Volume 3 Number 1
Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis

genesis

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The editorial staff appreciates the support and confidence of Rebecca Pitts, sponsor of English Club and Laurence Lampert, sponsor of the Philosophy Club.

GENESIS is published in the spring and fall of each year by English Club-Sigma Tau Delta and Philosophy Club-Phi Sigma Tau, Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis. Content is devoted to creative writing in the areas of fiction, essays, and poetry. Correspondence pertaining to business or editorial matters should be addressed to GENESIS, Student Services Offices, Cavanaugh Hall, 925 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202.

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INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

Manuscripts are invited from all persons who have been students at IUPUI at any time during the last eighteen months prior to submission. Manuscripts of essays, fiction, or poetry, on any topic, may be submitted at any time to GENESIS, Student Services, Cavanaugh Hall, 925 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46202. All manuscripts are considered by an editorial board elected by the English Club and the Philosophy Club. Authorship is not revealed to the board until a manuscript has been accepted. Any manuscript submitted too late for the current deadline will be considered for the next issue. Manuscripts of less than sixteen double-spaced typewritten pages will be given first consideration. All submissions should be accompanied by a separate sheet of paper containing the author's name, address, and telephone number. Manuscripts must be submitted *in duplicate.* No manuscripts will be returned to authors. Authors whose material has been accepted will be notified prior to publication.

Toward Recovery

KATHERINE KING

"If I was her, I don't think I'd ever come back!"

"Me neither. Gee, I hope she isn't my locker partner again. You don't suppose violence runs in families, do you?"

The two voices, though not loud, cut through the din of the first day back at Rogerton Junior High. Renee's ear seemed to single them out from the rest of the crowd as she made her way along the gloomy, windowless hall toward the principal's office.

"I knew it would be like this," she thought, staring at her feet as though she had to concentrate on how to walk. "I'm to be talked about and probably pointed at all day. And who knows how long?"

The other eighth graders and the younger seventh graders swarmed by, laughing and shouting. Renee did not look up. She felt their stares and their taunts—some real, some imagined. Her eyes flooded with despair. The hall seemed a mile long. Her feet pushed themselves across each square of faded sea-green tile. Above, pictures of former graduating classes (dating back to when the building was a high school) lined the walls. Ghosts glared down at her from black frames. One of the groupings, she remembered from last year, held a portrait of her father.

Her father! A sudden fear gripped her. She felt her father's face mocking her—not the young graduate but the dead horror, as she last remembered him. Eyes gaped above twisted mouth, and the gunshot wound he had just made in his left temple reddened. If she looked up, she would see the wreck of her father's face. "He's everywhere. I can't get away from him!" She dashed through the yellow rectangle of light at the end of the dim corridor and took temporary refuge in the principal's office.

"Yes?" asked the well-fed secretary, who sat behind the desk. She adjusted her glasses and looked up at Renee. Their eyes met before Renee had a chance to lower her gaze but not before she had seen the coldness of the school reflected in that hard face. Had Miss Foster been the one to order the flowers the school sent to her father's funeral? They had needed money and friends, but the school had sent carnations. Not even Mrs. Lee had come to the funeral. No one had asked all summer how they were getting on.

"What is it you want?" Miss Foster asked impatiently. "I'm very busy."

"I missed, uh," Renee began timidly, searching for the right word. "I missed...Pre-school Day, and I..."

"You mean Orientation Day," interrupted Miss Foster. "Just one minute. I'll get your packet." She pushed her chair back, then opened a drawer in the file cabinet to her right. She slid her forefinger quickly over the edges of the folders, noting the names on the tabs. "Johnson, Renee. Here you are." She pulled out a folder and delivered it. "Everything you need is in there—locker assignment, registration card, class schedule, information sheet, and insurance form. Fill out the registration card yourself, but have

your parents—er, your mother—fill out the information and insurance forms. Return them to me tomorrow before school."

Renee took the packet, then turned hesitantly toward the door. She would have to retrace her steps, back down the shadowy hall beneath the grinning pictures. The crowd had thinned, leaving the corridors even more bleak and desolate. She wished her brother David were with her.

"Run along now. It's almost time for your first class," Miss Foster admonished.

Her first class? She opened the folder and saw a schedule lying on top of the other forms. English, Room 301, Mrs. Danworth. The shortest route was down that same hall and up the stairs. She squeezed her eyes shut. "I can't pass that picture."

The last bell rang. Miss Foster, who had been typing, looked up. "Renee," she said gruffly, "you're tardy, and don't expect me to give you an excuse. You had time to get to class."

Renee said nothing but walked out the door and turned left, determined to take the longer route to English. She strode down the empty corridor, turned right, and descended the two flights of stairs into the basement. She followed another corridor to her left, then another. In the middle of the second hall, three flights of steps ascended to the eighth grade English room. She climbed the stairs and entered class five minutes late.

Mrs. Danworth had just finished seating everyone. She saw Renee walk in noiselessly. "Are you a new student?" she asked. Everyone turned.

Renee quickly averted her glance to the floor and clasped her hands, still holding the packet. "Mrs. Danworth doesn't know me," she thought, amazed.

"She's not new. That's Renee Johnson," muttered a boy sitting in front of Mrs. Danworth's desk.

"If you were here last year, you must have known where the room is. This is a small school. Do you have an excuse for being late?"

Renee stood, her head bowed. She shook her head again. What could she say?

"Your tardiness will be reflected in your conduct grade," Mrs. Danworth stated crisply. "Sit over there in the last seat by the windows."

Renee followed Mrs. Danworth's pointing finger to the other side of the room and sat in the designated seat. Without looking up, she felt searching eyes move across with her.

Mrs. Danworth rose from the chair behind her desk and began to pace around the room, arms folded across her chest. "I am not," she commenced, "going to repeat all the rules you heard Orientation Day." She paused long enough to snatch a recently completed paper airplane from Brian Hunter's desk. "You will receive your books tomorrow," she continued. "Today I want to find out how much you know about written expression." She glanced out the window at the gray drizzle, leaned on the cold radiator, and faced the class again. "You will spend the remainder of the period writing a one-page composition on an experience you had last summer." She returned to her desk and resumed her work while the students ripped paper from their notebooks, hunted their pencils, then began frowning at desks in an effort to remember something worth telling.

Renee found a pencil, but she had forgotten to bring a notebook. Maybe she could write on back of the information sheet in her packet, then transfer it to notebook paper in study hall, and turn it in later that day.

"Last summer, I baby-sat and helped Mother," she wrote, then stopped. "Father left us nothing," she thought. "I had to baby-sit." She brushed the perspiration from her forehead. "Insurance doesn't pay in suicide

cases," she heard her mother say again. Images and sounds crowded into her mind faster than she could sort them out.

Beautiful May afternoon, warm and balmy. Herself and brothers just home from school. In the living room. Cookies and milk. Mother ironing Mrs. Winters' clothes. More customers' laundry baskets in front of yellowed lace curtains. Hollows in worn sofa cushions. Tony and David sitting there with her. Bobby and Ricky on a blanket in front of the television. "I could watch cartoons forever," Bobby had said. The Flintstones. Ricky nodding agreement. Tony cleaning his hunting rifle.

"Do you want to walk up to the library with me, Renee?" David had asked.

"You mean you found something you don't already know everything about?" she had teased. "You're a year younger than me. But two years smarter."

Mother smiling at them. "David, I don't know where you get your brains."

The front door suddenly creaking open into the adjoining dining room. "Oh, no, Father's home drunk before we've had a chance to get out." In the doorway, the familiar, hunched body, paralyzed right arm hanging limply. The contemptuous smirk and flashing eyes. "You're about to see a man kill himself," he proclaimed. The pistol at the left temple. The shot!

The bell exploded into the silence of Mrs. Danworth's room, and Renee jumped out of her seat, upsetting a desk in her rush through the door. She was halfway down the first flight of steps before she heard Mrs. Danworth calling after her and realized that it was only the bell. "I've made a fool of myself again," she thought dejectedly, continuing her descent to the basement. Boys and girls pushed through doors, jammed halls, and crowded her against the wall. Shouts, whistles, and peals of laughter seemed to echo throughout the basement. She felt cramped and stifled. No windows in this musty vault. Somehow she reached the end of the second corridor and managed the two flights of stairs to the office floor. People were dispersing now, giving her room to breathe, but she still hugged the wall on her way to the paper machine just outside the office door.

A hand tapped her lightly on the shoulder. She turned quickly on her assailant; but it was only a small, dark-haired girl whom she had never seen before. "I thought you might need these," the girl said, offering Renee's purse and folder to her. "You left them in Mrs. Danworth's room."

"Thank you," muttered Renee, accepting the belongings, which she hadn't even missed. She hurried to the paper machine, hoping the girl would not follow, and opened her purse, searching for a quarter and dime. The dark-haired girl hesitated beside Renee, looked at her watch, then went on. Renee found only two quarters, just enough to buy lunch. Why hadn't she brought a little more baby-sitting money? Her mother would be sure to ask what she had eaten. She would do without paper. She opened the folder to see what her next class was. Study hall, Room 305, Mr. Lattimer. That was two doors from Mrs. Danworth's room. She started back down the hall. She would take the long route again. Her father's face still waited in the main corridor.

Renee slipped into the study hall just after the tardy bell sounded, but it was all right. Mr. Lattimer had lined the fifty students around the enormous room and was seating them alphabetically. He hadn't reached her name yet.

She stood in an empty space by the door and glanced furtively around. Nobody paid any attention to her. "They didn't paint the walls this summer," she observed. When the school had been erected in 1912, someone had ordered the walls painted a dull pea green. Now a fine gray dust veiled the

faded color. Every room had the same green and the same dust, the same miniature United States flag, and the same dingy portrait of George Washington.

"Jackson, Tom, last seat, third row," called Mr. Lattimer. "Johnson, Renee, first seat, fourth row."

Fearing someone would look her way now that her name had resounded across the room, Renee glued her eyes to the scuffed tile and edged past the aisles until she reached the fourth row. She sat down directly in front of the teacher's huge desk. It rested on a low platform so that when she looked straight ahead, she saw only the grain of the wood. That suited her. She felt less conspicuous.

Wishing she had paper for her composition, she glanced up and noticed Melissa Crane staring quizzically in her direction. Embarrassed, she quickly riveted her eyes to the desk in front. Melissa had been her best friend in seventh grade. Should she signal for a piece of paper?

She would have to continue her composition on the information sheet. A summer experience? She had baby-sat for Mrs. Winters' little boy. She earned ten dollars a week and gave all but fifty cents to Mother, who added it to ironing and sewing money. Bobby and Ricky had mowed lawns and weeded gardens. David had delivered newspapers, and she had got up early every morning to fix a hot breakfast for him. With their meagre income and the welfare money, they had managed, even without Tony. In all the confusion after the shooting, he had disappeared. Mother had phoned the police the next day, but no one had found a trace of Tony or his rifle. "Well, he's nearly eighteen," Mother had said to comfort them. "He's old enough to take care of himself. Maybe he's joined the Army. Anyway, I'm sure we'll hear from him soon." But it was September now, and they didn't talk about Tony any more.

Tony had left, but the rest of them could not escape so easily. After seeing her father fall, Renee had overturned her milk and cookies in a mad scramble up the stairs. She had burrowed under her bed to the far corner, where she lay retching. The next thing she could remember was lying in her bed, weak and hot, dreaming terror and being wakened by sobs and screams from her own throat. David had stayed with her during their father's funeral, giving both of them an excuse for not attending. She had begun to recover after that.

Renee glanced at the study hall clock. Almost time for the bell. She would be prepared for the sudden clamor this time. It rang. "Dismissed!" called Mr. Lattimer.

Everyone rose and started for the doors. Renee slipped through the library, out the door, and down the stairs, then crossed the hall into first aid class. No one else was there yet, so she sat down and pretended to examine the contents of her folder. "I wonder which locker I have," she thought, turning over her locker assignment sheet. "Number 209. It's on the main floor then." The class filled. Renee concentrated on the whereabouts of her locker. Mr. Silvers entered and turned on the lights. The bell rang.

"Your first aid books are under your seats," Mr. Silvers said.

"It's in the main corridor," Renee remembered with a start. "It's in the same hall as my father's picture!" She crumpled her locker assignment sheet in her fist. "I'll have it changed," she thought, "or I won't use it."

"Knowledge of first aid is vital in today's society," Mr. Silvers began; and she sat through the lecture, grateful for an interruption of her thoughts.

The bell rang, signaling lunch. Renee waited for everyone else to leave before languidly pushing herself out the door. She stood in a corner just outside the room. She wasn't hungry. She wasn't anything. Leaning against

the wall, she watched fewer and fewer feet scuffle past. Then, looking up, she saw one dark, familiar figure approaching. Eyes on the floor, he propelled himself slowly along the wall with one hand. "Why, it's David." Absorbed in her own misery, she had forgotten the rest of her family's suffering. Now there was David, as alone as she. How could she let that happen? She was the oldest now Tony was gone. She had to lead the way. At least, she had to try. Her despair formed a hard knot in her chest.

"David," she called. His eyes rose to meet hers. "Going to lunch?" She managed a smile, reached out, and patted his shoulder. "Wait here a minute," she said. "I have to go to my locker."

Litany

An ancient plough strikes deep stone and root
Rips furrows through earth—a burgeoning of forest
Planted in the belly of silence, of grain bartered
For riches, then the sacrament of laughter.

Fly through mute oiled air, the centuries' disintegration,
Through shattered mythologies of art and engine
Where gods in embryo wove naked dances
On the spine of love's creation, but lost.

Man ends with plough, hunger, food's salvation
Praying for madness or a fire in winter;
Between stale emotion and memory's fatal diction
A beautiful departure is a gift, the gift of death.

There is no shelter for formless constellations
Where space beyond earth spins its etchings:

May he who wears
The mask of a god
Have mercy on us
And we on him.

—ALISON KIRBY RECORD

Loneliness

One. Morning

In the morning
When the sun was weaving a texture of green
I went out, for a voice, for a hand in the wind,
For a face in the trees that seemed sleeping:

And I got silence, and the scent of the lemon.

I spoke to the blossoms—
And by chance I suppose—
One infant lemon fell out of the verdure.

Then I went to the mill at the edge of the grove
For it was older than I and stronger—
But all it said, in an aged cracked voice,

Was water water wind—water water wind
Then turned back to the sky.

Two. Afternoon

In the afternoon
It was very hot and there was no one.

All was brilliant under the sun,
Which danced like a crazed flamingo
Over the rainbow of flowers.

I walked,
But the heat was oppressive.
My blood rode on my breath
To the swaying tree limbs
To the flesh of slim frail ferns

Then deeper
Where the earth steamed softly,
Absorbing everything.

Three. Night

It was night
And I had no dreams
But earth had stretched out to the tips of the starlight
And I heard from my bed the far whirling planets.

My flesh kept grating between the sheets and darkness
And the dust of my eyelids was swirling in orbits,
Until I stared down a tunnel that led to the stars.

They sputtered and faltered
And then they were finished.

In a starless cavern
Flesh fell away
Muscle nerve and bone died slowly
And sleep became a pandemonium of shuffled dream.

On a frothing concrete sea
Voices uttered a baroque language
Out of the monstrous darkness of human struggle—

And there, in that mirror without image,
I sought my own forgotten face.

Four. Between Day and Night

Neither sorrow nor loneliness came with me
When I ascended
Nor dawn, rapturous with sunlight
Nor the galaxy beyond the sun

Nothing and no one came with me
Through the passage of night to day—
Flesh abandoned,
Touch, earth, memory abandoned—

Where I saw myself without form
Like a hole in space

Neither being nor ever to be
Between night and approaching dawn.

—ALISON KIRBY RECORD

HAIKU

The clear white water
Flows to the end of the leaf—
A passing pearl falls.

—DENNIS WILLIAMS

Last Pitch

As, from a very great distance,
  He dominates the circular dune,
Those before me have scored; I'm on base
  But am rocked by discordant tune:
'Take me out...'; 'Take 'im out!' voices chanting.
  Air is shocked by the force of the blow.
I am left. I am O. Henry fielding—
  But didn't He play right? I don't know.

Confused, as it were, out of order
  Images marshal and burst and peel.
There are Aesop, his dog, and his shadow;
  They rave, 'Ditch her, son!' Is it real?

How much enterprise in rooting and digging
  Must one tap to uncover the bone?
How many pictures really are caches—
  How many songs are more than just tone?

A highly-embroidered mantle
  Can cloak a lot of bull.
Aye...and the hooded peregrine falcon
  Marks not the wheeling sea gull.

"Foul Ball!" I am back at attention—
  Alert and a different chap.
The battery trade signals; I'm ready.
  The hurler tugs at the brim of his cap.
The wind-up, the throw—I am running
  And sliding for all that I'm worth!
At the plate—I am out—on the bench
  And cursing the day of my birth...

'Neath the brightest star in the heavens,
  A babe in arms, kappa pi.
A walk or an error'd been merry
  But lo! Sirius burns, cold to the eye.

Too late, I recall home-spun wisdom
  As I dust off the seat of my pants:
Keep your eye on the ball; your feet on the ground;
  And your mind on each step of the dance.

For of all the canons of the rituals of men...
  Someone should write a poem
(Or tar and feather the sinner...)
  The shortstop should never steal home!

—MARY WALKER

In Search of *The Lost Steps*: Four Explorations in an Uncharted Land

SUBMITTED BY THE MEMBERS OF
S231 SPANISH AMERICAN FICTION IN
TRANSLATION (SPRING, 1975)
TAUGHT BY PROF. NANCY NEWTON

The Lost Steps, by Alejo Carpentier, is considered to be quite typical of the New Latin American Narrative,[1] a term applied to recent Latin American fiction. But we have chosen to analyze this particular novel because, with its many levels of meaning, its combination of narrative richness and symbolic depth makes a special demand on the reader. Each of us has been concerned with one or more of these levels, as our examinations will demonstrate; however, an acquaintance with the first level, that of the narrative action, is necessary for one to understand the value of Carpentier's symbols. Therefore, we present the following short summary of *The Lost Steps*.

We meet the Narrator (we are never given his name) during one of his wife Ruth's performances of a successful Broadway play. The success of the play has ruined the couple's marriage, if the few hours on Sundays they are both free to spend together can be called a marriage. After the performance, Ruth tells the Narrator that the company is leaving immediately for a road tour, and the Narrator is going to have to spend his month-long vacation alone. This news troubles him, not because of the absence of his wife but because he will be forced to face himself and answer penetrating questions about the lifestyle he has chosen. In an attempt to escape, he searches throughout the city for some amusement, but is on the point of failure when he runs into the Curator of the University's museum, an old teacher. The Curator talks to the Narrator about a forthcoming mission to the interior of South America in search of primitive musical instruments; because the Narrator, a musician himself, had once theorized about the origins of music, he is invited by the Curator to undertake the search. The Narrator at first refuses, but after prodding by his mistress, Mouche, who believes it an excellent opportunity to spend some time on a tropical beach, finally accepts the invitation.

After arriving in the South American city, Mouche and the Narrator search in some small shops for the instruments he needs, but without success. Several days later, a civil war breaks out, leaving the guests at the Narrator's hotel isolated, cut off from food and water supplies. During this period, Mouche exhibits an attraction for a young, female Canadian painter, which comes as a complete surprise to the Narrator. When some order is finally restored, the three move to the Canadian painter's home in Los Altos in order to escape the government-imposed curfew. It is here that the Narrator begins to recognize Mouche's shallowness and finally decides to travel up-river in pursuit of the primitive instruments. At first reluctant to leave Los Altos, Mouche eventually agrees to come along.

On the initial bus ride over the mountains, the two find Rosario on the road near death from exposure. The Narrator immediately notices the contrast between Mouche and Rosario, disliking

more and more the former and feeling an increasing attraction to Rosario. This feeling is accentuated when they reach the Valley of the Flames, an oil production settlement: Rosario is treated with respect by the men there, while Mouche is mistaken for a prostitute. One of the men, a Greek diamond-hunter named Yannes, accompanies the trio to the city of Puerto Anunciacion, where the Narrator expects to find a guide to take him up the river. It is Yannes, in fact, who introduces the Narrator to a man known as the Adelantado; in a tavern named "Memories of the Future" he agrees to lead the Narrator and his party to the primitive musical instruments.

Mouche does not go very far, however; at the first stop, the small cabin of the Diamond-Hunter Yannes, she becomes stricken with malaria and is forced to return to Puerto Anunciacion. Yet it is while Mouche is delirious with fever that the Narrator and Rosario first become lovers, forming a relationship which is to become extremely important for the Narrator and his journey.

Led by the Adelantado, the party comes upon a tree trunk, notched with three V's fitting vertically one within another, which marks the entrance to a secret waterway into the unexplored interiors of South America. On a symbolic level, this special sign marks the beginning of the Narrator's journey into the equally unexplored interior of his being. Indeed, he undergoes the first two of three Trials: he struggles to overcome his repulsion and fear of the nocturnal life in the jungle; and he survives a sudden tempest which catches the travelers in a dangerous stretch of water. After the storm subsides, the Adelantado leads them to a small Indian village to rest. The instruments for which the Narrator has come are in this village. He feels a great sense of accomplishment and his mission seems to be over.

A new search has become all-important for the Narrator, however. He has slowly succumbed to the simplicity of a life lived primitively, to a life closely attuned to Nature, and the Adelantado's disclosure of a city of his own founding sparks within the Narrator a fervent desire to see it, to experience it, to share life with its inhabitants. And thus his journey continues: the Adelantado, Rosario, and the Narrator leave Yannes, who is going to search for gold, and travel the remaining stretches of water until reaching Santa Monica de los Venados.

The Narrator spends several days basking in the atmosphere of Santa Monica, observing the harmony of the people with their natural environment. There are, however, some things in the village which disturb him—the presence of a church; the existence of several laws, made by the Adelantado, which carried punishments for their infraction—but they soon get lost in the rush of new and strange thoughts which fill his head. One of those new thoughts is a musical composition, called the *Threnody*, which he begins after the rains keep him secluded inside his hut. He fills one of the Adelantado's notebooks with the work, and then a second, and a third, exhausting the village's meager supply of writing material, yet not able to finish his magnum opus.

Meanwhile, the Narrator's wife Ruth had gone to a newspaper with the story of a dedicated musical researcher who had disappeared in the jungle, and the result was that the newspaper launched a tremendous search for the Narrator (accompanied by the appropriate publicity for both Ruth's and the newspaper's efforts). The search succeeds when two airplane pilots spot the isolated village and land in order to "rescue" the Narrator. He decides to return to New York with them in order to hand over the musical instruments and to bring back paper and ink with which to finish the *Threnody.* Despite his attempts to persuade her to the contrary, Rosario remains convinced that the Narrator is leaving her permanently, and as he leaves, she takes on the

appearance of a widow.

The Narrator arrives in New York to the acclamation of a relieved public, with promises of huge payments for the published account of his ordeal. His plans to take the money and return to Santa Monica are disrupted by the two other women in his life: Ruth refuses to give him the divorce which would free him to marry Rosario; and Mouche makes public her role in his adventure, an admission which bursts the "dedicated researcher" myth and ruins all the financial arrangements he had made. Consequently, he is unable to return to Santa Monica immediately, and must spend several months in a world which increasingly sickens him. After six months, he finally returns to Puerto Anunciacion, finding the houses and people changed, the old guides gone, the level of the waters in the river risen to such a degree that the mark of the three V's is hidden completely, and himself unable to repeat the journey to Santa Monica de los Venados. And when he meets Yannes, who has recently discovered a diamond mine quite near the village, and is told that Rosario has married the Adelantado's son and is expecting his child, the Narrator's delusion of "sever[ing] the bonds of time" and forsaking the world he had grown up in—the modern world—is finally shattered. Extremely depressed and full of resignation, he returns to the "burden" awaiting him in North America, his eyes burning with the sign "Memories of the Future."

The Lost Steps is above all an account of a journey, a very special journey: one at once spatial, temporal, psychological, individual, universal. The following explorations, originally written in response to the issue of the success or failure of the Narrator's journey, address themselves to these aspects of Alejo Carpentier's work.

* * *

One can assess the Narrator's journey as ultimately successful in that it liberated him from an absurd existence and engendered his spiritual resurrection as an integrated man. This beneficial element, it seems to me, outweighs even the enormous pain which resulted from his forfeiting Rosario. The following discussion focuses on the Narrator's journey to self-integration and acceptance of his destiny.

In the book's first chapter, the Narrator was a fragmented man who realized the absurdity of his situation but was unable to ameliorate it. He was prostituting his artistic talent. His life was controlled by forces which he despised: his relationship with his wife had succumbed to the dictates of a mediocre play and his fear of poverty had resulted in his "...selling the best hours of [his] life from sunup to sundown." The Narrator's meeting with the Curator forced him to acknowledge his self-disgust. He declared that he was empty and was unable to ignore the abyss separating "...the I that I was and the I that I might have been...."

His journey in the jungle enabled the Narrator to integrate the two "I's." By becoming attuned to nature's dominance and gradually freeing himself from the artificial restraints of a decadent civilization, the Narrator learned to recognize and incorporate his actuality with his innermost desires and goals. His rejection of Mouche represented an end to his allegiance to false values. An organic physical harmony developed within him; he began to walk in time to his breathing and ate and slept in accordance with his needs rather than according to externally imposed dictates. This process of liberation and self-integration culminated in his creating the *Threnody*. "...the *Threnody* had been inside me all the time, but its seed had been

resown and had begun to grow in the night of the Paleolithic...." Because the Narrator was an artist, the paramount example of his integration was this self-expression through music. Without the jungle experience, he could not have created the *Threnody*.

It must be admitted that the Narrator's attempt to recapture the idyllic life of the Adelantado's city failed. This failure, however, served to increase the Narrator's integration by forcing him to accept fully the implications of his position as an artist. The nature of art precluded the possibility of his return because of two specific factors. First, art demands an audience: "What was done was not completely done until someone else had seen it." The second barrier to the Narrator's return was the sense of history necessary to an artist:

> But none of this was for me, because the only human race to which it is forbidden to sever the bonds of time is the race of those who create art, and who not only must move ahead of the immediate yesterday, represented by tangible witness, but must anticipate the song and the form of others who will follow them, creating new tangible witness with full awareness of what has been done up to the moment.

Although the Narrator cannot escape his temporal boundaries, his journey, by bridging the abyss within him, enabled him to fulfill his inner goal. "Sisyphus' vacation came to an end," but one can feel assured that the Sisyphus who returns to his burden will no longer suffer from spiritual emptiness.

—SARAH NEMECEK

* * *

Whether the journey of the Narrator is successful or not depends on how it is viewed. At one point in the narrative the Narrator refers to his journey as a vacation: "Today the vacation of Sisyphus ended." When one takes a vacation it is with the understanding that it is not permanent and that one has to return to whatever he is leaving behind. If the journey is viewed in this perspective alone, it can be considered successful, for the Narrator is able to *temporarily* leave behind his highly technological and robotizing world. But if the journey is viewed in another, much broader, perspective, the verdict has to be failure.

The Narrator, a modern-day Ulysses, passes through several trials in his journey. The first is the night in the jungle; he survives its horrifying darkness and noises. The second test he encounters is a devastating storm, which he also survives. It is in his third test that failure comes.

The third test is less dangerous, but is the most decisive because it is the test of renunciation, of breaking the last ties that attach the vacationer to the world he has left behind. The encounter of his liberty, of his realization as a man, leads him to renounce his world and become a part of his newly discovered reality.

But the renunciation that this supposes is never complete because it is never a conscious and voluntary act which makes it irrevocable. In the jungle the Narrator recovers his capacity as a man but he has to return to the dehumanizing world left behind. He has to return for two simple but necessary things for him: "But I admit that I lack here things that can be summed up in two words: paper, ink." It is thus that he fails the supreme test, the supreme renunciation.

As in the old myths and also in life itself, the temptation is lost to him. The renunciation is never total. He wants to escape the world that torments him but he cannot make the final decision to break permanently his ties to

that civilized world. When he is ready to return to the primitive world, he finds the passageways displaced, the markings gone, and the people changed: in short, everything is changed. It is then that he realizes that the marvellous adventures come only once. It is in vain that he tries to repeat them.

The question which remains is: if the unnamed Narrator represents mankind in general and if he fails in that he cannot liberate himself completely from the civilized world, then what hope is there for man and his present situation? What will his journey be? A vacation that ends! Perhaps as in *The Reign of This World,* another work by Alejo Carpentier, man has to arrange his world to fit him, instead of fleeing it in search of another. The following is from *The Reign of This World:* "Man is always longing for a happiness situated beyond that portion which is promised to him. But the grandeur of man is precisely in wanting to better that which is...man can only find his grandeur, his maximum measure, in the Reign of this World."[2]

Although the Narrator can go back in time, he is still a visitor in the primitive times; they are not the times given to him. Moreover, he is bound, as we all are, each to his own time. In order to achieve ultimate success, we have to find it in the times to which we are bound. The grandeur lies in reaching a harmonious balance between our inner selves and the outer world which we have created.

—PATRICIA JIMISON

* * *

One of the continuous undercurrents in *The Lost Steps* is the Narrator's struggle to come to terms with a seeming paradox: time, art, and language can give order and meaning to man's world, while at the same time imprisoning man forever within their grasp. The following essay examines this contradictory concept in order to evaluate the success of the personal aspect of the Narrator's journey.

In his novel,*The Lost Steps*, Alejo Carpentier utilizes the literary motif of the journey to provide a framework for his narrator's experiences, and this motif gains emphasis through Carpentier's allusions to Homer's *Odyssey*. However, these two artistic visions—Homer's and Carpentier's—do not evince a one-to-one parallel in view of the fact that, unlike Odysseus, the fictional narrator of the novel cannot return home, home being that primordial state of existence the Narrator finds in the South American jungle. Instead, Carpentier's narrator, while delivered from the geographical battlefield of modern society, remains trapped within modern civilization in terms of his own psychic responses. However, the Narrator's attempt to journey back into time does allow him to fulfill his destiny as a musical composer as the jungle nourishes his artistic tendencies; and, thus, in evaluating Alejo Carpentier's assessment of his narrator's journey in *The Lost Steps*, it is possible to deem the quest both futile and successful.

In one sense, the Narrator's attempt to gain personal freedom from the "galley master" of modern society and from the Sisyphus-like torment found in the routines of modern life and artistic forms is rendered impossible in the realization that "certain forces of the world he had left behind continued to operate in him." The Narrator comes to understand that his commitment to music, his desire to "cure the music of my time of many errors," constitutes his burden as an artist who cannot live in the past or the present "but must

anticipate the song and the form of others who will follow...." However, the Narrator's symbolic identity is not that of the artist solely but that of modern man in general. Carpentier refuses to name his narrator, which adds to his universal quality, and the Narrator identifies himself as representative of modern man: "my own people—big business, bronzes, pomp..." Thus, his condition illustrates that for modern man, the "absolute mental sloth" of the physical man experienced by the Narrator in the jungle only serves to spur the brain on to understanding and analysis which trap the individual into re-creating nature through the "word," through "tangible witness." This very act of creation, then, becomes a burden in and of itself, and the "miracle" of being what man once was in his primordial state can no longer be retrieved. The only individuals who can escape time are those who do not live "out of any intellectual conviction," who are not endangered by a brain spurred on to analysis. There is an intense irony in the fact that the very elements of creativity, language and analysis, which allow man to order his world and to escape the animal existence of "struggle with the mountains and the trees" constitute the same elements which confine man to his "epoch." The Narrator's journey illustrates that modern man cannot escape the influences of time and cannot retrieve a more basic and simple existence, and in this way, the quest has been futile.

In another sense, the Narrator's journey may be seen as successful only if the reader places value in intellectual achievement and creativity. The journey into the jungle forces the Narrator to confront the "the diabolical vegetation that surrounded the Garden of Eden before the Fall." This vegetation becomes symbolic of a "prenatal world" which had *not* been "re-created by the Word," and it threatens the Narrator with burial, disappearance and remaining "unknown because...never named." This aspect of the journey illustrates the chaos and void before God's creation, and thus, re-creation becomes associated with divinity and man's destiny in being created by the "Word" of God. In this way, language and creativity are elevated in importance in their ability to achieve order in existence and to save man from oblivion. In experiencing virgin nature, the Narrator realizes that the jungle created "a world of appearances that concealed reality," and his artistic impulses, "a power beyond my control," force him into creating some meaning out of his experiences with nature, an attempt towards order and a manifestation of being. Thus the journey has allowed him to participate in an act of re-creation through his subsequent musical composition, the *Threnody*, and the journey can be envisioned as successful only insofar as the reader values human concepts of order and knowledge.

Through the above analysis regarding the futility and success of the journey in Alejo Carpentier's novel, *The Lost Steps,* the reader should be aware that the novelist has, in fact, posed a dilemma found in human existence. Time, language and the ordering aspect of creativity confine man to the extent that they become forces which inescapably continue to operate within him making him what he is. On the other hand, while these forces constitute a type of "prison," they do allow man to benefit from concepts which give meaning to his world and which permit him to order his experience so that he escapes oblivion. To the extent that the journey has allowed the Narrator to participate in the "fruits" of time (knowledge, language, order and creativity), it is successful. If one values, instead, a state of simplicity found in the mysteries of the jungle, then man has paid a great price for knowledge, that price exhibited in the burdens of modern civilization.

—KATHLEEN ANNE WARD

Alejo Carpentier's *The Lost Steps* not only has meaning for man, the individual, but for man, the species as well; any discussion of the book would not be complete without taking this fact into account. Therefore the following essay concentrates on the meaning of the recurring phrase "memories of the future" and its broader implications.

The reader comes away from *The Lost Steps* with a strong feeling that Carpentier has presented some sort of evolutionary view of man and his society, a feeling which stems from the temporal movement in the novel (from modern society backwards to a prehistoric one, and then forward again). The Narrator, as the journeyer, thus becomes the important focal point, and his reactions to what he experiences are vital clues to Carpentier's statement. Let us therefore examine the Narrator's responses to the Puerto Anunciacion tavern sign "Memories of the Future."

When he first noticed the sign, the Narrator thought it "such a delightfully absurd name" for a tavern in modern civilization's last outpost before the unchanged jungle of South America. At that point, the phrase had no meaning for him. But later on, after he had reached Santa Monica de los Venados, enjoyed and relished its lifestyle, and had returned to New York in order to obtain pen and paper, he was gently taken back by its memory, coming "as a relief," to what Carpentier terms "the vast land of possible Utopias." And finally, once he had realized the futility of actually returning to the simple ways of Santa Monica, he suffered the consequent vision which caused his eyes to burn, because he had finally learned the real meaning of the phrase "Memories of the Future":

> ...the one who made too much of an effort to understand, the one who underwent the agonies of a conversion, the one whose idea was that of renunciation when he embraced the customs of those who forged their destinies in this primaeval slime in a hand-to-hand struggle with the mountains and the trees, was vulnerable because certain forces of the world he had left behind continued to operate in him.

This idea that time is binding, that one cannot escape the world to which he is born, is an important one for the book. It explains the Narrator's failure to return to Santa Monica; it explains Rosario's inability to accompany the Narrator to New York on the airplane; and it explains the Adelantado's efforts to keep Santa Monica de los Venados isolated and unknown to outsiders. Each world had its own characteristics, achievements, and shortcomings. To attempt to mix two worlds is not only doomed to fail but may have unpleasant side effects: for example, Fray Pedro de Henestrosa's attempt to bring Catholicism to the isolated Indian tribes ended in his brutal murder at the hands of those same Indians; Yannes the Greek's discovery of diamonds near Santa Monica had already, by the time the Narrator rejoins him, changed him into a suspicious, secretive man, worried only about accumulating more wealth. The people of different worlds even think differently: when the Narrator decided to return to New York, he rationalized his decision by thinking to "buy the few things I needed to live a life as full as that of all the others here." A striking portrait of modern man's belief that money can buy even happiness!

But Carpentier is not content to simply describe modern man's situation; he feels the need to explain it. This he does by presenting two worlds at opposite ends of the evolutionary scale, allowing the reader to recognize the progression from one to the other. From a simple village where the few laws are crudely written in a notebook by a single law-giver to the complex legal jargon assembled by masses of technicians is quite a

contrast; yet Carpentier makes it plain that the former inevitably leads to the latter (after all, the Adelantado is unmistakably cast in the role of Hammurabi, the ancient law-giver). The Narrator recognized that the Adelantado stood "at the first chapter" of history, prepared to lead his people in the same path that other once-primitive peoples have forged.

It is also evident that Carpentier views this evolutionary process in a negative light. The modern world, for all that it gains in creature comforts, loses even more: it loses true knowledge and its self-awareness. When the Narrator reflected on his observation of a medicine-man's ritual chant designed to bring the dead back to life, he realized that

> ...what I had seen confirmed, to be sure, [was] the thesis of those who argue that music had a magic origin. But they had arrived at this conclusion through books, through studies in psychology.... But I *had seen* the word travel the road of song....

Clearly, knowledge without any basis in experience (modern man's knowledge) is less sound and less pure than experiential knowledge. And the degradation of knowledge leads to a loss of self knowledge: the modern world is characterized as "the world of the Apocalypse," where the absence of self-awareness has progressed to the point that people's actions are hobbled by fear, and in which all the ancient ceremonies (weddings, funerals, religious services) have become meaningless. J.B. Priestley, in his Introduction to *The Lost Steps*, calls this advance in civilization a substitution of "mere secondary satisfactions for those primary satisfactions of deep desires that we seem to inherit." Carpentier is more explicit: "It [is] of greater value for a people to preserve the memory of the *Chanson de Roland* than to have hot and cold running water." When Carpentier employs the phrase "memories of the future" he seems very close to saying that the seeds of the destruction of the human race lie within Man himself, in his value systems and his ideas of what civilization properly is.

Where does all of this lead the reader? Perhaps to the Adelantado's lesson: "the greatest challenge a man can meet is that of forging his destiny." But after man reaches a certain stage in his demographic and intellectual development, is he able any longer to make his own destiny? Or does the impact of a crowded, restless, frightened world eliminate his choice in the matter? The Narrator, on his way back to Santa Monica, believed "I was the master of my steps, and I would set them where I chose." But in light of his ultimate failure to return to Rosario and the simple life, and the consequent implications regarding the bonds time imposes upon an individual, perhaps within the title of the book lies some judgement about man's process of development: it is a trail of *lost* steps.

—*MICHAEL POSTON*

NOTES

[1] *The Lost Steps* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1967), with its use of mythical structures, its sense of ambiguity, its attempt to do more than merely mirror reality by focusing on "lo real maravilloso" (marvelous reality), is clearly representative of the New Latin American Narrative.

[2] *El Reino de este Mundo*, Editorial Universitaria (1971), p. 156.

The Last Watch

My stead they keep, though
I, not ready, bid them go.
Besides, public translations,
accompanied by shakes and howls,
beg greater justifications.
Instead they stand in my private time,
nodding, and shushing life as if
the solemn performance death plays is not
to be rehearsed, encored.
I, longer than they, can tolerate this closing.
They think me deaf to the scratching in the earth.
The cakes have arrived. I smell the bouquets, too.
Soon I must forfeit or they'll stale.
Someone said it is like sailing on a riftless tide.
Another that it is soaring, so glide.
Ignoble I say. Spittle and wheeze and
folkeyes to see it, wipe its brow and
suffer vicariouslies.
Away with you! —or me?
Irreducibility I seek: the I
stands alone and whole before the
void or throne. Cares the sky
that I sniffle, snicker, sound or bellow?
I doubt so. Maker/creature, come I to the
gallows, nest? Where the gate of
Universe and swings it side to side?
Face me, Christ, and show me your palms!
Retrieve, or suffer me not. Shy?
Too long the discourse, too short the doing.
Far away there is a quiet chatter growing small.
Restless watchers see distance in disease,
or age. Tulle and gossamer stretch their
lengths across me, wedding gown style:
white because I step unsoiled out, waiting
nervous as a girl's first kiss and blush;
is it also easier after the first time?
Come, groom, ravenous in your appetite.
Mine equals yours. Whether last or new
(I have charted moons and rivers)
this breath anticipates implosion, holy shattering.

—CHRISTY AUSTIN

The Raspberry Woods

DONNA SCOGGAN

That day I came home from school and couldn't eat my lunch. Ham sandwiches on rye bread and potato salad—remnants of Sunday dinner. I didn't want them to notice, so I tried to eat it. I chewed slower and slower, each bite more and more tasteless, until finally I was just too tired to keep on pretending. I curled up on my mother's bed and pretended to be asleep, until I knew the time to go back to school had passed.

My mother felt my head, her mother-hand cool and familiar to my skin. She was worried. I always ate my lunch.

On the way there, I crouched down in the back seat, so that any kids walking back to school wouldn't see me and think I was playing hookey.

There, they put me on a table and felt me all over. Then, people started rushing around the room, calling places and arranging things. He started feeding me a bunch of garbage like—"Just think, you can have your own T.V.," and "You'll be able to go home real soon." But all the time I kicked and cried, screaming, "No!No!" I knew where they were sending me. I hated him with all my heart. If he had come one step closer, I would have bit him. I would have filled him with my poison germs.

He couldn't look me in the eyes. He knew.

Back home, I huddled in my corner of the couch, my suitcase packed, waiting. My mother, in the kitchen, peeled potatoes for supper, her tears salting them silently with fear. I planned to run away and hide in the raspberry woods, but I was afraid I'd get in trouble.

Daddy came home. I heard him murmuring to my mother in the kitchen. Suddenly her voice rang, sob-clear, "She's got the hepatitis!"

That was it, the terrible thing that was in me. The thing that was making them send me away. My germs made people die, so they were sending me to a room where I would be alone, forever. There, I would wait until my germs killed me. I wanted to die in the raspberry woods.

There, the rooms were made of glass, so the people could stare at you without having to touch you or come near. They didn't want to catch it and die. My mother had to wear a white mask so that she wouldn't breathe the bad air that I breathed. I tried not to breathe too much air.

Everything that I touched or used or breathed on had to be burned and destroyed. My poison was everywhere.

Secretly, I was racked with guilt. I knew I was being punished for the bad thing I had done. I had laughed when my mother told me that Sandy's eyes had turned yellow. My eyes were yellow now.

My mother brought me a brand-new Raggedy Ann doll. I loved Raggedy Ann; each night I cried myself to sleep, clinging to her soft body for comfort, pretending she was Mommy.

They burned her.

Fall of a Daemon

SATANIC MAJESTY
PRINCE OF THE VEIL
MASTER OF EVIL

AND MY WELL-BELOVED:

Did You not remember me
with glee
the day that very fool
Prometheus
I bound upon the rock
(and stabbed him with it)?

Fire gave he to puny man:
thus
I seared him with the sun;
ah, yes, the broiling sun, the mocking sun.
He never dies, he rages still,
immortally.

Well pleased were You;
I, too,
to see the bright flesh crackle.
I go to visit him, indeed,
to tickle my delight
on idle days.

We, You and I, we reveled
in two cups of vintage blood,
spilled by lofty royalty
in brilliant crimson tears
for every one of them we slew so
royally.

How gladly did You lower me
to You,
O cunning Tempter,
to laughing fall with You:
to tumble into mirth with You,
conspiratorially!

Disciple then to You was I,
favoured
to sit upon the needle-rug
and to fast upon coals.
You offered me, Yourself,
the eyeballs of a prophet, blinded.

Grasped, You said, by You
the eyes, the roots still green
and blue and sliding down
my eagerly awaiting throat.
I sit. I think of them still,
and salivate.

I gathered for You wrath,
to feed the fire, Malice,
to stoke the sacred hearth,
licking the highest flame
to spit into the sky the taste of You
in triumph kneeling.

Nor did You in Your toils neglect
to honour me in mine,
clothing me in compliments:
raiment of the blackest blacks, the livid reds,
the moulded bones of centuries
decayed by the touch of You.

When, in menace dressed,
I stalked for You the prey,
a certain child born,
a wise man fated king,
I whispered treachery to him;
his life I made a thorn.

You chortled so with me!
O merry-making orgy
of destruction that we wreaked!
Your scales, O Master, darkening
with pleasure,
lustfully.

And, on the eve You limped,
a kind old man, disguised,
to grinning plunge a hatchet
through innocents in bed,
suddenly,
I ate a mother's breast in Your honour.

I tore the unborn child for You,
presenting to Your jaws the
morsel brain, the tender skin,
the precious fluid I had saved,
that aphrodisiac of vengeance
that You love so well.

And, as You hungered, so I fed.
I grew from You unclean
a root, a germ of greedy wisdom,
glistening I and new and stronger,
sapping at the very core of You.

Aha, You taught me well enough
to summon You Yourself,
leering,
when even the dark angels of Fury who
rested in the caves of hatred
would not come to me.

Were we not then of one mind, You and I?
Did we not plot, deep in our lair
of bristles, far into the years?
Wanted we for bile to build our strength
when pleasure gaped and beckoned
to the flesh?

One afternoon, when,
to prove Your faith in me,
a razor I slid into a child.
Many hours I toiled, patiently sawing
the o so very young, almost-woman,
lovingly.

First, each joint of every bone
I pulled. (She howled so!)
Then, separating limbs when
twisting, they snapped,
I snorted, until every bit was sliced, skillfully
the masterpieces to fling at Your many sacred feet.

How well You knew me then!
How well You knew Your mate,
Your paramour, Your other self,
that consort of Your night!
Immortal proud, I great and gloating stood.

But strange the day You sat
in silence passive,
gnashing not Your teeth,
nor clawing at Your shoulder thoughtfully.
You gazed. I stooping slapped Your face
in obeisance to You.

That day You sat You
stood deliberatingly
You hurled
a vomit me You flung
Unblinking You The Master
out.

Where shuddering You I see
now a glint of, fanged,
and closed the gate, and locked;
iron-hot no more to fondle,
I freezing wait.

In brilliance scorned
too brilliant for my eyes,
accustomed as was I to midnights
of Your clutching madness joy,
I reel;
I freezing wait.

Am I, Disciple of the Highest,
of the Unclean Spirit,
thus to be tormented, thrust aside?
I lash. I
shriveling.

Outside Your door,
a daemon falls.

—RUTH REDSTONE

Thurible

Why is an incense censer
Entitled so? It has no sense nor sensor.
It neither morals suppresses
Nor dame temper distresses;
You can have mine free for five cents, sir.

—MARY WALKER

Artist at Chateau Noir

ALICE ELY

Looping through startling red hills and green parasol pines, the Route de Cezanne crosses the Arc Valley east of Aix-en-Provence, to be lost among the lower slopes of Mt. St. Victoire. Each bend opens onto a new vista whose colors—orange and blue, yellow and violet—are wedded with light. French schoolboys tear along the road, more intent on driving with one hand than taking in the splendor of the looming mountain. Yet even if, like me, they had slowed to a walk, perhaps they would have been long to notice one rutted, tangled track which leads away from the road, undistinguished by any marker or name. This is the driveway to Chateau Noir; obscure, unkempt, and one of the truest back doors to the past that I have ever stepped through.

France was not new to me when I came to Chateau Noir, but I had known only her cultured richness before, and had tasted almost nothing of her more homely graces. Two years previous, I had lived with a French family long accustomed to American students, and had attended an institute for students from abroad. A happy delirium winged me through that first year; it left me passionate, if inarticulate, on the "glories of Europe." Yet I had returned, half uncertain of whether I meant to flee or find myself.

I had come to the right place. Three quarters of a century earlier, in 1889, another artist had come here, too. His name was Paul Cezanne. At Chateau Noir he had found the two things he desired most: unrivalled seclusion in which to paint, and matter enough for a thousand canvasses. The same family, the Tessiers, owned the place then as now. Some say it got its name—literally, the Black Chateau—because of the blighted family fortunes which prevented its completion, and forced them to rent out its rooms. The building stands there still the same: its two disjointed wings starting abruptly out of the hillside, with a huddle of sheds linking them together as though by afterthought. The land surrounding the house, too, was full of stubborn angles and bent trees. Yet the power of Cezanne's imagination was such that from this jumbled setting he drew motifs full of an elusive grace. The challenge of bringing order to that chaotic beauty lured him back always, and led him to try to purchase the estate in 1899. The Tessiers would not let him have it, and so he was forced to live in town, but he kept a room there, which he used as a base for his painting expeditions, until near the end of his life.

It is true enough to say that Cezanne seized the essence of Provence in his canvasses. But the truth that fewer are made to see is that the essence of the painter himself still lies deep within his country. There is a tree down by the road which so embodies the spirit of his genius that it seems more a symbol than a thing of nature. Its image can still be singled out among various ones of his paintings and drawings: here framing the mountain in the distance, there stooping low and stately over the road itself, its needles hanging from the outstretched branches like a soft green mane. It is a most

intimate experience of Cezanne's presence to witness the solitary splendor of that parasol pine curving dark against the late afternoon sky.

Indeed, the sense of oneness with Cezanne was never a contrived sentiment for us at Chateau Noir, chiefly because the gulf between past and present is not as wide there. Life is rustic, but not in self-conscious homage to the past—rather, in a unanimous effort to live simply but richly. Every tenant who comes there may grimace at first, but soon either the compelling nature of the place itself, or else the enviable gaiety of those already there, takes hold of his heart. The habit of boiling one's drinking water was easily acquired, and the world seemed less distracting without telephones, T.V.'s or radios. The latter sacrifice was even a gain; "having friends in" became the finest form of impromptu entertainment. Four fresh artichokes were sufficient occasion for a dinner party, and it did not matter that there was nothing else but rice and wine in the cupboard, or that everyone within shouting distance had been invited. By nine P.M. or so when the dinner was usually ready, enough food had appeared to feed all present, with some left over for those who dropped in later.

"I am lucky to be here" was a feeling we all shared, and was part of the reason why friendships grew so quickly at Chateau Noir. To live there is much sought after; the landlady interviews the hopefuls with the grave deliberation of a queen giving audience—and none are admitted without a personal introduction by a former tenant. My own entree was through one of my art teachers. He made ready to move out of his room like a thief in the night, so that Madame Tessier would not suspect an imminent vacancy until I arrived in person and was introduced. Whenever one of the uninitiated knocks confidently on her door and asks if any rooms are available, she turns him away with wide-eyed surprise as if to say, "Whatever made you think that there might be?" The subject will be closed right there. Artists, though, are especially welcomed, as are foreigners (particularly French Canadians), students, and all others with no visible means of support. The rent is never expected on time. In Aix, where the evening aperitif goes down best with large draughts of gossip, this sort of selective housing was a choice matter for discussion. Our bourgeois neighbors were all certain that we were "heepies," but they invariably picked us up as we thumbed our way into town. They couldn't resist the chance to ask what we were doing in France, whether we were married, and had we ever met their cousin Pierre LeGrand who lived in Ottawa?

It is no wonder that the inhabitants of Chateau Noir are a curious lot—even the name of the place is an enigma: many houses far more stately do not presume to call themselves chateaux. The title conjures up visions of the grandiose only in those who do not know it; but for those who do, it reveals qualities more important than elegance. Nonetheless, it was a joke of ours that a lodger of Chateau Noir could get bank credit in Paris but not even a C.O.D. in Aix. It was true; once he had made his address known, a professional wine taster who lived at the house was told when he visited Paris, "Oh, no, monsieur, let us bill you later." But on his return to Aix, he was unable to persuade La Compagnie Générale pour le Livraison du Mazout to deliver his fuel, unless he promised that all ten barrels needed to be filled, and paid in advance—for the whole ten thousand litres—cash. But that is only the beginning of the trouble which the oil caused us, and it brings me to another story.

Some years back, the landlord had made one of his few commitments to modern convenience, and had installed oil-burning stoves in all the rooms where wood-burning stoves had existed before. This great leap forward meant, chiefly, that instead of tramping about in the woods for handy bits of

logs, we traipsed back and forth from town with slick, smelly ten-litre jugs, which slopped oil on our pants legs no matter how tightly the caps were screwed on. The nuisance of it only confirmed our belief that progress in any form was not to be trusted. When there was no oil left to burn, we hugged our convictions for warmth.

The primitive aspects of Chateau Noir, as I have hinted, are closely linked to her charms. There is no better example than our scanty sanitation system. The plain fact is that every bit of sewage was flushed down the side of one hill. A short path led from my room to the latrine, but quite long enough for robe and slippers to be soaked with raindrops or dew. Yet these trials only lent, if anything, a keener edge to the joys. I never minded those early morning trips. Necessity dug me out of bed, but once I stepped outside, how could I sleep again? Every blade of grass bore a crisp shadow, every bush was spangled with dew. But that was just the homely familiar path—it is time that I tell you about the rest of the land we called ours.

The house is built upon a steep promontory of its own, skirted by silver-leaved olives and other fruit trees whose names I have not found in English. Pines march along the slopes and tilt across the path, their leanings as often determined by the sweeping power of the wind as the steepness of the climb. The land is made up of colors baked vivid by the sun; they are raw-looking only when the red gashes in the hills are soaked with rain, but more often they are akin to the color of kiln-dried terra cotta. Above the house the trees fall back as you near the very crown of the hill. They were burnt away one summer years ago, and left bare a ridge of limestone boulders. The stones are white and jumbled like bones in the desert—more beautiful than sad. Greenish grey scrub crowds in among the stones. Once trodden on, the bruised leaves pour out the scent of rosemary, thyme or sage. The topmost rocks command the valley, pointing out over it like the prow of a great ship. It is only up here that other houses can be seen, but from this height they appear merely to be a trickling inroad into a land which is deep and vast and private. The fellows to Mt. St. Victoire—other mountains whose names are not mentioned in Aix—appear to be crowding over its shoulder. Chateau Noir is below, more at home among the hills than any house in sight. Its tumbledown steps are worn through in the middle, while its tiles are numberless hues of rose and tan, with the bright accent of a new tile here and there. The heavy shutters are thrown back and the casements are open; even in winter, the sunshine melts away the chill in the air. When the weather grows fine, all the tenants appear in the garden as surely as the daisies, and they bask, eat, sketch or talk with an enormous unconcern for time or obligations. Indeed, it almost seems as if time were waiting for them. Almost.

The work which brought me to Aix, however, left me too absorbed to watch the calendar. As the year passed, I came to terms with my painting, and ground away at my senior thesis, too, while I learned to accept the plateau days along with the inspired ones. I was to leave before the first of June, and my sense of melancholy grew as each day became more blessed with sunshine. One night I lay awake, restlessly sorting the good moments from the bad. The air was balmy; its breath slipped into the room like a living thing. Suddenly the night was all about me, for while I'd felt it, smelled it and seen its stars, my ears had ignored its vague sounds. Now a new note was there; it kept key, at first with my melancholy, but then it grew and burst into the room. In every muscle and heartbeat I followed that song; it was a single bird. The notes were as rich and varied as a symphony's—wild and profound and endless. I tried to see if I were truly awake, but I was moved beyond the power to stir; then I slept, my struggles forgotten. In the morning Marielle

told me I had heard a nightingale. Remembering Keats' ode, I felt shy and grateful.

It was not long after that that I, with a few successful paintings and a finished thesis, saw that even the slow pace of Chateau Noir could not subvert time altogether. For a year I had been a second Alice; now I shook myself and saw I was in a hall where many doors waited to be tried. I passed outside that rough, lovely threshold and walked on.

A Note Concerning *From Day One to Death*

DENNIS WILLIAMS

I'm a writer. My name is John Huston, and although it is not a familiar name now, it will be. I haven't been a writer long, just two or three years. During this time, I have mainly been working on a book, an autobiography—*From Day One to Death*. It's finally finished.

For almost ten years I worked as a wallpaper salesman, completely dedicated to my job. I used to tell my customers, "If I didn't believe in wallpaper, I couldn't sell it." One day, as I casually gazed at the various colors of samples piled about me, I thought, "Is this all there is?" That's when I became a writer. I had taken a couple of journalism courses back at Morgan State; I felt that with a little practice, I'd be famous.

When I first started, I worked on short stories, which I mailed away to magazines. They all came back, usually without an explanation. Before long, I decided that I might do better writing a novel. I put myself in the correct frame of mind, and prepared for the task. For days I thought about the subject, considering all possibilities. As I searched for an interesting theme, some of the duller books I had read popped into my mind. One, *Taco Flat* was about a bunch of drunken Mexicans—completely boring. After all, each of us could easily name two or three devoted alcoholics. Another novel, *Less Miserable*, spent half of its pages describing a big city sewage system. And what about that Irish guy, Jayne, he didn't even bother to end his stories. In one of them, this man gets drunk, a girl starts crying, and just as you expect the excitement, the story ends. I bet that if he had gone on with that one, there would have been one hell of a fight.

Thinking of these books strengthened my desire to get started on my own. Eventually, I realized that the best subject I knew was me. An Autobiography? Why not! My life had been full of excitement and intrigue.

At first, everything went well. I remembered chapter after chapter of boyhood detail; then moving into college and my sales career, I recalled the tension, frustration, and fatigue. I told how I had charmed and dazzled the ladies; how I had amazed and bewildered my business competitors—the "wizard of wallpaper," they called me. Every sentence was faithful to the facts.

Finally, I came to the last chapter. Here the trouble arose; I didn't know how to end the book. You must understand, the entire time I had been accurately writing about my life. But, my life had not ended. How could my

authors had written their conclusions and discovered a couple of interesting story? I knew that the finish should not coincide with my writing the end. For instance, "And now as my books draws to an end, here I sit, a brilliant, misunderstood author, contemplating a sequel." That is not exciting. I had read enough to realize that the best-sellers had an important event take place in the last chapter. I decided that I would have to fabricate the final part.

I had to find an original ending. I spent a month searching out how twists. First, many of the characters were killed in order to end the book: Robert Jordan, Lenny, Macbeth. In fact, this guy Melville had a whole list of people to get rid of, so while the crew was trying to reel in this big fish, he just sunk the ship—had the whole *Piqued* swallowed up in a vortex. Fortunately, he saved one guy, who, of course, wrote the book.

Second. I found that the amount of tragedy in an author's life determined his popularity. Poe was a transient, couldn't hold a job, used drugs (sort of a nineteenth century hippie), and finally drank himself to death; Fitzgerald, always fashionable, also decided that this wasn't such a bad way to go. Sylvia Plath stuck her "cowheavy" head in an oven, and Hemingway "cleaned" his gun. And it seems like half of the English and Russian writers either got mad and left their country, or were kicked out. Then take a look at all those romantic Romantics—how many of them lived to be forty? They spent too much time in bed, without getting any rest. It finally killed them.

Well, it didn't take me long to realize what they had done. It was just like the wallpaper game. You had to have a gimmick. You go out and get drunk, maybe arrested, and hope that you make the front page. Or, move out of the country, then write something uncomplimentary about the people. You can't get back in, but everyone will buy your book to see if they're mentioned. It made sense to me—an author also has to be a good public relations man.

I strained my wits and imagination. For awhile, it seemed futile; then, one morning it came to me. I quickly finished the last chapter, mailed the book off to a publisher, and made arrangements for my suicide. I'll be famous—a best-seller!

My plan's similar to Robert Jordan's and Hemingway's, although you will see that I am more original. I moved the stove away from the wall and attached the vacuum sweeper hose to the gas pipe. Then I placed my mattress in the bathtub, taped the cracks around the window, and ran the hose under the door. It's all finished; tomorrow I will sit on my mattress reading my autobiography, while the gas immortalizes me.

Well, maybe I should at least wait until I hear from the publisher—just to see what he thinks of the story.

I'll Expect You for Tea

D.A. BIGGERSTAFF

The Lotus Europa came screaming up the long, oak-flanked drive and screeched to a halt in front of the old mansion. Tom Sandison, a twenty-nine year old writer with one best seller under his belt, ambled out of the sports car and walked around to help his bride of five weeks, Cathy.

"That was one fantastic honeymoon," Cathy said as she shut the car door. "In fact, that was the best one I've ever had!"

"Don't feed me that bull. That was the *only* honeymoon you've ever had unless you're counting that cross-country trek you made with your philosophy professor a few years ago. But *you* paid for that one, didn't you?" Tom teased laughingly. They walked arm in arm toward the majestic entrance to the mansion and sat down on the warm, red brick steps.

The estate towering above Cape Porpoise, Maine, was huge. The nine hundred and forty acres of land stretched south to the jagged, sheer cliffs that dropped to the sea. From the cliffs, the Sandisons' newly-acquired property included all the beach two miles west and a mile and a half east of the mansion. The rest of the acreage encompassed the undeveloped, thick forests that loomed in the distance to the north. The mansion proper was comprised of four wings and boasted seventy-three rooms. Completed in 1796, the mansion was built like a fortress. The stone walls, over three feet thick, had withstood every squall and hurricane over the past one hundred and seventy-five years with no noticeable damage. The house was originally built by Augustus Courtney, a Scottish adventurer and businessman who made his fortune in America as the sole owner of an impressive fleet of trading ships.

The estate had sheltered many owners over the years. It had been in the hands of grandparents, great uncles, cousins and second cousins. Aunt Merriam Brookshire—actually, Tom Sandison's great-aunt—had been the previous owner of the property. A strange old soul, Aunt Merriam had inherited the estate seven years ago. She moved into the place at the age of seventy-two. Ever since Aunt Merriam had first visited the estate as a child, she had been fascinated by it. Sometime during her long life, that fascination had turned to envy and by the time she had reached sixty, she had begun to count the months and years, just waiting for her second cousins either to move out or die, so she could inherit her dream house. The day finally came and in spite of her doctor's orders, Aunt Merriam moved in, bag and baggage, in less than twenty-four hours after the inheritance papers became official.

So there she was—a seventy-two year old spinster who moved her thin and frail body in and out of those seventy-three rooms *alone* for seven long years. At the time of Aunt Merriam's inheritance, Tom was living alone in his parents' home in nearby Portland. His father was an executive consultant for IBM and had since been transferred to Europe. Reluctantly, Tom realized he was Aunt Merriam's closest relative and recognized his responsibility to

visit her on a more or less frequent basis.

The young writer would never forget his first tea with Aunt Merriam. Tom had knocked off another forty-five pages of his novel over the last six days. By noon on Tuesday, he realized his paragraphs had become sluggish, his creative flow had dwindled drastically. By two in the afternoon, he had cleaned his desk of garbage, sharpened his pencils and had shut down the electric typewriter. Feeling the need to get away for awhile, he went for a drive along the coast. As he cruised over the treacherous road cutting through the cliffs, he thought of Aunt Merriam. Downshifting, Tom made a quick right-hand turn and sped along in the direction of the old mansion.

* * *

Dimming light from the dying afternoon cast a long shadow of Tom's arm across the huge door as he reached for the knocker. Two minutes later, Aunt Merriam slowly opened the door. A hinge creaked.

"Why, Thomas!" the old lady said. "This is an unexpected surprise."

"I apologize for coming unannounced this way, Aunt Merriam. I was out driving and..."

"Don't apologize for pleasantly surprising your old auntie, Thomas. I'm always happy to see my favorite great-nephew. Please, come in. I have a few friends over and you're just in time for tea."

Tom walked in slowly, his eyes taking in every detail of the ancient place. "Forgive me for gawking, Aunt Merriam. It's just that I haven't been here since I was a little boy."

"That's right. You haven't, have you? Well, come along, sweetie. We'll take a short stroll through the ground floor. My guests won't mind."

After they had walked through a few rooms, Tom asked, "How are you getting along, Aunt Merriam?"

"Why, what do you mean, Thomas?"

"Well, you're all alone in this big house and I just thought..."

"Oh, Tommy, I manage just fine. I'm *always* entertaining guests and on those few occasions when I'm alone, I spend my time in the library. Why, there must be ten thousand volumes in there. I love to read, you know. Once in a while, I explore the upper levels of the house, though I only really live in a few rooms down here. I haven't even begun to explore the lower levels yet. But come, let us have tea. I want to introduce you to my guests."

Tom Sandison thoroughly enjoyed the small tour. He was fascinated by the house, and every detail conjured up an idea for fiction he could possibly use later. Tea was being served in the drawing room. The room was built in an L-shape and the first thing that had caught Sandison's attention was the huge oil painting of Aunt Merriam that hung over the stone fireplace. He estimated the portrait to be at least fifty years old. The slightly-faded work of art portrayed Aunt Merriam as a beautiful young woman. Her auburn hair fell in a cascade of curls about her white shoulders. She wore a gown of blue velvet. One strap of the dress was unhooked and half of the bodice fell drastically in layers of shimmering blue, delicately revealing her left breast.

Noticing his intense interest in her portrait, Aunt Merriam said, "That was done by an artist from Paris when I was in my twenties. I think it adds something to the room, don't you?"

"Indeed. You were very lovely, Aunt Merriam."

Leading him around the corner, she said, "Come. Meet my guests." As they approached the chairs grouped around a long coffee table that supported a silver tea service, Sandison's eyes nearly popped from his head. His body physically jolted. The coffee table was flanked on one side by an immense sofa and on the other by two high-backed chairs. There were no

guests occupying the chairs or any other part of the drawing room.

It took nearly an hour for Tom to pull himself together—an hour for him to realize just how lonely Aunt Merriam really was. He made it through the ordeal pretty well and as he rose to leave, he felt quite amused as he bade farewell to the "guests."

"Now Tommy," Aunt Merriam began as she walked him to the door, "now that you know where I live, I'll expect you for tea every Tuesday. Is that too much to ask of a busy, young writer?"

"If I can't make it for some reason, I'll call, Aunt Merriam," Tom replied, not wanting to commit himself fully. He kissed her goodbye and drove home slowly. The events of the afternoon reverberated in his head a thousand times as the afternoon light rapidly faded and fell into dusk.

* * *

Within the next few months, Tom Sandison had completed his first novel and had received a telegram to meet with an important publisher in New York City. During all those weeks, he had not once failed to keep his Tuesday afternoon dates for tea with Aunt Merriam. Besides feeling a moral obligation to his great-aunt, he was intrigued by the mansion and always looked forward to returning.

This Tuesday, though, and possibly the several following, he would have to cancel. Before leaving for the airport, Tom made a call to Cathy, his interior decorator fiancee who was in New York on a remodeling job. He told her he had sold his book, was coming to New York, asked her to pick him up at the airport and, after a pause, proposed they get married as soon as the contract was signed. His second call was to Aunt Merriam. Seeming to comprehend the situation, she expressed her happiness for him and said, "I'll be waiting for your return."

Sandison did indeed sell his novel. After depositing the advance check, he and Cathy went through a quick wedding ceremony and flew to sunny Spain for their honeymoon. It was during their second week in Barcelona that the Sandisons received word of Aunt Merriam's death. They were too late even to send flowers. The funeral, which had taken place a few days earlier, had been attended by the minister and a city official. Aunt Merriam's lawyer explained over the phone that she had died of a cerebral hemorrhage one afternoon while having tea in the drawing room. The lawyer also said that the old lady had left the mansion and estate to Tom and that there was no need for them to cut their honeymoon short.

* * *

Tom pulled his bride from the steps. "C'mon, let's go explore our new home."

"From the looks of the outside, this place is going to be a decorator's dream." They laughed and went inside. Tom began the tour with the immense library. "Oh, Tom," Cathy gasped, "this room is perfect! I've never seen so many books in one house...and that walnut desk is just beautiful." Mrs. Sandison turned about the room, attempting to take it all in at once. "Do those gas lights really work?"

"They sure do. They're all over the house, too."

"Oh, I love it. The only thing this room needs is a good dusting." They continued the tour of the ground level, the drawing room being their last stop. Tom opened the door, his attention immediately drawn to Aunt Merriam's portrait. "That's odd," he said, more or less to himself. "Her painting appears sharper, more vivid than the last time I saw it."

"Aunt Merriam?" Cathy asked, studying the painting.

"Yes."

"Was she a loose woman, or something?"

"I don't think so," Tom replied vaguely, "but she certainly was beautiful."

Cathy suddenly drew closer to her husband. "Is this the room where she died?"

"Yes."

"I don't like it, Tom. It's *freezing* in here. I'm going outside." Cathy quickly turned and left. Tom stood there a moment longer, almost hypnotized by the beauty emanating from the canvas. He sighed, then left to find his wife.

At dinner that evening, the Sandisons discussed decorating schemes, trying to come to an agreement concerning which rooms to remodel and which ones to leave as they are. Within a week, they had completed the business of moving in and Tom claimed the library as his domain. He rearranged the room slightly, adding his typewriter and a fluorescent lamp to the desk and made room along one wall for his file cabinets. Cathy had eagerly started remodeling the kitchen.

After sending out nearly one hundred cards stating their new address, they were visited by several friends each week. Cathy usually conducted the tours of the house with obvious pride and enthusiasm. She would not, however, go into the drawing room. The guests were allowed to explore wherever they wished, but Cathy always had to "make refreshments" or "take something out of the stove" whenever their friends neared the drawing room.

The weeks and months passed quickly. Tom had made a good start on his second novel and Cathy had almost completed the kitchen. But during those weeks, Tom seemed to spend more and more time in the drawing room; Cathy became extremely upset because of it. Finally, Cathy demanded the room be changed and the portrait of Aunt Merriam destroyed. Reluctantly, Tom agreed to take care of it as soon as he returned from his upcoming trip to New York.

* * *

Cathy was about to apply the soap to her dripping sports car, when she heard the phone ring. "Damn...never fails," she mumbled while walking towards the house, shaking the excess water from her hands. "Hello?"

"Hi, honey. What 'cha doin'?" Tom asked over the phone.

"Hi. You in New York already?" Cathy asked, sliding to a sitting position on the tiled kitchen floor.

"Yeah. Listen, I'm in a hurry. I left a letter that was supposed to be sent to Seattle on the fireplace in the drawing room. It should have been mailed yesterday. Will you do it for me?"

"Dammit, Tom, you know I hate to go into that room....Oh, all right. I'll mail it for you," she said reluctantly.

"Thanks, hon. I'll be home around dinnertime tomorrow. See you."

"Okay, bye." She got up and headed directly for the drawing room. Pausing outside, she took in a deep breath for stability, then opened the door and walked in. Cathy had walked about a third of the length to the fireplace, when the door suddenly slammed shut behind her, and locked itself.

Tom noticed the bucket of water sitting next to the car as he got out of the taxi. He glanced at his watch. It was four P.M. He casually entered the

house, turning down the corridor towards the drawing room. He saw that the door to the room was slightly ajar. Setting his briefcase down, he slowly pushed the door completely open.

There, above the fireplace, was a portrait of terror. It was a girl dressed in jeans and a sweatshirt. Her hair was suspended wildly, as if having been blown by a wild wind. Both palms were raised and they faced outward, as if the girl were pushing against something. Her eyes were wild and bulging. Her color was crimson. Her face was contorted as if preparing to scream bloody murder. The girl in the portrait was Cathy.

Tom turned towards the coffee table and chairs. Hanging over one arm of the chair appeared a soft fold of blue velvet. "Merriam," Tom breathed.

Slowly, the figure in blue velvet rose from the chair and turned towards Tom. Merriam was even more lovely than her portrait. Light from the fading sun danced in her auburn hair. Her white, slender shoulders and exposed breast gleamed. Blue velvet rustled softly. "I knew you would come for tea."

Tom unfastened the single strap of Merriam's gown and it rushed to the floor. She wrapped her arms about his neck while they sank to the sofa.

Only the last dusk beams of the day noticed the eyes of the girl in the portrait, as they slowly, ever so slowly, shifted toward the silver tea service.

Maturity

The neat, crisp black and white
    of youth melt rapidly
into subtle shades of compromise.
Colors, rendered mute and meaningless
    by hypocrisy and stupidity,
stand tear-stained on barren walls.
I must paint with an empty brush
    and say thank-you.

—JERRY DREESON

Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* An Analysis of Roger Chillingworth as Villain & Hero

KATHLEEN WARD

Whenever a true artist creates a memorable villain, there follows an unfortunate tendency for critics to become the spokesmen for a dualistic viewpoint of the universe, i.e., the truly good versus the truly evil. In analyzing the character of Roger Chillingworth, the apparent villain of Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel, *The Scarlet Letter* this critical tendency has gone to such extremes as to deny the purgative influence of Hawthorne's villain and to substitute, in its stead, the influence of other factors. Thus Pearl, Hester's strength, the temptation of escape, and Dimmesdale's own remorse become the catalysts for the sinful minister's redemptive confession. However, if the reader embraces these alternative catalysts in preference to Chillingworth, the reason for this character's insertion in the novel becomes a simple desire on Hawthorne's part to portray symbolic evil with no apparent function, and Chillingworth becomes no more than a persecutor who is easily dismissed as mere symbol. It is the tendency to see Chillingworth in this light which has caused many critics to misconstrue Hawthorne's purpose in *The Scarlet Letter*.

It is the contention of this paper that Hawthorne utilizes his villain in a functional way to bring about a positive result, that is, the therapeutic release of guilt. One may question the value of Dimmesdale's confession in view of his subsequent death; but the twentieth-century reader must remember that for the Puritans, and perhaps for Hawthorne, the attainment of promise of heavenly salvation far transcended any mundane or temporary happiness. The Puritan man or woman, the good individual, must attend to the health of his soul, and in this perspective, Dimmesdale's hypocrisy in hiding his guilt constitutes a far greater sin than his complicity with Hester's adultery. Thus, in order for the reader to comprehend Chillingworth's function as an instrument of good as well as evil, we must see how important Hawthorne felt public confession to be, and understand too that Chillingworth does facilitate this confession. Finally, I wish to suggest that Hawthorne was greatly influenced by Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard the Third. This last point is important because, as Malcolm Cowley notes, Hawthorne "had been familiar with Shakespeare's works since boyhood."[1]

In order to establish the importance of confession in *The Scarlet Letter*, it is necessary to show some result of a positive nature emanating from Hester's agony of disgrace, Dimmesdale's agony of guilt, Pearl's untamed nature, and Chillingworth's diabolic office of revenge. As a matter of fact it is Dimmesdale's confession which resolves each of these dilemmas. After the minister's death, Hester can no longer entertain hope for either an earthly or a heavenly union with her lover, and therefore she returns to New

England, the place which "was yet to be her penitence." That Hawthorne alludes to penitence yet to come suggests that Hester does repent, and as Randall Stewart asserts, "there could be no salvation without that." But the most dramatic avowal of repentance is that of Dimmesdale. Had either Hester or Chillingworth publicly revealed the minister's sin, Dimmesdale would have been forced into confession, and true repentance can only be achieved through a *voluntary* statement of guilt.

Hawthorne attests to the importance of public confession when he states, "No man, for any considerable period, can wear one face to himself, and another to the multitude, without finally getting bewildered as to which may be true" (p. 154). Thus hypocrisy precludes man's knowledge of himself, and since Hawthorne confirms the moral, "Be true!" (p. 183), and the admonition to show one's self "freely to the world" (p. 183), one must assume that Dimmesdale's voluntary, public revelation of guilt has been salutary. The confession has saved the minister from adding "hypocrisy to sin" (p. 52) and has allowed him to embrace Hawthorne's demand for truth. As for the resolution of Pearl's difficulty, the spell of her wild nature "was broken," and the "great scene of grief...had developed all her sympathies" (p. 181). Pearl is thus no longer the "elf-child" but a fully developed, sympathetic human being. And by means of Dimmesdale's confession, Hawthorne even allows Chillingworth to achieve a promise of salvation in the "spiritual world" where his hatred will be "transmuted into golden love" (p. 184). Chillingworth also enacts a redemptive role in bequeathing his property to Pearl (p. 184). In allowing Dimmesdale's confession to function in such a redemptive manner—repentance for Hester, truth for Dimmesdale, sympathy for Pearl, and generosity for Chillingworth—Hawthorne establishes the positive aspect of the minister's public revelation of his guilt.

The character of Roger Chillingworth now comes into focus as the primary agent responsible for the purgation of guilt through confession. The clearest evidence of Chillingworth's positive function occurs near the end of the novel where Dimmesdale, subsequent to his confession, states: "God knows, and He is merciful! He hath proved his mercy, most of all, in my afflictions. By giving me this burning torture to bear upon my breast! By sending yonder dark and terrible old man, to keep the torture always at red heat! ...Had either of these agonies been wanting, I had been lost for ever!" (p. 181-82). In fact the minister is suggesting here that the physician has been an instrument of God's divine mercy. According to Harry Levin, "it is his [Chillingworth's] concentrated malevolence, more than anything else, that implants the idea of confessing in Dimmesdale's mind."[2] Chillingworth's positive role is further hinted at in Hawthorne's reference to his "pursuit and systematic exercise of revenge" in terms of "its completest triumph and consummation" (p. 183), the confession.

Immediately after this pronouncement of "triumph," Hawthorne redeems the physician and includes Chillingworth in his statement, "we would fain be merciful" (p. 183). He also humanizes his villain by explicating the psychological similarity between hate and love, indicating that Chillingworth and Dimmesdale have been "mutual victims" in a drama of sin and guilt (p. 184). It is noteworthy as well that the seemingly negative desire on Chillingworth's part for private revenge, "deriving his enjoyment" from "the constant analysis of a heart full of torment" (p. 123), is the very factor which restrains the physician from publicly revealing Dimmesdale's guilt and is therefore the factor which allows Dimmesdale to enact a true and voluntary penitence. Even if one allows that Hester's temptation to escape from Chillingworth instigates Dimmesdale's confession, one must still recognize the fact that it is Chillingworth's diabolic, selfish, vengeful behavior which

calls Hester into action.

The best method for realizing this positive thrust through a seemingly evil character is to envision Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* exclusive of Roger Chillingworth. One is tempted to believe that it would be an entirely different novel, and one is also tempted to believe that Hester would have continued in her illusion that her sin "had a consecration of its own" (p. 140), that Dimmesdale would have persisted in his "garments of mock holiness" (p. 138), and that Pearl, whose nature was "wilder" than the wild Indian's (p. 173), would never have been "subjugated by human law, nor illumined by higher truth" (p. 146).

If one accepts Hawthorne's Chillingworth as a catalyst for the purgation of guilt, it is possible to see a connection between the hero/villain in *The Scarlet Letter* and the hero/villain in *King Richard The Third*. Since Hawthorne was familiar with Shakespeare's plays, it is possible that he adapted the playwright's figure of Nemesis, or retributive justice, to the Puritan idea that a negative element was necessary for man to achieve spiritual fulfillment. However, Hawthorne's concern was not necessarily to advocate the Puritan doctrine of necessity, but, rather, to use that doctrine to illustrate his main theme of good-in-evil. In this way, *The Scarlet Letter* can serve as a type of theodicy, which seeks to account for evil in a universe created by a God of mercy and love.

The most obvious connection between Chillingworth and Richard exists in their deformities, suggesting the ancient Greek idea that the external aspect is a clue to the internal health of the soul. Hawthorne's initial description of Chillingworth almost suggests the hunchback quality of Richard: "This figure of the study and the cloister...was slightly deformed, with the sinister left shoulder a trifle higher than the right" (p. 46). Although Richard's deformity was historically real and not created by Shakespeare, both authors use deformity to accent their respective characters' qualities, and the identical words of "misshappen" and "deformed" are utilized frequently in both works.

Another comparison between these characters is manifested in the authors' utilization of serpent imagery, the idea of hypocrisy, and allusions to doing the devil's work. Chillingworth's expression upon seeing Hester on the scaffold is described as "A writhing horror twisted itself across his features, like a snake..." (p. 47). The serpent imagery in Richard's case is expressed as "when he bites,/His venom tooth will rankle to the death" (*Richard The Third* I.iii. 290-291). Hawthorne indicates the hypocrisy of Chillingworth by describng "a glare of red light [coming] out of his eyes" which "he repressed as speedily as possible, and strove to look as if nothing of the kind had happened" (p. 123). Richard's speech in Act I, scene 4 of the play, attests to his own efforts to conceal his true nature: "And thus I clothe my naked villainy/With odd old ends stol'n forth of holy Writ/And seem a saint when most I play the devil." Thus, Chillingworth's features have a snake-like quality; Richard has a venom tooth; Chillingworth strives to hide the red glare in his eyes; and Richard seems a saint when he is most the devil. Richard's speech reveals his attempt to play the devil's part, and Hawthorne's character is said to "undertake a devil's office" (p. 123).

These similarities in character and the use of words and imagery not only suggest a Shakespearean influence upon Hawthorne, but they also imply a relationship between Richard and Chillingworth as agents of evil who serve a functional purpose. For Chillingworth this function exhibits itself in the instigation of Dimmesdale's confession. For Richard, his function eradicates the ancient evils of England and paves the way for the more

beneficent Tudor monarchy. Moreover, there is a strong similarity between the idea of Nemesis and the Puritan belief in a negative pole in sin.

A final comparison between these two characters is a psychological one revealing the human reasons behind a pursuit of revenge as both Roger and Richard feel their deformities cut them off from true love and healthy intercourse with others. Roger Chillingworth's early life had been "lonely" and "chill," and he states his reasons for marrying Hester as follows: "It seemed not so wild a dream,—old as I was, and sombre as I was, and misshappen as I was,—that the simple bliss, which is scattered far and wide, for all mankind to gather up, might yet be mine" (p. 57). Thus, Hester constitutes Chillingworth's hope to be a part of the love and happiness of humanity in spite of his deformed body, but as William Bysshe Stein states, "The first sight that greets his eyes is Hester on the pillory. ...he sees his connection with the magnetic chain of humanity snapped."[3] Because of his age and deformity, Chillingworth is isolated from the hearts of others, and confronted with Hester's love for Dimmesdale, he finds himself totally rejected. Bereft of love himself, Chillingworth can only turn to hate as an emotional substitute and tie with humanity, and when the object of that hate, Dimmesdale, dies, Roger must die as well.

This feeling of rejection and the psychological need for a communion with humanity are so closely linked with Shakespeare's Richard that one must insist upon a connection between the two characters. Like Chillingworth, Richard is deformed and feels cut off from humanity, and as a needed compensation, he also pursues revenge. Richard states, "...since I cannot prove a lover/To entertain these fair well-spoken days,/I am determined to prove a villain" (**Richard The Third**, I.i. 28-30). These psychological dilemmas of love and rejection seem to motivate both characters, so that the respective authors can portray their villains as true human beings whose pursuit of revenge, while diabolic and dangerous to the soul, yet becomes poignant in the reader's realization that the characters themselves are victims of society's rejection. This psychological explanation of Chillingworth explains how a good man can be transformed into a fiend, and suggests Hawthorne's concern with man's plight in a complex world of love and hate.

To conclude: we have established the therapeutic outcome of confession in *The Scarlet Letter* and the positive thrust of Chillingworth towards that confession. Hawthorne's villain/hero must therefore be considered as an agent of evil who purges guilt and brings about good; and because of his human needs and psychological drives we may see him as a victim, with his own pathetic reality, as well as a victimizer. All this is illuminated with greater clarity when we consider the analogy between Hawthorne's villain and Richard III. When we read Shakespeare's play, however, the figure of Nemesis comes to mind; but for Hawthorne, the concept of retributive justice is better suited to the Puritan belief that certain individuals who undertake the devil's office also fit into God's divine plan.

If one believes in the genius of this American novelist, one must realize that Hawthorne could not accept a simple dualistic view of the universe. He believed that there is a significant relationship between good and evil; and since he demands sympathy on the part of man, it is reasonable to believe he would entertain a certain sympathy for his unfortunate physician. As an unwitting agent of positive confession, the character of Roger Chillingworth provides the groundwork for Hawthorne's later novel, *The Marble Faun* in which the idea of good arising from evil is investigated in all its complexity, significance, and ambiguity.

Notes

[1] Malcolm Cowley, "Five Acts of *The Scarlet Letter*," *College English*, XIX (Oct. 1957), rpt. in Sculley Bradley, Richard Croom Beatty, E. Hudson Long, eds., *The Scarlet Letter*, A Norton Critical Edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1961), p. 326. Although Mr. Cowley maintains that Hawthorne's cast of mind may have been "A Racinian drama of dark necessity," he does suggest Shakespeare's influence upon Hawthorne from the latter's boyhood reading.

[2] Harry Levin, "The Power of Blackness: Hawthorne's Fiction," *The Power of Blackness: Hawthorne, Poe and Melville* (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1958), rpt. in Bradley, Beatty and Long, eds., *The Scarlet Letter*, A Norton Critical Edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1961), p. 358.

[3] William Bysshe Stein, "Chillingworth as Faust and Mephistopheles," *The Scarlet Letter: The New England Faust, Hawthorne's Faust* (Gainesville, 1953), rpt. in Seymour L. Gross, ed., *A Scarlet Letter Handbook*, Wadsworth Guides to Literary Study (San Francisco: Wadsworth Publishing Co., Inc., 1960), p.78.

A Consolation Sound

IS THERE A MAN CAN SAY LO I HAVE FOUND
ON BRITTLE EARTH A CONSOLATION SOUND?
—ANNE BRADSTREET (1649)

Merrimack flows over Andover stones,
erect granite grows from wasting bones.
Yours, my gracious fertile lady Anne,
and Simon's, and your eight babes', once
indelicately wrested from the sacred nest.
Womangod. Magnanimous. Isis-prone.
You are here in me, Matron, sighing.
I feel you breathe my breath.
My bones quake upright, lie where you lay
fitted with your fits.
Inside, you scare me.

Buy the land, Simon, here is my blood;
here the eight male hands to husk
out the broody boon;
here the eight more winsome arms to hush
the nocturnal moaning.
Look to me, sower, and dream the furrowed field.
The sign of the wheat is on my brow.
I, with tears and kisses, send thee to the plow,
and thou, manmower, gather what I yield.
Nationbuilder, I am thy ransom.

I ache. This cool, ancient yard breeds only chill.
Pine, fir and shadow rest here
but I cannot. Tumultuous and weeping
I sit among you stones, shivering, lost in my agony
and in my fear and in my reminiscence of remoteness.
Tun of America Primordial, my hands have unpacked
centuries from your beds and ghoul-like I look
for you, Dame Anne, scratching the quiet granite with my nails
and listening to the song of the Merrimack.

> I am deep in this new earth,
> the red clay, red man, red pox and red fever.
> Red is the paradise I am heir to
> if paradise will have me.
> My Christ, please, abandon me to ease!
> Page upon page the pen strikes its own accord,
> covenant with the Tree's thin bark—
> blanched and stretched to be tethered
> to so much fret and feathered ink—
> and here sit I astonished by the fire
> and burning inside.
> My fingers know the needle's way by heart.
> Why know they not my heart's way by the needle
> there? Or do they know it well, my Christ Jesus?

No answer issues from this dead mist
yet clinging to the living limbs of boughs borrowing
sadness from old tears years old and from new tears newly borne.
Slow and smooth the cool gray cuddles three centuries
and the earth holds upon its lap the rocking fool
tilting old tombs and fretting for you, great Lady Anne,
yet unfinished in your being
or in mine.
Will I know you when I grow and bear
children or death with equal dignity?
When I give myself, in time, to eternity?

Merrimack flows over Andover stones
and stills the evanescent graveside groans.

—CHRISTY AUSTIN

Janus

I.

(Ending as it begins—
nothing being the end to everything;
any end,
like that final journey to ultimate madness.)

Am I to walk the beach with this dumb beast,
friendly tug, stretching the leash;
leave sinking prints to mark our way
and words to echo in the caves?
Except this hound.

I see him searching, endlessly searching
directionless
for something lost in a past life,
or something buried in the future.

I hear the thunder of the shell
and see the clouded face of someone forgotten
in a luminous moon.

I see myself in that crescent laugh of moon.
Who, I? Shall I wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled?

My life has been an empty place,
desolate...my God! such waste.

> Surely every man walks in a vain show;
> surely he is disquieted in vain;
> he heaps up years and knows perfectly who shall gather them.

But then
I do not count the time, the clocks,
the ways of young men's deaths.
Young boys throwing stones
now bones that scar the yard.

And now they sleep, sleep
but not sleep;
not that pseudodeath we living suffer nightly.

Where can I go?
Time has seized my heart;

Sleep sits in my chamber;
And wherever I set my foot, there lurks Death.

Have pity on me, have pity upon me,
at least you, my friend, for
the triumverant hand has touched me.

I do not shut a midnight eye.
I'm forced to walk this midnight beach, tugged along by the hound's haste.
I am given to eating seaweed, sea algae,
sea fruit of sleepless youth.
It's too deep! O depth:

I tied my feet to stones one night
and threw them in the sea.
Something threw the stones back out
and so it threw out me.

II.

(Waking arrests itself with strength
when the cool balm of dream, intermediate laving of soul,
soothes the mad prisoner of Sleep's hold
and blindly the willful soul asks for more length:)

When have I been so near the bargaining table?
The twin hosts of evening—
they know my desire for the eternal;
they come with shadowless steps
and at their silent voices begins my trembling,
like the tearing of leaves...

I am Time.
I am Death.
We'll gamble
for your fate.

What can they be doing in that outer room?
I hear a pair of bones grumble across the floor
(like the stones on a sea floor tied to the feet of a dying man).

III.

(Feathers in the fire,
ashes on the ground,
traces of a september's gall,
me, bitters and ashes, that's all.)

One dismal night
when the bird of eternity was aflame,
unobserved I slipped away
while Time and Death were dicing for my life.

In the secrecy of darkness
I climbed his holy tree,
compromising life for time.

He sat unhurried in his bier.
I caressed him and he drowsed and swayed
until my fingers touching near his throat,
incensed in all the beauty there
of red flame and red feather, red
and what was red and wet—
Strange! to feel the breath of life endure
and not live where life is!

In his ashes he remembered no more,
no more when he soared over memory and sadness,
no more when he soared over me, the leaves and ashes...

IV.

I come simple with my sack of ashes—
surely the secrets of these will speak for me.
And here comes that boat which reaches the shore
and falls.
There the boatman beckons with his bony hand.
How curious a faceless man!

I say, Boatman, draw back your cowl.
I have a deal to share with you.
Turn your head, the moon blocks your jowl;
I say I have a deal for you.

The faceless man with oar on knee
waving over the depthless flow
ceased his rowing, groaning so:
How frivolous a baby man would be.

And there the hound of the caves
with trebled heads gnashing all around
protecting what was lost and only now found:
bones in a triangle, the dull white bones of Death's slaves.

And there a hidden contingent of bones
dropped without honor into holes;
the disturbed mite of the skeleton groans
the slim preparation for deaths without souls.

And there the deadeye boys keep watch, lidless eyes of weeping stones.
There the deadboys, altar-robed, waning flesh with so much dust
spoiling magic.

Monsignor, is there magic in death?
Yes, there is death in magic.

Monsignor, is there life hereafter?
Yes, hereafter there will be life.
Monsignor, is not this life? do I live?
Monsignor? Are you sure?

Nothing is sure but decay.

V.

Father forgive me for I have sinned...
Oh God help me

I have sewed sack cloth upon my skin
and have covered my flesh with ashes;
my face is swollen with weeping
and my eyes are blinded.

Already the Lethe runs from my lips.
Already the salt and the clang of gates.
The flutter the flutter
the new wings speak, one to another;
when the hour falls upon the dead, they speak.
The nightingale and eagle glow in one nest,
copulative and magnificent between eternities.
The rage of age cries out from the seas
or from the claw of the carrion crow,
pendulous before the ravished deadman's brow.

VI.

I see myself in all decay, I see my
carrion skull, gray stone face split between extremities,
man of vision with no trace of shadow,
awaiting,
when all is gone,
the proper drop of earth
on coffin top.

The destiny given me now,
the judgement never appealed
I heard on that night, in my night,
in the bleating toll (mimic of graveyards)—
birds chattering of death without ever suspecting it—
until the grumble down under the sea
swallowed the last agonizing growl.

I moved with one static foot and one too fast.
My backturned face lost the simple groan of what was past
and the forward face, left visionless, merely awaits
the hound's pull, the fall, and the closing of the gates.

—CHRISTY AUSTIN

The Tongue

JEFFREY PURVIS

When Barnaby Jackdaw walked into the office that morning everyone noticed that he was working his mouth in an odd, half sucking, half chewing manner, somewhat as a mildly retarded cow might do with her cud. He walked indifferently past the talky secretaries who stood gabbing about various inanities, sheathed as they were in their too-tight skirts and transluscent blouses. He pushed straight through his colleagues' desks, and without a single word to anyone, flopped his thin, immaculate briefcase down on his desk and sat in his noiseless swivel chair before it.

Barnaby's desk was one in a whole forest of desks, each exactly like the one next to it, with the possible exception of the random assortment of papers on it. Each of the clerks (Barnaby Jackdaw was one such) had his own semi-private secretary, but among the desks and the workers there was a constant flow of shouting and gossiping chatter.

The desks were all a flat, steely gray, growing, if you will, from a decidedly deciduous-looking carpet of beige and green. The walls were a rough plaster, not yet cracked, and painted a similar dull brown, and the twelve-foot high ceiling was of hideous bile-colored molded tiles. The room was intended, of course, to be as unnoticeable as possible to anyone.

What business and firm Barnaby Jackdaw clerked for is irrelevant to our purposes: perhaps his company manufactured doggy bags or tampons, or some other such indisposable commodity; let it be sufficient to say, however, that his work was an integral part of The American Economy.

Also, Barnaby's particular function is unimportant to us; we shall be content to know that he processed forms all day, typing a bit here, applying a rubber stamp there, and perhaps scribbling a few non-grammatical sentences now and then, such as "Line discontinued; please revise order." Barnaby, it must be noted in all fairness, was quite good in his field.

It must also be noted, though, that like all clerks in such positions, he was a rather dull individual.

Please, reader, don't mistake my evaluation: it was pointed out to me many years ago by a sagacious professor of English literature that the overwhelming majority of people in this world are dull, stupid, and generally uninteresting. When I remark that our clerk was "dull," by no means am I holding him in contempt: I merely state fact.

Barnaby Jackdaw was the sort of man you would never notice walking down a crowded public street, unless, like myself, you make it your business to notice such average humans. He might be wearing a contemporary cut suit, but more likely it would be two or three years behind the latest fashion, certainly never would it be anything modish or gaudy. He might be carrying a dark, plastic umbrella; but rarely, if ever, would he be wearing a hat. His shoes aren't shiny; but neither are they dull. His hair is somewhere between dark and light, thick and thin, and most likely it is coated with some popular,

but not flagrant, dressing to keep it looking neat and "natural." He may smile at you if you wave or nod to him, but most likely not: he simply doesn't want to get involved.

In case, friend, you haven't noticed it, this world is thick with Barnaby Jackdaws, and we are blessed for it; for they are content not to govern multitudes or swim seas, and they certainly never try to add cubits to their stature by taking thought: they exist to work eight-hour days and propagate the species in small but significant numbers. Without them humanity undoubtedly would entirely cease to exist.

But our particular clerk, Barnaby, rarely considered his role in the cosmos, for he was content to process his orders and pick up his weekly paycheck. And as I mentioned earlier, he was incredibly dull.

Ah, well...

As Barnaby unloaded his briefcase of papers onto his desk, the other clerks and their secretaries began to gather around him, trying to discern what the odd motions of his mouth might mean. He constantly looked as though he were chewing something, which, like the bush on Sinai, refused to be consumed, and occasionally he would prod his tongue against his cheeks, making them bulge comically. When he suddenly stuck his tongue out between his lips and made a rather loud, offensive sucking noise, one of the more feeble-minded secretaries let go a high-pitched giggle.

Barnaby looked up immediately, and taking note of the small crowd around his desk, turned various shades of crimson before mumbling, almost inaudibly, "Oh. I'm sorry...I didn't know you were all here. What can I do for you?"

His query was met with somewhat irritated, if curious, countenances, and after a moment's silence one of his colleagues asked, "What the devil is it that you're doing with your mouth? Why, you were so preoccupied with it that you rushed right past us all this morning and didn't say hello to anyone."

Barnaby again blushed briefly, then loosening his inconspicuous necktie, spoke up in a crack, "Yes; it's my tongue."

"Your tongue?" they all chorused. "What about your tongue?"

"Well, really," Barnaby began, "I don't know quite how to answer that, except to say that it's there and I know it."

"I'll be damned," someone muttered.

"Yes, well, I said I didn't know how to explain. Last night I woke up around three o'clock, suddenly aware of my tongue. I'd never really noticed it before, and all of a sudden, there it was. Why, the very shock of it jolted me right out of my sleep."

"Jackdaw, have you been drinking?" someone offered.

"Oh, heavens no. It's only nine o'clock. But anyway, I couldn't get back to sleep, constantly aware of my tongue as I was. So I guess I'm a little drowsy."

Not one of the surrounding co-workers accepted this ridiculous explanation, and all huffily turned away to his or her own desk feeling grossly offended. The offense was short-lived, though, because Barnaby, being the insignificant creature he was, was in no position in anyone's esteem to deserve a grudge. In fact, no one bothered to speak of it again all day.

But Barnaby had not prevaricated: he sincerely had become aware, as he put it, of his tongue. Wakened from a sound sleep, he felt as though someone had suddenly thrust a soft, flappy depressor in his mouth and attached it there. He sat up, felt for his tongue with his fingers and when he discovered nothing physiologically wrong with it, he lay back down. But of course, as one does with a sore tooth or an ingrown nail, he couldn't help thinking about it, in fact concentrating all his attention on it. The

concentration precipitated his insomnia, and when he sleepily pulled himself from bed that next morning, his tongue was still foremost on his mind, which of course explains his rather thoughtless behavior upon entering the office.

And Barnaby Jackdaw was aware of his tongue the whole of the day. He found himself making errors on orders that he had never made before, and he was halfway through his designated lunch-hour when he realized he had not yet eaten. He got up from his desk, leaving it totally disheveled, and ran to a nearby diner, where the waitress made inquisitive and rude glances at him while he wolfed a toasted cheese sandwich.

At every other bite or swallow Barnaby would thrust his tongue out and finger it, once causing a stool-mate to make a caustic remark and find another seat. Barnaby shrugged his shoulders and again turned to his sandwich, only to check his tongue again a few seconds later.

On his tardy return to the office Barnaby found a hastily scribbled note on his desk, reading "Jackdaw, report to me immediately." It was signed "Obadiah Codger," a signature which was enough to fill any of the clerks with terror, for Mr. Codger was head of the accounting department.

Barnaby summoned his scant courage and strode into Codger's office, trying his best to maintain a facade of dignity. Codger looked up from his massive real-maple desk, and motioned Barnaby to a slick, green leather chair with an imperial stroke of his fat, imported cigar.

"Barnaby, we're making a shipment of so-and-so to such-and-such next whenever, and, since you're handling the accounts for that one, I want you to..." and Mr. Codger drifted off into some obscure set of instructions, none of which Barnaby perceived, because Barnaby was prodding his tongue into his cheeks and teeth and fingering it eagerly.

Obadiah Codger looked up at Barnaby for the first time and pulled the mushy cigar from his teeth, shouting furiously, "Good God, man! Haven't you heard a word I've said?" Then peering at the clerk through clouds of perpetual noxious smoke, Mr. Codger ejaculated, "What's wrong with your tongue, Jackdaw? Can't you answer me?"

Barnaby, who quickly regained consciousness of his surroundings, responded quickly, "Oh no, sir. It doesn't keep me from talking. It's just there, that's all."

"What in God's name are you talking about, Jackdaw? Are you being insolent?" Codger demanded.

The clerk, quite shaken, realized that his superior's question about his tongue was only a figure of speech, and stammered, "No sir. I simply meant..."

But Obadiah Codger would hear no excuse. "Aw, get out of here you little twit, and send in somebody respectable."

Barnaby leapt up and out of the office, as Mr. Codger once more invoked the Deity.

That evening at the supper table, Barnaby's small, corpulent but ever-loyal wife watched him curiously as he seemed to wrestle with each morsel placed in his mouth. Her examination had continued for some time, when she quietly cleared her throat and asked meekly, "Barnaby, honey. What's wrong with your mouth? Is there something in the food you don't like?"

Barnaby, ever conscious of his wife's tender ego, spoke out, "Oh no, dearest. I'm just having a little trouble with my tongue, that's all."

"Oh," she returned. "Maybe you can take something for it." At that she considered the matter closed, assuming her husband would know the proper course to take.

After looking over the evening paper, Barnaby, because of his

sleeplessness of the previous night, told his wife that he was going to retire early. Taking this to be an invitation of sorts, with girlish glee—Mrs. Jackdaw was forty-three years old—she quickly washed and shelved the dishes, and finding Barnaby already in bed, she went to the tiny bathroom where she changed into a slick, synthetic hot-pink nightgown. With devilish anticipation she left her pajama panties off, and skipped off to the double bed that she and her husband had shared for twenty-five years.

Admitting to minor disappointment at finding him snoring sonorously, she nevertheless decided to pursue her desires.

Cuddling up closely to the sleeping clerk, she stroked his flaccid buttocks and began flicking her little pink tongue in his ear, a bit of foreplay she knew to be dynamite with Barnaby. As he struggled out of sleep, Barnaby felt the wet warmness of her agile mouth, and quickly realizing what was happening, he let out a bloodchilling scream and jumped from the bed.

"Edith!" he implored, for Edith was his wife's name, "How can you do that? Don't you realize that's your tongue you're doing that with? Your tongue, Edith? How could you?"

The unpanted woman, already feeling a bit slick between the thighs, burst out in large salty tears, claiming, "Oh Barnaby, you don't love me anymore. You think I'm old and, and..."

"Oh, Edith, dearest. You know that's not true. It's just that you were using your tongue and I..."

Here the weeping stopped, and the woman looked at her husband with a countenance of disturbed fear.

"Barnaby, I've always done that, and you've always liked it."

Barnaby stood away and looked at the floor in the twilit room. "Yes, dearest. But now it's different. It was your tongue; don't you understand?"

"No, Barnaby, I don't. I think you've blown a fuse." She began crying again. "I knew it would happen. They're just working you too hard at the mean old office. I knew it would happen sooner or later."

Realizing his wife was virtually inconsolable and that she would enjoy crying herself to sleep anyway, the chastised clerk picked up his pillow and a blanket from the hall closet and bedded down on the living room couch for the night, all the while sticking his tongue against his teeth and the roof of his mouth.

When morning came Barnaby was aware of his tongue long before he was aware of the smell of breakfast pervading the air or the unaccustomed sunlight streaming in through the picture window. While eating, husband and wife spoke not a word, though Mrs. Jackdaw shot worried looks at him occasionally, and Barnaby fingered his tongue.

Barnaby didn't go to work that morning. Instead he made an appointment with the family physician, an old respectable man named Phlize. Dr. Phlize had attended the Jackdaws for years, and Barnaby trusted him not only as a doctor but as a friend. Certainly Dr. Phlize would not belittle him and condemn him as insane or drunk.

In fact Phlize listened to Barnaby's tale, hands on his aged knees, looking quite serious. Barnaby stumbled and slurred through his words, all the time remaining aware of his tongue. As he finished the doctor got up and walked about the little attending room a few moments, then turned to his patient.

"Well, Barnaby, it sounds like you've got a real problem there. And truthfully, I know only one thing to do."

The clerk listened eagerly. "Yes? Yes?"

"We'll have to take your tongue out."

"What?" Barnaby shrieked. "What do you mean, take it out? How

could I eat or talk or anything without a tongue?"

The doctor smiled paternally, and returned, "The ignorance of the public sometimes really astounds me. Tell me, how many people do you know who can't talk or eat, Barnaby?"

He shook his head. "None, I suppose."

"Well, let me just tell you here and now, I don't know any either. But I'll also have you know that there are hundreds of thousands of people walking around without tongues."

"But how..." Barnaby began.

"This business of needing a tongue is all myth," the doctor said, with a sweeping gesture. "No one needs a tongue. Why, they're useless, just like an appendix or your tonsils. Last year alone I removed fourteen bothersome tongues, for one reason or another. I assure you, Barnaby, you'll never miss it."

Barnaby pondered this, but again being brought back to the harsh reality of being aware of the one he had, he said with decision, "All right then, Doc. Out she comes! When do we do it?"

The doctor shrugged, "Right now, if you like. I'll just give you a local anesthetic, and in thirty minutes you'll be out walking the streets."

Barnaby waited nervously as the doctor prepared a Novocain injection, and again considered life without a tongue. Who needs it? he decided.

The next morning Barnaby again walked into the office past the gabbing secretaries and the clerks, and plopped his briefcase down on his desk and began unloading it. Again the workers gathered around him and demanded to know the cause for his rudeness.

"Well, it's like this," Barnaby began. "Yesterday I had my tongue removed, and last night I woke up suddenly aware that it was gone."

"I'll be damned," someone said.

Feint Praise

Of all sad words
Of voice or verse,
The saddest are these:
It coulda been woise—
(or worse...)

—MARY WALKER

"Gifts of Poverty": A Critical Review

REBÜ NEHCSNEM

We, the powerful, would like to take this opportunity to respond to Syomara Tindera's essay, "Gifts of Poverty" (**Genesis**, Spring, 1974). It is not often that we, the powerful, have the opportunity to communicate with "the poor" en masse, and we appreciate the gravity of such a dialogue. It is with the utmost gratitude toward Mrs. Tindera that we submit our thoughts to "the poor" for their thoughtful consideration through the kind auspices of this journal.

From a careful reading of Mrs. Tindera's essay, we have determined three basic points of discussion: poverty's vision as a cultural gift, the intellectual substance of poverty's vision, and the wisdom of poverty's vision. Our procedure will be to carefully reconstruct these three points to express Mrs. Tindera's total argument, and then proceed to critically evaluate the argument point by point.

The essay begins with the rather rhetorical contention that poverty has cultural gifts to give which transcend the mere artifacts of a culture of poverty and constitute a wise vision of the world—a vision the powerful would do well to consider seriously.

The intellectual substance of this vision can be best expressed by three principle terms: "limitation," "inertia," and "miracle." According to Mrs. Tindera, the poor are more aware of the "limitations" of human action and therefore are more pessimistically realistic in their appraisals of human planning and more tolerant of human frailty. Because of this, progress is futile and foreign to them, and thus they marshall the weight of their "inertia" against projects of "community development" in order to avoid the frustration of desiring objectives that can never be realized. The poor, she says, see that their plight is hopeless, and that the only salvation possible is a "miraculous" stroke of chance—a stroke they see as possible only through "magic," "superstition," and the "lottery."

The essay then proceeds to outline the wisdom derivable from such a vision. It is maintained that the powerful could understand how they have come to see themselves as the makers of history subjugating everything to their scheme and control. They could learn that unlimited potential is a myth, and thereby give up unrealistic expectations of success. They could appreciate chance in human affairs and see themselves as part of the universe rather than masters of it. By staying in the past with the poor, they could appreciate the value of hindsight over foresight, and thereby get in closer contact with reality in order to test the validity of their abstract labels. And finally, they could comprehend the importance of interdependence and emotions in human interaction, thereby discovering the superiority of the language of feeling over symbolic communication. In short, the wisdom of poverty outlined in Mrs. Tindera's essay consists primarily of practical suggestions

by which the powerful could also achieve indigency.

We have no formal objection to the first point made in Mrs. Tindera's essay, although we are somewhat uneasy with the use of the term "gift." Nevertheless, we are agreed that poverty tends to make people poor, and this has the advantage of showing graphically how disagreeable impoverishment can be. This being the case, we are willing to accept the general point that there are "gifts of poverty."

However, as to the intellectual substance and wisdom of the world vision poverty offers, we must be somewhat more argumentative. Moral insight does not walk hand in hand with poverty, and neither does human community evolve from its womb. Egalitarians that we are, the powerful defend the right of "the poor" to be as iniquitous as the rich—a right, incidentally, the poor have exercised with a ferocity even the most powerful of planners would envy.

Being powerful, we do not pretend to understand the value of embracing human debility, social inertia, and the miraculous intervention within human affairs for salvation as a way of life; we leave that to people who have nothing better to do. However, we find it extraordinary that human beings would eagerly and "wisely" embrace a way of life which undercuts the value of instrumental intelligence and social action and then gamble on chances "50 to 1" in hopes of some sort of miraculous deliverance. After all, even given the "limitations" imposed by human "frailty," intelligent action can usually expect better odds than that.

The "real" which Mrs. Tindera says the poor experience in the pits of their stomachs is curiously more responsive to agricultural science than to incantations and chance droppings of manna. It seems to us that Mrs. Tindera is suggesting that it is a form of wisdom to accept difficulties as intractable limitations and lend the weight of social "inertia" to programs of "community development" which might alleviate human suffering, all the time hoping for some "miraculous" intervention to solve the difficulties without intelligent effort. Mrs. Tindera is welcome to her opinion, but we find it curious that she would call this wisdom. We would call it something else.

As to Mrs. Tindera's comments concerning the wisdom of poverty's world view, we, the powerful, are cheerfully agreed to the general point that the powerful have much to learn, but we are rather uncertain as to what exactly it is that the "wisdom of poverty" has to teach. However, we have the suspicion that the lessons consist primarily of the practical means to ineffectuality, frustration, and misery. These we could probably achieve for ourselves without any formal instruction.

But there are a few points of criticism which we would like to raise to the attention of the poor and Mrs. Tindera. In the first place, we find the "wisdom of poverty" disturbingly passive. This might not upset anyone who agrees with Mrs. Tindera, but anyone who suspects that the universe really does not have man's best interest at heart and that there are things that can be done to improve matters in man's favor, might feel uncomfortable with this attitude.

In the second place, "staying behind" in the past seems to us a rather curious method of getting in better touch with reality. Certainly ill-conceived abstractions can lead to false connections, but we submit that this is somewhat better than making no connections at all. Mrs. Tindera's romantic appreciation of the past is reminiscent of the elderly matron who refused to use the current bus schedule and insisted on relying on a schedule twenty years old because she was "sure those buses ran on time."

Finally, it is not the social planner who frustrates imagination; it is the prophet of poverty's world vision. In the face of such a malignantly

passive world view, it is no wonder that imagination among the poor has no other avenues of expression but "magic," "superstition," and the "lottery." This state of affairs Mrs. Tindera finds admirable; but admitting our ignorance, we do not find the emasculation of imagination quite so attractive.

In conclusion, we, the powerful, submit that success in planning is much more enjoyable and fruitful than suffering in silence. Nevertheless, we are happy to hear Mrs. Tindera's report that the "wisdom of poverty" imbues the poor with a unique sense of community. This is a credit to Mrs. Tindera's capacity for finding silver linings in the darkest of clouds. We suggest that she continue this work in a series of essays indicating the remarkable side benefits to be derived from a number of assorted hopeless situations. We, the powerful, would consider this a social service; and in grateful appreciation, we might even let her lottery ticket win.

Learical

How pleasant to know Mr. Lear,
His nonsense familiar and dear.
As a fine landscape painter
His fame has grown fainter—
A lot that would pain him, I fear.

But how refreshing to read Mr. Lear;
His music's so child-like and clear.
Childish it's not
And as for what's what
Or who's whose, that's not his tune. Here! Hear!

How delightful to quote Mr. Lear;
His rhyming's so jolly and queer.
With his runcible hats
And scroobius cravats
He captures and tickles my ear
my ear
my ear.

How pleasant to know Mr. Lear!

—*MARY WALKER*