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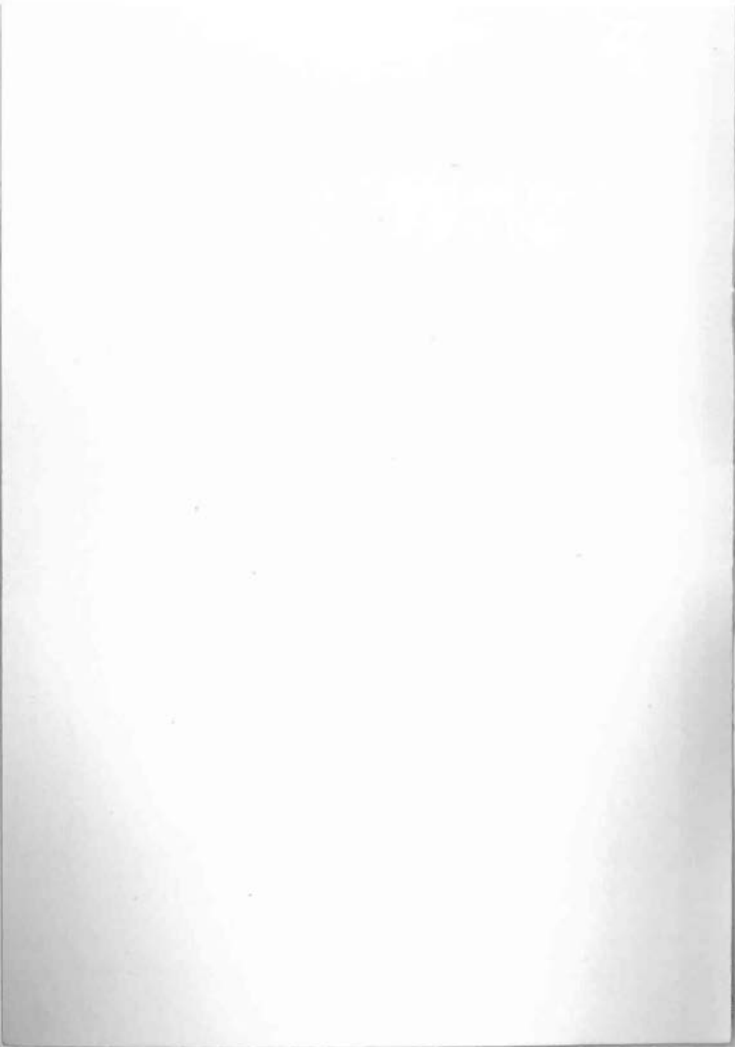
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Writers' Guidelines and Submissions

Calliope is published annually. Contributions in all areas of literary history and criticism are welcome, but manuscripts will only be considered if they have been recommended by a professor.

Submissions must be typed or word-processed and should not exceed 25 double-spaced pages. The first page of the manuscript should contain the author's name and essay title. All subsequent pages should be numbered. Submission of a paper to this journal will be taken to imply that it represents original work. Essays should conform to the current MLA citation system. Authors should use notes and appendices sparingly. The editor reserves the right to edit manuscripts as needed for publication.

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Introduction

This volume inaugurates an annual publication entitled *Calliope*. It will highlight some of the best work in literary history and criticism by undergraduates and graduates at CSUB.

This publication contains ten essays covering a wide range of literature from Shakespeare to Kurt Vonnegut. The essays deal with poetry, drama, and fiction and represent a diversity of critical approaches. Two of the articles in this distinguished collection were written by graduate students (Robert Richmond and Kelly Hoeltgen); the other eight were composed by undergraduates. Contributors Sue Glenn and Delia Jolley received the 1993 Vincent Ponko Award for Excellence in the Humanities. Sue Glenn was also named the Outstanding Graduating Senior in English.

The cover design incorporates an illustration by turn-of-the-century French artist Alphonse Mucha. The painting, entitled "La Poésie," represents Calliope, the Muse of epic poetry from Greek mythology.

Glenda A. Hudson, Ph.D.
Editor

**Marriage, Materialism, and Meaning in
*The Taming of the Shrew***

ROBERT A. RICHMOND, JR.

Well, come, my Kate, We will unto your father's
Even in these hones, mean habiliments.
Our purses shall be proud, our garments poor,
For 'tis the mind that makes the body rich;
And as the sun breaks through the darkest clouds,
So honor peereth in the meanest habit.

The Taming of the Shrew, IV.iii.165-170)

When Petruchio distinguishes his habiliments from his person, he formulates in a nutshell a major motif of William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. More than in most plays—more even than in most Shakespearean comedies, which again and again turn on confusion and mistaken identity—things and people in *The Taming of the Shrew* are not what they seem. The play is largely about the way a remarkable man and woman come to recognize each other for who they really are and mold that recognition into a union that is satisfying to themselves at the same time that it is acceptable to their culture.

In this struggle to reconcile self and society, however, lies the major conflict of the play, and it is the source of what has made *The Taming of the Shrew* a puzzling, problematic, and even

disturbing theater piece for four centuries. The play centers around a superior, energetic couple who command our sympathies even as they prompt our laughter. Fortunate in their discovery of one another, Kate and Petruchio fashion for themselves a rich and sophisticated mode of discourse that allows them subtly and fully to communicate with each other but that remains nearly incomprehensible to the social milieu in which they operate. They succeed finally in finding a comfortable niche for themselves in their society, even learning to exploit society's incomprehension of them, but in so doing they remain essentially separate from the culture from which they sprung. The play's controversy thus resides in its complexity: smarter not only than their fellow characters, Petruchio and Kate are also smarter than their audience—including a fair portion of the critics who have written about them over the years.

Accordingly, critical commentary on *The Taming of the Shrew* has been sharply divided, and any serious account of the play must position itself somewhere on the broad spectrum of possible "stances." Even among those critics who find the play deplorable, one finds a diversity of opinions, ranging from those who dislike the play almost purely on aesthetic grounds to those who see it as a distasteful but illuminating reflection of its time. But the complexity of *The Taming of the Shrew* is such that its supporters also disagree about it—reading it, on the one hand, as parody, and, on the other, as a more direct account of a normative view of matrimony. Let me state my own position from the outset: I read the play, in essential agreement with Germaine Greer, not as "a knockabout farce of wife-battering, but [as] the cunning adaptation

of a folk motif to show the forging of a partnership between equals" (Greer, *Shakespeare* 111). As such, I believe its language can be taken at face value—that our comprehension of it requires little recourse to irony or hyperbole—though the terms of that value and contours of that “face” may oblige us to look at certain words in ways that are unfamiliar to us. Because even the basic premise of this reading—that Kate and Petruchio are “a partnership between equals”—is a matter of considerable critical disagreement, a significant portion of this essay will be devoted to “answering” critics who choose to read the play in other ways. But my interest in the notion of worth in the play, especially as formulated by Petruchio, leads ineluctably to broader questions: what role do material possessions play in *The Taming of the Shrew*’s concept of valuation? In what ways do Kate and Petruchio act to subvert the values transmitted to them by their culture? How do these subversions interface with the play’s treatment of language? And what, through the play, does Shakespeare finally seem to be saying about marriage as an institution?

That Kate and Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew* are a model couple, whose unconventional approach to courtship and marriage should be viewed as normative exactly because of its unconventionality, is not a reading that finds universal critical acceptance. Many commentators on the play see it as a parable of male dominance and female submission—as a document that, far from being culturally subversive, affirms and approves a marital system in which the male subjugated the female and the female’s proper attitude was obedience and compliance. For these readings, Kate’s final speech is a gesture of defeat that is right, proper, and

telling for Shakespeare's culture, even as it is at least deeply problematic, if not appallingly retrogressive, for ours. Thus, Lynda Boose insists that

[f]or feminist scholars, the irreplaceable value if not pleasure to be realized by an historicized confrontation with Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* lies in the unequivocal with which the play locates both women's abjected position in the social order of early modern England and the costs exacted for resistance (Boose 179).

For Boose, then, the play's value resides in its very offensiveness. Attempts to "soften" what is objectionable in the play are finally insidious, in that "the impulse to rewrite the more oppressively patriarchal material in this play serves the very ideologies about gender that it makes less visible by making less offensive" (Boose 181-82). The question, of course, is whether the play really does serve the ideologies Boose says it does. Boose's contention is difficult to answer fully, especially to the satisfaction of committed and unwavering adherents to her position, because any such rejoinder might easily be dismissed as just one more example of the "artificial sweetening" that Boose sees as harmful. Even so, I hope to demonstrate the extent to which *The Taming of the Shrew* is more than just a cozy affirmation of the status quo of its time—that it is less a dramatization of the powerlessness of women in Renaissance England than an enactment of one way that a canny and resourceful woman could disrupt the social pattern and enter

into a matrimonial state of shared empowerment with an equally resourceful mate.

Boose, at any rate, at least concedes that the play has historical value, if perhaps little else; Robert Ornstein would be hard put to go even that far. By his lights, the play depicts courtship as "a Punch-and-Judy farce in which a bully-boy hero imposes his will on a wild-eyed but ultimately supine heroine" (Ornstein 63), and it apparently brings out the worst in today's audiences, as it presumably did in those of Shakespeare's time. Thus, Ornstein tells us,

[i]t is one of the dependable box-office-hits of contemporary Shakespeare festivals because it can be pitched to the lowest common denominator of audience taste with mugging and leering, shouting, thumping, and chasing across the stage, and it therefore can be warmly recommended by reviewers as an "Elizabethan romp" (Ornstein 63).

That modern viewers of *The Taming of the Shrew* might find more in it than an excuse to indulge their unevolved penchant for boorishness entirely eludes Ornstein. Any critical effort to "save" the play he dismisses as casuistic, and he asserts that interpretations of the play that somehow manage to see it as better than "unpleasant" finally cannot stand up to careful scrutiny (Ornstein 71). As we shall see, my own interpretation is just the type that Ornstein deplores as misguided. I cite him here so extensively both to dramatize the extent to which *The Taming of the Shrew* engenders in some readers a negative reaction (of which Ornstein's can be seen as a kind of priggish extreme) and to provide a foil for

the advancement of more approving assessments of the play. Ornstein, in fact, inadvertently points the way toward a justification of the "casuistry" he so dislikes, for he is forced to acknowledge that it is possible to "humanize" the play in performance—indeed, he says, "generations of actors have done so" (Ornstein 71)—and this very admission begs the major question: how can a work, on the one hand, be as irredeemably coarse as Ornstein maintains it is and, on the other, lend itself to the theatrical redemption that Ornstein himself admits has characterized it for generations? We are tempted, of course, to dismiss the question altogether as irrelevant, on the grounds that a work intended from its inception for performance on the stage ought not to be answerable to the darts and demurs of a critic in his armchair. But the other approach is to suppose simply that Ornstein is wrong: that the breach between a script and its realization in the theater is not so absolute as his formulation implies, that actors immemorial have found humanity in *The Taming of the Shrew* because humanity is, in fact, very much there to be found. In any event, Boose and Ornstein in tandem speak here for a host of critics who make the "case" against *The Taming of the Shrew*. Plainly, not all their arguments are of equal weight and cogency; if Ornstein's distaste for the play can be dismissed as merely dyspeptic, Boose's arguments about the play's fundamental orthodoxy require more careful and extensive answers.

Boose's article is thorough, detailed, and wide-ranging; whatever my disagreements with her reading of *The Taming of the Shrew*, I cannot deny the breadth of her research and the utility of her article as a source for information about the treatment of

women in the English Renaissance. She begins, as do so many critics, with Kate's final speech, interpreting it, as I noted above, as a gesture of submission. When Kate enjoins Bianca and the Widow to "vail your stomachs, for it is no boot,/ And place your hands below your husband's foot" (V.ii.180-81), Boose reads the gesture literally, as involving an actual genuflection, and she notes that the act recalls a feature of the pre-Reformation wedding service, in which the bride was required to drop the wedding ring as it was proffered to her and then stoop before her husband to pick it up (Boose 182-83). Kate's genuflection before Petruchio thus marks the entire scene as dramatizing "a now correctly ordered version of the play's earlier negated, parodic marriage" (Boose 182), thereby affirming the patriarchal ordering that the madcap "official" ceremony seemed to subvert. But Boose, placing the whole package of scene, play, and audience in precise historical context, maintains that the scene goes further than simply affirming the status quo of the 1590's. For the bridal genuflection echoed in Kate's speech had been excised from the Anglican wedding rite some four decades earlier—when Thomas Cranmer removed it, along with other "ritual excesses," in 1549 (Boose 182)—so that its inclusion in the play in so public and affirming a fashion can be construed as "a golden-age lament for a world gone by—a world signified by a ceremony that publicly confirmed such shows of male dominance" (Boose 184). Shakespeare, Boose suggests, does more in *The Taming of the Shrew* than applaud the patriarchal present; he implicitly idealizes an even-more-patriarchal past.

Boose then turns her attention to the larger social context, and her article, replete with diagrams and illustrations, explores the

range of physical devices actually used in England, during the Renaissance and beyond, to silence and humiliate women. These included the cucking stool, the female equivalent of the pillory, to which scolds were tied and publicly dunked; and the bridle, used to "tame" high-spirited women literally by harnessing their bodies and, in some cases, their tongues. Fascinating as all this is, however, its direct connection to Shakespeare's play is dubious, since such obvious mechanical debasements of women "would have been wholly antithetical to the play's desired romantic union as well as to the model of benevolent patriarchy that is insisted on here and elsewhere in Shakespeare" (Boose 198). Shakespeare's discomfort, in other words, resides not with the patriarchy itself but with its more brutal modes of realization. In *The Taming of the Shrew* he "is conscientiously modeling a series of humane but effective methods for behavioral modification" (Boose 198), methods that, notwithstanding their benignity, were calculated to perpetuate social habits and customs that subjugated women. But in "de-brutalizing" the male-female dynamic, Shakespeare was doomed to no better than partial success, for "the sheer fact that the excluded brutalities lie suppressed in the margins of Shakespeare's shrew material also means that they travel, as unseen partners, inside the more benevolent taming discourse that Shakespeare's play helps to mold" (Boose 198). The humiliation of women in Shakespeare's time, in short, was so prevalent that it inevitably informed even well-intentioned efforts to ameliorate it; Shakespeare was inextricably trapped in the ideology of his era, destined willy-nilly to affirm it, despite his better instincts.

Well-researched and couched in masterful, authoritative prose, Boose's complex argument is seductive. It founders, however, on several questionable assumptions, and it depends in the end on logical connections that seem, at best, stretched and, at worst, contorted and tendentious. To begin with, Kate's alleged "echo" of the pre-Reformation bridal prostration, while interesting as a bit of textual gloss, seems unlikely to have had as much allusive currency as Boose asserts it did. In an age of debilitating plagues and low life expectancies, forty years was no small span. Far from being "almost certainly recognizable to an audience of the 1590's" (Boose 184), an indirect reference to a religious rite outlawed more than four decades previous might well have escaped the comprehension of many in *The Taming of the Shrew's* first audience, most of whom, like Shakespeare himself, were born after Thomas Cranmer's rewriting of the Book of Common Prayer. The gesture of Kate placing her hand beneath her husband's foot is, moreover, ambiguous. Is Kate prostrating herself—or reaching down to help her husband to a higher level? The text certainly seems to "suggest" a kneeling motion by Kate at the point of the delivery of the line—but does it absolutely require it? In any case, even if Kate's physical activity were invariably exactly as Boose assumes, the connection between the genuflection and its imputed parallel in an outmoded ceremony seems tenuous at best.

More tenuous still, however, are Boose's assertions about Shakespeare's entrapment in the oppressive ideology of his time, for here Boose seems committed to a philosophy of reading and writing that deprives the author of any "authority" to posit visions of reality that run counter to those already dominant in his culture.

That all writers, all people, are inscribed in cultural ideologies is, of course, self-evident, and Boose is within her rights to hold Shakespeare accountable for his own cultural and social blind spots. But her logic seems circular and self-affirming. Her research on the indignities and abuses to which women of Shakespeare's time were subjected is illuminating; her observation that Shakespeare excludes such practices from his script is accurate and fair-minded; her assertion that the reality of such practices nonetheless remained peripherally in the consciousness of Shakespeare's audience is reasonable; but her conclusion—that the brutal customs, by remaining ever-present (however marginal), somehow “double back” on the gentler approaches to which Shakespeare compares them and thereby validate themselves by dint of their refusal to go away—strikes me as contorted. The inhumane practices are “in the margin” (and not center stage) because Shakespeare put them there. And Shakespeare put them there because he presumably wanted to substitute something else. The question finally is what that “something else” really is. Boose claims that it is simply a milder, more palatable version of the same old thing, that patriarchy is patriarchy is patriarchy, and that Shakespeare was merely sugarcoating what was *déclassé* as form but still serviceable as substance. But this formulation discounts the possibility that Kate and Petruchio might truly have been up to more than just business as usual, and Boose, ironically, may be overlooking the radical possibilities embodied by Shakespeare's lovers in part because of what comes across as her own latent conventionality.

Consider Boose's treatment of the wedding ceremony. She sees Petruchio's outrageous behavior entirely as a ploy to shame Kate and expatiates upon the general idea of shame as a key component in the societal subjugation of women (Boose 193). Thus, Kate complains bitterly of Petruchio's late arrival at her wedding:

No shame but mine. I must, forsooth, be forced
 To give my hand opposed against my heart
 Unto a mad-brain rudesby full of spleen,
 Who wooed in haste and means to wed at leisure.
 (III.ii.8-11)

Later, making utter mockery of the ceremony itself, Petruchio causes the guests to depart, in Gremio's words, "for very shame" (III.ii.180), and he ends his argument with Kate over when to leave the reception with his famous declaration of "ownership":

I will be master of what is mine own.
 She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,
 My household stuff, my field, my barn,
 My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything. . .
 (III.ii.230-32)

Boose sees this entire sequence as central to Petruchio's subjugation of Kate, and it "works" for Petruchio precisely, in her view, because of the gender-specific connotations of shame. "Because shame is already a gendered piece of cultural capital,"

she states, "Petruchio can transgress norms of social custom without it ever redounding upon him" (Boose 193). And in his appropriation of the attention and prerogatives normally reserved for the bride—of the "spotlight" that normally belongs by right to the female in wedding ceremonies—Petruchio denies Kate the enjoyment of "even what few pleasures may have attended the narrowly constructed space of womanhood" (Boose 193-94).

The gap here between Kate's shame and Petruchio's utter shamelessness is crucial, for it speaks to the difference in outlook between the two characters. Boose would have us believe that that gap is located entirely in the sphere of gender—and, to the extent that Kate's attitudes, her whole mien, has been shaped by years of coping with the exigencies of a sexist culture, she may be right. But Boose is mistaken in supposing that Petruchio is equally a tool of the dominant ideology. She assumes that his actions are designed to humiliate Kate in accordance with social customs that debased and subjugated women, but she overlooks the deeper and more radical implications of Petruchio's behavior. In violating the "narrowly constructed space" to which Kate's culture entitled her, Petruchio acts in the long run to re-define and expand it. But such re-definition requires an act of violence to the social norm—a violation superficially uncomfortable, even humiliating, to those who continue to reside in that norm. That Petruchio's actions don't redound to his own sense of shame is not because he is male; it is because he has explicitly rejected the standards and values that inform the conventions he chooses to violate. He tramples on the contradictory features of Christian wedding practice, appropriating for himself Kate's moment at the altar, and while the appropriation

seems cruel, it is a necessary step in his radical re-configuring of the notion of matrimonial value.

The concept of "bridal value" as constituted in the traditional Christian wedding ceremony is linked, of course, to the idea of virginity. The bride herself is less the object of community adoration than the notion of purity that she embodies. In this sense, the woman's potential as a "commodity," as an entity charged with power and value, can, in traditional terms, only be realized negatively. For Kate, for any Christian bride, her potency (her "narrowly constructed space") resides less in who she is than in what she has not experienced—in the notion of her being virginal and unsullied. But in this resides also the contradiction within the Christian notion of matrimonial value, for the entire rite, in which the woman's innocence is celebrated as affirming her identity and fitness for marriage, is really an elaborate preparation for the groom's deflowering of her. Pure, honored, and momentarily empowered, the Renaissance bride had every reason to regard her wedding as a kind of apex, for it represented the single moment in her life when her "worth" was both intact and publicly acknowledged. The reality of female worth in the Renaissance, in other words, is that it was located, not in the person of the women or even finally in her possessions, but in some abstractly defined nether world, in which her inexperience (read: "virginity") was conjoined with her unrealized potential as a future wife. Once betrothed, however, a woman lost most of whatever power her looks, dowry, or social status might have previously conferred upon her. Because her "strength" lay in her remaining uncommitted, the wedding ceremony, insofar as it served to glorify her, was

really an illusion, bestowing a false sense of empowerment and importance on a woman whose limited capacity for free will and volition was already spent.

What, then, of Kate? From the beginning of the play, she understands what is at stake for her and chooses to play the marriage game so as to minimize her chances of being saddled with a weak husband. But the shrewish front she erects to ward off mediocre suitors carries its own risk, for the essence of a woman's strength in the courtship process lay not at the extremes of seeming highly willing or incorrigibly hostile, but somewhere coyly in the center, in being "available but choosy." Kate's shrewishness succeeds in driving away the great mass of men who flock to her father's doorstep, until, in Petruchio, she finally encounters a suitor who can match her in wit, will, and energy. She tests all three of these qualities in their marvelous first meeting with one another, and though she protests sarcastically to her father over the impending marriage ("You have showed a tender fatherly regard,/To wish me wed to one half-lunatic,/A madcap ruffian and a swearing Jack" [II.i.283-285]), she arrives punctually at the church on her appointed wedding day and is apparently prepared to go through the ceremony without scene or complaint. The implication is that, having held out for an exceptional husband, Kate is satisfied to settle for an ordinary marriage, trusting Petruchio's innate intelligence and essential goodness to render her conjugal state less confining than the norm.

She has not, however, reckoned on Petruchio, who is bent on more than just a nice, comfortable Renaissance marriage; he

wishes really to reconfigure the whole concept of marriage as defined in the 16th century, and he begins by mocking the liturgy that legitimizes it. He arrives late, garbed outlandishly, and makes a sham of the wedding mass, cuffing the priest, quaffing the communion wine as though it were tavern ale, and disdaining the traditional chaste, tasteful wedding kiss for "a clamorous smack/ That at the parting all the church did echo" (III.ii.178-79). These maneuvers catch Kate unawares and embarrass her, but her shame proceeds less from Petruchio's direct treatment of her than from his violation of a series of social codes that, in spite of herself, she still respects. In every case, Petruchio's indignities are visited upon institutions whose aura of authority is conferred by society and maintained through a carefully calculated array of material trappings. Thus, the church is "sanctified" because, in part, the community agrees that it is, substantiating that agreement with the donation of sufficient resources to confer on it a physical authority commensurate with its authority in the spiritual and political realms. Likewise, the vicar is known by his vestments, the communion wine by the goblet that bears it, so that Petruchio's insults to both of these represent a rejection not only of the social contract that validates the church but of the material signs that prop up that validation. But his statement of rejection does not end there. In eschewing the customary formal dress of the groom at his wedding, he calls into question his own role in the conventional marriage, and he shows as little regard for the conventional sensibilities of this startled wife, herself presumably fit for matrimony in virginal white. Dressed for convention, like the meekest English bride, Kate is shortly to receive an object lesson from her "madcap

ruffian" spouse in the inessentiality of material possession like clothing.

The journey to Petruchio's country home, along with the subsequent "feast," continues the process begun by Petruchio at his wedding. For in these scenes Petruchio carries even further the pattern of subordinating material concerns to ones more essential. Grumio memorably describes the wild journey: Kate's horse falling; her landing in the mud; her prayers, Petruchio's curses, and the moil of grime and confusion. Not long after, Kate and Petruchio themselves enter, the latter aflame over the alleged incompetency of his servants. Though Kate is hungry, he finds fault with the mutton and sends the dinner away uneaten. Later, in a soliloquy he confides the whole of his plan to the audience:

Thus have I politically begun my reign,
And 'tis my hope to end successfully.
My falcon now is sharp and passing empty,
And till she stoop she must not be full-gorged,
For then she never looks upon her lure.

(IV.i.176-80)

He goes on to detail his strategy, the gist of which is to deny Kate's physical needs, her food and sleep, all "in reverent care of her" (IV.i.192). This scene is the one that creates the most difficulty for critics inclined to impute benevolent motives to Petruchio, for the physical nature of this seeming-abuse of Kate is inescapable, and his soliloquy imparts an air of calculation to the taming of "his" proud falcon. Still later, in scene iii, he continues

his "solicitude" on Kate's behalf, spurning as unworthy a cap and gown that Kate clearly desires. How can we explain Petruchio's behavior except by recourse to an admission that he really does wish to dominate his wife, disregarding her comfort in favor of his own, taming her through physical abuse?

We might begin by noting that her physical well-being, however compromised, seems never to be in any real danger, nor is she the only character forced to endure discomfort. Petruchio shares all of it: the ragtag clothing, the stormy night, the hunger, the sleeplessness. And these indignities are of a different type altogether from the whip, the halter, or the cucking stool, for they speak to aspects of human experience that transcend the realm of mere human oppression of other humans. Hunger, poverty, cold, filth, and sleeplessness are among the stock of universal human cares. Petruchio seeks, then, to temper his wife—and himself as well—not in a honeymoon of artificial luxury, but in one calculated to test concretely the depth of their commitment to each other. The casting off of church and culture has its price. If it means liberation from the constraints of a narrow society, it also means exposure to the elements against which societies are erected in the first place. In the world of the play, Kate's and Petruchio's return to society is in the nature also of a return to material comfort, a return doubtless welcomed equally by both. But the appreciation of comfort and all it implies can only have been strengthened by their temporary deprivation of it. Kate and Petruchio can live with a keener appreciation of the material world having been forced themselves for a time to live outside of it.

The Taming of the Shrew thus can be read as an extended exploration of the notion that people are not reducible to things. Remarkably, though, this idea flies in the face of much of the rhetorical “stuff” of the play. Carol Heffernan has noted “a steady undercurrent of suggestion that calls attention to the fact that in the society of Padua marriage is a business and that, in general, this world is one where social position and wealth count for much” (Heffernan 3). Petruchio himself certainly seems comfortably part of this world at the start of the play, as he announces rather baldly that he has “come to wive it wealthily in Pauda.” His situation does not, however, compel him to marry specifically for wealth, for, as he informs his friend Hortensio, he is well-fixed financially:

Antonio, my father, is deceased,
 And I have thrust myself into this maze,
 Happily to wive and thrive as best I may.
 Crowns in my purse I have, and goods at home,
 And so I am come abroad to see the world.

(I.ii.53-57)

Petruchio’s circumstances, in other words, suggest that he has little need to concern himself much with wealthy “wiving,” even though the well-dowried Kate seems to fill the bill. But words, conventionally defined, are slippery when Petruchio uses them. His attitude toward material comfort as expressed in his honeymoon, for instance, certainly points to the ways in which his concept of “wealth” differs from the conventional. The script, however, suggests that he was thinking non-conventionally long before then.

Right from the beginning he shows himself to be an altogether different suitor, impervious to the norms and standards of the larger society. Thus, tales of Kate's shrewishness, far from putting him off, seem to whet his appetite, and when he agrees to marry her, he does so in express disregard for the opinion of his associates: "I choose her for myself./If she and I be pleased, what's it to you?/"Tis bargained twixt us twain, being alone" (II.i.300-02). Likewise, his penchant for wild, slovenly, and unorthodox dress is carefully considered, for he expressly establishes the dissociation of clothing from character as a condition for pursuit of an honest, healthy marriage: "To me she's married, not unto my clothes./Could I repair what she will wear in me/As I can change these poor accoutrements,/Twere well for Kate and better for myself" (III.ii.117-19).

In this remark we catch a glimpse of Petruchio's humane vision of marriage. It is rooted in the basic realization that human character is neither perfect nor particularly malleable and that good marriages are necessarily built on the reciprocal acceptance by each spouse of the other's foibles. More profoundly, his formulation of his own character as something Kate would "wear" underlines his basic understanding of himself as someone for his wife to possess and use, much as she might a garment, even as she in turn is possessed and used by him.

In light of this vision, we may reasonably dispute Carol Heffernan's assessment that Petruchio, despite his challenges to the materialistic values of his culture, "remains essentially a man of his class" (Heffernan 12). Good burgher though he may be, and despite his and Kate's return to the bower of the upper-middle-

class lifestyle, Petruchio's attitudes are daring enough finally to transcend class. I argued earlier that Petruchio's rejection of church, conventional garb, and the prevailing opinion of his associates was evidence of a larger rejection of society in general, especially as expressed in the complex of material possessions. His challenge of society is not, however, limited to these. In the final analysis, his actions transform not only marriage and the social constructs that undergird it but pose an implicit challenge to the most basic of social institutions: language itself. At this level we can finally make sense of the more disturbing aspects of Petruchio's character. His frank talk of taming and ownership bothers us partly because we do not fully comprehend it, for when Petruchio speaks, he speaks in a language distinctly his own. Despite his evident comfort with himself and his way of seeing and expressing the world, he is not, however, content to remain a cipher to society. Indeed, one way of "reading" his actions is to see them as an extended effort at making himself comprehensible—primarily, of course, to Kate, but ultimately to everyone else as well.

Ralph Berry has commented extensively on Petruchio's mastery of language, noting correctly "that his will extends to the interpretation of words" (Berry 63). Words, Berry asserts, are Petruchio's chief means of defining himself, and he uses them with the skill of virtuoso. But even in his admiration Berry underestimates the radicalism of what Petruchio is up to, for he assumes, like too many critics, that Petruchio's more extreme expressions of proprietorship are mere exaggerations, pitched high and fast for rhetorical effect but not intended to be taken seriously

or literally. He interprets Petruchio's "chattels" declaration, for instance, as "a hyperbolic overstatement of male dominance" and in the same sentence sums up Kate's concluding speech in the same way, as an equally hyperbolic assertion of "female submissiveness" (Berry 67). Berry's approach, regrettably, fails to do justice to the reality of these utterances, both of which are too prominent in the drama to be dismissed as elaborate overstatements. He would have done better to consider the ways in which Petruchio and Kate go beyond such simple foreground rhetorical devices as hyperbole, to write, in the end, their own lexicon, the terms of which allow them to speak directly to each other and to us without recourse to evasion or misdirection.

Let us return, then, to Petruchio's speeches in Acts III and IV and reconsider them in light of what we have discovered about Petruchio's values and use of language. Kate, he tells us, is his goods, his chattels, his house, his field, his barn—in short, his possession—an admission that horrifies us by its implication of enslavement, of ownership of one human being by another. But Petruchio has already begun to transform our understanding of what it means to possess and to belong. For he "claims" Kate while undercutting the very ceremony by which custom and law decreed her "his." If his object were simple, conventional, patriarchal ownership, he could have achieved it with far less trouble than he puts himself to. As I have suggested, though, he wants a marriage partnership more spacious than his society usually permits or expects, and this leads him to subvert the defining institutions of his culture. In so doing, he acts to free himself and Kate from the tight web of custom and convention that hems in both of them.

One of the customs against which Petruchio rebels is the notion of personal valuation based on material possessions. His apparently mercenary intention to “wive it wealthily” seems consonant with the mores of a culture often obsessed with finance and social status. By implication, according to this scheme of values, one’s goods could “stand in” for one’s person; possessions almost metonymically expressed the man or woman. As we have seen, though, Petruchio explicitly rejects this when he justifies his rude wedding outfit: Kate is marrying him, not his clothing, better though it might be for them both if she could alter him as easily as she could his clothes. With this notion as the backdrop, and in light of Petruchio’s blatant disregard for material and physical comfort on his wedding night, Petruchio’s speech in Act III takes on a meaning entirely different from its apparent surface one. When Petruchio says that Kate “is” his goods and his chattels, he does not mean that she is nothing more than these objects—a new “thing” among his many possessions; he means instead that, in some powerful sense, she has superseded them, taken their place. Read this way, “Petruchio’s “ownership” of Kate is less an expression of her subordination than of her elevation. Far from being just another commodity, Kate is now central in her husband’s life, just as, in precisely reciprocal fashion, we may assume that he is in hers.

We see a similar process of transformation of meaning in the Act IV soliloquy. Here Petruchio compares Kate to a wild falcon and speaks directly of taming her. The critical stance that condemns Petruchio’s position in the soliloquy as patriarchal and oppressive makes several implicit value judgments, perhaps the

major one being that Kate the falcon is better off wild than tamed. But if we conflate Petruchio's imagery with the other symbolic choices he makes in the play, our verdict redounds to Petruchio's favor. For if Kate is figuratively an untamed falcon, then she is painfully trapped in interior spaces ill-designed to accommodate her. Uncomfortable as she may have found the wild journey to Petruchio's villa, to say nothing of the sleepless hours that ensued, her discomfort is insignificant next to her confinement in the ideology of bourgeois Padua, physically symbolized by her father's townhouse and the local church—edifices whose dues and perquisites Petruchio steadfastly refuses to honor. His method of "taming" then is nearly the opposite of what its surface meaning implies. Petruchio's purpose is not to fit Kate for the cramped interiors he and she both despise. Rather, it is to free her from them. That that freedom entails a price in the form of her allegiance to him does not alter the fact that both mutually benefit from it; such a price, moreover, is one that Kate seems more than willing to pay, once she understands the magnitude of what she has to gain. Given this interpretation, Petruchio's mock-gallant "rescue" of Kate in Act III ("Fear not, sweet wench, they shall not touch thee" [III.ii.238]) assumes a literal urgency, for the forces in danger of "touching" Kate are ones capable of doing her great harm, while Kate, moreover, is probably incapable of making such a bolt to freedom on her own. The social ideology that makes her miserable likewise delimits her thinking, as it did that of all women of her time, so that Petruchio needs to "teach" her in a way that may look to us like condescension but which was progressive and startling by the standards of Shakespeare's day.

Kate's final speech, then, is a gesture of submission and defeat only if we continue to believe that Kate and Petruchio inhabit the conventional marriage space. Lynda Boose is certainly correct when she asserts that that space was severely limited for women of Renaissance England. More to the point, such limitation virtually guaranteed some measure of connubial discord, as repressed wives, marginalized by the system, struggled to hold onto what little latitude society permitted them. The process of *being* married was thus radically different from the process of *getting* married, devolving too often into a kind of war. As I have tried to demonstrate, however, Kate and Petruchio opt for a definition of marriage mutually more empowering precisely because its frames of reference lie outside the matrix of convention and social expectation. The concluding wager among the three successful suitors serves to dramatize the profundity of Kate's and Petruchio's choice. Bianca and the widow, already embarked on a lifetime of rearguard actions to preserve their status as beings independent of their humdrum spouses, refuse to leave their place by the fire when summoned. In part, their refusal is passive aggression; in part, it is an expression of their satisfaction with the "venue" society has symbolically assigned to them. They enter the stage to witness a remarkable sight: Kate throwing down her cap at her husband's command. The act seems senseless, fawning, gratuitous—yet only if we believe that Kate much values the cap. The progress of the play, however, demonstrates how Kate and Petruchio have learned to repose the whole of their stock of value in each other; Kate can discard the cap because finally it means less to her than her husband.

And yet we cannot evade the paradox inherent in this scheme of valuation, for the profitability of the wager suggests that Kate and Petruchio are likely to thrive according to the very standards they have learned as a couple to reject. The paradox is rooted in the inescapable truth that their culture continues to operate according to bourgeois standards, even if Kate and Petruchio seem not to, and throughout the play the notion of psychological space stays inextricably tied to the notion of economic security. Thus, Petruchio comes to Padua in the first place because he can afford it: "Crowns in my purse I have, and goods at home,/And so am come abroad to see the world" (I.ii.56-7). Understood this way, these same crowns and goods become empowering agents whose benefits Petruchio extends to Kate. Assured of Kate's dowry, Petruchio immediately pledges to her the whole of his fortune and then takes her "abroad" in a fashion analogous to his own departure from the bower of his own home. That freedom from materialism depends on freedom from want is the defining paradox in a play full of paradoxes, for it speaks directly to the bourgeois culture's tendency to reduce people to commodities. Because Petruchio and Kate will not allow this reduction to happen to themselves, they are free to indulge in games with material goods like Kate's cap—games that ultimately prove profitable even as they appear to mock the concept of material profit. In the same way, Kate and Petruchio play with other "objects" invested with value by society, even down to words themselves, so that their word play with sunlight and moonshine in Act IV, along with their raillery with Vicentio on the road, becomes the perfect expression of their ability to define and order their university for themselves,

irrespective of the definitions and procedures previously laid down for them by their culture.

What, then, of Kate's famous (or infamous) final speech? That it exists at all is cause for comment: though Shakespeare's comic heroines, with surprising frequency, are left wordless once they are betrothed or wedded, Kate's speech is the last substantial utterance in the play. It "seems" certainly to cloy and fawn in a manner George Bernard Shaw once termed "altogether disgusting to modern sensibility" (Berry 69-70). By now, however, we should have learned not fully to trust what is merely apparent in this play. For Kate's speech is eloquent, and it defines marriage as a covenant between equals:

Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,
 Thy head, thy sovereign; one that cares for thee,
 And for thy maintenance commits his body
 To painful labor both by sea and land,
 To watch the night in storms, the day in cold,
 Whilst thou liest warm at home, secure and safe;
 And craves no other tribute at thy hands
 But love, fair looks, and true obedience—
 Too little payment for so great a debt.

(V.ii.150-58)

"Modern sensibility" may fault such terms as "lord" and "sovereign," but kings, after all, are married to queens, not scullery maids, and there is nothing in Kate's formulation to suggest that Petruchio's regard for her is anything less than hers for him.

Indeed, one consequence of Shakespeare's conferring on Kate the last extended thoughts of the play is that we do not get to hear from Petruchio; as I hope I have demonstrated, however, everything about his attitude and action elsewhere in the play suggests that his own characterization of married life would be reciprocally respectful.

Germaine Greer calls Kate's closing speech "the greatest defense of Christian monogamy ever written" (Greer, *The Female Eunuch* 206). Kate's vision of marriage, Greer notes, recognizes the difficulties inherent in so intimate an arrangement vision paralleling Shakespeare's own concept of matrimony "as a difficult state of life, requiring discipline, sexual energy, mutual respect and great forbearance" (Greer, *The Female Eunuch* 206). In this sense, *The Taming of the Shrew* is finally a cautionary tale, for it illustrates the hard truth that, though marriages are common, good ones are rare. To Greer's list of personal qualities essential to married life, then, we must surely add creativity. In *The Taming of the Shrew* we see how in the best marriages, of which Kate's and Petruchio's is an example, each partner plays sovereign to the other's sovereign—king to queen and queen to king—fashioning their own matrix of values, their own modes of discourse, and learning to preside over the private realm they have created for themselves.

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Misogyny and the Controversy Regarding the Chastity of Women During the English Renaissance

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The Renaissance, long hailed as a major turning point in history towards more humanistic and scholarly thought as well as the beginning of individual freedom for society as a whole, carries a different connotation when examined from the perspective of how the period related to and affected the place of woman in society. Throughout history it had been commonly accepted that women were both mentally and physiologically inferior to men, but it was during the Renaissance that literary perceptions cultivated a further bias towards women in viewing them as sexually promiscuous, licentious, and lustful, either chaste or comely. According to much of the English literature of the Renaissance period, a beautiful woman could be neither honorable nor virtuous, and a man who placed his trust in a beautiful woman would be deluded and destroyed. However, such misogynous attitudes in English Renaissance literature depicting woman as an evil, sexual temptress should not be accepted as an historically accurate reflection of English Renaissance society as a whole. Close examination of the actual historical context of the English Renaissance period may reveal both a dichotomy between the beliefs of the aristocracy, under whose patronage most of the

literature was written, and society in general, as well as the reasons for that dichotomy.

One of the first examples of the misogynous ideology surrounding the chastity of women of the Renaissance period may be found in the writings of Edmund Spenser, long acclaimed as the first notable author of the English Renaissance. In attempting to exalt and mythologize the status of England and the English language, Spenser wrote his masterpiece, the epic *Faerie Queene*, under the patronage of English aristocracy, since writing for general publication at this time was considered plebeian. The work is dedicated "to the most high, mightie and magnificent emperesse renouumed for pietie, vertue, and all gracious government Elizabeth by the grace of God Queene of England Fraunce and Ireland and of Virginia."¹ However, other women in this work are not depicted as regally and deferentially as is Elizabeth. The majority of women throughout the work are stereotyped as either constantly good or consistently evil, and a large portion of Book III is devoted to a futile search for virtuous women. When the Squire of Dames finally locates one virtuous woman, he proclaims:

Safe her, I never any woman found,
That chastity did for it selfe embrace,
But were for other causes firme and sound;
Either for want of handsome time and place
Or else for feare of shame and fowle disgrace.²

In stressing that most women are virtuous only for expediency or lack of opportunity, Spenser's work emphasizes the lustful character of woman in general. However, Spenser was writing to an aristocratic audience, under aristocratic patronage, and it must be assumed that his experiences with women were within this category.

Another example of misogynous writing concerning the virtue of women can be seen in the works of Cavalier poet Robert Herrick, again writing under aristocratic patronage. Much of Herrick's work glorifies the unrestrained sexuality of woman, but Herrick also condemns woman's licentiousness and infidelity. His poem "Upon Some Women" effectively illustrates his cynical representation of woman's vanity and mendacity:

Thou who wilt not love, do this:
 Learn of me what woman is.
 Something made of thread and thrum,
 A mere botch of all and some.
 Pieces, patches, ropes of hair;
 Inlaid garbage ev'rywhere.
 Outside silk and outside lawn;
 Scenes to cheat us, neatly drawn.
 False in legs, and false in thighs,
 False in breast, teeth, hair, and eyes,
 False in head, and false enough;
 Only true in shreds and stuff.³

Again, however, Herrick wrote not for publication to a general audience, but under aristocratic patronage. Further, since silk and lawn fabrics were only available at this time to the elite, it may be assumed that the view he presents relates solely to the aristocratic and upper-class women of his own experience.

A third presentation of misogyny relating to the sexuality of women by English Renaissance authors is delineated within the poetry of John Donne. One of Donne's metaphysical conceits ingeniously compares the loss of woman's honor and chastity to the death of an infinitesimally small flea.⁴ Another proclaims that women are "more hot, wily, wild" than "foxes and goats," thus "open to all searchers."⁵ A third alludes to an apparently unexceptional practice of multiple burial, asserting that "graves have learned that women-head [characteristic of woman]/to be to more than one a bed" if they contain more than one body.⁶ The culmination of Donne's sexual misogyny is contained within his poem entitled simply "Song":

If thou be'est born to strange sights,
 Things invisible to see,
 Ride ten thousand days and nights,
 Till age snow white hairs on thee,
 Thou, when thou return'st, will tell me
 All strange wonders that befell thee,
 And swear
 No where
 Lives a woman true and fair.⁷

Donne, however, was also supported by aristocratic patronage, and his poems circulated only among the elite. It may again be assumed that his writings were a reflection of the aristocratic society with which he was familiar.

Finally, even the writings of William Shakespeare, often proclaimed by many literary critics as favorable to women because of the diversity and complexity with which his heroines are endowed, also contain many misogynous views of woman's chastity. In the play *Othello*, for example, Othello meets his doom because he perceives Desdemona as "the cunning whore of Venice"⁸ who could never be faithful, especially when Iago assures him that all women have a predilection to "nightly lie in those improper beds."⁹ In addition, Hamlet proclaims that woman's "virtue be as wax / and melt in her own fire,"¹⁰ in despair over his mother's licentiousness. In the tragedy *Antony and Cleopatra*, the Roman soldiers instinctively assume that Cleopatra has aroused and seduced Antony with her lasciviousness, and Enobarbus contends that "there is never a fair woman has a true / face."¹¹ Very few of Shakespeare's plays are free from the sexual misogyny of the age, and even though they were often presented to a general audience, Shakespeare, as a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men and later the King's Men, again had an obligation to entertain and please his aristocratic patrons. Even the commoners in the audience often came to performances of Shakespeare's company anticipating a good laugh at the expense of their betters.

From the few examples presented, as well as numerous other writings of the period not cited here, it may be seen that English

Renaissance authors held a common belief that woman was lustful and licentious, virtuous and chaste only when expedient, and possessed of a disreputable and disturbing sexuality. According to Ruth Kelso, "vituperation of women seems always, as far back as we have any record, to have been a manly sport,"¹² so English Renaissance authors may have been continuing a sustained tradition. However, these authors, almost without exception, were writing for an aristocratic audience composed of nobility and upper classes, and their views can only be a reflection of the behavior of the aristocracy. Such views were prevalent enough to create a formal debate and "pamphlet war"¹³ among men and women of the upper classes, but Linda Woodbridge argues that these pamphlets may have been simply a unique literary genre, a "courtly game," and their use as "evidence of Renaissance attitudes towards women" is "questionable."¹⁴ To determine if such views were justified, or even typical to society as a whole, examination of the entire social context is necessary, from the aristocracy to the commoner.

Woman of the English Renaissance was, of course, bound by the strict limits of Christian doctrine, with its insistence on woman's culpability in original sin that argues in favor of patriarchal male domination. This doctrine was accepted by both men and women, and though some women expressed dissatisfaction with the restrictions placed on them by Christianity, "refusing allegiance to a male chauvinist God was farther than they were prepared to go."¹⁵ In addition, secular beliefs in the great chain of being leading to a disciplined and autocratic hierarchical order validated and reinforced the Christian relegation of woman

to an inferior position. Finally, classical tradition and medical knowledge of the time maintained that woman was "prey to a hysterical animal within her (the uterus), and a woman could not control her emotions, nor discipline her sexual impulses."¹⁶ It is apparent, therefore, that secular beliefs restricted woman to the private sphere under male domination, while Christian doctrine, historical tradition, and medical knowledge provided some justification for the belief during the Renaissance in the sexual misbehavior of woman. There may, however, be other reasons for the belief in the lustful sexual appetite of woman, at least among the aristocracy.

As noted earlier, English Renaissance authors who depict woman as a licentious being wrote their works under the patronage of the aristocracy, and it may be assumed that their views were formulated by the customs and practices of the court circles in which they moved. According to Joan Kelly, the doctrine of courtly love had originated during medieval times among an aristocracy that was beginning to view women as equal partners in relationships, almost in the same way that knights and lords enjoyed the mutually beneficial relationship of vassalage. In the courtly love relationship, the knight and the lady also entered into a mutually beneficial relationship "much at variance with the patriarchal family relations obtaining in that same level of society." This "variance" between courtly love and the patriarchal order "ignored the almost universal demand of patriarchal society for female chastity in the sense of the woman's strict bondage to the marital bed." In addition, marriage itself was viewed by the church in feudal society as an inferior and necessary state rather

than a religious one; therefore, it was devoid of any kind of love, especially the exalted love usually reserved for God. Courtly love, because of its place outside of marital vows and even with its sexual nature, was subsequently elevated to become equated with the vocation, passion, and ecstasy normally associated with Christianity alone. Therefore, courtly love effectively freed the aristocratic woman from the constraints placed upon her by both patriarchal society and the church.¹⁷

This courtly love tradition, introduced in such recent proximity to the Renaissance court, was conceivably difficult to dislodge from the mind of the aristocratic woman, since "changing rules about sexual behaviour have nearly always been made by men."¹⁸ Furthermore, Lawrence Stone notes that "especially after the first son and heir was born, the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century aristocratic court ladies felt themselves free to take lovers if they chose."¹⁹ Many aristocratic women, as this evidence of court behavior suggests, may have felt justified in continuing a tradition that allowed them greater sexual freedom.

In addition to a plausibly continuing belief in sexual freedom on the part of aristocratic woman, originating in the tradition of courtly love, the prevalent custom in the upper classes of older men marrying younger women, in order to cement family ties and estates, could have ostensibly contributed to the belief, among the aristocracy at least, in the carnal lust of woman, who was "married only for wealth and not for love."²⁰ Lawrence Stone, for example, observed that "marriage in these circles was so exclusively a matter of political convenience" that marital love was probably rare or nonexistent.²¹ Ruth Kelso, citing Erasmus, notes that in

both Italy and England during the Renaissance “very young girls would be found married to old men, really old men of seventy.”²² Lawrence Stone also suggests that “a young wife often sexually exhausted her husband” because “the capacity of the female for multiple orgasms far exceeding the male ability to keep pace was a well-known fact.”²³ It can, therefore, be argued that many aristocratic women still found sexual pleasure and fulfillment outside of marriage if they were tied to much older men.²⁴ Moreover, “as early as 1603 Lady Anne Clifford reported that ‘all the ladies about the court had gotten such ill names that it was grown a scandalous place.’”²⁵ The number of young aristocratic wives cuckolding their older husbands in court circles was, therefore, neither exceptional nor covert in upper-class society, and the authors of the period were presumably influenced by observance of such liberated sexual behavior. Furthermore, these authors characterized such women as sexually promiscuous and deviant since “the Renaissance man and his female contemporary saw the sexuality of woman as morally acceptable so long as its expression was confined to the conventional form of sexual intercourse within marriage.”²⁶ The overt display of the apparently wanton sexual behavior among the upper classes might logically have persuaded English Renaissance authors that all women behaved comparably.

An additional reason for the vilification of female chastity among English Renaissance authors can be traced to the place of aristocratic woman in court society. Expected to be merely decorative, witty, modest, and above all submissive to the male-dominated hierarchy, the aristocratic woman was relegated to a “minor part except in what may be described as indoor amusements for

leisure hours.”²⁷ Such aristocratic restrictions on the public prestige of woman would logically lead to the woman’s perception of her helplessness, dependence, and vulnerability in court circles. It is entirely feasible that in such circumstances women used the granting of sexual favors as a form of influence over hierarchical male domination. Anne Boleyn, for example, negotiated the power of her sexual attraction into marriage with a king and her own coronation as queen. Other aristocratic women may have followed her example and used their sexual attractions to their own, or their husbands’, economic or political advantage. Although Lawrence Stone maintains that “the withholding of sexual favours is a woman’s only source of power over men,”²⁸ it may also be argued that the granting of sexual favors can be just as effective. Indeed, Stone does relate several instances, delineated in the diaries of Samuel Pepys, of upper-class women opportunely using the granting of sexual privileges for their own interests and welfare.²⁹ If aristocratic women were following the examples set by Anne Boleyn and others in using sexual license as a bargaining tool in a powerless situation, English Renaissance authors, observing the promiscuity frequently prevalent in court circles, could again have conceived the belief that such behavior was analogous to all women.

In examination of the social patterns and sexual behavior of women in the lower strata of society, however, a dichotomy of both beliefs and behavior from those of the upper classes can be observed. Women of the middle- and lower-middle classes, where neither hereditary tradition nor political policy demanded strict regulation of female sexuality for purposes of primogeniture, were

more likely to observe chaste behavior than their upper-class counterparts. Lawrence Stone observes, for example, that Christian doctrine requiring female chastity was more easily internalized by lower-middle class women, and "the most sexually inhibited class in the population is like to be the lower-middle class of small property owners."³⁰ Additionally, in a study of legal documents and court proceedings among Norfolk village society in early modern England, Susan Amussen reports that most "women protected their sexual reputations" because "villagers payed [sic] close attention to the sexual and social relations of their neighbours."³¹ Amussen also argues that "women apparently centered their own interpretation of their reputations on chastity."³² Furthermore, Lawrence Stone notes that the incidence of pre-nuptial pregnancy and illegitimacy in the lower-middle classes of Renaissance England, "the most reliable indicator of the level of premarital chastity in a society without contraceptives,"³³ were both phenomenally low and even declined between 1550 and 1650.³⁴ Stone argues that there was "little premarital intercourse" among the middle and lower-middle classes, and "it was a remarkably chaste society."³⁵ In addition, among the middle and lower-middle classes "fornication with an unmarried woman threatened the village with a bastard and bastards often became drains on the parish poor rates."³⁶ Thus, each parish had good reason to monitor the sexual behavior of its populace. Moreover, women of the middle and lower-middle classes had not been sexually liberated by the courtly love tradition presumably practiced among upper-class women. It is apparent, therefore, that if aristocratic women were practicing sexual liberty and license,

they were not emulated by the women of middle and lower-middle class society.

Additionally, while women of the middle and lower-middle classes were dominated by the patriarchal order as assiduously as were the women of upper classes, they were also viewed more realistically by the men of their own society, probably because of the more common marriage patterns based on personal choice, companionship, and love, rather than on consolidation of property.³⁷ Lawrence Stone cites case studies of middle and lower-middle class men who not only respected the opinions and views of their wives, but loved them so much that they were devastated upon their deaths.³⁸ Keith Wrightson also argues that marriage containing "a strong bond of mutual respect"³⁹ was common at this time among the middling ranks of society. Reformation and dissenter ministers who urged men to "respect their wives, to appreciate their wives' talents"⁴⁰ probably contributed to the more favorable perception of women in middle and lower-middle class society. In addition, the economic situation that demanded income from both men and women forced men to regard women more equitably. A woman who helped support the family financially could not be viewed as a sexual libertine, and the lower incidence of sexual promiscuity among the middle and lower-middle classes may also have been due to the economic conditions that required women to be economically productive, contributing members of their families. Susan Amussen argues that women achieved "higher status" in rural areas where they were closely involved in the economic stability of the family.⁴¹ In addition, Ralph Houlbrooke notes that marriage

among the middle class in urban society "came closest to being a full working partnership,"⁴² with each partner maintaining an equal, and complementary, position. Furthermore, the close nuclear family units, as well as the lack of privacy within those units where the whole family might work, eat, and sleep in one or two rooms, conceivably provided close supervision of both women and men.

Among the lowest classes of English society, the laborers, wage earners, and poverty-stricken unemployed, although sexual activity is difficult to document, the incidence of prostitution apparently rose during the Renaissance.⁴³ However, those women of the lower classes who practiced sexual license by becoming prostitutes, as Lawrence Stone notes, did so not out of an incessant craving to fulfill their sexual appetites, but for economic reasons.⁴⁴ Stone argues that there was a "growing culture of sexual promiscuity in the large submerged class of the very poor"⁴⁵ where "chastity and poverty are incompatible."⁴⁶ Stone notes that "for some girls, selling their bodies was a preferable way of earning a living to working fourteen to sixteen hours a day"⁴⁷ for minimal subsistence. Additionally, Susan Amussen cites several cases of maidservants, because of their powerless situation, being seduced and abandoned by their employers.⁴⁸ Renaissance authors, observing the considerable number of working girls apparent in London during this time, may have misconstrued their poverty for licentiousness.

From the historical examples presented here, it may be argued, therefore, that English Renaissance authors, in delineating woman as a lecherous, lustful, lascivious being who can be neither

honorable nor chaste, had some justification for their views. Aristocratic society, of which they were unremitting observers, presumably provided some evidence for their misogynous views, as did the perceived promiscuity among the lowest classes of women. On the other hand, middle and lower-middle class women were apparently virtuous and chaste, contrary to the representations of woman imposed by these authors. They were also apparently well-respected both as wives and members of their communities. However, most Renaissance authors probably had little opportunity for observing the middling ranks of society, moving as they did among the aristocracy. Therefore, it was easy to stereotype all women based on the examples they saw among the upper classes and court nobility, as well as on the behavior of the poverty-stricken prostitutes they saw on the streets of London. Such misogynous views of the sexual behavior of women, as delineated by these authors, should not, however, be accepted as representational of women during the Renaissance, nor should they be accepted as representative of the common views of women during the period, as evidenced by the behavior and views of middling ranks. Women then, as now, cannot be stereotyped by literary conventions, and it is fallacy to accept such conventions as an accurate reflection of society.

N.B. This essay was written for a history course. It conforms to *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

Notes

- ¹Edmund Spenser, Dedication of *The Faerie Queene*, *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, ed., Hugh Maclean 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982) 1.
- ²Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book III, Canto VII, Stanza 60, 290.
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Separation or Unity?: Edwards, Emerson and Man's Relation to God

SUE FULTON-STAHLE

Jonathan Edwards, in his "Personal Narrative," and Ralph Waldo Emerson, in "The Over-Soul," hold different views of man's relationship to God. Edwards believes God is separate and apart from man, who is inherently sinful and in need of salvation. Emerson, on the other hand, sees man as potentially "part and particle" (973) of God. Man is an inherently valuable being who is not in need of salvation. Although Edwards and Emerson speak of ecstatic experiences, definite differences exist between these experiences.

Edwards speaks of a God who is external to man and who possesses "absolute sovereignty and justice with respect to man's salvation and damnation" (301). This doctrine presupposes that man, by nature, is sinful and that he must be redeemed. That redemption has been purchased through the blood of God's son, Jesus Christ. Edwards believes that the salvation which Christ brings to man comes through the Holy Spirit in the form of "free grace" (309). Man may or may not choose to accept this grace, but if he chooses not to accept it, he is subject to an afterlife of untold misery "everlastingly tormented in hell" (301).

Although Edwards initially objects to the reasonableness of God's absolute sovereignty, he experiences an "alteration in my

mind" by which he overcomes this objection. Prompted by his "longings of soul after God" (302), he attempts to live according to the "blessed rules of the gospel" (303). Through reason, he continually strives to follow these rules, thereby seeking "an increase of grace" (303). Edwards believes that if man follows the gospel's rules, God's spirit can move him to an experience of "inward sweet delight in God and divine things" (301), which is manifested "sensibly" (303). Prior to this sensory experience, however, man must "be emptied and annihilated" and then "made pure" through Christ (308). One need only look at Edwards' use of language to realize the emotional enormity of the task he undertakes. He speaks of "great and violent inward struggles"; "uneasy thoughts" which "seize him"; "conflicts"; "terror"; "extreme feebleness and impotence" (303); "secret corruption and deceit" (303); "brokenness of heart and poverty of spirit" (304). In addition to wrestling with his own inadequacies, Edwards feels he must also accomplish "the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world" (305). Indeed, he is responsible for his own sin and salvation, as well as for the salvation of his fellow men.

In his struggle to advance Christ's kingdom, Edwards endeavors to seek out those of like mind who appear to possess "true piety" (304). Here again, he agonizes, because he can find so few people in whom are "appearances of true piety" (304). He cannot, he says, "bear the thoughts" of companions who are not "holy" (304).

Emerson is much less exacting in his view of a supreme being. God, or the "Over-Soul" (973), is not separate and apart from man. On the contrary, the Over-Soul is a "Unity. . . within which every

man's particular being is contained and made one with all other" (973). This Unity "stands behind" man and shines through him. Man is, in effect, a transparency through which the Over-Soul shines its perfection, and man cannot be separated from that perfection. Emerson says, in fact, that there is "no bar or wall in the soul where man, the effect ceases, and God, the cause, begins" (974). One might further illustrate this relationship using an object as simple as a wooden table: There is no point where the wood (the cause) ceases and the table (the effect) begins. So it is with man's relationship to God. There is no point at which man's soul, the effect, ceases and God, the cause, begins.

Emerson believes that man cannot be base and sinful, for he is part of the Unity of perfection. As a part of perfection, he is in no need of salvation. In addition, man needs no intermediary between God and himself, either in the form of Jesus Christ or the Holy Ghost. There is "no bar or wall in the soul where man . . . ceases, and God, the cause, begins. The walls are taken away" (974). To Emerson, man's true nature is so subtle that, unless his inner, spiritual ears are attuned to his true nature, he will not hear this nature speak to him and through him. Emerson believes, then, that man does not live in sin; he simply is not always attuned to his inner perfection.

Emerson speaks, as does Edwards, of God's sovereignty. This sovereignty, Edwards feels, is reinforced by rules with which man must comply, lest he be sentenced to eternal damnation in hell. God's sovereignty, for Emerson, "is made known by its independency of those limitations," or rules, "which circumscribe us on every side" (974). In this independent state, the soul transcends all

sensory and intellectual boundaries. For instance, as one views a work of art or listens to a beautiful piece of music, he may lose all track of time and place. He wanders through fields of transcendence and often comes away with a new awareness of some aspect of existence or of himself. It is in those moments, Emerson tells us, that measurements of time and distance dissolve.

Edwards expresses his view of "salvation and damnation" (301) as he prepares "to fight with all my might against the world, the flesh and the devil" (304). He feels assured of an eternal existence, where he will meet "dear Christians in heaven" (305). For Emerson, any idea of heaven or hell is irrelevant: "the doctrine of the immortality" is not "separately taught," and "there is no question of continuance" (979). The Over-Soul, which resides in, about, and through man, "cannot wander from the present, which is infinite, to a future, which would be finite" (979).

In Emerson's view, man cannot reach God through intellect. Indeed, intellect and spiritual attunement are unrelated: "the soul's scale is one; the scale of the senses and the understanding is another" (975). Realization of the Over-Soul does not come through intelligence but through a state of attunement and receptiveness: "Always our being is descending into us from we know not whence" (973). The soul does not advance on a linear scale; it evolves. Furthermore, one man does not advance beyond another. As each man evolves, his outer "rinds" (976) merely dissolve and fall away, and he enters "the region of all virtues" (976).

We have seen Edwards exert great effort to seek out companions of a like mind—those who possess "true piety," those who are "holy" (304). Emerson experiences no such dilemma. He

writes that, if a man has "found his centre," all his opinions will "involuntarily confess it" (980), and he can be known by his "tone" (980). Furthermore, no amount of preaching "from without" can affect that centre. Emerson feels that, when man possesses the "wisdom of humanity" (981), he does not require acknowledgment or admiration; his wisdom is his fulfillment.

Both Edwards and Emerson describe ecstatic experiences, but these experiences seem to vary markedly in origin and manifestation. Granted, both men experience feelings of peace. Edwards speaks of his feelings of "delight" (299) and sweetness, which are of a "refreshing nature" (303). Emerson speaks of immense beauty and divine unity (984). Edwards, however, seems always to come from behind, as it were. He mourns that "I did not turn to God sooner" (302), and his sensory experiences of God are connected to "the way of duty" (310). In addition, his spiritual experiences come in waves, which range from extreme lows to extreme highs. We know that one cannot sustain moments of heightened awareness for long periods of time, but Edwards' experiences take on an almost manic-depressive quality. He moves from extreme sorrow over his sinful condition to extreme elation whenever he happens upon a "new sense" (301). This "new sense" arises frequently, and it often follows fast on the heels of "poverty of spirit" (304) and feelings of "terror" (300). Emerson, on the other hand, seems to experience no such extremes. His writing indicates a more evenly-balanced state of awareness of the "soul whose organ he is" (974). He is more confident as he "calmly" fronts "the morrow" (984), although he, too, experiences moments of ecstasy.

As one reads Edwards' and Emerson's views regarding man's relationship to God, one is struck more by the differences in their thinking than by the similarities. Edwards, as a participant in the "Great Awakening," brings new life and emotion to the Christianity of his day. Ironically, he emphasizes the wrathful God of the Old Testament, instead of the merciful God of the New Testament. Conversely, Emerson is absorbed by what he believes to be man's innate perfection. Emerson's God does not condemn man; he merely waits for man to recognize his inner divinity. His God is, in the words of Tennyson, "Closer. . . than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

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Experience in William Blake's "The Garden of Love"

HEATHER BURT

The conflict between innocence and experience is a theme that pervades William Blake's poems. The "Garden of Love" from *Songs of Experience* is no different. It embodies the innocent garden of the past with the ravaged graveyard of the present and alludes to the causes of the present state of death and destruction. As in the other poems of Blake's *Songs of Experience*, this work addresses mankind's fallen state.

In the "Introduction" of *Songs of Experience* Blake writes, "Hear the voice of the Bard!" (line 1). The Bard goes on to narrate the "Introduction" and the rest of the "Song" in which "The Garden of Love" is included. The Bard symbolizes mankind in Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, and his experiences illustrate humanity's journey from innocence into experience.

In the first stanza, the Bard begins by going to the Garden of Love. What is the Garden of Love? God is love. Perhaps Blake is referring to God's garden (which is the Garden of Eden) created by Him for mankind to live happily, innocently and freely. It is where truth, liberty and joy abound, and where God is seen face to face. But when the Bard gets there he says, "And saw what I never had seen" (line 2). Apparently the Bard had been there before, but on

this visit something was different. (Blake emphasizes this point by putting two stressed syllables together: "I never.")

A Chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green. (3-4)

The garden of his childhood innocence (symbolized in the words "play" and "green") is changed because of the obstacle sitting on the green. The Bard's memories of the garden are defiled by the presence of the chapel, and he has no way of going back to the place where he played as an innocent child; just as humanity's relationship to the Garden of Eden is forever denied because of Adam and Eve's disobedience in eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Blake also mentions the green where he used to play in the poem "The Ecchoing Green."

Such such were the joys
When we all girls and boys,
In our youth-time were seen,
On the Ecchoing Green (17-20)

As in the "Ecchoing Green" where the children played on the green, so too in humanity's innocent childhood we played in the Garden of Eden.

The second stanza of "The Garden of Love" describes the chapel, "And the gates of this Chapel were shut," (5), giving the reader a cold, unwelcome, and foreboding feeling. The Bard feels

that he is being locked out of his own innocence and cannot go back, identifying again with mankind's exile from the garden of Eden.

The Bard then sees "And Thou shalt not. writ over the door" (6). Blake emphasizes the negative commandment by putting a period after "not," even though it is in the middle of the line. This gives the commandment a note of finality. It is further emphasized with two successive spondees in the second and third feet of the line. Perhaps Blake meant "Thou shalt not" to refer to the Law of Moses in the Old Covenant. The Ten Commandments were given to the Children of Israel by God to impute sin. "For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Rom 5:13). "Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom 3:20), and "...the strength of sin is the law" (1 Cor 15:56). The association of the Law with the Garden of Love further symbolizes the loss of innocence of the Bard's pristine childhood memories. He is no longer innocent and neither is mankind.

The third stanza begins with the Bard seeing that graves fill the garden instead of flowers now: "and tomb-stones where flowers should be" (10). It appears that the chapel is not the only change in the garden. Its presence has defiled the pristine garden, killed off the flowers that once grew there, and replaced them with tombstones. Blake intends the chapel to symbolize religion. By using the Law (symbolized by "thou shalt not"), religion kills innocence and twists the simple truth of God (as found in the Garden of Eden) to its own devices, thereby poisoning the life of the Garden.

Throughout "The Garden of Love" Blake uses iambic tetrameter, until the last two lines. It seems he wants to set them off by using pentameters and changing the rhyme scheme in the final stanza from ABCB to ABCD. These changes emphasize the last two lines of the final stanza:

And Priests in black gowns were walking their rounds.
And binding with briars my joys and desires. (11-12)

By employing the phrase "walking their round" (11), Blake gives the impression that the priests' indiscriminately and unquestioningly go about binding up people's joys and desires with briars as a matter of course. The priests described by the Bard sound like the Pharisees spoken of in the Bible, who "bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers" (Matt 23:4).

"Briars" could symbolize the crown of thorns that Jesus wore during the crucifixion. Blake is saying that instead of accepting the simple truth of the Garden of Eden, religion seeks to be a substitute for God. Instead of appropriating the suffering of Jesus for its followers, it binds up its believers and causes them to suffer penance on earth in order to be worthy of eternal life. As a result, the Bard's "joys & desire" are bound, and life, innocence and truth, intended by God in the Garden of Eden, are crushed.

In "London" Blake relates "mind-forg'd manacles" (8) to the "blackning Church" (10) in the same way the Law relates to the Chapel in "The Garden of Love." He blames the bondage, loss of innocence, social ills, sin and death on the institution of religion.

Wherever these things are found, religion is found sitting in their midst. Mankind's loss of innocence forces experience and ensuing misery upon us. As in the other poems in *Songs of Experience*, William Blake contrasts innocence with experience and bemoans the wretched state of humanity in "A Garden of Love."

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The Scarlet Letter:
The Artistry of Blending Fictions
SHERRY HUMPHREY

The visual images of color, light, intensity, texture, and harmony play an important role in *The Scarlet Letter*. Nathaniel Hawthorne uses these visual images to illuminate artistic contrasts and, ultimately, to suggest a kind of aesthetic harmony as a result of these contrasts. It is intriguing to examine Hawthorne's story as the blending together of binary fictions. Just as the shades of a watercolor painting bleed one into another, so the hard concepts of sinfulness, adultery, and ugliness are muted and softened by the opposing concepts of God's grace, angelicism, and artistic beauty. The following is a look at how Hawthorne presents the artistic blending of opposing fictions.

Sinfulness vs. God's Grace

Nathaniel Hawthorne presents the child, little Pearl, as an exaggerated and gigantic symbol of Hester Prynne's sinfulness and guilt. Pearl becomes "the moral agony which Hester had borne" (1199). Hester seeks "to create an analogy between the object of her affection and the emblem of her guilt and torture" (1214). In so doing, Hester adorns Pearl in rich, crimson clothing "abundantly embroidered with flourishes of gold thread" (1215), so that Pearl becomes "the scarlet letter endowed with life" (1215). In regard to

little Pearl's character, Hester is "ever dreading to detect some dark and wild peculiarity that should correspond with the guiltiness to which she owed her being" (1209). In her confusion over little Pearl's character, Hester asks, "Child what art thou?" (1213). In an attempt to distinguish Pearl as a token of sin or as a gift from God, the narrator tells us that "in truth Pearl was one as well as the other" (1216). The author introduces the opposing concept of God's grace when he tells the reader that "God, as a direct consequence of the sin which man thus punished had given her (Hester) a lovely child" (1209). Hawthorne further suggests that Pearl is an angel or a gift from God when Pearl is described as a "lovely and immortal flower," a "plaything of the angels," and a being with "an absolute circle of radiance around her" (1209).

Just as Pearl is her mother's "happiness," she is also her "torture" (1222). Just as Pearl is her mother's "token of shame" (1190), she is also her "sole treasure" (1221). In Hawthorne's picture of Pearl, he paints no clear, distinct lines but creates subtle shadings and, thus, blends binary fictions and brings harmony to the essence of little Pearl.

Adultery vs. Angelicism

The Puritan society, a cultural fiction, labels Hester Prynne an adulteress and, in so doing, forces Hester to wear a scarlet letter upon her breast which "was represented in exaggerated and gigantic proportions, so as to be greatly the most prominent feature of her appearance. In truth, she seemed absolutely hidden behind it" (1218). The Puritan townspeople hope that in "giving up her individuality, she (Hester) would become the general symbol at

which the preacher and moralist might point, and in which they might vivify and embody their images of woman's frailty and sinful passion" (1203). Her society wants to point to Hester "as the figure, the body, the reality of sin" (1204). Hawthorne's narrator reveals that this societal fiction is "half a truth, half a self-delusion" (1204). Hester refuses to accept the societal concept of the A pinned upon her breast and uses "her sin, her ignominy" to bring about "*a new birth*, with stronger assimilations than the first" (1204). Hester transforms the symbol of the A and makes "a pride out of what they, worthy gentlemen, meant for punishment" (1991). She uses the "torture of her daily shame" to "purge her soul, and work out another *purity* than that which she had lost; more *saint-like* as the result of martyrdom" (1204).

Hawthorne says that the Puritan townspeople who had

expected to behold her dimmed and obscured by a disastrous cloud, were astonished, and even startled, to perceive how her beauty shone out, and made a halo of the misfortune and ignominy in which she was enveloped (1190).

Thus, Nathaniel Hawthorne merges society's adulteress with Hester Prynne, saint and angel.

Ugliness vs. Artistic Beauty

The Puritan society is determined to cast a shadow of ugliness in exaggerated and gigantic proportions by poisoning Hester Prynne on the "platform of the pillory" (1191) to be "displayed to the multitude" on the framework of the "devilish" and "ugly engine"

(1192). Hester, “supported by an unnatural tension of nerves, and by all the combative energy of her character,” is able to “convert the scene into a kind of lurid triumph” (1203). Hester uses the artistic beauty of elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold” (1190) to transform the ugliness and stigma of the scarlet letter into something “so artistically done and with so much fertility and gorgeous luxuriance of fancy...” that it “had the effect of a spell, taking her out of the ordinary relations with humanity, and enclosing her in a sphere by herself” (1190). Thus, Hester tears herself away from the ugliness interpreted by the Puritan society and reinterprets herself as a symbol of beauty and light. With vivid visual depiction, Hawthorne brushes away the harsh images of ugliness and tints his literary canvas with various vestiges of beauty.

Using visual images, Nathaniel Hawthorne explores in *The Scarlet Letter* the blending and merging of opposing fictions. Hawthorne never does this more compellingly than in the opening of *The Scarlet Letter*, wherein he describes the prison door as an ugly “wooden edifice” which was “heavily timbered with oak, and studded with iron spikes” (1187), and then counters this image with the visual aesthetics of a wild rose bush, covered...with its delicate gems which might be imagined to offer their fragrance and fragile beauty” (1187). Hawthorne goes on to assert that one image or idea might serve to soften and lend harmony to the other:

we could hardly do otherwise than pluck one of its flowers and present it to the reader. It may serve to symbolize some sweet

moral blossom, that may be found along the track, or relieve
the darkening close of a tale of human frailty and sorrow.
(1188)

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**Never To Be Parted:
Maggie, Tom, and the Illusion of Individuation in
The Mill On The Floss
KELLY J. HOELTGEN**

The relationship between brother and sister Maggie and Tom Tulliver in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* has long confused critics. Some believe that the relationship is incestuous; according to Eva Fuchs, "Maggie transfers to Tom much of the libidinal need which has been left unsatisfied in her relationship to her mother. For the most part, Maggie's unsatisfied hunger takes the form of incestuous longings for union with her brother; those longings are fulfilled in the fatal embrace which ends her history" (Fuchs 424). Most critics feel that justification for the incest theory lies mainly in the contention that "a psychic state which is 'erotic' in the fullest sense of the term" (Smith 148) exists between the siblings as is shown by their intense physical relationship as children, Maggie's future abortive attempts at romantic relationships with Philip Wakem and Stephen Guest, and the final flood scene. This episode ends in "an embrace . . . [Such] a passionate one between not a man and woman of different families but between a brother and sister—is not [indicative of] a normal relationship" (Smith 146). However, each of these arguments can also be used provide support the theory that the problem in the novel is not one of

misdirected sexual attentions, but of a lack of individuation between the siblings.

When we read a novel, we expect to be confronted with a mirrored image of the real world. Often the image is distorted or warped, but the reflection we see is still recognizably similar to what we know exists around us. Authors do, however, sometimes alter the reflection using extremely subtle techniques and in ways that we do not expect. For example, in *The Mill on the Floss*, George Eliot has either consciously or unconsciously divided the psyche of one individual and assigned it to two separate characters, Maggie and Tom. Because of this, and because the two characters are siblings, readers have been perplexed and perturbed ever since the novel was written. Perhaps the only way for us to come to terms with the disturbing characteristics of Tom and Maggie, traits that we know have brought about their deaths, is to understand that neither sibling represents a psychologically complete person; instead, they are two halves of a whole. Because of their peculiar psychological makeup, neither is able to live a full and healthy life, which is why they must die at the end "in an embrace never to be parted" (Eliot 546). Together, they are the tragic hero "who share[s] and express[s the] author's vision . . . catharsis" (Hardy 14).

First, one must recognize that the entire structure of *The Mill on the Floss* is based on a pattern of union, separation, and reunion between Maggie and Tom. Maggie awaits Tom's return home from school with a "fluttering heart" (Eliot 38) in the first few chapters of the novel, and as Sara M. Putzell has noted, "when the novel was first published, it was in three separate volumes, the first

two of which ended with Maggie and Tom ignoring their differences and embracing each other" (Putzell 235). Both unions end suddenly because "nothing has changed within [Tom and Maggie] or in their visions of each other" (Putzell 235). Putzell implies that both unions, though passionate in nature, are merely moments of physical, not psychological, solidarity. In order for a true and lasting reunion to come about, something must happen which will make both characters understand their true bond; that each is a psychological manifestation of the other. They cannot exist alone, nor can they exist together, and it is not until the final reunion, the one which ironically causes their deaths, that Maggie and Tom actually have a meeting of souls, a moment of "recognition" (Putzell 235). The bond is not incestuous because it goes beyond the merely physical and enters a realm of spirituality.

According to Carl G. Jung, the human psyche is made up of several different components besides the conscious ego. In order for an individual to attain psychological stability, the subconscious must be "assimilat[ed]" (Jung 83) with the conscious through analysis, an event which "is often somewhat painful, the more so if, as is generally the case, one has previously neglected the other side" (Jung 86-7). This assimilation "obliterate[s]" the "individual boundaries" (Jung 87) between conscious and subconscious. This same type of boundary disintegration occurs when Maggie and Tom reach their moment of recognition (or analysis) during the flood; each character represents an element of the subconscious, and when they break down the barriers between themselves, death is the result. An examination of these two features of the

subconscious, the anima and the animus, sheds more light onto the relationship between the siblings.

First is the anima, which represents to the male "all the outstanding characteristics of a feminine being" (Jung 151) which he denies his conscious self. Thus, the male typically represses many of his "feminine" qualities and projects them into his subconscious anima, and these characteristics typically come out in dreams and other manifestations of the subconscious mind. Tom takes this kind of action to an extreme, denying himself all the pleasures in life that such "female" characteristics as love, friendship, and "the function of relationship" (Jung 152) can bring. David Smith describes him as having a "dominating personality" and rightfully ascribes him the role "of warrior hero" (Smith 158), especially in the eyes of Maggie. Because of these traits, Tom is unable to create or sustain solid relationships with people, and instead is guided by his concept of Justice. He is described as "having more than they usually share of boy justice in him—the justice that desires to hurt culprits as much as they deserve to be hurt, and is troubled with no doubts concerning the exact amount of their deserts" (Eliot 60), which corresponds to what Jung defines as the masculine traits guided by logic and reason (Jung 150-3). Furthermore, Jung insists that the anima is a "perilous image of Woman," including "an image not only of the mother, but of her daughter, [and] the sister . . ." (Jung 150); she is the male subconscious mind's image of the ideal woman. If we understand that Tom is not a real person, but is in actuality a manifestation of George Eliot's subconscious, then we can see how Maggie, through her ability to be impulsively emotional, which is so

different from Tom's insentience, fulfills the role of anima in Tom's psychological makeup.

Because of Tom's extremist views about the dichotomy between the sexes, Maggie, as his anima, is dangerous ("perilous") to him and his usual ability to restrain his feminine side. Maggie, with her unrestrained emotionality, often makes him act against his nature, which is what happens after he has determined to punish her for forgetting to feed his rabbits by telling her "you're a naughty girl. . . . I don't love you" (Eliot 42), and leaves her weeping. Later she runs up to him, embracing him and crying, and Tom's guilt makes him react even though he was "not intending to reprieve Maggie's punishment" (Eliot 45). Not yet the strong, resolute young man who refuses to receive Maggie back into their home after she runs off with Stephen, "he behaved with a weakness quite inconsistent with his resolution to punish her as much as she deserved; he actually began to kiss her in return and say, "Don't cry, then, Maggie—here, eat a bit o'cake" (Eliot 46). Maggie is dangerous to Tom because he doesn't want to permit himself to identify with her and feel her pain.

Many critics claim that this intense moment of passion is clearly indicative of an incestuous relationship, but David Smith challenges this assumption, claiming that "it may be objected that this childhood love between Maggie and Tom is 'innocent,' and that therefore the notion of incestuous passion is untenable. . . . As long as the relationship is only a childhood matter, it is 'innocent'" (Smith 151). Smith goes on to claim that the relationship does carry on in such a manner as the siblings enter adulthood, citing the final embrace as an example. The final embrace, however, can

also be explained in terms of psychological reunion, which will be dealt with later.

Much is also made by the critics of *The Mill on the Floss* of Maggie's abortive relationships with Philip and Stephen, but few have remarked about Tom's complete lack of female companionship, other than living with his mother, who seems to be little more than a housekeeper or beloved family servant to him. Tom is, because of his extreme identification with the Logos archetype, unable to sustain relationships with anyone. In his childhood, he immediately drops Bob's friendship because his "pride and resentment" (Eliot 59) gets in the way of compassion and forgiveness when Bob cheats, and later on, he is too busy to examine his feelings because "he thinks so much of business" (Eliot 408). In other words, he is entrenched in the masculine world of work. Indeed, he is so wrapped up in his work that even in his teenage years, he is described as having "that fold in his brow [which] never disappears, but it is not unbecoming; it seems to imply a strength of will that may possibly be without harshness when the eyes and mouth have their gentlest expression" (Eliot 366). If we accept that Maggie acts as Tom's anima, we can see that he allows her to show all the passion and irrationality which he considers to be feminine, and cannot permit himself to act upon.

Tom has an incredibly inflated ego, and puts himself in a deity role, passing judgment on people and doling out punishments, especially to his sister. He knows that Maggie depends on his love and compassion, yet he is unable to accept her as she is. He justifies his cruelty to her by claiming that he acts both for her own good as well as for the good of the family. When we understand

that Tom is cruel to Maggie because he is afraid of her emotional intensity and because he sees in her the qualities which he has refused to allow himself to feel, his reactions become recognizably human.

Conversely, Maggie is haunted by Tom, her animus, who represents all the "masculine" traits that she is unable to permit herself to express; he acts as "a representative of a masculine cultural ideal" (Steig 50). She relies too heavily on Eros, the feminine virtue of emotion (named after the Latin God of love), which leads her to bond with others readily, deeply, and for the wrong reasons. Because she "had rather a tenderness for deformed things" (Eliot 191), Maggie eventually allows her pity for Philip to lead her into telling him she loves him because she does not wish to cause him pain. When Tom eventually forces her to cease her relationship with Philip, she seems somewhat relieved to have his masculine sense of rationality make the decision for her: "her mind ceased to contend against what she felt to be cruel and unreasonable, and in her self-blame she justified her brother" (Eliot 360). Tom acts as Maggie's animus, the representation of all that is masculine in her; he acts as the aggressive side of her personality, breaking off a difficult and unfulfilling relationship which she has not the determination to end herself. He represents Justice (however skewed) and strength, and it is Maggie's determination both to escape and to placate her animus which causes her destruction.

Besides being the God Of Love, Eros is also "invariably" portrayed as "mischievous [and] often naughty" (Hamilton 36) in mythology. This aspect also fits in with Maggie's willful

disobedience of authority. As a child, she resolves that she does not want her mother to do her hair, so she “suddenly rushed from under her [mother’s] hands and dipped her head in a basin of water standing near—in the vindictive determination that there should be no more chance of curls that day” (Eliot 33). Another important incident of her childhood is when Maggie, reacting to criticism about her unruly hair, decides to cut it off. However, she cannot do so without Tom’s help:

The black locks were so thick—nothing could be more tempting to a lad who had already tasted the forbidden pleasure of cutting the pony’s mane. I speak to those who know the satisfaction of making a pair of shears meet through a duly resisting mass of hair. One delicious grinding snip, and then another and another, and the hinder-locks fell heavily on the floor, and Maggie stood cropped in a jagged, uneven manner, but with a sense of clearness and freedom, as if she had emerged from the wood into the open plain. (Eliot 72)

The importance of this passage is that Tom plays a pivotal role in Maggie’s emerging self-consciousness by being strongly and subconsciously drawn toward the temptation of aiding her in her endeavor. However, he then abandons her “to that bitter sense of irrevocable which was almost an everyday experience of her small soul” (Eliot 73). Clearly evident here is the pattern of union and separation; Tom and Maggie unite in a spirit of rebellion, yet Tom leaves Maggie to her own insufficient devices when the act is completed.

Another "female" trait of Maggie's is that she is caught in a habit of idealism, self-denial, and paralysis. Philip M. Weinstein sums up Maggie's personality perfectly when he explains that she "respond[s] to the compelling reality of the moment; she has been 'foolish' and 'not wise,' not guided by earlier commitments that ought to inhibit her present act" (Weinstein 78). Because of her impulsive nature, she continually runs away but is powerless to actually effect any change on her life, so when she returns things are worse, rather than better, as she had hoped. She lashes out, but is unable or unwilling to make any sort of commitment which will have a lasting impact on her life. She runs away to the Gypsies because she has romantic daydreams about the kind of life they lead, imagining it to be "pretty and comfortable," (Eliot 119) but then she learns that their life is not really "just like a story" (Eliot 119), and she returns home after her idyllic daydream has turned into a "nightmare" (Eliot 125). This action is repeated again, with similar results, twice: first, she has a relationship with Philip, which she allows her brother to destroy, and then she allows Stephen to "kidnap" her. In both cases her passivity causes her downfall.

Jung also points out that "when animus and anima meet, the animus draws his sword of power and the anima ejects her poison of illusion and seduction" (Jung 153). Already we have seen how Maggie's "seductive" behavior forces Tom to express emotion, and Jung's statement about the animus also has a literal parallel in the novel. When Maggie goes to visit Tom at his school, he "drew the sword from its sheath and pointed it straight at Maggie" (Eliot 193). Tom obviously never means to hurt Maggie, only to

“astonish [her] . . . there was nobody but Maggie who would be silly enough to believe him” (Eliot 189), and he only not only frightens her so that she “shrink[s] away from him” (Eliot 193), but injures his own foot in the process. The incident is significant because it acts as a literal representation of the destructive force created when the animus and anima come in contact, prefiguring the death scene, which, as we will see, must occur at the final reunion and moment of recognition.

Michael Steig’s analysis of *The Mill on the Floss* includes some insights which support his theory of anality in the novel, but which also support my contention that Tom and Maggie are actually comprised of one psychologically complete individual. In his study, Steig discusses the Dodson consciousness, which manifests itself in a type of “loyalty to the family [which] stems not from love or impulses of generosity, but from a stubborn adherence to ‘one’s own’” (Steig 47). This idea, of turning inward within the family unit or the self, is a basic symptom of Freud’s postulations on anality. However, it can also be consistent with the “process” of individuation, during which, “the dichotomy between outer and inner reality is replaced by a sense of unitary reality” (Edinger 96). Thus, the person who is working toward individuation must understand that the inner self is just as significant as the outer self. Smith states that “when fictional characters have been placed in peculiar relationships, it is appropriate to suggest unconscious motivations of their actions” (Smith 146). Thus, when Maggie and Tom have achieved their moment “face to face” (Eliot 545) with each other, they embrace not because of a subconscious need to have an incestuous relationship, as Smith claims, but because each

recognizes his or herself in the eyes of the other as they fight the Floss. According to Ira Progoff, "the integration of the personality can be accomplished only *via* the Anima or the Animus, since they are the autonomous personification of the unconscious in the male and the female" (Progoff 93). Thus, if Maggie and Tom actually represent two conflicting halves of a single individual, it is necessary that they confront each other in order for unification to occur. Psychologically, they are able to become a single person, but physical unity is impossible, and so death is inevitable.

As we have seen, one of the most disturbing aspects of George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* in the eyes of many readers is the ending, but a full understanding of the implications of the final reunion between Maggie and Tom dispels these purely pessimistic attitudes. Sister and brother die together in a flood, "in their death . . . not divided" (Eliot 547), and are even buried in the same grave, perhaps leaving the reader feeling abandoned and despairing. Although neither Maggie or Tom Tulliver is anywhere near perfect, we have learned to understand their problems and personalities through the process of identification, and perhaps a part of us dies with them. Critics have argued that the ending is merely "a *deus ex machina*," a flaw which makes *The Mill on the Floss* "perhaps the most troubled of its author's novels" (Adam 122). Henry James felt that the ending is flawed because of "its relation to the preceding part of the story, [which] is told as if it were destined to have, if not a strictly happy termination, at least one within ordinary possibilities" (Smith 144). However, the flood acts as more than a device to end the twisted plot and psychology

of the novel; it releases the tension between Tom and Maggie, revealing the truth about their tortured relationship.

Most importantly, the deaths of Maggie and Tom Tulliver at the end of the novel are not just an instrument used by Eliot to end the story: they are necessary to the world order. Joseph Campbell tells us that "the world lives on death" (Campbell 177). If there were no deaths, there would be no room for births, for newness, for change. Many critics decry Maggie and Tom's deaths in the novel, claiming, as James did, that "the story does not move towards it" (Smith 144), but in truth, the story *does* move towards it. In the beginning of the novel, Mrs. Tulliver worries about their children being "drowned" (Eliot 44). Then, Tom tells Bob Jakin that "there was a big flood once . . . and the sheep and cows were all drowned . . . and the boats went all over the fields ever such a way" (Eliot 57). He goes on to say that when he is grown, he will "make a boat with a wooden house on the top of it, like Noah's ark," (Eliot 57) and if he sees Bob swimming, he would "take [him] in" (Eliot 57). Later, the story of St. Ogg, and the Blessed Virgin is told, and "the legend . . . reflects from a far-off time the visitation of the floods" (Eliot 129), and when Maggie is floating down the river with Stephen, she dreams that she sees

the Virgin seated in St. Ogg's boat, and it came nearer and nearer, till [she] saw the Virgin was Lucy and the boatman was Philip—no, not Philip, but her brother, who rowed past without looking at her; and she rose to stretch out her arms and call to him, and their own boat turned over with the movement, and

they began to sink till with one spasm of dread she seemed to awake. . . . (Eliot 493-4)

Eliot has carefully and precisely set up images of dead livestock and rescue missions, of Maggie and Tom drowning, and of God flooding the earth to destroy the old and make way for the new.

In fact, as Campbell again claims, “reproduction without death would be a calamity, as would death with reproduction” (Campbell 177), and Maggie and Tom Tulliver do both die childless, but Bob Jakin’s infant daughter, named after Maggie, lives on. Thus, the wants and needs of the individual rank below those of the rejuvenation of the collective. Death, especially in this case, is natural because as the novel’s narrator explains in her conclusion:

nature repairs her ravages—repairs them with her sunshine and with human labour. The desolation wrought by that flood had left little visible trace on the face of the earth five years after. The fifth autumn was rich in golden corn-stacks, rising in thick clusters among the distant hedgerows; the wharves and warehouses on the Floss were busy again with the echoes of eager voices, with hopeful lading and unlading. . . Nature repairs here ravages—but not all. The up-torn trees are not rooted again; the parted hills are left scarred; if there is a new growth, the trees are not the same as the old, and the hills underneath their green vesture bear the marks of the past rending. To the eyes that have dwelt on the past, there is no thorough repair. (Eliot 547)

Just as "the new trees are not the same as the old," the new Maggie will be different from her predecessor, and perhaps she will be psychologically complete.

The old Maggie still lives on in those who remember her "among the trees of the Red Deeps, where the buried joy seemed still to hover like a revisiting spirit" (Eliot 547). Both characters and reader have been left behind; they are outside the unbreakable bond of consciousness which unites sister and brother, and all must experience the cathartic effect of the tragedy of "fatal fellowship" (Eliot 546) which kills them. Nature's cruelty and the indifference of the universe must be faced in order to progress. Stephen, more effectively than Philip, learns to overcome his despair at Maggie's leaving him and to recommence his own life. Although he does visit the grave of Tom and Maggie, he does so "with a sweet face beside him . . . many years after" (Eliot 547), and the impression is that he has married and will himself participate in the rejuvenation of the species by having children to "clasp . . . their little hands in love and roam . . . the daisied fields together" (Eliot 546), just as Maggie and Tom had done a generation before.

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**“The Dead” Viewed as a Conclusion to
*Dubliners***

DELIA JOLLEY

With the stories in *Dubliners*, James Joyce creates an intricate account describing the nature and effects of the “paralysis” he believes envelops Dublin. The similarities in experience and response among the characters in the different stories emphasize the pervasiveness of this paralysis. Repetition of thematic content is especially evident in the final story of the collection, titled “The Dead.” Because “The Dead” offers a refined and synthesized exhibition of the various themes pertaining to the underlying paralysis found in the preceding stories, it can be viewed as a concluding prognosis of the crippling malady explored throughout the work.

The behavior displayed by the minor characters in “The Dead” mirrors the actions and attitudes demonstrated in other selections of *Dubliners*. Lily seems to have a boyfriend remarkably akin in nature to Corley from the story “Two Gallants.” When Gabriel asks if she plans to marry soon, Lily retorts “with great bitterness,” “The men that is now is only palaver and what they can get out of you” (178). In “Two Gallants,” Corley boasts to his cohort Leneham that he will procure from his “date,” in addition to sexual favors, funding for their next spree. At the end of the story, Corley, “smiling,” displays a “small gold coin in the palm” of his

hand to his eager companion (60). Lily's cynical comment resounds with such ill treatment as Corley delivers.

Freddy Malins represents the seemingly ubiquitous Dublin alcoholic. His appearance comes complete with the obligatory worried hope that he will maintain relative sobriety. Gabriel's aunts are "dreadfully afraid that Freddy Malins might turn up screwed" (176), much like Maria in "Clay" hopes Joe won't "come in drunk" (100). Freddy is "very hard to manage" when drunk (176), and Joe is "so different when he [takes] any drink" (100). The names and faces are different, but the lives of these Dubliners are uncomfortably similar. This uniformity of experience hints at a hopeless paralysis which intensifies as the collection progresses.

Gabriel's personality is a composite of traits witnessed through characters in previous stories. Gabriel's fastidious attention to his dress is reminiscent of Little Chandler's grooming habits. At the beginning of "A Little Cloud," the narrator reveals that Chandler takes "the greatest care with his fair silken hair and moustache" (70). With similar care Gabriel "flick[s] lustre into his shoes and pull[s] his waistcoat down more tightly" (178). These two characters both fancy themselves romantic literary figures as well. Chandler walks about imagining the critical acclaim he will receive for poems he has not yet written (74). Gabriel writes reviews so he can feel connected with the literary world in a more "impressive" manner than teaching affords him (188). Both of these characters support a pretentious attitude with fantasy.

Gabriel's penchant for romantic fantasy casts him as an adult version of the boy in "Araby." As Gabriel stands "gazing up the staircase" at his wife Gretta, he sees her as "a symbol of

something" because of the way the light plays on her. He even imagines that "if he were a painter," "he would call the picture . . . 'Distant Music'" (209-210). When the boy in "Araby" gazes up at Mangan's sister, he notices "the white curve of her neck" and "the white border of her petticoat" accentuated by the streetlamp (32). Gabriel seems to entertain the same dichotomous concept of his love object as the boy does. She must be either pure or sexual. Gabriel also notices the petticoat of his wife's skirt and the curve of her "bowed" neck (210, 215). And even though Gabriel is an adult, his reaction to the destruction of his fantasy is nearly identical to the boy's response. At the end of "Araby," the boy sees himself "as a creature driven and derided by vanity" and his "eyes burn with anguish and anger" (35). Likewise, when Gabriel realizes that his wife has been thinking of a previous love, he "instinctively" hides from "the light lest she might see the shame that burned upon his forehead" (220). There has been no emotional development between "Araby" and "The Dead." Apparently Dublin's paralysis prohibits true maturity.

This lack of emotional maturity is evident in the character traits shared by Gabriel and Farrington as well. Gabriel's desire for Gretta is described as "a fever of rage and desire" (217). He "long[s] to be master of her strange mood" and "to crush her body against his, to overmaster her" (217). These desires echo the frustrating impotence that Farrington experiences in "Counterparts." After Farrington loses an arm wrestling match to a mere "stripling" and is snubbed by an English woman's curt "Pardon," he rushes home to dominate his family (97). Farrington beats his son because his wife is not at home to bear the brunt of his wrath

(97). Gabriel wants to overpower his wife in sexual conquest; Farrington chooses to vent his feelings in outright violence. The actions differ, but the impetus is the same: a yearning for conquest. Paralysis does not foster the realization of aspiration.

In the end, Gabriel decides that he needs "to set out on his journey westward" (223). This can be related to Eveline's aborted adventure to "Buenos Ayres." She, like Gabriel, is at one point nearly swept away by strong sexual emotions. She feels as though "all the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He [Frank] was drawing her into them: he would drown her" (41). But she too does not act on her feelings and thus continues her mired existence (41). Considering the pattern of similarities carefully woven by Joyce throughout *Dubliners*, "The Dead" appears to stand as a thematic climax. The notion of paralysis meets with an appropriately anticlimactic end as Gabriel's "soul swoon[s] slowly" (2232). He is buried beneath the snow that symbolizes the paralysis of Dublin, just as Eveline remains "a helpless animal" caged by the same immobilizing trap: fear (41).

The characters of Joyce's *Dubliners* participate in their own entrapment by deluding themselves with romantic fantasy and alcoholism, as well as with many other self-defeating practices. And because of Joyce's apparent fascination with this paralysis, it would seem that even though he has physically escaped Dublin, much of his spirit remains bound in the same snow that lies "thickly drifted" over Gabriel's soul.

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Images of Inevitable Separation in Philip Larkin's "Love We Must Part Now"

BRIAN CLERICO

Allowing for a slight irregularity in the rhyme scheme and the relative sizes of the two stanzas, the form of Larkin's poem "Love, We Must Part Now" is a Petrarchan love sonnet. In the Petrarchan love sonnet, one generally finds a liberal use of images exaggerating the virtues of the beloved and making the torments of the frustrated lover a thing of narcissistic beauty. However, instead of re-working the standard conceits, Larkin explicitly rejects the images and sentiments associated with the love sonnet: "In the past / There has been too much moonlight and self-pity" (2-3). One should not expect despairing images of romantic love—the "moonlight"—nor teary-eyed banalities from him. The images that Larkin develops involve the act of breaking free from a place of confinement. They represent the dissolution of the lovers' union as driven by powerful forces seemingly inherent in their union from the beginning. The lovers' union is portrayed as a cramped space which their hearts have outgrown and from which they seek release.

Far from pining over lost love, their hearts feel a wild lust for freedom. This feeling is most emphatically expressed in the first stanza when the speaker abruptly announces his impatience to be rid of whatever remains of their union:

Let us have done with it: for now at last
 Never has the sun more boldly paced the sky,
 Never were hearts more eager to be free,
 To kick down worlds, lash forests: (4-7)

The image of the sun, with its connotations of burning passions and vigorous life in the open, recalls and contrasts with the wistful moonlight he has earlier rejected. This conveys a readiness and a preference for decisive action over nostalgic reflection.

Moreover, if the sun has "Never . . . more boldly paced the sky," then it must also be imparting a scorching heat to those objects on which it shines. A close association is made between the state of the lovers' hearts and the sun because the consecutive lines in which these images appear begin with the word "Never." Yet, that the hearts are "eager to be free" implies they are not now free, but confined. The hearts, in their frenzy for escape from this confinement, will destroy the obstacles to their freedom. Thus, they "kick down worlds" and "lash forests." It is as if the heat from the sun is bringing to boil the volatile contents of a closed container; an explosion is inevitable.

The "worlds" that must be destroyed are vehicles for the implied tenor of the lovers' union. The word "world," besides denoting "planet," connotes the myriad facets of human society and relations which envelop and bind the individual to others. A lovers' union itself creates such a microcosm of binding relationships in the lovers' lives through the intensity of its intimacy. It is in this sense that their hearts must "kick down worlds." In order to

achieve true freedom, psychologically and emotionally, they must make a violent break with the old habits of affection.

It seems as if their hearts, newly unfettered and in the exuberance of their escape, go beyond what is necessary to achieve their freedom when they "lash forests." However, in another sense, this image brings to mind a picture of the separated lovers who, from a surplus of rage, madly cut their way through dense and pathless woods. They irrationally resent and punish the surrounding trees for being an impediment to their absolute freedom. The forest is the natural place for this wild and primitive passion. No mention is made of an ultimate destination; it does not seem to matter where they are going. Their hearts only crave freedom.

Because they are powerless to resist the fury of their hearts, the first stanza concludes with the lines:

you and I

No longer hold them; we are husks, that see

The grain going forward to a different use. (7-9)

The metaphor in these lines compares the lovers to husks and implicitly compares their hearts to threshed grain. In the previous lines, the poetic images make us identify with the exhilaration of the lovers' hearts. Yet, the implied metaphor of the hearts being grain in these lines makes the lovers' hearts, as well as the lovers, passive and impersonal spectators to a separation which is destined. Like the grain inside its husk, their hearts have grown mature, and they must shed the formerly protective but now

superfluous and cramping union. In this sense, it is inevitable and natural to go "forward to a different use." The will of the grain plant does not figure into the course of its development or destiny. The fixed and diverging future of the lovers is simply a fact to be accepted.

The second stanza conveys this tone of stoic acceptance of an inevitable parting:

But it is better that our lives unloose,
As two tall ships, wind-mastered, wet with light,
break from an estuary with their courses set,
and waving part, and waving drop from sight. (11-14)

Here, the metaphor compares the lovers to "wind-mastered" ships, which suggests that their separation is partly due to powerful outside forces that operate on their lives and are beyond their control. This recalls the image of the hearts as threshed grain. The separation of husk and grain is only achieved by the intrusion of an outside force: a thresher.

However, while external forces are at work, the forces that impel them to dissolve their union are seemingly an inherent or organic element of the union itself. The metaphors in this last stanza implicitly compare the river to the lovers' union, and the ocean to the freedom that their hearts have been striving for. One can also see the implication that both their union and separation are highly contingent. The river whose current had carried the ships together in its channel, making their union possible, now has brought them to the estuary where their separation is inevitable.

The two ships' courses are already set as they "break" from the estuary, the last stretch of the river which constrains their ships to be together before they arrive in the absolute freedom of the wide ocean. Just like the lovers' hearts hewing a path through an unknown forest, or "The grain going forward for a different" but unspecified use, no destination is named for the set courses of the ships. All that is certain is that the lovers' hearts have escaped from the confinement of their lifeless union. Their futures and fates as individuals are left uncertain. But that both ships are "wet with light" implies that the weather for their respective voyages is, for the moment, auspicious and should give them hope.

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Love in Mishima's *Spring Snow* and Nabokov's *Lolita*

KATHLEEN BENNETT

In literature, passionate love is very much like a mountain stream, which is inextricably bound up with its surroundings and is given its character and beauty by the ruggedness of the landscape through which it travels. The shape of the stream is defined by the demands of the terrain — now winding like a silver thread, now cascading in brilliance down a precipice. Yukio Mishima and Vladimir Nabokov examine two relationships set in vastly different cultures with dramatically different circumstances. Despite their differences, both novels, *Spring Snow* and *Lolita*, examine the way characters evolve as they react and interact with the institutions of society in their pursuit of passionate love. Mishima and Nabokov explore the institutions of family, school, and government as they affect the development of their characters' passionate love.

Mishima develops the character of Kiyooki Matsugae and his passionate love for Satoko Ayakura against the backdrop of a rapidly changing Japanese culture. The tension and ambivalence of this society is dramatized by the Matsugae estate, which combines the regal dignity of traditional Japanese architecture with an imposing Western-style house. Even the behavior of the Matsugae family reflects the awkwardness of this ancient society as it experiments with Western culture. Kiyooki's father evidences

a fascination with Western food and wines, and his mother, uncertain of her cultural bearings, continually shifts from traditional to Western hairstyles and dress.

The Matsugae household is a study in artificiality. Kiyooki's mother is "invariably insensitive," and her persistently melancholy expression is a studied facade designed to disguise her lack of emotion or insight. The Marquis, wealthy and ambitious, keeps a mistress in a house just outside the gates of the estate. When Kiyooki was a child, it had been his father's practice to make his son accompany him on his walks to the mistress's house. Kiyooki was never unaware of his father's desire to involve him as an accomplice in the betrayal of his mother. With his son now a young man of eighteen, the Marquis is eager to acquaint him with the pleasures of the flesh and offers to provide geishas for Kiyooki and his friends. The Matsugaes live lives of ritual and tradition, experiencing no storms of passion, comfortable not only with the compromise of their culture, but with the compromise of their emotions as well.

Mishima uses the Matsugae household to suggest a corruption of the Japanese society as a whole. The awkward and unartistic combination of Japanese and Western culture pervades even the Imperial Palace, where Prince Harunori devotes himself to Western music yet greets his own father with a stiff military salute. Impressive in his bearing, Prince Harunori, nevertheless, seems to project only the facade of an empty dignity.

In contrast, Kiyooki at eighteen is an exquisitely sensitive young man, keenly conscious of his emotional distance from his family. At this point Kiyooki is acutely narcissistic. He views the

slightest incongruity in his life as assuming immense proportions, throwing his world out of balance. Aware of his defenselessness against society's power to inflict pain, he retreats from both the artificiality of his family and the intimacy offered in other relationships. He realizes, though, that he is painfully vulnerable to Satoko Ayakura and attempts to free himself from the overwhelming bonds of emotion which tie him to her. He cowers at the realization that Satoko knows him well and that she recognizes his immaturity. Kiyooki sees Satoko as confident and alert, with fierce bright eyes which communicate the power which springs from her very essence. Intimidated by these qualities which Kiyooki sees as eclipsing his own, he distances himself from the confident young woman until she reassures him, "My happiness lies in your hands. Be careful with it" (p. 76).

Kiyooki experiences the first stirrings of change when Satoko proposes a rickshaw ride in the snow. He is fascinated by the strength which enables her to violate the conventions of society. With Satoko's boldness overwhelming his customary arrogance, Kiyooki begins to exhibit a hidden determination that he has never manifested before. Satoko's spontaneous declaration, "More than anything else in the world I wanted to go riding through the snow with you" (p. 86), reassures Kiyooki that her mood was the same as his own. The exchange of kisses and caresses confirms to the lovers that this relationship has been a secret realization in both their hearts for some time. At this moment Kiyooki realizes that his fanatical insistence on total independence has been a disease of his mind; his intimacy with Satoko causes him to understand, "What he really wanted to do was to challenge the world" (p. 90).

But Kiyoaki is not far removed from his habitual narcissism and its inherent insecurity. Too unsure to risk humiliation or defeat, he retreats from the unknown.

Kiyoaki realizes, as he approaches his majority, that he has no desire to assume the responsibilities of manhood as his society defines them. Besides, he is aware that he is failing to control his relationship with Satoko. Sensitivity and insecurity drive Kiyoaki into an expressionless shell which insulates him from the pain of maturing. When his parents reveal that Satoko is considering a serious marriage proposal, Kiyoaki unhesitatingly responds, "It's something that doesn't concern me in the least" (p. 147).

Kiyoaki's feigned disinterest regarding Satoko's engagement allows the arrangements to proceed. His father takes a particular interest in solidifying the situation because it represents political advancement for Satoko's family and helps repay the Marquis' debt to her father.

When Kiyoaki hears the phrase "imperial sanction," he feels self-satisfaction at his ability to hear such matters discussed without becoming upset. His triumph over his own rage and despair communicates to him a sense of immortality. In his confidence he sees himself as a cold and supremely capable young man, free forever from his former vulnerability to Satoko. Kiyoaki realizes, with Satoko's engagement a matter of course, that he prefers the actuality of loss to the fear of it.

However, reality elicits an unanticipated response from the self-contained youth. His mother's words, "The imperial sanction was graciously granted at last" (p. 176), initiate a violent passion within him, something that can only be described as a sinister,

ominously threatening joy. "Imperial sanction" — the absolute certainty of that term creates an absolute impossibility, and the thrill of that dichotomy is the fulfillment of unspoken dreams. Kiyoaki resolves to abandon himself in the passion of this situation, instantaneously realizing something he has refused to entertain before, "I love Satoko" (p. 178). A further revelation unleashes the sexual desire he had denied for so long: "elegance disregards prohibitions, even the most severe" (p. 179). He envisions his pure, undefiled sensitivity and elegance in opposition to the pollution and vulgarity of Imperial power. Kiyoaki finds the impossibility of fulfilling his love for Satoko to be the strongest reassurance that he is correct in his conviction. In a wave of insight he realizes that he is no longer vulnerable to any onslaught of emotion; his passion now has a definite course.

Emboldened by the thrill of his new self-awareness, Kiyoaki tells Tadeshina that he must see Satoko. He dismisses her objections with a confidence that reflects an acute wisdom and overwhelming power that he is only now beginning to discover. He cannot dismiss the feeling that a wild animal is gradually beginning to awaken within him. When he and Satoko finally meet, she holds an irresistible attraction for him: "it was the lure of the forbidden, the utterly unattainable, the proscribed. He wanted her this way and no other" (p. 187). Kiyoaki visualizes his love for Satoko as the merging of his purity with her ineffably sacred essence. In the rich new world of his passion, his sense of sin only increases his emerging courage. When they part, the lovers share a recognition of their desire and their destiny.

Kiyoaki's friend Honda notices the decidedly mature manner that has replaced the uncertainty of the irresolute young boy. Kiyoaki's gestures reflect determination and strength as he confides that he will continue his relationship with Satoko. Honda shares with Kiyoaki his perspective on a new kind of war being waged in Japan. He describes this war of emotion as, "the kind of war no one can see, only feel — a war, therefore, that the dull and insensitive won't even notice" (p. 198). Honda cannot escape the awareness that Kiyoaki's love for Satoko threatens the interests of the nation as a whole. He says that the war will exact casualties and asks Kiyoaki if he is resolved to die in it. Kiyoaki recognizes the ring of truth in his friend's words. His passion for Satoko embodies his defiance against all that his sensitivity cannot tolerate and cannot overcome. He realizes that an unnamed portion of the frenzy that consumes him is a beautifully threatening sense of doom.

Kiyoaki cannot escape an intoxicating desire to introduce more danger into his forbidden relationship with Satoko. Musing on his growing sense of inevitable destruction, Kiyoaki confides, "You know, if we had everyone's blessing, we would probably never dare to do what we have done" (p. 244). Realizing that they are already talking as if their times together are over, Satoko reminds Kiyoaki that they are not on a path but on a pier which ends where the sea begins. They foresee no future and have no plan; this, they believe, testifies to the purity of their intentions. But Kiyoaki is aware that he questions his love for Satoko if he cannot anticipate punishment. If he were convinced that things could go on forever as they are, he wonders if he could continue loving Satoko just as

passionately as he does now. He knows that he is driven by a fascination with the taboo they are violating. His love for Satoko is now so consuming that happiness is a thing of the past. Now he cannot isolate his thrill of possessing Satoko from the intoxicating danger that surrounds it.

Tadeshina's letter to the Marquis reveals Satoko's pregnancy and simultaneously exposes new dimensions to Kiyooki's love. Acknowledging that the child is his, Kiyooki speaks with unprecedented strength and determination, "However that may be, Satoko is mine" (p. 285). This is a moment of heightened vision and maturity for Kiyooki. He openly faces his father's anger and disappointment and assumes responsibility for the relationship which has exercised such dominion over him.

But the societal machine which operates without emotion, certainly without passion, envelopes Satoko and begins to determine her fate. As the Matsugaes and the Ayakuras confer to plan for Satoko's abortion, Kiyooki realizes that he is becoming a part of the background. In this environment his courage is worthless and his passion is impotent. He cannot save Satoko; he cannot save their child. When Kiyooki is allowed to see Satoko for the last time, he is ironically aware that the solemn occasion makes him feel like a bridegroom waiting to receive his bride. Their moment together pierces his soul: "He now saw something that had never touched him before, and he wanted to beg her forgiveness" (p. 314). Kiyooki realizes that he is moving beyond his perspective that equates love with defiance and danger; he now sees his love for Satoko as a living thing which is being torn from him with the train's departure.

Satoko's decision to enter the convent produces still more refinement in Kiyooki's love for her. He envisions her purity penetrating the world at large, without a word in her own defense. Kiyooki realizes that by accepting all of the sin and shame, Satoko has absolved herself. In response to this new awareness, Kiyooki experiences, without noticing it, the emergence of sentiments of pity, tenderness, and gentleness which he has never felt before. His spiritual communion with Satoko allows him to shed the last of his arrogance and pride. Oblivious to his former haughtiness, Kiyooki approaches a schoolmate who is shunned because of his hideous appearance. Kiyooki's attempts to penetrate the distance between them is gently rebuffed by the ugly boy, but Kiyooki is comforted by the warmth and kindness of this other wounded spirit.

Kiyooki's responsiveness to his maturing love brings him to a point of deep personal insight. Realizing that his heart has become empty and desolate, he recognizes his loss of beauty and elegance as well. But he is also aware that such a profound sense of loss is essential to attaining true beauty. With exquisite clarity he recognizes that "his pain, at least, was something that was his" (p. 358). However, this realization is insufficient to dispel the dismal blankness of his soul. He is increasingly aware that, "hope and despair, dream and reality, now came together to cancel each other out" (p. 363). He feels he cannot survive without seeing Satoko again. A glimpse of her face will suffice to relieve his racking anxiety.

Burning with fever, Kiyooki begins his personal pilgrimage. He petitions at the convent gates, but, again and again, he is refused. He persists, all by himself, to demonstrate the purity of

his devotion. In shame he realizes that he has never had an opportunity to demonstrate his devotion to Satoko. His state of mind imposes this penance upon him; he will have no peace if he does not accomplish it. He has no choice but to risk his life in order to see Satoko. His fevered mind still acknowledges its most powerful truth: "She's the essence of beauty. And it's only that which has brought me this far" (p. 373).

Kiyoaki's fever-racked body is a symbol of the painful refining process that has taken place in his love for Satoko. Conceived in narcissism, arrogance, and immaturity, this love has been beaten and shaped by the power and corruption of society. As a result, narcissism has given way to defiance and the thrill of danger, which has finally been purified to an appreciation of the essence of beauty. Kiyoaki is physically defeated by his exhaustive quest, but his intense suffering has forged extraordinary character and dignity into his young face. He is now a physical manifestation of his lifelong search; his body and soul reflect the inextricable melding of unfathomable joy and unbearable pain, the essence of love.

In contrast to Mishima's Kiyoaki, Nabokov's Humbert Humbert does not hold himself at a disdainful distance from society. In *Lolita*, Humbert makes a distinction between a "normal man" and himself, "a creature of infinite melancholy, with a bubble of hot poison" (p. 17) in his loins. Describing Lolita as "my sin, my soul" (p. 9), he informs the reader that these two elements are blended beyond distinction and form the core of his being.

Lolita, the source of Humbert's consuming passion, is actually a child of twelve named Dolores Haze. Nabokov uses her name to

communicate the subtle undercurrents which pervade the society she and Humbert inhabit. "Dolores" speaks of an air of sadness which surrounds this young child in her association with the institutions of society, while "Haze" suggests the vague and indistinguishable boundaries between good and evil, love and hate.

Humbert describes his first view of Lolita as "an impact of passionate recognition" (39). He sees the child as an incarnation of his child-love Annabel, while Lolita sees him as a "handsome hunk of movieland manhood" (p. 9). Her presence returns to him the passion of an unfulfilled and unresolved love, and he eagerly resumes the long-past relationship with this child of the present.

As a lodger in the Haze home, Humbert observes the pretense of family life that is enacted there. Charlotte Haze is not a loving mother. She describes Lolita as having been a spiteful child at the age of one, and readily recites a litany of offenses which she feels have been devised by her daughter to make her life miserable. Humbert is especially sensitive to the dynamics which are governing the relationship between the mother and daughter at this point. Charlotte Haze is not subtle about her interest in Humbert Humbert, nor is she discreet about her resentment of Lolita. She urges Humbert to ignore Lolita and says it's intolerable for her to be "so very persevering when she knows she is unwanted" (p. 51). Charlotte's admonition to Humbert to "slap her hard" (p. 55) if she interferes with him exposes the basic antagonism she feels toward her child. As observed and recorded by Humbert Humbert, these are the days of Dolores Haze.

Charlotte Haze continues to simultaneously manipulate Humbert into her life and Lolita out of their lives. Lolita is

abruptly sent to a summer camp and will stay until school begins. When Humbert questions whether Lolita will be happy there, Charlotte responds, "She'd better. And it won't be all play either" (p. 64). Charlotte uses Lolita's absence to propose marriage to Humbert. With the wedding accomplished, Charlotte reveals the next part of her plan: "Little Lo, I'm afraid, does not enter into the picture at all, at all. Little Lo goes straight from camp to a good boarding school with strict discipline and some sound religious training. And then — Beardsley College. I have it all mapped out" (p. 83). With this conversation Charlotte Haze effectively eliminates her daughter from her life.

In stark contrast to Charlotte Haze's view of her daughter as an unwanted intrusion is Humbert Humbert's vision of Lolita as "my darling, my sweetheart." His insatiable fascination with every aspect of her body, every movement, every scent and sound, reveals that he is already far more aware of this child than her mother has ever been. While Charlotte devises plans to remove Lolita from her presence, Humbert incessantly schemes to have her near him. So attuned is he to Lolita that he imagines the entire house as an enormous spider web, while he, like an acutely sensitive spider, detects her presence anywhere. But Humbert in his painful honesty reminds the reader, "I know that I had fallen in love with Lolita forever; but I also know that she would not be forever Lolita" (p. 65). His distinction, at this point, is clear and uncompromising. To Humbert, the word "forever" refers only to his own passion, to an eternal longing for the sensuous nymphet of his desires.

Dolores Haze is a victim. At this point Nabokov establishes her as vulnerable to both a hostile and degrading mother and a lustful and manipulating man. As he continues to do throughout the novel, Nabokov challenges the reader to discard the comfortable stereotypes of acceptable and unacceptable motives and behavior toward children.

Humbert continues with an arrogant self-awareness of his "boyishly manly" good looks, and reminds the reader that "pubescent Lo swooned to Humbert's charms as she did to hiccuppy music" (p. 104). With this perspective he assumes responsibility for Lolita after her mother's death. Armed with a rainbow of new clothes for Lolita's days and a bottle of purple sleeping pills for her nights, Humbert removes the child from the camp and she begins her life with him.

In the drive from the camp to the seclusion of *The Enchanted Hunters*, Nabokov interjects information which increases the haze which distorts the boundaries of this relationship. Surprising both Humbert and the reader, the author portrays Lolita as the more explicitly aggressive and Humbert as the more awkwardly naive. Deliberately nonchalant about her mother's reported illness, Lolita engages in slightly suggestive conversation and questions Humbert, "Well, you haven't kissed me yet, have you?" (p. 112). Despite his consuming passion for this child, Humbert at this point considers Lolita to be chaste and innocent, and he is determined to satisfy his burning desires without traumatizing her. When they actually kiss, Humbert describes, "I touched her hot, opening lips with the utmost piety, tiny sips, nothing salacious; but she, with an impatient wriggle, pressed her mouth to mine...I knew, of course, it

was but an innocent game on her part..." (p. 113). And later in the conversation, Lolita further confuses her would-be seducer, "Say, wouldn't Mother be absolutely mad if she found out we were lovers?" (p. 114). She introduces a final comment to complicate Humbert's fastidious plans, "Well, I'm also sort of fond of you" (p. 115). The reader now realizes that, although Humbert's agenda may be far from honorable in any conventional sense, the motives of this provocative child may also be in question.

Lolita's contribution to the initial sexual encounter is another complicating ingredient. When Humbert awkwardly tries to explain the necessity for their sleeping arrangements, Lolita sums up the situation, "The word is incest" (p. 119). After a night of anguish and inhibition about his attempts to approach the sleeping child, he reports to the reader, "I had thought that months, perhaps years, would elapse before I dared to reveal myself to Dolores Haze; but by six she was wide awake, and by six fifteen we were technically lovers" (p. 132). In obvious surprise, he reveals, "It was she who seduced me" (p. 132). Nabokov has tremendously confused the issue for the reader. While Humbert has described himself in terms which leave no doubt about his mental and emotional focus, he is apparently uninitiated in actual encounters with young girls. And Lolita, who is well-documented as an emotionally undernourished waif, becomes a relatively sophisticated seductress. Humbert's confusion about this unexpected turn of events, and his consequent mental anguish, is manifest: "I have but followed nature...Why then this horror that I cannot shake off...I was not even her first lover" (p. 135).

Nabokov supplies the reader with many twists and turns in the unraveling and labeling of Humbert's evolution as a passionate figure. The character who presents himself as a cosmopolitan, supremely self-confident, and intoxicatingly charming man is far from being the controlling or manipulating influence in this relationship. Not only is Lolita uninhibited in her behavior with Humbert, but she willingly supplies him with details about her previous sexual encounters. The camp where she was conveniently dispatched by her mother has been, in fact, the location of her relatively extensive sexual initiation.

The author reinforces the continually shifting dynamics of this relationship. Humbert notices at breakfast that a "queer dullness" has replaced Lolita's normal cheerfulness. His guilt overwhelms him when he sees an expression of pain flit across her face, "This was an orphan. This was a lone child, an absolute waif...I had been careless, stupid, and ignoble" (p. 140). When Lolita, with a sweetly smiling face, calls Humbert a revolting creature and threatens to tell the police that he has raped her, he realizes that the situation is rapidly spinning out of control. His guilt, fear, and confusion are evident when he abruptly tells her that her mother is dead, then lavishes her with gifts. The poignancy of her situation is not lost on Humbert; when she comes sobbing into his room that night, he recognizes that she has "absolutely nowhere else to go" (p. 142).

Humbert, in his first travels with Lolita, exhibits his controlling influences on the child. When he describes the various methods he uses to keep his "pubescent concubine in submission and passable temper" (p. 148), he admits that he is not as successful at keeping

her in good humor as he is in establishing with her a background of "shared secrecy and shared guilt" (p. 151). Humbert stresses that his only motivation for his generosity to Lolita was to procure her sexual favors without protest, but he also mentions, with obvious affection, the delight he experiences when Lolita enjoys an adventure he provides. Humbert confesses to having wildly fluctuating perspectives on his charge, ranging from anticipating the day he will relieve himself of a difficult adolescent to the thought that perhaps he will one day marry this child.

Despite Humbert's attempts to entertain and educate Lolita during their travels across the continent, he cannot overlook "her sobs in the night — every night, every night..." (p. 176). His guilt about the lack of stability their gypsy lifestyle is imposing on Lolita prompts Humbert to take her to the Beardsley School for girls. His hope is that she will acquire some formal education. But, as has so often happened, Humbert's plans and expectations regarding Lolita are unrealized. When he is invited for a conference with Miss Pratt, he learns, among other things, that "Biologic and psychologic drives are not fused in Dolly, do not fall so to speak into a — into a rounded pattern" (p. 194). The school has diagnosed Lolita with a myriad of problems ranging from myopia to vulgarity, and Miss Pratt reveals that the teachers do not like her. Humbert's irreverent response to the offensive monologue is to have Lolita "put her inky, chalky, red-knuckled hand under the desk" (p. 198) while she sits in a classroom decorated with a print of Reynolds' "Age of Innocence."

Humbert Humbert is experiencing many of the disappointments and frustrations with society's institutions that

Kiyoaki encountered in Spring Snow, but with a more comic or ironic emphasis. Humbert has a firsthand perspective on the cruelty and emotional abuse that can masquerade as a normal family situation. He now also understands that even the most prestigious educational institutions may fall far short of approaching genuine education. As Nabokov has acquainted Humbert with these perspectives, he has not failed to inform and educate his reader as well.

While Nabokov spares no amount of detail regarding Humbert's passion and jealousy regarding Lolita, there is interspersed in Humbert's character a gradually increasing emphasis on his paternal interests in the child. Nabokov also borrows an ancient tradition and inserts a "play within a play" to reinforce his perspective on Humbert's bumbling evolution. Lolita is involved in a production in which the "profound message, namely that mirage and reality merge in love" (p. 201) is dismissed by the intellectual and worldly Humbert.

When Lolita suggests that she and Humbert leave Beardsley to go on another trip, she insists that she make the travel plans. In his delirious delight, Humbert admits shedding "torrents of tears" at the prospect of a long happy journey with his beloved. But Humbert is, if nothing else, a jealous man, and he soon begins to suspect that Lolita is somehow involved with someone else. His suspicions are communicated in violence toward the child, and he suffers intense remorse for his actions. He realizes, as he attempts to console her, "It was all of no avail. Both doomed were we" (p. 227). In the midst of his torment, Humbert is certain of only one thing, "That I loved her hopelessly" (p. 234).

Nabokov reinforces the complexity of Humbert's love for Lolita when Humbert reveals, "I could do nothing with the anguish of knowing Lolita to be so tantalizingly, so miserably unattainable and beloved" (p. 239) at an age when she should be losing her nymphet charm. This manifestation of emotion is immediately juxtaposed with a time of illness for Lolita during which Humbert reacts "as any American parent would" (p. 240). He explains his terror when, at the hospital, he realizes that "my child was taken away from me!" (p. 240). Humbert becomes a sympathetic character when he relates that, while suffering from the same illness as Lolita, he travels sixty miles to buy her special books, books which reflect her girlish interests, and flowers. The poignant combination of gifts designed for a child and for a lover communicate that Humbert is far from being clearly defined in his perspective on Lolita.

Humbert is portrayed even more sympathetically after Lolita leaves the hospital without him. He tells of seeing her constantly and obsessively in his conscious mind, and he relates how much difficulty he has parting with any of her belongings. Humbert makes a symbolic gesture of atonement for the guilt and misery he has shared with Lolita when, on her fifteenth birthday, he sends her belongings as an anonymous gift to orphaned girls. His anguish is also expressed in a poem, where he says, "Dying, dying, Lolita Haze, of hate and remorse, I'm dying" (p. 256).

When Humbert finds Lolita, she is "frankly and hugely pregnant" (p. 269). He is immediately aware, "I loved her. It was love at first sight, at last sight, at ever and ever sight" (p. 270). When he sees their "poor romance" reflected for a moment in her

eyes and dismissed "like a dull party," he begins to face the reality that his love for Lolita is not reciprocated. Despite that painful realization, Humbert Humbert is faced with his moment of clearest self-knowledge:

I loved her more than anything I had ever seen or imagined on earth, or hoped for anywhere else...I will shout my poor truth. I insist the world know how much I loved my Lolita, this Lolita, pale and polluted, and big with another's child, but still gray-eyed, still sooty-lashed, still auburn and almond, still Carmencita, still mine (p. 278).

Through a series of comic tragedies, Humbert Humbert has come to recognize his capacity for genuine, mature love. Like Matsugae, he has discarded the protective pretense of narcissism and the distorted thrill of power. He is aware of his vulnerability, but he no longer denies it, for he realizes that the pain he suffers for love is a confirmation of his humanity.

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If I Only Had a Brain: An Essay on Postmodern Fiction

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In the postmodern technological world, several factors cause a denaturing of human experience. Overloads of information, the rapid development of technology, and the growing human dependency on that technology cause a "waning of affect," or the gradual desensitization to sensory input and emotion. If technology is merely an extension of the human body, then the postmodern human is the most expanded and divided human that has ever existed. By extending the human eye via television to see events around the world, by extending the human ear and voice by telephone, and even by extending human thought via language, the postmodernist has divided his psyche, breaking down the elements of his once-intact individuality. This is the essence of the postmodern "crisis of self."

Characters in *Player Piano*, *White Noise*, and *Neuromancer* exhibit these characteristics, but deal with them in very different ways. Paul Proteus is in constant conflict with his sense of individuality. Much like the machines at Ilium Works, which read from magnetic tape the actions of a lathe operator, Proteus is a machine reading and duplicating the past action of his father: "Paul could have only been what he was, he thought" (PP, p. 31). Finnerty is an individual, and Paul envies his life outside the

feedback loop. Vonnegut writes, "It was an appalling thought, to be so well-integrated into the machinery of society and history as to be able to move in only one plane, and along one line" (p. 31).

Everything in Paul's life is programmed. When Anita writes up lists, lays out his clothes, and coaches him in conversation, she is his repairman, polishing his exterior and keeping his programs up-to-date. Even their relationship is robotic, with the endless repetition of "I love you, Paul" and "I love you, Anita" (p. 16). This acts as a rhythm section, keeping tempo in the great player piano that is Paul Proteus. In fact, when Anita leaves Paul for Shepard, she is merely replacing a defective part. Ironically, she says about Shepard, "When you see him at just the right angle, he's the spitting image of your [Paul's] father" (p. 55). Anita has simply found a new Paul Proteus, one who will continue the replay of George Proteus' life.

In *White Noise*, the members of the Gladney family face the "waning of affect" on a daily basis. One example of this is the family's fascination with disaster in any form. Watching T.V., they are "... totally absorbed in these documentary clips of calamity and death" (WN, p. 64). While the story of a disaster should have an emotional effect on them, they instead "... wish for more, for something bigger, greater, more sweeping" (p. 64). In another television episode, the family sees Babette on the news, teaching her class. Instead of seeing her as an image on the screen, they are confused, feeling that something supernatural is occurring: "Was this her spirit, her secret self, some two dimensional facsimile released by the power of technology . . ." (p. 104). Jack Gladney's comments show the fading of the lines between technology and

mysticism, the growing narcissism developing from the worship of technology.

Computers, for Jack, seem to hold the secrets of the cosmos. They read his groceries, control his money, predict his death. He feels a near-transcendent confirmation when his checkbook balance matches the instant teller's balance: "The system had blessed my lie. I felt its support and approval" (p. 46). A further denaturing through computers comes after the Airborne Toxic Event. The "pulsing stars" that come up on Jack's file after exposure to Nyodene D calls out the computer judge's verdict. Jack is reduced to an equation. "[Y]ou are the sum total of your data," the SIMUVAC worker says, "No man escapes that" (p. 141). It is not until he is faced with the death offered by technology that he begins to appreciate life away from technology.

Case, of *Neuromancer*, is a denatured product of technological advancement who loses his saint-like abilities to interface with technology. He has become a beast, unable to interface with the world and forced to steal, lie, and finesse his way through survival. Having spent so much of his life in cyberspace, the electronic world of the matrix is his only reality. With the coming of "simstim," which we can assume to mean simulated stimulation or stimuli, the line between reality and fantasy becomes increasingly difficult to discern. When Molly asks Case about the Berne AI, she asks if it was "like real . . . Like simstim" (p. 128). Though her concept of real is strange, his reply is even more frightening—"Real as this," he added, looking around, "Maybe more" (p. 128). Since artifice seems so realistic, Case and Molly's lack of emotion can be blamed on technology.

In a world of artificial tans, limbs, and eyes, of vat-grown flesh and cyber implants, the concepts of sentience and spirituality change. Much like the intelligent HAL computer from 2010, the Wintermute/Neuromancer personality attains not only self-awareness, but a form of spirituality. The dead character of Dave from 2010 says that when HAL dies, he will join Dave (wherever he is). Neuromancer and Wintermute mesh to become "something else" (p. 252). Similarly, Hideo, the vat-grown ninja assassin, practices Zen. The most inhuman characters in the novel are the characters most prone to the ancient human concepts of spirituality. The Zen master practices joining the body with the mind, as Hideo does. Case, who can only deal with things in relation to the matrix, achieves the same connection at the end of the novel. He flows through cyberspace:

Beyond ego, beyond personality, beyond awareness, he moved, Kuang moving with him, evading his attackers with an ancient dance, Hideo's dance, grace of the mind-body interface granted him, in that second, by the clarity and singleness of his wish to die. (p. 262)

It is only through Case's travels through an artificial world that he can achieve his Zen state, his moment of transcendence.

The major difference between the characters in the three works is their attitude toward technology in the end. Paul Proteus had been surrounded by machines, saw how his life was becoming robotic, and led a rebellion against technology. The jacquerie showed Paul the love humans have for machines, and the futility of

trying to stop progress. Paul still harbors a dislike of machination, and toasts "To a better world . . ." in the end. Jack Gladney has his attacks of technological angst with money machines, the Airborne Toxic Event, and Babette on television. But instead of rejecting technology like Proteus, he finds an alternative. He begins to appreciate sunsets as a celebration of life, perhaps because the natural death of a day is more powerful than the artificial death of technology. Case, who mastered technology, lost his matrix virility, and would do anything to re-acquire it, was driven to a transcendent moment in a computer hologram. There is an old Zen adage that says, "To know others is wisdom. To know yourself is Enlightenment." Case, in a computer-generated hallucination, knew himself—literally saw himself (through Molly's eyes). While Jack and Paul see technology as a necessary evil, Case relishes technology, using it to become more self-aware, and closer to Enlightenment.

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