is filled with, we have seen: the incurious rattling of wretches craving for ataraxy. Inadequately filled form is parody, and to enhance the effect, the M's do employ remnants of the language used in the autobiographies of happier ages. Moran's narrative abounds in these: "but it is not at this late stage of my relation that I intend to give way to literature" (139), he writes after relating the murder of the stranger.

Of the *Trilogy*, perhaps *Malone Dies* is closest to *Tristram Shandy* in its handling of the narrative process. Malone prepares a plan, sets out to fulfil it, is discouraged, loses interest, changes the plan, sets out again, kills off characters, introduces new ones, becomes bored ("What tedium!") or enthusiastic ("We are getting on, getting on"). His fitful alterations of the plot make him similar to

Tristram. Even his "fear of not finishing in time" (181) resembles Tristram's distress. However, there is one plot the existence of which he realises only late: that of his own life:

With my distant hand I count the pages that remain. They will do. This exercise book is my life, this big child's exercise book, it has taken me a long time to resign myself to that. And yet I shall not throw it away. For I want to put down in it, for the last time, those I have called to my help, but ill, so that they did not understand, so that they may cease with me. Now rest.

(252)

The ultimate in uncertainty in the trilogy is represented by the Unnamable. His very 'name' goes against our expectations of a narrator. If he is to tell a story, he should know something, at last about his identity. And who is it that cannot name him? Has he not the power to give himself a name, if only for sake of convenience?

His narrative is a mass gradually taking shape, solidifying itself for a minute, then losing firmness and melting back into formlessness. Or, rather, like a wave rising out of the sea of words, assuming a new, temporary, third dimension — becoming speech — and then submerging again.

The first few lines are like guidelines, along which the mass could solidify itself, or a set of definitions — in the non-assertive. But definitions are by their nature assertive; how can one say something about a phenomenon without saying *anything*? What the Unnamable attempts is to define things in both ways: stating something and at the same time stating its opposite: "I seem to speak, it is not I, about me, it is not about me". Another way of achieving non-assertiveness is questioning. "Where now? Who now? When now?" Three questions form the overture, which, were they answered, would serve in any 'good, honest' narrative, stating place, person, time — three basic ingredients of a fictional situation. Here, instead, remaining unanswered, they create utter insecurity. The fictional world they define, paradoxically by its very dissimilarity, questions the notions we hold of our own.

The Unnamable's strategy is *aporia*, the art of doubt. Literally "a pathless path", it becomes the organising principle even at the level of the sentence. The Unnamable's sentences are paths winding out from nowhere and leading

nowhere. The second half of his narrative is a vast verbal maze, expressing the chaos in his mind and intended to confound the reader.

The way this labyrinth is being built, the fact that a statement can be negated or rendered ineffective so easily, calls our attention to the source of the text's vulnerability and the status of the created world.

NARRATIVE DISCOMFORT

The ontological status of fictional worlds is largely determined by the fact that they are entirely verbal constructs. Though our own reality is more and more often seen as just another order of discourse, the presence of a material environment is hardly denied in everyday circumstances. But what is taken for granted in life, has to be constructed in fiction, and through solely verbal processes. This is what Sterne exploits so ingenuously and with so much humour: his blank page description of the Widow Wadman "serves to draw the attention to the fact that what is described in the real world exists before its description. In fiction, if there is no description, there can be no existence" (Waugh, p.96). Or take the following:

This inn [where he would want to have his death-bed] should not be the inn at Abbeville — if there was not another inn in the universe, I would strike that inn out of the capitulation: so [sic!]
(471)

Losing its name, the inn (on which Tristram bears a grudge) becomes non-existent. But the process works in the other way, as well: words in fiction project things. The use of names is especially characteristic of what Waugh calls the description/creation paradox of fiction: utterance (description) equals existence (creation) (1984:88). Quite unlike in real life: "A proper name can only be a proper name if there is a genuine difference between the name and the thing named. If they are the same, the notion of naming and referring can have no application" (John Searle, quoted in Waugh, 1984:93).

Some words — and names seem to belong here — project more than mere things; they create whole worlds by means of the connotational field we attach to them. As the Unnamable puts it:

Where there are people, it is said, there are things. Does this mean that when you admit the former you must also admit the latter? Time will tell.

(268)

And time indeed does tell. He tries to keep his world as bare as possible, but he fails: having admitted a human being into it he has to admit things:

Sometimes I wonder if it is not Molloy. Perhaps it is Molloy, wearing Malone's hat. But it is more reasonable to suppose it is Malone, wearing his own hat. Oh, look, there is the first thing, Malone's hat.

(268)

There are other differences between the real and the fictional world, in terms of linguistic possibility. McHale points out that there are three "global semantic restraints" which we impose on our sentences: the restraint of necessity, possibility and impossibility (1987:123). In other words, these restraints prescribe the relation between the state of affairs and the sentence. Propositions about our own reality are determined by necessity (things exist in a certain way, which determines description), whereas possible propositions describe fictional worlds (things exist in a certain, but not necessary, way, which facilitates a description.) Does this mean that propositions restrained by impossibility refer to impossible worlds? Umberto Eco prefers to call them *antiworlds*:

...the proper effect of such narrative constructions [...] is just that of producing a sense of logical uneasiness and of narrative discomfort. So they arouse a sense of suspicion in respect to our common beliefs and effect our disposition to trust the most credited laws of the world of our encyclopaedia. They *undermine* the world of our encyclopaedia rather than build up another self-sustaining world.

(from *Lector in Fabula*, in: *The Role of the Reader*, quoted in McHale, 1987:33)

The Unnamable's "affirmations and negations invalidated as uttered" (267) create such an antiworld: they are not merely the signs of extreme scepticism — they attack the very foundations of fiction; credibility and self-sustenance.

By credibility I mean the plausibility of the interrelation of creative fictional elements: place, time and character. The resulting world has to be self-sustaining — integral in ontological terms. Realistic fiction, as a rule, observes these principles, the latter especially by emulating our own world. But should the

world be a different one — as in fairy tales, or science fiction — the narrative could still be referred to as realistic, provided the world's ontological integrity is not disturbed.

What self-conscious, or metafiction does is exactly interfere with this integrity. Foregrounding the act of fictionalising is pointing out the created aspect of the fictional world. A narrator reflecting upon writing necessarily calls attention to the different — weaker — ontological status of his creation.. This is the case of *Tristram Shandy* and *Malone*. This display of power is from the latter:

The living. They were always more than I could bear, all, no, I don't mean that, but groaning with tedium I watched them come and go, then I killed them, or took their place, or fled. ... I stop everything and wait. Sapo stands on one leg, motionless, his strange eyes closed. The turmoil of the day freezes in a thousand absurd postures. The little cloud drifting before their glorious sun will darken the earth as long as I please.

(179)

Another interesting possibility of raising *ontological awareness* in the reader is when the narrator himself is a character in his fiction. Such is the case when Tristram tells about his journey in France. He gives it a double twist by relating this digression to another one and to the main narrative.

... I am this moment walking across the market-place of Auxerre with my father and uncle Toby, in our way back to dinner - and I am this moment also entering Lyons with my post-chase broke into a thousand pieces - and I am moreover this moment in a handsome pavillion built by Pringello, upon the banks of the Garonne, Which Mons. Sligniac has lent me, and where I now sit rhapsodizing all these affairs.

-Let me collect myself, and pursue my journey.

(492)

For the reader the most disturbing of all techniques which violate the principle of self-sustenance is when the narrator realises himself to *be narrated*, in someone else's fiction. This weakens the status of two worlds at the same time: his own and his creation's. The Unnamable comes across this possibility very early

and his — is it *his* then? — narrative is partly a struggle to free himself from any influence of the "masters".

But why is it disturbing? Why do we feel affected by something that happens in another world, obviously so unreal?

Questioning not only the notion of the novelist as God, through the flaunting of the author's godlike role, but also the authority of consciousness, of the mind, metafiction establishes the categorisation of the world through the arbitrary system of language.

(Waugh, 1984:24)

"The world", says Waugh, and she probably means both the fictional one and ours. Metafiction makes us conscious of the role language plays in our categorisation of the world and of the vulnerability of this "arbitrary" system. Here is Malone's contribution to the problem: "... words, they are no shoddier than what they peddle" (179). And the Unnamable's:

But it seems impossible to speak and yet to say something, you think you have succeeded, but you always overlook a little something, a little yes, a little no, enough to exterminate a regiment of dragoons.

(277)

So far we have avoided the question whether *Tristram Shandy* has any concerns with being. Although, as we have seen, metafiction, by its very nature, calls attention to the ontological status of fiction and through it that of the real world.

A most prominent example of raising existential awareness in the reader is the continuous juxtaposition of the novel's and the reader's chronology.

It is about an hour and a half's tolerable good reading since my uncle Toby rung the bell, when Obadiah was ordered to saddle the horse, and go for Dr Slop, the man-midwife; — so that no one can say, with reason that I have not allowed Obadiah time enough ...

(122)

Thus begins Chapter 7 of Vol.II — and the whole chapter would be worth while quoting as a convincing and characteristically Shandean treatise on the nature of time. With the conclusion that it will after all depend on the reader what he will accept as possible.

The internal chronology of the novel would deserve an essay on its own. Suffice it to say here, however, that it is intimately related to the digressions and is a great source of amusement. See, for instance, the part, where Tristram is at three places simultaneously (Vol. VII, Ch.28). There is a definite purpose in this technique, which we shall discuss later.

As for the play with levels of being it is mostly their actual existence rather than the transgression of their borders that signals ontological concerns in *Tristram Shandy*. For instance, "Uncle Toby's apologetical oration" is 'thrice removed' from our level: having been recorded by Mr Shandy and "published" by Tristram. Or, rather, four times, when we consider the mysterious editor who appears only on a handful of occasions. Such an occasion is the following quotation, although it might as well be the translator's (Tristram's) note in the midst of Slawkenbergius's tale.

¹ Mr Shandy's compliment to orators — is very sensible that Slawkenbergius has here changed his metaphor — which he is very guilty of; — that as a translator, Mr Shandy has all along done what he could do to make him stick to it — but that here 'twas impossible.

(258)

This is not only a funny admittance of the narrator's limitations ("but that here 'twas impossible") but also a laying bare of existential levels. For the reader knows that Slawkenbergius is a creation but being reminded of it by somebody who is one level closer to our reality creates a curious effect. The *Tale* has some little, innocent-looking remarks like "says Slawkenbergius" — planted in the most vulnerable places. They are vulnerable, because through the holes these remarks bear on Slawkenbergius's world its ontological filling leaks away, and they show who has the power to stop the leakage. The joke, of course, is that it is not Tristram — but Sterne.

This is one of the striking differences between Sterne and Beckett — their attitude towards their creations. At no point is Tristram's authority and ontological status questioned, let alone pointed out to him. We have no difficulty in identifying Tristram as Sterne's voice. Malone and especially the Unnamable are discernibly creations, who are made aware of their status.

Though most hints at the narrator's status in *Malone Dies* might be explained away by the topos of the unreliable narrator, or Malone's scepticism, the following can be best accounted for by the notion of levels of existence.

I fear I must have fallen asleep again. In vain I grope, I cannot find my exercise book. But I still have the pencil in my hand. I shall have to wait for the day to break. God knows what am I going to do till then. I have just *written*, I fear I must have fallen, etc. I hope this is not too great distortion of the truth. I now add these few lines before I depart from myself again.

(191, my italics)

His apology reinforces and calls attention to the oddity of the previous paragraph. If it *was* written and *is* part of the text in the exercise book, and moreover Malone claims himself unable to have committed it, then somebody else must have done it. His authorial mask cracks and we see somebody else peeping from behind it: we sense the narrator being narrated. The ontological barriers are blurred, the levels overlap.

There is a dissimilarity between *Tristram Shandy* and *Malone* in terms of the narrator's attitude towards *their* creations, as well. Tristram obviously *loves* the world he forms and its inhabitants. There is always affection in his tone when he talks about his father or uncle Toby, even if their folly is being pointed out. Malone's failure to achieve ataraxy is best seen in his struggle with his creation. He cannot help getting involved in his characters and stories, has to develop some emotion towards them, has to *do* something to annihilate them: all a menace to his imperturbability. He shows his gratitude by being contemptuous or hateful towards them.

He takes advantage of his authorial freedom: he retroactively changes the status of Molloy and Moran's world by claiming its authorship, and he changes Sapo's name arbitrarily. However, the death of the narrator on the weaker level of his creatures has disturbing effects on his own.

We are invited (by the novel's title, if nothing else) to construe this [Malone's death] as a sign of the author's (Malone's) death *in medias res*, so to speak; nevertheless, an ambiguity lingers over this ending, leaving us to wonder, which was the "more real", the world in which Malone lives and (presumably) dies, or the world which he has projected, and within which the text ends.

(McHale, 1987:12)

Although, dying with his creatures is quite in accordance with Malone's desires:

It does not depend on me, my lead is not inexhaustable, nor my exercise-book, nor Macmann, nor myself in spite of appearances. That all may be wiped out at same instant is all I ask, for the moment.
(246-7)

In view of the agonising last words of his narrative, his creation expires rather than is "wiped out".

There is less ambiguity in the narrator's ontological status in *The Unnamable*. He well knows himself to be the character in someone else's fiction and this only adds to his misery, which is further deepened when he realises the uselessness of resistance, of "mutilation".

Considering this, it is little wonder that the Unnamable lacks a definite identity. He often confounds himself with his "hero", who apparently becomes the teller.

At the particular moment I am referring to, I mean when I took myself for Mahood, ...

According to Mahood, I never reached them...

... I recall it I find myself wondering again if I was not in fact the creature revolving in the yard, as Mahood assured me.
(291-2-4)

Tristram's jumbling of chronology, Malone's death wish, and the Unnamable's impossible situation as a narrator all bring us to the question: Why narrate?

THE BIG ESCAPE

[Read, dear Reader, do read Vol. VI, Ch. 13 of *Tristram Shandy*]

As Tristram/Sterne⁴ observes earlier, life and writing are essentially the same for him — and let me add, for most writers. By multiplying his fictional lives he hopes to lengthen his real one. By mixing past, present and future he stops the motion of time, or, rather, creates a private time-dimension. So his being unborn at the end of his autobiography is a great achievement: death has to wait three

⁴ Here, I think, we can assume a total identity.

more years at least. Cause to live and live, Tristram seems to say. Build worlds, create lives and mock death from the inside. Tristram/Sterne's world glitters with the enjoyment of this grand hide-and-seek, this game of the Big Escape. And reading this "book of books" one has the feeling (a most gratifying one, too) that the loser cannot be but death.

Malone's motives for writing are similar: to create vice-existers and be lost in the midst of them. He does not hope to evade death — all he wants is to abate his fear of death, to forget about his *Angst*. "If I start trying to think again I shall make a mess of my decease" (168), he says, with characteristically bitter irony. But he fails in his attempt:

For my stories are all in vain, deep down I never doubted, even the days
abounding in proof to the contrary, that I was still alive and breathing
in and out the air of earth.

(214)

And the air of earth (as opposed to the air of his worlds) is infected with fear of death. To live is to dread the end.

For the Unnamable the narrative is not simply a means to explore the boundaries of human knowledge and existence — the narrative *is* his knowledge and existence. He does not exist outside language, which is true of all fictional characters — but he is also aware of it. He realises that he is confined into someone else's speech and he tries to escape by relapsing into silence. Why silence? Why not a discourse of his own (as he himself suggests at one point)? Because language belongs to 'Them', it is the very means by which he is held captive.

If Beckett's narrators so obviously abhor the activity they are engaged in, why do they not put an end to "that bitter folly" (276)? Why keep on imploring, if meaning is to be avoided and there is no meaning in the first place? Why not keep silent if silence is so longed for? For a possible answer we might want to turn back to Heidegger.

Man's essential experience in the world is his sense of *thrownness-into-being*. This situation — which in stylised form constitutes the starting point for many of Beckett's plays and novels — continuously spurs his mind to examine this predicament. Inquiry is man's way of being (St. John Butler, 1984:12). He implores — because he is human. Man is in the world, and this condition of *being-in-there* necessitates his being involved. Man is Care (St. John Butler, 1984:30).

To this inevitability of inquiry Beckett appends the necessity of declaration:

[I prefer] the expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express.
(Beckett, 1983:139)

Both *Malone* and *The Unnamable* embrace this futility, as we have seen earlier. For the M's this awareness of futility is coupled with an acute sense of the limitations of language. They realise that language is our only means to approach reality and the self — and also a bar to them (St.John Butler, 1984:55). Man's real self (Heidegger's *authentic* self) calls man upon *authentic existence* by *being silent*. The clamour of discourse, in the language of the others (*They*), makes this call inaudible. Hence the M's aspiration for silence.

...it is his turn again, he who neither speaks nor listens, who has neither body nor soul, it's something else he has, he must have something, he must be somewhere, he is made of silence, there's a pretty analysis, he's in the silence, he's the one to be sought, the one to be, the one to be spoken of, the one to speak, but he can't speak, then I could stop, I'd be he, I'd be the silence ...

(380)

But the discourse must go on, and one's own voice is added to the general turmoil, in which it is impossible to talk about being.

The goal of ontological speech is not discourse about being, but the revelation of Being. Since speech is in itself an emanation of, rather than ... identical with Being — i.e. since speech, as discursive, necessarily 'runs through' or is bound to the disjunctive multiplicity of things — speech necessarily separates us from Being.
(Rosen quoted in St.John Butler, 1984:56)

To this let me add: doubled is the problem when 'one' exists only in discourse. The Unnamable's discourse is a paradoxical realisation, and at the same time refutation, of Rosen's claim. For him speech *is* being, the one and only. But he *is* separated from his Self (from *authentic being*) by his own speech. The Unnamable realises that the 'I' of language is different from the 'I' of the self. In the light of this we may gain a better comprehension of one of the enigmatic opening sentences: "I seem to speak, it is not I, about me, it is not about me".

There can be no valid discourse about the Self, about Me, due to the very nature of discourse. Man can be himself only in silence.

...you don't know why, you don't know whose, you don't know against whom, someone says you; it's the fault of the pronouns, there is no name, for me, no pronoun for me, all the trouble comes from that ...

(372)

Real freedom is existence in silence, *in the nameless*. Riddled with the necessity to express, to talk, man's soul can only aspire for that freedom. The narrator's task is to let silence in to the world of discourse, to break the surface created by discourse over the abyss, to "speak of the silence before going into it" (375).

As we cannot eliminate language all at once, we should at least leave nothing undone that might contribute to its falling into disrepute. To bore one hole after another in it, until what lurks behind it — be it something or nothing — begins to seep through; I cannot imagine a higher goal for a writer today.

(Beckett, 1983:??)

The whole point, I think, is best summarised by Malone:

What I sought, when I struggled out of my hole, then aloft through the stinging air towards an inaccessible boon, was the rapture of vertigo, the letting go, the fall, the gulf, the relapse to darkness, to nothingness, to earnestness, to home, to him waiting for me always, who needed me and whom I needed, who took me in his arms and told me to stay with him always, who gave me his place and watched over me, who suffered every time I left him, whom I have often made suffer and seldom contented, whom I have never seen.

(179)

Despite their claim of hating their occupation, Beckett's narrators find a black pleasure in writing. Their grammar is impeccable and they pick their words with great care. The dark humour in no small part derives from their extreme consciousness of the human tongue. Language not only helps them explore their scepticism, it also presents an impenetrable obstacle on the way towards the Self and reality. It well deserves to be mocked.

Tristram Shandy is in many ways a flirtation with silence and death — which for a novelist is the same (175). And Tristram is fond of his life, endangered as it is. So it is all the more daring when he omits a whole chapter (on the grounds that it was too perfect) and leans over the crater created in the surface of the text — without Malone's "rapture of vertigo". He does not feel giddy either; he simply wants to call our attention to the surface and what is under it. So chapters 18 and 19 in Vol. IX are kindly "replaced" a few chapters after they were removed. For although

I look upon a chapter which has *only nothing in it*, with respect; and considering what worse things there are in the world — That it is no way a proper substitute for satire —
 [...] all I wish is, that it may be a lesson to the world, 'to let people tell their stories their own way.'

(602, NOT my italics!)

Tristram puts more faith into language than silence ("it is no way a proper substitute for satire"), even though he has no illusions about its capacities. For the most beautiful tales remain untold:

This tale, crieth Slawkenbergius, somewhat exultingly, has been reserved by me for the concluding tale of my whole work; knowing right well, that when I shall have told it, and my reader shall have read it through - 'twould be even high time for both of us to shut up the book; inasmuch, continues Slawkenbergius, as I know of no tale which could possibly ever go down after it.

(274)

Slawkenbergius's last tale will never be read in English (or in any language for that matter) — on account of its being untranslatable. Or perhaps to allow other stories to exist: Tristram/Sterne arrives at the border of the narrative but will not cross it. Live and let live, he seems to say, and the story (his story) keeps on rolling for several hundred more pages.

And one has the feeling that Slawkenbergius's tale is not in Latin either or in any other known language. It is not want of knowledge on the translator's part that forbids a readable rendering — it is the impotence of the human tongue.

... how this can be translated into good English, I have no sort of conception. [...] I can make nothing of it, - unless, may it please your worships, the voice, in that case being little more than a whisper,

unavoidably forces the eyes to approach not only within six inches of each other - but to look into the pupils - is not that dangerous? - but it can't be avoided - for to look up to the ceiling, in that case the two chins unavoidably meet, and to look down into each other's laps, the foreheads come into immediate contact, which at once puts an end to the conference - I mean to the sentimental part of it. - What is left, Madam, is not worth stooping for.

(274-5)

"Is not that dangerous?" Stranded between the divine (cf. ceiling) and the animal (laps), behind man's eyes unspeakable horrors loom. But the feeble whisper of *Tristram Shandy* defeats silence and creates the surface on which we can safely cross this valley of horrors. And though the craters are numerous, we are never overcome by vertigo.

So even though Sterne is not uncritical about language, he does not reach the point where it is considered a barricade, on the other side of which truth would hide. It is far from being perfect — if only for its incapability of following life's current. "The more I write, the more I shall have to write" — but its only for the better. And the joys to be had from it are by no means black.

... there are two poles of metafiction: one that finally accepts a substantial real world whose significance is not entirely composed of relationships within language; and one that suggests there can never be an escape from the prisonhouse of language and either delights or despairs in it. The first sort employs structural undermining of convention, or parody, using a previous specific text or system for its base because language is so pre-eminently the instrument which maintains the everyday. The second is represented by those writers who conduct their fictional experiments even at the level of the sign [...] and therefore disturb the 'everyday'.

(Waugh, 1984:53)

Tristram Shandy obviously falls into the first category. The Shandies' ideas seem mad or funny against an existing divine order (Rosenblum, 1977:245). Trust in God gives Tristram his stance in the face of riddles and mysteries. And it is trust in God that makes uncle Toby's simple-mindedness so charming — especially when compared to the ferreting mind of his brother (See, for instance, p.280).

Love of God and the love of his creatures make Sterne's world cosy and habitable. And it is no mean prospect for a writer who wants to lose himself in

the midst of his creation. This is no mere metaphor: as McHale argues, love between authors and characters bridges the gap between their different ontological levels (McHale, 1987:222). And texts and readers can maintain a similar 'relationship'. At any rate, among the loving voices of *Tristram Shandy* the call of death is less discernible.

Without exactly suggesting that Beckett does not like his characters we must observe how curiously void of love their worlds are. Whenever it is present, however, it seems to soothe the pangs of existence. In fact, the presence of the other seems to be the only consolation.

And if I tell of me and of that other who is my little one, it is as always
for want of love, well, I'll be buggered I wasn't expecting that, want of a
homoncule, I can't stop.

(207)

But, as we have seen, consolation is not to be had — or only temporarily: see Macmann and Molly's short-lived romance. Beckett's interest lies in the lonely soul and its struggle with the mystery and misery of being. Taking pride in this struggle in *Molloy* and *Malone*, disgusted with it — or rather with the need to talk about it — in *The Unnamable*.

Both Sterne and Beckett undertook the task of undermining the novel as a genre, which originally set out to be an extension or emulation of Reality. Their doubt in the form was paralleled with a profound scepticism about the human condition. The result is texts which both scorn and celebrate the novel. Instead of reflections *of* life, they are reflections *on* life. And instead of pretending to be reality, they become reality — for Sterne an alternative one, the one and only for Beckett.

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Dóra Csikós:

BLAKE'S FOURTH FOLD: THARMAS

The major achievement of recent Blake scholarship is the fact that critics today acknowledge that the oeuvre shows gradual changes in the poet's thinking, as opposed to the traditional view according to which Blake was a monolithically stable poet. While the latter notion was at one time a necessity "to hold a difficult subject still long enough to get a focused likeness"¹, once - the static - Blake gained a firm footing, new approaches started to emerge, most of which dismissed the former canon and advocated a dynamically changing Blake.

One of the most conspicuous modifications in Blake's ideas is discernible in the gradual development of his system of the fourfold.

The early hypothesis was essentially twofold based on the confrontations between the contraries, like innocence and experience, heaven and hell, good and evil. This dualistic view soon proved to be insufficient to describe Blake's expanding system because it was characteristic of the world of Generation and Ulro, the two inferior states in Blake's poetry. Ulro is the lowest state, it is the material world, the place of the sleepers, the spiritually dead, it is the Grave itself: "We look down into Ulro we behold the Wonders of the Grave"². Ulro is the state of eternal pain "where the Dead wail Night & Day"³. Until Jerusalem (12:45-13:29) Ulro seems to be identical with Generation, "the Generation of Decay &

1 Damon XV

2 All the quotations are from Erdman - hereinafter abbreviated as E.
The Four Zoas (hereinafter abbreviated as *FZ*) VIII, 113:223 (E. 377.)

3 *FZ* II, 25:71 (E. 317.)

Death"⁴. As Blake's vision turned more and more into the direction of redemption and regeneration, besides the contraries there appeared the shapes of a threefold system, almost always bearing some sexual connotations, like in the *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, *The Book of Urizen* or *The Book of Ahania*. This threefold state is called Beulah. Blake took the name and developed the idea of the region of sexual love from the Biblical account of Isaiah: "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married."⁵ Of all the four states Beulah is the most ambiguous. This ambiguity is mainly due to its sexual nature and Blake's ambivalent portrayal of sexuality in the fall and redemption of Man. The duality of this state is also the result of its position. It is an intermediary between Ulro and Eternity, a land of sweet delusions and sleep:

There is from Great Eternity a mild & pleasant rest
 Namd Beulah a Soft Moony Universe feminine lovely
 Pure mild & Gentle given in Mercy to those who sleep
 Eternally. Created by the Lamb of God around
 On all sides within & without the Universal Man
 The Daughters of Beulah follow sleepers in all their Dreams
 Creating Spaces lest they fall into Eternal Death⁶

Beulah is, then, the state of the unconscious, which, when dwelt in too long - as in the case of Thel in *The Book of Thel*, as well as Har and Heva in *Tiriel* - reduces man to an infantile imbecility or aged ignorance. When this happens, Beulah degenerates into Ulro. But Beulah can be a redemptive state inasmuch as beyond it lies Eden or Eternity into which it is possible to enter through Beulah⁷ and it is also over this state that the Saviour descends to awake the dreamers⁸. As Harold Bloom poetically put it:

⁴ FZ I, 4:21 (E. 301.)

⁵ Isaiah 62:4

⁶ FZ I, 5:94-100 (E. 303.)

⁷ Then Eno a daughter of Beulah took a Moment of Time
 And drew it out into Seven thousand years with much care & affliction
 And many tears & in Every year made windows into Eden
 She also took an atom of space & open'd its center
 Into Infinitude & ornamented it with wondrous art
 (FZ I, 9:222-226; E. 304.)

⁸ FZ IV, 55:248-253 (E. 337.)

Beulah is the most ambiguous state. Its innocence dwells dangerously near to ignorance, its creativity is allied to destructiveness, its beauty to terror. (...) In Bunyan's Beulah the Pilgrim may solace himself for a season - not longer. For Beulah lies beyond both mortality and despair, nor can doubt be seen from it. And yet it is upon the borders of Heaven, not Heaven himself. It is not what the Pilgrims had sought in all their Pilgrimages, though here they are within sight of the City they are going to.⁹

Blake sought to find the City itself, and in order to achieve this goal he felt the need to complement the so-far tripartite structure and add a fourth dimension. "The Sexual is Threefold: the Human is Fourfold."¹⁰

With the appearance of Tharmas in *The Four Zoas* (up until the compilation of the minor prophecies only three of the four Zoas are mentioned by the name: Luvah, Urizen and Los) the fourth dimension is introduced¹¹; Blake's system is completed and his ultimate goal, Humanity - and its corresponding state, Eden - has found a proper expression.

We shall now examine the role of Tharmas and his emanation, Enion in the redemption of Albion. As the Zoas are entities that make up the mind¹² and as such are often interpreted in psychological terms¹³, we shall also follow this line in our analysis.

The psychology that shows deep affinities with Blake is Lipót Szondi's depth psychology, designated as the analysis of vicissitudes - or simply: fate analysis¹⁴ (commonly known as his schicksal analysis) upon which he based his famous test. In Szondi's system four basic drives are assumed, all four of which define a special character. These characters correspond to Blake's Zoas: The sexual drive to

9 Bloom 16

10 *Milton* I, 4:5 (E. 97.)

11 This is not to say that Tharmas is the ultimate redemptive power in Blake's poetry, but his appearance is inevitable in the emergence of the - redemptive - fourfold unity.

12 *FZ* I, 3-4:1-13; 11:302-303 (E. 300-301; 306.)

13 cf. Hume, Webster, Singer, Youngquist

14 With his intensive research in depth psychology, Szondi wanted to place the hitherto occult concept of human destiny upon a medical and psychological basis. For this he elaborated his much-debated gene-theory. To substantiate this theory he developed the Szondi-test. Paradoxically, even very recent research in genetics has been unable to prove the connection between the test and the gene-theory, upon which he claimed to have based the test. (See Bereczkei) Yet, irrespective of whether or not we accept the medical, theoretical basis of Szondi's postulate, the test has stood the test of clinical validity, and has proved itself empirically to be a most useful technique to define a personality. (This comment is indebted to Dr. Bruno Hilleweare.)

Luvah, the paroxysmal to Urizen, the ego drive to Los and the contact drive to Tharmas¹⁵. It is important to note that Szondi's drives agree with the fallen aspects of the Zoas - they both describe pathological cases, which in Blake means the allegorical, spiritual sickness of Albion, and his indwelling Zoas.

Because Szondi's system was primarily conceived to be of scholarly character and as such it strives to give a detailed analysis of cause-and-effect relationships, we expect that it will be a useful tool to complement and illuminate the apparent incoherences and textual idiosyncrasies, which are the result of the suppression and exclusion of elements from the narrative field of the poem, a new - and certainly taxing - technique, "Blake's greatest contribution to literary methods"¹⁶.

THARMAS AND ENION

The names Tharmas and Enion may be derived from Thaumás and Eione, who are Hesiod's sea god and shore goddess in the *Theogony*. This seems all the more possible as fallen Tharmas sinks into the Sea of time and space and is associated with water all through the poem: "the World of Tharmas, where in ceaseless torrents / His billows roll where monsters wander in the foamy paths"¹⁷. Furthermore, Thaumás is father of Iris, the rainbow, which signals the end of the flood; similarly Tharmas's daughter, Enitharmon, is the main agent of the Apocalypse and regeneration. (In Night II, Enitharmon is likened to a "bright rainbow weeping & smiling & fading"¹⁸)

As David Erdman pointed out, the names 'Tharmas' and 'Enion' appear to be the back formations from the name of their daughter: Eni-Tharmon¹⁹. Although we cannot substantiate our hypothesis with a straight reference from the texture of the poem, it does not seem impossible to conjecture another etymology for Enion's name. Just like the name 'Enitharmon' suggests her filial relationship to Enion and Tharmas (this suggestion is confirmed several times in

15 For the rationale of the test (including the description of the categories) see Deri; Szondi et al. *The Szondi Test* and Lukács.

16 Damon 143

17 *FZ* II, 33:256-257 (E. 321.)

18 *FZ* II, 34:382 (E. 324.)

19 Erdman 275

the poem, as the conception and birth of Enitharmon is repeatedly described²⁰), similarly, we could confer that the name 'Enion' implies that she is a daughter of Eno and Albion. Since Eno (possibly an anagram of *eon*) is the "aged Mother"²¹, the mother of all poetry²² and Albion is the Universal Man, it is quite likely that the Emanation of "Parent power" Tharmas is their offspring.

Neither Tharmas nor Enion appear in Blake's poetry before *The Four Zoas*. We first meet them in the midst of a marital quarrel, which starts the poem. Enion is jealous of Jerusalem and the Emanations whom Tharmas has sheltered in his bosom out of compassion. In the ensuing conflict they sunder, and as the primeval connection between them disintegrates, they are both doomed to fall. No longer the bucolic characters "of the sort that the wheels of history run over: good but not too bright, easily confused" (whose mythic counterparts are Baucis and Philemon, Deucalion and Pyrrha, or in fiction, Sterne's Shandies and Goldsmith's Vicar and Mrs. Wakefield²³), their relationship perverts into a sado-mazochistic one, and Enion weaves the Circle of Destiny out of Tharmas's fibres:

[Tharmas] sunk down into the sea a pale white corse
 In torment he sunk down & flowd among her filmy Woof
 His Spectre issuing from his feet in flames of fire
 In gnawing pain drawn out by her lovd fingers every nerve
 She counted. every vein & lacteal threading them among
 Her woof of terror. Terrified & drinking tears of woe
 Shuddering she wove—nine days & nights Sleepless her food was tears
 Wondering she saw her woof begin to animate. & not
 As Garments Woven subservient to her hands but having a will
 Of its own perverse & wayward Enion lovd & wept

Nine days she labourd at her work. & nine dark sleepless nights
 But on the tenth trembling morn the Circle of Destiny Complete
 Round rolld the Sea²⁴

Confronted with the Circle of Destiny, the Daughters of Beulah close the Gate of the Tongue, which provides an entrance from Ulro to Beulah. The allegorical meaning of the tongue (sense of Tharmas) was illuminated by

20 *FZ I*, 7-8:185-192; *IV*, 50:84-106; *VII*, 84:277-295 (E. 304, 333, 359.)

21 *The Book of Los* plate 3 and *FZ I*, 3:6 (E. 90; 300.)

22 Damon 125

23 Ostriker 159

24 *FZ I*, 5:77-89. (E. 302.)

Northrop Frye, who pointed out that eating the body and drinking the blood of Jesus is a profound image of the final apocalypse, so taste (tongue) implies our imaginative control of this world. "Just as sight is the mind looking through and not with the eye, so taste is the mind transforming food, and thus 'taste' in the intellectual sense is the mental digestion of the material world. Tharmas, then, is the tongue of unfallen man, his power to absorb the nonhuman"²⁵. When the Gate of Tongue is closed, Tharmas sinks into the chaos of Ulro. In the primordial unity of Eternity Tharmas was "darkning in the West"²⁶, which - from *Tiriell* on - has been the realm of the body. Since the instinctual unity of the body (depicted in the figure of Tharmas), which once comprehended and held together all the other faculties, has fallen into chaos, the disintegration of these faculties is also inevitable.

Fallen Tharmas begets time and space (Los and Enitharmon) on Enion, who is soon deserted by the children. She starts out to find them, "In weeping blindness stumbling she followd them oer rocks & mountains"²⁷ all in vain, just like she is sought after by Tharmas all through the nine nights to reunite with him only in the apocalypse. The wanderings of Enion and Tharmas coincide with Man's fall from Innocence, his tribulations of going through Experience. Although in the major part of the poem we face the fallen Tharmas, emblematic of the horrors of sundered existence, from the regularly recurring nostalgic accounts of Eternity we learn that he once presided over Beulah ("in those blessed fields / Where memory wishes to repose among the flocks of Tharmas"²⁸), which is the idyllic (or quasi-idyllic) world of pastoral harmony, presented by Blake in the *Songs of Innocence*:

Art thou O ruin the once glorious heaven are these thy rocks
Where joy sang in the trees & pleasure sported on the rivers
And laughter sat beneath the Oaks & innocence sported round
Upon the green plains & sweet friendship met in palaces
And books & instruments of song & pictures of delight²⁹

25 Frye 281

26 FZ I, 4:22 (E. 301.)

27 FZ I, 9:215 (E. 304.)

28 FZ II, 34:226-227 (E. 323.)

29 FZ VI, 72-73:212-216 (E. 349-350.)

While in his unfallen form Tharmas was the Good Shepherd, the disintegrated Zoa (also called the Spectre of Tharmas) seems to be the precise negation of his previous self. After his fall is completed in Night I, Tharmas's actions are conditioned by his futile yearning after Enion; his sado-masochistic repulsion of his consort in Night III, his bidding Los to rebuild the universe (so that he can destroy it), his separation (which he immediately regrets) and subsequent unification of Los and Enitharmon in Night IV, his suicidal "pact" with Urizen to end his torments in Night VI, his punishment of his enemies, an ambiguous deed of revenge (which paradoxically signals the nearing apocalypse) in Night VII, his relegating his power to Los in Night VIII, and his rebirth as a child in the pastoral interlude of the last night as well as his final reunion with Enion followed by his active participation in the apocalypse are all but complementary to, and conditional upon his main activity: his search for his lost ideal.

Since - as we have noted - Szondi's categories and descriptions fit the fallen aspects of Blake's Living Creatures, we shall proceed to examine the separated Tharmas and Enion with an eye on Szondi's system. While in his eternal form Tharmas was Compassion now he has become its opposite: wrath and violence. (The most often used verb and adjective in connection with him is 'rage' and 'furious'.) The reason for this change is the frustrated search after Enion, which renders him a good example of Szondi's *Category of Everlasting Loneliness and of Hypomania* of the contact drive. In members of this category the separation of the person from his love object "makes for a distractable, unstable, restless disposition"³⁰ - as it is manifested in many cases (especially in Night IV) by Tharmas's inability to hold on to his ideas, decisions: "he reard his waves above the head of Los / in wrath. but pitying back withdrew with many a sigh / Now resolved to destroy Los & now his tears flowd down"³¹. Just like in Szondi's category people feel a compelling need to search for the lost ideal and "the hopelessness and disappointments of this activity (...) generate self-hatred, self-

30 Szondi *Experimental Diagnosis of Drives* 192
31 FZ IV, 48:45-47 (E. 332.)

torture and depression"³², Tharmas is a pathetic figure, constantly brooding over his sundered counterpart in self-abasement³³:

Fury in my limbs. destruction in my bones & marrow
 My skull riven into filaments, my eyes into sea jellies
 Floating upon the tide wander bubbling & bubbling
 Uttering my lamentations & begetting little monsters
 Who sit mocking upon the little pebbles of the tide
 In all my rivers & on dried shells that the fish
 Have quite forsaken. O fool fool to lose my sweetest bliss
 Where art thou Enion ah too near to cunning to far off³⁴

But the masochism of Tharmas soon turns into sadism³⁵, both against Enion, whom he cruelly repels: "I send thee into distant darkness / Far as my strength can hurl thee wander there & laugh & play / Among the frozen arrows they will tear thy tender flesh"³⁶ (just to regret it and fall into an even deeper despondency) and against his environment, as it is clearly indicated by the fact that while in Eternity he was the unifying power, in Night IV he tears Los and Enitharmon apart, inflicting grinding pain on them. Ironically, he immediately repents of his cruel deed and commands the separated Spectre to reunite them, threatening him

32 Szondi *Experimental Diagnosis of Drives* 193

33 Enion experiences the same feelings; she blames herself for her jealousy and accuses herself of being the prime agent of their separation ("do thou [Tharmas] / Thy righteous doom upon me", "Tho I have sinned. tho I have rebelld / Make me not like the things forgotten as they had not been"; *FZ III*, 45:186-187, 191-192; E. 330.), and sinks into deep dejection projecting a very debased image of herself:

I am made to sow a thistle for wheat; the nettle for a nourishing dainty
 I have planted a false oath in the earth, it has brought forth a poison tree
 I have chosen the serpent for a councillor & the dog
 For a schoolmaster to my children
 (...)
 My heavens are brass my earth is iron my moon a clod of clay
 My sun a pestilence burning at noon & a vapour of death in night
 (*FZ III*, 35:387-396; E. 324-325.)

34 *FZ III*, 44-45:162-169 (E. 330.)

35 "A kapaszkodási-öszön [Tharmas] szoros kapcsolatban látszik lenni a kínzási
 szükséglettel és hatalomröréssel. A leválasztódási és keresési szükséglet [Enion] pedig annak
 ellentétével az önkínzással, a mazochizmussal." Szondi: "Módszertan és ösztönton", 284.

Tharmas's vindication of the role of God shall be referred to later.

36 *FZ III*, 45:170-172 (E. 330.)

with rending him asunder in bloody tortures ("thy limbs shall separate in stench & rotting & thou / Become a prey to all my demons of despair & hope"³⁷) if he should not obey his will. The sadism of these people, Szondi explains, is an expression of the person's desperate hatred, rage and vindictiveness against the world from which - in the absence of the beloved one - he feels separated forever³⁸.

Tharmas laughd furious among the Banners clothd in blood

Crying As I will I rend the Nations all asunder rending
 The People, vain their combinations I will scatter them
 (...)

 In war shalt thou bear rule in blood shalt thou triumph for me
 Because in times of Everlasting I was rent in sunder
 And what I loved best was divided among my Enemies
 (...)

 Therefore I will reward them as they have rewarded me
 I will divide them in my anger & thou O my King
 Shalt gather them from out of their graves & put thy fetter on them
 And bind them to thee that my crystal form [Enion] may come to me³⁹

But for all his hostile attitude towards his environment, Tharmas does not transfer his murderous impulses into action and discharges his accumulated rage in furious speeches and threats. The reason seems to be the same as in the case of most people in this category: they "have become too restless and distracted to concentrate their hatred upon one object sufficiently to be ready to kill him."⁴⁰ When Tharmas encounters Urizen in Night VI, he offers him a suicide pact: "Withhold thy light from me for ever & I will withhold / From thee thy food so shall we cease to be"⁴¹, but Urizen does not even bother to reply to him. Outraged Tharmas threatens to kill him, but paradoxically what he menaces with is exactly the same as what he offers in the pact: he will deprive Urizen of food and indulge in the horrible consequences: "Thou shalt pursue me but in vain till starvd upon the void / Thou hangst a dried skin shrunk up weak wailing in the

37 FZ IV, 49:74-75 (E. 333.)

38 Szondi *Experimental Diagnosis of Drives* 192-193.

39 FZ VII, 96:49-51; 97:58-60, 69-72 (E. 361-362.)

40 Szondi *Experimental Diagnosis of Drives* 193

41 FZ VI, 69:64-65 (E. 346.)

wind⁴²". It is crucial to recognize here, that however chaotic and distraught Tharmas may be in his fallen form, he has - as the pact proves - unconsciously retained the intuition of the essential interconnectedness and unity of the Zoas, and is dimly aware that intellect has to feed upon instincts, just as the light of intellect is inevitable for the proper functioning of the senses.

We have seen that Tharmas's conflict with Urizen came from the latter's refusal of a mutual suicide. Paradoxically, immortal Tharmas desires the death of his indestructible body⁴³. His powerful death instinct, which we encountered as early as the beginning of Night IV, is the result of his antithetical feeling of hope and despair. "The realization that the truly desired object may not be found leaves the individual with an utter indifference. He evaluates available value objects with the standards of one who is prepared to die."⁴⁴

Ah Enion Ah Enion Ah lovely lovely Enion
 How is this All my hope is gone forever fled
 (...)
 Deathless for ever now I wander seeking oblivion
 In torrents of despair in vain.
 (...)
 When dark despair comes over [me] can I not
 Flow down into the sea & slumber in oblivion. Ah Enion⁴⁵

But the death impulses are just one way of coping with the absence of Enion. Sometimes it seems that Tharmas abandons the search for his consort and instead of the adherence to his unobtainable ideal he indulges in completely different activities - which as a rule finally turn out to be vaguely, sometimes almost inexplicably, connected to his search - like the commissioning of Los to rebuild the universe in Night IV, right after he uttered his desire to be dead. Tharmas wants a world to rule over, a realm that he can destroy ("renew thou I will destroy / Perhaps Enion may resume some little semblance / To ease my pangs of heart & to restore some peace to Tharmas"⁴⁶). This coincides with what Szondi calls megalomaniac phase, an exaggerated feeling of power during which the

42 FZ VI, 69:70-71. (E. 346.)

43 "For death to me is better far than life. death my desire / That I in vain in various paths have sought but still I live" FZ VI, 69:58-59. (E. 346.)

44 Szondi *Experimental Diagnosis of Drives* 193

45 FZ IV, 47:8-23 (E. 331.)

46 FZ IV, 48:55-57 (E. 332.)

search is replaced by hasty casting about without goal or focus; a passing phase because of the instability of acquisitive impulses⁴⁷. Whatever is attained is soon cast aside as without worth. Similarly, Tharmas declares himself God, but immediately (fifteen lines later!) relinquishes his claim: "Is this to be A God far rather would I be a Man"⁴⁸ to repeatedly call himself God ten lines later.

To sum up fallen Tharmas's characteristics we can conclude that he is a raging, sado-masochistic figure, incoherent, inchoate, and chaotic, a ghost of that human integral that he was in his eternal existence. At this point it would be all too easy to dismiss him as a pathetically dependent, inconsistent, irresolute creature, weak and frail, in whom the ever-recurring depression hinders all actions, a late-comer in Blake's poetry who apparently was only conceived to complete the fourfold scheme and to accentuate the striking difference between him and Los, the Eternal Prophet, to whom - somewhat unaccountably - he finally delegates his power in Night VIII. But we should be wary of drawing such a one-sided conclusion. A closer look at Szondi's description of Tharmas's category which has so far seemed to be consistent even in the subtlest details (we learn from Szondi that the most important socially positive occupation that the members of the category tend to choose is painting⁴⁹, just like Tharmas's art is painting in the fourfold correlations) warns us that the contact drive and its categories carry much more significance than it may appear at first sight. Szondi points out that the contact drive (consisting of factors *d* and *m*) has a central role in the individual in that certain drive factors (the *h* and *s* of the sexual drive - Luvah; and the *e* and *hy* of the paroxysmal drive - Urizen) can only function when connected to the contact drive⁵⁰.

Let us see whether the correspondances between Szondi and Blake hold true in this point; whether Tharmas's central role can be substantiated from the texture of *The Four Zoas*. We have seen that the basic conflict between Tharmas and Enion was the result of Tharmas's hiding the fleeing Emanations in his

47 Szondi *Experimental Diagnosis of Drives* 192-193.

48 FZ IV, 51:146 (E. 334.)

49 Szondi "Módszertan és ösztöntan" 65

50 The following quotation is from Szondi "Módszertan és Ösztöntan" 278-279. (Italics mine)
Az ösztönigenyek közül: a h-, s-, e-, és hy-szükséglet csak a d- és m-szükséglettel együtt tud kielégülni. Ez más szóval azt jelenti, hogy léteznek: h-d-m, s-d-m, e-d-m, hy-d-m ösztönkoalíciók. Ezek rendszeres ösztönéleti viszonyok mellett együtt hozzák létre a nemi gyöngédség, a férfias erőszakoskodás (szadizmus), a meglepés ösztönjelenségeit. *A felsorolt ösztönigenyek tehát csak a d- és m-szükségletek előreküldött, antepontált mozgósításával tudnak kielégülni.*

bosom. Since the Emanations represent the creative power of humanity that is preserved during the fall, Tharmas, who is the repository of this crucially important power, assumes a special significance. Paradoxically, as he laments in Night VII, his sheltering the Emanations led to the separation from his own Emanation, Enion, and resulted their fall:

My little daughters were made captives & I saw them beaten
 With whips along the sultry sands. I heard those whom I lov'd
 Crying in secret tents at night & in the morn compell'd
 To labour & behold my heart sunk down beneath
 In sighs & sobbings all dividing till I was divided
 In twain & lo my Crystal form that lived in my bosom
 Followed her daughters to the fields of blood they left me naked⁵¹

Even though the fact that the Circle of Destiny is drawn from his fibres⁵² would suggest a negative role of Tharmas, as the turning of the Circle implies an even deeper entanglement in the world of experience, it turns out that a complete devastation is a prerequisite to the regeneration of the Universal Man.

John B. Pierce attributes an even more significant role to Tharmas. According to him Tharmas is not only instrumental in bringing about and carrying out the redemption of Albion, but he is Albion himself:

The weaving imagery (...) suggests Tharmas's incarnation into the limitations of the physical body, while the notion that he holds the emanation Jerusalem⁵³ within suggests the potential for redemption of the body when it contains the city of God. These associations suggest that Tharmas is analogous to the universal human form of the One

51 FZ VII, 97:60-66 (E. 362.)

52 As Nelson Hilton so convincingly proves in his article "Some Sexual Connotations" (*Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* 16, 166-168.), the fibre refers to the semen, as it is appropriate in the case of Tharmas, Parent power.

53 Jerusalem is the Emanation of Albion, the bride of Jesus; she comprises within herself all the Emanations, just like Albion is the composite form of all humanity.

Man, Jesus Christ. Such associations give Tharmas a symbolic equivalence with Albion.⁵⁴

While Pierce's arguments in connection with the role of Tharmas in *Jerusalem* seem well-grounded, the identification of Tharmas and Albion in *The Four Zoas* appear to be a conclusion he drew in the knowledge of the later epic, and not so much from the text of the poem in discussion. We would rather urge another interpretation that assigns Tharmas a similarly important role.

In Night IV Los triumphantly declares that even though his God is Urizen (traditionally identified with the God of the Old Testament), he is fallen into the deep "And Los remains God over all."⁵⁵ Knowing that Los is Imagination, that is Jesus Christ, we can take his words as the indication of the coming of the rule of Jesus. This assumption is supported by Tharmas's response: "Doubting stood Tharmas in the solemn darkness"⁵⁶, where the doubting Tharmas may be taken as an ingenious pun subtly referring to the doubting Thomas of the Bible, who needed tangible proof of the resurrection of Christ. Once the biblical connotation has been established in the doubting Thomas-Tharmas intimation, the substructure of the poem calls for further associations. Suffering from the fierce pangs of the ambiguous feelings of love and rage, Tharmas denies Los three times, (49:53-55; 51:131-132; 52:156), just like Peter denied Jesus⁵⁷. The Tharmas-Peter parallel is strengthened by the fact that while Peter had to confess his love to Jesus three times consecutively⁵⁸, similarly, Tharmas relegates his power to Los thrice in three consecutive nights (VII, VIII and IX). We learn from the Bible that Peter is the rock upon whom Jesus's church is built, against which the gates of hell

54 Pierce *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* 22, 100. He goes on to argue that the suggestion that Tharmas became a model for Albion can be an explanation for the Zoa's relative absence from Jerusalem. To prove this assumption he brings four examples: 1. On Plate 25 of Jerusalem Albion fibres, like Tharmas's, are drawn out by female figure to create the vegetated world. 2. Albion's Spectre moves to the west, which is Tharmas's realm. 3. While in *The Four Zoas* Tharmas hides Jerusalem, in Jerusalem this is done by Albion. 4. Certain lines that are addressed by Enion to Tharmas (FZ I, 4:33-36; E. 301.) are given over to Vala to direct to Albion (J Pl.22:1, 10-12; E. 167).

55 FZ IV, 48:41 (E. 332.)

56 FZ IV, 48:44 (E. 332.)

57 Urthona-Los's words to Tharmas could have been addressed by Jesus to Peter:

"wherefore shouldst thou rage / Against me who thee guarded in the night of death from harm". (50:109-110; E. 334.)

58 Urthona-Los's words to Tharmas could have been addressed by Jesus to Peter:

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cannot not prevail, and Peter is given the keys of the gate to the kingdom of heaven⁵⁹. In *The Four Zoas* Los builds Golgonooza (City of Art, the New Jerusalem in Blake's poetry in which the "Divine Countenance shone"⁶⁰):

For now he feared Eternal Death & uttermost Extinction
 He builded Golgonooza on the Lake of Udan Adan
 Upon the Limit of Translucence then he builded Luban
 Tharmas laid the Foundations & Los finishd it in howling woe⁶¹

The parallel is striking: just like Jesus's kingdom is built to overcome eternal death, Golgonooza is erected to serve the same purpose. While the first is raised over the rock - Peter, the second is founded by Tharmas. (Similarly, in the last night Los fights his battle leaning over Tharmas, just like the resurrection in Jesus is made possible for us with the help of his earthly governor, Peter.) Peter has the keys to heaven, Tharmas is the keeper of Luban, the Gate of Golgonooza, the gate of salvation which opens into our world.

When Peter remedies his denial of Jesus by three times confessing love, he is commanded to feed Jesus's lambs and sheep⁶², and thus from the fisherman he becomes the shepherd that tends Christ's flock. Tharmas, who was a water god, whose body surged forth in fish⁶³, is regenerated at the end of the Apocalypse as a shepherd: "Tharmas brought his flocks upon the hills & in the Vales / Around the Eternal Mans bright tent the little Children play / Among the wooly flocks".⁶⁴

For a Peter-Tharmas association to be plausible one would expect Tharmas to have an underlying innocence in his nature. The fact that he is the only Blakean Quaternary never to be associated with Satan, a very complex state of error, death, war and selfishness, seems to answer this expectation; as Wilkie and Johnson put it: "it corroborates our impression that although human instinct can become chaotic, weak, and misdirected, it is incapable of the absolute error to which more

59 Matthew 16:18-19

60 FZ VIII, 100:40 (E. 372.)

61 FZ V, 60:75-78 (E. 340.)

62 John 21:15-17 ("So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, loveth thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.")

63 FZ VI, 69:61 (E. 346.)

64 FZ IX, 138:838-840 (E. 406.)

complex faculties are susceptible."⁶⁵ It is also important to note that he is the only one of the four Zoas who is reborn as a child before the resurrection. (This does not contradict the fact that he is Parent power, since we know that the child is the father of the man.) But this child is no longer the child of "The Little Boy lost" and "The Little Boy Found" of the *Songs of Innocence*, the dependent infant, who is desperately lost without his parent, whom any darkness can vapourize leaving the child helpless again⁶⁶, but much rather the child of "The Land of Dreams" of the Pickering Manuscript:

Awake awake my little Boy
 Thou wast thy Mother's only joy
 Why dost thou weep in thy gentle sleep
 Awake thy Father does thee keep

O what Land is the Land of Dreams
 What are its Mountains & what are its Streams
 O Father I saw my Mother there
 Among the Lillies by waters fair

Among the Lambs clothed in white
 She walkd with her Thomas in sweet delight
 I wept for joy like a dove I mourn
 O when shall I again return

Dear Child I also by pleasant Streams
 Have wanderd all Night in the Land of Dreams
 But tho calm & warm the waters wide
 I could not get to the other side

Father O Father what do we here
 In this Land of unbelief & fear
 The Land of Dreams is better far
 Above the light of the Morning Star⁶⁷

Although the imagery, the mood and the obvious biblical allusion to the ideal Beulah world of the twenty-third Psalm would render the poem to belong

⁶⁵ Wilkie-Johnson 181-182. The only thing we cannot accept from this observation is that Tharmas is regarded as an essentially simple character. What we are trying to prove is even the opposite: the intricacy of his personality.

⁶⁶ I am following Harold Bloom's interpretation of the two poems. Bloom, *Blake's Apocalypse* 47

⁶⁷ E. 486-487.

to the pastoral lyrics of the *Songs of Innocence*, there seems to be a crucial difference between them. Little Thomas (Tharmas), who now lives in the land of unbelief and fear, is pinig for the Land of Dreams, but what sets this land apart from the land of innocence is formulated in the last line: it is "Above the light of the Morning Star". As is well-known, the Morning Star, Lucifer, is associated with Urizen (as the first is "the light-bearer", the second is the "Prince of Light")⁶⁸, the light is the light of his intellect. The fact that the child aspires after an idyllic land, but which is intricately connected to the realm of Urizen, suggests that little Thomas is the rejuvenated Tharmas of Night IX, who has gone through the horrors of disintegrated existence, and even though he has retained his innocence, he is now conscious of the importance of suffering and experiences in order that a higher ontological state, a more aware consciousness, an organized innocence is achieved by the Eternal Man.

As has been adumbrated, our contention is that Tharmas is much more complex a figure than he may seem at first sight. Of all the Zoas he seems the least likely to share any characteristics with Urizen, and yet there are sophisticated hints of their similarities. (It is important to emphasize that their similarities pertain to their fallen form.) The inconstancy and capriciousness of Tharmas, his raging outbursts, which are always followed by his regret and atonement, is strikingly similar to the two alternating aspects of Urizen which in Szondi's terminology are called the Cain and the Abel phases. An evidence of the analogy between the two Zoas is to be found in the fact that it is Urizen that Tharmas offers a suicide pact; he intimates their intricate resemblance and suspects that Urizen's death is essentially his as well. More straightforward than this is Blake's association of Tharmas with doubt while elsewhere we are directly told that "Urizen who was Faith & Certainty is changed to Doubt"⁶⁹. The last night of *The Four Zoas* brings

68 Two more evidences for the Morning Star-Urizen association is 1. Lucifer is the first of the seven Eyes of God, the first step in the fall from the original unity, on the path of Experience. The disintegration of the Zoas is blamed on Urizen, who initiated the fall by attempting to usurp Urthona's place thus causing a war. 2. Urizen's lament at having failed to obey the divine word which led to his fall from Eternity clearly echoes the casting out of Satan in *Paradise Lost*:

I went not forth. I hid myself in black clouds of my wrath
I call'd the stars around my feet in the night of councils dark
The stars threw down their spears & fled naked away
We fell.

(FZ V, 64:222-225; E. 344.)

69 FZ II, 27:105 (E. 318.)

about a significant transformation in all the Quaternals but it is only Urizen and Tharmas who are rejuvenated: the hoary Urizen as a radiant Apollo, Tharmas as an innocent child. Finally, the strong link between the two Zoas is evidenced by the essential interconnectedness of their Emanations. They both are relatively insignificant as far as the frequency of their presence in the poem is concerned. But as a rule, when they appear, the emergence and actions of one effects the future of the other. Enion's lament in Night II, her powerful death instinct irresistably pulls down Ahania. She sinks into a deadly sleep and disappears from the scene until the eight night, when she bewails the state of the disintegrated Man. Her lament is answered by the now hopeful Enion, who consoles Ahania by prophecying the coming of the Saviour. The faith of Enion prepares the way for the reunion of Ahania with Urizen, which in turn, leads to the long-sought resurrection of Tharmas and Enion.

As Urizen is the main agent of the Apocalypse and regeneration of Man, Tharmas's association with him, together with the Parent power's other aspects delineated above, point to Tharmas's potential importance as a kind of encompassing power, essential to the substructure of the poem.

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Zsuzsa Febér:

SHELLEY:
"PIERCING THE INFINITE SKY"

*The wilderness has a mysterious tongue
Which teaches awful doubt.*

In his poem written in 1816 Shelley presents his dualistic world view in a rather dense and powerful symbol. 'Mont Blanc'¹ displays its theme through description converted into symbolism. There is a division to the scenery described. The borderline is the veil of clouds which hides from our sight what is beyond. What is below is referred to in a detailed description what is beyond is hinted at in interrogative sentences, that scenery is a mystery and remains a mystery:

Is this the scene
Where the old Earthquake-dæmon taught her young
Ruin? Were these their toys? or did a sea

¹ *English Romantic Writers*, ed. David Perkins. New York, Chicago: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967: 968.

Of fire envelop once this silent snow?

(l. 71-75.)

He describes two different types of scenery. What is below, the "Many coloured, many voiced vales" is a diverse scene with "wild woods", mountains, waterfalls, "a vast river" and rocks, with caves and caverns. There is a multitude of images presented:

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams,
Ocean, and all the living things that dwell
Within the deadal earth; lightning, and rain,
Earthquake, and the fiery flood, and hurricane,

(l. 84-87.)

The ever-changing quality of the scene is emphasized. There are constant shiftings in the "universe of things". With the four repetitions of the time adverbial Shelley stresses the time aspect:

Now dark – now glittering – now reflecting gloom –
Now reflecting splendour, ...

(l. 3-4.)

The whole scene is constantly darkening and lightening:

Thou many-coloured, many voiced vale,
Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail
Fast cloud-shadows and sunbeams: awful scene,

(l. 13-15.)

We can conclude that in the description of the scenery the time aspect and dynamism are emphasized with all the verbs denoting dynamic movements: "leap", "bursts and raves", "swinging".

All the living things of this realm are subject to the process of life and death.

The limits of the dead and living world,
Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place
Of insects, beasts, and birds becomes its spoil;
Their food and their retreat for ever gone,
So much of life and joy is lost. The race
Of man flies away in dread; his work and dwelling
Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,
And their place is not known.

(l. 112-120.)

All things that move and breathe with toil and sound
Are born and die; revolve, subside, and swell.

(l. 95-97.)

But in contrast to all that there exists a separate realm beyond, completely different of quality.

Power dwells apart in its tranquility,
Remote, serene, and inaccessible:

(l. 98-99.)

There is an ultimate power which transcends the vale of this-wordly existence. The sensual experiences characteristic of the sphere beyond the film of clouds are completely different from those described so far. There is "calm darkness" there and "voiceless lightning", "winds contends silently there". Different qualities do not exist in multiplicity, but they seem to emerge: the wind's "breath" is silent, the snowflakes "burn in the sinking sun".

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high: – the power is there,
The still and solemn power of many sights,
And many sounds, and much of life and death,
In the calm darkness of the moonless nights,

In the lone glare of the day, the snows descend
Upon that Mountain; none beholds them there,
Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,
Or the star-beams dart through them:--Winds contend
Silently there, and heap the snow with breath
Rapid and song, but silently! Its home
The voiceless lightning in these solitudes
Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods
Over the snow.

(l. 127-139.)

The 'Mont Blanc' can be interpreted as drawing on the Platonic system. Plato also deciphers different spheres where there are different laws operating. Plato contrasts two kinds of motions: one characteristic of the phenomenal world and the other one of the ideal world; one is begotten and destructible, the other one unbegotten and indestructible. And that unbegotten existence functions as an infinite source.² The poem can be taken as the Platonic metaphysics transformed into a symbolic scenery. The two worlds divided by the borderline of the clouds can be interpreted as the phenomenal and the ideal realm of the Platonic system. The poem attempts to convey or elucidate an intuition of the Ultimate Being or the power of the cosmos. This power both transcends and ascends into our world. The "infinite sky" which is pierced solely by the snow-capped peak of Mont Blanc seems to be synonymous with the divinely order, in other words, with God, the prime source of everything:

The Secret strength of things
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome
Of Heaven is as a law inhabits thee.

(l. 139-141.)

² Platon: *Works*, in: *Great Books of the Western World VII.*, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins. Chicago, London: William Benton, 1952: 682.

Such a content of the mountain symbol had also been expressed in ancient cultures like in the Greek mythology gods reside on Mount Olympus or we can also mention to Biblical references to the sacred mountain. Two examples of the poets who received divine inspiration while on a mountain are Jesus (Sermon on the Mount: *Matthew* 5) and Moses (Ten Commandments: *Exodus* 19). The mountain is seen as a connection between the mundane and the supramundane: "The Sacred Mountain – where Heaven and Earth meet – is situated at the center of the world. Every temple or palace – and, by extension, every sacred city or royal residence – is a Sacred Mountain, thus becoming a Center."³

The mountain mediates between the two states of existence the this-worldly and the divine, a place where a transcendental experience can be encountered. This symbolic mountain top, as the abode of the divine, is comparable to the sources of wisdom from which the knowledge radiates in all directions like rivers that fertilize the land.

In the poem discussed the river Arve, which runs from the mountain top through the Alpine valley, affords a crucial link to Power. The river is pervaded with the qualities present at that inaccessible height:

Thy caverns echoing the Arve's commotion,
A loud, lone sound no other sound can tame;
Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,
Thou art the path of that unresting sound --
(l. 30-33.)

The unintelligible Power fuses into something material and exists within it through likeness, through resemblance, through analogy:

Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down
From the ice-gulfs that gird his secret throne,
(l. 15-16.)

³ Mircea Eliade: *History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*, New York, 1954: 12.

The river originates from beyond the film of clouds, thus participates in the life there and carries its images. In *Defence*⁴ he also expresses his assumption that there is a "permanent analogy of things by images which participate in the life of truth;" "the rhythmical elements of a poem are the echo of an eternal music." There are two further symbols associated with the river in the poem. One of them is the lightning which is suggestive of illumination:

[The river]
Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame
Of lightning through the tempest;
(l. 18-19.)

The other corresponding symbol is the rainbow:

Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep
Of aethereal waterfall,
(l. 25-26)

The rainbow is a reconciliation symbol, what is best known for its mention in the Bible. We are told in *Genesis*: "And God said, I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud." (*Genesis* 9:13-14.) This bow represents the higher mind and is a link between God and man. By these two corresponding symbols the function of the river as a mediator, a divine messenger is emphasized.

J. A. Notopoulos says:

Mont Blanc is symbolic of Power, 'the secret strength' which governs thought and is the law to the universe; the various streams that flow from the mountain into one majestic river are symbolic of the temporal experiences that flow through the human mind. The use of a stream for a symbol is ... natural metaphysical symbol, as may be seen from its use by Coleridge in 'Kubla Khan'. ...The mind is endowed with a power which it derives from secret 'springs' are symbolic of a power

⁴ *English Romantic Writers*: 1075.

emanating from the mind's immortal and ivine heritage. The effusion of the external universe with the stream of the soul may be interpreted as a Platonic conception of the mind.

(*The Platonism of Shelley*. Oxford, Durham: Clarendon, 1949: 207)

In the following chapter we shall consider how divine images are perceptible by the human mind.

II.

First we should attempt to interpret the symbolism of the poem in relation with human cognition. The mountain is a general cross-cultural symbol for the aspiration to transcend one's little self. The process of the ascent is a spiritual pursuit, a quest for an elevated vantage point which gives an exhilaration of the view.

Some of Shelley's prose writings help us to understand the significance of the image that Mont Blanc is piercing through a veil of clouds which frustrates the vision. Shelley claims in his essay 'On Life'⁵ that "The mist of familiarity obscures from us the the wonder of our being", which is a a very close reformulation of his statement in the *Defence*: "The veil of familiarity obscures from us the wonder of our being." The veil-metaphor is very commonly used in the Romantic movement to denote some kind of cognitive block which separates us from the comprehension of some higher ideals. One of the important aspects of Shelley's definition of poetry is that it

...strips the veil of familiarity from the world, and lays bare the naked and sleeping beauty, which is the spirit of its forms." Or elsewhere: "It makes us the inhabitants of a world to which the familiar world is a chaos. It reproduces the common universe of which we are portions and percipients, and it purges from our inward sight the film of familiarity which obscures from us our wonder of being. ... Poetry lifts the veil

⁵ *English Romantic Writers*: 1063.

from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects as if they were not familiar.⁶

Jay Appelton, in "The Experience of the Landscape", discusses the role of horizon in landscape painting:

It is a matter of common experience that the arrival at the horizon is followed by an opening up of a further field of vision, and the contemplation of the horizon therefore stimulates the expectation that such an extension of the field of vision is probable.⁷

The poem begins and ends with the mind. It begins with a statement and ends with a question. The statement is about how the human mind perceives the the images of the everlasting universe; the question touched upon at the end is how far the human mind is capable of transcending the sense experience, if images like the mountain, the stars, the sea barely flow through the mind points towards, or if there is something which is beyond our direct apprehension.

And what were thou, and earth, and clouds, and sea,
If to the human mind's imaginings
Silence and solitude were vacancy?

(l. 142-144.)

This manner of the objects pointing beyond themselves and thus setting out a chain of thoughts which transcend the object itself is described in his essay 'On Life': "in a wide sense almost all familiar objects are signs, standing not for themselves, but for other in their capacity of suggesting one thought which should lead to a train of thoughts."⁸ The poem starts with the following lines:

The everlasting universe of things
Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,
Now dark – now glittering – now reflecting gloom –
Now reflecting splendour, where from secret springs
The source of human thought its tribute brings

⁶ *English Romantic Writers*: 1074-1077.

⁷ Jay Appelton: *Romantic Horizons*. Columbia: University of Columbia Press, 1990: 10.

⁸ *English Romantic Writers*: 1064.

Of waters, –

(l. 1-7)

Seemingly this image is very close to that of 'The Eolian Harp' by Coleridge, but it is significantly different. Coleridge pictures the mind as a box of strings placed at an open window, and it makes music as the wind passes through: the world of the human mind flows through man's mind and thus it creates supernatural harmonies:

And that if all animated nature
Be but organic harps diversely fram'd,
That tremble into thought, as over them sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the soul of each, and God of all?⁹

In Shelley's poem the mind cooperates with the ever changing images, it absorbs them but it is not a sublime experience.

... For the very spirit fails,
Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep
That vanishes among the viewless gales!
(l. 57-59.)

The vantage of the perceiver is limited. He does not seem to be able to surpass the threshold which separates us from a supernatural world. The horizon marks an impediment to the line of vision. That is what the "viewless gales" expression refers to.

By 1816, then Shelley would argue that despite the near-universal belief in an ultimate cause—a belief he shares—our experience of causation is a human construction. We cannot know and represent an ultimate Power; the best we can do is follow 'Mont Blanc' the process of the mind's creation of cause and effect.¹⁰

⁹ *ibid.* 399.

¹⁰ Richard Isomaki: "Interpretation and Value in 'Mont Blanc' and 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty'", *Studies in Romanticism Spring 1991*, 70-86: 73.

What is beyond the horizon does not seem to unfold to our awareness. The mountain top is a deserted place:

A desert peopled by storms alone,
Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone,
And the wolf tracks her there –
(l. 67-69.)

According to Shelley's view human mind is lacking the capacity for sustaining a clear apocalyptic vision:

My own, my human mind, which passively
Now renders and receives fast influencings,
Holding an unremitting interchange
With the clear universe of things around.
(l. 37-40)

This parallels the idea put forth in the *Defence*: "...for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness;"¹¹ the insight into some spiritual realm is either a feeble momentary experience or takes place in a state of conscious-ness when we are not fully aware of the it:

Some say that gleams of a remoter world
Visit the soul in sleep,—that death is slumber,
And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber
Of those who wake and live.—I look on high;
Has some unknown omnipotence unfurled
The veil of life and death? or do I lie
In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep
Spread far around and inaccessible
Its circles?
(l. 59-67)

The uncertainty of the experience is indicated by all the question marks. Shelley hints that our mind is not structured to fully comprehend a sublime

¹¹ *English Romantic Writers*: 1084.

experience consciously, the realm beyond the veil of clouds cannot be attained intellectually, only intuitively, to "feel":

Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal
 Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood
 By all, but which the wise, the great, the good
 Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.
 (l. 80-84)

Shelley raises serious doubts if the "mystery of being can be penetrated". The throne of the ultimate being, the ultimate power is "inaccessible":

The wilderness has a mysterious tongue
 Which teaches awful doubt.
 (l. 78-77)

III.

The definition of the poet, concerning such a sceptical view of human mind's cognition of sublime images should involve a number of paradoxes.

In the *Defence* Shelley describes imagination as the "faculty of approximation to the beautiful"¹², and "Those in whom it exists in access are poets, in the most universal sense of the word[,] as it is said further, the poets are those who express some kind of "indestructible order" which is close in definition to Truth, Beauty or Harmony. As it has been discussed, what can be appropriated for the "indestructible order" in the imagery of the 'Mont Blanc' poem is the "inaccessible" realm of the "infinite sky". The poet has no direct apprehension of it, he beholds the river which mediates between the two spheres:

Dizzy Ravine! And when I gaze on thee
 I seem as in a trance sublime and strange
 To muse on my own separate fantasy.
 (l. 34-37)

¹² *English Romantic Writers*: 1073.

Shelley applies Plato's famous cave simile, and he refers to it as "the cave of the witch Poesy". Since the cave is the metaphorical expression the limitations of the human perception, this statement can be judged as a refutation of the high romantic claim of the poet as a seer. The cave only allows us to see shadows, ghosts, phantoms: some faint reflections:

In the still cave of the witch of Poesy,
 Seeking among the shadows that pass by,
 Ghosts of all things, that are some shade of thee,
 Some phantom, some faint image; till the breast
 From which they fled recalls them, thou art there!
 (l. 54 -58.)

He applies a rather plastic metaphor to express the intangibility of any kind of sublime experience. There are only intuitions of the ultimate Being, the Power of the cosmos, "some unsculptured image" issued forth:

Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep
 Of the aethereal waterfall, whose veil
 Robes some unsculptured image;
 (l. 35-37.)

In another poem, 'The Sensitive Plant' there is a clear statement of Shelley's disbelief in the sense's capacity to convey the highest and permanent aspirations:

For love, and beauty, and delight,
 There is no death nor change: their might
 Exceeds our organs which endure
 No light being themselves obscure.¹³

In the *Defence of Poetry* he expresses that even if an internal quest for a glimpse into the ideal, into the "indestructible order" is completed, the "naked truth" is attained in the poet's mind, the experience cannot be communicated, since it cannot be materially realised. is incompatible with the corrupt "Few poets of the highest class have chosen to exhibit the beauty of their conceptions in its naked truth and splendour; and it is doubtful whether the alloy of costume, habit,

13 *ibid.* 1028.

etc., be not necessary to this planetary music for mortal ears." In *The Defence of Poetry* Shelley gives considerable thought to his doubts about "the limitedness of the poetical faculty". He holds that an inside beyond the "painted veil", the mind is not capable of sustaining its inspiration.

...when composition begins, inspiration is already on decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communi-cated is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet... For language is arbitrarily produced by the imagination and has relation to the thoughts alone; but all other materials, instru-ments, and conditions of art, have relations among each other, which limit and interpose between conception and expression. The former is a mirror which reflects, the latter is a cloud which enfeebles, the light of which both are mediums of communication.¹⁴

Shelley claims that the highest aspirations of poets are basically not communicable since they are incompatible with the corrupt material of language. In the pursuit of the ideal separate the poet from the material world which creates an intense isolation. (This paradoxical aspect of the romantic quest is the subject for 'Alastor' which was written in the same year as the 'Mont Blanc'.) This sense of isolation creates in Shelley's conception of the poet's role. On one hand he formulates a purely idealistic attitude, on the other hand he refutes it. The aesthetics of the *Defence* is based on the moral benefits of the imagination. He holds that

A man to be greatly good must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must place himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause. ... Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of moral nature in the manner as exercise strengthens a limb ... it is a strain which distends, and then bursts the circumference of the reader's mind, and pours itself forth together with it into the universal element with which it has universal sympathy.¹⁵

¹⁴ *English Romantic Writers*: 1084-1085.

¹⁵ *ibid.* 1076.

As we have seen, the reader's psychology is quite an important focus for Shelley, and he maintains a rather pragmatic concept of poetry. The famous conclusion of the treatise also points towards this direction: "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." He contends that poets have an unrecognized and inevitable effect on the world. There is an unreconcilable contradiction between this view and the argument that the idealist is cursed with the dissatisfaction communicating the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth. Shelley seems to have a clashing mentality. There are two sets of ideals influencing Shelley: Platonism and scepticism. C. E. Pulos, examining the relation of the two in Shelley's thinking, says:

... he no longer regarded Plato as 'sage', but had to come to see him ... as a kind of poetic dreamer. From this point of view regarding Plato Shelley was liberated, and liberated completely, by the influence upon him of the sceptical tradition.¹⁶

Scepticism determines Shelley's basic divergence from Plato. Shelley has a view of the ideal: he desperately wants to see and communicate but he does not see it viable. Both views are present but it is impossible to incorporate them. It creates a clash.

SUMMARY

Shelley also can be interpreted as drawing on the dualism of the Platonic world view. The cosmos seems to be structured according to the a dichotomy of the phenomenal world and the realm of the ideals. Using the 'Mont Blanc' poem's imagery we might say that he sustains a belief that beyond the veil of the clouds there is an ideal world, which is beyond the confines of time and space. (In a sonnet written in 1818, 'Lift not the painted Veil', however, he raises doubts concerning the very existence of transcendent ideals thus expressing a complete disillusionment of the Platonic idealism:

¹⁶ *The Deep Truth*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1954: 69.

Lift not the painted veil which those who live
Call Life; ...¹⁷

He states that the quest for some ultimate ideals can only be tragic and futile.)

Shelley doubts if the human perceiver can surpass the borderline between the finite and infinite realms which is marked by the horizon. The human mind can only receive intuitions of the world beyond. And even that is a momentary and transitory experience.

Shelley's definition of the poet's role is rather contradictory. He maintains that the poet should apply to the highest ideals which, however, are too subtle to be grasped by the the medium of poetry. The state of the poet is admittedly paradoxical.

¹⁷ *English Romantic Writers*: 890.

Katalin Sinóros - Szabó:

LOVE AND LOSS RECONSIDERED

TWO DIVERGENT VERSIONS OF D. G. ROSSETTI'S *DANTE'S DREAM AT THE TIME OF THE DEATH OF BEATRICE*

Rossetti executed two divergent versions of this subject: one in watercolour in 1856 and another in oil in 1871. The latter became his largest oil painting as well as one of the very few multi-figured late compositions he has ever painted, which is not surprising since this canvas is a replica of an earlier design.

These paintings clearly represent the double change in Rossetti's art between the 1850s and the 1860s-1870s. It was the alteration of the female figure, the person of the beloved - when Elizabeth Siddal's place was taken by Jane Morris in Rossetti's heart - on the one hand, and the development of his style and technique on the other. The difference of execution in terms of technique is insignificant from this point of view, as it is in terms of a higher level.

The subject is taken from Dante's *Vita Nuova* and Rossetti chose a few lines to explain his composition:

These idle fantasies
Then carried me to see my lady dead;
And when I entered,
With a white veil her friends were covering her;
And in her mild look was a quietness
Which seemed as if it said,
I have found peace.

(Surtees 42)

The settings of the two versions are identical. They follow those interiors Rossetti had composed for his Dante subjects. The viewer finds himself in the middle of a room open at both sides and on the top. The side-walls diverge and open the front of the chamber. Next to the back wall Beatrice lies on a sofa that is partly pushed into the depth of the room. Two women standing at the ends of the bed hold a flower-covered shroud above her dead body. An angel of love is leading Dante into the scene, and - since he is not a worldly creature - bends to Beatrice and kisses her before Dante. The floor in the foreground is covered with red poppies, the symbols of laudanum and death induced by that drug. The composition might recall 14th-15th century Netherlandish paintings, which depict religious subjects - such as the adoration of the Magi, scenes from the life of Christ and others - as they are commonly placed in stalls, inns or other half-open buildings. The opened side-doors and roof give a sight of the town around and of nature and the sky.

The first version is very close to those mediaeval pictures, particularly in terms of simplicity, brightness of colour and open composition. On both sides, the room is opened to the town, and so it is through the ceiling and three small windows in the wall behind the bed. Rossetti describes this early version as a foreground-background composition with the figures in the foreground and "a good deal of accessory matter" all around (Surtees 42). However, the composition could be rather regarded as one of his two-dimensional ones, where the layers are set behind each other and no perspective acceptable links are given. The connections of the figures within each layer are built up by their limbs or by the objects they touch. There are five layers in this design. The first one is Dante alone representing earthly life in a heavenly scene. The second layer is taken by Love and the woman attendant on the left. Beatrice and the other female figure make up the third layer in a similar way; the back wall of the room and the view of the town set the fourth and fifth layers. The only direct link between two layers is Love holding Dante's hand, so emphasizing the connection of the worldly and transcendental lives in a dream. Its central setting also stresses the importance of that relation. On the right Rossetti tried to achieve the same level of connection by leading curving stairs from the room towards the view of the town. Nevertheless, the deformed bend in the middle of the staircase and its false proportions prevent the viewer from having that illusion of connection. This watercolour - as well as many of his others - gives the impression of an illustration from a pop-up book with its folded figures and enchantment.

The colouring system is that of his watercolours. Soft and bright colours are used, and the gloomy shades melt into each other as there are no strong outlines to break them. The tonality is rather monochromic here. Emerald green dominates the scene, with some patches of cobalt blue and slight touches of jade. In terms of tincture the figures create a mass of cold sea-colours: blue and green. Neither the small particles of Beatrice's white robe, nor the pale shades of contrasting vermilion and red can break the greenish veil that almost covers the painting. Still, the brightness of the colours and the softness of the brushwork compensate this monochrome and create a pleasant cool harmony. The brown of the back-wall and the reds and golds of women's hair cannot contrast with the greenish-blue draperies, but give a solid frame and a modest rhythm to the composition. Death becomes as quiet and peaceful as pale the red poppies on the floor are. Beatrice's calm face, neatly held hands and her unexpressingly closed eyes strengthen the effect. This watercolour is fairly luminous. There is no exact source of light, the entire design - both the interior and the exterior - is soaked by some fluid brightness.

The composition is very light and pleasant. Air fills the room as we feel the soft breeze coming in through the open doors, windows and the ceiling. The greens of the figures' robes are accompanied by the greens of nature. Vivid branches are let in through the ceiling and rich trees can be seen through the windows. This arrangement gives nearly an open-air effect. The harmony of tonality and the lightness of design make the painting homogeneous. The figure of Love is distinguished only by his blue gown in contrast with Dante's black coat. The greenish shades of his black gown and the pale reds of the sleeves and cap cannot provide strong distinction. Earthly life is as close to the heavenly one as it is possible on this canvas. The sitter for Beatrice's figure was Mrs James Hannay and the right-hand attendant was possibly modeled on Annie Miller (Surtees 42). Rossetti started this picture when Lizzie was in Nice - so Gay Daly says - and:

Annie Miller modeled for one of the attendants, and Lizzie must have been chilled when she saw this work on Gabriel's easel.

(Daly 69)

Although it was not Liz to inspire this setting, Rossetti painted Beatrice in a way that recalls many drawings and pictures modeled on her. The long, auburn hair, the fine features of her face, the small hands and her dove-like appearance make one believe that she could have been Lizzie as well. Rossetti might have had

her in mind when he painted Beatrice. But Beatrice had left Dante as Liz did Rossetti; first through ill health, then through death. Furthermore, she could not give Rossetti - before their marriage in particular - what he wanted, so he found other women for his pleasure. Annie Miller was one of them, and Rossetti kept seeing her during the early years of his relationship with Lizzie. If that figure had been modeled on Annie Miller, that would give a reason why she is looking up into Dante's face instead of turning her eyes towards Beatrice as everyone else does. Since Dante is depicted in profile, one cannot be sure whether he is looking at his beloved Beatrice or his eyes meet the sweet attendant's eyes: or both. This duality could have been a characteristic feature of Rossetti's mind at that time.

Nevertheless, he never stopped searching for his Beatrice, whom he seemed finally to have found in two women. First in Elizabeth Siddal during their short marriage and especially afterwards, when only sweet memories and longing remained. Then Jane Morris became Rossetti's Beatrice, his Proserpine and his everything.

As early as 1863 he wanted to change the painting, though the alterations were meant to be technical ones at that time:

The Dante drawing is unchanged ... but I find much in it which I could now revise greatly to its advantage should you wish it. However I know that if I once began on it I should do so much in the way of heightening its colour & removing stiffness, smallness of execution etc. in parts all over the picture, that it would be a week's or a fortnights [sic] work to me ...

(Surtees 43)

By 1863 Rossetti reached a stage where he did not find his previous minute and sometimes monochromatic style satisfactory. He wanted the grandeur of expression that is characteristic of his art in *Beata Beatrix*. Though the soft shades are still present on that canvas, the design became more grandiose. As he could not take up the replica of *Dante's Dream*... for another couple of years, the later oil version of 1871 was altered in terms of his late style.

Rossetti kept the setting of the earlier version, but he changed nearly everything else. Colouring, as his first aim to revise, became more dramatic and more vivid at the same time:

... from the stiff quaintness of the earlier mediaeval style to the fully rounded, thoroughly confident Renaissance style of the later work.
(Faxon 205)

Draperies and figures were re-drawn in a harder but more expressive way. Some interior-details were re-designed and new symbols were added:

The design is the same as that of the water-colour but elaborated with additional symbolism and accessories, notably in the introduction of two doves with crimson plumage, and in the circular flight of angels bearing away the soul of Beatrice (upper centre). On the wall above the brier flickers a dying lamp; a scroll on the left records the lamentation of Jeremiah: "Quomodo sedet solo civitas".

(Surtees 44)

While the earlier version was an open one, Rossetti closed this composition to create a circular design of a confined place. All his pictorial means emphasize this effect in the painting. First of all, he broke the openness of the room by narrowing the views to the town. That townscape background was flat and tapestry-like, yet it gave a wide and open effect, the result of pale, sunny colours and lights. The gloomy scenery is darker and sharper here. On the right, the houses are built up in a larger scale, and the stairs are turning inwards instead of leading out to the open-air:

... whilst to add in a small measure to the realisation of the design I [Rossetti] built up carved in wood for him a circular staircase in Florentine style of structure that he wished to introduce.

(Surtees 44)

Reality is of less importance here, but the objects reflecting it are better designed and more "real" than they were in the watercolour. The earlier version was meant to show reality in a dream, but it became more of a vision than any kind of earthly setting put in the world of fantasy. Rossetti wanted to depict a transcendental scene - similarly to *Beata Beatrix* - a later version of the subject. Heavenly atmosphere is present here that is linked to the world of mortals by a few objects from everyday life. Rossetti composed *Beata Beatrix* in the same way. The atmosphere is emphasized by the closing of the scene, which continues on the left of the room. There the view is blocked by the red roofs and the shaded walls of some neighbouring houses. The windows of the back wall are completely

abandoned and the weak light of the lamp cannot substitute the brightness of the sun. Nor can the green garlands on the dark brown wall give the freshness of the trees depicted in the earlier version. The only open space is above the ceiling, where a circle of angels are floating, which stresses the heavenly character of the composition.

The alteration of the figures is not only formal, they have different attitudes as well. All the present ones participate in the scene of the watercolour. They turn towards and look at the dead Beatrice, who lies passively on her bed. Everyone feels pity for her, and the maidens - one in particular - feel sympathy for Dante, too. Though they concentrate on her, she has no organizing power, not even great or specifically distinct significance in the composition. All the participants are of equal importance and compositional value. Such an arrangement underlines the widening effect of light and colours and creates a broad, open and non-concentrated composition. The canvas of 1871 is closer to the portraits of that decade and it is really "worlds away" from the earlier version. Beatrice is the absolute centre of the design in the oil painting. Her full red lips kissed by the Love-angel are echoed and reinforced in the effect by his scarlet robe and wings. Dante is seemingly watching her, but a closer look betrays him. He is gazing in front of him, as if he were travelling in his thoughts and memories. All the figures depicted on Rossetti's late canvases have the same far-looking eyes. The maidens do not even look at Beatrice. They are the secondary figures (or "heroines") in the paintings in Rossetti's late period, supporting characters, or more often they are ornamental equivalents to drapery, flowers or jewels. All the poppies, the birds and the persons function as ornaments here. In this sense, this painting is almost a simple portrait of Beatrice, since many of those late designs present some other figures of no significance beside or behind the actual figure of the picture. Nevertheless, these figures are not composed in different two-dimensional layers any longer. Real human bodies are covered by more plastically drawn robes, which results in a sculpturesque effect. The characters - or decorative statues - form a very delicately set pictorial group in this painting. Dante stands closer to the bed and he is in motion towards his dead lover, however unconscious or dream-like this motion is. He is literally led there by Love, whose bending is softer and more roundish than it was before. He is holding Dante's hand with twined fingers and is kissing Beatrice on the cheek - nearly on her lips. She is not a passive participant here, since she seems to turn her face towards Love as if she had long been waiting for that kiss. Her portrait is altered from Lizzie's - or

Lizzie-like - features to Jane Morris' face. Her hands are not plainly put together for prayer. The gesture recalls Beatrice's hands in *Beata Beatrix*, but it is inevitably Jane's who was the model for this composition. The face shows the same expression that Beatrice had in *Beata Beatrix* and her long, bending neck is typical of Jane again. Rossetti seemed to have found his Beatrice in Liz, then in Liz and Jane and finally in Jane. Since the picture is a replica of an earlier setting from Liz's times, the mixing of the two *femmes* is not surprising here. Beatrice acts as an absolute centre of the composition, and so she has a very strong organizing power. This late design is more about love lost through death, but refound in the ecstasy of a transcendental dream. The watercolour version told a ballad of peaceful and Christian mediaeval death, where the senses are shut out. Heavenly and earthly love, sensuality and everlasting trance are depicted on this late canvas, which are expressed by the colouring as well.

The richness of colour, especially that of the clothes, is turned deeper tonally, as Rossetti painted this picture in oil. Monochrome robes replace the vivid colours of the former design, and their thorough elaboration causes darker shades. In addition, a more dramatic effect is reached by the rhythmical composition of contrasting colours. The colour-rhythm also provides plasticity in the design. Genderless and non-significant colours - gloomy greens, smoky browns and pale yellows - are used here. The attendants' robes are kept in emerald green, though they gained a deeper shade. Dante's coat is still greyish-black and it has green overtones, which separates him from the attendants and keeps him on earth by its tincture. Nevertheless, its plasticity fits the well organized composition of the figures, and creates the interference of the two worlds.

Beatrice's plain, auburn hair is replaced by the great mass of blond curls, which is the first step in the development that led to Jane's large veil of ebony black hair. Her white gown is much more emphasized here as it is falling to the floor. Her pale complexion and golden hair expand the brightness of her figure. She provides the "sunbeams" in the painting. Apart from the weak or limited light that comes from outside, her beautiful face and transcendently enlightened body shine in the room. Besides Beatrice's shining figure in the middle, Love's scarlet robe provides a dramatic contrast to the dark greens and browns of the painting. He is the well-known Love-figure from *Beata Beatrix*. As he kisses Beatrice's burning lips, he lights the fire of love that is burning continuously and eternally in Dante's - and so in Rossetti's - heart. The central setting of that burning colour suggests Love's importance and its sensuous character as well.

Love is heavenly and earthly, spiritual and sensual at the same time, as it was in *Beata Beatrix*. Death takes human souls to a higher level of existence, but fleshly pleasures are not expelled from that world. When they are at the border, human beings come into a trance that will last forever, as they will live happily and lovingly. That is why death is signaled by Love's scattered echoes. Some ruby birds, the heavenly messengers of death, fly here and there in the room, while the blood-coloured, bright poppies are glittering like small lamps on the floor. Both symbols were present in *Beata Beatrix*, though the poppy was white for purity there. Her innocence is expressed by her white robe on this canvas. Everything tells about love in this closed scene. The birds are flying inwards. Love holds flowers in his hand replacing the palm leaves of sanctity and martyrdom. Their scent - together with the odour of the poppies and the may-flowers on the veil - parallels the incense-burner of later designs. The vision creates a heavy atmosphere loaded with symbols, yet its mood is not unpleasant. The circular composition of figures and symbols is repeated in the garland of angels that take the departed's soul to Heaven. Those floating angels in the open-air provide the way out of this closed scene, and they melt love and death into a heavenly trance up there.

Although this painting is multi-figured, as it is a replica of a much earlier design, its late style shows the approach to the icon-like quality Rossetti reached in 1864 by painting *Beata Beatrix*. That was the first step towards the closed, circularly composed picture-sonnets that determined his late decades.

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Eszter Kiss

'THE PURE AND THE FALLEN'

THE UNIVERSE IN THOMAS HARDY'S *TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES* AND CHARLOTTE BRONTE'S *JANE EYRE*

A Comparison

Comparing the two heroines of the two novels: Thomas Hardy's *Tess of D'Urbervilles* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* is not an easy task to undertake but by all means an exciting one. One could raise objections to the drawing of parallels in the first place, arguing that the two characters have nothing in common, and an educated, highly intellectual and accomplished, but rather 'plain' governess can hardly be compared to the physical, very sensuous, natural peasant girl. Yet in my work I would like to point out the parallels and contrasts in their lives and characters, in their circumstances and their destinies. Although many scholars writing about Hardy might argue with me and accuse me with misunderstanding and thus misinterpreting him, I will especially endeavour to elucidate the two author's depiction of the world around us, of man's place and role in the universe, and of the invisible, underlying forces that rule and influence our lives.

Examining the characters' lives a certain parallelism can easily be detected and shown. Nevertheless, at the most critical, the most crucial turning points Jane's life seems to take a different course than that of Tess - I will talk about this in the second part of my essay. To begin with, I will first point out the parallels and the similarities between the lives of the two characters.

of her hostile and mean aunt, and the wicked and spoilt cousins, and Tess coming from a rather disordered family with an alcoholic father (who worked harder in digging a grave for his horse than he had worked for months to grow a crop for his family [*Tess*, 73.]), and a disorganised mother. They both have to leave their homes at a fairly early age; Tess going to Trantridge to look after Mrs Durberville's fowls, and Jane going to the orphanage in Lowood. Later a period starts in their lives when they seem to have reached a haven, an almost idyllic and very promising and favourable situation, where they find pleasure and satisfaction and even success in their works and where they both find love and acceptance among the people around them; Jane at Thornfield and Tess in Talbothays at the dairy.

Mr Crick was glad to get a new hand ... and he received her warmly.
(*Tess*, 161.)

"I am so glad" - says Mrs Fairfax to Jane - "I am so glad you are come; it will be quite pleasant living here now with a companion."
(*Jane*, 116.)

But, which is of greatest importance for them, they meet 'Love' in the person of Mr Rochester and Angel Clare, an unexpected and un hoped for happiness. Both Mr Rochester and Clare are on a higher social standing than Jane or Tess, and accordingly the two women equally doubt the possibility of the fulfilment of their love and first they both refuse to believe the sudden fortune and the prospects that open up before them. Both of them have evil forebodings about their happiness, and indeed, a past event stands in the way of both of their felicity. In Jane's life it is Betty Mason, the insane wife of Mr Rochester locked up in a small room in the attic; and for Tess, it is also a former relationship, her having been seduced by Alec d'Urberville. The past keeps haunting their lives, they can not get rid of its overwhelming, oppressive presence, they can not escape it, it is lurking behind them all the time and keeps surfacing and emerging again and again. The mad Betty Mason escapes from her imprisonment several times trying to hinder Mr Rochester and Jane's marriage, either by trying to set ablaze her husband's room or by appearing in Jane's room at the night before the wedding, tearing her veil and trampling on it. And Tess's past cannot fully be kept back either, she herself considers it as an obstacle, as something that separates her from

happiness "I cannot marry you" (*Tess* 233), and she even gets recognised in an inn just before their marriage.

They both cling to their lovers with a single-minded devotion, a childlike attachment, with a deeply committed, sacrificial love.

There was hardly a touch of earth in her love for Clare. To her sublime trustfulness he was all that goodness could be ... She thought every line in the contour of his person the perfection of masculine beauty, his soul the soul of a saint, his intellect that of a seer. ... He would sometimes catch her large, worshipful eyes, ... looking at him from their depths, as if she saw something immortal before her.

(*Tess*, 257.)

My future husband was becoming to me my whole world; and, more than the world: almost my hope of heaven. He stood between me and every thought of religion, as an eclipse intervenes between man and the broad sun. I could not, in those days, see God for his creature, of whom I had made an idol.

(*Jane*, 346.)

In spite of their misgivings the day of their wedding is drawing nearer. They both get jewels from their lovers, but these jewels are in a way symbolic; they are in sharp contrast with their wearers' low social standing.

"If you were only to appear in a ball-room!" he said, "But no - no , dearest; I think I love you best in the wing-bonnet and cotton-frock - yes, better than in this , ... , "I'll take them off" she said ... They are not fit for me, are they?"

(*Tess*, 288)

And neither of them can eventually enjoy their respective marriages, the 'ghost of the past' reaches them in the end. Both Jane and Tess has to leave their lovers, leave the place of security and joy, they have to break with their former ways of life, they have to break off every contact and every tie and set out in search of a new new life, in search of a new job. After a long and exhausting journey they both find a place to stay, a new job; and what is more, a family. Jane in Mary and Diana in the Moor-House, and Tess among Iz and Marian on Flintcomb-Ash Farm. They are both proposed marriage by men who consecrated themselves for the service of God, and who wish to marry for higher spiritual causes and who plan to take their wives to the missionary field.

"I intend to...devote myself to missionary work in Africa. ...what I want to ask you is, will you put it in my power to do my duty - to make the only reparation I can made for the trick played on you: that is, will you be my wife and go with me?"

(*Tess*, 394.)

"Jane, come with me to India: come as my help-mate and fellow-labourer."

(*Jane*, 513.)

Another similarity in their lives is that though they both started out moneyless and poor, they both rise to a certain level of social rank and financial stability. With Alec on her side Tess can support her family and she can afford herself to wear nice clothes and jewels, she is not lacking anything. (Or is she?) And we can also see Jane settled in a nice stately house in the circle of a loving family in complete satisfaction.

Seemingly similar life, yet what a difference. In spite of all these parallels, at the most crucial points of their lives, things suddenly take an unexpected curve and they arrive at an utterly different position. Tess seems to be right when she says: "I don't quite feel easy....All this good fortune may be scourged out of me afterwards by a lot of ill. That's how Heaven mostly does." (*Tess*, 271.) World and nature seem to be against her, her life is full of small incidents, fatal coincidences, incalculable events that seem to drift her towards her fate, that seem to set and decide the course of her life, incidents that change the whole direction of it. She is no longer in a position to be able to make right decisions, morally and rationally right choices. She has no option, but to do what life dictates for her, what it compels her to do, what she is bound to, what she is doomed to do. Only thus can we explain the fact, that though given the very same conditions in life, Tess is after all not 'a pure woman', that she is a fallen girl who was not strong enough to resist the seducer, who does not have the strength to confess her past to Angel. Then she is a deserted wife, who surrenders and marries her former seducer, and eventually she ends up killing him. Yes, she is not a pure woman measured with the rules and standards of society. And, what is just as much, or even more painful and embarrassing, she is not a pure woman in the eyes of Angel, measured with his standards (who is after all not that enlightened and radical in breaking with the old and obsolete rules and constraints of his time.) I certainly do not want to shift the responsibility and blame Fate or Destiny or Chance, whatever we call it, yet I believe that Hardy's is a hostile universe, a place where

things work together against the individual, where one feels trapped and deluded. Some accuse Hardy and label him an 'angry fatalist', and there seems to be some truth in that. Tess is limited in practising her free will (if she has any!) - she is far too much bound by the occurrences of her life. And here I am not talking about genetical or social determinism, but explicitly about a malign or at least indifferent, nonchalant force of some kind.

Charlotte Brontë's universe, on the other hand, is a benevolent one, helping Jane through life, secretly co-ordinating and organising the smallest details and occurrences or the progress of events, giving warnings, signs and insights when needed. Doors get opened for Jane, obstacles clear out of her way so that she is free to make the right choices, to choose not to live in sin, to go through life remaining pure and virtuous. Her life seems to be directed and guided by a benevolent will or force or power, call it Provision or God or Mighty Spirit. (*Jane*, 537.) Her life also proceeds, heads in a certain direction, towards a certain goal, but in her case this goal is a settled life, financial and social independence and a loving relationship in which the partners can mutually give and receive love and respect.

In the rest of my essay I would like to expose these coincidences and unfortunate or fortunate incidents in the two novels, thus supporting my observation and providing a base for my argument.

The unfortunate death of Prince, the family's horse makes it even harder for the Durbeyfield family to eke out a living, consequently Tess has to leave her home and go and work for Alec d'Urberville to earn some money for the family, and that is where her fate is actually decided, where she is unable to resist her nature (she is a woman after all!) and the strong temptations of the flesh and she falls prey to the shameless, lustful young man.

But, might some say, where was Tess's guardian angel? where was the providence of her simple faith? Perhaps, like that other god of whom the ironical Tishbite spoke, he was talking, or he was pursuing, or he was in a journey, or he was sleeping and not to be awaked. Why it was that upon this beautiful feminine tissue, sensitive as gossamer, and practically blank as snow as yet, there should have been traced such a coarse pattern as it was *doomed* to receive ... As Tess's own people down in those retreats are never tired of saying among each other in their fatalistic way: 'It was to be' [!]. There lay the pity of it.

(*Tess*, 119. italics mine)

Then she goes to Talbothays, where she gets to know Angel Clare, they get to love each other, and Angel wants to marry Tess. That is the point where Tess should admit her sins to Clare and either settle it with him and ask for his forgiveness or make the choice to live without sin and give up on the hope of the marriage at all. And that is the point where again she is unable to act in a right way. She is unable to do so, but not because of weakness. We can follow all her failed attempts, which in the very last moment all get prevented. She does try to tell Clare about her history, but he mistakenly believes her aristocratic descendancy to be the secret she tried to conceal. Next time, she sits down, and in a four-page letter she writes a 'succinct narrative of those events of three or four years ago' (*Tess*, 275.) but in her haste and excitement she slips it beneath the carpet as well as beneath the door, Angel cannot find it and the incidence of the misplaced letter again prevents her confession. Lastly she makes a final, last minute, desperate attempt (still before the wedding) to confess all 'her faults and blunders' - and this time Clare himself silences her and she is '*whirled onward* the next couple of *critical hours*' (*Tess*, 280. italics mine) and when she eventually does have the opportunity to make her confession, it is already too late.

Jane also has to leave home and go to a new place, to the orphanage in Lowood, and there she also gets into a situation where the whole course of her life could be changed. She is openly put to shame and exposed by Mr Brocklehurst in front of all her fellow-pupils, and then, left to herself she is brooding over her misery:

"I had meant to be so good, and to do so much at Lowood; to make so many friends, to earn respect, and win affection. Already I had made visible progress: that very morning I had reached the head of my class; ... Miss Temple had smiled approbation; she had promised to teach me drawing, and to let me learn French, if I continued to make similar improvement two months longer; ... now, here I lay again crushed and trodden on: and could I rise ever more?"

(*Jane*, 80.)

Yes, she could. Yes, things do turn out well for her. Helen Burns stands on her side, 'imparting strength to her', and Miss Temple writing a letter to the chemist Mr Lloyd and receiving [!] his answer (here we have another letter, but peculiarly, it does not get lost on its way somewhere) assembles the whole school and Jane Eyre is pronounced completely cleared of all charges. And she does learn

drawing and she does learn French, thus she can write about herself in her advertisement when trying to get away from Lowood that

"... a young lady ... qualified to teach the usual branches of a good English education, together with French, Drawing, and Music...". (and "in those days...this...catalogue of accomplishments, would have been held tolerably comprehensive".)

(Jane, 103.)

Thus she gets to Thornfield, where she gets to know Mr Rochester, they get to love each other, Mr Rochester decides to marry Jane, but they are prevented before it would be too late.

In the very last minute their marriage is crossed, the sin of bigamy cannot be committed, and Jane leaves Mr Rochester, not willing to live in sin and she 'flees temptation'. But that it was not just her extraordinary strength and morality that compelled her to do that, shows also that when on second thought, in a sudden weakness she is about to turn back and return, she finds that she is unable to do so.

Oh! with agony I thought of what I left! I could not help it. ... I longed to be his; I panted to return: it was not too late; ... As yet my flight, I was sure, was undiscovered. I could go back and be his comforter - his pride; his redeemer from misery; perhaps from ruin. ... Still I could not turn, nor retrace one step. God must have led me on ...

(Jane, 410. italics mine)

Tess is drifted towards sin, Jane is prevented from it at every step.

Tess sets out to find and visit her husband's parents in the hope of receiving some help, or sympathy. After a long day's journey, she arrives in their village, but she accidentally overhears a conversation between Angel's two brothers which makes her rather uncertain about her plan, and also completely by chance somebody detects her pair of old boots carefully hidden in the hedge, and "reading the scene as her own condemnation" (*Tess*, 377.) she goes back along the road by which she came.

It was *somewhat unfortunate* that she had encountered the sons and not the father, who, despite his narrowness, was far less starched and ironed than they, and had to the full the gift of charity.

(italics mine; *Tess*, 377)

At this point she does not know that the greatest misfortune of her life was

this feminine loss of courage at the *last and critical* moment [she always has to face critical moments] through her estimating her father-in-law by his sons. Her present condition was precisely one which would have enlisted the sympathies of old Mr and Mrs Clare.

(*Tess*, 378. italics mine)

Jane Eyre also sets out in search of a lodging, in search of a job, in search of a new life and she wanders around hopelessly through 'fields and hedges and lanes', and when in utter despair and exhaustion, on the verge of starvation she is getting ready to die St. John Rivet finds her on his threshold (just in time!) and leads her into a warm family circle where again she finds love and acceptance and also respect and recognition, and what a fortunate coincidence; these kind people turn out to be her cousins, thus she is also presented with long longed-for relatives.

Angel emigrates to Brazil, which actually was not his original intention; he goes there "in a fit or desperation, the Brazil movement among the English agriculturists having *by chance* coincided with his desire to escape from his past existence" (*Tess*, 421.) There he rethinks and reevaluates his harsh judgement and treatment against Tess, and he realises that his values and principles need readjusting.

This growing fondness of her [Tess's] memory coincided in point of time with her residence at Flintcomb-Ash, but it was before she had felt herself at liberty to trouble him with a word about her circumstances or her feelings. ... Thus her silence of docility was misinterpreted. How much it really said *if he had understood!*

(*Tess*, 421. italics mine)

Only later does she take the courage to write to him, and Angel does return, but again, it is already too late.

"It is too late," said she, her voice sounding hard through the room, her eyes shining unnaturally. ... "Too late, too late!" she said, waving her hand in the impatience of a person whose tortures cause every instant to seem an hour. "But I say, I say it is too late".

(*Tess*, 446.)

It is too late for she is now no longer Mrs Clare, not even Miss Durbeyfield, but Mrs d'Urberville... Here again, one might think it was Tess's weakness or

lack of firmness and character that she accepted the proposal and money of Alec d'Urberville, this so much hated, corrupt and wicked man, but again we can see, that she did try to stand against the flow of events, for a long time she did resist the constant and cruel persuasion of Alec, but just like at the accidental death of Prince, now she is thrust to him once more, only this time not as a servant taking care of the fowls, but as a wife. Tess and her family are turned out of their house, they have to leave their property and their home, they have to move to another place, to the half-dead townlet of Kingsbere, where they have taken some room. Rather unfortunately their letter gets there too late, so the rooms they want are already let. They are turned out without lodging, without a place to sleep the children, having given their last shilling away to driver of the wagon, and Alec d'Urberville is a rich man, Tess has been fighting long enough against her fate before she gives in and marries him. "We didn't know you was coming till we got your letter this morning - when 'twas too late. But no doubt you can get other lodgings somewhere." (*Tess*, 446.) No doubt, they did; and Tess became Mrs d'Urbeville. But by that time she has already ceased to recognise her body as her own,- "allowing it to drift, like a corpse upon the current, in a direction dissociated from its living will" (*Tess*, 447.)

Tess does not inherit suddenly and unexpectedly a large sum of money like Jane Eyre does, through which she can become an independent and wealthy woman who can afford to herself even such great generosity as to share her inheritance with her cousins. Though Mr Rochester is not in Brazil, they are also still far away from each other, and they are also to be reunited, but under what different conditions. Jane is also just about to bind herself to another man, to St. John, but she is warned in time, she is summoned by a mysterious voice, a strange calling which she follows, therefore she is not too late, she returns back to her beloved Edward and this time there is already nothing and nobody in the way of their happiness, the insane wife is dead by now, Jane does not need to fight against her any longer. Providence does not do this service for Tess and thus she takes retribution into her own hands, and she becomes the murderer of the man who 'came between Angel and her', she murders him for 'the trap he has set her in her simple youth'. Insight is not refrained from her either, but her vocation is different than that of Jane's:

I thought as I ran along that you would be sure to forgive me now I have done that. It came to me as a shining light that I should get you

back that way.

(*Tess*, 474.)

Examining all these events and the reaction of the characters and eventually the outcome of all that has happened, we can draw the conclusion again that in the two novels we have two different worlds. Hardy's is a universe which is a dreary, bleak and cruel place, where the heroine Tess is inevitably drifted towards sin and towards her fall, and Charlotte Brontë's being a helpful universe, a helpful world, guiding Jane towards virtue and moral victory. This is also shown in their assessment of the very same phenomenon: the starry sky, with which I would like to conclude my essay.

"Did you say the stars were worlds, Tess?"

"Yes"

"All like ours?"

"I don't know; but I think so. They sometimes seem to be like the apples on our stubborn tree. Most of them splendid and sound - a few blighted."

"Which do we live on - a splendid one or a blighted one?"

"A blighted one"

"`tis very unlucky that we didn't pitch on a sound one, when there were so many of `em!"

"Yes."

(*Tess*, 70.)

We know that God is everywhere; but certainly we feel His presence most when His works are on the grandest scale spread before us: and it is in the unclouded night-sky, where His worlds wheel their silent course, that we read clearest His infinitude, His omnipotence, His omnipresence. ... Looking up, I, with tear-dimmed eyes, saw the mighty milkyway. Remembering what it was - what countless systems there swept space like a soft trace of light - I felt the might and strength of God.

(*Jane*, 414.)

Small Abraham is right when in his sorrow over Prince's death he asks Tess through his tears: "`Tis because we live on a blighted star, and not a sound one, isn't it Tess."

(*Tess*, 73.)

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András Szigeti

THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED PRUFROCK

*"I grow old... I grow old... I shall wear
the bottoms of my trousers rolled."
What does that mean Mr. Marlowe?
'Not a bloody thing, it just sounds good.'¹*

INTRODUCTION

Often when a poet feels compelled to revise the available means of poetic expression, bequeathed on him by literary tradition, he does so because he looks at the world somewhat differently than his predecessors. The introduction of a new poetic technique indicates the poet's changing approach to the relationship between the constitutive experience and the poem. How radical this change is may vary in subsequent periods of literary history - sometimes a significant new poem alone may succeed in carrying out a revolution, sometimes the change is more gradual, each poet of the day contributing to it to some extent. Most literary critics would subscribe to the claim that the work of T. S. Eliot and his contemporaries (E. Pound, etc.) marks a very important turning point in the history of poetry. There is less agreement, however, as to how the nature of this development can be best described.

By introducing the concept of *textualization*, this essay will try to point out how this change in the use of the various poetic means of expression occurs in

¹ Raymond Chandler: *The Long Good-bye*. Penguin Books. London. 1990.

Eliot's poem "The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock". Therefore, two things must be noted in defence of what follows. First, it is by no means argued that the poetic technique or process of textualization, which will be discussed here, could exhaustively describe all the novelties to be found in the poem. Second, this work is not intended to be a complete analysis of this elaborate and difficult poem. Always remaining within the generic boundaries of the essay, it will focus on three main aspects of the Love Song. These three aspects have been chosen, because they seem to be best suited to showing how Eliot makes his poetry 'differ' from that of his predecessors. I will identify textualization as a crucial element of this difference. The three key aspects will be considered from this point of view, that is, to what extent they demonstrate the working of a new poetic technique.

TEXTUALIZATION

"The poet has no idea of what he wants to say until he has found the words of his poem, and 'When you have found the words for it, the 'thing' for which the words had to be found has disappeared, replaced by the poem.' What the poet has at first is a kind of rhythm or movement which becomes manifest in words and 'may bring to birth the idea and the image'".² In Prufrock's Love Song we see the first instance of Eliot's new approach to poetic creation. The poem is not the expression or representation of a distinct and definable experience. The traditional notion of poetic meaning is abandoned. No doubt, one can find a great number of poems, at any point in the history of poetry previous to Eliot's Love Song, in which the layer of the poet's actual experience and the layer of the poetic images and language, through which the poet turns his actual experience into poetry, are difficult to separate. Yet in these instances of pre-twentieth century poetry, there seems to remain a recognisable inner core of the actual experience. With Eliot's poetry (and with that of some of his contemporaries), however, the point is reached where the dividing line between experience and language, experience and images is blurred to an extent that these very distinctions seem to carry no

² T. S. Eliot: "The Three Voices of Poetry." in: *On Poetry and Poets*, 1953, 97-98. Quoted by Fry 28.

significance any more. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is a pre-eminent example of this tendency.

Eliot does not want the reader to find the 'inner core' of experience. The clearest evidence of this intention is offered to us by the famous story about how the poem gained its final form. As it is well known, Eliot showed a previous version of the poem to Ezra Pound. After having expressed his admiration for the Love Song, Pound grabbed a pair of scissors and simply cut most lines of the poems shorter. The reader is not presented a poem that tries to 'say something' by creating meaning through linking particular segments of reality to certain images. We have a poem that is, first and foremost, a *rhythm* created by the combination, repetition and variation of words. Images, ideas are born out of this rhythm after the poet has found his words. This method, which has been labelled 'textualization' for present use, is quite different from previous poetic techniques. Priorities change: the text is not a means to convey the poet's image of a certain experience of his, on the contrary, the text is the foundation on which poetic images and ideas are built.

This essay will attempt to discuss the poem along these theoretical lines. It will argue that the concept of textualization may significantly contribute to an interpretation of Prufrock's Love Song, implying that the ways in which rhythm and images, structure and poetic language, versification and meaning are interrelated in the poem are highly innovative and to some extent unprecedented in earlier literary periods.

PRUFROCK RECONSTRUCTED

Rhythm

One of the ways in which Eliot establishes the primacy of the text is that he assigns new functions to rhythm. It ceases being just a pre-organized form of 'verse', metre and rhyme. In the process of textualization rhythms of many kinds are interwoven sometimes amplifying and sometimes contradicting each other. Rhythm in the stricter sense, that is, versification is of an accentual kind, the number of syllables being variable between the stresses. Yet, not even versification is subject to a rigorous pattern. "Eliot has said that the most interesting verse is that which constantly approaches a fixed pattern without quite settling into it: 'it is this contrast between fixity and flux, this unperceived evasion of monotony,

which is the very life of verse".³ The validity of Eliot's statement concerning fixity and flux could be extended to all the manifold rhythms that make up the 'text(ure)' of the poem. There is a rhythm of sections,⁴ a rhythm of changing line-lengths, a rhythm of repeating words, a rhythm of the occurrence of rhymes running parallel to, but equally often going against the rhythm of concepts and the rhythm of literal allusions. As if the poem had an underlying score like a piece of music. The difference between a musical piece and the poem is that the score of the latter is nowhere written except in the poet's head during the creation of his poem. One can also distinguish the internal rhythm of the section from that overall rhythm of the whole poem. By analysing the following example, we will be attempting to take a glance at one page of the poem's imaginary score as it were. In other words, we will be trying to separate and formalize one section of the intricately interwoven layers of the poem's rhythmic structure:

And indeed there will be time
 For the yellow smoke that slides along the street
 Rubbing its back upon the window-panes;
 There will be time, there will be time
 To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
 There will be time to murder and create,
 And time for all the works and days of hands
 That lift and drop a question on your plate;
 Time for you and time for me,
 And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
 And for a hundred visions and revisions,
 Before the taking of a toast and tea."

The most apparent feature of the section is the rhythmic alternation of lines referring to everyday life and Prufrock's surrounding ("For the yellow smoke...") with those that stand for his thoughts ("To prepare a face...") and those that 'represent' general ideas ("And time for all the works..."). However, this rhythm is combined with that of rhymes and versification: the most stressed line in the section, the citation from the Bible ("There will be time to murder and create") rhymes with a line that brings us back to Prufrock's thoughts ("That lift and drop..."), and subsequently, we arrive back to another everyday image by the rhyming of the last line ("Before taking of a toast and tea...") with a line that could

³ T. S. Eliot: "Reflections on 'Verse Libre'". in: T. S. Eliot: *Selected Prose*, ed. F. Kermode. 1975. Quoted by Salinger 445.

⁴ I will use the term 'section' for labelling the various parts of the poem, as the term 'stanza' would be technically inappropriate.

be Prufrock addressing somebody or Eliot addressing the reader ("Time for you..."). The third rhythmic element - obviously not independent from the first and second - connects the this section with the rest of the poem by repeating or modifying lines in other stanzas ("For the yellow smoke...").

An exhaustive analysis of the poem should probably aim at deciphering its underlying 'musical' score completely. This analysis would then bring to the surface all layers of the poem's rhythm structure, as well as all the relationships between these layers. For the purposes of this essay, however, it is sufficient to observe the complexity and richness of the rhythmic structure in this section to understand the importance of rhythm in the process of textualization, on the one hand, and to realize the organic unity of the entire poem, on the other.

"I believe in an 'absolute rhythm'; a rhythm, that is, in poetry which corresponds exactly to the emotion or shade of emotion to be expressed. A man's rhythm must be interpretative, it will be, therefore, in the end, his own, uncounterfeiting, uncounterfeitable."⁵ The emergence of Prufrock's very personality is determined by the poem's rhythm structure. The rhythm of words represent his oscillating between thought and emotion, sincerity and self-concealment. The rhythmic patterns make his soliloquy swing back and forth, from the preparation of "his face to meet other faces" to self-analysis and introversion, from the courage to accept defeat to the arrogance of believing that he understands.

Image

"...When you were a tiny boy, learning to talk, you used to sound the rhythm of sentences without shaping words - the ups and downs of the thing you were trying to say. I used to answer you in kind, saying nothing yet conversing with you as we sat side by side on the stairs at 2635 Locust Street. And now you think the rhythm before the words in a new poem!... Such a dear little boy."⁶ Northrop Frye remarks that "the capacity of poetry to be unconsciously memorized is a criterion of genuineness, and the capacity of Eliot's own poetry for this is extraordinary."⁷ It can be argued that one of the reasons for Eliot's poetry being so 'memorable' is to be found in the intimate connection of rhythm and images. "An 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and

5 Ezra Pound 63.

6 Ada Eliot Sheffield (1869-1943) writing to TSE. Quoted by Valerie Eliot XXXXI.

7 N. Frye 29.

emotional complex in an instant of time... It is the presentation of such 'complex' instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art."⁸ In fact, it is possible to identify 'focal images' which serve as centres of the various sections of the poem. Yet, these images are not fixed in terms of their location in the poem, neither are they based on an exclusive reference. Like watching the glimmering lights of a city in the night, some of them are precise and readily localisable, some are blurred and their position is difficult to tell, some seem to form figures (or it is perhaps only our eyes that reads these configurations into what we can see) and some appear to stand alone. As a whole, however, the we scarcely ever fail to see the totality of these lights to be constituting a fascinating pattern.

The focal images are constituted by a particular combination and variation of lines, words, rhymes. They may also occur in other sections around another focal image, but not with the same degree of concentrated intensity. Some of these images are variations, some are closer to each other than others, although the distance of the 'focus' is not proportional to the distance expressed in the number of lines that separates them. In this way, there emerges a rhythm of images as well. One may say that, not unlike the rhythm of versification, the images function as beats, stresses between which the number of not directly related ideas and secondary images is variable.

The focal image of the section cited previously ("And indeed there will be time, For the yellow smoke that slides along the street...") is time, whereas that of the following one is ageing ("And indeed there will be time..."). We see the theme of time returning in the next section ("For I have known them all already..."), but here the focal image is that of the time of everyday life (coffee spoons, etc.). The theme of ageing returns in the penultimate section, but here the central image is that of death.

The comparison of the yellow smoke lingering in the evening to a cat by its wonderful precision creates an image of extreme intensity. Later, however, the image of the smoke is re-evoked by only a single line ("And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes..."), because the poem's economy and rhythm structure do not require more precision at the given point. This veiled reference is sufficient to remind the reader of one particular aspect of Prufrock's urban environment.

8 Ezra Pound 59.

Certainly, these images are not completely independent of a given external reality. Emphatically however, the experience of the encounter with an external object remains in the poet's mind where he transform it consciously and unconsciously to an extent that the reader will have no access to the direct experience. One may even argue that the innovative manner in which images are used is the most characteristic evidence of the novelty of the process of textualization.

"Language in a healthy state presents the object, is so close to the object that the two are identified."⁹ Images in *Prufrock* are not references, they are not intended to mean anything in a direct way, and therefore one should not aim at deciphering them one by one. "He [Prufrock] reads 'an overwhelming question' into the layout of the city blocks. What the question is - a proposal of marriage? the question of human dignity? - is not put into words; but the way it emerges expresses the condition of seeing a problem and shrinking away from it".¹⁰

PRUFROCK SINGING

It seems rather easy to lose sight of the fact that the title unambiguously classifies the poem in terms of its genre. T.S. Eliot leaves the reader in no doubt that what he is about to read is a *love song*. There is a blatantly obvious contrast, however, between the dominant characteristics of Eliot's poem and other lyric works of the genre. On consulting the dictionary we find that a song is traditionally defined as a brief poem with an unsophisticated structure and unequivocal mood expressing a simple emotion clearly and directly without the interference of intellectual reflections, descriptions and narrations. It is furthermore noted that a song is generally constituted by a handful of images and only a limited number of variations on the central theme.¹¹ Eliot, obviously well-aware of the like definitions, has very consciously manipulated the available means of the genre. One could argue that he has set out to present the reader with an outright parody of the lyric and popular songs characteristic of the Romantic age. It seems more likely, however, that Eliot has gone further. He has chosen to

⁹ T. S. Eliot: "Swinburne as a Poet". in: *Selected Essays*. 327. quoted by N. Frye. 29.

¹⁰ L. G. Salingar 446.

¹¹ Magyar irodalmi lexikon. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1963.

extend radically the generic boundaries of this form, while retaining many of its essential elements at other levels of the poem.

The understanding of Prufrock's emotions does not require an extraordinary intellectual or emotional sophistication, "And in short, I was afraid", and could form part of a more traditional song, but Eliot breaks the rules by interweaving them with reflections, musings, descriptions. The structure is a far cry from being clear and unsophisticated. The Love Song is a difficult and lengthy poem with a number of layers, containing a medley of complex emotions and feelings. And yet, Prufrock sings. Eliot does not allow him to be harmonious and simple. Prufrock's song is unsung, it is a confession withheld. Its subjectivity is constantly ridiculed and kept in check by Eliot's other voice of sarcasm and irony "Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter".

At this point it is also possible to tie up the discussion of the genre with the discussion of the process of textualization, since there is another sense in which the Love Song can be characterized as a descendant of the lyric genre of the song. Just like its nineteenth century predecessors, it maintains intimate ties with music. The musical quality of the poem is primarily based on a rhythm established by-as it has been noted in the previous chapter - a complex pattern of repetitions, stresses and variations. "In short, behave as a musician, a good musician, when dealing with that phase of your art which has exact parallels in music. The same laws govern, and you are bound by no others."¹² The poem's tone swings back and forth between the caricaturistic parody of the genre of the love song and Prufrock's hesitant confession. The poem's musicality swings back and forth between a near-melody and a bare syncopated rhythm. This constant oscillation, therefore, is also an essential part of the process of textualization, inasmuch as it contributes to creating a new relationship between the text(ure) and all the superstructures (images, ideas, etc.) building on the text(ure) as the foundations.

PRUFROCK AMOROUS

Two voices

Even if one accepts the claims concerning the primacy of the rhythmic structure, there are still several questions left unanswered. The most important

12 Ezra Pound 61.

among these concerns the overall cohesion of the Love Song. What keeps the poem together? Why is it still more than a boundless sequence of interwoven rhythms (as there are, of course, countless examples of this kind of good poetry as well)? The poem is not two-dimensional, in the sense that it is more than just a surface extension, more than an elaborate fabric (texture). The poem has a beginning and an end, and there is clearly a line of development, a course of events and unfolding thoughts between them.

In the poem Eliot creates an undeniably individualized character. In the final analysis, it is Prufrock's character that seems to be giving coherence to the rhythmically organized sequence of images. The focal images of each section can be in one way or another linked to Prufrock's thoughts, environment or interpreted as Eliot's comments concerning his own character. Thus for example, the first section ("Let us go then...") is the description of the evening of Prufrock's walk, the second ("The yellow fog..") is that of the city which surrounds him and so on.

We have already mentioned Eliot's sophisticated technique by which he always maintains some distance between his poetic voice and Prufrock's character. He uses a wide range of poetic means to create this effect. One of these, the re-definition of the genre of the lyric song, has already been discussed. Once again we should take note of the oscillating dynamics ('always approaching, but never quite settling into a fixed pattern') of the poem: the reader is being swayed back and forth between the two voices, the ironic, sarcastic voice and the other which is supposedly Prufrock's own.

Eliot sometimes denies the word from Prufrock or immediately comments on his utterances. At the very outset, of course, the reader comes across the untranslated motto from Dante's *Divina Commedia* (*Inferno*. Canto XXVII). All throughout the poem the reader is presented various interjections interrupting the flow of Prufrock's thoughts or the description of his surroundings (In the room the women...). These appear to subordinate the importance of Prufrock's individuality to developing the rhythmical structure of the entire poem. The mixing of everyday images with the discussion of 'existential' questions (After the cups...; To have squeezed the universe...) also serves the same effect. Most importantly, however, Eliot polarizes dreamy romanticism against sharp realism¹³ ("I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach. I have

13 N. Frye. 39.

heard the mermaids singing, each to each"). Prufrock's dreams are being continuously parodied against the background of banal everyday routine. He dreams but "human voices wake him" and then, presumably, he will fall back into his dreams again.

The result of this constant interplay is a tone of irony setting Prufrock meditations in a peculiar light. I believe it is this irony, the carefully kept distance between the poet and his character that 'allows' Eliot to touch on questions of human existence without the poem assuming a tone of empty and irrelevant pathos. From the viewpoint of modern poetry the transcendent ceases being an independent realm, sometimes it appears in the gaps of everyday life, sometimes most ordinary objects gain a transcendent value and sometimes it seems to be completely concealed by the "evenings, mornings and afternoons". Prufrock is not the Hamlet of to be or not to be. The poet is most interested in showing the way in which the thoughts, love (?) and surroundings of a not too extraordinary character, "an attendant lord", are mixed with glimpses of something beyond the everyday routine.

The image of Prufrock's personality is shattered to pieces, but ultimately his failure is not his fault. It is not his fault that tragedy and heroism are replaced by frustration and routine. You cannot sing your love song if the meaning of your words is lost in a maze of allusions, references and veiled implications. You cannot reach your loved one if she does not exist. And it is equally useless to try reaching her there, through Inferno, Purgatorio and Paradiso; you know you will never find the gates anymore.

"I am not..."

Prufrock's character is secondary to the rhythm that brings him to life. In a sense he does give coherence to the rhythm structure of the poem, the pattern of stresses, rhymes and images. At the same time, the poem's beating pulse is also Prufrock's pulse. The rhythm of the poem is also that of his vacillating steps, his hesitant words, his audible breathing. The reader is to follow this rhythm and not the meticulous description of a character. Prufrock's existence cannot be separated from the poem that created him.

Ultimately, the greatest paradox of the Love Song is that Prufrock's character is being simultaneously constructed and deconstructed, brought to life and taken to pieces, described and ridiculed. He is given qualities and then these qualities are denied of him. Not only is his love song counterpointed by its own parody, his very personality is being questioned as soon as it emerges from the poem. How

does Eliot achieve this? This essay has been arguing that Eliot was able to avoid the rigidity of a fixed pattern by employing the process of textualization. That is to say, rhythm acquired priority over meaning or to say it differently, *a radically new definition of poetic meaning was arrived at.*

We are witnessing the same oscillating dynamics in the poem which has been noted several times above. Prufrock, who in one sense is the protagonist of the poem, is fragmented, enlarged and then reduced, identified, ridiculed, questioned and tormented within the same poem. This technique is even more instrumental than Prufrock's own statements in creating an inescapable feeling that this portrait represents "the quintessence of futility".¹⁴

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¹⁴ Ezra Pound writing to Harriet Monroe about the publication of Prufrock in 1914. Cf. Valerie Eliot 106n.

Mónika Mesterházi:

THE WAY OUT IS THE WAY IN
AN ESSAY ON T. S. ELIOT'S *FOUR QUARTETS*

ATTACHMENT

To understand the poem or to grasp its meaning, one has to have the whole in mind, and while keeping it there, while it is working in and on us, we are hardly able to articulate the experience. It would be like speaking with the mouth full of ineffable material.

Words strain,
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
Under tension, slip, slide, perish,
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
Will not stay still.
(V, "Burnt Norton")

(...) and every attempt
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure
Because one has only learnt to get the better words
For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in
which
One is no longer disposed to say it.
(V, "East Coker")

And if I say I put down the text and look back on it, how far do I get?

We had the experience but missed the meaning,
And approach to the meaning restores the experience
In a different form (...)
(II, "The Dry Salvages")

There is, it seems to us,
At best, only a limited value
In the knowledge derived from experience.
The knowledge imposes a pattern, and falsifies,
For the pattern is new in every moment
And every moment is a new and shocking
Valuation of all we have been. (...)
(II, "East Coker")

On the other hand, is my experience of the *Four Quartets* so elementary that I can quote all these without mocking the whole? Although reading is experience, a poem cannot be called "inarticulate" in the least. Still, even if it uses words for its material, it has to keep its "message" as hidden as possible. When I am quoting Eliot about expressing and wording thoughts and feelings, I am holding these texts in front of me as a shield for my attempt to speak about them.

DETACHMENT

There is (a) time

The experience of time is not the "topic" of *Four Quartets*, which is not a thesis on time. But it starts with time so I will begin with it as well. To abuse the metaphor, time is the material of the text. Or the gap in the material. It gives cohesion. Or else, it provides digression.

Looking at the Quartets from a distance, they have the linear succession of a lifetime: childhood, "our first world", in "Burnt Norton", "in the middle way", in "East Coker", "as one becomes older", in "The Dry Salvages", and in "Little Gidding", the anticipation of old age and death. This looks like the framework of a narration. What is begun in the first Quartet ends in the last. Life grows to death and the elements of the universe, each represented in one Quartet, die in turn in "Little Gidding".

But this is a bird's eye view. In fact, *by the time* we get to the last Quartet, we have met all possible ends. Our memories, begun "in our first world", end up in

the present, the time of looking back. Birth itself contains death: "That which is only living/ Can only die." ("Burnt Norton"); "In my beginning is my end." ("East Coker"). It is only repeated in Little Gidding, "at the end of the journey":

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from."

What begins and ends is also subject to gradual change: the body grows old, light fades, "Houses rise and fall", and there is also an Ecclesiastical time for everything. Repetition takes place in rhythmical patterns: "The dance along the artery,/ The circulation of the lymph/ Are figured in the drift of stars". And there is the endless, either in the metaphysical sense (the universe: "Or say that the end precedes the beginning,/ And the end and the beginning were always there/ Before the beginning and after the end"), or in the metaphorical ("humility is endless"), or in the existential: "There is no end of it, the voiceless wailing,/ No end to the withering of withered flowers"): "Time the destroyer is time the preserver".

And there are moments that do not belong to time, although they exist and return. These seem to give the most important aspect of time. Not the empty moments of strangers on the underground, but the conscious, authentic, "unattended moments", which exist when we do not count and count with time. These moments are not in public time, in the psychological awareness of its passing.

If every aspect of time is represented by a pattern or by an element (the circular by the wheel or the slow rotation of the Earth, the linear and the empty by air, the everlasting and the changing by water and fire - although these interlink in other ways), the unattended moment stands for the centre of motion, the centre of time and the universe: it is the still point. "Give me a still point and I shall turn the world out of its corners."¹ (When Eliot speaks of time he obviously evokes every and any author on the phenomenon of time, before and after him.² But he does not develop a whole argument, does not give his process of thinking, step by step, with sudden realizations, nor does he provide conclusions about time. What he achieves is the most that can be done in art: he creates the same in

¹ The Archimedes' point

² From Herakleitos, St. Augustine, to Bergson, Einstein or Heidegger.

form (pattern) as he reveals in words. The text functions as time experience itself. If I do not understand it, I can still feel it.

We had the experience but missed the meaning

What is there at the still point of the turning world? There is:

The inner freedom from the practical desire,
The release from action and suffering, release from the inner
And the outer compulsion, yet surrounded
By a grace of sense, a white light still and moving,
Erhebung without motion, concentration
Without elimination (...)

And to arrive here one has to descend into the "internal darkness", "the darkness of God" where the soul is waiting - without hope or love or thought, yet open, getting ready and able to perceive, "So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing".

At the still point we equal ourselves. When we start to think or speak about it, we get out of it. If it is like a point, it has no extension. What there is to tell about it is all beside the point, is elimination. Naturally, when Eliot writes the poem, he "eliminates".

Yet (...)
(...) Time past and time future
Allow but a little consciousness.
To be conscious is not to be in time
But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,
(...)
Be remembered; involved with past and future.
Only through time time is conquered."

There is a longer explanation of the difference in "The Dry Salvages":

But to apprehend
The point of intersection of the timeless
With time, is an occupation for the saint -
No occupation either, but something given
And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,
Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.
For most of us, there is only the unattended
Moment, the moment in and out of time (...)

A lifetime burning in every moment

And there are the other moments of life ("East Coker"):

As we grow older

The world becomes stranger, the pattern more complicated
 Of dead and living. Not the intense moment
 Isolated, with no before and after,
 But a lifetime burning in every moment
 And not the lifetime of one man only
 But of old stones that cannot be deciphered.

A lifetime is the "form of limitation" which includes the conscious moments together with all other moments that make up a personality, an identity, a life. Which one? Life is the vaguest: "what has been". Though the *Four Quartets* contains personal, autobiographical allusions, it lacks any narration of an autobiographical writing. In fact, personality is to be found rather in the voice that speaks, in the way it speaks - as far as Eliot is concerned he stays in the background (the poet's mind is the medium for art, the poet is not the man),³ and, though less than in his earlier poetry, the voice is almost impersonal. But again, who is the one that looks up the places (if revisiting them only in his memory) that are important in the history of his family, his country and religion? This personal intention is then the search for identity.

Yet identity is hard to approach directly, and I would rather mention "the personal experiences of a person", the identity of "the speaker" instead of looking for the author, for it is uncertain where he is. In very plain words, by an argument strictly logical he deceives us around a Moebius tape, the dispossession of the self.⁴

You say I am repeating

Something I have said before. I shall say it again.
 Shall I say it again? In order to arrive there,
 To arrive where you are, to get from where you are not.
 You must go by a way wherein there is no ecstasy.
 In order to arrive at what you do not know

³ See Eliot, "Tradition and Individual Talent"

⁴ Technically speaking, this is unfortunately an "object trouvé" from St. John of the Cross, but intensified with the play on repetition with variation (statement 1. - statement 2. - question) in front of it, which is the same pattern as the whole part.

You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.
In order to possess what you do not possess
You must go by the way of dispossession.
In order to arrive at what you are not
You must go through the way in which you are not.
And what you do not know is the only thing you know
And what you own is what you do not own
And where you are is where you are not.

So if I maintain that at the still point we equal ourselves, I can just as well say that here we exclude ourselves. Both statements are valid.

I can only say, there we have been:

But sometimes he does say where: there are the other moments. In this indirect search for identity (done directly), past, future and general times are correlated with places, ending in "Little Gidding" with now and in England.

There are other places
Which also are the world's end, some at the sea jaws,
Or over a dark lake, in a desert or a city -
But this is the nearest, in place and time,
Now and in England.

Some of his places become significant motives of the text, the rose-garden, the yew tree, the hedgerow: he has seen them, they are like old photos ("The evening with the photograph album"), they are echoes in his memory. Other places are shown descriptively, the sea, the houses - here real places are in focus. This is the visitor's view of them⁵, only completed with the visitor's state of mind. Real is the underground world of other people, but that is mentioned as counter-example only, the opposite of the identity to be found.

And there is a symbolic level of places where other people are shown and addressed as travellers on board a symbolic ship, on the journey of life. Symbolic are the rustic village and the churchyard - there is no story told us about them in the Quartets but the ghost of a story is strongly felt around them (and can be looked up in biographical notes).⁶ Both "East Coker" and "Little Gidding" have

⁵ Like in the five Landscapes, written before the *Four Quartets*.

⁶ e. g. Gardner, *The Composition of Four Quartets*

such history, they are real places shown enigmatically: what they mean is more important than what they are.

If the poet does not want to place his conscious moments in time, he often only "times" his places. This is the most typical in the visionary meeting with the purgatorial master:

In the uncertain hour before the morning
 Near the ending of interminable night
 At the recurrent end of the unending
 After the dark dove with the flickering tongue
 Had passed below the horizon of his homing
 While the dead leaves still rattled on like tin
 Over the asphalt where no other sound was
 Between three districts whence the smoke arose
 I met one walking (...)

("Now and in England", in 1942, these lines meant the London air raids; this is an allusion the happier posterity has to learn from notes.)

Both one and many

This meeting takes place in a significant, unattended moment, "at this intersection time/ Of meeting nowhere, no before and after", because most likely it happens in a dream. The author's self is split: "So I assumed a double part, and cried/ And heard another's voice cry: 'What! are you here?'/ Although we were not. I was still the same,/ Knowing myself yet being someone other - / And he a face still forming". The message this unidentifiable master⁷ conveys is far less vague: it is about old age, in the sharpest, strictest words; beautiful, cruel and true. No complaint, no inaccuracy would be valid here, and no sympathy, because old age speaks for itself.⁸ The only escape is the refining fire of Purgatory.

They can tell you, being dead

⁷ See Gardner 64, who quotes Eliot's letter to his friend Hayward: "I think you will recognise that it was necessary to get rid of Brunetto for two reasons. The first is that the visionary figure has now become somewhat more definite and will no doubt be identified by some readers with Yeats though I do not mean anything so precise as that. However, I do not wish to take the responsibility of putting Yeats or anybody else into Hell and I do not want to impute to him the particular vice which took Brunetto there. (...)"

⁸ cf. "Old men ought to be explorers" - recommended by a presumably younger voice.

These clear words follow the enigmatic communication of the dead, reporting or foretelling the death of the four elements of the universe, and with them all that was once living or connected with life: feelings, the body, homes, actions done or missed. "They can tell you, being dead" what they "had no speech for, when living": which is apparently quite typical of Eliot's approach towards other people in the *Four Quartets*. The dead, "Keeping time,/ Keeping the rhythm in their dancing", mean harmony, rhythm, order. They know what we do not know, what they "had no speech for, when living". Whereas people in this world are strangers. Strangers on the underground train with "strained, time-ridden faces/ Distracted from distraction by distraction", where the poet sees "behind every face the mental emptiness deepen/ Leaving only the growing terror of nothing to think about". At the same distance there are anxious worried women, forever waiting, fishermen at the mercy of the sea, voyagers, men whose curiosity searches past and future - strangers.

Now, we come to discover that the moments of agony
 (...) are likewise permanent
 With such permanence as time has. We appreciate this
 better
 In the agony of others, nearly experienced,
 Involving ourselves, than in our own.
 For our own past is covered by the currents of action,
 But the torment of others remains an experience
 Unqualified, unworn by subsequent attrition.
 People change, and smile: but the agony abides.

Is this irony? Scepticism? Admitting that to study the nature of agony, other people come more handy? If irony, then self-irony as well. No, I don't think the poet has to be "nice". I just wonder. "People change and smile": but there are enough of them for experimenting. Or is that so?

In this world, in this pattern people are things, motives, examples: objects for observation. On the other hand, objects behave like bothered, interrupted persons: "The roses/ Had the look of flowers that are looked at". He is more tactful with them than with people, he just lets them be. ("And the unseen eyebeam crossed" - cf. "The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase"⁹)

9 "The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock"

It seems to me that there are four points each at an equal distance from the consciousness of the thinking mind: children who are not yet aware of themselves, not yet conscious as opposed to the dead who have lost their consciousness, and on another axis, similarly opposed to each other, the empty distraction of other people and the desirable "distraction fit" of the mind.

I found only one place in the text when the poet really turns to someone: "My words echo/ Thus, in your mind." Is it someone with him? Someone who shares his experience or can share his thoughts? For some time I had thought it could be the reader ("You! hypocrite lecteur! - mon semblable, - mon frere!"¹⁰), then I found the poem addressed to the poet's wife:¹¹

No peevish winter wind shall chill
 No sullen tropic sun shall wither
 The roses in the rose-garden which is ours and ours only

But this dedication is for others to read:
 These are private words addressed to you in public.

This text explains something and raises doubts. It explains that the author's personal, private feelings are among the experiences that words cannot describe. We cannot speak *about* the most important feelings or the most important people around us directly¹², and when we address them it is not "for others to read". But if the reader is such a stranger, if publication is public in the negative sense, and still, the self is in the centre (i.e. in the *Four Quartets*), then who is on which side? (Where you are is where you are not.)

But perhaps it is the other way round. The poet observes his own self just as keenly as he observes others:

See, now they vanish,
 The faces and places, with the self which, as it could,
 loved them,
 To become renewed, transfigured, in another pattern.

Another pattern

10 *The Waste Land*

11 "A Dedication to My Wife"

12 Much of Buber's book, *Ich und Du* deals with the question above.

It is almost impossible to let the inarticulate speak, whether it consists of emotions, experiences or mental struggles. The metaphors come from warfare:

And so each venture
Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate
With shabby equipment always deteriorating
In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,
Undisciplined squads of emotion. And what there is to
conquer
By strength and submission, has already been discovered
Once or twice, or several times (...)

And on the other hand, another pattern is needed to speak about love "beyond desire". One way is to use aphorisms, abstract terms:

There are three conditions which often look alike
Yet differ completely, flourish in the same hedgerow:
Attachment to self and to things and to persons,
detachment
From self and from things and from persons; and, growing
between them, indifference
Which resembles the others as death resembles life,
Being between two lives - unflowering, between
The live and the dead nettle. This is the use of memory:
For liberation - not less of love but expanding
Of love beyond desire, and so liberation
From the future as well as the past.

The cause and end of movement

And when he turns to love and faith, he chooses enigmas; this is the other way. Love belongs to the still point: it is unmoving and timeless. In the perfect sense, as it seems, it is "Neither flesh nor fleshless". It is the equilibrium of the soul in itself, having only the limitation of the lifetime.

It would be difficult to separate human and divine or other kinds of love in the Quartets. But earthly love involves another person, or a scene, the rose-garden with children, and is found in time only: in the intensive, unattended moment. Further on, however, "the waste sad time" becomes ridiculous, "stretching before and after" - and the metaphor here reveals the mockery of the body.

And though "Desire itself is movement/ Not in itself desirable", and "Love is most nearly itself/ When here and now cease to matter", in the earthly sense the poet goes on to suggest movement or desire:

Old men ought to be explorers
 Here and there does not matter
 We must be still and still moving
 Into another intensity
 For a further union, a deeper communion
 Through the dark cold and the empty desolation (...)

This is perhaps the point where earthly and divine love differ, because the soul is told to wait in the darkness of God without love "For love would be love of the wrong thing". Eliot suggests, I think, that there is an easier stage of love and there is another love, beyond human power, the love of the church. The most enigmatic part of the Quartets, the hospital metaphor of the fourth part of "East Coker" enumerates as many as fourteen paradoxes of faith. (As it is not a crossword puzzle which has to be solved and then forgotten, nor is my approach theological, I will not try to decide whether the wounded surgeon, the dying nurse and the ruined millionaire are three persons or one and the same.) But what is told here in the 17th century metaphysical manner can perhaps be compared to an extract from *The Rock*, written in a direct way, which shall explain it better:

Why should men love the Church? Why should they love her laws?

She tells them of Life and Death, and of all that they would forget.
 She is tender where they would be hard, and hard where they like to be soft.
 She tells them of Evil and Sin, and other unpleasant facts.
 They constantly try to escape
 From the darkness outside and within
 By dreaming of systems so perfect that no one will need to be good.
 But the man that is will shadow
 The man that pretends to be."
 (*The Rock*, VI)

Either fire or fire

Of all the paradoxes or oximorons, it is "the frigid purgatorial fires" with the flame of roses that is the most organic one in the text. Both the rose and the fire have several connotations throughout and they "are one" in the ultimate line. The roses are almost persons with "the look of flowers that are looked at". The rose is the motive of the intensive moment, the love of life and of living things. The burnt roses are associated with the death of air: with the death of hope and despair. And fire, as in Heracleitos, is the arché of the universe and organizes the Quartets. It is present in all the different kinds of light (especially in "Little Gidding", "When the short day is brightest, with frost and fire,/ The brief sun flames the ice, on pond and ditches"), it appears together with the ashes of dead materials in "East Coker" ("old timber to new fires,/ Old fires to ashes"), is there in the dancing of the dead, is destructive in a catastrophic sense, then refining, purgatorial and Pentecostal: the communication of the dead is tongued with fire; the death of water and fire is perhaps the mockery of all human intentions; then there is a war-time meaning of fire, "The dark dove with the flickering tongue"; and there is fire in desire and love, though less explicitly, or more symbolically, when the fire and the rose become one.

Having seen all these aspects of the element, and of course in a somewhat simplified way we can interpret the absurdity in the fourth part of "Little Gidding", "The choice of pyre or pyre -/ To be redeemed from fire by fire". On the one hand there must be the unredeemable, the negative senses of fire: the destructive, the inhuman: the fire of catastrophes, of bombers, the guilty: the fire of sin ("The intolerable shirt of flame") the earthly, the wasted, the imperfect: the fire of desire, (c. f. "love of the wrong thing") - and on the other hand there must be redemption: the divine, refining, purgatorial, Pentecostal fire, which ultimately equals the rose, the fire of Love.

Indifference and liberation

That was a way of putting it

I feel that I had to put down the burden of my reading of the *Four Quartets*. But perhaps this is where I should begin writing. In my end is my beginning.

The poem speaks for itself, it is the reader who needs interpretation. The poem even resists it, especially one that keeps repeating the vanity of "elimination". What else does it resist? "If you do not come too close": you may perceive the whole universe of the text. But this is something you must not want to do - only let happen.

It is the problem of the will then, because I may have simplified and made didactic what was hidden in the texture of the poem, but I was similarly irritated by what I felt a message in it, and perhaps now I shall begin with the ending. I do not like allegory as a device. It is saying one thing instead of another, and not "allowing the inarticulate speak for itself". Or, to correct this statement, I think allegory is too direct in such a complex material. It sticks out. And I have doubts about a conclusion of this kind, when a text is otherwise so rich in material and when its roundness and its structure are able to create an endless universe of its own. I would have appreciated it better if this last line had pointed more into the wholeness of the poem and not out of it. This is too loud. This resembles Beethoven's symphonies more than his quartets.

I have gone on trying, and the dispossession of the self is the point how far I like to follow the voice. The question is, who is deceived. I like the familiar Eliotean voice, his hiding personality, his unmistakable self. A poet does not have to be "confessional" to have a personal tone.

There are sentences that I have possessed ever since I read them in the Quartets. And I possess the experience of reading it over and over. But this world is not my world; mine begins with people. Care. Emotions. Then, of course, values, observance, thought and action. I lack discipline and have other words for prayer. There is the place value for faith, and concepts can be substituted.

I have not spoken about Eliot's love of his country, partly because I am sure there are several things I could have mentioned, and partly because I stressed other aspects of identity. In mine, love of a country also begins with people, "the faces and places". But this is not war-time which would make patriotic feelings stronger.

But something must be wrong with the analysis. When I read the text, its words echo in my mind. When I analyze it, I compare and interpret and feel the difference. How could I distill this from the experience? Or is it perfection of this size that I cannot accept?

Although this universe is endless, its still point, the identity is impregnable ("this dedication is for others to read"). It leaves one with the ambiguity of

attachment, detachment or indifference. But it is liberating as well, makes one identify or differ, or map one's own world.

And there is also the unattended moment of reading: "you are the music while the music lasts. These are only hints and guesses; and the rest" - The rest is different.

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ANNUNCIATION

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD IN T. S. ELIOT'S *FOUR QUARTETS*

In T. S. Eliot's opinion "the poet is occupied with the frontiers of consciousness beyond which words fail."¹ It demands that "the great master of a language should be the great servant of it." This principle "is therefore a constant reminder to the poet, of the obligation to explore, to find words for the inarticulate, to capture those feelings which people can hardly even feel, because they have no words for them; and at the same time, a reminder that the explorer beyond the frontiers of ordinary consciousness will only be able to return and report to his fellow-citizens, if he has all the time a firm grasp upon the realities with which they are already acquainted."² A poet should write with this in his mind, because "every language, to retain its vitality, must perpetually depart and return upon itself; but without the departure there is no return, and the returning is as important as the arrival. We have to return to where we started from, but the journey has altered the starting place: so that the place we left and the place we return to are the same and also different. ... But it is in this way that ... languages ... can be kept alive."³ So

1 Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets* p. 30

2 Eliot, *To Criticize the Critic* pp. 133-134. Agnes Nemes Nagy says: "... a tudott rakétatámaszponttá válik az ismeretlen felé. [And later she goes on with the help of a quotation] '... a lehetséges határait csak egyetlen módon fedezhetjük fel, ha megkockáztatjuk, hogy egy kevéssel túl is haladjunk rajtuk, a lehetetlenbe.'" Nemes Nagy pp. 259 and 276

3 Eliot, "Leçon de Valéry", in: Brett, pp. 108-135.

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
("Little Gidding", 241-244)

Similarly, Eliot argued in 1939 that "a ceaseless care, a passionate and untiring devotion to language, is the first conscious concern of the poet."⁴ Eliot did not conceive this, however, as a focus purely literary. For, to preserve and extend language is also to preserve and extend sensibility. "What we cease to try to find words for, we cease to be able to feel," he said. And he insisted repeatedly "that preoccupation with words which marks the writer as artist ... is at the same time a concern with the exploration of subtleties of thought and feeling."⁵ In preserving and extending the precision of that instrument, Eliot passes on a vehicle capable of subtler thought and finer feeling, leading

Into another intensity
For a further union, a deeper communion.
("East Coker", 207-208)

However,

Words strain,
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
Will not stay still.
("Burnt Norton", 152-156)

The problem is to bring words into an order,⁶ to let them grow into a pattern,⁷ because

Only by the form, the pattern,
Can words or music reach

4 Eliot, "A Commentary: That Poetry Is Made with Words", in: Reibetanz, p. 88.

5 "The Writer as Artist: Discussion between T. S. Eliot and Desmond Hawkins", in: Reibetanz, pp. 88-89.

6 Eliot, *Selected Essays* p. 344. There is a poem, generally known by its first line as title, "Mint a kutya silány házában" (1930), written by Babits that can match this short passage, especially for the shared accumulation, though with its own differences.

7 Verma, p. 54

The stillness ...

("Burnt Norton", 143-145)

Besides this, one of the most conspicuous qualities of the style is the "precision in the use of words."⁸ It is necessary in order to avoid idle talk or "conversations"

so nicely

Restricted to What Precisely

And If and Perhaps and But.

("Five-Finger Exercises", 63-65)

Eliot's point is "that the perpetual compromise with words, the necessity for the vigilant attention to the literal meaning, the association and the sound, has a bearing on the process of development of the original idea. ... But the final work will be another work than that which the author set out to write. ... For the idea behind a poem will always be less than the meaning of the poem: the meaning depends on the musical structure as well as upon the intellectual structure."⁹ This preoccupation takes along the verbal technique of echoing, that is a referential system.¹⁰ This is based on the concept of the *logos* that gets translated (and this means that it is always interpreted) as "reason", "ground" or "relationship",¹¹ the "primordial gathering",¹² the "relation of the one to the other, ... the original collecting collectedness which is in itself permanently dominant."¹³ Because "*logos* as *legomenon* can also signify that which, as something to which one addresses oneself, becomes visible in its relation to something in its 'relatedness', *logos* acquires the signification of relation and relationship."¹⁴ In this way *logos* as ground is the foundation of language,¹⁵ and as such, *logos* is "the only clue for obtaining access to that which authentically is."¹⁶ Based upon these we can say that *logos* is the original Saying and the essence of saying, the Being of beings¹⁷

8 Eliot, *Selected Essays* p. 344

9 Delank quotes from Eliot's "Scylla et Charybde" on p.5.

10 Blamires, p. 3

11 Cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time* p. 55

12 Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking* p. 66

13 Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics* pp. 125 and 128

14 Heidegger, *Being and Time* p. 58

15 Cf. Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics* pp. 167-168

16 Heidegger, *Being and Time* p. 196.

17 Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking* pp. 76-77

which, being "the articulation of intelligibility", "covers things up".¹⁸ "Everything comes to be in accordance with and owing to this logos," because "the logos essentially unfolds as what is common to beings," which means that "to which for the most part they are bound and by which they are thoroughly sustained, [is] the logos."¹⁹

The words are semantic not merely by being referential but by the texture of sound of which they are composed, by the rhythms which any two or three of them must inevitably create, and by the welter of associations which any one word brings from its history as part of the language.²⁰ Or in Eliot's own words: "The music of a word is, so to speak, at a point of intersection: it arises from its relation first to the words immediately preceding and following it, and indefinitely to the rest of its context; and from another relation, that of its immediate meaning in that context to all the other meanings which it has had in other contexts, to its greater or less wealth of association. ... This is an 'allusiveness' ... which is in the nature of words, and which is equally the concern of every kind of poet. ... [A] 'musical poem' is a poem which has a musical pattern of sound and a musical pattern of the secondary meanings of the words which compose it, and that these two patterns are indissoluble and one."²¹ Thus the "auditory imagination" is defined as "the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end."²² It is a case of "conscious and complete appreciation of every word, and in relation to every other word, as it goes by."²³

Eliot discovered his own method in the sermons of Lancelot Andrewes. "He will not hesitate to hammer, to inflect, even to play upon a word for the sake of driving home its meaning;" and "his examination of words terminates in the ecstasy of assent. Andrewes takes a word and derives the world from it; squeezing and squeezing the word until it yields a full juice of meaning which we should

18 Heidegger, *Being and Time* pp. 161-162 and 267-268

19 Heidegger, *On Heraclitus* pp. 13-14, 15 and 48-49

20 Alldritt, p. 22

21 Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets* pp. 32-33

22 Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* pp. 118-119.

23 Eliot, "Marianne Moore", in: Weining, p. X

never have supposed any word to possess."²⁴ And this is what Eliot himself does: shakes

... the tattered arras woven with a silent motto.
("East Coker", 13)

Words move, music moves
Only in time; but that which is only living
Can only die. Words, after speech, reach
Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,
Can words or music reach
The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
Moves perpetually in its stillness.
("Burnt Norton", 140-146)

This section offers a discussion on the craft of poetry itself and introduces the idea that art may achieve an incarnation of the still point, or as the poet says, "reach the stillness" through form. "The word itself, like the note in music, has meaning only in relation to other words. It exists in time and in usage; and since contexts and usages change, the life of a word is a continual death. Yet within a pattern, in a poem, the word's life is preserved almost miraculously by art, in a kind of true life beyond its life in speech; it is there stable, non in itself, but in its relations to all the other words in the poem, which in turn are held to their meaning by their relations to it."²⁵

The paradox of poetry moving in time yet achieving stillness through its total form is compared to the reverse paradox of painting on a Chinese jar caught in stillness but moving perpetually within its stillness. The analogy between music and poetry was to find its way into Eliot's works again. In *The Confidential Clerk* a similar point is made about form when Colby and Sir Claude speak of what their respective arts have meant to them, and Sir Claude says that in pottery he has found

... a world where the form is the reality,
Of which the substantial is only a shadow.
(*The Confidential Clerk*, Act I, 740-741)

²⁴ Eliot, *Selected Essays* pp. 350 and 347-348

²⁵ Gardner, p.7

Only by its form can art reach the stillness; and the form is the reality, while the substantial - the words themselves, the sound of the notes, or the clay of the pot - is finally only the shadow of the reality, for time and death must overtake it. Only by the form can music become more than a succession of sounds and "reach the stillness", or poetry become more than speech and "reach into the silence", beyond time.

The implicit contrast here between sound and silence suggests that silence is the perfection of sound, as stillness is the perfection of motion. In *The Rock* Eliot words this opposition more explicitly. The realm of time

Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;
Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;
Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word.
(Choruses from "The Rock", 8-10)

Motion, speech and words exist only in time and die in time; what they must constantly strive to attain is the condition that escapes time - the stillness, the silence and the Word itself, instead of vanishing motion or action, speech and words. Indeed, to get beyond poetry in this way was one of Eliot's stated ideals: "to write poetry which should be essentially poetry, with nothing poetic about it, poetry standing naked in its bare bones, or poetry so transparent that we should not see the poetry, but that which we are meant to see through the poetry, poetry so transparent that in reading it we are intent on what the poem points at, and not on the poetry; this seems to me the thing to try for. To get beyond poetry, as Beethoven, in his later works, strove to get beyond music. We never succeed, perhaps, but (these words) express to me what I think that the forty or fifty original lines that I have written strive towards."²⁶ It may well be in this sense, it seems to me, that Eliot suggests:

The poetry does not matter.
(*"East Coker"*, 72)

What matters is the reality that words reach, after speech, having shed their substantiality and passed into silence.

Four Quartets seems to strive unrelentingly for perfect transparency, pointing us always beyond the immediate poetic surface to the immeasurable substance it

26 Matthiessen, p. 90

encloses. The poetry does not ultimately matter; what the poetry points at absorbs our awareness, as all words are gathered into the still and silent Word.²⁷ "It is as though the human word were sustained by the absolute word. ... Silence is like a remembrance of that word."²⁸ So Eliot's concern throughout *Four Quartets* is: how we may get beyond the poetry to the stillness and the silence. What is discussed here in "Burnt Norton" essentially as a literary and formal problem, merges with the spiritual task of striving towards the timeless, the stillness and the silence.

... Only by the form, the pattern,
 Can words or music reach
 The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
 Moves perpetually in its stillness.
 Not the stillness of the violin, while the note lasts,
 Not that only, but the co-existence,
 Or say that the end precedes the beginning,
 And the end and the beginning were always there
 Before the beginning and after the end.
 And all is always now.

("Burnt Norton", 143-152)

The stillness is a "co-existence" of all the parts and all the patterns in any one moment, so that the end and the beginning are not in succession but are liberated into an eternal structure where "all is always now". This "co-existence" is achieved when all of the parts are interrelated and united that the unheard music is sounded simultaneously with the heard, at any one point in the succession of particular notes. So with a poem, at any point in the succession of particular words, the whole poem can co-exist and sound in a "complete consort",

... (where every word is at home.
 Taking its place to support the others,
 The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
 An easy commerce of the old and the new,
 The common word exact without vulgarity,
 The formal word precise but not pedantic,
 The complete consort dancing together)

("Little Gidding", 219-225)

²⁷ See notes 11 through 19.

²⁸ Picard, p. 43

Eliot remarked elsewhere about his own experience of music, in terms very much the same as this "co-existence", and it is clear that *Four Quartets* is constructed with this kind of experience in mind: "For music itself may be conceived as striving towards an unattainable timelessness; and if the other art may be thought of as yearning for duration, so music may be thought of as yearning for the stillness of painting or sculpture. I speak as one with no technical training in music, but I find that I enjoy, and 'understand', a piece of music better for knowing it well, simply because I have at any moment during its performance a memory of the part that has preceded and a memory of the part that is still to come. Ideally, I should like to be able to hold the whole of a great symphony in mind at once,"²⁹ as if it were

... the co-existence,

...

And all is always now.

("Burnt Norton", 148 and 152)

Four Quartets is so closely interwoven as to make these words literally true. Certainly there are passages in the poem that in order to explicate, one feels that the very least one should do is repeat the whole poem as commentary. The music of each word exists "at a point of intersection", as Eliot said before.

In *Four Quartets* this kind of allusiveness is pervasive. Eliot has taken a quality he sees generally in the nature of words and has extended it into a poetic method. As we read each passage, we must hear simultaneously with its music the unheard music of all the other passages that harmonize with it; the meaning of each passage is to a large extent the harmony of all the unheard parts with the heard. So, we approach the meaning; the allusiveness of each word to all the others, and each passage to all the others, points to the poem's theme - the unity of all words in the Word, since *logos* can be described as "Being-present-at-hand-together,"³⁰ which means a permanent and revealing presence.³¹ Each experience is seen in the terms of another and the poem constantly returns upon itself as a kind of self-revelation. It is only when we know the poem well enough to be able to hold it in mind all at once, as a "co-existence", that we see its total configuration, from all its angles and in all its details, yet as a still whole. If this is only an ideal,

29 Bush p. 176

30 Heidegger, *Being and Time* p. 201

31 Seidel, p. 90

it is nevertheless an ideal towards which we must strive. Perhaps we are only undefeated because this ideal is essentially unattainable. That is why one never gets tired of the poem; you are constantly discovering new angles you have never seen, and you see old ones as for the first time, because

... here and now cease to matter.
 Old men ought to be explorers
 Here and there does not matter
 We must be still and still moving
 Into another intensity
 For a further union, a deeper communion
 ("East Coker", 203-208)

With ... the voice of this Calling.
 ("Little Gidding", 240)

It is only when we know *Four Quartets* as a "co-existence" where "all" of the poem is always now, when we read each Quartet and hear simultaneously with its music the unheard music of the other three, that we hear the music of four quartets. It is in this sense that the poems are quartets. Obviously, poetry cannot achieve the actual simultaneity of sound that by nature music does; but in a figurative sense, poetry can imitate the simultaneity natural to music, and this is the point of the title, *Four Quartets*. As each of the four poems is read, the unheard music of the other three is sounded in harmony with the heard, and so we have a "co-existence", a quartet. The better you know the poem, the more you will be able to read it as a quartet, rather than as four successive solos. But there are four separate poems, each with its own individual contours. Thus, as we read each poem, the harmony of all four will sound to a unique result each time. The title of the poem is not "A Quartet" but *Four Quartets*, and the paradox of separateness and union is at the heart. Each poem is one of four quartets, unique and separate unto itself, yet each poem is part of four quartets, formal by the "co-existence" of four poems, of the unheard music with the heard, in its vibration between the two aspects, in the stillness of this union with the silent but speaking or spoken Word.³² In this way one poem consumes the others, thus presenting an *opus consummatum*. As none of the poems matters, so there is no poem, there is

32 Cf. Rees

no poetry, but there is nothing, and that is all. This nothing as all emerges like a complete poem, as perfect poetry, but before reaching so far, we were to consume that

The poetry does not matter.
("East Coker", 72)

However, Eliot himself is still left with "the intolerable wrestle / With words and meanings" ("East Coker", 71-72). In this way he turns the poem back upon itself ("to start again"), because

It was not ... what one had expected.
("East Coker", 73)

"The poetry", he starts, "does not matter". What matters is meanings - that words should convey his meaning, that the wrestle with words and meanings should result in words communicating the meaning. Eliot here turns to poetry of direct statement, poetry that turns back upon itself in a ceaseless effort to apprehend and to state its meaning.

If we listen to the undercurrent of rhythm, which is never absent even in the more prosaic passages of *Four Quartets*, lines like these take on a new strength and shape; even within their loose configuration, a pattern is asserted by rhythm, which belies our claims of diffuseness and collapse. What we hear is the predominance of falling rhythms through the use of dactylic and trochaic units. Though the shape of these lines is loose, a pattern is sounded in the pervasive falling rhythms. We may note how masterfully Eliot serves:³³ incorporates and underlines the burden of the intolerable wrestle with words and meanings. Subtly but firmly, Eliot communicates his own feeling of the purifying struggle with words,

Since our concern was speech, and speech impelled us
To purify the dialect of the tribe.
("Little Gidding", 128-129)

Eliot is holding together these "prosaic" lines, conversational and slack as they are, by gently asserting recurring patterns in their rhythm. Whether one

33 Eliot, *To Criticize the Critic* p. 133

hears them consciously or not, they have their effect in shaping these lines into poetry.

/ x x / x / x x / xx \ x / x x
 That was a way of putting it - not very satisfactory.
 ("East Coker", 69)

It is not satisfactory because while the poet ascends, his words fall back.

... Words strain,
 Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
 Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
 Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
 Will not stay still.
 ("Burnt Norton", 152-156)

The Word of the Lord came unto me, saying:
 ...
 I have given you speech, for endless palaver,
 ...
 I have given you lips, to express friendly sentiments,
 ...
 I have given you power of choice, and you only alternate
 Between futile speculation and unconsidered action.
 Many are engaged in writing books and printing them,
 Many desire to see their names in print,
 Many read nothing but the race reports.
 Much is your reading, but not the Word of God ...
 (Choruses from 'The Rock', 180, 186, 188 and 190-195)

In this way,

... The Word in the desert
 Is most attacked by voices of temptation.
 ("Burnt Norton", 158-159)

Human words finally fail. In themselves they cannot attain the awaited transparency and silence. Thus, although it is a style easy to read having a sort of poetic lucidity because the words in it are translucent, but, on the other hand,

these words with their associations have but "a kind of local self-consciousness".³⁴ This is why we found the desired transparency in the simultaneity of music. The failure of our words, when they become silent because of their inefficiency, "tells" us that the essence of our words is beyond human speech. This conclusion becomes incarnate in the tattered, disconnected form of the poem. In the empty spaces between the disconnected parts there is the unheard music, the Word unheard, as if it were a "lyre without strings".³⁵ thus, the unheard music

With ... the voice of this Calling
("Little Gidding", 240)

becomes heard speaking of an unexplainable reality, of a subtler and deeper syntax³⁶ which does

... not spell
Old enchantments.
("Landscapes", III. Usk, 4-5)

In this case it is wise listening to the *logos* of the epigraph. In the fragments of Heraclitus *logos* "is some superior endowment"³⁷ which means something universal, even eternal. "The essence of *logos* ... would offer a clue concerning the divinity,"³⁸ since it is a divine principle, that makes the world a cosmos. For the Stoics the *logos* was the mind of God, guiding, controlling and directing all things. Philo used the *logos* theme in his attempt to bring together the Greek and Hebrew worlds of thought. For Philo God's *logos* gave meaning and plan to the universe. In the later Hermetic literature it was the expression of the mind of God, helping to create and order the World.³⁹

34 Eliot, *Selected Essays* pp. 239-240

35 Hassan, p. 6

36 Steiner. pp. 12-54

37 Heidegger, *Being and Time* p. 74

38 Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking* p. 72

39 Philip Wheelwright, *Heraclitus*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959, rpt. Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1981.; Charles H. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, An edition of the fragments with translation and commentary, London: Cambridge University Press, 1979.; George Thomson, *The First Philosophers*, London: Laurence and Wishart, 1955, rpt. with corrections in 1972.; G. S. Kirk - J. E. Raven - M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, A Critical History with a Selection of Texts, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957, Second Edition 1983.; Gilbert Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, New York: Meridian, 1968.;

In *Four Quartets*, the *logos* of Heraclitus is fused with the Christian understanding of the *Logos* as the divine principle itself, the Word that "in the beginning was with God" and "was God", as St. John declares in the Prologue of his Gospel.⁴⁰ One must remember that the Gospel of John and the above mentioned Hellenistic sources had a common heritage in the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament, and that these parallels can therefore be traced back to Semitic roots, suggesting the activity of the Word at the creation.⁴¹

The Word has a certain dynamic energy and power of its own, and means more than "spoken word" because it covers both speech and deed. When this Word, the "Word of the Lord" came to a particular prophet, the Word challenged the prophet himself; and when he accepted it, the Word impelled him to go forth and give it to others:⁴²

The word of Yahweh was addressed to me, saying,
 ...
 I have appointed you as prophet to the nations.
 ...
 There! I am putting my words into your mouth.

While Hebrew thought did not personify the "word of the Lord", we must remember that in Hebrew outlook a word once spoken had a quasi-substantial existence of its own. The best example can be read in Isaiah 55:11. Using the comparison of the rain and snow coming down from heaven and making the earth fruitful, God says: "So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty. Rather it shall accomplish what I want and prosper in the things for which I sent it." So, we have here the same effective cycle of coming down and ascending that we can see in the Prologue of St. John, which means that the way down and the way up are the same in the case of the Word,

Alexander P. D. Mourelatos, *The Pre-Socratics*, New York: Doubleday, 1974.; Karl Barth, *Witness to the Word*, A Commentary on John 1 (1925, 1933), Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986.; Charles K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to John*, An introduction with commentary and notes on the Greek text, London: SPCK, Second Edition, 1978.; Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, Translated with an introduction and notes by R. E. Brown, Vol. I, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1971.

⁴⁰ John 1: 1

⁴¹ Hebrew *dabar*, Genesis 1, Psalm 33: 6, Wisdom 9: 1.

⁴² Jeremiah 1: 4-8, see also: Hoseah 1: 1, Joel 1: 1, Isaiah 6: 1-13 and 40: 1.

the *logos*, both in the beginning and in the end, at the Creation and the Incarnation.⁴³

The revelation of God in the Word is formulated against a background of God's previous silence. The Epistle to the Hebrews contrasts God's speaking through a Son, with His speaking through the prophets; but we must remember that in Jewish estimation no prophet has spoken in the land for centuries.⁴⁴ In the rabbinic exegesis of Genesis 1:1-3, it was maintained that before God spoke, there was silence. This opinion suggests the hypothesis as if the Prologue of St. John presented God's Word as once more coming forth from the divine silence. Such a picture would appeal to the Hellenistic hymns of "silence", where silence was a mark of the *Deus absconditus*, the Unheard Word, the Unmoving Mover, of whom we can speak only in the "negative way". In the quasi-personification of the divine word in the Wisdom Literature,⁴⁵

When silence lay over all,
and night had run the half of her swift course,
down from the heavens, from the royal throne,
your all-powerful Word leapt
into the heart of a doomed land.

St. Ignatius of Antioch, who seems to offer an early echo of the Johannine thought, speaks of God, "who manifested himself through Jesus Christ, His Son, who is His Word proceeding from silence."⁴⁶ Moreover, he puts a similar stress on the Incarnation wrought in silence.⁴⁷

Eliot felt that even in the pre-Christian Greek philosophy, "there was something inexplicable about *logos* so that it was a participation of man in the

43 The Incarnation is an "end" being Re-Creation compared to the Creation, but at the same time it is also a "beginning" that points towards the Second Coming which will be a New Creation.

And just follow St. Thomas Aquinas: "The first creation of things is by the power of God the Father through the Word. Hence also the second creation ought to be by the power of God the Father through the Word, so that re-creation corresponds to creation." (*The Incarnate Word* 3a. 1-6qs)

44 Psalm 74: 9 says: "There is no longer any prophet."

45 Wisdom 18: 14

46 "[Jézus Krisztus] [Isten] hallgatásból származó Igéje." Letter to the Magnesians 8: 2, in: Vanyó, *Apostoli Atyak* p. 173.

47 "... Mária ... szülése ... Isten csendjében ment végbe." Letter to the Ephesians 19: 1, in: Vanyó, *Apostoli Atyak* p. 170.

divine."⁴⁸ One of the Hellenistic books of the Bible shares and adjusts this notion: "The fountain of wisdom is God's word on high."⁴⁹ St. Thomas Aquinas goes on with that thought and writes that "the Word is the intelligible expression of divine wisdom, and as such is the source of all human wisdom. Man therefore reaches his perfection in wisdom, proper to him as an intelligent being, through a participation in the Word of God."⁵⁰

The *logos* is the wisdom for which Eliot praised Goethe - wisdom that "transcends place and time, and is capable of arousing a direct response as of man to man, in readers of any place and any time," wisdom that is "greater than any sum of wise sayings" and "greater than the actualization of wisdom in any human soul. ... [This] wisdom of a human being resides as much in silence as in speech."⁵¹

However, when we try to speak the "unspoken Word", that is, to articulate the Inarticulate, our articulation becomes inarticulate:

... Words strain,
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
Will not stay still. Shrieking voices
Scolding, mocking, or merely chattering,
Always assail them.

("Burnt Norton", 152-158)

All this happens after the attempt to define the concept of "stillness" by words. However, primordial words, like this one, are precisely the words which cannot be defined, because all definitions have constant recourse to new words,⁵² and as soon as "stillness" is approached in this way, it ceases to exist. That is why that in this passage the language struggles and strains. The "stillness", it seems, eludes the pursuit of words. It is little wonder then really that the poem is so concerned with linguistic inadequacy while struggling to express the ineffable. Every attempt at describing it, the unconditioned, can therefore only be

48 Eliot, *Selected Essays* p. 485

49 It is Ecclesiasticus 1: 5, as it is quoted by Aquinas, p. 113.

50 Aquinas, p. 113

51 Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets* pp. 219 and 221

52 Cf. Rahner, pp. 296-297

... a way of putting it - not very satisfactory:
A periphrastic study ...
("East Coker", lines 69-70)

... a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure.
("East Coker", 177)

According to Eliot this distortion is due to the fact that since Schleiermacher words have changed their meanings and what they have lost is definite.⁵³ It seems then that language exists in fallen finitude. In this way, our "raid on the inarticulate" ("East Coker", 181) ends in failure, and our words hurt the Word:

... The Word in the desert
Is almost attacked by voices of temptation,
The crying shadow in the funeral dance,
The loud lament of the disconsolate chimera.
("Burnt Norton", 158-161)

The origin of distortion and loss is obvious:
The Word of the Lord came unto me, saying:
...
I have given you speech, for endless palaver,
...
I have given you lips, to express friendly sentiments,
...
I have given you power of choice, and you only alternate
Between futile speculation and unconsidered action.
Many are engaged in writing books and printing them,
Many desire to see their names in print,
Many read nothing but the race reports.
Much is your reading, but not the Word of God ...
(Choruses from 'The Rock', 180, 186, 188 and 190-195)

Nevertheless,

There is only the fight to recover what has been lost
And found and lost again and again: and now, under conditions
That seem unpropitious. But perhaps neither gain nor loss.
For us, there is only the trying.
("East Coker", 188-191)

53 Cf. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood* p. 9

It means that owing to the imperfection of our words, Eliot urges us to submit them to the perfection of the *logos*.⁵⁴ For it was the Word that came for restoring the distorted. And because the Word is the exemplar for all creation,⁵⁵

The soul of Man must quicken to creation.

...

Out of the sea of sound the life of music,
Out of the slimy mud of words, out of the sleet and hail of verbal imprecision,
Approximate thoughts and feelings, words that have taken the place of thoughts
and feelings,
There spring the perfect order of speech, and the beauty of incantation.
(Choruses from 'The Rock', 426 and 431-434)

Thus, when our words and speech fail because they become inarticulate and reach into the silence, the process of de-creation starts becoming creative as the unspoken Word itself becomes articulate out of the silence⁵⁶

With ... the voice of this Calling.
("Little Gidding", 240)

The rest is not our business.
("East Coker", 191)

When a poet is directly concerned with the craftsman's problem of the limitations of his medium, then it is sure that for him "humility is the most essential virtue,"⁵⁷ especially when one is still left

... with the intolerable wrestle
With words and meanings
because then he can even say that
The poetry does not matter
("East Coker", 71-72)

since

54 Li, V. P. H., "'The poetry does not matter': 'Four Quartets' and the Rhetoric of Humility" in: Bagchee, p. 81.

55 Aquinas, p. 111

56 In connection with the following allusion in the next line see: *The Cloud of Unknowing*, the beginning of chapter two.

57 T. S. Eliot, "On Poetry", Concord Academy, Concord, Mass., 1947, p. 9., in: Schuchard, R., "'If I think, again, of this place': Eliot, Herbert and the Way to 'Little Gidding'" (Lobb, p. 72).

... the spent word is spent
... the unheard, unspoken
Word is unspoken, unheard.
(*Ash-Wednesday*, 149-151)

Thus, when human words fail and you resign your words for the unspoken one,⁵⁸ in the silence of your words the silence of the unspoken Word gets spoken because now there is

enough silence.
(*Ash-Wednesday*, 160)

In this way,

the Infant, the still unspeaking and unspoken Word
("A Song for Simeon", 22)

grants us consolation announcing itself.
If this is the case, the disembodied

voice of this Calling
("Little Gidding", 240)

draws us to the negative way of illumination.
Although through this silent annunciation

the unspoken word, the Word unheard,
The Word without a word, the Word within
The world and for the world
(*Ash-Wednesday*, 152-154)

is

... given ...
("The Dry Salvages", 206)

it remains a

58 Cf. "Marina", line 31: "Resign ... my speech for that unspoken".

calamitous annunciation
 ("The Dry Salvages", 55)

unless it is

... taken.
 ("The Dry Salvages", 207)

The "unspoken, unheard Word" can only be taken if we are willing to stand on the "ground" where we can get into relation with this "silent Word", with "the voice of this Calling."⁵⁹ Standing on this "ground" ("Little Gidding", 201), the waste land becomes the "significant soil" ("The Dry Salvages", 236) or *humus*,⁶⁰ where renouncing your inefficient words and taking this *logos*, thus surrendering yourself to it

... in a lifetime's death in love,
 Ardour and selflessness
 ("The Dry Salvages", 207-208)

that is showing *humilitas* (humility), you become a "homo `sapiens", a real *human* being, a *zwon logon econ*,⁶¹ because through this process of creative de-creation you can realize that

The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
 Is the wisdom of humility.
 ("East Coker", 98-99)

For most of us it can be hardly realized here and now and this is why we start with a wish:

... Do not let me hear
 Of the wisdom of old men, but rather of their folly,
 Their fear of fear and frenzy, their fear of possession,
 Of belonging to another, or to others, or to God.
 ("East Coker", 94-97)

59 Cf. notes 11 through 19.

60 Cf. Reeves, pp. 118-119. The author writes that our earthly origin includes the inevitability of death and rebirth.

61 Heidegger, *Being and Time* p. 47

From the first jolt of the monosyllables, "Do not let me hear", this cadence gathers force and mounts, with the addition of phrase upon phrase and stress upon stress, to the crowning word of "God", the treasurer of the divine Word. Many devices work to strengthen these lines: the triple repetition of the word "fear" in stressed position and the internal rhyming with the strongly stressed "hear"; the alliteration of the sounds *f* and *r*, which build up again in stressed positions; the repetition of the assonant *o* sound in the final line; and most especially the syntax itself, which extends itself by affirming phrases to phrases through the main series of six *of* constructions and, following that, through a lesser series of three *to* constructions.⁶²

We single out these devices in order to notice them, and to show that they strengthen the power of the word. We are swept along by the movement of the verse and we cannot resist its argument, so closely is the one sustained by the other. Finally we accept the knowledge that

The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless.
(*"East Coker"*, 98-99)

In their simplicity, these lines achieve the quality they speak of. It is a masterful orchestration of sounds, words, tones and rhythms that Eliot affected.

Humility was an attitude that stood at the heart of Eliot's understanding of human conduct, he referred to it again and again in many different contexts. It was for him a universal virtue, yet the one that goes hardest to attain: "Humility is the most difficult of all virtues to achieve; nothing dies harder than the desire to think well of oneself,"⁶³ and he considers pride as the lack of humility.⁶⁴

He was actually aware of the necessity of humility for all poets, and in the following passages he clearly has himself and his own temptations foremost in mind: "I am sure that for a poet humility is the most essential virtue. That means, not to be influenced by the desire of applause, not to be influenced by the desire to excel anybody else, not to be influenced by what your readers expect of you, not to write something merely because it is high time you wrote something, but

62 Concerning stress and music in Eliot's poetry, see: Gardner, Rees, and Reibetanz.

63 Eliot, *Selected Essays* p. 130

64 Cf. Reibetanz, p. 69

to wait patiently, not caring how you compare with other poets, for the impulse which you cannot resist."⁶⁵

... there is yet faith
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
("East Coker", 126-127)

It is in accordance with Eliot's attitude, phrased in a lecture, that words have to wait on the experience which one cannot will.⁶⁶ Eliot even recited a psalm: "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope."⁶⁷ Practically this is a part of his wisdom he has acquired so far. He goes on along this way, saying that "human wisdom ... cannot be separated from divine wisdom⁶⁸ without tending to become merely worldly wisdom, as vain as folly itself ... [and] ... true worldly wisdom leads up to, and fulfilled in, and is incomplete without, other-worldly wisdom."⁶⁹ So,

... I am repeating
Something I have said before. I shall say it again.
Shall I say it again? In order to arrive there,
To arrive where you are, to get from where you are not
You must go by a way wherein there is no ecstasy.
In order to arrive at what you do not know
You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.
In order to possess what you do not possess
You must go by the way of dispossession.
In order to arrive at what you are not
You must go through the way in which you are not.
And what you do not know is the only thing you know
And what you own is what you do not own
And where you are is where you are not.
("East Coker", 135-148)

Eliot "proceeds by rejection and elimination."⁷⁰ This negative way leads to the conviction that

65 Eliot, "On Poetry" in: Reibetanz. p. 70.

66 Eliot, "The Bible as Scripture and as Literature", an unpublished address in King's Chapel, Boston, on 1 December 1932. Cf. Gordon, pp. 37 and 290.

67 Gordon, p. 39

68 Cf. notes 37, 38 and 48 through 50.

69 Eliot, *The Idea of Christian Society* pp. 118 and 120

70 Eliot, *Selected Essays* p. 408

the way up is the way down, the way forward is the way back.
("The Dry Salvages", 130)

This is based on Heraclitus, and the other Heraclitean fragment that Eliot quotes also suggests the need to divest ourselves of the wordly *logoi* by which we live for that *Logos* that transcends and encompasses them all. What Eliot has attained through this way is a proper sense of his limits.

... There is, it seems to us,
At best, only a limited value
In the knowledge derived from experience.
The knowledge imposes a pattern, and falsifies,
For the pattern is new in every moment
And every moment is a new and shocking
Valuation of all we have been.
("East Coker", 82-88)

This allusion to his dissertation about *Knowledge and Experience* contours his scepticism concerning the possibility of knowledge, that limits our scope. The other possibility is put this way:

The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless.
("East Coker", 98-99)

In this way humility, the acceptance of limitations, enables us to go beyond limitation: Knowledge is limited, but humility is endless.⁷¹

Indeed, humility and a trust in God were at the basis of his understanding of the Christian life: "We must be sure that we are relying on God, and not merely clothing still one more ambitious human scheme in the vestments of Christianity. Without humility, submission and love, nothing is possible."⁷² "Only in humility, charity and purity - and most of all perhaps humility - can we be prepared to receive the grace of God without which human operations are vain."⁷³

"Humility" occurs with emphasis. It is the folly of men and their fear of possession that will not let them belong to other human beings and to be related

71 Lobb, E., "Limitation and Transcendence in 'East Coker'" (Lobb, p. 26)

72 Eliot, "Towards a Christian Britain", in: Reibetanz, p. 70.

73 Eliot, *The Idea of Christian Society* p. 96

to God who is the source of the Word. The fear of admitting fear and of surrendering to something greater and other than ourselves is present also in *The Waste Land*, lines 403-405:

The awful daring of a moment's surrender
Which an age of prudence can never retract
By this, and this only, we have existed.

The only wisdom is to acknowledge the finitude and our dependence on Him and the Word, this is the wisdom of humility, and that wisdom is endless.

It is an enormous burden Eliot places on the poet, a burden only to be borne by "strength and submission"; strength, that is in mastering the language to the fullest; submission, in accepting the discipline inherent in the language itself. Yet, in the end, success and failure are themselves beyond calculation and intent. The only resolution of the poet's private agony, as he contemplates his own insufficiency, lies in the faith that he is only undefeated because he has gone on trying:

For most of us, this is the aim
Never to be realised;
Who are only undefeated
Because we have gone on trying;
We, content at the last
If our temporal reversion nourish
...
The life of significant soil.
(*"The Dry Salvages"*, 229-234 and 236)

Thus, we turn to the only wisdom we can hope to acquire, the wisdom of humility. It is in the spirit of humility that our words rise into a new beginning. It is in the acceptance of the wisdom of humility, the knowledge that

For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business,
(*"East Coker"*, 191)

that we rediscover

... the motive of action
(*"East Coker"*, 110)

which was hitherto "lost"; and this is what makes a new beginning possible. The final words of "East Coker" reverse the opening words, and that which was spoken in despair

In my beginning is my end
("East Coker", 1)

now, in the process of creative de-creation, is spoken in hope

In my end is my beginning.
("East Coker", 211)

At the same time we must realize that the poet is now beyond hope and despair, beyond caring about his beginning and his end: this is the point of

The death of hope and despair.
("Little Gidding", 62)

Humility regards neither beginnings nor ends; the trying never ceases. This is the lesson of Krishna:

(And the time of death is every moment).
("The Dry Salvages", 160)

So the poet launches into a dimension beyond poetry whose words move in time, the poet launches into a dimension beyond time and the succession of beginnings and ends. Something of its nature is suggested by the mysterious and insistent phrase: the poet launches

Into another intensity
For a further union, a deeper communion.
("East Coker", 207-208)

Although Eliot's Christian orthodoxy prevents him from accepting completely the cardinal truth of the efficaciousness of human effort for union with Brahman, his reference to *Bhagavad Gita* are by no means half-hearted. Eliot's firsthand and thorough knowledge of the *Gita* is clearly evidenced by his statement that it is "the next great philosophical poem to the 'Divine Comedy'"

within his experience.⁷⁴ The idea of redemption through grace is as central to the teachings of Krishna as it is to Christianity. The *Gita* recommends total surrender to God as the means to win his grace. Krishna advises Arjuna to follow the way of total self-surrender for winning his grace. Obviously, Eliot's repeated emphasis on humility in *Four Quartets* is common to both Christianity and Hinduism, and the efficaciousness of human effort is to be found as much in the form of total surrender to God as in that of perfect knowledge and detached action.⁷⁵ Thus, the only reality can be attained by following the way of negation,⁷⁶

... in a lifetime's death in love,
 Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.
 ("The Dry Salvages", 207-208)

According to the negative way only a complete renunciation of what we are can convert us to the new life. The ultimate renunciation is death. Death, for Eliot, is the end which authenticates the meaning of human existence. "What faith in life may be I know not ... [but] ... faith in death what matters."⁷⁷

Whatever we inherit from the fortunate
 We have taken from the defeated
 What they had to leave us - a symbol:
 A symbol perfected in death.
 ("Little Gidding", 194-197)

This faith in death is manifested as a realisation that we only truly begin from the end:

What we call the beginning is often the end
 And to make an end is to make a beginning.
 The end is where we start from.
 ("Little Gidding", 216-218)

Death is seen as the end towards which we submit our being for judgement and from which our lives are measured as limited, incomplete, not yet real. But although an end that has yet to be reached, death nevertheless accompanies all our

74 Eliot, *Selected Essays* p. 258

75 Srivastava, pp. 98-99

76 Srivastava, p. 107

77 Eliot wrote it in *The Criterion*, quoted in: Moody, p. 161.

acts. Its present and not yet present nature is expressed by the parenthetical isolation:

(And the time of death is every moment)
("The Dry Salvages", 160)

Such an end carries the double meaning of conclusion and purpose expressed by

The tolling bell
...
And the ground swell, that is and was from the beginning,
Clangs
The bell.
("The Dry Salvages", 36 and 47-49)

With the reminiscence of the doxology⁷⁸ the "bell" sounds a warning and a summons: it demands a response. Like the "tolling bell" it reminds us of our bell and calls us to die daily.⁷⁹ It is a "calamitous annunciation",⁸⁰ "clamour", which announces not a "destination" but only an "addition", that is "Death".

Where is there an end of it, the soundless wailing,
The silent withering of autumn flowers
Dropping their petals and remaining motionless;
Where is there an end to the drifting wreckage,
The prayer of the bone on the beach, the unprayable
Prayer at the calamitous annunciation?
...
There is no end of it, the voiceless wailing,
No end to the withering of withered flowers,
To the movement of pain that is painless and motionless
To the drift of the sea and the drifting wreckage,
The bone's prayer to Death its God. Only the hardly, barely prayable
Prayer of the one Annunciation.
("The Dry Salvages", 50-55 and 80-85)

78 Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, amen.

79 Gardner, pp. 171-172

80 Headings (p. 170) calls our attention to Genesis 3: 16-19 where man's death is announced.

Turning for a moment to the metrical form of the poetry, you can see that the verse follows the norm of four stresses per line; this rhythm prevails throughout the lyric. In the opening lines the four-stress rhythm is noticeably smooth and very slowly paced, partly because unstressed syllables are literally interspersed between major stresses, and also because smooth consonants, like *w*, *n*, *m*, *l*, *r* and *s* prevail. The languid pace extends throughout the lyric, and its effect is enhanced by Eliot's use of the form of a modified sestina. A sestina is normally a poem of six six-line stanzas, each stanza repeating the rhyme words of the first but arranging them in a different order.⁸¹ Eliot has modified this form considerably. He does not repeat the six original end words in each succeeding stanza; he uses other rhymes in stanzas two through five, and returns to the original set of rhyme words only in the last stanza. But this allows him to preserve the original order in his rhymes, and thus he gains the effect of "repetition without progression, a wave-like rise and fall."⁸² As the rhymes recur in the same order in stanza after stanza, the ever-repeating sound advances apparently nowhere. All the same, it arrives at the state of a complete poem.

It is in this context that you can see the effects of the particular rhymes Eliot has chosen. Most of the rhymes are feminine, and whereas feminine rhymes usually add a lighter touch to verse, here their preponderance throughout the sestina tends to have the opposite effect. They are all long words, many with three or five syllables, and they add a languid quality to the already slow paced rhythm. As rhyme normally adds emphasis to the end of verse lines, so here by punctuating his lines with polysyllabic words, conspicuous too in their suffixal endings, Eliot has given special weight to the end of each line. The result is to underscore the effect of "repetition without progression, a wave-like rise and fall," with the feeling of annihilation.

Against this concentration of blankness Eliot sets a single reality, defined simply as a "prayable" prayer of the annunciation. Here is a new possibility; indeed, it is the only possibility, some progression at last. What is left to set against death and the

... unprayable
Prayer at the calamitous annunciation
is nothing else

81 The sestina was the invention of Daniel Arnault. Cf. Moody, p. 226

82 Gardner, p. 38

... Only the hardly, barely prayable
Prayer of the one Annunciation.
("The Dry Salvages", 54-55 and 84-85)

The shift in typography from lower to upper case conveys a meaningful change. This Annunciation is unique. The former word, annunciation, is a common noun. The final Annunciation means a theological event that calls to mind the new beginning in a sacred context. This Annunciation implies a reinstatement of that promise, that calling, that fulfilment of the word as Word which founds discourse. This calling is not the result of avoiding or denying the negative way, but a result of following it rigorously as far as it will go.⁸³

The answer to this change is: "Be it unto me according to Thy word."⁸⁴ These are Mary's words of humility to the angel Gabriel, spoken upon the annunciation of the coming Christ, the Word of God. These words express the acquiescence of man's will in God's, which has been central to *Four Quartets* since its beginning:

What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.
("Burnt Norton", 9-10)

They meet in the one Annunciation.
Previously, Eliot spoke of our

... fear of possession,
Of belonging to another, or to other, or to God.
("East Coker", 96-97)

This is the fear we must struggle to overcome, as in *Ash-Wednesday* the speaker struggled to be able to say finally,⁸⁵

Our peace in His will.
(*Ash-Wednesday*, 214)

⁸³ The process is exactly similar to Dante's descent into Hell, which proves, without change of direction, to have been the whole time an ascent towards Purgatory as the other pole of the world as well. So, "the way down is the way up."

⁸⁴ Luke 1: 38. It is interesting to learn that Arjuna's last words to Krishna are nearly identical to those of Mary's: "Thy will be done" (*Bhagavad Gita*, XVIII, 73.), quoted in Naik, p. 44.

⁸⁵ Eliot translates, digests, consumes and assimilates Dante's words: *la sua voluntate e nostra pace* Cf. *Selected Essays* p. 265.

The prayer of the one Annunciation is the only prayable prayer, but Eliot does not say it is an easy prayer. It is "hardly, barely / Prayable", perhaps possible to us only for a moment, when the speaker of the bone's unprayable prayer to death becomes unbearably real to us. For some readers at least, this sestina succeeds in making that speaker real enough; and for that moment, reader and poet acquiesce in the prayer of the one Annunciation.

The moment of the one Annunciation is the moment which bisects time, investing it with the essence of the eternal.⁸⁶

... But to apprehend
 The point of intersection of the timeless
 With time, is an occupation for the saint -
 No occupation either, but something given
 And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,
 Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.
 ("The Dry Salvages", 203-208)

These words are not lightly announced and should not be lightly taken. Each of them contains a world of meaning and a world of sacrifice, which most of us will never apprehend. The kind of discipline and selflessness Eliot means here, involved in "a lifetime's death in love", is not something we can understand easily. The problem is one that occupied Eliot's thoughts deeply, as the following comment indicates: "I found no discipline in humanism; only a little intellectual discipline from a little study of philosophy. But the difficult discipline is the discipline of emotion; this the modern world has great need of; so great that it hardly understands what the word means; and this, I have found, is only attainable through dogmatic religion. ... There is much chatter about mysticism: for the modern world the word means some spattering indulgence of emotion, instead of the most terrible concentration and asceticism. But it takes perhaps a lifetime merely to realize that men like the forest sages, and the desert sages, and finally the Victorines and John of the Cross ... really mean what they say. Only those have the right to talk of discipline who have looked into the abyss."⁸⁷

The most exemplary person who was able to apprehend the "point of intersection", is the "Lady of silences" in *Ash-Wednesday*, who as Our Lady of the Annunciation, through her renunciation of her will and words surrendered

⁸⁶ Verma, p. 112

⁸⁷ Eliot, "Religion without Humanism", in: Reibetanz, pp. 130-131.

herself to the Will and made assent to the Word. Thus, choosing silence in humility, through the process of creative de-creation, the silent, unheard, unspoken Word became spoken and heard.

The Blessed Virgin's central role in a poem whose subject is the need for obedient submission before the great annunciations which impose costly demands upon men and women, is obvious and appropriate. The figure of the Virgin Mary is before us as the one whose Annunciation is the pattern of all human vocations to self-sacrifice, whose obedient and humble response should be the pattern of all human responses to vocational demands.⁸⁸

The poet submits himself, as Mary submitted herself, to the

... hardly, barely prayable
Prayer of the one Annunciation.

That is, "Be it unto me according to Thy word", and the word is indeed brought to life:

So I find words I never thought to speak.
("Little Gidding", 125)

We may now recall that even to achieve communication with the compound ghost of the poetic masters the poet had to submerge his individual personality, becoming

Both intimate and unidentifiable.
("Little Gidding", 98)

He had to communicate with the collective dead in the voice of one whose personality had accepted a voluntary death,⁸⁹

... a lifetime's death in love
Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.
("The Dry Salvages", 207-208)

This is possible only

⁸⁸ Blamires, pp. 109 and 115

⁸⁹ Blamires, p. 175

With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling.
("Little Gidding", 240)

By placing the call to renunciation in a new context, Eliot shifts its meaning. It now requires a renewed exploration whose goal is known; the Calling is to the goal rather than to a single way.⁹⁰

With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling

the individual is not annihilated, though transformed, or rather transfigured. It remains a distinct entity though permeated through and through with the divine substance⁹¹, realized in Incarnation:⁹² in the communion with the Word.

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⁹¹ See again notes 37, 38 and 48 through 50.

⁹² Zaehner, p. 29

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Orsolya Frank:

EPISTEMOLOGY AND EXISTENTIAL THOUGHT IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S MATURE NOVELS¹

Virginia Woolf is usually seen as a sophisticated upper middle class lady writer whose work is ethereal, poetic and highly detached, either beautiful or irritating, but in any case bearing little real relevance to the world at large as a social, political, constructive unit. What it was that still made her work part of the institutional canon is never really easy to understand against the background of such a general evaluation. Whatever relevance her work still has to real life is supposed to be either of an autobiographical or of a feminist nature, whatever novelty it brings to literature to be merely stylistic. She may have contributed to the reinvigoration of the novel form within the High Modernist movement but in fact little of the general philosophical application of that shift in literary paradigm is projected back into readings of her novels. In other words, the idea that Woolf's works be read as texts with a serious philosophical purport has only rarely emerged. This is partly due to the traditional divide between literature and philosophy in the Anglo-Saxon academic tradition and partly to the fact that Woolf's philosophical thought is not overt or professional, it does not use jargon, and her philosophical bearing is fundamentally non-English or anti-English.

One of the few indications that a philosophical reading or re-reading might be justified and necessary, came from a 1974 essay by Tony Inglis, called *Virginia Woolf and English culture* which Rachel Bolwby still found necessary to reprint in

¹ This is the revised text of a lecture given at the Department of the Philosophy of Science, Sorbonne University, Paris, in February 1995.

the early 1990's.² Inglis sees European Modernism as basically an epistemological paradigm and highlights Woolf's weighty part in the philosophical statements that this movement made. In his lecture, which was, characteristically, addressed to a French audience, Inglis states that the reason for the insufficient philosophical evaluation of Woolf's work results from the nature of English culture itself, particularly its traditional insularity.

Another indication came from Michele Barrett's introductory essay to her edition of Woolf's *Essays, Assessments and Arguments*.³ Here the sociologist Barrett analyses Woolf's stance within the feminist movement as part of a wider, coherent body of philosophical as well as social thought that Woolf developed in her novels and non-fictional writings.

The focus of my examination in this paper is on Woolf's ideas concerning the position and prospects of knowledge and understanding within the wider ontological pattern, as they develop in three of her mature novels, *To the Lighthouse*⁴, *The Waves*⁵ and *Between the Acts*⁶. The interpreter's situation and the status of the following statements is especially difficult since we are discussing a body of work which on the one hand clearly warrants a philosophical reading but on the other does not rely on concrete points of reference, names, forces or schools within the philosophical profession. It is part of Woolf's mastery to protect the novel from any generic, stylistic or other aesthetical violation and yet to contain finely elaborated abstract ideas. But this also presents an abyss between text and reading over which the interpretative process becomes the walking of a tightrope. I walk it in the conviction that tightropes inevitably lead somewhere, from one firm endpoint to another.

Further caution follows from Eliot's statement, that "Poetry is not a substitute for philosophy".⁷ I am hoping to do more than just comply with this: I am hoping to show that the valorization of dilettantism, of literature's own specific vision as opposed to philosophy's as it happens in *To the Lighthouse*

2 Tony Inglis: "Virginia Woolf and English Culture," in *Virginia Woolf*, ed. Rachel Bowlby (London: Penguin, 1993), pp. 46-60.

3 *Virginia Woolf on Women and Writing: Her Essays, Assessments and Arguments*, Selected and introduced by Michele Barrett (London: The Woman's Press Ltd., 1979), pp. 1-39.

4 Virginia Woolf: *To the Lighthouse*. 1927; (rpt. London: Granada, 1977)

5 Virginia Woolf: *The Waves*. 1931; rpt. London: The Hogarth Press, 1963

6 Virginia Woolf: *Between the Acts*. 1941; rpt Oxford: OUP, 1992

7 T. S. Eliot: "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca" 1927; rpt. in T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934), p. 137.

contains a meaningful warning addressed at professional philosophy in the form of anxious reflection coming from outside.

Virginia Woolf herself never studied philosophy, in fact she never went to school at all. All she ever learnt was to read and to write. Mrs Ramsay, the main female character in *To the Lighthouse*, also carries that ostentatious ignorance which is a strong motif in all of Woolf's novels. Her husband, Mr Ramsay, on the contrary, is not only a learned man but a philosopher, a professional and institutional philosopher, with all the necessary props, lectures, disciples, a career to consider and with an aura respected by all around him: he is the man whose task is philosophy. In the very set-up of the situation an opposition of knowledge and ignorance is stated which should make the reader suspicious.

The opposing dispositions of wife and husband reveal themselves very well in a close reading of the first one and a half pages of the novel. In a germinal form Woolf contrasts here two understandings of language, and two corresponding concepts of truth. From this little section it emerges that Mr Ramsay is an uncompromising champion of what he holds to be true. But his truth is one that does not accommodate metaphor, symbolic speech or exaggeration. His love of truth drives him always to clarify and simplify, he refuses to see the world as a context where everything carries a multitude of meanings, where languages and viewpoints build up into overlapping networks of significances. He refuses to understand what statements, gestures, tones connote. To him words mean their direct and first meaning and nothing else. He has no ear, for example, for the changes of meaning that take place while a sentence reaches from a mother's mouth to a little son's ear:

James Ramsay, sitting on the floor cutting out pictures from the illustrated catalogue of the Army and Navy Stores, endowed the picture of a refrigerator, as his mother spoke, with heavenly bliss. It was fringed with joy. The wheelbarrow, the lawn-mower, the sound of poplar trees, leaves whitening before rain, rooks cawing, brooms knocking, dresses rustling - all these were so coloured and distinguished in his mind that he had already his private code, his secret language, though he appeared the image of stark and uncompromising severity ...

(p. 9.)

Mr Ramsay is "incapable of untruth", and although he is proud of this, to Woolf this inability *means* inability, and untruth means a whole lot more than lying. Mr Ramsay's preoccupation with truth blinds him to the fact that *reality* is

built up of equal parts of truth and untruth and prevents him from examining his own notion of truth and recognizing the significance of the various forms of 'untruth'. His moral stricture springs from the same source as his tyrannical insensitivity and his everyday ineptitude, his existential inadequacy: from the need to reduce the complexity of life around him to handleable formulae. His aim is to schematise and regularise the chaos and complexity around him for practical purposes. The Faustian impulse of his science-based philosophy reveals itself when we notice that his abstractions and categorizations aim at conquering and subjugating things rather than gaining a genuine knowledge of them.

The critique he evokes seems to echo certain aspects of Nietzsche's criticism of the preceding tradition of Western philosophy. By referring to Nietzsche we have started a practice that we shall follow throughout the essay: that of naming points of reference in order to outline something like a philosophical *hinterland* to Woolf's ideas. This tentative treatment is invited by the sensitive interpretative situation that Woolf's novels engender. We cannot name concrete influences on the author, but we certainly pin down our reading with a set of associations from the history of philosophy that are evoked by and stand in timeless conversation with the ideas that are present in Woolf's own work.

The notions of truth and language outlined in the first passage of *To the Lighthouse* are extended in the further course of the novel. Woolf uses a set of emblems or trademarks which identify Mr Ramsay's philosophical affiliations. These sporadic instances are the closest she ever comes to revealing acquaintance with philosophical terminology. These references are accurate and well-placed in the overall philosophical network of the novel. The trademarks, dispersed through various parts of the novel are the following: the image of a table "when you're not there" (p. 26.), the subject-object relation (p. 26.), and a description of the way in which Mr Ramsay's mind works: like the keys on a piano or the sequence of the letters of the alphabet (pp. 35-36). The alphabet becomes the decisive image: its letters are the stages of a linear progress through which, step by tortuous step, human thought is working itself toward a definite end. If human thought, ruminates Mr Ramsay, has reached the letter P, and he were to contribute the letter Q, he would become famous and everlasting.

Woolf's terms of definition are loose enough to bring under scrutiny a whole wide tradition of European post-Cartesian or post-Baconian professional philosophy: the tradition that has created that loose popular notion of philosophy which lives in Mrs Ramsay's mind. This naive vision of the

philosophical enterprise and of the figure of the philosopher becomes the narratorial standpoint and the source of wisdom alternative to Mr Ramsay's. This choice of narratorial standpoint, too, smacks of irony from the first: and if it is ironical a reason must be sought for that position.

Woolf does not state whether the facts Mr Ramsay works with are speculative or empirical. We do not know whether his alphabetical or keyboard linearity is a series of inductive or deductive steps. But we do get a clear idea of *method*, in the sense in which both the above mentioned founding fathers of modern European philosophy used it. This is the notion of method which became an unquestioned assumption for European philosophy down to Husserl. Yet, before Husserl was ever born, Nietzsche dealt it such a blow of criticism, which discredited far ahead any unexamined use of the notion of method in philosophy. Nietzsche's critique, as wide as Woolf's if obviously more rigorous, was based on identifying the underlying epistemological and ontological assumptions of an entire tradition, nor was he the last one to identify a vast period of philosophy by its obsession with truth and with method.

The methodical phase of philosophy assumed, in broad terms, that the philosopher's first task was to construct an appropriate method for the search for truth, and then to follow it step by step without going wrong and, if this was successful, finally to access, possess and present the truth. Whether method as such was or was not the way to truth, whether the world itself also followed a method or not, whether we were indeed looking for truth or were doing something totally different, whether truth existed and finally to what end we wanted it, remained unasked questions. What Nietzsche started was not only the asking of these questions but a practice of asking always behind and beyond the intended statement, pushing through to the underlying assumption, the hind thought, the intellectual motivation: he planted the seed which grew up into branches as varied as deconstruction and hermeneutics.

The problem of method can be translated into a question about what we regard as philosophy and what we expect from philosophy. Mr Ramsay's stance seems nearer to the self-identification of 17th c. natural philosophy. It evokes a mathematical, scientific direction of questioning rather than any other. The ideal of method is itself quasi-mathematical: the corrects steps are steps of reduction leading through clearly defined stages to one or two simple figures which can be called the end result. The language of this tradition consists in processes of definition, categorization, reductions and transformations. It inevitably leads to

excluding, omitting or negating things which do not conform to the formula. The perpetual discrepancy between theory and practice is seen as a necessity for achieving the truth. In Bacon's view, for example, these irrelevancies amount to four major groups - the four types of idols, of irrational factors - which cover just about all of our human predicaments, from myth structures, through upbringing and social background, popular prejudices and figures of speech, to the very errors of philosophical reasoning. Only if we eliminate the effect of all these from our thought, can it be called clear thinking. This, however, is only possible in mathematics, logic, and perhaps in the natural sciences and it definitely prevents thought *about* these fallacies, about myth, about dreams, about socialization.

Descartes, too, comes in the *Regulae* to conceive of method as a way of reducing all problems to a comparison of a pair of proportions and, since he also managed to create the link between algebra and geometry, his initial existential impulse thus boils down to the comparison of two quadrangles. I need not point out just how much of the potential scope of philosophical questioning is excluded by an approach which, however badly I exaggerate, carries this kind of idea of truth and method.

Even if Woolf's work is given no more credit than a mere philosophical *mise en scène*, she seems to have felt that philosophy, as practised by the Mr Ramsays of professional philosophy, has turned thought into something detached from its original concern, human life. This has gone so far that even this observation or claim can only be made when clothed in the figure of a supposedly silly and uneducated woman. Mrs Ramsay sees what her husband is doing and makes her simple interjections of 'yes but', which are on the level of 'yes, but what of the poor?' 'what about suffering'? She thinks about her husband's personality, why he does what he does, how it fits in with the economy of his self-esteem, self-image, and what are the balances that enable him to pursue his obsession? It appears to her that philosophy has made thinking absurdly specialised and incommunicable, so much so that her children only have the strangest and vaguest notions of what their father actually does for a living. The figure of the philosopher, too seems to have become a clown: no one could be further from love of wisdom, original questioning and a desire for an understanding of existence in its depth, than this indulged and self-indulgent eccentric whose only endearing feature is that he instinctively admits his wife's superior understanding of the 'practical' things of life. Her questions are awkward, dilettante, and take no notice of boundaries between areas of thought. He, who is disciplined, trained

and truthful accepts all the basic rules of his trade without questioning, most importantly the vision of truth for which he has to search. In this he presages Percival of *The Waves*: the original Percival of the Arthur legends on whom he is based is called upon to go and look for the Holy Grail: he proves willing to die in the act, rather than ask questions about it. Through him the virtue of unquestioning loyalty as a traditional asset of hero-worship is put in a suspicious light. Mr Ramsay's idea of truth is very similar to Percival's vision of the Grail: they are both looking for a solid object which will make itself accessible at the end of a quest, a road or path, on condition that the hero takes the correct steps and does not go astray. Both of them believe that this truth exists as a solid, single, static entity, waiting for them to be found and possessed and, like a commodity, to be traded for fame or wealth or freedom from suffering.

In a passage in the middle part of *To the Lighthouse* Woolf summarises her view according to which this urge to search for order, perfection and finality is an illusion, the result of a human drive which lacks a metaphysical correlative:

In those mirrors, the minds of men, in those pools of uneasy water, in which clouds for ever turn and shadows form, dreams persisted, and it was impossible to resist the strange intimation which every gull, flower, tree, man and woman, and the white earth itself seemed to declare (but if questioned at once to withdraw) that good triumphs, happiness prevails, order rules; or to resist the extraordinary stimulus to range hither and thither in search of some absolute good, some crystal of intensity, remote from the known pleasures and familiar virtues, something alien to the processes of domestic life, single, hard, bright, like a diamond in the sand, which would render the possessor secure.

(p. 123.)

Mrs Ramsay's discontents and anxieties with regard to her husband have all these insights lurking in the background. Her criticism is not systematic or outspoken, it manifests itself in moods and ponderings filled with angst and concern. Yet as Mrs Ramsay's discourse develops, we sense more and more clearly a point of view, a set of values and questions specific to her, and potentially capable of challenging those of her husband. Her thinking, clearly favoured from a narrative point of view, is based on inclusion, expansion, the revision of boundaries between the true and the untrue, the philosophical and the domestic, the serious and the trivial. Through the vehicle of these epistemological insights

inherent in Mrs Ramsay's soliloquies, Woolf re-presents and re-announces an old and long-lost claim on philosophy, that of an engagement with human life.

The language of Mrs Ramsay's internal monologues is essentially different from the language used in relation to Mr Ramsay. Her entire predisposition is symbolic, she talks in a variety of ways which her husband considers untruthful. Her language requires interpretation and is itself always an act of interpretation. We need to recall the way in which the first sentence of the novel spread out into a whole fan of significances and distortions in James' mind. This idea is played out more explicitly in a passage about fifty pages later, in which Mrs Ramsay tells her daughter Cam to go and ask the cook whether their guests had returned from their walk:

... she had to repeat the message twice - ask Mildred if Andrew, Miss Doyle, and Mr Raley have come back? - The words seemed to be dropped into a well, where, if the waters were clear, they were also so extraordinarily distorting that, even as they descended, one saw them twisting about to make Heaven knows what pattern on the floor of the child's mind. What message would Cam give the cook? Mrs Ramsay wondered. And indeed it was only by waiting patiently, and hearing that there was an old woman in the kitchen with very red cheeks, drinking soup out of a basin, that Mrs Ramsay at last prompted the parrot-like instinct which had picked up Mildred's words quite accurately and could now produce them, if one waited, in a colourless singsong. Shifting from foot to foot, Cam repeated the words, 'No they haven't, and I've told Ellen to clear away tea'.

(pp. 53-54)

The importance of the residual, trivial, connoted elements is emphasised in more direct relation to philosophy in the example of the kitchen table. Lily Briscoe has asked James about his father's work. In answer to her question she is told to imagine something like a Platonic idea of a table. But the only thing she can conjure up in her mind is an image similar to Heidegger's poetical phenomenological description of the pair of peasant shoes in *The Origin of the Work of Art*: a particular kitchen table which at the same time contains its entire milieu, its history, its significance.

The repetition of this motif shows a fascination with the gap between abstraction and concretion. It suggests that there is no such thing as a pure fact or a pure statement without an added richness of connotations resulting from context, personality, memory. It is not possible to see something as if you were

not seeing it or to have a thought as if it was not thought by a particular 'you'. In Mrs Ramsay's world there is no sterile reduction to formulae, no separation between what is relevant and what is only the trivial debris of concrete life. Her vision is of something uncontainably rich, mobile, and endless. Her knowledge is a constant interpretation.

The point of view born out by Mrs Ramsay's questions and language is that of concrete existential reality. Her unanswered questions are so many embarrassments to the philosopher. In interpreting the lives and characters, the hopes, efforts and destiny of the people around her she constantly addresses life with direct questions which Mr Ramsay would say you cannot ask in philosophy. Even while she is serving mutton she ponders - to the great dismay of some critics - about the meaning of life. She has a definite vision of life in its finitude and in its returning qualities, features and structures: marriage, family, work, trouble and hardship, pain, loneliness, fear, courage. Her vision is framed by a horizon of death and contingency and the fallibility of reason in the face of them. These, too, Mrs Ramsay wants to make the objects of thinking. Her thought focuses on the trivial and through the trivial ascends to the ultimate beyond.

If her husband finds her questions wrong and sees no connection between them and his own profession, this is due to a long-standing division that the preoccupation with method had created in matters of thought. Phenomena are of two sorts: some are and others are not the stuff of philosophy. This separation had worked with amazing perseverance and Woolf seems to have felt that almost the whole of thinking about ourselves, all the 'women's thoughts' about why we live, how we live and what could we do to 'live differently', in other words all the existential questioning has been declared not the stuff of philosophy. There does not exist a language, she seems to claim, in which these questions can be seriously asked, there is not a scene in which this existential thinking could take place with any authority.

By pointing out this division in thought and gendering the two approaches as she does, Woolf also pioneered one of the most significant theoretical achievements of later feminist writing, namely, the need to break down the barrier in question, and thus make the trivial, the domestic, the private and the bodily accessible to theoretical reflection. This thought remained dominant throughout her thinking and was to assume a further dimension of significance in *Between the Acts* and in *Three Guineas*, two works which we will mention later.

It seems necessary that the sort of reflection on the project of professional philosophy contained in *To the Lighthouse* should come from outside of philosophy, that it should be tentatively made and clothed in an attitude of dilettantism and an ironic use of stereotyped female ignorance. Yet, as we have shown, it was carried through on the level of the epistemological implications of narrative techniques with great consciousness and rigour. The critique contained in *To the Lighthouse* and developed further in the other two novels in discussion may have been asking philosophy the impossible, but it was asking something that needed to be asked and that philosophers had also begun to ask in the wake of Nietzsche. It remains to be considered whether all aspects and consequences of this questioning have been borne out or whether Woolf's was one of the early voices in a modern trans-philosophical dialogue which is still in full vibration.

The tendency to revise our concepts of knowledge, the potentials of philosophical questioning and its relation to the existential sphere, implied a new notion of truth. This could no longer be solid and static, it could no longer be based on exclusion and reduction and a linear approach. It could no longer posit a truth which was simply accessible to a method. The new vision of truth seemed to be based on an endless flow of original questioning which takes the form of commentary and stays always within the neighbourhood of the most vital and radical existential questions. In its language it was to accept and even rely on forms of expression which were not governed by a mathematical ideal of verification but involved the forms of symbolic and paradoxical speech. One of its strong features was to be communication and communicability as opposed to the permanent communication crisis in which we find Mr Ramsay, Percival and the philosophical tradition that they are referential to. In one of her essays Woolf hails the philosophical predecessor to the type of truth that she invokes in the mature novels: Montaigne.⁸

Montaigne is attractive to Woolf because "it is impossible to elicit a plain answer" from him (p. 21). He gathers his truth from all sources, from life, anecdotes, trivia. He is suspicious of clever men and universal statements. His instinct is endlessly to expand rather than limit the scope of his thought and experience. He is a born outsider, his vision of life as incessantly changing and complex leads him to rely on an idea of personal autonomy of judgment and

⁸ V. Woolf: "Montaigne", in *The Common Reader 1933*. Rpt. *The Collected Essays II.*, ed. Leonard Woolf (London: The Hogarth Press, 1966)

prevents him from joining his fellow-creatures in any kind of ideological commitment. He is not a teacher or a preacher, in the same way as Woolf claims elsewhere to be not a 'critic', merely a 'reader'.⁹

The notion of knowledge that Woolf finds emerging from Montaigne's essays emphasises an idea of a particular lively sense or tact or taste, a mobile ability of adaptation and adjustment. "Truth can only be known by the well-born soul - l'âme bien née" (p. 21). Truth is thus an existential predicament and not the result of following rules. The well born soul has only one rule which is not to lay down rules, as they are "mere convention, utterly unable to keep in touch with the vast variety and turmoil of human experience" (p. 23). Woolf learns from Montaigne that knowledge is not teachable, for it is a way of life: a constant exercise of an autonomous sense of judgment by "those who have a private life", who are guided by "another monitor, an invisible censor within, 'un patron au dedans' whose blame is much more to be dreaded than any other because he knows the truth. (...) This is the judge to whom we must submit, this is the censor who will help us achieve that order which is the grace of a well-born soul" (p. 23). This type of knowledge cannot be detached from the particular human being herself or himself. The idea that knowledge and convictions are inseparable from the total individuality of the thinker disappeared with Montaigne and was not heard of again until Nietzsche. It was the latter philosopher who first attacked as one of "the prejudices of philosophers"¹⁰ the claim that correct rational thought follows a universally valid order and revealed the ways in which self-interest, psychological self-justification or socialist pre-conceptions determined the use of reason from person to person. In Montaigne's thought the separation of knowledge from life had not taken place. For him wisdom can take no other form but life wisdom, philosophy has no other dimension but existential philosophy. The vision of truth that he posits in the pursuit of life wisdom is similarly mobile and dialogic to Woolf's as represented in *To the Lighthouse* and in *The Waves*. Woolf emphasises the communicative element in Montaigne's thinking: "communication is health, communication is truth, communication is happiness". "To communicate is our chief business; (...) and reading, not to acquire

9 V. Woolf: "How should one read a book?" in *The Common Reader: Second Series*. 1932., rpt. in Virginia Woolf: *The Crowded Dance of Modern Life*, ed. Rachel Bowlby (London: Penguin, 1993)

10 Fr. Nietzsche: *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part One: On the Prejudices of Philosophers, trans. and ed. R. J. Hollingdale, (London: Penguin, 1973)

knowledge, not to earn a living, but to extend our intercourse beyond our own time and province" (p. 23). Truth is as rich as life, "for nothing matters except life; and of course order" (p. 22).

The two approaches to life and thinking represented in *To the Lighthouse* by Mr and Mrs Ramsay seem to act as complementarities rather than mutually exclusive alternatives in the first third of that novel. But we might suspect that the balance is precarious. Later on in *To the Lighthouse* this balance begins to erode and, as the opposition returns in varied forms in the later novels, it continues shifting, until in *Between the Acts* a cataclysmic state of imbalance sets in. This play between balance and disaster foregrounds another, a social and historical aspect already latently present in the initial theoretical problem.

Mr Ramsay's figure, the summary image of the dominant theoretical hegemony, is the product of a long process. His wife's cautious conservatism suggests that our value judgment of Mr Ramsay must not be simplistic: Mrs Ramsay admires men, her husband among them, because they negotiate treaties, rule India and run the country. By 'men' Mrs Ramsay identifies a particular social impulse as well as a particular way of thinking. This heroic but civilised stereotype of masculinity is the token of social order and legitimacy, the liveability of our lives in ordered patterns, the protection from chaos, the heroic effort of keeping at bay the forces of irrationality and destruction of which she is so acutely aware. The enlightened benevolence of men's actions is in many cases indubitable.

Woolf likes to think in sets of values connected by basic underlying ideas. Thus the philosophical ideas that lie at the basis of 'men's' thought and actions have their ramifications in other spheres. One of these, the ruling of India, is an old topos in English literature. Only in the period of High Modernism, however, did it become an acknowledged symbol of imposition without understanding, of false superiority, of unexamined oppositions of good and bad, order and disorder. The men who rule India impose their system of understanding on something whose own nature they do not bother to penetrate. They see, i.e. control, it as irrational and disordered. They can only do this by closing their eyes to a great part of that reality. The structure of this attitude is the same as we saw in the analysis of method-based philosophy. A similar idea also fuels men's efforts at running society 'for us': the belief that a social order based on a rational effort is possible, that society functions according to a finite number of rational laws which might finally lead to the perfect society. This belief, again, is only possible

by a separation of the rational from the irrational, by the exclusion of an element of chaos and contingency, by the reduction of reality to a number of formulae. Naturally, such reductions are necessary, they help create a semblance of a liveable-in society. By this ignorance and naiveté 'men' create something that 'women' can take for granted. At the same time Mrs Ramsay is full of misgivings: she sees the sterility and inappropriacy of men's activities, their blindness to 'the real questions', and she feels a strong foreboding that they are going to lose, that this blindness cannot buy them their goals - it is more likely to cause their undoing.

The complex of 'men's' hopes, convictions and aims, centering around reason, progress, science and, technology is clearly the continuation of the European tradition of the enlightenment which assumed one of its many versions in British Victorianism. Some of their ideas deserve an ironic intonation while others do not. The duality of acceptance and criticism in which Mr and Mrs Ramsay live is to a certain degree still the determining predicament of our life today. We reject the metaphysical and epistemological underpinnings of the enlightenment tradition. We have seen its dismal failure, and commentary on the nature and causes of this failure takes up a great part of 20th c. writing. At the same time we find it hard to posit aims other than those old Victorian, old enlightenment aims and we find it difficult to base these efforts on anything but the same, if somewhat more shaky, faith in reason. We carry on ambitious efforts to create liveable-in societies and even wider federations of societies, through rational effort; we perpetuate the idea of the systematic perfectibility of the human being and the value of positive knowledge by our education system, we take for granted the forward moving dynamism of progress in our everyday contact with technology, and associating life quality with the possession of material assets, we go on collecting and systematizing knowledge, we try and urge ourselves to make one co-ordinated global effort to save the ecological balance of Earth.

Woolf's vision of the search for perfection and order is complex: she sees it as necessary, beneficial up to a point, but harmful beyond that, doomed to failure, based on an illusion yet inevitably, fundamentally human. Mr Ramsay's missionary optimism keeps the world going, but the authorial voice takes the side of Mrs Ramsay's pessimism. It is implicit, and is reinforced in the cosmic visions of the following two novels, that the mission will fail but will always reawaken, that the pulsation of ambition and failure, the repetition of these cycles is in some

way the pre-destined course of human effort. In *The Waves*, the use of the temporal cycles and the rise and fall of the waves puts the ebb and flow of human effort is put on a cosmic footing, makes human nature seem but part of a universal rhythm.

The dichotomy of faith and misgiving and the relationship between the two conceptions of truth determine the structure of *To the Lighthouse*. The novel has a double ending, partly it suggests a state of balance, and partly a process of erosion which presages the destruction of the feminine mode of thought by the masculine.

The last lines are on a note of balance. The painter Lily Briscoe exclaims: 'I have had my vision', and completes a painting created to perfection by a stroke of symmetry. The couple themselves seem to be in harmony only as long as Mrs Ramsay is alive. But after the tenuous balance of the first part, W. W. I. takes place, Mrs Ramsay dies, their son Andrew falls in battle, and their daughter Prue, who promised to become heir to Mrs Ramsay's spirit, is also dead by the end of the middle section. Nobody is left to believe in Mr Ramsay any more. And in the final section Mr Ramsay destroys the lighthouse as a symbol.

Woolf said that the lighthouse was not a symbol *of* something: it was a focal point around which the book coheres, an image to unify the design. Generally, it is the function of a symbol to grasp and make permanent and communicable a complex of meaning otherwise fleeting and un-nameable. The choice of object for this function should not be accidental. A lighthouse is a source of light or illumination, and a point of orientation. It is an object on which people keep their eyes during their manoeuvres on the treacherous waters, something that gives guidance from afar. Mrs Ramsay admired it from the distance: it reminded her during the day's work of a certain dimension of thought and it served as an altar on which she laid these most intimate and profound thoughts. To the child James it meant an object of desire: a dream whose loss planted in him the first seeds of disillusioned adulthood. Eventually Mr Ramsay, to whom everything is an obstacle to overcome, resolves to conquer the lighthouse. In an atmosphere of after-ness, of ruin and desolation he decides to take James there, even though by now this is against the boy's wish. Mr Ramsay in fact turns the once desired dream journey into a voyage of hatred, incomprehension, irritation and disillusionment. Viewed from a direct closeness, the lighthouse is a heap of ugly grey stone. Going to the lighthouse does not give pleasure. It does not fulfil but rather extinguishes and desecrates the desire which it had engendered from afar: it turns out that the significance was in the distance itself, distance was part of the

adequate relation to the lighthouse. In a last and most typical act of incomprehension Mr Ramsay treads into the heart of the symbolism that carried all Mrs Ramsay's values and meaning. And, characteristically, this act of his, like all the others, is rooted in misconceived and unreflecting but definite benevolence.

The structure of desire and extinction, distance, respect and orientation which Mr Ramsay misunderstands is also inherent in the problem concerning the Victorian rationality which he represents.

The set of ideas of perfection which governed the rationalist project, both practical and philosophical, were eschatological ideals, their attainment would bring the suffering of humanity to an end. Because of a faith in perfectibility, in a finite form of truth and the total competency of reason and method, these ideas were inevitably presented as attainable, and implied a definite metaphysics of their own. This latter made it impossible to see these ideas of perfection as useful fictions, lighthouses to guide man on an ocean of necessary and unalterable imperfectibility. The direct and belligerent pursuit of these ideas at the cost of an ontological falsification, had to lead to their destruction. At the moment when culmination was expected, the ignored contingency and uncontrollable, irreducible superabundance of reality revealed itself and the treacherous inconsistency of supposedly linear progress became undeniable. The totality of this destruction is presented in *Between the Acts* where the continuity is established between the enlightenment project and the total collapse in W. W. II. In the sequence of *To the Lighthouse*, *The Waves* and *Between the Acts* Woolf explores this continuity of distortion, giving due respect to the original notions but also providing an understanding which makes the process of disintegration seem inevitable. The three novels are built partly on a fluidity between the different strata such as creative technique, philosophical vision, social action and politics and partly on a continuous shifting of the relations of these along the chronological axis. In this sense history provided Woolf with an exceptionally intelligible stretch of time within which to create her oeuvre.

The unresolved tension at the end of *To the Lighthouse* sets the parameters for *The Waves*. This is the novel of the generation maturing in the early years of the 20th century which is determined by the shock of post-Victorian disillusionment and a vacuum of social or communal ideals. Thus it is not surprising that the book is almost entirely dedicated to developing the feminine model of truth on the level of six introspective individuals forming a small community. The role of art becomes highlighted as the scene of existential reflection and at the same time

the crisis of traditional art forms is indicated. The linear vision of civilization is replaced by cyclic movement, cognition is presented as an endless flow of all-inclusive dialogue, instead of a systematic occupation with a definite end. This vision relies on Mrs Ramsay's focuses: the sight of the ultimate through the trivial.

In *The Waves* there is no balance any more between faith and disillusionment. The mission of the Victorian world is represented by Percival. His friends, the other six characters, have a strong wish that he should triumph, but they also know with a great certainty that he must lose and are not surprised when after a period of hope he disappoints their expectations.

Percival's mission is threefold. On the plane of legend his task is to find the Holy Grail. On the symbolic level his mission is the cultural mission of the enlightenment. Finally, on the concrete narrative level, his task is part of the social mission of Victorianism: he must go and rule a district of India in the name of the British Empire. The cross-references between the three superimposed cultural strata multiply the possibilities for generating meaning. For example, a distancing mythological light is cast on the missionary consciousness of the Victorians and the clumsy image of the knight in armour lends the heroes of rationalism that naive cartoon-quality which always accompanies historical retrospection.

The Grail motif continues the line of ideas of perfection. It is the vessel of truth, a means to bring the long search for truth to a desired end; a guarantee of moral perfection as it can only fall into the hands of the sinless man; it is also a Christian symbol which brings to the world salvation and rest. Thus Woolf makes Christianity appear as perhaps only one among those structurally related ideas of perfection which became incriminated in *To the Lighthouse*, and which are based on an anthropomorphic urge for totality, unanswered by any real correlative. The use of a quest-myth and the narrator's position of disbelief in that quest re-evokes the philosophical search for a solid and all-perfecting truth. By referring to a myth it points at the atavistic roots and deep anthropomorphic nature of the ambition in question. It also indicates the way in which the search for truth has been mythologised and paradoxically substituted for a pursuit of happiness. On the level of myth, the hero leaves civilization and goes out into the wilderness in order to bring back salvation for the community. Here this structure is subverted, Percival, although his raw and naive heroism is viewed with nostalgia by the disillusioned, mature community, offers no promise of

salvation but those who remained seated at the round table experience moments of deep, though imperfect insight. Their nostalgia is directed at the communal nature of the heroic illusion: they are displaced, strictly private people whose insights and sensitivities only work within a small community. Their maturity is based on insights into imperfection, liminality, relativism, a radical intellectual realism. Their insights can never become the basis for the collective knowledge of a society, societies want heroes, aims, and promises. This is a recognition that already predetermines the structure of *Between the Acts*.

On the concrete and synchronic plane Percival's colonial mission recalls the social and cultural ramifications of the philosophical notions behind his quest. Percival is associated with the social reality of Victorian Britain simply by virtue of being the perfect public school boy. The British public schools were, and still are, private institutions of learning which function as vehicles of a social meaning and serve as the rite of passage to a privileged position in the British class system and establishment. Public school life, ritualised in its every aspect, is shown as already becoming uncomfortable for all the characters of *The Waves* except, of course, for Percival.

Colonial service, one of the habitual continuations of public-school education, was a method for disposing of not-too-bright upper-middle-class boys in such a way that they would not be under much mental strain and could still reap sufficient glory in the service of the empire. The offence to the colonised culture implied in this usage was no longer ignored by the time Woolf wrote *The Waves*. Percival's insensitive domineering attitudes as an Indian civil servant, as well as his satisfaction to remain a chessman in a game whose rules he does not question, recall Mr Ramsay's character. But in *The Waves* the representatives of Mr Ramsay's world even fail to run society, they even fail to rule India. The establishment becomes irrelevant, out of touch, it no longer carries the private person. It seems that the smug self-evidence of the contemporary social order, of the political imposition and the cultural superiority that it entailed also go under with Percival's heavy and graceless fall.

Percival is thus voiceless and unquestioning, his communication problems and his incomprehension are frequently emphasised. The six other characters form a circle of communication in which they canonise a different mode of thought. Their interrelated soliloquies unfold Mrs Ramsay's internal monologue about life into a wide stream of virtual dialogue. They address similar questions in a similar language. We can think back to Montaigne: in order to study the world,

these characters study themselves, to study life they analyze their own lives. For the reader there are six perspectives, six partial, shifting truths, six attempts to reach out and contain everything. The understanding which these characters achieve of their single individualities are so many tributaries to an endless flow of human understanding. To carry on in their widely inclusive fashion the speakers must forego systematization. This process of understanding can never become fixed and completed. There is no way to step out of it and formulate a repetition or a reproduction.

Philosophy, simply by virtue of being a written medium, has always assumed that it can place itself outside of reality in order to duplicate it, while truth, being solid and static, will wait and submit itself to reproduction. But if nothing is to be excluded, if selection is seen as falsification, because the unconscious aspects of selection are more informative than the text, if truth is seen as complex and kinetic, and if it is to be told in its fullness of connotations and significances, it becomes impossible to assume a position of retrospection. That totalization is always partial, secondary and false is a view developed in *To the Lighthouse* and taken for granted in the technique of *The Waves*, thus it remains alien to the figures of this novel.

This situation rests on a latent critique of the relation of subject and object - a philosophical tool actually mentioned in *To the Lighthouse* as one of Mr Ramsay's identifying trademarks. The principle of subject-object opposition assumes the separation of reality into an observing and reproducing subject, and a passive phenomenal world. This conceals a claim that the observing subject comes under different determinations from the rest of reality and represents a solid point outside of its universe. This principle also reflects the traditional assumptions of natural science, according to which scientists can place themselves outside of nature and penetrate into its regularities without contributing something of their personal self or disturbing the original state of the observed reality. The latent humanist assumption is obviously the essential separation of man from nature. In the writings of Woolf and Montaigne, to the contrary, the subject is the object of observation, man is the event. The individual is part of the flow of reality, member of all the cosmic cycles: observer and observed, event and its understanding are not separated. The ontological determinations are the epistemological predicaments. No other knowledge is available but existential knowledge.

Woolf believed that art-forms which uphold a claim to realism make a similar unfounded claim to external objectivity. The authors of these works - in one much-quoted essay Woolf calls them materialists - implicitly claim that they are in a position of subject and can capture their object, human life, human character, in an authoritative fashion. They express this claim in all their technical tools but, as Woolf claims, their works fail to fulfil their claim. We have already shown a number of way in which Woolf revises her technique, drawing the creative consequences of the epistemological standing we have outlined. In fact the epistemological standing is revealed by technique and structure as much as by imagery and statement. By the frequent use of visual references to impressionist and post-impressionist painting she makes use of the results of a similar recognition in the visual arts.

It was a reaction against the dictates of pictorial realism, combined with rigid academism, that made painters openly assume an attitude of depicting personal visions of everyday objects incorporating their subjective associations, emotions or the more complex ideal significance of the object in its representation. By the use of impressionistic visual descriptions, Woolf is presenting a variation on the idea that she already used repeatedly in *To the Lighthouse*. The changes that affect visual reality in the process of perception are similar to the distortion of verbal statements in the process of perception, as we saw in the example of the message Cam gave to the cook. The ambition of artistic realism to present autonomous objects as they are when not observed by anybody i.e. without the admission of subjective perspectivity, is reminiscent of Lily's troubles when she had to imagine a table 'when you are not looking at it'.

A similar consideration had lead Woolf in *To the Lighthouse* to substitute traditional dialogue with the analysis of the totality of meaning carried by statements which otherwise sound simple and functional. The characters in *The Waves* no longer even utter the words of traditional dialogue: the author records only the meanings they exchange, and not the words which they happen to choose in order to carry those meanings. The sustaining element of these characters is communication, none of their thoughts exists except in so far as it is addressed to one or more members of the small community. Meaning is constituted in communication, it cannot exist in isolation, only in a system of references, memories, sub-languages and symbols established through a period of time and usage. This ideal exchange of fully comprehended meanings is not just

talk, it is the scene where life can be made sense of without assuming an external standpoint.

This sense-making, as developed in *The Waves* and also in Mrs Ramsay's questioning, has its own utility: its aim is life itself, the self-understanding of the individual, the small and the large community, as part of a history, a family, a nation. It is a living understanding in which there pulses the constant tension of live choices, mysteries, challenges. The idea that knowledge is not there as an item of trading but as something to be had for its own sake, for the sake of life is perhaps the strongest element of the Montaigne heritage in Woolf's thinking. Montaigne seems to have been one of the last people to uphold a synchronic vision whereby life, its understanding, and the use of understanding take place at the same time. It seems that only an existential thought system based on synchronicity and finality as opposed to eschatological expectations, on a recognition of mortality and the unrepeatability of every moment of existence, and on the denial of another world can direct the floodlight of thought back onto this life. Only in this way can we achieve a representation of human life as the cause and the end, the merged subject and object of thought. The idea of salvation and of the attainment of perfection in another world, but also the notion of the human being whom science has freed from all suffering, discomfort or want in this world, imply a division between a real world of imperfection and the promise of something completed beckoning from a messianic land of beyond. The idea of perfection has gone through a number of transformations in Woolf's novels: the lighthouse, the letter Z and everlasting fame, the Holy Grail were all images which carried a belief in attainable perfection and transcendental gratification. What Woolf (and Montaigne) oppose to this is the need to accept transience and imperfection, irrationality and contingency as basic existential and epistemological predicaments which are not transcended but merely accompanied by the continuity of interpretative commentary through the ages, by the totality of history and tradition. This is of course a deeply this-worldly, non-Christian belief and it obviously goes contrary to that deeply eschatological philosophical tradition which based its ontology on a Christian model and usually found a way to accommodate Christian belief in its systems. It is also obvious that it is a demand which has been exiled into dilettantism by hundreds of years of philosophical practice and cannot be seriously pronounced within the quarters of professional theorizing.

In *The Waves*, living existential understanding is the only form of understanding endorsed. Theory has no part, understanding manifests itself in concrete occasions of communal happiness. These are the points which Woolf calls *moments*. They are existential events which unite a group of people in a shared existential insight and a simultaneous recognition of their community. These moments seem to arrest the flow of time, their characteristic is that they unexpectedly draw lines of accidental everyday motion and thought into a meaningful constellation. They are moments of symbol-generation. Woolf's returning phrase is 'to make of the moment something permanent'. These occasions of epiphany are part of a mode of thinking which has reckoned up its position of finality and transience. If our existence is not to have a perfected version in this or in another world, or a blueprint description in a book of philosophy, or a captured representation in 'the' story, then the chance to appropriate it and to penetrate into it is in the rare moments of vision that present themselves inside its flow.

The language which can deal adequately with reality according to this view, cannot be that of science since this assumes a notion of truth just discredited. If Woolf refers existential understanding to the sphere of art as she does in *The Waves*, this must be because art is the only form of expression which has no direct methodological preoccupation with logical verification, as it is completely fictional; which makes no claim to positive empirical reality or logical consistency, but is built instead on unreality, paradox, ambiguity, and yet claims to address the most vital questions presented by human existence. This is what makes Bernard, the artist, the exemplary commentator among the six characters of *The Waves*.

Although art is the par excellence existential understanding, Bernard is a failure. He cannot find the story that would tell it all - it seems no longer possible. Even art is in a crisis. The epistemological basis of traditional art forms has been rejected, but the new epistemological recognitions that took its place, the emphasis on complexity and fluidity, perspectivity and subtlety, do not allow the creation of a work of art as we have come to think of it; they create almost impossible conditions for modern art to work under. This is why Bernard cannot capture the truth in a story, a novel with a plot. At the time when art takes on itself the task to address seriously the questions that science and science-based philosophy have failed to tackle, and goes through a revision of its

epistemological underpinnings, it faces a challenge of complete renewal and cannot rely on a simple realistic story-telling tradition.

The insistence on art's truth value, such as we find in Woolf, came from a long tradition of romantic hermeneutics. Foremost among its appearances in this century was the central role it played in Heidegger's *The Origin of the Work of Art*, which, supported by ontological analyses carried out in *Time and Being*, posited art as the scene for adequate existential understanding. One of the possible objections to this position, which also served as the foundation stone of Gadamerian hermeneutics, is the tremendous burden of expectation which it places on art which in its turn is going through a permanent crisis with regard to its epistemology, its criticism, its quality, its communicability and its audience. The other is that after the insights which lead to the discrediting of methodologically based philosophy and which directed our attention to art, the criteria for criticism of both literary and theoretical texts have become thoroughly relativist. In other words, the commentary of works of art and the parallelly continuing existential, critical, linguistic etc. commentary carry on producing an enormous body of theoretical writing which we are forced to judge on the principles of that theoretical hegemony which we had already discredited, i.e. on the basis of verification, logical coherence, etc. (It is also obvious that all writing at all times will have a layer of unexamined underlying assumptions.) This means that serious philosophical thought about those fundamental existential questions still remains unfounded and self-contradictory, and philosophy remains in the state of language crisis. Within the arch that leads from *To the Lighthouse* to *The Waves*, from the early outlining of the problem to the final collapse, the function of *The Waves* was to examine the prospects of the type of understanding that remained alone credit-worthy and desirable at the end of *To the Lighthouse*. The novel showed the merits of this understanding and also its impracticability as anything more than a private existential programme. It recognised that society at large will not base its intellectual life on radical philosophical recognitions: to demand that is to demand a degree of intellectual maturity which cannot be programmatised, it is equal to demanding that humanity go against its most deeply ingrained intellectual desires, archetypes or drives. This impossible imperative would be similar in structure to that which Nietzsche formulated when he revealed the necessary strategic lie inherent in our epistemological tradition and demanded that we bring this lie to the surface and live in its permanent critical consciousness.

The wider impracticability of the insights that Woolf's characters achieved on the level of the individual or the small community in the first two novels also explains why the cataclysm in the centre of *Between the Acts* was inevitable. The final degeneration of the rationalist paradigm is fitted into Woolf's cyclic vision of history: the crash of the optimism of the enlightenment is seen as the end of a historical cycle. *Between the Acts* openly thematises the rise of the National Socialist Party in Germany and its consequences up to that date, i.e. 1941. To this event Woolf reacted vigorously both in *Between the Acts* and in *Three Guineas*. The latter is a book of polemic in which she pioneers the recognition that attitudes of aggression and imposition habitually practised on the plane of private life, embedded in language and tolerated in supposedly non-political areas of social life directly foster grand scale political aggression such as we were to see in Nazi Germany.

The various levels of articulation, the artistic, philosophical, social and political are forged into a unit of meaning in the heat of the historical cataclysm. The collapse of the central tenets and stereotypes of their culture unites the characters in an almost un-called-for community: the times suddenly become historical, people and statements turn almost involuntarily from private into public. History uninvitedly descends on the individual, on art, on relationships. It becomes an important recognition that the happiness of a person is always embedded in the well-being of the larger community, since meaning and understanding are only created through communication, and the way to self-understanding, identity and self-appropriation necessarily leads through a detour to others. It is shown that the private existence even of the most self-contained person is connected in a multitude of unconscious ways to the life of the sustaining and communicating community. In other words the embeddedness within history - within the happiness or unhappiness of the community - is not something accidental and extraneous but something essential, personal and private.

The scene of essential understanding in *Between the Acts* remains art. In spite of Bernard's failure, *The Waves* ended with his apotheosis, his understanding defeated death. Here, too, the vision which art provides remains effective when everything says it should long be dead. Although it is past its sphere of effect, past its competency and without any hope of influence, although it is amateur and unoriginal, mere pastiche and fragments, it continues to yield a profound and

specific understanding, aesthetic pleasure and a sense of community, a sort of fusion and happiness.

The first sentence of the novel proves that *Between the Acts* is again a book for close reading, and one that has to be read with the rest of Woolf in mind.

It was a summer's night and they were talking, in the big room with the windows open to the garden, about the cesspool.

(p. 3)

It plays perpetually on the elements, ideas, tones, structures that were established in the oeuvre, it takes up old harmonies and allows each to deform into harsh, grotesque but meaningful dissonances.

Incongruity and subversion are the unifying formal principle of the book, they return on innumerable points of the imagery and the language. The end of the era means the break-up of the small community and of communication: "All is over. The wave has broken. Left us stranded, high and dry. Single, separate on the shingle" (p. 87).

The original opposition between the two types of understanding, indicated by the epistemological markers of Mr and of Mrs Ramsay, is resurrected in a diminished form in the grumblings of Lucy and Bart, an old pair of brother and sister. At a melancholy passage ending they conclude "So we must ... it's time to go" (p. 106). Their complementarity is an out-dated affair, the old balance is irrecoverable.

Yet Woolf clearly establishes Bart's lineage with Mr Ramsay and Percival through several means, his past rank in the Indian Civil Service being just one of them. Although Bart himself never recognises it, Woolf makes clear his responsibility for the political situation. In a central and recurring image of the book the borderline between man and animal disappears, Bart repeatedly gets merged or substituted with his dog or other sorts of beasts. The humanist tenet of man as a rational animal, as superior to and essentially different from nature, which Bart himself would typically uphold with pride, is overthrown and all the claims traditionally based on this superiority collapse in reaction. The barrier around the leisurely life of private people breaks down, from this point in time any small community engaged in a dialogue of self-understanding based on radical philosophical insight, such as figured in *The Waves*, appears as an absurd and displaced luxury. The natural surrounding with its message of raw 'live or die', the indifferent cows, the weather, and finally the German warplanes join in with

the cacophony of the stage play that the novel's genteel characters are trying to perform in the garden. If it seems odd that the war-planes descend as a natural disaster, we only need to think of the way in which Woolf established the constructive/destructive pulsation of human nature as part of the wider rhythm of the natural universe. If man is an animal, there is nothing that is not 'nature', man's supernaturality was an illusion. The planes are as indifferent to the meditative leisurely English as the thrush is to the caterpillar it destroys.

If the life of that civilization was a cycle which had to come to an end, a wave which had to break, man nonetheless precipitated its collapse. In the pageant, Woolf enumerates a number of cultural features which may have been instrumental in bringing on the final breakdown. Coming down to the level of recent social history, she gives a comprehensive and acid summary of all destructive aspects of the Victorian tradition. The stage becomes the scene of 'deconstructing' a number of clichés: the faith in the Victorian project which was respectfully endorsed by Mrs Ramsay, nostalgically indulged by the characters of *The Waves* is here drastically discredited. If we bear the previous novels in mind, these features are well known by now. They range from the aggression and false naiveté of the Empire through sexual repression and the all-pervading hypocrisy of genteel society and the Victorian family to the mention of scientific laboratories, technology, commerce and construction. The recognition of the connection, which we mentioned earlier, between the implications of widely different levels of action becomes topical again, but here the stress is explicitly on violence and the responsibility involved. By this time Woolf was past the explicit and polemical analysis of this point in *Three Guineas*.¹¹ It is also the explicitness and scope of the analysis in this work which might give ground to believe that Woolf was not totally unconscious when she displayed a structural and historical evolution between the most benevolent efforts of rationalism and the most destructive reaches of unreason in war. When she steps back from the cosmic determinism of the author to the social conscience of the humanist Englishwoman, the emphasis seems to be, besides responsibility, on the way in which a benevolent impulse has turned into its opposite without there having been a single noticeable point at which it left its supposedly straight track of progress.

11 Virginia Woolf: *Three Guineas*, (London: The Hogarth Press, 1947)

Woolf sees the cause for this unexpected transition in the fact that those who claimed a monopoly on reason have misunderstood the nature of reality and identified the rules of their method with the laws of the universe. It seems from the depiction of the Victorian stereotypes in the three mature novels that Woolf saw 'men', the representatives of this order, assuming a method which was useful in making society manageable but which meant the acceptance of a falsification, a trap, in which they had to take something false to be true because they wished that it were true, and acted as if it were true, and consequently shut themselves away from the genuine nature of reality. According to Nietzsche, thought went astray when the useful fictions of man's categories of reason were identified with the nature of reality. The moment of doom was that in which double vision failed, in which man's inability to accept split states of mind, unclear categories and liminal positions was overruled by archetypal dreams, by mythological thought, by a childlike want of certainty. According to this the first signs of disaster were epistemological, our failure was a failure of understanding. From Nietzsche's analysis a similar duality of determinism and responsibility emerges as from the novels of Woolf.

From the narratorial preferences and the analysis of the creative tools it seems that for Woolf, understanding meant a comprehensive vision of existential reality in its full complexity and contingency to which human beings can only relate through a permanent interpretative commentary. Woolf's insistence on linking the most trivial phenomena with the most ultimate questions can be unfolded into a challenge for philosophy: a challenge to return from its sterile alienation to man's pursuit of happiness through self-understanding. If we keep in mind the question concerning philosophy throughout the three novels, by the end of the cycle it also seems as if the philosophers' self-lie was responsible for a wider self-lie of a culture, it turned a blind eye to inconvenient aspects of reality and allowed or even precipitated the collapse of the civilization which carried it.

The three novels outline the vision which in Woolf's view is the alternative to such blindness: this is based on a language which allows a flexible and complex understanding and demands an acceptance of imperfection, liminality, this-worldly incompleteness. This will always remain a minority vision, a limited intellectual programme since it goes contrary to human nature. Mr Ramsay, Percival and Bart are determined by ideas of certainty, fixity, heroism, quest for perfection and transcendental gratification.

What we have described is a complex of meaning that emerges from the three novels when read with a certain set of questions in mind. These are in fact set by the novels themselves although they are by no means the only possible group of questions which can be followed through the texts. The questions and their examination are also supported by several other texts by Woolf. In the framework of meaning which emerges from this reading, the position of art, philosophy and the existential attitude of the individual can be re-formulated. If our reading of the three novels finally lands us in a situation which is defined partly by a universal determinism and partly by the intellectual responsibility of the individual, the only possible conclusion remains a solitary existential programme of continued original questioning. It is also clear from the novels that this programme will make almost impossible demands on the individual. It necessarily seems to guarantee a position of intellectual isolation and minority which lacks any firm foundations and any hope of lasting effect. What Woolf leaves us with is a sense of disaster which still does not invalidate the existential and intellectual mission whose parameters she had developed. Its very strength seems to be in its radical self-awareness and autonomy which allow it to continue in a predicament of impossibility.

Judit Nényei:

THE SIGNIFICANT MOMENT

THE ROLE OF 'EPIPHANIES' AND THE ASPECT OF REBELLION AGAINST PATERNITY IN *A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN*

In order to understand what exactly Joyce meant by an 'epiphany', we have to examine the relationship between author and hero, and their attitude towards their surrounding world. His provisional title, *Stephen Hero* marks the book as an early point in his stages of artistic impersonality. (Here we have to mention Joyce's admiration for Ibsen who used a similar method in his plays.) Stephen's character is essentially the same in the surviving parts of the *Stephen Hero* manuscript and in *A Portrait*. The difference can be found in the relationship between the character and the author. As Joyce rewrote his book he seems to have transferred the scene of action from the social to the psychological sphere. As he recollected his "conflicts with orthodoxy" in the tranquillity of his exile, he came to the conclusion that the actual struggles had taken place within the mind of Stephen. The Stephen we finally meet is sharply differentiated from his environment; the richness of his inner experience is continually played off against the reality of his external surroundings. The desire to "fly by the nets" flung at his soul which hold it back from flight is also indicated by his name: Stephen Dedalus. The relations between Stephen and his sanctified namesake, who was stoned by the Jews after reporting his vision of Christ¹, extend to parody as well as parallel: Stephen's visions are constantly judged by his more mature self, and

¹ *Acts* 7:56.

due to his admiration for Byron he is badly beaten up by his fellow students. Simon Dedalus is only the physical father in the flesh, incapable of maintaining his family. The myth of Daedalus, the "hawklike man", the "fabulous artificer" (*Portrait*, 176) of the Cretan labyrinth, whom Stephen invokes in the last chapter symbolically refers to his flight from Ireland. Being a son of Dedalus, he also bears the characteristic features of Icarus (whose death was compassed by the invention of his father), an archetype of ill-fated rebellion against paternal authority. Stephen's awakening consciousness; his quest for self-knowledge and unity is resented by different kinds and levels of paternity. The whole novel can be read as a constant struggle against it. At the end of each chapter a significant "epiphany" illuminates the weakening, or sometimes the disruption of yet another bond. According to Irene H. Chayes

by an epiphany Joyce meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. He believed that it was for the men of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments.²

The word itself stands for "illumination". In the Roman Catholic liturgy it is the festival (6 January) commemorating the manifestation of Christ to the Magi.

In the first chapter the paternal image is represented by his biological father, Simon Dedalus, whose hairy face, the sign of maturity is the conventional analogue of God the Father who looks at him "through a glass" (*Portrait*, 1, which recalls *I Corinthians* 13:12). Simon appears as a storyteller, in a sense a creator. The next significant event the infant Stephen recalls is that he is hiding under the table and has to apologise for a rather obscure sin, otherwise, as the short rhyme threatens him, eagles will pull out his eyes. The role of eyes in the novel is very important, since Joyce himself was half-blind, his hero is convinced that sin comes mainly through the eyes (*Portrait*, 157), wears thick glasses, which is the indirect cause of his first rebellion against the Jesuit fathers, and he deeply resents that an old woman was spat in the eyes (*Portrait*, 33). But why does he have to apologise? If we have a look at the last sentence before he hides under the table we realise that he was talking about marrying Eileen Vance, a girl next door. According to the *Book of Proverbs* 30:17 eagles will pull out the eyes of a son who scorns and

² Irene H. Chayes: "Joyce's Epiphanies" in: "The Sewanee Review", July 1946 p. 155.

defies his parents. Stephen is threatened by a father for claiming his rights to marriage, to maturity, no matter how innocent that claim is. The possibility that Stephen might one day mature into fatherhood himself, causes the unconscious resentment of his father because it contains the element of decline for the older generation. The attempt to halt the process of maturity is supported by the Jesuit fathers. Stephen's first victory over the fathers, which coincides with one of the major epiphanies is his protesting at the rector because he was unjustly punished by Father Dolan (originally Father Daly, since this event contains some autobiographical elements as well). When Simon Dedalus tries to reduce the whole incident to the level of a joke, he attempts to rob Stephen of his pride in his victory - and thus make Stephen's isolation even more stressed. If we consider the motifs of Stephen's actions and decisions in *A Portrait* and also in *Ulysses*, it is obvious that his pride attracts him to priesthood (the director's description of the priest's unique power) and the same repels him (in a sense, it is a bondage: his entire life would depend on the order). His personal pride separates him from his friends (he wants to emphasise his difference from the others, which is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the artist) and his father. Intellectual pride makes him reject the Roman Catholic church and refuse to pray at his mother's deathbed (which haunts him throughout *Ulysses*).

In the second chapter the isolation from his father becomes more prominent. On the trip to Cork Simon tries to convince Stephen of his status as a child (*Portrait*, 92) several times and to warn and ward him from sexual development: "Now don't be putting ideas into his head. Leave him to his Maker." (*Portrait*, 95) "Maker" is generally used as a reference to God, the Creator, but in this context it contains a secondary reference to Simon. He considers himself the only one who has the right to influence Stephen. He indirectly warns "the little man" not to remind Stephen that there are girls in the world, that one day he may grow into maturity. The word "Foetus" (*Portrait*, 90) carved into a desk makes Stephen shrink from the company of his schoolmates and indirectly reminds him of his own immature state. Simon boasts that he can keep up with his son in everything (*Portrait*, 96) but his claim is definitely refuted 3 pages later when he asks his son to slow down (*Portrait*, 98). When Stephen grows tired of his father's voice, he closes his eyes, escaping into darkness. Gradually, Stephen is beginning to see that his father is unworthy of his status, unable to maintain and look after his family. His irresponsibility emphasises the growing doubts in Stephen who, inspired by his curiosity and desire for sexual experience, visits a brothel. His initiation into

sexual life, a significant epiphany, takes place at the end of the chapter. His meeting with the prostitute occurs amid much darkness and warmth, in sharp contrast with the pale and cold sensations that surround almost every reference to the fathers.

Carl Jung, in dealing with the masculine psychology, notes that when man breaks away from the parental images, which then remain somewhere outside the psyche, woman takes up the position of the most immediate environmental influence for the adult man. Her image is not split off as that of the parents but kept associated with that of the consciousness. She is more personal and teaches him to be. This is a source for the feminine quality of the soul. Jung goes on to show how the whole nature of man presupposes woman, physically and spiritually. "His system is turned in to woman from the start, ... an inherited collective image of woman exists in a man's unconscious, with the help of which he apprehends the nature of woman."³

In the third chapter the attacks of the fathers grow both stronger and subtler as they sense the presence of the maturing generation. The pricks of bad conscience due to his carnal sin coincide with the retreat in the college. The sermon on Hell fills him with paralysing terror for his soul. All the sensations he has learned to love since childhood: darkness in which he does not have to rely on his weak eyes, warmth, odours, that mysteriously, like a womb, enfold him in the arms of the prostitute as well as in his early memories about his mother, turn out to be the attributes of Hell. The only way offered by the preacher to avoid it is to repent and throw himself at the mercy of God, the ultimate father-figure. His affinity for warmth turns against him (reference to the flames in Hell), the "horrible darkness" arouses his fear. Even then he first escapes not to God but to the "refuge of sinners", the Virgin Mary, another aspect of idealised womanhood, like Mercedes, like Eileen with the ivory fingers. He does love her, desires to be her knight, yet strangely enough, finds no conflict between his devotion to her and his visits to whores. She is the goddess of life for him in religious form, whom he adores in the fourth chapter on the beach. He begs the Virgin after the repentance of his sexual sins to confirm him in his love for Emma. Before the sermon he feels only a "loveless awe of God" (*Portrait*, 106). His pride in his own sin, the contempt he feels towards his fellow students who remained in their filial

³ Carl G. Jung: "Confrontation with the Unconscious" in: *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, New York: Random House, 1961 pp. 228, 230.

state while he considers himself lost make his alienation from them even more complete. In Joyce's world the artist is always irreconcilably at odds with society.

The sermon is a temporarily successful attempt to horrify Stephen with the idea of maturity and sexual development. The preacher evidently ignores the fact that his audience are composed of 14-16 year-old or sometimes even older boys and the style of his speech is that of one addressing children. His words arouse a temporary desire to remain a child forever, God's child ("his soul became again... a child's soul"; *Portrait*, 111) Stephen embraces his role as a penitent child. He makes his confession to a bearded Capuchin priest - we encounter with another father-figure. He cannot confess to a clean-shaved Jesuit. He tries to force himself to love God but succeeds only in fearing him (*Portrait*, 148). His confession, also an important epiphany, marks his spiritual development as regaining the original, innocent state of his soul.

In the fourth chapter this state proves to be deceiving and short-lived. He schedules a tight artificial routine on himself. Due to its rigidity it soon leads to spiritual dryness and is doomed to fail to be permanent. It is Stephen's humble attempt to accept paternal authority and remain in an enforced spiritual childhood. Abandoning his search for himself, he tries to unite himself with the fathers, ironically, rejoices at the sight of "white" things, such as white pudding, pale flames of the candles among the white flowers (*Portrait*, 151). Yet darkness and fire persistently haunt him, especially during his meditation on the Holy Trinity: his thoughts are mostly dedicated to the Holy Spirit, whose presence is generally indicated by tongues of flame (*Portrait*, 154-5).

In his self-deceit pride stops him from being honest. Stephen thinks he is pious, loves God but he only loves his creature: woman. The thought of her warms him in the general coldness and whiteness of his environment. The sermon proves a false epiphany because it sets him off the search for his self and true vocation. Its effect reaches the culminating point when he is faced with the possibility of becoming a priest. After a short period of temptation the idea repels him due to the director's mistakes who talks about renouncing women and the enormous power a priest has over the soul of man. Stephen cannot accept celibacy; his previous experience binds him to women forever. The reference to clerical authority indirectly provokes his pride which so far has reinforced itself only in his difference from others. The sensations he likes: warmth, darkness, odours are getting stronger after he refuses the vocation of priesthood. Having successfully overcome the strongest temptation to servitude and dependence, the

highest and most powerful exultation takes place; the most significant epiphany in the novel. All the female figures whom he loved or loves are incorporated in the vision of the bird-like girl he sees on the beach: Eileen Vance, Mercedes, Emma C., the prostitute and the Virgin. In his dream a red rose appears which represents experience of all kind and growth into maturity for Stephen. Besides, it has a strong sexual overtone in the works of Joyce (for example in *Ulysses* Blazes Boylan buys red roses for Molly before their rendezvous). The role of birds becomes significant in the next chapter; he takes their flight as a sign prophesying his own departure. When Stephen ponders about his love for Emma C., he bitterly remembers that she was flirting with a priest; perhaps it can be taken as another reference to the fathers, who attempt to block his way to emotional and sexual maturity. The idea that she might have behaved in a different way, would have remained faithful to him if she had a heart as that of birds shows an aspect of Stephen's (and Joyce's) strong fascination for these animals (*Portrait*, 227).

In the last chapter Stephen's alienation from the fathers becomes symbolic as well as physical; he has to find his way of expressing himself. "As a Young Man" he is not yet an artist, only an aesthete, seeking his artistic vocation. Another representative of the fathers enters the novel: the dean of studies (his role is asserted in his appearance as well: he has pale eyes). He is different from the others; old, lame, ready to surrender paternity. He encourages Stephen instead of hindering him in his quest. Symbolically and in reality, he tries to light a fire, using Stephen's help. When the dean talks about art in lighting a fire, Stephen says he will try to learn it. Later he expresses his doubts about his ability of ever lighting a fire - of ever creating anything. The old priest looks at him and reassures him ("Are you an artist, are you not? ...The object of the artist is the creation of the beautiful." *Portrait*, 193-6).

At one dawn he makes his attempt of artistic creation: in the "rosy" light of inspiration writes a villanelle. As the morning light comes, the flow of inspiration ceases. The colour symbolism ("...the white flame had passed, deepening to a rose and ardent light; ...the dull white light...covering the roselight in his heart." *Portrait*, 228-9) works in another aspect compared to that of the previous chapters: this time red stands for inspiration, spiritual development, whereas white refers to forces antagonistic to artistic creation. The fifth chapter of the novel gives a collection of Stephen's moves in a twofold way: he makes his decision and preparation of leaving Ireland, his "fatherland", and starting his flight. He also experiments with different methods of creation: the discussions

with his friends, the villanelle, his diary are all attempts of clarifying his thoughts on his vocation. The separation from his mother also takes place in this chapter: he refuses to obey her wish and does not do his Easter duty. His pride and his reluctance to bend before any kind of authority or servitude are stronger than his attachment to his mother. He also breaks the bonds of friendship: Cranly, the one who stands perhaps the closest to him, is on the side of the fathers. Stephen suspects him of close intimacy with Emma, and feels betrayed. According to Stephen, Cranly is destined to support the fathers: he is "the child of exhausted loins" (*Portrait*, 261).

In this part the most powerful epiphany is the flight of birds, symbolising loneliness and departure for Stephen. As a general peculiarity, true for all the significant epiphanies in the novel, it is important to note that they all take place either in the evening or they are quickly followed by darkness and sometimes accompanied by fire, warmth, or odours. It is obvious that each of them are closely connected to the faculties Stephen likes otherwise they would not be epiphanies for him.

From the evidence of his correspondence it is retraceable that Joyce's actual relationship with his father was mostly warm and friendly, as a letter of January 17, 1932 shows: "...he was the silliest man I ever knew and yet cruelly shrewd. He thought and talked of me up to his last breath. I was very fond of him always." Thus the irreconcilable antagonism between father (in the symbolic sense of the word) and son appears only in his novels. Though the novel contains certain autobiographical elements, Joyce was definitely a better rounded and better adjusted person than his fictional surrogate. He, for instance, was a good swimmer and was called "Sunny Jim" for his good nature⁴, whereas Stephen is afraid of water and no one could call him sunny of temperament. The "autobiographical problem" for Joyce was not only a question of how life influences art; it was also a question of how art influences life. Therefore he removed from the composite figure any traits of his own character that conflicted with the stereotype, the image of a potential, archetypal artist, wearing a mask of an aesthete. He also removed himself from Dublin to be able to write about Dubliners and their environment from a distant, artistically objective point of view.

⁴ Stanislaus Joyce: *Diary*, pp. 23, 135.

The artist searches for a mask, originally to conceal his natural self but ultimately to reveal his imaginative self, the body of his art. A person cannot get rid of himself in favour of an artificial personality without punishment. Stephen made an attempt (his phase of Christian devotion) and he failed. He realised that any form of limitation or servitude, even those which contain elements of power and authority in front of others would hinder or stop his artistic development.

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NARRATIONAL DIALECTIC IN JAMES JOYCE'S *A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN*

As far as narrative technique and style are concerned, James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is generally assumed to be, in comparison to *Ulysses*, *Finnegans Wake* and even to *Dubliners*, a fairly traditional novel. There are, however, a number of aspects in this work that have not been explained consistently and comprehensively yet. The most problematical are the apparent inconclusiveness of Stephen's development in the final chapter, the intensely subjective focus of the narrative technique, the ironic and sceptical stance of the narrator at many particular points in the text, the repetition of sentences of earlier chapters in later ones, the process of composing the villanelle in the fifth chapter or the sudden appearance and the strange structural position of the journal at the very end of the novel. The following analysis attempts to elucidate these problematical points in the work. I will rely heavily on F. C. McGrath's most revealing book, *The Sensible Spirit*¹, especially on its final chapter since I think that McGrath's idea of conceiving *A Portrait* as a novel displaying those features of the modernist paradigm that have been partly ignored up till now, i.e. its roots in German idealist philosophy and Hegel's dialectic, has far-reaching consequences with respect to the novel's narrative particularities, too.

After reconstructing the Modernist paradigm from Walter Pater's texts and claiming that Modernist aesthetics and techniques can be explained largely in terms of "the two major philosophical traditions of the nineteenth century," (SS,

¹ McGrath, Francis Charles: *The Sensible Spirit*, Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1986. Henceforth abbreviated as "SS".

236) i.e. German idealism and English empiricism, McGrath, in the conclusion to his book, considers *A Portrait* as "an indisputably Modernist work" and as one that may exemplify and "test the validity" of his ideas which, in turn, shed some new light on *A Portrait*. He does not aim at a traditional source study but wants to demonstrate the common grounds, the common intellectual paradigm, in which Pater as well as Joyce were deeply rooted.

My concern here is less with the general conceptual paradigm they shared. I organize my essay around only one of McGrath's three issues crucial to the interpretation of Joyce's work: the dialectical structure of the novel. But it must be mentioned here that McGrath most convincingly argues that Joyce's immediate intellectual milieu has obscured for decades the role played by the German idealists in Stephen's (and Joyce's) aesthetic theory and that looking beyond Aristotle and Aquinas toward Kant and Hegel may clear up some "white spots", both of general orientation and of specific details, of Stephen's aesthetics.

Stephen's aesthetic theory is, however, not the only manifestation of German thought in *A Portrait*. The structure of the novel also reflects the dialectic fundamental to idealist philosophy and, as McGrath points out, Stephen's development "conforms to the evolution of the human spirit outlined by Hegel." (SS 255) This is a progression from the immediacy of intuitive, unreflected sensory perception through various stages of analytic, reflective mediation to the highest level of cognitive reasoning that includes both the initial sense perception and the various processes by which the mind understands itself. Hegel calls the highest level the realm of the absolute spirit where the progression leads through completed dialectical circles, each of which results successively in a larger one. Joyce renders Hegelian ideas in terms of individual psychology - the growth of a young boy into a young man - but this application is, as McGrath argues, encouraged by Hegel himself, who often used the development of a man from the embryo through the boy to the maturity of adulthood as an analogy for his whole system. While the overall structure of *A Portrait* reflects a completed dialectical movement in Stephen's experience, that movement is not finished by any means; for just as the overall dialectic contains many dialectic circles within it, so it, too, will be contained within subsequent movements in Stephen's life - for instance, in *Ulysses*.

Here I leave McGrath's train of thought since we have arrived at a point where it can be linked to my own particular interest. The problematic character

of the narrative technique of *A Portrait* derives precisely from the dichotomy of two dialectical or *diegetical*² levels: in the first, Stephen is the protagonist of the novel, in the other, he is the narrator of his own story; in the first, we experience the novel as a *product* of creation and the basic narrative relationship is established between the narrator and his character, while on the higher level (which is already our second reading of the novel), we experience the work as a *process* of writing and the relationship we realize is between Stephen's two selves: a more experienced one, the artist we encounter on the title page, who narrates the story of the other, his earlier unexperienced self. It is as if the reader held two different books in his hand at the same time, though at first he is (must be) unaware of the deceptive quality of the work. Thus, to conceive of the novel as one that constructs itself in dialectical circles allows the reader to *redefine* the whole narrative in a new frame of reference that may clear up some of the obscure details of the (chronologically and structurally) prior fiction.

The second, extradiegetic level is not, in this particular case, independent from the diegetic level (as, for instance, it is in the presentation of the pilgrims in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*) but is a consequence of the latter; in other words the two are in a tight *interrelation*: extradiegesis is in a *dialectical* relation to diegesis, which gives way to a simultaneous existence of both narrator and character, creating an insoluble controversy, an oscillation of narrative perspectives that is characteristic of Joyce's every work. Thus, on the one hand the narrator and the character are not separable, they are the two sides of the same coin, the one is organically linked to, and interdependent of the other. On the other hand, it is no worth claiming an absolute identity of narrator and character, and emphasizing the narrator's invisibility, or a narrator "refined out of

2 Cf. Genette, Gérard: *Figures III*. Paris: Seuil, 1972. In English: *Narrative Discourse*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980. 255-56.

Genette gives a both theoretical and descriptive analysis of Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*. In his theory, according to the narrator's degree of perceptibility and the extent of his participation in the story, Genette differentiates between different (extradiegetic, [intra]diegetic, hypodiegetic, etc.) levels of narration. His term, "diegesis" is roughly analogous to the term "story" that is more frequently used in English letters. According to the definition of the narrative poetics, "story" is one of the three categories of fiction, the one that designates the narrated events, abstracted from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order, together with the participants in these events. For further investigation see: Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith: *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, London, New York: Routledge, 1983.

existence"³ since an interpretation of this sort would fail to account adequately for at least two crucial aspects of *A Portrait*: the narrator's recurring presentation of Stephen's consciousness and the various paradoxes of narration that make interpreting the details of the story and its form so difficult. Obviously there can still be disagreements concerning the precise mix of the narrator's attitudes toward the central character at any given moment of the story, but if we accept that Stephen (too) narrates, the large problem of his future as an artist can no longer be at issue.

Many critics who have written on *A Portrait* interpret the work autobiographically, claiming that it is based on details of Joyce's youth. Generally, they adduce the title as an evidence for the link between the life and the work of art: the portrait of the artist who writes the book. Unquestionably strong evidence supports this kind of autobiographical reading, but an autobiographical interpretation of a different kind, the one outlined above, is also possible, according to which Stephen Dedalus, too, is the narrator of his own story. Implicit in the story of Stephen's growth to maturity is the process by which his book emerges from previously existing texts that Stephen knows, some of which he has written himself. *A Portrait* is both the author's autobiographical fiction and the autobiography of the fictional character. It provides the portrait of both artists.

* * *

In the first episode of the first chapter (I.1.) of *A Portrait* Stephen embodies the Hegelian spirit in the embryonic condition. The primary dialectical forces of Stephen's life are, as McGrath has shown explicitly, established as early in the novel as in this very first episode. The episode and the chapter appear as a "microcosm of the whole novel." (SS 259) The scene introduces not only the symbolical and factual oppositions of Stephen's later experiences but it presents the basic narrative controversy of the whole novel as well.

The first paragraph is the first hypodiegesis in the book and the first story Stephen remembers hearing as a child:

³ Joyce, James: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, London: Wordsworth Classics, 1992. 215. Henceforth abbreviated as "AP".

Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo...
(AP 7)

The full implications of this beginning are not evident immediately. The one narrator is Stephen's "father [who] told him that story." (AP 7) Stephen is both inside and outside the father's tale; he is at once his father's listener and part of his father's tale. The tale is told him, but in the third paragraph the reader learns that "he was baby tuckoo." (AP 7)⁴ Stephen's situation here presents in small, comically, the basic situation of the novel. There is a parallel between the (splitted or double) role Stephen plays here in this small narrative (he is at once listener and character in the tale) and the one he plays in the whole book where he is at once character (on the diegetic level) and writer (on the extradiegetic one) of the story. While as child Stephen becomes part of his father's story, as adult he becomes the narrator of a tale in which his father plays a part; here Stephen is the narrator of his father's story. And since (as we learn at the end of the book) Stephen wishes to become this kind of teller (an artist), this small story presents at once the final goal, the (teleological) end of the whole novel, and as such it is at once the very beginning and the very end of the book.⁵

The first chapter as a whole gives many examples of mingling the character's and the narrator's language; the reader encounters indirect and free indirect discourse (FID) in all the four episodes of the chapter, generally emerging in moments when Stephen is alone or in a situation where he can withdraw from the others into his own thoughts. It is interesting to note, however, that there is a strict rhythm of change, a dialectical progression in the intimacy of narration.

4 The technique, analepsis or retrospection, applied at the beginning of *A Portrait* is not new in Joyce. The very first story of his volume, *Dubliners*, "The Sisters" opens similarly: the ambiguity of the first sentence, "There was no hope for him this time; it was the third stroke," (in: Joyce, James: *Dubliners*, New York, Toronto: Bantam Books, 1990. 1) can be understood only in retrospect. It seems to be a straightforward, objective, third-person narration but in the following lines the reader encounters a first-person narration - and his previous mistake.

5 Readers of Joyce do not find this kind of intermingling of beginnings and ends surprising. The device is forced to its extreme in the well-known example of *Finnegans Wake* where the very last sentence ends in the very first one of the book; and it also appears in his oeuvre as early as in the composition of *Dubliners* where the titles of the first and the last narratives ("The Sisters," and "The Dead") are interchangeable (cf. Kenner, Hugh: *Joyce's Voices* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978).

In the episodes of even numbers (2 and 4) Stephen's feelings, thoughts and consciousness are more tacitly conveyed to us, instances of free indirect speech occur on many pages of the second episode (*AP* 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 20); there are only two in the third (*AP* 35 and 36), while in the fourth we encounter again a number of presentations of inner life (*AP* 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 52, 54, 55, 59). The second and the fourth episodes of the first chapter take place in Clongowes. The dialectic of the chapter is of home/school: Stephen proceeds from family to school, from school to family and back to school, although with an always greater involvement in life – with wider and wider spheres of experience, each with its own dialectic and each overlapping the other. This is made explicit in the style of narration as well, since the instances of immediate thought presentation appear in greater and greater number as we proceed through the episodes. In school Stephen feels extremely lonely and isolated from his mates, which results in his rejection of the outer world; thus, a greater stress is laid upon his consciousness. McGrath considers this dialectic as of cold and of warm, and derives it from the hot and cold flashes Stephen feels as he comes down with a fever. "Coldness is what Stephen associates with Clongowes, where he has been shoved into the urinal ditch by Wells. Opposed to his chilly associations with his school and schoolmates [...] are Stephen's warm memories of the security of home and the even warmer fantasies of the coming Christmas holidays." (*SS* 261-2) It is in the "cold" episodes that Stephen's mind, his inner world is pushed into the foreground by means of narrative techniques. The first chapter leads him through his early boyhood and prepares him for the dialectic of puberty and adolescence which dominate the next two chapters. Narration, too, follows this progression in a way that it turns out to be one of the most essential devices for characterizing the protagonist; his intellectual uncertainties or maturity are conveyed to us by the more or less intimate presentation of his mind.

The dialectical construction of narration is maintained in the following chapters, too, though the structural strictness of the first is never overcome in them. It is only the first and the last parts that have such a privileged status as far as narrative dialectic is concerned. In the second chapter Stephen's thoughts are fewer presented and in a much less intimate style. The narrator's presence is asserted in a more explicit way. Although the mediation of Stephen's inner world is instanced many times, these are presented so that the reader cannot interpret them as Stephen's own words: we encounter verbs of consciousness, such as "felt,"

"thought," "wondered," and the like, all conveying and emphasizing as well the narrator's conspicuous presence and omniscience as Stephen's withdrawal. Another apparent device is to efface Stephen's mental and emotional life, the working of his mind, from the text: instead of the more consciousness-bound verbs, such as the ones above, his thoughts and feelings are mediated as if Stephen's mind was only a passive subject (and not the creator) of emotions and ideas, as if they were independent of him. Instead of reading, for example, "had calmed down," we encounter the formulation that his "moment of anger had already passed," (AP 78) or instead of "wonder," we read "Stephen listened to them in wonderment," (AP 80) instead of "remembered a mocking smile," "[it] came into Stephen's memory," (AP 84-5) instead of feeling no sympathy he only "listen[s] without sympathy." (AP 87) Active verbs of consciousness are replaced by more passive phrases and constructions. Possibly, the only instance of free indirect discourse occurs in a moment of great emotional vexation caused by Stephen's remembering Emma before the beginning of the Whitsuntide play. Even this is retracted by the following sentences where we are informed that his recollections are rather vague: "He tried to recall her appearance but he could not." (AP 83) He can only remember that she wore her shawl like a cowl.⁶ What I want to stress is not that Stephen has no mental life in this and the following chapters (on the contrary, his intellectual efforts are more and more shaped and mature) but that his inner world is conveyed to us in a way that it seems to be pushed to the background, creating the effect of a certain *passivity* or a subordination to another consciousness, that of the narrator.

The middle chapters of *A Portrait*, i.e. the second, third and fourth chapters, form, as a whole, the core of the narrative structure of the book. There are only slight differences in narrative style in them: a certain homogeneity characterizes the middle section of the book. McGrath, too, stresses this homogeneity by describing the chapters as governed by - less a Hegelian progression than - "Schiller's more aesthetically oriented dialectic." (SS 263) He argues that an interpretation of this kind illuminates better the specific patterns and details of these chapters, and that Joyce's idealism leaned more toward Schiller's privileging of aesthetic experience in the reconciliation of sense and spirit than toward

⁶ These words are worth having in mind since they will appear later again in the story, at the time of the composition of the villanelle, where their role will be of a much greater importance.

Hegel's more abstract realms of absolute spirit. Thus, he conceives of the second and the third chapters as being analogous to Schiller's distinction between the "sensuous drive" (*Stofftrieb*) and the formal drive (*Formtrieb*) (SS 263). The two terms, to put it bluntly, stand for, on the one hand, "the physical existence of man", his sensuous nature binding him to the laws of the nature, and on the other, for his moral and psychic life, the level of analytic reflection of his dialectical progression. Both Schiller and Hegel held that the human spirit must pass through the aesthetic phase, in which sense and spirit are equally developed, in order to pass on to the higher phases of religion and philosophy. To pass *directly* from the physical to the moral stage without passing through the aesthetic leads to a false application of reason. McGrath points out that this is precisely what Stephen makes in the third chapter: his response to the sensuous environment is to be found at the very end of the second chapter where we see Stephen in the arms of a prostitute. In the third chapter he makes the false passage from this predominant sensuousness that he finds oppressive even before his retreat sermon, to a predominance of spirit over sense without passing through an aesthetic phase (SS 264).

In the fourth chapter Stephen is on the threshold of an aesthetic phase that will balance the two impulses, the purely sensual and the purely spiritual. After the interview with the director of his school, he rejects to be a priest and returns to the sensual world. This reimmersion in the physical world is, however, different from the one in the second chapter; it is not a regression to a lower dialectical phase. At the end of the fourth chapter, in Stephen's epiphany of the girl on the strand, the two previous levels come to a synthesis, that will predominate the last section of the book.⁷

Narration, too, follows the dialectic of the development of Stephen's spiritual life. The second chapter, as described above, is the narrative representation of the *Stofftrieb* by rendering his consciousness into a certain passivity. In the third chapter of *Formtrieb* the narrator's attitude towards his central character alters: a more striking fusion of inner and outer and of character and narrator emerges in it. As we proceed through the sections of the book it begins to be more and more evident that the progression and alteration of the narrative style in the successive

⁷ McGrath argues that the description of the girl in itself conveys the synthesis: it is "sensuous but not coarse or vulgar, is an idealized sensuality - neither the gross sensuality associated with the prostitute nor the pure spirituality of the vision of the Virgin [...]. She is like the Greek statues that for Hegel embodied the perfect fusion of sense and Idea." (SS 265)

chapters is of a dialectical sort: in the chapters of odd numbers the narrative style is in an antithetical relationship to the style of the chapters of even numbers, in other words, it is always the odd chapters that present the mediation of Stephen's mind in a more intimate way and in greater and greater number, whereas the even chapters are somewhat of a withdrawal and regression of the consciousness-presentation; this alteration results in the synthesis of the fifth chapter which is in this way, on the one hand, the *end*, i.e. it is the representation of a completed dialectical circle, but on the other hand - remembering that Joyce was too much of a sceptic and that Stephen at the end of *A Portrait* is by no means a complete human being - we cannot satisfy ourselves with such a simple answer, and must interpret the last chapter rather as a *beginning* than as an end, as the beginning of a new circle of the continuous and lifelong dialectic and the beginning of a new narrative, too.

As in the case of the Christmas dinner in I.3., in III.2. the narration alternates between the external scene (the sermons) and Stephen's reaction to the outer world. Although the narrator continues to employ narrative devices introduced in the earlier chapters, there are some crucial modifications. These changes suggest the intensity of Stephen's reaction to the external world. Section III consists of an introductory talk and three sermons that take place on successive days. Instances of free indirect discourse begin to appear from the time of Stephen's walking home the first evening after the introductory talk that exercised a great influence upon him. After dinner he sinks into his inner life; he goes to the window (a place generating great intellectual and emotional vexations, as we know from other writings of Joyce, especially his short story, "The Dead") and looking out of it, the first free indirect discourse for already a long time appears: "This was the end. [...] And that was life." (*AP* 111) The device is extremely manifest here, precisely because it has been omitted for a long time already; and it indicates the beginning of a process, that of the fusion of narrator and character: the statements quoted can easily be transformed into the character's speech to himself in first person and present tense.

In the following paragraph, the narrator presents the initial sermon on death and judgement (*AP* 112-15) in a curious way. He renders it not as direct discourse, the technique he uses to report the previous introductory talk (*AP* 109-11) and the two subsequent sermons on hell (*AP* 117-24 and 127-35), but as a speech mediated by Stephen's consciousness. The brief passage of free indirect discourse acts as the preparation for this odd filtering of Father Arnall's words through Stephen's

mind. The first words of the sermon appear in the same paragraph and are intermingled with the last words of Stephen's unpronounced thoughts: there are no orthographical indications (no dashes, nor anything else) of the beginning of Father Arnall's words; it takes some time until the reader understands that he has got outside of Stephen's mind. This intermingling of his and Father Arnall's words throws some shadow upon Stephen's true vocation and may easily be considered as the sign, conveyed by the means of narrative techniques, of what McGrath has pointed out, namely that Stephen's entering the purely spiritual phase of the dialectical progression at this stage of his development is of a false sort, it is not rooted in a determined and mature belief yet. This fusion of voices has the effect that we regard Stephen as a young adult who, in search of his own identity, effaces his personality in favour of another, which, in this way is dissolved in the other's words. These words are not his own ones, he has not found his own authentic voice yet. As we go on with our reading of the novel, this idea turns out to be justified by the emergence of Stephen's real voice that is in a sharp contrast to his earlier words; it is perhaps the *germ* of his later decision to be an artist, though, of course, it is conveyed only in a very opaque and uncertain fashion. Stephen, when wandering in the streets of Dublin in search of a chapel near, wishes eagerly to confess his sins. The confession in itself demands a *creative* articulation of his sins, since the ability to confess them truly demands real emotions, a deep understanding of, and meditation upon, the sins - a process that shows many similarities to artistic creation. This is also emphasized by Stephen's sudden inward exclamation in a state of shame: "To say it in words!" (*AP* 142) In the following two chapters he proceeds toward verbality, toward his own voice; in this cry, his wish to do so is conveyed.

After the lengthy report of Stephen's consciousness during the first sermon, the alternation between the passages focusing on psyche and those focusing on scene is again established, but now the free indirect discourse has become a recurring element of the narration. The narrator employs it briefly but regularly throughout the remainder of Section III (instances occur on *AP* 116, 125, 126, 137, 138, 139, 140, 142, 146). The sudden recurrence of the technique in the narration is undeniable: these numerous instances of free indirect discourse grouped together in Section III mark a significant shift in the style. In the two remaining parts (especially in the last one) the narrator freely combines the various techniques he has used to present Stephen's mind. It is only after the reader has

become accustomed to the different modes of representing consciousness, that the narrator can begin to shift rapidly from one to the other.

The fourth chapter depicts the process through which Stephen enters the aesthetic phase. After the interview with the director of the school, Stephen rejects to become a priest, oversteps the spirituality of his religious phase and realizes that he "was destined to learn his own wisdom apart from others" (*AP* 162). The synthesis of the physical and the spiritual components of his development emerges clearly in his epiphany of the girl on the strand, experienced at a moment when he realizes his artistic vocation. (*AP* 171)

Narration in this chapter presents only very few instances of intimate rendering of Stephen's thoughts: they appear only just before the epiphany where the narrator gives us Stephen's interior exclamations, "Yes! Yes! Yes!" (*AP* 170), followed by his thoughts quoted as if they were direct discourse: "--Heavenly God! cried Stephen's *soul*, in an outburst of profane joy" (*AP* 172, my italics). On the next two pages the reader encounters several examples of free indirect discourse, a result of Stephen's newly acquired intellectual and emotional freedom. Preceding the epiphany, there is no direct mediation of the protagonist's thoughts; some immediacy may be detected in the narration on pages 158 and 159, but the effect is much weaker than before.

The subtly mingled language of the narrator and the character emerges vividly in the book's second half, the free indirect discourse together with the related techniques appear frequently from III.2. Along with the seemingly intimate presentation of Stephen's thoughts, in Section V we encounter longer and more elaborate statements to his companions than he has made earlier. His voices, both internal and external, are pushed to the foreground. At the book's close, it is primarily these voices that determine the reader's overall judgement of both Stephen's possibilities to become an artist and the possibilities of his writing his own autobiography, the portrait of the artist as a young man.

* * *

The fifth chapter is by far the longest and most complex part of the novel, though seemingly Stephen makes little progress toward maturity in either his life or his art in it. Though critics have often been puzzled by this chapter, Stephen's progress is more clear if we compare his relations with his family, peers, and teachers in this part with previous chapters, and, as McGrath argues, if we

perceive these relations in terms of the dialectical paradigms of Schiller and Hegel (SS 266). In this light Stephen still does not emerge as a mature artist or a complete being but we understand better why Joyce leaves him on the eve of his leaving Ireland for an even wider sphere of experience in Europe.

The first episode of Section V, telling a day in Stephen's life as a university student, repeats the second episode of Section I, which describes a day in Stephen's life at Clongowes. The similarities and contrasts of the two chapters are of a dialectical sort: we encounter Stephen's similar relationships with his family, schoolmates and teachers, but his experience of these relations is in a sharp contrast with the previous one. As a young boy, he had seen home and family with warmth; as a young man, however, he expects nothing from home and family but poverty of body and spirit. Likewise, whereas in Clongowes and Belvedere Stephen was persecuted by his mates and teachers, at the university he keeps himself out of their reach. In his own mind, Stephen has superimposed himself on "all the oppressive forces of his physical and mental environment that have threatened, in Schiller's terms, to fetter the aspiring spirit" (SS 267). Thus we find Stephen escaping from a physical world into the intellectual world of the villanelle and the aesthetic theory. Stephen formulates this to Lynch at one point of the chapter: "We are just now in a mental world." (AP 206) Thus, he arrives at the end of the Hegelian evolution: the whole book has been constructed so that, according to a dialectical process, each chapter negates the previous one, not annihilating it entirely, but making it the precursor for the following synthesis.

Even McGrath admits that Stephen's completion of a dialectical circle does not mean that at the end of *A Portrait* he is a complete being or artist. Joyce, as many other Modernists, could not share Hegel's optimism. He insisted that "dialectic is a continuous, lifelong process and that its goal is not to arrive at some foreordained conclusion" (SS 272). The aim is the *process* itself.

This idea is conveyed by the techniques and styles of the narration, too. Apart from the very first paragraph of *A Portrait*, discussed above, it is only in the last chapter that we see the ambiguity both of the narrator-character relationship and – as a consequence – of the relation of the diegetic and the extradiegetic levels of narration, i.e. the possibility of an interpretation according to which the two are interdependent. As in a dialectical relation, where the end is not the completion of the progression but the process itself, in narration, the end of the book is not to be detected on the last page, and in the last words of the book, but in the process of writing the book. Our concern should be less with the

written product than with the process by which it is written, on the one hand by the narrator, and on the other by Stephen. In this latter case, what we should analyse are the means by which the narrator conveys the possibility of somebody else's (Stephen's) act of writing

In the analysis of the fifth chapter I shall limit myself to interpreting only the two most revealing instances: they account for the ambiguities of this section so convincingly that no other parts of the text can compete with them. The most significant and extended example of such a fusion is precisely an act of writing, the composition of the villanelle. Even in *Ulysses* we find nothing quite like it. This part of the novel calls attention to itself with a particular force because it shows us a finished text written by a character and the narrator's curious attempt to present the process by which Stephen writes the poem. It is an extreme application of the free indirect discourse and the related techniques in fiction: to reveal a process of mind that is in itself an aesthetic creation. The attempt to present the producing of a literary text within a literary text is a highly unusual procedure. It draws our attention to the dual status of writing as being *simultaneously* product and process, and thus it presents in small the possible simultaneity of the *whole* novel as process and product. The text of the villanelle is not just the poem but the book itself. The reader's judgement about its value is less important than the role it plays: the villanelle indicates the fusion of the writing as act and the text that is written.

We encounter Stephen Dedalus waking early in the morning after a night of dreams, inspired to write. As he composes his poem stanza by stanza, the parts are presented to us successively until finally the entire poem is printed at the end of the section. In the break in the middle of this writing Stephen remembers some of his past encounters with the girl to whom he writes. The narration that presents the stanzas can be read in two ways: Stephen is involved in the composition of his poem, while the narrator is also producing his *own* texts. The printing of the whole poem at the end of the section indicates that the narrator attains an intimacy with the character in his text like the one Stephen himself experiences; it is the extreme penetration of the character's mind by the narrator.

During the discussion with Lynch in V.1., the episode preceding the writing of the villanelle, Stephen distinguishes between "three forms progressing from one to the next" into which "art necessarily divides itself": the lyrical, the epical, and the dramatic (*AP* 214). One question that has arisen in many discussions of Stephen's lyric-epic-dramatic paradigm is whether *A Portrait* is lyric or dramatic.

The answer depends on how one considers the narrative ambiguities of the novel: in this section a fusion of the two takes place; while Stephen discusses the three forms as distinct from one another, the narration combines two of them by placing the lyrical within the narration (the epical). Lyrical has become epical, when diegesis and extradiegesis are one.⁸

The ambiguity of this section arises from other narrative devices, too. The relationship of the narrator and the character emerges through a network of connections linking Stephen's act of writing to earlier and later sections of the book. While there are close connections to many other sections, the most important links join the poem to Stephen's earlier and later writings: his previous attempt to write a poem to Emma in II.2. (AP 70) and his later writing of the journal. The links backward are obvious: just before he writes the villanelle's first stanza, Stephen "turned towards the wall, making a cowl of the blanket." (AP 221) That here he is imitating Emma's much earlier act of throwing her shawl over her head to form a cowl becomes clear some lines later where we are reminded by Stephen's unpronounced thoughts that Emma "had worn her shawl cowlwise about her head" (AP 222) and by his memories of the details of the scene. The words of his recollection are nearly the same as the words we read in Section II. Sentences are, with the only exception of substituting a semi-colon for a full stop, quoted verbatim from the earlier scene:

It was the last tram; the lank brown horses knew it and shook their bells to the clear night in admonition. The conductor talked with the driver, both nodding often in the green light of the lamp.
(AP 222 and 69)

When the words are repeated, they become allusions that we recollect as the narrator's previous language at the same time as we understand them as Stephen's memories: it seems extremely odd that the narrator's authorial voice and his language of narration become the character's interior language some 150 pages

⁸ This is a more successful attempt at the fusion of literary genres than Virginia Woolf's in *The Waves*. Not long before the composition of her novel, Woolf, in her essay "The Narrow Bridge of Art", argues for the emergence of a new fictional style in which poetry, epic and drama are one.

later. As Stephen recomposes his poem he tried to write earlier the narrator is also involved in the rewriting of his earlier text.⁹

The other link points forward, to the references of time and location at the end of the journal. In order to appreciate the fullness of implications of this link, first we must first consider the ambiguities of the journal itself. At the end of the book, and the journal, the reader encounters the notation of dates and places ("Dublin 1904 - Trieste 1914", *AP* 253), and has to decide whether these references are part of the story or part of the writing (whether they belong to the product or to the process of writing). *Like the title itself*, they refer at once to both product and process, to both character and author as artists. The autobiographical basis of the dates are well-known. Joyce finished *A Portrait* in Trieste just ten years after leaving Dublin. But the autobiographical significance diminishes in no way the relevance that the dates and locations have to Stephen Dedalus's story. There is a complicated, uncanny doubling behind the apparently innocent closing.¹⁰ The strange duplication becomes apparent once the dates and the locations are both understood as referring to the author's process of writing *and* to the story of Stephen Dedalus. Although there are no exact dates provided for Stephen's activities earlier in the book, Dublin is obviously the place of the journal and much of the action and 1904 is also within the limits of probability. 1914 would be the year and Trieste the place in which Stephen completes the transforming of the journal into a book. If we consider the end of the journal as part of the process of writing, on the extradiegetical level, we can regard it no more as the end of the book, but as its beginning: in Stephen Dedalus' fictional life, which includes his life as a writer of fiction, the keeping of the journal *precedes* the completing of the book; it is prior to the book, as well as part of it, and thus it exemplifies and reinforces the already well-known technique where the end is united and continuous with the very beginning of the novel.

The poems and the end of the journal are linked in various ways as repetitions of similar scenes. Section II is joined to the villanelle *and* the journal

9 This is a belated fusion. The device is a highly complex one: it is both analeptic and proleptic. The second chapter anticipates the section of the villanelle whereas the mingling of voices can be fully understood only in retrospect.

10 The doubling has a precedent in Joyce's earlier fiction "A Painful Case", where the central character, James Duffy, has "an odd autobiographical habit which led him to compose in his mind from time to time a short sentence about himself containing a subject in the third person and a predicate in the past tense." (*Dubliners*, 84.)

by the narrator's words in II.2: Stephen "had heard their [Emma's eyes'] tale before" and "he had yielded to them a thousand times." (AP 69) In the journal we read that Stephen wants to "encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience." (AP 253) The specific lapse of time between Stephen's two attempts to write poetry also emphasizes the connection of the poems to the journal. When Stephen composes the villanelle he thinks twice that it had been "ten years since he had written verses for her," "ten years from that wisdom of children to this folly." (AP 222) The time between the composition of Stephen's first poem "To E- C-" in II.2 and his villanelle is exactly ten years. At the end of the ten years, the process of writing as the repetition and transformation of earlier texts and experiences can create a new work. At the end of a similar period of time at the journal's conclusion (1904-14), the villanelle will have been rewritten as part of a later work, the book itself.

The last chapter of the book is, thus, not an end. Our final judgement of Stephen's potentials as an artist and of the book's quality of being only in the middle of a dialectical process, that of a narrative dialectic, are determined by the techniques presented in it. Along with the extremely direct presentations of mind and the fusion of the narrator's and the character's voices, the reader finds in this chapter Stephen's longest and most elaborate statements to his companions. His voices, both internal and public, are in the foreground and are many a times nearly indistinguishable from the one of the narrator. The two, however, are not one. This is the reason why the term *narrational dialectic* is a useful one since it conveys a continuous process by which the two contradictory forces can be united *and* be considered as separate at the same time, i.e. the controversy between the theoretical exclusion of the identity of the narrator and the character in a third-person narration and our recurring experience of encountering them as *not* separate, can be dissolved in a dialectical synthesis of the two.

The term dialectic, of course, works even more straightforwardly on other levels of the story: the dialectical relation of symbols or metaphors, for instance, appears in the novel much more frequently. The reader is, however, provided with enough examples of various narrative techniques that give rise to, and justify the assumption that narrational dialectic is a main element of the work.

James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, similarly to its unification of ends and beginnings, establishes the narrator and the character's relationship in a dialectical identity of their difference. The reconciliation of seemingly irreconcilable dichotomies results in a subtly spinned texture of both

diction and ideas that is characteristic of Joyce's every writing. The complex narrative style of *A Portrait*, thus, points beyond itself and is a precursor to the large configuration of narration in *Ulysses*.

Akos Farkas:

BURGESS RE JOYCE OR BURGESS DE-JOYCED?

Anthony Burgess's fascination with James Joyce began as early as the late 1930s when the then six-former's history teacher directed his attention to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Far from looking for artistic inspiration or aesthetic precepts in the work of an as yet little-known writer, the fifteen year old read the book as an adolescent would, eager to find out about the realities of his own personal life, mundane and spiritual alike. The effect was phenomenal: young John Wilson, as Burgess was known at that time to everybody including himself, was so horrified by the "sermon on hell" in Joyce's novel that he rushed to the nearest confessional to beg for absolution and thus dodge damnation.¹ The last imaginary encounter between master and by that time also masterly disciple was part of a large-scale public event, the centenary celebrations of Joyce's birthday on 2 February, 1982, when the BBC as well as Radio Telefis Eiran broadcast *The Blooms of Dublin*, a musical version of *Ulysses* composed by Burgess himself.

In the intervening decades Burgess had come to absorb, assimilate, interpret and reinterpret the Joycean oeuvre to an extent surpassed by probably none of his fellow writers and but few of the Joyce specialists; he could justifiably claim to "have known [Joyce] longer than most of the Joyce professors" (*You've Had* 371). The numerous end-products of the interpretive process include two monographs (*Here Comes Everybody*, 1965, [the American edition under the title *ReJoyce*, 1965],

¹ Reading Joyce's passage in question "scared [Burgess] back into the Church" (Coale p. 4); for a more detailed and colourful description of the episode in Burgess's reading life see *Little Wilson*, 140-41.

Joysprick, 1973), introductions written to at least two novels by Joyce published anew (*Stephen Hero*, *Ulysses*), the editing of *Finnegans Wake* (*Shorter Finnegans Wake*, 1966), its translation into the Italian, a television show on Joyce's Dublin years and the above-mentioned musical tribute to Joyce. The sheer bulk of this work, let alone the originality and undeniable validity of many of the insights made by this sympathetic interlocutor, should be enough to impress the professional Joyce scholar - even if the professional Joyce scholar has repeatedly refused to be impressed by the work of Burgess, who in turn has repeatedly disclaimed any pretension to scholarly distinction.²

Disavowals of another nature came almost as frequently as books written on, or influenced by, the master. In *Joysprick* this self-distancing is as yet rather impersonal; here Burgess claims that "Joyce exhausted the possibilities of the interior monologue, as of so many other literary techniques" and then draws the laconic conclusion that "one Ulysses is probably enough" (*Joysprick* 60). Seventeen years later, in *You've Had Your Time* the disclaimer is more personal and rings with impatience:

I was dubious about the commission [of writing a book on Joyce later to be entitled *Here Comes Everybody*], since I saw that its fulfilment might make it too easy for critics of my own work to see me as a satellite of Joyce, which was not true. No post-Joycean novelist can learn anything from him except a certain eccentric scrupulosity in the handling of language, usually interpreted as clumsiness. His literary experiments were meant for himself alone: he drained all the possibilities of formal ingenuity in two massive novels which are not quite novels. After Joyce the novel in England had to start all over again. (*You've Had*, 98)³

The impatience is even more pronounced when Burgess makes the following comment on the fulfilment of the above-quoted prophecy reviewing the reviews of his novel *Napoleon Symphony*: "The sacred name was always coming up, as though Joyce were the only fictional innovator" (*You've Had*, 296).

² On his relations to the world of academy see his essay "Writer Among Professors" in: *Blondes* pp. 8-11.

³ A view shared by Kingsley Amis (and the Joyce-critic Matthew Hodgart by whom the former is quoted) who claims that Schoenberg and Joyce were "men of enormous talent, each of whom helped to destroy his art" Cf. Hodgart p. 5. Amis's remark may be a reiteration of T. S. Eliot's opinion according to which Joyce had "destroyed his own future" Quoted by Ellmann p. 542.

Given the fact that Burgess himself "admits" to having patterned the quasi-mythological structure of his first novel *A Vision of Battlements* on *Ulysses*, and to having "tried to go further than Joyce" at one point in *The Worm and the Ring* (*Little Wilson* 363, 369 respectively) it seems strange that he should take to task his own critics for finding correspondences between his own fictional work and that of Joyce. Still in the same autobiography, he chastises his contemporaries for not attempting to bridge the gap between serious literature and entertainment the way Joyce did and recommends Joyce's joyful literary practices for emulation to fellow writers,⁴ and elsewhere he suggests that even our sub- and extra-literary existence is being altered by the work of the arch-innovator, because with time "Joyce will flow through the arteries of our ordinary, non-reading, life, for a great writer influences the world whether the world likes it or not" (*Here Comes* 25-6). Why then, one asks, should Burgess have demurred at his critics insistence that his own fairly extraordinary, reading and, especially, writing existence has also been heavily affected by the same influence?

One possible reason for his objections could be the simple fact that Burgess had indeed not been significantly influenced by Joyce, that however much he might have admired *Ulysses*, *Finnegans Wake* and the rest of the Joycean canon, he had managed to 'compartmentalize' himself isolating his reading from his writing capacities. If, after all, having reviewed scores of novels written by contemporaries in his earlier years, he could forswear reading them as a mature writer, in order to avoid being influenced, then why should it be unthinkable that he was also capable of distancing himself from Joyce *while* he was reading him. Well, whatever mental exploits Burgess, this athlete of the mind, might have been capable of, the hard evidence of the written work, the evidence of his own thirty-one novels are there for anybody to see how much, or how little, he managed to avoid stepping in the footprints of the inimitable master.

Unfortunately - or fortunately - this evidence seems to suggest that, irritating as it may be for Burgess, it is not only in the two above-mentioned novels listed by himself that one can distinctly feel the much-contested influence. With a little exaggeration, one could go so far as to assert that the Joycean influence permeates the whole of Burgess's fictional output and affects every possible aspect of his

4 This is what he says on that head: "The inability to entertain is supposed by some to be an aspect of high seriousness. The trouble with most of my contemporaries, in my view, is that they do not seem to have heard of James Joyce." *You've Had* p. 74

creative work. Many of these correspondences have been explored by Burgess's monographers Geoffrey Aggeler and Samuel Coale, and such occasional papers as a 1971 publication by M. J. Friedman or my own contribution to a conference on English studies in 1993.⁵ What one can cull from these scholarly analyses is that Burgess has very consciously exploited the Joycean technique of mythopoeic structuring - either used in high seriousness to superimpose a pattern suggesting significance on the maze of banality which is our shallow everyday existence⁶, or, jokingly, in the manner of the mock-heroic epic, to underscore the very same smallness and triteness of our lives through its juxtaposition to the grandiosity of the original epics used⁷; that Burgess has gone even further than Joyce in experimenting with the musicalisation of prose; that - partly related to this - he has had a predilection for wordplay in general and punning in particular; and that he has been preoccupied with certain themes and motifs - eg. eschatology versus scatology, artistic versus divine creation, independence of will versus loyalty to tradition (especially tradition represented by the Mother Church and the fatherland), and that he has not stopped short of taking for a ride a few of Joyce's hobby horses, such as his theories concerning the biographical background of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *King Lear* or that the eucharist may evoke associations of cannibalism.⁸ In the paper cited above the author of this article even drew up a table of correspondences between the individual chapters in *Ulysses* and apparently matching novels written by Burgess.

I am sure that with sufficient familiarity with the two authors' respective writings and with some degree of inventiveness anyone could go on adding to this list of borrowings and correspondances. A good further example could be the way Burgess goes one step further than Joyce in that the latter "merely" uses proper names as common nouns where the former turns them into verbs; this is Joyce: "A husky fifenote blew. / Blew. Blue bloom is on the / gold pinnacled hair" (*Ulysses* 269); "Mr Canvasser Bloom was heard endeavouring to urge, to *mollify*, to restrain" (*Ulysses* 434; italics mine); and here is Burgess with his not-so-

5 Cf. Aggeler, *Anthony Burgess and The Comic Art of Anthony Burgess*, Friedman, Coale, and Farkas.

6 Coale, Farkas

7 Aggeler, *Anthony Burgess*

8 For the latter see my paper "Anthony Burgess and James Joyce."

hidden reference to Caroline Spurgeon the famous Shakespeare scholar in *Nothing Like the Sun*: "[beneath the Clopton Bridge flows] the spurgeoning black-eddy⁹.

Beyond revelling in such curiosia, it is worth mentioning that the delinquent anti-hero Alex in Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* may not be a far cry from the arrogantly disrespectful, obscene and sometimes - at least verbally - violent character of Malachi (Buck) Mulligan in *Ulysses*. The similarity is remarkable between the diction of Stephen Dedalus's friend Buck, wherein the mockingly archaic alternates with the affected childish, and Burgess's character Alex's brilliantly offensive lingo, which also mixes the mock-Jacobean with the quasi-infantile. "Baddybad Stephen lead astray goodygood Malachi," says Mulligan (*Ulysses* 450) - Alex crunches for breakfast his toast dipped in "jammiwam and eggiweg" (*Clockwork Orange*, 44)¹⁰; Mulligan warns his friend Stephen of Bloom's assumed homosexuality with the words "O, Kinch, thou art in peril. Get thee a breechpad" (*Ulysses*, 229)¹¹ - "O my brothers" addresses Alex his reader (listener?) whilst narrating his story to "thee and thine" (*Clockwork Orange*, throughout).

The significance of character-drawing in general goes far beyond the importance of the parallelism Stephen and Alex. Why I find this matter so important is because the difference between Joyce's and Burgess's methods of treating their characters, especially the minor ones, the figures who people the background against which the protagonists play out their leading roles, may well be at the crux of the real difference between the two novelists' literary practices and the two divergent types of aesthetic underlying these practices.

What follows here may strike Joyce's admirers as somewhat heavy-handed, therefore I quote two authorities whose understanding of, and even admiration for, Joyce's work was no less than anybody else's. My first source is an early mentor of Joyce's, the eminent critic of the age William Archer, the second being none other than Anthony Burgess himself. Here is part of a letter Archer wrote to Joyce concerning *A Brilliant Career*, the drama the young writer had sent Archer for consideration:

9 Quoted by Aggeler, *Burges the Artist* p. 75

10 It is worth mentioning that Burgess himself quotes the "baddibad" tag in his *Joysprick*, p.121, which indicates that this kind of wordplay and the attitude behind it was very much in the back of his mind.

11 This is also quoted by Burgess in *Joysprick*, p. 41.

On the whole [...], you seem to me to be deficient as yet in the power of projecting characters so as to seize upon the reader's attention and kindle his imagination.

(Quoted by S. Joyce; *My Brother's Keeper*, p. 128)

That criticism, of course, was levelled at a very early, and hence immature, piece by Joyce; however, what Burgess has to say about the minor characters in his fiction concerns Joyce the artist as a mature man:

Most lovers of Joyce's pre-*Wake* work will reluctantly admit that the bulk of the supporting cast of Dubliners in *Ulysses* have not recovered from the paralysis they are suffering from in the short stories where they first appear. [...] [T]he general effect of the *Ulysses* background [...] is strangely unvital.

(*Joysprick*, p. 42)

Harsh words, one might say, but they may not be as offensive as they seem if we consider that they may not be entirely groundless - telling, say, Mina Douce and Lydia Kennedy or Lyster and Magee in *Ulysses* apart is indeed no easy task for the non-expert - and, more importantly - that Burgess's unfavourable criticism is based on assumptions about what fiction should accomplish very different from the principles underlying Joyce's practice. The divergent assumptions referred to here are explicated by Burgess himself in a note on his own *The Worm and the Ring*.¹² He starts off with his own novel and then goes on to compare Joyce's artistic temperament to his own:

The realism overcame the symbolism. This usually happens when the novelist possesses, which Joyce did not, a genuine narrative urge. It requires a perverse devotion to sheer form to hold up action while the symbols sound. The perverseness is most spectacularly visible in 'The Oxen of the Sun' episode of *Ulysses*, where the meeting of Bloom and Stephen, immensely important to the narration, is occluded by a series of literary parodies which serve the representation of the growth of the embryo in the womb. Could anything be more demented and yet more admirable?

(*Little Wilson*, 368)

¹² A novel whose dreary setting and drab subject matter are in sharp contrast with its Wagnerian mythology.

The distinction made here is clear: the claims of realism are pitted against those of symbolism; the narrative urge, the urge to tell a straightforward story, is at variance with the urge to bedazzle the reader with the fireworks of stylistic wizardry. The two urges are of course not mutually exclusive as they can be, and indeed often are, present in the same work, but one or the other does tend to control most individual works and, in turn, to dominate the entire work of a given writer. One does not have to be a true Joyce-scholar in order to decide which one of these urges dominates Joyce's work: no doubt it is the "symbolic", rather than the narrative urge. With Burgess it is more difficult to tell. There is little doubt that he is right when, comparing his own fiction to the work of Graham Greene's, he concludes that he "had elected the Joycean way in the sense of deliberate hard words (to check the easy passage of the reader, in the manner of potholes on a road) and occasional ambiguity," as opposed to Greene, who "had made the popular novel of adventure his model" (*You've Had*, 358). And yet, one can safely say that potholes notwithstanding, most of his work - with the possible exception of *A Clockwork Orange*, *Nothing Like the Sun*, *Napoleon Symphony*, and *MF* - provides the reader with relatively smooth surfaces to drive along: symbolism here, hard words there, Burgess's novels do possess the kind of psychological realism and, especially, the kind of narrative pull which much of Joyce's work partly or completely lacks. If the above-mentioned experimental novels of Burgess cater for the tastes of an audience grown up on Joyce's artistic experimentation, there is hardly anything in the latter's work which could appeal to a much broader readership ever-eager to follow the exciting yarn spun by the expert story-teller of Burgess's type; in other words, Joyce would never have dreamt of writing a spy story, not even a "spiritual" one like Burgess's *Tremour of Intent*, a virtual *roman à clef* such as *Earthly Powers* or a historical novel in the genre of, say, *Any Old Iron*. If Burgess is always out to entertain, Joyce - however entertaining people like Burgess himself may find him - could not care less. If Burgess has always had an eye on the best-seller chart,¹³ Joyce's weak eyes were strongly fixed on his quasi-religious calling as an artist.

Joyce's unwavering loyalty to his art and nothing but his art is amply attested by his work and by his copiously documented biography, so it is only by way of a reminder that I refer to the testimony of *A Portrait of the Artist* and of the

¹³ Witness his many pieces on, and references to, the topic of "literary trash" (eg. "Prolefeed", "The Boredom of SF", "Tripe?" - in: *Blondes*).

biographical monographs *James Joyce* and *My Brother's Keeper*, the latter two by professor Richard Ellmann and Joyce's brother Stanislaus, respectively. This is, for example, how Stanislaus Joyce sums up James Joyce's attitude to popularity: "[U]nlike his friend Italo Svevo, who was disappointed at not being a popular success, my brother never cared a rap who read him" (*My Brother's Keeper*, 54). Unlike Svevo, says Stanislaus Joyce, and very much unlike Burgess, we might add, who is half-embarrassed, but also half-pleased by being a popular success or at least by having the kind of cult following that some of his work (most notably *A Clockwork Orange*, especially its film version) has generated.¹⁴

Here I have only been able to briefly suggest, rather than thoroughly demonstrate, what I see as the major difference between the fictional world of Burgess and that of Joyce, arguably the greatest influence on the former. Endeavouring to fully explore the reasons behind these differences, namely behind the different attitudes to character drawing, the relative importance attached to narrative flow versus formal experimentation and to popular success, would be an even more hopeless task within the confines of this paper. And yet, it would be less than satisfactory to altogether forgo any attempt to at least indicate what these reasons might be. These reasons then appear to be related partly to the different statuses of the two writers and, possibly, to the difference between the aura, the intellectual-spiritual atmosphere of the two ages in which they each worked. Risking the charge of oversimplification, I suggest that while James Joyce could never have grown into what we know him as without the kind of patronage which allowed him to pay little attention to pecuniary considerations, Anthony Burgess is the archetypal professional whose very career as a full-time writer started, according to his own account, at least partly due to financial pressures (*Little Wilson*, 448). Far be it from the author of these lines, veteran member of an imaginary Burgess fan-club, to suggest that one of the most significant, if not *the* most significant, figure of contemporary English fiction was more of a money-making professional than an artist or, conversely, to claim that Joyce was an amateur, but I do believe that the former has always been more willing to recognise the demands of the market place than the latter.

14 The novel *The Clockwork Testament or Enderby's End* depicts a situation very similar to the one Burgess himself found himself in after the film version of his earlier *A Clockwork Orange* was released (cf. *You've Had* p. 285).

As for the intellectual climate referred to above, the modernist writer regarded his art as something sacred and therefore high above the philistine world of the market place and its pseudo-art (even if this philistine world happened to serve him with his subject matter); the artist of the post-modern aura, however (to resort to this somewhat over-used term), seems to have far fewer inhibitions when it comes to drawing on the devices of sub- or quasi literary genres. And while Joyce is undeniably one of the greatest figures of modernity, Burgess (alongside Vladimir Nabokov or John Barth, who have also freely availed themselves of some of the devices that the various sub-genres of the paperback novel had to offer) can be seen as a fore-runner of post-modernism: another reason why Burgess has had relatively fewer qualms about being accessible to the uninitiated.

One last qualifying remark does not seem to be out of place. Without the intention of retracting any of the arguments regarding the differences between the nature of Anthony Burgess's work and that of his half-admitted paragon James Joyce, I would like to emphasise that what the former had to learn from the latter and what he emulated thereof in his practice far outweighs all that he ignored or discarded of the Joycean heritage. But that was the subject of an earlier and will possibly be the subject of a later study.

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Rita Horvátb

ON ANNE SEXTON'S *TRANSFORMATIONS*: INNER STRUCTURE AND THE "QUEST MOTIF"

Anne Sexton's fifth volume of poetry, in which she retells seventeen of the Grimms' fairy tales, was written within an eight-month period in 1970. This was an extremely productive time in her life, similar in its intensity to her first "binge" of creativity which resulted in the poems constituting *To Bedlam and Part Way Back* and *All My Pretty Ones*. At this time she was working simultaneously on three different books: *Transformations*, *The Book of Folly*, and *The Death Notebooks*. It is valid to say that during this peak period of her life, which coincides with a traditionally reevaluating, summarizing period, viz. she was forty two at the time, she re-addressed important questions which had concerned her before. Among other crucial problems which the poet deals with again is the motif of the quest, its role, aim and necessity. Anne Sexton's drives, her devices, and even the target of her inquiry changed over the years from being scientifically psychological toward being more transcendental, but the desperate intensity and her commitment to the painful but promising quest for some kind of meaning or truth remained the same.¹ Naturally, in order to follow the changes, she rethought from time to time her attitude to this process, which was tormenting not only for herself, but for her loved ones and for the audience as well.²

1 "The insistence on the conduct of the quest [...] may be taken as a distinctive trait identifying her own voice within the confessional canon." Cf. Marras 30. Diana Hume George's choice of title for her book, *Oedipus Anne*, is intended to emphasize this aspect of Anne Sexton's poetry, rather than the other obvious Freudian connotation.

2 Middlebrook's biography tells us that Anne Sexton's extremely creative period in 1970 was also a mentally very troubled one, although it was kept under control Cf. Middlebrook 333-336.

Her new approach to the quest motif is one of the major themes of the first poem of the book *Transformations*, "The Gold Key" (Sexton 223-224), which is extremely important since it serves as a general prologue to the rest of the poems. In order to understand and appreciate the novelty of her view about this important issue, it is necessary to review the stages of the whole development of the quest motif.

In 1968, in the course of an interview to the question, "Do you feel that writing about the dark side of the human psyche takes a special courage?" she replied: "Of course, but I'm tired of explaining it. It seems to me self-evident. There are warnings all along the way. 'Go - children - slow.' 'It's dangerous in there.' The appalling horror that awaits you in the answer."³.

It looks as if the same kind of "tiredness" comes across from "The Gold Key" as well. In the poem she merely states the fact that the inquiry is necessary, it is a natural life-function:

Let me present to you this boy.
 He is sixteen and wants some answers.
 He is each of us.
 I mean you.
 I mean me.
 [...]

 we must have the answers.

Anne Sexton herself speaks about this kind of duality in the prologue preceding "Red Riding Hood":

Many are the deceivers:

[...]

 And I, I too.

 Quite collected at cocktail parties,

 Meanwhile in my head

 I'm undergoing open-heart surgery.

(Sexton, 1981:269).

Anne Sexton frequently used three periods as punctuation, so to indicate ellipsis I place brackets around the periods.

3 Kevles 6.

The fact that the boy "wants some answers" characterizes him in the same way as his age. Even the punctuation, the frequent use of periods at the ends of short sentences, conveys the feeling of firmness. The slight irony incorporated in the phrase, "This boy!" (This boy!/Upon finding a nickel/he would look for a wallet./This boy!), comments only on the impatient insatiability of the inquirer, not on the act itself. Anne Sexton does not spend time explaining and defending the necessity of the quest, she does not even emphasize its heroic nature. She did that thoroughly in her first volume, in the motto and also in the poem which refers directly to the motto: "For John, Who Begs Me Not to Enquire Further." (Sexton 34-35). The motto itself is an extract from a letter of Schopenhauer to Goethe dated November 1815:

It is the courage to make a clean breast of it in face of every question that makes the philosopher. He must be like Sophocles's Oedipus, who, seeking enlightenment concerning his terrible fate, pursues his indefatigable enquiry, even when he divines that appalling horror awaits him in the answer. But most of us carry in our heart the Jocasta who begs Oedipus for God's sake not to inquire further... (Sexton 2).

The importance of "For John, Who Begs Me Not to Enquire Further" is emphasized by its position as the opening poem of the second part of *To Bedlam and Part Way Back*. In this poem Anne Sexton gently, patiently, even a little bit timidly explains why she writes about such embarrassing and personal subjects. This poem on one level is a direct answer to John Holmes, her mentor, who tried to persuade her out of publishing the intensely personal poems which reveal so much about her own family and her mental illness⁴. The poem actually accomplishes much more: it is Anne Sexton's defence and justification of the confessional genre.

She lists accurately the charges: the ugliness ("Not that it was beautiful"), the limitedness in size and scope and the insignificance of a personal view ("It is a small thing / to rage in your own ball", "there is no lesson here", "narrow diary of my mind"). The last quotation contains a nicely interrupted phrase, narrow minded, which reveals the insulting nature of the accusations as well. Against all this she offers two arguments to support her efforts. First, that she "found some order there", which according to a letter to W. D. Snodgrass is a great need of

⁴ Sexton - Ames 58-60

hers: "my own need to make form from chaos."⁵ Then she names the main, the most powerful reason, which is that she believes her poetry has immediate utility for others:

that the worst of anyone
 can be, finally,
 an accident of hope.
 [...]
 There ought to be something special
 for someone
 in this kind of hope.
 (Sexton 34-35)

To strengthen this argument in the line "or my own selfish death" she indicates that the only charge which she feels herself guilty of is selfishness. She also humbly admits that the starting point was her own closed universe but "Then it was more than myself, / it was you, or your house" Later, in "The Gold Key" as well, she feels necessary the use of this warm, emphatically individual manner of generalization: "I mean you. / I mean me" (Sexton 223) or "My face, your face" (Sexton 35) in order to establish a very personal contact, a bonding.

Anne Sexton's poetry has a general quality of tenderness. To a certain degree tenderness is present almost in all of her poems. She herself felt this, in an interview she compared herself to Sylvia Plath: "She had dared to write hate poems, the one thing I had never dared to write. [...] I think the poem 'Cripples and Other Stories,' is evidence of a hate poem somehow, though no one could ever write a poem to compare with her "Daddy"⁶. However, those poems are very rare in which this tenderness sets the basic tone. "For John, Who Begs Me Not to Enquire Further" is one of these rare works.

One of the main reasons for her gentleness is not that she is not sure of being right, but that she needs the love and approval of her beloved mentor, and more widely, the approval of her readers. Maxine Kumin interprets this poem as an attempt "to seek to make peace"⁷. With her tenderness she gives weight to the expression in the above cited motto, that we carry Jocasta "in our heart", which means simultaneously the internalization of common fears and values and our

⁵ Sexton - Ames 43.

⁶ Kevles 12.

⁷ Kumin, "How It Was" XXIV.

love for them. Anne Sexton goes as far as to say that if the reader is not ready to receive her gift, she will stop writing, she will stop throwing her insights at us:

And if you turn away
 because there is no lesson here
 I will hold my awkward bowl,
 with all its cracked stars shining
 like a complicated lie,
 and fasten a new skin around it
 as if I were dressing an orange
 or a strange sun.
 (Sexton 34-35)

The images which express her "generous" offer are remarkably ambivalent. Indications of opposites like the sun and stars, night and day, undressing at night and dressing up in the morning, etc. are present. Also there is a great tension created by the antagonism between the cruelty directed toward her own self, the pain of the vivisection conducted, and the tender protection directed toward others, which manifests itself even in a readiness to hide the results of the brutal inquiry if others are scared away by all the ugliness and pain involved. However, by rendering the image "dressing an orange" instead of peeling it, she stresses the unnaturalness of this act. Moreover, in the last part of the poem she restates the advantages of her poems and she even adds a warning by calling attention to a very possible motivation for our intense rejection: our own fears, because we see ourselves in her troubles. We are very ready to make the necessary connection.

At another level of the poem she shows her own vulnerability, as if to emphasize the heroic aspect of her determination in order to show its value. She compares her delicate head to a glass bowl which she taps against the wall. She even caresses it by saying "It is a small thing," which phrase, despite the punctuation, simultaneously refers to the scale of the quest and to her head. The punctuation merely sets the primary direction of the reader's train of thought.

At the time of writing *Transformations* she wasn't interested in the heroic nature of the quest any longer. Her opinion changed in another respect as well. In "The Gold Key," she states that the poems are merely devices to conduct the search: the key opens "this book of odd tales," and not the means to change the reality that we discover with their help. This view is drastically less ambitious than her previous direct action-provoking one, as can be illustrated by the following statement of hers:

That poem about losing his daughter brought me to face some of the facts about my own life. I had lost a daughter, lost her because I was too sick to keep her. After I read the poem, "Heart's Needle," I ran up to my mother-in-law's house and brought my daughter home. That's what a poem should do - move people to action.⁸

In the book *Transformations*, the narrator, "the middle aged witch," accomplishes brilliantly what she is contracted for. During the interpretation and retelling of seventeen fairy tales, she discovers extremely important social and psychological truths. For example, she investigates and exposes the terrible and degrading roles forced on women. The speaker does not offer any solution, but she believes or hopes that for others the sharp presentation of the devastating situation can work as an alarm, as an urge to change it. A positive outcome is possible but she also lets us know that for her personally this quest ends in total defeat. We can learn this from the last poem of the collection: "Briar Rose (Sleeping Beauty)" (Sexton 290-295). This demonstrates that the result of the essential quest is uncertain. The discovered and carefully articulated truth can be empowering, but it can be paralyzing as well. This will be addressed in detail later.

Another possible reason for not spending time on explaining the role of the quest, besides the "tiredness of explaining," could be the fact that the primary audience of the poems are fellow mental patients. In this way she addresses directly this part, this aspect of the readers, *viz.* the prospective mental patient. And on that point there is nothing to lose, the only positive action one can take is the search for some kind of truth. In other words, to take on the task of a thorough analysis of present and past, the mental, personal and social situations which brought him/her there.

The total failure of the thoroughly conducted scientifically psychological quest shown in *Transformations* brought about a completely new attitude of Anne Sexton to the quest. One can detect that the search for God, a previously latent theme, becomes her main concern in the last three books she prepared for publication: *The Book of Folly*, *The Death Notebooks* and *The Awful Rowing Toward God*. The opening poem of *The Death Notebooks*, "Gods" (Sexton 349), shows it in summary.

⁸ Kevles 8.

In the poem Anne Sexton enumerates the inevitable stages of a heroic, large-scale quest, which is at the same time naive, ordinary, and above all ridiculous. She begins the search for gods according to a child's imagination, and rushes through to find answers in science, art, other belief systems, fashionable Eastern religions, and pantheism. The poem is ironic and self-ironic, as it describes so accurately the stages of this intellectual journey experienced by many who grow up in a western, Judeo-Christian based cultural tradition and value-system. In my opinion the most shockingly ironic and accurate part is: "She prayed in all the churches of the world / and learned a great deal about culture." The major difference between this and her earlier attitude toward the process of the quest is not the change of goal, but that she is now searching for something which is entirely outside of her, an objective truth. She is not taking an active part any longer in the creation of the truth she is looking for. The only action she takes is the ridiculous and totally unnecessary monumental search. The needlessness of "going out" is stated, since at the end she finds the gods in her own lavatory. On the one hand, Anne Sexton insists on her earlier premise that the places where truth can be discovered are not "beautiful", but disgusting and shameful. She creates extra tension by using the most distinguished word for the bathroom. On the other hand, it is entirely outside of her self. It means that looking out is necessary even if "going out" is not.

Now let us concentrate on the *Transformations*. Fairy tales have been in the center of public interest in the second half of the twentieth century. Naturally, this culmination was preceded by a long tradition represented by Freud, Jung, Walt Disney, etc. The turn to this subject can be illustrated with the massive volume of works done in the sixties and seventies, widely ranging in style, genre, and aim, from a scientific analysis, through experimental fiction, to literature. Works hall marking this tendency include Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Donald Barthelme's *Snow White*⁹, and Bruno Bettelheim's epoch-making book, *The Uses of Enchantment*. Bettelheim approaches fairy tales from a single psychoanalytical point of view, that is, he investigates the ways in which these tales help children to overcome the psychological obstacles that growing up imposes on them. They address such severe problems as Oedipal conflicts, separation, individuation, sibling rivalry, parental rejection, sexual awakening, oral fixation, fear of being annihilated, and so on. Bruno Bettelheim proves that,

9 Middlebrook 333.

first of all, the tales take the children's problems very seriously, and secondly, that they provide models, and show the possibility of overcoming their difficulties.

The heated debates which *The Uses of Enchantment* provoked gave yet another strong impulse to the thorough analysis of all aspects and implications of fairy tales. On the one hand, there are several other possible and in fact necessary points of view, like the ethnographic, historical¹⁰, literal, etc., approaches. On the other hand, a crucially important body of criticism of Bettelheim's work has been done by feminist and Marxist scholars who accepted one of Bettelheim's main points, that these tales help children to integrate themselves into society, to understand and internalize its value-system, and are concerned about and appalled by the values that are encoded in the tales and reinforced in new generations. They realized that fairy tales, as effective part of the socialization process, help to preserve the social and gender status quo¹¹. In other words, they convey negative values things as well as positive ones. For example, they prescribe restricted social roles for women.

Thus by dealing with fairy tales, Anne Sexton met a deep need of the public. This was the main reason for the resounding success of the collection. Not only did it turn out to be Anne Sexton's most popular book, it was also adapted and staged quickly as an opera by the Minnesota Opera Company.

The funny colloquial language used and the pop art¹² style she employs indicate unquestionably that the book was intended to be popular. However, precisely because of the easily perceptible differences from her earlier works, her publishers and the poet were afraid at first of the reaction of the audience¹³. Thus Anne Sexton was forced to think over thoroughly her relationship toward this book. This is reflected in a charming letter addressed to Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., in which she asks him to write an introduction to her *Transformations*.

The enclosed manuscript is of my new book of poems. I've taken Grimms' *Fairy Tales* and "Transformed" them into something all of my own [...] I feel my *Transformations* needs an introduction telling of the

10 Cf. Darnton.

11 Cf. Bottigheimer, Gilbert - Gubar, Franz.

12 She connects her work to pop art by the last lines of "The Gold Key":

As if an enlarged paper clip
could be a piece of sculpture.
(And it could.)

13 Sexton - Ames 359.

value of my (one could say) rape of them. Maybe that's an incorrect phrase. I do something very modern to them (have you ever tried to describe your own work? I find I am tongue-tied). They are small, funny and horrifying. Without quite meaning to I have joined the black humorists. I don't know if you know my other work, but humor was never a very prominent feature... terror, deformity, madness and torture were my bag. But this little universe of Grimm is not that far away. I think they end up being as wholly personal as my most intimate poems, in a different language, a different rhythm, but coming strangely, for all their story sound, from as deep a place [...]14

The letter shows clearly that Anne Sexton was very well aware of the fact that, although the book *Transformations* is different from her earlier works, it still fits coherently into her oeuvre.

The organic continuity in terms of subject matter between Anne Sexton's earlier works and *Transformations* was ensured by her method of selecting tales to "transform."¹⁵ She describes this in an 1973 interview:

...and if I got, as I was reading it, some unconscious message that I had something to say, what I had fun with were the prefatory things, ... that's where ... I expressed whatever it evoked in me - and it had to evoke something in me or I couldn't do it.¹⁶

It is remarkable that Anne Sexton, whose valuable and psychologically valid insights Bruno Bettelheim praised¹⁷, and whose work antedates his approach and the bulk of scholarly analyses provoked by it, is concerned simultaneously with the psychological and social aspects of the tales. Moreover, she is able to ensure that the psychological content of the tales and the social criticism coincide and amplify each other's shocking effect. This achievement is most evident in her obsession with food and devouring. This theme is the keynote of the book.¹⁸ The tales are jam-packed with the imagery of food and eating. Among the senses, taste and touch are addressed and whipped up by the tales most often. Thus the close connection between infantile oral fixation and consumer society presents itself

14 Quoted by Sexton - Ames 367.

15 The title was suggested by Maxime Kumin. Cf. Kumin "A Friendship Remembered" 237.

16 Hall 92.

17 Bettelheim 412.

18 "As Sexton noted to friends, fairy tales - both the originals and her own - were full of food imagery and mouth imagery, and the theme is keynoted in the dedication of *Transformations*: 'To Linda, who reads Hesse and drinks clam chowder'" Cf. Middlebrook 335-336.

naturally. The society she presents is an ultimately dreary, violent, and infantile one, in the sense that oral fixation /consuming has such an important role. One feels that to be a devourer or to be devoured, or both, are the only options, as in the case of the witch in "Hansel and Gretel" (Sexton 286-290). Infantilism manifests itself in the close connection between eating, killing and sexuality. In other words, the world Anne Sexton shows us has the "id"¹⁹ as its main governing force, and the "id's" needs hide behind all actions.

Another marvelous poetical achievement of Anne Sexton is that her fairy tale versions act on both the conscious and unconscious levels of the reader's mind. On one hand, by interpreting the tales she forces the readers to understand some psychological and social messages which she articulates for him/her, on the other hand, by retelling the tales quite faithfully in terms of plots, she lets them communicate their messages to his/her unconscious as well.

We know from Maxine Kumin that Anne Sexton wanted to know, and thus to analyze the original Grimm tales, so she asked Kumin's "daughter to translate and retranslate some tales from the German so that she could be sure she had gotten every final variant on the story"²⁰. This shows that the real challenge is to show that the tales contain extremely personal meanings for the poet as they are, they do not need to be altered, only interpreted. This conception is yet another answer of Anne Sexton to the common charge against her which she mentioned in "For John, Who Begg Me Not to Enquire Further," namely that she was concerned with too small, too personal problems. She calls attention to the fact that she could take traditional material intact from the common heritage of our western Judeo-Christian culture, something which is unquestionably outside her personal history, and she could demonstrate that it still concerns her.²¹ Thus she implies the universality of her own experience.

To increase the feeling of familiarity and also as a device of interpretation Anne Sexton modernizes the tales. It is not only the language which is twentieth century, but to understand her images and allusions one has to be familiar with the twentieth century culture, especially with its great traumas. For example, the book is filled with references to wars, especially to the Second World War. Alicia Ostriker calls attention to the naturalness of the process of adapting tales in order

19 Pleh 179; Bettelheim 51.

20 Kumin "A Friendship Remembered" 237.

21 "Sexton's interpretations discover and release elements already implicit in the stories." Cf. Ostriker 259.

to make them locally meaningful. This is "what peasants and poets have done with traditional lore for millennia. The stories would never survive without it"²². The anachronistic language is partly responsible for the book's double impact: it shocks and entertains the reader at the same time.

Another form of modernization through bathetic humor is shown in the following passage:

Gretel,
 seeing her moment in history,
 shut fast the oven,
 locked fast the door,
 fast as Houdini,
 and turned the oven on the bake.
 The witch turned as red
 as the Jap flag.
 Her blood began to boil up
 like Coca-Cola.
 Her eyes began to melt.
 She was done for.
 Altogether a memorable incident.
 (Sexton 289)

The last statement with its cold, low-key tone contradicts the strong emotion aroused by the previous lines. Thus the last line works like a little ironic snap.

Although most of the critics emphasize the differences between Anne Sexton's earlier work and *Transformations*²³ I would like to emphasize the continuities and the similarities among her works. There is continuity not only in terms of psychological subject matter or in terms of the omnipresence of her delightful "black humor," which seemingly she herself fails to recognize²⁴, but most interestingly also in her instinctive tendency toward the symbolism and the imagery of fairy tales and her concern about women's roles. These tendencies manifest themselves clearly in her "program" poem, "Her Kind" (Sexton 11-16).

This is an early poem of hers appearing in the first book she published: *To Bedlam and Part Way Back*. It was intended to be a key poem in the first place, since Anne Sexton needed an emphatic topic-poem, around which all the other

22 Ostriker 259.

23 Ostriker 255.

24 Cf. Sexton-Ames 367; "It's about time I showed some signs of humor" (Sexton-Ames 365).

poems in the first part of the book could be organized²⁵. The poem did not only set the keynote of her first book, but it became the "program" poem of her entire oeuvre. She was well aware of the summing-up nature of "Her Kind" and used it to identify herself: she included this poem as part of the provocative, spectacular, nearly ritual beginnings of her public readings:

Anne Sexton liked to arrive about ten minutes late for her own performances: let the crowd work up a little anticipation. She would saunter to the podium, light a cigarette, kick off her shoes, and in a throaty voice say, 'I'm going to read a poem that tells you what kind of a poet I am, what kind of a woman I am, so if you don't like it you can leave.' Then she would launch into her signature poem: 'Her Kind.'²⁶

The topic of the poem is the accurate description of the awful roles available for women in our society: the witch, the madonna (the virgin, the mother, the home-maker aspects) and the whore. All these roles are presented in *Transformations* as well. The important aspect now is that she finds fairy tale images most appropriate to describe the roles: the witch's image, which dominates the first stanza, and the allusion to Snow White in the second.

The poem makes it clear that the problem with rolecasting is twofold. First of all, the roles themselves are terrifying. All of them, even those which seem to be nice at the first glimpse. For instance, the Snow White scene full of nice cozy soft words, nouns and adjectives like worm and silk also contains words to contradict these and transmit the lurking horror, such as worms and whining. The other infuriating element is the mere existence of these prefabricated roles.

Although the poem is especially powerful there is a certain feeling of tenderness about it which works against the shock of the revelation. Maybe its tenderness manifests itself only in the full and serious attention she gives to the problem. She enumerates these roles very objectively, although admitting that she knows them from inside. The mere fact that she takes the issue seriously is so unusual, and the finality accompanied with simplicity as she states: "a woman like that is misunderstood." She does not open this issue up for discussion, she simply and firmly states it. By this, she confirms a lot of female experiences, validates and provides background to a lot of thoughts and feelings. On top of it all, despite the presence of the word "I" and the continuous process of personal identification, the

25 Middlebrook 113.

26 Middlebrook XIX.

poem succeeds in giving a safe sense of unimpassioned discovery of a social law. This distance and the air of objectivity make it a perfect program poem.

The refrain, the constant identification of the speaker with those roles ("I have been her kind."), serves as a constant consolation. It feels as if she is taking the reader by the hand, and helps her to identify as well. It also emphasizes the fact that these roles are stages and can be surpassed. Although it does not promise anything positive to expect especially if we take into consideration that the last stanza's penultimate line ends with the word "to die", still the roles are so terrible that the mere fact that it can be surpassed is a relief.

The surprising order of the stanzas suggests the arbitrariness of the roles. The mentioning of many separate parts of the body (fingers, arms, tights) lends a touch of horror by alluding vaguely to an autopsy.

I wish to turn my attention back now to the book of *Transformations* and take a close look at the "bleak, devastating" roles for women available for the heroines of Anne Sexton's versions of fairy tales. "In these poems Sexton's protagonists are silenced, acted upon, and they acquiesce almost helplessly in continuing silence themselves. The devalued products of patriarchy, of a process of socialization that inscribes male power, are viewed as commodities, as objects [...]"²⁷

The young women in the stories are either "lifeless dolls" like Cinderella and Snow White, who behave exactly according to the roles prescribed for them, or if they show any sign of personality they get defeated totally, like the protagonists of "The Twelve Dancing Princesses" (Sexton 276-281) or the princess in the fairy tale "The Frog Prince" (Sexton 281-286). In the tales passivity, helplessness and beauty are rewarded, or rather seem to be rewarded, whereas actions draw severe punishment. Active, at least partly self-conscious women are seen as evil, scheming witches, and Anne Sexton renders perceptible their "well deserved" physical or spiritual punishments with great accuracy and cruelty. For example she gives graphic descriptions of the death of Snow White's stepmother:

The wicked witch was invited to the wedding feast
and when she arrived there were
red-hot iron shoes,
in the manner of red-hot roller skates,
clamped upon her feet.

²⁷ Leventen 136.

First your toes will smoke
 and then your heels will turn black
 and you will fry upward like a frog,
 [...]
 (Sexton 228-229)

and of the unbearable loneliness of Mother Gothel:

As for Mother Gothel
 her heart shrank to the size of a pin,
 never again to say: Hold me, my young dear,
 hold me,
 and only as she dreamt of the yellow hair
 did moonlight sift into her mouth.
 (Sexton 249)

However, there is one act of rebellion against the emptiness of the society depicted. Very gentle, isolated, but none the less beautiful: the tortured queen in "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (Sexton 224-229) dances, and the protagonists of "The Twelve Dancing Princesses" also choose dance as a means to rebel. In other words these active women set dancing, which represents beauty, joy, and art, against the whole mutilating patriarchal value-system.

Perfect marriages, the ultimate reward which the characters can hope for in Anne Sexton's disillusioned interpretation mean boredom, which is a death-like state, as the endings of the "The White Snake" (Sexton 229-232) and "Cinderella" (Sexton 255-258) confirm:

They played house, little charmers,
 exceptionally well.
 So of course,
 They were placed in a box
 and painted identically blue
 and thus passed their days
 living happily ever after -
 a kind of coffin,
 a kind of blue funk.
 Is it not?
 (Sexton 232)

Cinderella and the prince
 lived, they say, happily ever after,
 like two dolls in a museum case

[...]
 their darling smiles pasted on for eternity.
 Regular Bobbsey twins.
 That story.
 (Sexton 258)

Marriage can also mean imprisonment, like in the case of the princess in the tale of "The Frog Prince." Moreover, marriages are not even safe, considering the inevitable outcome stated in connection to Snow White:

Meanwhile Snow White held court,
 rolling her china-blue doll eyes open and shut
 and sometimes referring to her mirror
 as women do.
 (Sexton 229)

The main themes of the tale titled "The Maiden Without Hands" (Sexton 273-276) are misogyny and mutilation. The three ill-famed manifestations of misogyny (foot-binding, suttee, and genital mutilation), to which the women's movement has called attention, pervade Anne Sexton's work: the main image of "The Moss of His Skin" (Sexton 26-27) is suttee. Her legs and foot-binding become major images of her inventory, like a part of the first stanza of the poem "Barefoot" shows:

Loving me with my shoes off
 means loving my long brown legs,
 sweet dears, as good as spoons,
 and my feet, those two children
 let out to play naked. Intricate nubs,
 my toes. *No longer bound.*
 [Italics mine.] (Sexton 199-200)

And in "The Maiden Without Hands" she writes about mutilation. In fact not only here, since mutilation and feet are important themes in the tale of "Cinderella" as well. The protagonist of "The Maiden Without Hands" lets herself be mutilated, but Cinderella's evil stepsisters do it to themselves in order to meet the prince's requirements. This element touches upon the question of internalization of patriarchal values. Society "enables" the sisters to take an active part in their own mutilation, since that contains the possibility - not even the certainty - of a reward. Even the agents who convey these cruel values are women

who have internalized the same set of rules earlier. In this case the agent is the mother of the victims, just as genital mutilation is performed on young Kikuyu girls by older women. The chain of associations flows from the necessity and beauty of small feet, through foot binding, and restriction of movement, to disability, and "a desire to own the maiming" (Sexton 273), leads us back to "The Maiden Without Hands."

"The Maiden Without Hands" is a unique poem, in the sense that this provides the only occasion where the narrator expresses her desperate anger toward the protagonist in the prologue: "If someone burns out your eye / I will take your socket / and use it for an ashtray." It is interesting to note that with the exception of Briar Rose, the narrator is not sympathetic with the helpless female protagonists of the tales at all. She does not even take pity on them. However, she expresses her deepest sympathy and even identifies with the witch figures, with the mad and consequently defenceless Iron Hans, and with the deformed, schizophrenic and impotent Rumpelstiltskin. Moreover, she insists upon the identification, or at least on forming some kind of intensive bonding between her listeners and the victims of the Wonderful Musician, the protagonists of "The Twelve Dancing Princesses," and the middle-aged wife of the miller in "The Little Peasant" (Sexton 237-242). She evokes this directly in the prologues, and she also acts upon the need of the reader to identify with someone. The poet demonstrates that the character through whom a reader would normally penetrate the story is impossible to relate to, and by the same token, she offers a suitable candidate by assigning a problem to that character which is likely to strike us immediately. In the case of "The Little Peasant" it is the problem of staying young:

*The men and women
cry to each other.
Touch me,
my pancake,
and make me young.
And thus
like many of us,
the parson
and the miller's wife
lie down in sin.
[Italics mine.] (Sexton 237)*

The author uses exactly the same technique to ensure our identification with Mother Gothel: "A woman / who loves a woman / is forever young" (Sexton 244-245). The other way of forcing the reader to identify is the frequent use of generalizations such as are seen in the quote above or in the first lines, "Inside many of us / is a small old man," of "Rumpelstiltskin" (Sexton 233-237).

The poet also uses a peculiar, but extremely effective, method of penetrating the tales which clearly relates to the game of identification which she plays with the readers and with herself. She creates many personae, assigning separate voices to different aspects of herself, among whom the most dominating is the "middle-aged witch." An interesting example of her manipulation with her personae is that she simultaneously enumerates herself as one of the mad people she introduces in the prologue of "Iron Hans" (Sexton 249-255), and as their mother: "I am mother of the insane. / Let me give you my children."

Although my main concern in this section has been to show the terrible roles available for women in the society described by Anne Sexton, her criticism of the society goes deeper. She indicates that in this patriarchal society which she depicts everybody is trapped and the whole thing is wrong. Fear is the main motivation, the male protagonist in "The Maiden Without Hands", for example, is attracted to the maiming because he is terrified: "A desire to own the maiming / so that not one of us butchers / will come to him with crowbars." Moreover, she shows that marriage is awful for both participants. After all, they both get "painted identically blue" (Sexton 232), and become "Regular Bobbsey Twins" (Sexton 258). Men clearly oppress women in the society reflected in the tales, but they do not enjoy themselves either. This society is a trap where everybody is caught.

She refers to specific twentieth-century American problems, like putting old people away, with icy sarcasm:

On his way to the castle
he met an old old woman.
Age, for a change, was of some use.
She wasn't stuffed in a nursing home.
(Sexton 279)

(This old woman is, incidentally another example of the women who help patriarchy by betraying other women.) Anne Sexton is also concerned with social problems as old as human society itself, such as the exploitation of, and cruelty toward, defenceless people, which is also one of the main themes of "Iron Hans."

Critics who express their dissatisfaction with the editing and structuring of Anne Sexton's other books, praise these very aspects of *Transformations*²⁸. Yet even they fail to realize that there is a deep underlying structure to the collection. We can even detect a personal story through the analysis of this structure. The clues given us to conduct this analysis are in the last poem of the collection, "Briar Rose (Sleeping Beauty)," which is a unique poem in a number of ways. It is the only tale which has both a prologue and an epilogue. In fact, the ratio between tale and commentary is reversed: the commentary is considerably longer than the actual tale. In addition, Briar Rose is the only young female protagonist in the book who has a voice of her own, and whose mind the reader is allowed to see into.

The change in the proportion between tale and commentary formally mirrors a tragic and ironic shift. Also, the powerful analyzing voice of the "middle-aged witch" becomes at the end the thin voice of a frightened child. To state what happens here plainly, the narrator who has transformed sixteen fairy tales gets transformed by the last one. This means that this was the very tale which struck her: this was her tale. The truth she discovered was too overwhelming, it was powerful enough to trap her in the "time machine"²⁹ - as the poem suggests, forever.

The poem works like a whirlpool, drawing her into itself and trapping her within its circle, where all actions repeat themselves endlessly. The poem straightforwardly states that she needs to be awakened over and over again by the prince, she utters the same words every time, and the poet makes the same highly ironic comment every time, that "she's out of prison!"

The tale itself is a shocking description of incest and the feelings of the abused child. The truth she revealed is unbearable partly because of the guilt associated with it. The guilt about having invited incest to happen, having in some way initiated it. Thus her natural Oedipal feelings, because of the abusive father became her worst source of guilt. It is somewhat similar to what happens when the body's immune system does not work, so the organism is killed by the bacteria with which it normally lives in symbiosis, i.e. in a mutually nurturing and satisfying relationship.

28 Cf. Ostriker 253; Vendler 440.

29 For a deep analysis of the concepts of the different levels of time, which are present in the poem see Miller 288.

The last transformation which changes the narrator into a frightened child shows the ultimate failure of the whole inquiry. In "The Gold Key" we were invited precisely to the time "voyage" described in "Briar Rose (Sleeping Beauty)". Thus this voyage leads to total defeat for the speaker. She discovers an overwhelming truth which she cannot cope with. Desperate loneliness of the endless time loop radiates from the poem. The book seems to conclude with the feeling that it is not enough to uncover the truth if it is so devastating.

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Judit Friedrich

**TWIN ARTISTS OF NARRATION:
PETER GREENAWAY AND JOHN BARTH**

In the following essay I will offer an overview of the roles of author and reader, of creator and audience, in the works of two Postmodernist artists, representative of two narrative - as well as reflective - branches of contemporary art: film and fiction. My method will be to present phenomena, concepts, and creative artists in pairs, in the hope that a demonstration of their similarities and differences will lead to a clearer understanding of the constituting elements.

Some of my premises may need explanation. Firstly, the art of film, a relatively recent development only a hundred years old in 1995, will be examined here as a form of art that arguably belongs to the realm of narration due to its fundamentally sequential mode of presentation. Another reason for its discussion in the present context is that film is a form that in many ways seems to have taken the place the novel had occupied in the attention of audiences for the previous two centuries.

Secondly, I consider Peter Greenaway as an author, rather than a director in the strict sense, since he makes his films himself from scriptwriting to producing, although with the assistance of experts at all stages (Greenaway, 1994).

Thirdly, the choice of Peter Greenaway, a distinguished representative of contemporary British film makers, and John Barth, a celebrated American novelist, is based on the observation that their works seem to share well-researched Postmodern characteristics - especially viewed from a third point in Hungary. Evoking the magic word of intertextuality - the notion of the primacy of the interplay of texts within the mind of the reader over the isolated

interpretation of the individual work - this comparative analysis is offered as one of a number of possible readings, or, better still, as a space for the free interplay of multiple texts.

Before addressing the problems of audience and authorship separately, a brief survey of some of the most striking general similarities of Barth's and Greenaway's attitudes toward art and artistic technique might be helpful. The most important parallel feature is the emphasis both Barth and Greenaway place on form and structure. This emphasis draws special attention to the artistic arranger of elements and creator of structures, that is, to the person, as well as the abstract concept, of the creative artist, who, however, is often presented in the disguise of intellectuals or game-players, usually counterbalanced by a contrasting group of characters interested in wealth and other less subtle forms of power.

Both Barth and Greenaway have a fascination with pre-19th-century ages: their references are definitely pre-Romantic, even neo-Baroque. They do not claim the place of the Romantic author-genius, they do not claim to be honest or truthful or spontaneous, nor are they objective Realist authors; they both acknowledge the artificiality of their works, their high level of structuralisation, and their commitment to foregrounding the patterns as well as the language they are using or creating for their works.

Barth is mainly interested in the 18th Century, which becomes clear not only from the setting of *The Sot-Weed Factor* (1960, 1967) but also through the revived 18th-century epistolary novel form of *LETTERS* (1979). On the other hand, Greenaway's favourite seems to be the 17th Century. *The Draughtsman's Contract* (1982) is set in 1694, the year of the establishment of the Bank of England (MOKÉP, 1989); there are obvious references to Shakespeare in *Prospero's Books* (1991); and we see the portrayal of a 17th-century theatre production in *The Baby of Macon* (1993). There are abundant visual references to 17th-century Dutch painting, such as the re-vitalisation of Vermeer's paintings in *ZOO (A Zed & Two Noughts)*, 1985, as well as the colours and imagery of Dutch painting present in *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* (1989). Moreover, Greenaway's predilection for early baroque music underlies almost all of his films.

Both Barth and Greenaway are lost in counting and listing the ways of doing a single thing, which, once done, could be forgotten, but which not done presents countless possibilities, looms above the horizon, and stays with us. For

Greenaway windows, telephones, bathrooms, and methods of murder¹ are phenomena to be catalogued or alphabetised, while Barth collects and displays methods of storytelling, narrative situations, and varieties of possible discourses.

Collecting seems to be an important Postmodern feature in general, as a way to avoid making a decision in favour of one piece, as well as a metaphor for the hoarding tendencies of society (cf. John Fowles' *The Collector*, 1963, or Bruce Chatwin's *Utz*, 1988²). Similar attitudes in the creative process seem to result in producing variations, for example by presenting characters in several slightly different versions. Authors can multiply characters, for example, by recycling myths - such as Greenaway's version of the Virgin and Child in *The Baby of Macon* or Barth's versions of mythic heroes - facilitating a comparison of model and imitator, archetypal image and individual aspiration.

Another form of multiplication is the introduction of a basic fictional character in somewhat modified forms - a frequent device in Barth's works, also appearing as the three Cissies in Greenaway's *Drowning by Numbers* (1988) - demonstrating the multiplication of the self in its different approaches to a problem, as well as in confrontation with its other versions.

A form of multiplication that almost resembles cloning is the doubling of characters by the introduction of twins several times over in both *oeuvres*, for further emphasis of the validity of simultaneous possibilities in any situation. This common interest in twins, illustrating questions of identity, is also the underlying inspiration for the following twin essays on audience and author.

READERS AND AUDIENCES

Both Barth and Greenaway are prominent, well-known creative personalities, and both have been accepted as leading Postmodernist artists who claim academic and popular attention alike. Yet both reward the analytical, even professional, audiences while supplying very strong effects most often used in popular forms of their genres, although their versions are more controversial and more extreme than the usual straightforward entertainment mainstream audiences might expect

¹ *Windows* (1974), *Dear Phone* (1976), *26 Bathrooms* (1985), and *Drowning by Numbers* (1988)

² "I intended the article to be part of a larger work on the psychology - or psychopathology - of the compulsive collector." Chatwin, 1988: 12

(cf. the 208 rapes in Greenaway's *The Baby of Macon*, or the incestuous sexual relations in Barth's *The Last Voyage of Somebody the Sailor*, 1991). Both artists seem to have decided to cater to the highest and lowest common denominators at the same time, in one gesture presenting intellectual games and a naturalistic rendering of topics commonly believed to be exciting, such as sex, violence, or power. Yet both authors place considerable obstacles in the way of their audiences. Barth writes very long books on how problematic it is to tell a story, and Greenaway creates beautiful visual images of violence, greed, death, and decay. So the question arises: What kind of audiences do these works expect, or, indeed, postulate? Are the people who enjoy the superficial audience-trap features of gang rape the same people who appreciate foregrounded structural elements at the expense of a story? Are these works really talking to the pits and the gallery, as in the Elizabethan theatre?

In an attempt to examine the positions of audiences and authors in contemporary art, one could turn to theory and find that one fairly prominent line of literary theory from Plato to Stanley Fish concentrates on the reader.

Another approach could be to survey the role the reader has been invited to accept by the authors themselves while reading novels throughout the centuries. For the present purposes it may be enough, however, to establish that it is the implied reader, that is, the place the text constructs for the reader, which is to be examined, rather than the sociological categories the majority of a work's contemporary readers belonged to, or the response of later generations (cf. Montgomery et al. 1992:223 and Toolan 1988:77-80).

From this point of view, it is revealing to examine Roland Barthes' theory of writerly texts presented in *S/Z* (1970) and put into practice in *A Lover's Discourse* (1977), where he requires the readers to read creatively, to supply a context for the utterances printed in the book, and, by themselves providing the images for his verbal archetypes, to co-produce the work with the author. Similarly, although more mechanically, B.S. Johnson's *The Unfortunates* (1969) needs the cooperation of the reader, who will determine the order in which the pages of the work are to be read.

These devices point in the direction of computer authorship, where interaction is possible as soon as the 'original' file is loaded on to the machine. Writers working in this direction deny the almighty position of the author and the necessity of a predefined meaning or moral in favour of the decisive powers of the reader, opening up various possibilities of writerly attitudes toward literature.

An interesting example of how writerly reading works is the concept of the American women's romance writing club, where the borderlines between readers and authors are consciously blurred. Popular romance is written primarily for women, by women, so much so that male writers take female pseudonyms in order to fit the pattern. This is also a genre where repeated readability may not be a requirement (see any second-hand bookstall at church fairs or charity events - except for possible favourites, these books are read once and are given away). To ensure an influx of new material as well as to encourage creativity, clubs have been formed (so one gathers from U.S. dailies, such as *The Los Angeles Times*) with names like the Women Writers' Association, where women come together to write popular romances. The guidelines for the genre are available even in very formal terms from certain publishers (for example, the British Mills & Boon), and the participants are already familiar with them from their reading experiences. The members of these club come together to discuss works in progress as well as completed pieces, and the best works are published.

This is a truly writerly example - up until the point where one of the books is published and joins the ranks of the traditionally readerly books, since the writerly reader who has just turned into a writer may not write writerly texts, that is, may not leave much place for the reader of the new work, arguing, paradoxically, for the definitive power of the author. While writerly texts by definition require the reader's cooperation by reading, this cooperation is facilitated by the writer through the writing techniques employed. Writerly texts, therefore, are still primarily initiated by the author's input; the copyright also belongs to the author, and the co-producer readers' names do not appear on the title page.

The reader, let us remind ourselves, cannot be born without the author. In the case of the individual reading process the reader can be creative, but may not even have as defining a role as the author: interactive language teaching workbooks are also written by authors, and the similarity between various readings of a book will also have to be attributed to the author's work (having duly considered underlying cultural parameters). Besides, from offering an invitation for the reader to play it does not necessarily follow that the reader perceives the invitation as such and even accepts it, rather than turning away from the work as if the artist had breached a contract to offer easily attainable pleasures by substituting them with joyless fiction.

If the role of the author is, after all, considered to be that of a source or a spring, it will be necessary to examine the actual techniques the two authors in question, Barth and Greenaway, use to construct, or at least handle, a reader or an audience.

Barth's decision is to avoid straightforward storytelling and to play with the roles of narrator and narratee instead. He does not invite the readers of his books to provide the material or take responsibility for it, but merely to analyse and appreciate his authorial skills while reading. The medium he uses allows this; the traditional physical book does not need more contribution from the reader than the actual reading. Barth seems to acknowledge this by concentrating on playing with the narrative voice and the roles of narratees within the book, rather than trying to induce any controlled activity by his readers external to his works.

Barth's writing about writing and storytelling shows traces of the analysis of his own works just being written. This attitude was already present to some extent in Henry Fielding's or Laurence Sterne's works, in the 'Dedicatory Epistle' of Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819), or in any apology by any author, but now it is foregrounded. It is not merely a concern with form, medium, or technique - it is also a concern with the person of the author. Barth writes as if he were reading and writing about what he is writing, thereby producing a meta-writerly text, showing a critic's concern with a text he incidentally is the author of - or, alternatively, showing an extraordinary interest in the author. This latter aspect will be examined below, under 'Authorship', the counterpart to this essay, which will concentrate on problems arising around the author; for now, let us proceed with the self-effacing critic theory.

Writing for analysis, as academic authors often do, creates a narratee who is very much like a critic, such as mythology major female graduate student listeners in *Chimera* (1972); literary critics like Susan, the Associate Professor of American Literature and Creative Writing in *Sabbatical: A Romance* (1982); or library scientists like Katherine, Director of Folklore and Oral History in *The Tidewater Tales: A Novel* (1987). What is this critic-narratee supposed to do? Surely not interpret - we have the votes of Jonathan Culler, Michel Foucault, and Susan Sontag against interpretation, and Sontag is not alone with her opinion that "interpretation is the revenge of the intellect upon art" (1964, 1972:655). Interpretation and analysis, however, are different. Analysis is supposed to help the reader think and understand, to read more consciously - that is to say, to perceive more of the text and enjoy it more fully. The analytical critic characters

in Barth's books in fact share the joys of living, loving, and storytelling with their narrator-heroes; they understand each other.

But what is the role of the external critic-reader in this game? Analysis seems to be the major form of justification for art nowadays; critics are the ones to offer immortality for artistic achievement, while 'best seller-dom' - the world of mass readership or the box-office hit - often seems to belong to a more ephemeral sphere. It is enough to have a few critics singing the praises of the masterful virtuosity of the author, as long as they praise it well and in the right places, even if some of them should follow Barth's method and write self-reflexive meta-criticism ending in Barthian complaints about how futile it is for the critic to act out the role coded in the Postmodernist texts of the author discussed.

The rest of the audience, however, may give up. The empowering of the reader actually puts a heavy burden on the recipient of the text. The reader has to make decisions, the reader is supposed to make sense of the text, the reader is invited to co-create the work - it seems like a job for trained professionals. Kids, don't try this on your own at home... If the special role of the magician-author disappears, will the magic stay with the readers? Will the reader work this hard for the Aristotelian catharsis? If the reader is not willing to play the game offered but chooses total passivity instead, to the point of the rejection of reading, thereby ceasing to be a reader, the Death of the Reader will be complete.

Are we, then, witnessing the birth of the critic at the cost of the death of both author and reader? As if to argue for the point, literature and English departments in U.S. colleges seem to concentrate increasingly on the teaching and production of theory. On the other hand, British university English departments have Media Studies and Communication Studies branching off of them, both showing a tendency to diminish the significance of literature, or at least to examine literature in a broader context. The analysis of films based on the appreciation of their narrative features, especially of film versions of established works of literature, is also becoming a practice employed within English departments.³ Encouraged by this trend, but discussing film as a different form of narration, rather than a popularising agent for literature producing twice-removed versions of books, I shall now examine the role Greenaway casts for the audience in his films in an embedded twin analysis to that of Barth's attitudes toward the reader.

³ e.g., at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow; cf. Montgomery et al., 1992., especially chapters on narration.

Greenaway also seems to have a sharp eye on the audience, observing us in the role of watchers of his films. Similar to Barth's stories within stories, Greenaway has pictures within 'the pictures' (the film), and myth within all, problematising foreground and background and simultaneously showing layers of images physically as well as metaphorically. In *The Draughtsman's Contract* there are drawings presented in the process of their development; *Drowning by Numbers* features games complete with rules, explained as well as played out; in *ZOO* photographs and films are taken, shown, and viewed within the film; in *Prospero's Books* we have the books Shakespeare's play contains foregrounded, containing everything, but also have Shakespeare's play; and in *The Baby of Macon* there is a theatre with the film's characters as actors, thereby not only framing the story but also presenting the "all the world is a stage" Shakespearean notion.

Already in *ZOO* there is a strong tendency to point out that everybody who views is also viewed, possibly including the audience, but it is really in *The Baby of Macon* that the notion of the audience as an external body of observers is problematised, especially at the end of the film. As the carcass of the barn animal and the corpses of the Son of the Priest and the Sister of the Child are brought out on stage while the other actors take their curtain calls, the audience of the Theatre of Macon clap, until they turn around to bow towards the camera and another clapping audience, who in their turn turn around and bow ... In Hungarian cinemas people do not clap, but there is no doubt left that the audience is now to turn around and face their own audience in the world outside.

This case, however, is not just a matter of relativising roles - who is setting the rules, who is playing games, who has the power - as in previous films by Greenaway. In *The Baby of Macon* power games seem to involve the audience more directly.

Although *The Draughtsman's Contract* already showed general power-relationships between the artist and the society he serves - he, as the Artist and the Intellectual are usually male characters in Greenaway's films - and unresolved mysteries remained, unsettling the viewers, the audience was still allowed to observe events discretely from the darkness of the auditorium. In contrast to the clear skies, green fields, and white sheep of *The Draughtsman's Contract*, however much framed by the Draughtsman's grid (and he in turn by the lords and ladies of the mansion), the general interior setting of *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* brings the message 'home'. The way contemporary images -

although with emphasis on features reminiscent of earlier periods - are presented (such as the destruction of the Intellectual and his Library, the Choir Boy and his fate, the death of Love as well as Lover, and the grossness of the Thief) strongly suggests that the director considers the Thief responsible for the destruction of all values other than material; and it is anybody's guess who or what is represented by the Thief: the *nouveau riche*, Mrs Thatcher and her policy of privatisation, or one's favourite social or political villain. Yet, unless one identifies with these characters in spite of the negative presentation, it is still possible to side with those who suffer, rather than with those who torture.

The Baby of Macon distributes blame more democratically. The Intellectual is an exception again - the Son of the Priest is mercifully killed fairly early on amid splashing blood and golden hay. But except for him, the Baby, and the Baby's wet nurse, nobody is blameless; all have their vices, even the audience - especially the audience, it seems towards the end. And at this point the patient movie-goer might voice some doubts.

What exactly does it mean if a film blames people in general? One may leave the cinema feeling that the world is a rotten place and that probably no nice people will survive here, not even oneself - or one may leave feeling like a miserable sinner, part of the evil crowd. The choice mainly depends on whether the individual viewer feels exempt from the blame, assuming the position of the impartial, outside observer, next to the First Observer of the events - that is, the director - or, lacking a positive hero(ine) to identify with, feels as part of the crowd to blame. This choice can be particularly interesting when people are beginning to realise that the way things happen in a country is not entirely independent of their own actions - at least not from their own votes in general elections, or in decisions whether their country should be part of the European Union.

The other question is that of the authority of the director who is spreading the blame. After all, we have seen a highly structured rendering of the world in a specific medium, not the world itself. And inasmuch as we have seen the director's vision of the world, his personal input is not to be underestimated, especially not in Greenaway's case where we have a director who started making films all by himself, wishing he could do the music as well (cf. Greenaway, 1994).

Is the placing of blame on the audience, then, part of the policy of empowering the reader, the principle materialising this time as sharing responsibilities between author and audience? The question of the

interdependence of author and reader is very much in the focus in *The Baby of Macon*. It seems to be another death of the author/birth of the reader story. The mother of the child is to be of no importance: the child, the miracle, is adopted by the Sister to be put into the narrative framework of the Miracle of the Virgin Birth, for which she offers a creative reading indeed, in order to acquire fame and riches. The baby, however, is soon claimed by the Catholic Church, the copyright owner of the framework.

The Sister's function in the film seems to be that of a mediator, an interpreter in several senses of the word - functions usually attributed to the critic, a special reader of stories. The Sister is between the miracle and the audience; she not only realises the possible implications of the child's presence and 'reads' it as if it were a 'writerly text', but also speaks for the child.

But as a narrator of the story of the Miraculous Child, and the heroine of Greenaway's *The Baby of Macon*, having insisted on taking the role of the Virgin Mother ("Go through with it if you wanted the role so badly," say her colleagues later when holding her still in the serial rape scene), the Sister becomes the facilitator of the film, her role being necessary for the sake of the entertainment of the audience in the Theatre of Macon as well as for the audience of the movie, although for everybody concerned within the action, including herself, her ambitious role playing turns out to be fatal.

Thus her role seems to resemble that of a storyteller in the Barthian sense: one who tells her own story of being a fake, a follower of patterns, that is, one who is retelling someone else's story with the necessary changes for the present adaptation, thereby losing not only her identity but also her self. The situation is similar to that in *Bellerophoniad*, the third part of *Chimera*, where the narrative voice is that of Bellerus from the body of his twin brother Deliades who has tried to live out Bellerophon's life: "I was his mortal killer; therefore I became his immortal voice: Deliades I buried in Bellerophon, to live out in selfless counterfeit, from that hour to this, my brother's demigoddish life." (*Chimera*, p.318) The Sister's self tied with the Virgin as well as her virginity also has a parallel in Barth's *The Last Voyage of Somebody the Sailor*, where "self" is a euphemism for the heroine, Yasmin's virginity which she is supposed to defend with a knife she received as a gift: "'To defend my ... self with," Yasmin said.' (*The Last Voyage of Somebody the Sailor*, p.425)

The audience has always been a primary mover of spectacles - for rituals, for the theatre, for the arts - but its role has been changing through the ages. Also, it

has always had more and less sophisticated members. In *The Baby of Macon* the audience in the Theatre of Macon actively participate on several levels: they comment on the events (for example, they notice that the Sister at least did not torture the Child, while the Church probably does, otherwise how could they sell his tears and blood); they count, whenever necessary, a feature of significance for Greenaway, as is clear from his other films, such as *The Draughtsman's Contract* or *Drowning by Numbers*; but the aristocratic members are also active in eating and amusing themselves in ways other than those involved with the play.

But does this mean that the audience is the first cause of mishap, the final agency to blame, since it facilitates, even demands, the production of horror? The Sister, author of this particular adaptation of the Virgin and the Child story, was killed for her art.

How does, then, Greenaway, author of *The Baby of Macon*, hope to avoid responsibility for his film by turning the reproachful gaze of the camera toward the audience? If the audience do not get the prestige authors used to be given, why would they take the blame? If they do not receive the stories they expect from the storytellers, why would they go on listening? Greenaway, who is very much against the 'I am going to tell you a story' school of film making, as he writes himself, wants to create movies of thought, rather than movies of story (1994:2-3); Barth in *Chimera* also refused to tell stories. On what grounds do authors hope to survive if their attitudes toward their audiences are to shock them, to disappoint them, or to blame them? Perhaps it is time to reconsider the role of the author, the other of the twin concepts in this essay.

AUTHORSHIP

What is, then, the role of the author? Who is the author? And what is the author's aim, or hidden agenda, if any? Perhaps the most important fictional explorer of this problem is Vladimir Nabokov (cf. Pellérdi, 1994), but Barth is also deeply involved in problematising the questions of who is telling the story, who is acting it out, and which of these roles is primary, which one secondary or derivative.

Adaptations, including those of myths, are by definition secondary and derivative. But they also talk directly to the audiences because of their

contemporary nature of delivery, much like advertising, commercial or political, which, as Barthes (1957) has pointed out, uses already established notions and images for present purposes.

If myth is considered as a form of expression, as Ernst Cassirer argued, claiming, "[M]yth is developed in order to objectify emotion,"⁴ we are indeed very close to T.S. Eliot's objective correlative.⁵ Authors of Postmodern adaptations of myth, however, give a subjective turn to emotions already objectified in myths or works of art, either by presenting mythic heroes as fallible humans or by portraying human beings heroically trying to follow mythic patterns. Both types of adaptation offer possibilities to express the author's quest for his own authorial identity, foregrounding in general the problems of creating and maintaining an identity, fictional, authorial, or heroic.

Problems of authorial identity possibly leading to a high degree of self-referentiality have their earlier traces in art. In "A lírikus epilógja" (1908), Mihály Babits conceives identity as a form of limitation:

Csak én bírok versemnek hôse lenni,
elsô s utolsó mindenik dalomban:
a mindenséget vágyom versbe venni,
de még tovább magamnál nem jutottam.⁶

This attitude is more customary with lyric poets than with artists of narration, yet there are examples of authorial identity tied up with works of narrative fiction as well: Flaubert's words "*Mme Bovary - c'est moi*" seem to support the possibility of the projection of authorial identity into a novel. Furthermore, if the 19th-century model of Romantic lyric poetry expressing subjectivity and the Realist novel presenting an objective totality are considered as exceptions rather than the rules of their genres, it will become less surprising to find an overinflated authorial subjectivity in Postmodern fiction. Whether the result is still to be called a novel is another question.

4 reference to Ernst Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, 1946, quoted by Chapman and Egger, 170.

5 Washington Allston's term made famous by T. S. Eliot in an essay on *Hamlet*, 1919

6 Compelled to be the hero of my verse,

the first and last in every song I write,

I long to shape in them the universe,

but nought beyond my self comes in my sight.

from "The Epilogue of the Lyric Poet", 1908, in: Mihály Babits, *21 Poems*, transl. by István Tótfalusi, Budapest: Maecenas, 1988.

Yet however inflated, even the Postmodern author could not claim to be an isolated, individual phenomenon, as Barthes would hasten to point out. The notion of the author being determined by various forces, such as a past (while determining and reshaping that past), became influential again around the turn of the century. It is present to varying degrees in Zola's biological and social determinism, Sigmund Freud's notions of the subconscious, or even T.S. Eliot's essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent", and Attila József's poem "A Dunánál" (1935), considering, from their different points of view, the interrelation of the individual and the past:

Tudunk egymásról, mint öröm és bánat.
 Enyém a múlt és övék a jelen.
 Verset írunk - ôk fogják ceruzámat
 s én érzem ôket és emlékezem.⁷

This awareness of underlying forces influencing authorial identity is what then turns into its even more depersonalised version by the introduction of the notions of Barthes's codes, Jacques Derrida's assertion that there is nothing beyond the text,⁸ and Julia Kristeva's intertextuality (Kristeva, 1966 and 1974), which latter can be observed in its most simple forms in the various techniques of allusions to, and adaptations of, myths and works of art, both abundant in Barth's and Greenaway's works.

The heavy reliance on mythology in W.B. Yeats' and Eliot's poetry, as well as James Joyce's prose fiction, also acknowledged a certain amount of derivativeness in literature. Relying on a tradition was a well-accepted merit in the Augustan age as well as in the Renaissance, and the return to it is part of the Modernist rejection of Romanticism. The notion of the Modernist artists using the mythical method while arranging and ordering their "heap of broken images" is expressed by Eliot. While Alan Wilde reminds us that Stanley Elkin denies the validity of Eliot's point for example in *The Bailbondsman* and *The Living End*, stating, "myth serves ... not to order chaos but to reveal it" (Wilde, 1981:159), this

7 "We know of each other, as pleasure and pain. / Mine is the past, and theirs is the present. / we are writing a poem - they direct my pen / And I can feel them and I remember" (rough translation by J. F.)

8 "there is nothing beyond the text - *il n'y a pas de hors-texte*": from Derrida's manifesto of deconstruction in *Critical Inquiry*, 1986, written as an answer to students following the publication of "Racism's Last Word", in *Critical Inquiry*, 1985.

opinion, rather than invalidating Eliot's point, demonstrates the difference between a Modernist and a Postmodernist approach. What is important, however, is that myth is used in both cases as a method of presentation, a pattern, which can be and is, in fact, equally easily borrowed from songs, stories, paintings or murals and can also be created of colours, motifs, and images.

From a structural point of view, the Modernist heap of broken images now gives way to the Postmodern series. The series are sometimes numerical, such as counting in Greenaway's *Drowning by Numbers* or at his 1992 Vienna exhibition, where there were a hundred items, including 100 umbrellas as one item, as well as the catalogue of the exhibited items, which itself featured as number 100.⁹ The series may be organised according to the letters of the alphabet or, indeed, by following Darwin's notion of evolution, as in *ZOO*.

The arrangement of the elements may also vary. Sometimes they are presented in embedded structures and sometimes they rise as if in a spiral pattern, as in Barth's *Chimera*. The presentation often starts from an *in medias res* beginning, and proceeds on a linear journey ahead with a recapitulating narration including flashbacks and flashforwards, as in Barth's last four sailing stories and in Greenaway's use of the motif of games and death.

The series often consists of simultaneously existing variations, like the multiplied selves and counter-selves of the author in Barth's *The Tidewater Tales* or *Once Upon a Time* (1994), or contain serial variations, like most of the music for Greenaway's films, such as the variations on the songs "The Teddy Bears' Picnic" and "An Elephant Never Forgets" in *ZOO* or the ever-recurring short melodies and their variations in several of his other films, such as *Drowning by Numbers*.¹⁰ It is interesting, however, that for the last sequence of the latter film, in the moment of imminent death, the music Greenaway chooses for his male intellectual to die by is not Postmodern Michael Nyman but chamber music for strings by W.A. Mozart, undermining his theoretical points in favour of emotional impact.

Foregrounding structuring elements and technical features, as well as the prominent use of myth, have an alienating effect, and as such have shown

9 also cf.: "Greenaway nem épít, legfeljebb konstruál. De inkább felsorol. Lineáris elme, a számok bűvöletében." ('Greenaway does not build, at best he constructs, but rather enlists. He has a linear mind, tied up in the magic of numbers.') (Lajta 9)

10 Michael Nyman, who composed the music for most of Greenaway's films, uses the terms "simple", "experimental", and "repetitive" for his music. (Nyman 1980)

increasingly similar features to Bertolt Brecht's A-effects ever since High Modernism. Greenaway's lists, numbers, and occasional narrative voices in his short films and feature films alert the audience and do not allow them to immerse themselves in the flow of the story or images. In his short films *Windows* (1974), *Dear Phone* (1976), or the interminable *A Walk Through H* (1978), where his drawings turn into maps of migratory birds' routes, he experiments with a combination of images and a narrator's voice, with the additional voice-over of several phone conversations in *Dear Phone*. Somebody is showing those images to us in a predetermined order, there is no 'natural flow' to the series of images - the less so since they are also variations on one theme, similarly to the way Somebody the Sailor decides to present information to us in a predetermined order, another series of variations on certain themes, in his stories of his quest for the truth about himself and about his beloved in Barth's *The Last Voyage of Somebody the Sailor*.

Greenaway has already experimented with the necessary skills in his television films, such as the non-narrative *M is for Man, Music, Mozart* (1991) as well as the fragmentary Open University film *Darwin* (1992), which is arranged in 10 or so tableaux. Simultaneous frames are to be found in his *A TV Dante: Cantos 1-8* (1988) and are then brought into focus and displayed for the feature-film public in *Prospero's Books*, where productional innovations also abound. The technical experimentation that is so prominent in both Barth's and Greenaway's work, however, seems to serve other purposes, beyond a display of technical virtuosity: their attempts at patterning and arranging thoughts and images represent the world in ways that may be sufficiently different to shake stereotypical mindsets and world-views audiences may have.

Both Barth and Greenaway are interested in structuring larger units; they demonstrate how events can be connected by numbering, logic, evolution, linearity, mythological association, or by their relation to various forms of art. Yet they do not arrive at a final order out of chaos; moreover, they often destabilise various orders they create, thus emphasising the problems of part and whole, of element and organism. In the end, all foregrounding of arrangement seems to serve the purpose of alienation in the Brechtian sense, as well as reminders for the audience that they are watching artifices, products of artistic arrangement (if not necessarily of creativity), thereby drawing considerable attention to the arranger, the author himself.

In films that make the governing conventions of film topical, such as the *Twin Peaks*¹¹ television series or *Top Secret!*¹², the camera and its viewpoint itself are presented by revealing their governing conventions. Greenaway in *ZOO* uses this type of visual self-reflexivity to draw special attention to the person behind the camera: even if the camera is taking automatic time-lapse photographs, he points out that there are watchful eyes following the events, and that even the watchers, such as the twins Oliver and Oswald taking the shots, are being watched. This emphasis on watchers and being constantly watched brings dark associations of Big Brother watching us into frightening proximity to the so-called 'free' West, carrying disillusioning messages about individual freedom for human civilisation of our praised European kind. And indeed we are watched and polled, if for nothing else, for someone to conduct their next advertising or political campaign more successfully.

It might be useful to emphasise the analogy between Brecht's A-effect and writerly texts. The audience or the reader is expected to do two things at a time: follow the action and allow for an alternative, so that nothing will be taken for granted or taken at face value. The fundamental aim of the A-effect is to make everything questionable. While the audience is still supposed to be naive as to the tricks performed on stage, once outside in 'real life' they are to be very much alert.

Another parallel feature of Brecht and Postmodernism working toward an alienation effect is a lack of belief in originality; in fact Brecht, too, believed in variation: he shows mirror image as well as mirror and provides a parody for all kinds of genre, including parody itself (cf. Honti 1982:374-378).

The question of parody is also interesting in connection with Postmodern adaptations. Is *The Baby of Macon* a parody of the Christ story? Are Barth's books parodies of the *Arabian Nights*, or Greek myths? I would say no - Greenaway's interest is to express fundamental feelings of loss, death, and decay, and Barth's is to celebrate life and make people read the works he supposedly parodies, while the interest of both authors in patterning things along old routes, whether the alphabet, counting, myths, or maps, seems to me to contradict parody as their

¹¹ *Twin Peaks* (pilot TV film), David Lynch, United States, 1989; *Twin Peaks* (television series), various artists, US, 1990.

¹² *Top Secret!*, Jim Abrahams, David Zucker, Jerry Zucker, US, 1984.

dominant genre.¹³ They use familiar material, and they provide new variations for it; Barth works with language and Greenaway with pictures as a sculptor works with stone. Moreover, far from pointing out the controversial points of the models, Barth actually ridicules the followers, including himself. Although he acknowledges a possible streak of parody in his works, he seems to emphasise the comic quality of his approach: "If my reorchestration of the myths has an element of parody or even travesty in them, it's because while I take that subject very seriously indeed, I don't regard it as being necessarily a tragic or heroic business in our own lives. It also has a comic aspect." (Ziegler and Bigsby, 1982:30)

Elizabeth Dipple, a critic who seems to be wholeheartedly antagonistic towards authors like Barth whose works she calls metafiction rather than using the term Postmodernism, emphasises the ironic quality of these works: "Metafiction takes the reader's sophistication and complete absorption of genres from the past for granted," and she continues, "Its irony comes from the fact that it is referential to literature itself rather than to human experience." (Dipple, 1988:9)

Whether parody is accepted as a dominant technique of Postmodern adaptations, or, alternatively, whether the underlying structuring value of myths is considered as the basis of variation or adaptation, a certain amount of alienation is undeniably present through the sheer dichotomy of the allusion to the Already Known and the Shockingly Different, which, while they support each other, also undermine each other's credibility.

Alienation techniques used by the Theatre of the Absurd work to show the absurdity of what is accepted as 'normal' in 'real life', such as waiting - beliefs - hopes - routines - relationships - inertia in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1952). Noticing the arbitrary or constructed quality of what we have grown up considering 'natural' is also one of the key messages of several contemporary theoretical trends, such as Deconstruction, Poststructuralism, New Historicism, and Feminism, which would all want to alienate mankind out of its follies.

In this context it is not surprising to find an attempt at the destabilisation of the almighty position of the author. But if everything is destabilised, desauthorised, why do such strong autobiographical and authorial presences appear as those of Barth and Greenaway, and why, or how, would it be possible

¹³ Zoltán Abádi Nagy also discusses irony and satire, rather than parody, in his book on Postmodernist American fiction in the 1960s.

to give all authority to the reader? Are we to turn back to the reader again, having come full circle? Fowles, for example, has doubts about the powers of the reader, which becomes apparent when he quotes Antonio Gramsci's phrase "cultural hegemony" in an interview as "the very cunning and sophisticated systems of brainwashing that so-called democratic western societies have evolved to keep the ordinary man and woman passive and sheeplike" (Ziegler and Bigsby, 1982:115). In the same interview, Fowles also discusses the reader's freedom:

In an internal sense, textually, I do not think a novelist can offer freedom to his readers, however aleatory his technique, however many forks he offers, however many 'clues' he suppresses. This is especially true in narrative and character terms. On the other hand, I think there is some sort of metaphorical truth in the use of alternative situations - that is, it suggests to the reader a possible method of escape in terms of her or his own life and its fictions and realities. It can't of course offer the actual escape itself.
(1982:118)

He presents the reader's freedom and authority no less illusory than those of the author. In a sense he shows it as even more of an illusion, suggesting that it is not only the 'text' of the author that is to be deconstructed, but the 'text' of the reader as well, complete with the reader's history and unchallenged assumptions. The 'naive readers' are naive only inasmuch as they are unaware of their own level of determinism and the necessity to suppose as much for the author as for the reader.

In spite of all the news about the Death of the Author, there are some features still pointing towards the survival of authorship. One is the authority of the work and the situation of the presentation, which is made obvious in the theatre or the cinema by its constraints, if by nothing else. If the projector breaks down, one has to leave Művész Mozi and ZOO with the ostrich feathers and Caterina's zebra pants pending, while on an intercontinental flight one is a captive audience to the latest and least amusing film version of Alexandre Dumas's *The Three Musketeers*. All this shows the extent of the author's control over the audience, if ever so indirect. With books the reader had more personal freedom all along.

Another sign of the survival of authorship is that people do get paid for their intellectual products, even if very few of them can live on being an author only - hence the increased importance of a development Dipple so poignantly describes in pointing out its main danger, its claustrophobia: "the creative writing seminar,

where writers write for themselves and each other in a tight little coterie of mutual applause" (1988:11). Furthermore, a certain amount of originality is still required; authors have to have at least their own version of self-reflexivity or derivativeness.

Barth, for example, sees the same archetype worked out in all stories (Ziegler and Bigsby, 1982: 27-28):

The wandering hero re-enacts the history of a spermatozoon from the moment of ejaculation through the fertilization of the egg. And then the famous transcension of categories: spermatozoons are not male animals, and eggs are not female animals, but what has male aspects and what has female aspects come together into a creature that transcends the categories both of the egg and the sperm, and is both and neither. There is a COINCIDENTIA OPPOSITORUM, if there ever was one! Then the magic transformation flight in that third quadrant of the mythic cycle (acc. to Jung, Campbell, Raglan and company) is really just the first law of embryology: ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny. The reascent across the threshold would be birth, etc. In short, my story 'Night-Sea Journey'.

In this mythic story of the death and rebirth of wandering heroes the point of death is also a point of birth, a passage where the beginning is the end, such as the ones in *The Last Voyage of Somebody the Sailor*. Therefore the death, birth, or rebirth of the author or reader might be seen as part of a process, of a series of transformations, in which the self-reflexivity of the author is characteristic of merely one phase, where the work, instead of celebrating the creative genius of the author, is devoted to the depiction of the author (cf. "A Mester" in Péter Esterházy, *Termelési-regény (kissregény)*, 1979) at work, like a painter's self-portrait at the easel. But even those self-reflexive or even narcissistic portraits have the eyes watching the viewer dominate the picture, like Tivadar Csontváry Kosztka's, which brings us to the watcher-watched problem so important in Greenaway's films.

The poststructuralist death of the author is a very different view from the Postmodern narcissistic author, both being different from the sculptor of the Viennese *Stephansdom* or Alfred Hitchcock making cameo appearances in his films, who sign their works with their own images, much like a book cover featuring the portrait of the author.

But what happens if the writer keeps writing mainly about himself, if the painter paints himself only? If other motifs disappear, if the image becomes

exceedingly self-referential? One path from here leads through increasingly dominant autobiographical references toward fictional autobiography, such as Barth's *Once Upon a Time*, where, however, stylisation reappears as soon as the concern with the authorial self has been officially established by the announcement of producing an autobiography.

A.P. Chekhov's *Of the Dangers of Smoking*, a one-act, one-actor play from the very beginning of the 20th century, is a play about speaking, where Chekhov makes his character give a public speech and problematise speaking in public, simultaneously foregrounding contentless form and the possible contradiction of topic and presentation. The character has trouble making his speech, yet he succeeds in making a speech about his troubles - just like Barth with his stories about being unable to tell a story, writing by exploring the causes of the lack of ability to write. But one can tell very few stories this way to the same audience.

The term intellectual property may be disappearing from our actively used imagery, like the romantic figure of the author did, and in these terms the author-god may have indeed died (in spite of the media's attempts at maintaining these images). Nevertheless, the creative personality who will inspire others through the creation of a work of art will survive - perhaps along the lines indicated in Barth's later works, whereby the author's pleasure in creation is shared, even doubled, by the anticipation, rather than the rejection, of that of the reader. The interplay of the author and reader still is a process offering most versatile results. Originality in ideas, whether to start a business, to produce a work of art, to create an image, or to tell a story, continues to be very much in vogue today. In *The Last Voyage of Somebody the Sailor* even Death is willing to take age-old Scheherazade only if she tells him a new story. There is still a market for novelties - even for novels.

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