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Introduction: The Third Annual Review

H. R. Stoneback

This volume of the *English Graduate Review* features the proceedings of the Third Annual Graduate English Symposium; these graduate student papers are introduced by Daniel Kempton in his remarks on the symposium. The editors of the *Review* record here their appreciation for the superb work of the symposium organizers, Professors David Booy and Daniel Kempton. We also salute the editorial assiduity of Professor Kempton, who is the guest editor of the "Medieval and Renaissance Women Writers" papers.

Along with these symposium papers, we are pleased to present essays by four more candidates for the M.A. in English: Guerita Gilmour, Alexandra Wilde Langley, Richard A. Hamilton, Jr., and Myrna King. Gilmour's article, "Irving Howe's View of Quentin Section in *The Sound and the Fury*," harks back to the first issue of this journal and our first symposium, when Irving Howe was the guest speaker. The article by Langley provides a variation on the medieval and renaissance themes of the last symposium; and King's review, rooted in her work in a graduate seminar dealing with Southern Renaissance writers, directs our attention to an important but neglected work of southern fiction. This is the first book review to appear in these pages; the editors invite more reviews--for guidelines see the back matter herein.

In addition, we are gratified to have this issue Zou Zhen's engaging cross-cultural study of "Wordsworth and Tao Yuanming: Different Roots for Their Return to Nature." Professor Zou is a Research Assistant in the English Department this year, a visiting professor from Peking University, who is pursuing his studies in American Literature, especially the fiction of Ernest Hemingway. He has published essays on the teaching of English as well as translations of American fiction and criticism; he is currently translating Chinese criticism of Hemingway into English. Zou Zhen's presence with us this year is the latest chapter in a rich and longstanding tradition of faculty exchange between New Paltz and Peking University. An historic international arrangement, one of the first, if not the very first U.S.-China scholar-exchange programs in the post-Mao period, this tradition dates back to the late 1970s when Luo Jing-guo and Tao Jie (now one of China's leading Faulkner scholars and translator of Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*) came from Peking University to study in the graduate program at New Paltz. We are proud of our long association with China's leading university, and delighted with the cultural enrichment of our graduate program that each visiting scholar brings to us.

As this issue goes to press, it is the eve of the Fourth Annual Graduate Symposium, under the direction of the Professor A. M. Cinquemani; the topic is an examination of influences in literature; the distinguished visiting speaker is Professor Thomas Greene of Yale University. The fifth Annual Graduate English Symposium will be held in April 1993 (exact dates to be announced); the topic will be "Literature and Sport." Graduate students and readers of this review are encouraged to contact Professor Stoneback concerning proposals and paper topics for this symposium.

Finally, it might well be noted here that the preceding issue of the *English Graduate Review* received notice for its significant contribution to Hemingway studies in a prestigious journal with an international audience (*The Hemingway Review*). We received requests for copies of Volume

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Two, the "Hemingway and Film" issue, from scholars around the country and the world. Thus it could be said, in the spirit of humility that carries--as Hemingway observed--"no loss of true pride," that the *Review* has made its mark. All of this is a tribute to those who have worked hard to make the *Review* and the Annual Symposiums successful; it is a tribute, above all, to our fine graduate students. It is also a tribute to my co-editor, Professor Lawrence Sullivan, whose editorial diligence and mastery of computer esoterica contribute immeasurably to the success of the *English Graduate Review*.

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Come my Beloved, let us go
forth into the Fields, let
us lodge in the Villages
Cant. 7. 11. B. 188.

INTRODUCTION: The Symposium Papers

Daniel Kempton

This volume of the *English Graduate Review* contains the papers presented at the Third Annual Graduate English Symposium, which was held at SUNY New Paltz on April 16, 1991. The topic of this year's symposium was Medieval and Renaissance Women Writers, and the speakers, in order of participation, were Sarah Gardner, Michele Morano, Nia Rockas, Catherine C. Allgauer, Kieran Murphy, Doris Stewart, and Rachel Elliott Rigolino. We were honored to have as our guest speaker Ann Rosalind Jones, Professor of Comparative Literature at Smith College, who delivered a lecture on two women poets of the Renaissance entitled "Designing Women: The Self as Spectacle in Mary Wroth and Veronica Franco." (This lecture has subsequently been published in *Reading Mary Wroth*, eds. Naomi J. Miller and Gary Waller [Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991], 135-153.)

In 1405 the French scholar and writer Christine de Pizan undertook a compilation of stories about virtuous women, *The Book of the City of Ladies*. Near the beginning of the project, she is told by her allegorical guide Lady Reason that the City must necessarily be founded upon the Field of Letters (that is, the medieval library of canonical texts), but paradoxically, as Christine had discovered in her own life, this Field was an exclusive male preserve, hostile in principle and in practice toward women, and especially toward the articulate woman. For example, the *Ancrene Riwe*, a thirteenth-century spiritual guidebook for women, instructs its readers that the Virgin Mary spoke so infrequently that her words are recorded in Holy Scripture only four times; and throughout the Renaissance, as Professor Jones observes in her book *The Currency of Eros*, there were extreme pressures that "worked against [women's] entry into the public world of print: female silence was equated with chastity, female eloquence with promiscuity" (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990) 1]. From the Middle Ages into the seventeenth century, women "shared the problem of writing in social and literary circuits dominated by men as models, mentors, readers, and critics" (*Currency*, 1). This being the case, the task of Christine de Pizan was obviously far from an easy one, and, in general, the status of the medieval woman as "author"--writer and authority--was fraught with difficult problems. Nevertheless, between the twelfth and the seventeenth centuries, there were exceptional women like Christine who did speak out and set their words down in writing.

The symposium papers collected herein deal with a number of texts by major figures in the female literary tradition, a tradition whose outlines have only recently begun clearly to emerge: *The Letters of Heloise to Abelard* (French, in Latin, ca. 1132), Christine de Pizan's *Book of the City of Ladies* and *Treasure of the City of Ladies* (French, 1405), Margery Kempe's *Book* (English, 1436-1438), Amelia Lanier's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (English, 1611), Lady Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* (English, 1621), Anne Bradstreet's *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America* (American, ca. 1670). The important question of gender is more or less prominent in six of these seven papers, but the collection is distinguished by a wide range of interpretative conclusions with respect to this central issue and by an equally wide range of critical methodologies, as is fitting for literary material of such diversity and complexity.

The present volume contains a complementary essay by Alexandra Wilde Langley that examines a poem (the Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale) by a male writer of the medieval period (Geoffrey Chaucer) from the perspective of contemporary feminist criticism.

David Booy and Daniel Kempton, the organizers of the Third Annual Graduate English Symposium, would like to thank all those who participated in and attended this year's symposium.

An Introduction to Aemilia Lanyer and *Salve Deus, Rex Judaeorum*

Catherine C. Allgauer

The purpose of my paper is to offer an introduction to Aemilia Lanyer's work. The world of Arts and Letters in seventeenth-century English literature was largely the province of men, certainly as far as printed literature was concerned, and so Aemilia Lanyer's book of poetry, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, printed in 1611, is a rarity. Lanyer seems to have been actively aware of this herself, and of what we might call a mission to speak to women and to give women a voice. Her dedications in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* --eleven in all, and all written to women--are an indication of this, as is her poem "Description of Cookeham" and the passage in her book known as "Eve's Apology." In the general dedication she insists on the virtues of women as compared to men, and although there is an overtone of bitterness in her commentary, her justifications are clear and logical, based on approved documentation--the Bible--forcefully presented.

So, Lanyer might be described as a seventeenth-century women's rights advocate, a savvy one, who--in choosing Scriptural referents--used what may have been the only politically safe and effective platform on which to promulgate ideas that would have been highly unflattering to the dominant male population. She directed her voice to women, often powerful women who moved in powerful circles and who could influence changes.

Barbara K. Lewalski describes Lanyer's poems as "a vigorous apologia for women's equality or superiority to men in spiritual and moral matters."¹ The unifying themes and concerns throughout the book fuse religious devotion and feminism so as to assert the essential harmony between these two impulses in what might be termed her celebration of good women, virtuous women, women of faith and devotion. However, Lewalski also cautions us that the subject of the poem, Christ's Passion, is not merely a thinly disguised veneer for subversive feminine interests, because Lanyer's piety is sincere. She deliberately focuses on Christ's Passion to illustrate, "all the forms of goodness--and masculine evil--her poems treat."²

Lanyer's volume begins with the eleven dedications: nine poems to noble women, a prose dedication to the countess of Cumberland, and then an open letter, an epistle intended to reach beyond the circles of nobility. The women to whom Lanyer addressed her dedications shared qualities of goodness, grace, modesty, piety and love as well as generosity. She is particularly devoted to Lady Margaret, the Dowager Countess of Cumberland, and to her daughter, Anne, Countess of Dorset. While the dedications are sincere, humble and heart-felt, they nevertheless include a not very veiled reminder to these ladies that each has an obligation to patronize and support artists and writers, as well as to care for those in need. The reminder is not callous self-seeking on Lanyer's part. It was expected that artists would receive patronage or income from the nobility to help support their efforts, and several noble women were important patrons during

this period--Lucy, Countess of Bedford, and Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, being perhaps the best known. In the dedicatory poem to the Lady Anne, Countess of Dorset, stanzas 10 and 11, Lanyer writes:

Cherish faire plants, suppress unwholsom weeds:
 Although base pelfe do chance to come in place,
 Yet let true worth receive your greatest grace.
 So shall you shew from whence you are descended,
 And leave to all posterities your fame,
 So will your virtues alwaies be commended,
 And every one will reverence your name;
 So this poore worke of mine shal be defended
 From any scandal that the world can frame:
 And you a glorious actor will appeare
 Lovely to all, but unto God most deare.³

If in the poems of dedication Lanyer's language is graceful, respectful, and flattering, her message in the general dedication, "To The Virtuous Reader," is couched in far different terms. Here Lanyer states that her volume is for use by all "virtuous ladies and gentlewomen of this kingdom," but she also reprimands those women who betray their sisters, warning them against speaking critically of against their own sex. When they do this, they sound like:

evil disposed men who forgetting they were born of women, nourished of women, and if it were not by the means of women, they would be quite extinguished out of the world, and a final end to them all, do like vipers deface the wombs wherein they were bred, only to give way and utterance to their want of discretion and goodness. Such as these, were they that dishonored Christ and his Apostles and Prophets, putting them to shameful deaths.⁴

Given the importance of religious beliefs in the early seventeenth century, this is a very serious charge to level against men, and thus a powerful weapon in Lanyer's argument. Lanyer continues to extol the virtues of women over men in a dramatic litany:

it pleased our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, without the assistance of man, being free from original and all other sins, from the time of his conception, till the hour of his death, to be begotten of a woman, born of a woman, nourished of a woman, obedient to a woman, and that he healed women, pardoned women, comforted women; yea, even when he was in his greatest agony and bloody sweat, going to be crucified, and also in the last hour of his death, took care to dispose of a woman: after his resurrection, appeared first to a woman, sent a woman to declare his most glorious resurrection to the rest of his Disciples.

Lanyer's assertions bring women to a position of great importance. They elevate women by showing that Christ favored them. While this is surely intended to raise the self-esteem of female readers, it also implicitly counteracts the old notion of women as daughters of Eve, creatures to be suspected by men. Lanyer concludes that she could give many other examples of virtue in women, but that the foregoing:

is sufficient to enforce all good Christians and honourable-minded men to speak reverently of our sex, and especially of all virtuous and good women.

What follows is the title poem, "Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum," that is, "Hail God, King of the Jews," which contains the following:

- 1.) The Passion of Christ,
- 2.) Eve's Apology in Defense of Women,
- 3.) The Tears of the Daughters of Jerusalem,
- 4.) The Salutation and Sorrow of the Virgin Mary,

All of these sections register her emphasis upon the good women associated with the Passion story. I am going to look only at "Eve's Apology."

Eve's "Apology in Defense of Women" introduces two Biblical scenarios, the second of which is developed out of the first:

- 1.) Christ's trial before Pontius Pilate (ll. 1-17), and
- 2.) Eve's encounter with the serpent in the Garden of Eden (l. 18 ff.).

The speaker warns Pilate that his condemnation of Christ will be a sin of such magnitude as to eclipse the guilt of Eve in giving Adam the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge to eat, thereby causing their expulsion from Paradise. Lanyer's subsequent defense of Eve is eloquent, and not only explains her motive but also forces Adam to share her guilt.

But surely Adam cannot be excused;
 Her fault though great, yet he was most to blame.
 What weakness offered, strength might have refused;

Being lord of all, the greater was his shame;
 Although the serpent's craft had her abused,
 God's holy word ought all his actions frame;
 For he was lord and king of all the earth,

Before poor Eve had either life or breath.⁵ (ll. 33-40)

Lines 41-64 give a detailed account of the Genesis myth whereby God created Adam "the perfectest man that ever breathed on earth," and ascribed to him great power and dominion over all the earth, while Eve was created merely as his companion. Adam was fully aware that partaking of the forbidden fruit would result in "present death," i.e., the end of immortal life, whereas Eve did not know the consequences. It was not out of malice or guile that she offered Adam the forbidden fruit, but out of love:

Not Eve, whose fault was only too much love,
 Which made her give this present to her dear,
 That what she tasted he likewise might prove,
 Whereby his knowledge might become more clear;
 He never sought her weakness to reprove
 With those sharp words which he of God did hear;
 Yet men will boast of knowledge, which he took
 From Eve's fair hand, as from a learned book.

Since they share guilt, Lanyer makes a plea for justice for all women:

Then let us have our liberty again,
 And challenge to yourselves no sovereignty.
 You came not in the world without our pain,
 Make that a bar against your cruelty:
 Your fault being greater, why should you disdain

Our being your equals, free from tyranny?
 If one weak woman simply did offend,
 This sin of yours hath no excuse nor end.

Lanyer's fierce defense of Eve not only portrays her as something of an abused innocent, but also presents Adam as the one who caused the downfall of humankind. He knew better than to eat the fruit, and yet he succumbed. Such role reversal was an open challenge to men and their belief in their superiority, as well as a strong platform from which women could reassess their position, their opinion, their self-image.

Equality is a constant theme throughout Lanyer's writing, equality based upon virtue. The exemplars of virtue are the Ladies Margaret and Anne, featured in the concluding poem of Lanyer's book, "The Description of Cookeham." This poem concerns both women and is a paean of praise to their outstanding characters. The poem contains none of the harshness and rancor witnessed in the epistle and the Passion poem. Only the poet's voice is apparent, describing the beauty of this country estate and the beauty and virtue of its two principal residents, the Ladies Margaret and Anne, mother and daughter. Lewalski describes this celebration of the Countess of Cumberland's estate as the representation of a lost female paradise. Interestingly, the poem may have been written before Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst," commonly thought to have inaugurated the genre of country-house poetry in English literature.

This poem establishes the second major theme in Lanyer's book. She leaves a harsh-toned, strident voice that demands equality of women in a male dominated world, and enters instead into an entirely different world, one in which there are virtually no men, no male influence, a world that is blissfully serene. That serenity is due to the grace, virtue, and beauty of its inhabitants. Lady Margaret has withdrawn into a devotional world after having been betrayed by her husband. All three women, in fact--Lady Margaret, Lady Anne and Aemilia Lanyer herself--experienced marital problems due to lack of fidelity on the parts of their husbands, and/or spendthrift behavior that depleted their fortunes.

If the very vivid scenarios of the Passion section of the book were couched in terms of Biblical reference, the description of Cookeham is fanciful. According to Samuel Taylor Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria* (1817), fancy is a mode of memory emancipated from the orders of time and space, a mechanical process which receives the elementary images from the senses, and without altering the parts, reassembles them into a different spatial and temporal order from that in which they were originally perceived. In "Cookeham," the elaborate personification of Nature resembles the descriptions of Eden in Genesis, yet it really reflects Lanyer's memory of the place. In lines 117-118, she writes:

Therefore sweet memorie doe thou retain
 Those pleasures past, which will not turne again.⁶

The poem is not only one of the first country estate poems, but also a valediction, as one sees from the opening line, "Farewell (sweet Cookeham)." Lanyer goes on to describe the cycle of Nature--the blossoming of spring, the fruitfulness of summer, the gold sweet-sadness of autumn, the desolation of winter--each caused by the presence or absence of the chief residents, Lady Margaret and her daughter, Lady Anne. Lanyer wrote this poem for Lady Margaret, and it may have been commissioned by her:

Yet you (great Lady) Mistris of that Place,
 From whose desires did spring this work of Grace.

(ll. 11-12)

The world in microcosm is revived upon Lady Margaret's arrival. Lanyer may be offering a double tribute to Lady Margaret in referring to her as the Phoenix, that fabled bird said to be the only one of its kind that renews its life by rising from its own ashes. Lady Margaret is, therefore, described as not only exquisitely beautiful but unique as well. Lady Margaret responds to personified nature, which literally reaches out to embrace her. Yet her own personal piety is such that she views the profound beauty of nature as a source of meditation on the wonder of God's creation. Lanyer describes Lady Margaret's strong sense of Christian devotion in lines 75-82:

What was there then but gave you all content,
 While you the time in meditation spent,
 Of their Creators powre, which there you saw,
 In all his Creatures held a perfit Law;
 And in their beauties did you plaine descrie,
 His beauty, wisdome, grace, love, majestie.

If Lanyer is awed by Lady Margaret, she seems to feel a much more personal kinship for her daughter, the Lady Anne. The relationship, at least from Lanyer's point of view, is one of love and closeness, even familiarity. In lines 97-98 Lanyer joyfully declares:

Oh what delight did my weake spirits find
 In those pure parts of her well framed mind.

But Lanyer continues and describes the relationship as not all that she would hope it be; the difference in their stations precludes such a friendship:

And yet it grieves me that I cannot be
 Neere unto her, whose virtues did agree
 With those faire ornaments of outward beauty,
 Which did enforce from all both love and dutie.
 Unconstant Fortune, thou art most too blame,
 Who casts us downe into so lowe a frame:
 Where our great friends we cannot dayly see,
 So great a diffrence is there in degree.

(ll. 99-106)

If the arrival of these two ladies at Cookeham causes a great celebration throughout the estate, their departure shatters everything--the beauty, the peace, the balance. Lanyer describes the disintegration of this little Eden when the ladies bid farewell, and her own bitterness at their leave-taking. It is apparent that Lanyer will not accompany them. When Lady Anne embraces a great tree which holds memories of happy hours spent there with her betrothed, and gently kisses it good-bye, Lanyer is envious that it received what she--as a close and loving friend--would like to have been offered but was not, casting doubt on the intimacy of the friendship. Lanyer takes from the tree the kiss that Anne bestowed on it:

And with a chaste, yet loving kisse took leave,
 Of which sweet kisse I did it soone bereave:
 Scorning a sencelesse creature should possesse
 So rare a favour, so great happinesse.

(ll. 165-168)

The valediction is complete. Not only does Lanyer bid farewell to the estate but to the ladies she admired the most as well. Her consolation lies in knowing that her poem will live on after her, extolling the praises of the place and of the two women she loved.

Three themes predominate in Aemilia Lanyer's writing. The first and foremost is her strong feminism in a male-dominated society, as well as her harsh denunciation of men in general. The second is her commitment to the virtues of goodness, generosity, honesty, humility--virtues that she presents through the depiction of women, not men. The third, Cookeham, represents for Lanyer an earthly Eden where goodness and virtue dominate. But it is a very exclusive Eden, inhabited by only three people and a highly personified Nature (just as nature was highly personified in the Book of Genesis before the Fall). Lanyer is devoted to the two noblewomen. When they leave, Eden vanishes just as it did when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden. But Lanyer has demonstrated that a community of women is feasible, whether it is a restricted one, such as that at Cookeham, or a much wider one--that of women more generally, such as the one addressed in the general dedication to this fascinating, even revolutionary--book of poetry.

NOTES

¹ "Of God and Good Women," in *Silent But for the Word*, ed. Margaret Patterson Hannay (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1985), 203.

² Hannay, 207.

³ Quoted from *The Poems of Shakespeare's Dark Lady: Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* by Aemilia Lanier, ed. A. L. Rowse (London: Jonathan Cape, 1978).

⁴ All quotations from "To the Virtuous Reader" are taken from *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, I, ed. M. H. Abrams, 5th ed. (New York: Norton, 1986).

⁵ All quotations from "Eve's Apology" are taken from *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*, ed. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar (New York: Norton, 1985).

⁶ All quotations from "To Cookeham" are taken from *Kissing the Rod: An Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Women's Verse*, ed. Germaine Greer et al (New York: The Noonday Press, 1989).

The Concept of Justice in *The Personal Letters: "To Abelard, Heloise."*

Sarah Gardner

The Western conception of gender differences, dating from the time of Aristotle, supports the notion that a woman is a defective man, inherently weaker in body, intellect and will. This notion, universally accepted in the Middle Ages and persisting into the twentieth century, has been used systematically to exclude women from positions of influence, since a woman's judgment is bound to be flawed. As modern theories of human development evolved, the theories were naturally constructed by men. Just as naturally, male theorists chose male subjects--boys and other men--to provide models of development. The so-called norms were then applied broadly to the development of both women and men. If women showed patterns of development that were deviant when measured against the male norm, it came as no surprise, since the idea of woman as defective man had held sway for so long. Modern measures of judgment and moral maturity are clearly no exception to this self-perpetuating line of thinking. Thus, Freud, who was highly influential in sustaining traditional ideas about gender, concluded that women "show less sense of justice than men, that they are less ready to submit to the great exigencies of life, that they are more often influenced in their judgments by feelings of affection than hostility."¹ Only recently have psychological theorists challenged the traditional views; one such challenge comes from Carol Gilligan in her 1982 book *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*.

Throughout the history of Western civilization, it has been the job of women to care for children from birth until formal education begins. Gilligan reminds us that as long as this is so, identity formation is bound to be distinctly different for female and male children. As the male child defines himself and discovers his place in the world, his first task is to recognize the differences between himself and his first caretaker(s), with whom his identity has been fused in infancy. His first step to self-hood, in other words, is separation. The female child, on the other hand, is able to define herself in relation to the world without that initial separation.² This observation seems fairly obvious, but the consequences for later development are more complicated and less apparent. Gilligan argues that the male, viewing himself as separate and autonomous, will abstract a system of rights and rules that governs moral transactions among separate and autonomous people.³ The female, viewing herself as connected to others, mutually dependent rather than autonomous, will define moral problems accordingly, in a way that stresses relationship and mutual responsibility.⁴ Gilligan's theory provides a new way of looking at *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*. The letters, written after Heloise and Abelard had been apart for ten years, reveal the attitude of each writer toward their passionate love affair and subsequent marriage, Abelard's castration, and their final separation in commitment to God. At the center of their dialogue is conflict over justice, as it applies to the actions and intentions of both. Gilligan's ideas shed light on the reasons why Abelard and Heloise define their conflict so differently, and why they are never able to agree.

One striking feature of the portion of the correspondence known as *The Personal Letters* is the unresponsiveness of Abelard's replies to the letters Heloise writes. There is a superficial thread of response, but below the surface there is a marked dissonance, as if the two are not really having a conversation. Where Heloise is at all times personal and direct, pointing always to the center of their purely human bond, Abelard is consistently impersonal and indirect, pointing to the authorities and institutions that define that bond for him. The question of indebtedness is central. Both writers have clear ideas about what each owes to the other. For Heloise, the claims are based on human connection, personal choice and responsibility, just as Gilligan's theory would predict. Heloise maintains that she has kept her part of the bargain, an agreement that is theirs alone, founded on human love. Her distress stems from the fact that, in her view, Abelard has not kept his pledge. For Abelard, the claims are based on publicly sanctioned vows, first in marriage, then in the taking of religious orders. In keeping with what Gilligan shows to be traditional male values--individual rights and externalized codes--he assesses their circumstances and is satisfied. He is impatient with Heloise for asserting indebtedness that exceeds the demands of either set of vows. In his view, both have fulfilled their pledges admirably. Heloise insists upon something more. It is as if Abelard is incapable of understanding what that "something" is. And so the disjointed correspondence unfolds.

The disjuncture is first evident in the salutations with which the writers choose to open their letters. Heloise begins her first letter, "To her master, or rather her father, husband, or rather brother; his handmaid, or rather his daughter, wife, or rather sister; to Abelard, Heloise."⁵ In these carefully chosen words, Heloise outlines their relation to one another in all its painful complexity. Abelard is the "master," she the "handmaid" by virtue of their relative positions in the church and in society, and perhaps most importantly by virtue of the fact that she has chosen to obey him. Yet the master/handmaid relation is too distant, and so she softens it to "father" and "daughter," familiar and familial, still connoting obedience, but also his obligation to protect her. With "husband" and "wife" she reminds him of one more way in which she is bound to obey, and he to protect. Then with "brother" and "sister" Heloise places herself on common ground with Abelard. Ultimately, she speaks to him directly, as one human being to another, "to Abelard, Heloise." Her greeting explores all the possible ways they can respond to one another and stresses, finally, the most important one. For Heloise, their freely chosen connection outweighs all the others and determines what they mutually owe. In contrast, Abelard's first salutation, "To Heloise, his dearly beloved sister in Christ, Abelard her brother in Christ," defines their relation to each other strictly in terms of present circumstances. The church and monastic vows, he reminds her with these words, determine how they will behave. If they are connected in any other way, the connections must now be forgotten or subsumed by this most recent and most significant one. Abelard's greeting is thus a subtle reprimand.

In her first letter, Heloise stresses the theme of indebtedness. "You have done your duty to a friend," she writes in reference to Abelard's *Historia Calamitatum* . . . , but it is a greater debt which binds you in obligation to us . . ." (111). "Debt" and "obligation" are oddly legalistic terms in which to frame a lover's plea. Yet Heloise also asserts: "you have dealt us fresh wounds of grief as well as re-opening the old" (111). The fact that wounds and healing are conventional figures of the Ovidian language of love reinforces the sense that Heloise, woman, is addressing Abelard, her lover. She declares him the "sole possessor" (113) of her body as well as her will or spirit. Heloise recognizes the marriage tie as a powerful yet secondary obligation, love itself the primary obligation. "You are," she tells Abelard, "the deeper in my debt because of the love I have always borne you. . . a love which is beyond all bounds" (113). Thus, far from being legalistic, Heloise sets no limits on the debt that love demands. Her sense of justice is affronted by his neglect.

It is clear from Heloise's first letter that she appraises her circumstances and Abelard's behavior by a standard that values connection and intimacy above all other obligations. Abelard's reply, by its unresponsiveness, shows that his appraisal relies on more predictable standards. He measures their obligations to one another strictly in terms of marriage and the

church, the two external institutions that bind them. Whereas, for instance, Heloise writes, "consider the close tie by which you have bound yourself to me" (112), Abelard replies with a treatise on the efficacy of prayers, "especially those of women on behalf of their dear ones and of wives for their husbands" (120). Abelard's letter clearly demonstrates his need to subordinate personal connection to an external code of rights and rules. In view of Gilligan's theory of development, it is as easy to hear the male voice in Abelard's letter as to hear the female voice of Heloise in hers.

If Abelard hopes to silence Heloise with his cold, distant answer, he is unsuccessful. In her second letter she abandons the pleading tone of the first, and in its place uses one of ardent emotion, stressed by hyperbole and poetic phrasing. Heloise vacillates as she struggles to meet Abelard on his own ground, to apply external principles to internal reality. She cannot reconcile what she feels--the vital human connection to Abelard--with what the rules say she is supposed to feel. Abelard's reply provides an orthodox response to each of her complaints, amply documented with scriptural references. Whereas Heloise recalls their intimacy with longing--"the pleasures of lovers which we shared have been too sweet--they can never displease me" (133)--Abelard chooses language that is calculated to degrade that intimacy. Thus he recalls "wanton impurities" (146), "wretched, obscene pleasures" (147), "filth" and "mire" (150). Whereas Heloise recollects their physical intimacy as an expression of their love, Abelard rebukes her through his consistent use of denigrating language. It is clear that Abelard has little difficulty reconciling his feelings with the external rules that he believes should govern them. What for her is painfully complicated is for him a simple matter.

If there is a faint note of agreement in the dialogue of *The Personal Letters*, it is agreement over Abelard's identity with God. Heloise insists in her first letter that she expects no reward from God, for she has "done nothing as yet for love of him" (117). Love for Abelard is her guiding principle, prompting her to lead an exemplary life. Abelard, in more subtle ways, reveals that he views himself as Christ-like. Even in this, however, it is apparent that Heloise defines her relationship with God through connection and intimacy, while Abelard defines that relationship in terms of separation. Heloise's spirituality might be described as horizontal; she comes to grace through her earth-bound love for Abelard. Although she knows the medieval Church demands that she renounce that bond in order to embrace a purportedly higher one, Heloise consistently refuses to do so. For her, in a strikingly modern way, the two bonds are not incompatible. She can continue to love Abelard, dedicate herself to God through him, and in this way reach salvation, her "corner of heaven" (135). Abelard's spirituality, on the other hand, is vertical. He must break the bond of love on earth in order to reach a higher level, identity with the godhead, just as the male infant must break the bond with his mother in order to achieve his own identity. In either of these identifiably male processes, separation is a prerequisite.

In a battle so ardently and eloquently joined as the one in the Personal Letters, there is the natural desire on the reader's part to declare a winner, but that is not possible here. On the one hand, Abelard wins, for Heloise's complaint is silenced. On the other hand, Heloise makes it clear that her feelings are unaltered, for, as she writes, "nothing is less under our control than the heart . . ." (159). To her credit, she never damns herself or anticipates damnation from her male God. "In whatever corner of heaven God shall place me," she writes in her first letter, "I shall be satisfied" (135). Heloise's sense of her own integrity holds firm; her sense of justice prevails, if only in her own eyes. We might even find a small victory for Heloise in what we know as the *Letters of Direction*, which show Abelard's willingness to devise a special set of rules for the convent, tailored to the needs of the women cloistered there. In the male moral framework that Gilligan describes, rules supercede human needs and bonds. Yet Heloise convinces Abelard that it makes no sense to devise a standard for men and then apply it arbitrarily to women. Heloise convinces Abelard that women are different--not necessarily deviant, simply different. Stretching the point, we might view Heloise as a forerunner of Gilligan, for as Gilligan writes:

Implicitly adopting the male life as the norm, [psychological theorists] have tried to fashion women out of a masculine cloth. It all goes back, of course, to Adam

and Eve--a story which shows, among other things, that if you make a woman out of a man, you are bound to get into trouble. In the life cycle, as in the Garden of Eden, the woman has been the deviant.⁶

Heloise does her part, as does Gilligan in *In a Different Voice*, to remove the stigma of deviance from herself and her sisters.

NOTES

¹ Sigmund Freud as quoted in Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 7.

² Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 8.

³ Gilligan, 16-19.

⁴ Gilligan, 19.

⁵ *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, trans. Betty Radice. (New York: Penguin, 1979), 109. Subsequent references to this work will appear parenthetically in the text.

⁶ Gilligan, 6.

Christine de Pizan's Doctrine of Endurance

Michele Morano

In 1390, Christine de Pizan became a widow with young children to care for and no source of income. She was twenty-three years old and, like any upper-class French women of the time, had never worked before. That she was able to earn a comfortable living at all may surprise us; that she did it entirely by writing is cause for astonishment. Christine was an unusually educated woman, thanks to her father's enormous library, and she possessed a strong sense of curiosity and a love of knowledge in general. As a result, her works are varied, covering a range of genres, including love poetry, a manual on war that became a standard military text, and a substantial amount of writing in which she defends the female sex against misogynist attacks.

The Book of the City of Ladies belongs to this last category. In it Christine, supervised by the figures of Reason, Rectitude, and Justice, creates an mythical city for virtuous women. The site for this city is the Field of Letters, and the tools for building are Christine's understanding, which she uses as a pick, and her pen, which serves as a trowel. The foundation, walls and towers are made from a variety of illustrious women whose tales Christine has inherited from male poets and orators. She rewrites the tales from a female perspective, ridding the women of the negative traits men have given them, and presenting them as a heritage that her contemporaries can be proud of.

Christine so methodically disproves the arguments against women that modern readers often see a connection between Christine's society and our own. Marina Warner writes: "*The Book of the City of Ladies* . . . is filled with potent observations for our times . . . Christine intersperses her tales of formidable and exemplary heroines of the past with down-to-earth remarks about the wrongs done to women by society's attitudes and opinions."¹ Earl Jeffrey Richards takes this idea one step further, saying of Christine: "Her attitude was profoundly feminist in that it involved a complete dedication to the betterment of women's lives and to the alleviation of their suffering."² However, this identification of Christine with the modern feminist movement is problematic. Reading and re-reading her work, I have often found myself examining a passage and thinking, "If only she had said . . . , if only she had gone one step further" Because of my connecting Christine with modern doctrines, I have been disappointed by certain inconsistencies in *The Book of the City of Ladies*. Marxist scholar Sheila Delaney takes her disappointment to an extreme, faulting Christine for a conservatism that prevented her from inciting women to revolt against their oppressors, and condemning Christine for her "self-righteousness, her prudery, and the intensely self-serving narrowness of her views."³ But to categorize Christine as either a feminist or a non-feminist is to judge her worth unfairly. Rather than focusing on how we, as modern readers, would like her to have counseled the women of her age, we ought to focus on the purposes behind what she does advise. In this way, we can perhaps uncover the logic behind what we deem inconsistent.

The major inconsistency in *The Book of the City of Ladies* seems to be the rift that occurs between Book II and the final section, Book III. In Books I and II, as the foundation and walls of the city are being constructed, Reason and Rectitude provide Christine with an unending supply of virtuous women, many of whom make important contributions to society as scholars, artists, leaders. Reason offers the Amazon women as exemplars of strength, Proba the Roman as a female scholar and poet, and Queen Dido as an exceptional leader with the necessary graces of constancy, nobility, and strength. Rectitude uses a variety of tales to disprove misogynist statements such as "there are few chaste women," "there are few constant women,"

"women are naturally greedy," and "women want to be raped." Most of these exemplary women either control the society in which they live, or succeed in living just outside of the patriarchal culture that tries to oppress them. Yet, when Justice takes over and begins to populate the completed city in Book III, we discover that the most revered women, who will occupy the highest towers of the city, are not the women who have triumphed over their male-dominated societies, but the virgin martyrs who have been tortured to death. The queen of this city is not found among those women whom Christine praised for their abilities to rule fairly and effectively, but is instead the Virgin Mary, whose passivity oddly qualifies her as the city's "defender, protector, and guard against all assaults of enemies and of the world."⁴ It may seem to some readers that Christine has sold out at the end of *The Book of the City of Ladies*, cautiously preferring to exalt the traditional Christian heroines and abandoning the more revolutionary pagan models. Some modern readers may even feel betrayed by the message Christine seems to be sending women: be proud of the females who were strong, intelligent, capable, but model yourselves after those who exhibit the qualities most important to the male-dominated church.

Furthermore, Book III contains exceedingly violent descriptions of martyrdom, in which the main elements of the virgins' tales are repeated over and over again. Women are starved, slashed, burned, dismembered, and their breasts are often ripped off. From their wounds sweet-smelling milk, rather than blood, often flows, but this miraculous phenomenon does not dissuade their tormentors. By the middle of this final section, one must certainly begin to ask why these scenes are repeated. Would not one or two instances of brutality have sufficed to describe what these virgins suffered for their loyalty to God?

To answer this question is to get at the heart of Book III, and, perhaps, at Christine's purpose in creating a City of Ladies. To do so, we must first go backward to the opening pages of Book I, in which Christine sits quietly alone, "devoting [herself] to literary studies" (3). During a break from the weighty subjects she is engrossed in, she picks up a book by Matheolus and browses through it to amuse herself. Her first reaction to his work is that it is "not very pleasant for people who do not enjoy lies, and of no use in developing virtue or manners," and she quickly puts it aside. However, Matheolus reminds her of the countless other philosophers, poets, and orators who "speak from one and the same mouth," and "concur in one conclusion: that the behavior of women is inclined to and full of every vice" (4). Christine ponders these authorities for some time, then says:

To the best of my knowledge, no matter how long I confronted or dissected the problem, I could not see or realize how their claims could be true when compared to the natural behavior and character of women. Yet I still argued vehemently against women, saying that it would be impossible that so many famous men - such solemn scholars, possessed of such deep and great understanding, so clear-sighted in all things, as it seemed - could have spoken falsely on so many occasions

This temporary acceptance of the scholars' views (4) plunges Christine into such a state of despondency at having been born a vile female that Reason must physically appear before her and fortify her self-worth.

Christine laments that her despondency came about when "I relied more on the judgement of others than on what I myself felt and knew" (4). This statement provides one of the keys to the City of Ladies, and may help to clear up the apparent inconsistencies. As Reason tells Christine, one of the purposes of building this city is "to vanquish from the world the same error into which you had fallen . . ." (10). In other words, this city is being built, and this book being written, to enable women to trust in themselves.

A direct connection can be made between this opening scene and Book III. Christine has encountered slanderous commentary on the nature of women for as long as she has been reading. However, she does not realize that this commentary is slanderous until the excesses of Matheolus' satire force her to react on an emotional level. Perhaps, then, the intense revulsion evoked by the violent scenes in Book III is designed to awaken Christine's female readers from their complacency toward their own oppression in medieval French society. I am reminded of Simone de Beauvoir, who asserts in her introduction to *The Second Sex* that one obstacle to male/female equality is that a woman "is often very well pleased with her role as the other."⁵ It must surely have been difficult for Christine's female readers to digest these vicious cruelties without taking some personal offense as Christians, but more importantly, as women, to these actions. The shock value of the violence and the rhetorical excess of Christine's examples in Book III may very well have been intended to show women why they cannot remain content with their oppression.

The next question, then, is: what purpose did Christine have for waking her contemporaries? If she was not going to provide them with a plan for overcoming their oppressors, as we might have liked, why bother to badger them with tales of brutality?

I believe she does provide them with a plan of action, though some modern readers, like Sheila Delaney, find this plan conservative. In *The Book of the City of Ladies*, and in its sequel, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies*, Christine puts forth what I have termed her "doctrine of endurance." This doctrine essentially tells women that by cultivating their virtue they can collect rewards both in the afterlife --as the virgin martyrs do--and in the life on earth. The rewards on earth come in the form of honor and a good reputation, which, to Christine, are a women's only means of gaining autonomy and a certain amount of power in society. At one point in *The Treasure of the City of Ladies* Christine even encourages women to be virtuous and to endure so that they may outlive their husbands and inherit the riches they deserve.⁶ While Christine's doctrine is by no means revolutionary, we must remember that it is extremely practical, and therefore more useful to fifteenth century women than a call for open revolt.

Above all, Christine de Pizan stresses that a woman must always be on her guard in a male-dominated society. At the end of *The Book of the City of Ladies* she makes a direct appeal to her female audience:

My ladies, see how these men accuse you of so many vices in everything. Make liars of them all by showing forth your virtue, and prove their attacks false by acting well, so that you can say with the Psalmist, "The vices of evil will fall on their heads." Repel the deceptive flatterers who, using different charms, seek with various tricks to steal that which you must consummately guard, that is, your honor and the beauty of your praise. Remember, dear ladies, how these men call you frail, unserious, and easily influenced but yet try hard, using all kinds of strange and deceptive tricks, to catch you, just as one lays traps for wild animals (256).

With the Virgin Mary as queen, and the martyred female saints as models, the women in this city may be able to cultivate the virtue necessary for avoiding these traps and, consequently, rid themselves of the frailty that has been forced upon them. Thus, the martyred female saints of Book III, whose passivity seems inconsistent with the other models presented by Christine, are actually as subversive as the Amazons. By ignoring what we, as modern readers, wish Christine had written and concentrating on the realistic elements of her "doctrine of endurance," we can begin to understand her method of resistance.

NOTES

¹ Foreword, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, by Christine de Pizan, trans. Earl Jeffrey Richards (New York: Persea, 1982), xiii-xiv.

² Introduction, *BCL*, xxviii.

³ "Mothers to Think Back Through," *Medieval Texts and Contemporary Readers*, ed. Laurie Finke and Martin Shichtman (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 182.

⁴ Richards, 218. All quotations from *BCL* are taken from this edition; page references for subsequent quotations are cited parenthetically in the text.

⁵ *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley (New York: Knopf, 1952), 21.

⁶ See Part III, section i, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies*, trans. Sarah Lawson (New York: Penguin, 1985), 145-146.

The Woe of Wroth

Kieran Murphy

The sonnet holds a special allure for the lovelorn, something in the frame that draws the heartbroken and sharpens the insights of those afflicted with *malatia*. For Thomas Wyatt, the man who introduced the sonnet to England, love is full of power and betrayal. For Spenser in his *Amoretti*, love is expressed according to Neoplatonic precepts. In Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, love is refracted through Astrophel's exuberant state of mind. Lady Mary Wroth, Sidney's niece, also works through the state of mind of a single lover, but for Pamphilia, the speaker of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, love is misery.

Pamphilia to Amphilanthus, comprised of 103 songs and sonnets, is fundamentally full of Petrarchan imagery and motifs, but for obvious reasons certain images and circumstances are tailored for Pamphilia's gender. Because of her sex, Wroth is considered a novelty in the study of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sonneteers. Critics, scholars and editors are surprised at a speaker who "reverses the conventional situation," and generally note her melancholic tone. To describe Pamphilia's tone as melancholic is a polite understatement. Her state of woe and frustration is of an intensity that matches the *élan* and jubilation of Sidney's *Astrophel*. Wroth has not exactly reversed the conventions, but countered a predominantly male conception of the experiences of love. To begin to understand, first, the balance Wroth was attempting to provide for a patriarchal conception of romance and then, more importantly, the resolution of Pamphilia, one needs to identify the components of Wroth's poetry.

Sonnet P 22 is perhaps not one of Wroth's more characteristically intricate efforts, but it serves as a rather ripe example of other Wrothian elements, as Pamphilia nearly revels in her misery. Not only does Pamphilia reveal the anti-energia of her passion, but the uncharacteristic simplicity of this sonnet shows the ease and grace of her voice. The sonnet reads:

Come darkest night, becoming sorrow best;
Light; leave thy light; fitt for a lightsome soule;
Darknes doth truly sute with mee oprest
Whom absence power doth from mirthe controle:

The very trees with hanging heads condole
Sweet sommers parting, and of leaves distrest
In dying coulers make a grieffe-full role;
Soe much (alas) to sorrow are they prest.

Thus of dead leaves her farewell carpetts made:
Theyr fall, theyr branches, all theyr mournings prove;
With leavles, naked bodies, whose huese vade
From hopefull greene, to wither in theyr love,

If trees, and leaves for absence, mourners bee
Noe mervaille that I grieve, who like want see.¹

The speaker moves neatly and succinctly from the dark state of mind of the first quatrain to the empathetic autumn landscape of the second quatrain to the synthesis in the third quatrain, where the physical atrophy of the trees graphically represents the speaker's abstract grief. Finally, the couplet unifies the three quatrains by deftly encapsulating the quick logic of the conceit. Wroth's sentence structure usually tends to be more convoluted, and she seldom uses a

conceit in the manner she does here, but we do find the two essential Wrothian elements: the dark atmosphere and the speaker's woeful state of mind. Throughout the sonnet sequence the motif of a dark ambiguous pain caused by love reformulates itself in many ways: as a strange labyrinth, a hopeful dream, a juggler, paternal advice to a young man, a sunset, a weary traveler, a dream vision of Venus and Cupid. All of these configurations lead the lover back to a state of powerless yearning and hopeless brooding.

Despite what might be regarded as somewhat restricted thematics, Wroth manages to circumvent a whining, monomaniacal or solipsistic tone. Pamphilia, although often consumed by her pain, is never absorbed with herself, unlike Astrophel. The focus becomes refreshingly external. Her perceptions, rather than being reduced and homogenized, seem to grow more acute and more grand. Mechanically, Wroth throws off any tedium by altering her syntax, toying with her rhyme scheme, mimicking voices and improvising on Petrarchan conceits and devices. Throughout the sonnet sequence the form and content shift and sway, and each sonnet, with its own nuance, informs the larger body.

Sonnet *P* 47 is a fine example of Wroth cutting back against her own grain, and also of the dialectical playfulness within the sequence. The sonnet reads:

You blessed starrs which doe heavns glory show,
And att your brightnes makes our eyes admire
Yett envy nott though I on earth beelow
Injoy a sight which moves in mee more fire;

I doe confess such beauty breeds desire,
You shine, and cleerest light on us beestow,
Yett doth a sight on earth more warmth inspire
Into my loving soule, his grace to knowe;

Cleere, bright, and shining as you are, is this
Light of my joye, fixt stedfast nor will move
His light from mee, nor I chang from his love,
Butt still increase as th'eith of all my bliss.

His sight gives lyfe unto my love-rulde eyes
My love content beecause in his, love lies.

In this sonnet there is no dark atmosphere, no tortured state of mind, and Pamphilia uncharacteristically refers to Amphilanthus, and still more uncharacteristically to a physical feature of Amphilanthus. The images are bright and the syntax is smooth. A conceit is established, fused to a particular emotion, and then the conceit and the emotion are simultaneously represented. It seems all straightforward, except for the word "lies," which may mean "rests" or "deceives." The effect of the word is so well orchestrated that I would venture to guess that Wroth has composed this sonnet for comic relief, in order to lend a more varied texture to the sequence. Amid a majority of sonnets on misery and heartbreak, Wroth opposes her own motifs with an ode to the bright and beautiful. For 139 syllables she sustains this optimism, and then after a slight faltering because of word inversion, she crashes down in a minor key: "My love content beecause in his, love LIES."

Perhaps the best example of Wrothian elements is sonnet *P* 40, which some editors entitle "False Hope." Here the dark atmosphere, the woeful frame of mind, the complex syntax and the perspicacious vision blend to formulate her strongest work:

Faulce hope which feeds butt to destroy, and spill
What itt first breeds; unaturall to the birth

Of thine owne wombe; conceaving butt to kill,
And plenty gives to make the greater dearth,

Soe Tirants doe who faulsly ruling earth
Outwardly grace them, and with profitts fill
Advance those who appointed are to death
To make theyr greater falle to please theyr will.

Thus shadow they theyr wicked vile intent
Coulering evill with a show of good
While in faire showes theyr malice soe is spent;
Hope kills the hart, and tirants shed the blood.

For hope deluding brings us to the pride
Of our desires the farder downe to slide.

Through the paradoxical conceits, Wroth constructs images antithetical to maternal nurturing. Abruptly, in the second quatrain, Pamphilia, whose central preoccupation has been heartbreak, suddenly moves outward, towards a larger theme, and speaks of tyrants and the nature of their power. The consideration of tyrants is thematically relevant because of the recurrent theme of powerlessness, and with this new subject matter comes a noticeable dilation of perspective.

In the first quatrain Pamphilia lists several analogues of false hope. In the second quatrain, tyrants are seen as yet another facet of the ravages of false hope. In the third quatrain there is a synthesis. The speaker notes the concealed malice of the tyrants and determines the specific malignancy of each force: "Hope kills the hart, and tirants shed the blood."

It is more than likely that Pamphilia's cynical conclusion directly pertains to the sexual politics of her own plight. With an unsustainable fervor, she has pined away for an absent or unfaithful lover. Previously, the pain Pamphilia experienced had been dark and ambiguous; in this sonnet we see her identify the entities that cause her harm. The false hope is the belief in the notion of romantic love or a patriarchal conception of love, and the tyrants are the actual woes she inflicts upon herself in subscribing to such a conception. The reciprocal causality, between the hope and pain of unfulfilled romantic love, is summed up in the couplet: "For hope deluding brings us to the pride / Of our desires the farder downe to slide." The more intensely one engages in a false hope, the more pain one feels.

This is the point of departure in Pamphilia's transformation. Through the intensity and drain of malatia, lovesickness, she creates an anti-energia. This anti-energia allows her to gain the perspective and objectivity whereby she can discern the forces at work, and examine her condition. As a result, she can identify and overcome her feelings of powerlessness and despair, and can arrive at the transcendent vitality of the closing sonnets. As Astrophel, through his exuberance, shows his unease with outmoded Petrarchan conventions, Pamphilia, through her woe, nullifies the patriarchal order and the false hopes of romantic love. In the final sonnet, *P* 103, self-empowered and free from her longings for Amphilanthus, Pamphilia counsels her muse: "What's past showes you can love. / Now lett your constancy your honor prove." This constancy is the new-found firmness of mind, a resolute vigor to address her muse's thoughts to truth, which, in contrast to thoughts of love, "shall etemall goodnes prove."

Notes

¹ All quotations from Pamphilia to Amphilanthus are taken from *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth*, ed. Josephine A Roberts (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983).

Making Margery Kempe

Nia Rockas

I find the fullest invitation to know Margery Kempe in her use of the word "creature." She narrates a book about spiritual conversion; she says it is about one creature, herself, for other creatures to know their Lord, the Creator. She likes the creaturely world in which she finds herself: she is delighted by creaturely "good cheer"¹ wants the approval of creaturely advisors and begins a peculiar, nested, busy, funny, creaturely relationship with her Creator. From her text and her Lord and her fellows, Margery wants, as she offers, compassion; she communicates with both creating Lord and created text and she offers, to her Lord, to her fellows, to her reader, the traces of her making for farther recreative compassion.

She is very different from her contemporaries who seem, like St. Augustine, paradoxically to understand creation by dividing it from the experience it creates. Walter Hilton, interpreting St. Paul, instructs his readers to consider physical sensation "as nothing or little in comparison with your spiritual aspirations."² St. Theresa, the most sensual of the mystics, finds deity in terms of "a great golden spear . . . plunged into my heart several times"³: the deity is superhuman, indistinct, towering above her brilliantly flaming and the mystic's own pain is "not physical but spiritual." Saint Bridgit, Margery's clearest role model, also describes Jesus in unusually physical terms: He is "not fleshy, but handsome," His nose "neither too big nor too small," His lips "not thick" and even His hair tidy⁴: her description, like Theresa's, might be creaturely but instead seems individually distinct only in avoiding ugly distinction wherever possible. Human detail is traditionally subverted, typified, mystified, again paradoxically to clarify humanity. Saint Bridgit describes a sinner not as a person who did something she shouldn't have done but as a decomposed body warning an allegorical daughter: "woe to me that I have been your mother. It is I who laid you in the cradle of pride . . ."⁵ Saint Theresa, providing unusually personal details of an unusually personal experience, describes herself in this experience merely as a prostrate body. Hilton generally avoids the first person altogether. What is called, the, spiritual experience, the established way to know living, might seem to Margery oddly separated from the living itself and even the body which lives. Anyone could be confused; anyone as eager as this woman to involve all of living might be more deeply unsettled.

And her living is physically ruptured: she endures sexual violation, like Theresa, from her husband, and other sorts of threatened or actual injury from others who represent patriarchal authority. They are monks, mayors, stewards, bishops and seem, like Augustine, to conceive of sex as perdition and woman as threat, and so they want to negate her. Margery is threatened, ridiculed, insulted, imprisoned, deserted for wearing white or for weeping or for speaking her mind. As a living woman in clear need of more living, she is impossibly divided from accomplishing this living. She wants to overcome her injury, rejoin her experience, by means of expression and finds herself again violated and stifled and assigned an impossible alternative: she can be either Eve--body, odious--or Mary--spirit, divine untouched and untouching.

But she endures her injury, wants to be Mary, suppresses Eve. She wants, I think, to please, but her need for real living presses firmly. Her narrative begins with a crisis: during her most immediately creative and actively female condition, childbirth, she labors with both child and a secret concern. She asks for her confessor; he reproves her and she goes, as she says, "owt of

her mende" (7). She labors now with "spyritys," "deuelys opyn her mowthys al inflaumyd wyth brennyng lowys of fyr as thei schuld a swalwyd hyr in." These too she integrates, so "sche knew no vertu ne goodnesse" (7) and must be restrained because otherwise she "roof hir skyn on hir body a-yen hir herte" (8).

She emerges from the episode after several months with a group of moods as divided as her living. They resemble her Mary-or-Eve option for living; as "creature," she finds herself both the glorious creation of a marvelous Lord and a foully functioning animal. She aggrandizes herself, congratulating center of several big stirs; or she miserably condemns what seem minor or healthy faults like sexual interest. She likes sexuality, enjoys it with her husband and is aware of other men; or "sche had leuar . . . etyn or drynkyn the wose, the mukke in the chanel, than to consentyn to any fleschly comownyng" (12). She has a wild enthusiasm, feeling "mery" and "joyful" and hurling herself into business ventures and pilgrimages with little need for food or sleep; or she is spent, incapacitated, expecting death on a sickbed. Happy, she seems untrue; real, she is despondent. And she is aggressive, quarrelsome, "scharp" in calm situations or passive under real attack. Actual, level defense of herself does not come to her naturally: she is damaged, and frightened, and so I think construes her fear awkwardly. She is shaken, so clumsy.

She often feels a physically indistinct "drede," usually following some surreal perception: "the Sacrament schok & flekeryd to & fro" (47); "she herde a maner of sownde as it had ben a peyr of belwys blowyng in hir [right] ere" (91); "many white thyngys [were] flying al a-bowte hir on euery syde as thykke in a maner as motys in the sunne" (88). Each event is moving, unfamiliar, inscrutable to human knowing, approachable only by metaphor, usually careful to negate itself in such phrases as "a maner of," and yet each seems to me to evoke the sensation of living. As separated from familiar experience, each seems appropriate to the impossible dissociations in her living; as wildly stirring, it seems to want living. The event, like the living into which it falls, seems an impasse: it is acute, but inscrutable, as Margery must live but can neither know nor make a real living.

So her Creator appears, on her bed, during her crisis. He quietly asks, "why hast thou forsakyn me?" She finds Him beautiful; He slowly explains "Dowtyr, I am comyn to the, Ihesu Cryst, that deyed on the Cross . . . I, the same God, foryeve the thi synnes" (16). Because she is injured, His initial work is to soothe her. He is careful, quiet, reassuring, always loving, and He draws instead of demanding her trust: "thou madyst me onys stiward of thin howsholde & executor of alle thy werkys, & I xal be a trewe styward" (157). He frequently opens dialogue with "be not aferd," at creaturely times and in creaturely ways, because her creaturely needs are important; and He too becomes creaturely. He guarantees Margery's physical safety, chastizes those who are unkind to her; He advises her about dress and food and friends, praises and promises to elevate her because, he says, of her concern for her fellows as well as for Him. She feels safe and more confident and so He further encourages, "boldly clepe me Ihesus, thi loue, for I am thi loue & schal be thi loue" (167). Her anxiety has been partly sexual; a human resolution of this anxiety could not then abolish her sexuality, and so she begins to actively love her Creator. He tells her, "thou mayst boldly . . . take me to the as for thi weddyd husbond . . . in the armys of thi sowle & kyssen my mowth, myn hed, & my fete" (90). He seems neither superhuman nor violative but kind and human and homely. He carries no flaming spear, but feet and a head, and these do not ravish her, but encourage her active embracing.

Always, then, bolder, more active and healthy, the creature begins with her Creator a more familiar dalliance. He is omnipotent and she devout as each should be; less conventionally, they act like an old married couple. They are impatient and frustrated and bugged by each other: when she is excessive in concern about her sins, He snaps "how oftyn-tymes haue I teld ye" (50) before more gently assuring her; later offering, in advance, a good piece of dirt, and finding that "sche wolde Yeue no credens therto." He produces a vision and testy guilt trip: "dowtyr, as loth as thou art to leuyn my steryngs, yet schal thou se . . ." (171).

Later, He commands her to travel. She does not want to; she is quite comfortable slouching, dragging her heels. "Sche wolde yet excusyn hir yf sche myth in any wey, & yerfor she seyde, 'I am not purueyed of gold.'" He catches her and "seyde a-geyn, 'Yf I be wyth ye, ho schal ben a-genys ye? I schal pureyin'" and she is also perfectly comfortable in ungracious grudging: "The creatur sey ther was non other help but forth sche must" (p. 227). And, when her ship encounters a storm, she too produces a guilt trip. She seems in fact to lay on the act with some style: "A, Lord, for thi lofe cam I hedyr, & thou has oftyn-tyme behite me that I schulde neuyr perischyn . . . I, unworthy wretche, am deceyued and defrawd of the promys that thou has mad many tymes on-to me, which haue euyr trostyd in thi mercy & thi goodnesse . . . Nowe may myn enmyis enjoyn . . ." Then, more plainly, she scolds "haue mende . . . & fulfille thi behestys." He is defensive (it has worked) and scolds back, "I am as mythy her in the see as on ye londe. Why wilt thou mistrostyn me?" (230) But when she is sea-sick, He calls some of his best tricks, the saints and later even the Virgin, to cheer her.

Every urge arising, now, in each finds a direct full response in the other. Jesus is homely, Margery active; each claims and encourages autonomy and each chooses a responsibility for the needs of the other more genuine and more vigorous than one externally prescribed would have been. The relationship engages its own terms: it is not conventionally holy but distinctly homely, creaturely, just because its creatures want this and the more restrictive standards defined by tradition seem irrelevant here. When the two want to, they squabble and "I wyl not," he tells her, "be displeysyd wyth the whedir thou thynke, sey, or speke, for I am al-wey plesyd wyth the" (90).

She becomes confident, distinct, alert and active; further encouraged, she begins to reshape her own damaged living. Her experience of piety has been redefined with Jesus Himself and so she feels politically as well as personally sound and contradicts, travels, weeps as she wants. He praises and encourages her; she writes a book and like the funny healing involvement between herself and her Jesus, Margery's communication now with her Book is intimate, direct, plainly and wholly responsive to those needs it immediately feels. It too engages its own terms; it does not rely on externally defined systems of logic, rhetoric, textual analysis or poetry; "Thys boke is not wetyn in ordyr, euery thyng aftyr other as it wer don, but lych as the mater cam to the creatur in mend whan it schuld be wretyn". It moves with an active and liberal awareness from instance to instance; and like Margery's other means of expression, like sobbing and telling stories and going on pilgrimages, and like her relationship with her Lord, her text chooses full creaturely living. It makes chatty creaturely rests, like "ryth wel" or "withouten ende," and necessary creaturely things like the barm on her ruined malt, or the pipes in her head-dress, or the candlestick taken by an innkeeper's wife, or unmannerly "voydyng" because these things make communication nicer.

The book is from the first written with another creature, an amanuensis. He cannot read an earlier attempt at the book, and so, as Margery narrates, "he sett a peyr of spectacles on hys nose" (5). The spectacles are clerklly, professional; like throat-clearing; the priest "setting" them on himself seems officiously puffy; "nose," the last word of the line, fondly but aptly sticks his puffing. And the spectacles don't work; he can't see to mend his pen; he seems unwilling to go on and "compleynes" but Margery brightly convinces him that his indisposition is the work of "hys enemy" Satan. It clears right up, "be day-lyth & be candellyth bothe." Later, a monk insists that Margery validate herself by describing his sins. She does not want to describe his sins; the monk insists and leaves her to pray. "Than," she tells, "cam the monk a-yen." He seems perky, cheerfully smug: "Margery, telle me my synnes." 'Ser, I vndyrstond that ye han synned in letchery, in dysper, & in kepyng of worldly good.' Than stod the monk stylye, sumdel a-baschyd, & sythen he seyde, 'Whethyr haue I synned wyth wyfes er wyth sengyl women?'" (26-7) Caught, he is astonished and like an unwise child reveals in trying to clear himself: his pedantry is gone and all he really wants to know is "Did you see me do it?" And when her husband after a bad fall, is ill, Margery nurses him with no spiritual pretense to charity but a clear sense of his physical functions. He "coud not don hys owyn esement . . . er ellys he wolde not, but as a childe voyded his natural digestion in hys lynyn clothys . . . he wolde sparyn no place." Of

course she minds the voydyng but, too, "bethowt hir how sche in hir yong age had ful many delectabyll thowtys . . . to hys persone" (181) and it seems less unpleasant.

She knows and forgives and remakes even this last offense because her husband is neither saintly nor evil. He is smelly, dirty, chummy, abashed, fit for neither allegory nor polite company, but appealing. His creator, now Margery, gives him distinction as one gives a box to a child, because she thinks he might like it, because it is the right size and his peculiarities fit here and are safe and because after all she likes him. She makes for him and his fellows small, comfortable scenes and in these scenes communicates with each. In the same way that as creature she cleans him up, as creator she skillfully manages the frailties of him and of others who would mismanage her: the position which for them has been abusive control becomes for her a more lively affection. She seems maternal, practised, firmly kind. Like her paternal creator, she heals and recreates an honest friendly compassion. And she narrates her book for other creatures; she embraces, finally, her reader, me. She expands for me a nice place where I can relax. I trust her management; I know that she, like her Lord in creation, wants to set me at ease so that we may converse, and she remakes living so that I, now, may like it as well.

But our discussion is often frightened, as well as funny, and Margery can be difficult. Her text instructs through example; it demonstrates error, injury, forgiveness and provocation: its creature provokes many and she herself responds, strongly and often negatively, to them and to others. I mimic; I find that she sometimes gets on my nerves. She requires a great deal of attention, and in pursuing it seems often relentless. She has no choice, but she tires me. I would rather not struggle; Margery must and so her text, too, one means of her struggle, provokes and unsettles. It is sexual, funny, angry, elated, painful, grotesque, and long: it is forceful and rapid and it pushes one far. Its struggle is real, its antagonist ugly: then perhaps it ought not always appeal. Its creature is injured. So am I; and I injure, as well. Like Margery's authoritative confessors and like so many others, I find myself more than willing to judge and to injure a situation which I, like them, only begin to know. Like them, I believe I will feel better if I separate myself from distress. The text seems too close. In fact, it offends me. I think, I am not sick: but then I feel sour. Then I think that maybe disliking feels worse than compassion.

And I find that in her compassion the creature herself becomes more certain, more bold, safer and stronger and happier. She is finally pleased by and pleasing for her Lord and her fellows and her scribe, and her reader. She makes a circular living: as her Lord has formed her, she understands Him; as she narrates her book, it reshapes her. Each creature here is both creator and created; each somehow makes, knows, likes and encourages another. Its means of creation is affectionate looping, and it generates further. I think that I like this; I think that I too might want some remaking. Such looping compels. Error becomes an embrace and, at the last, "owr Lord halpe hir so that sche had good loue of many frendys" (247).

Notes

¹ *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. H.E. Allen and S.B. Meech (Oxford: Early English Texts Society, 1940), 231.

² Eric Colledge, *The Medieval Mystics of England* (New York: Scribner, 1961), 208.

³ Ben-Ami Scharfstein, *Mystical Experience* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), 6.

⁴ *Medieval Women Writers*, ed. Katharine Wilson (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1984) 241.

⁵ Wilson 242.

Anne Bradstreet: The First American Poet

Rachel Elliott Rigolino

Born around 1612, Anne Bradstreet was the first American poet to have her works published. With her husband and parents, she came to Puritan Massachusetts to escape persecution in England. Her father, Thomas Dudley, had been a steward to the Earl of Lincolnshire, and she had lived "among educated and leisured aristocrats . . . learn[ing] to read, write, and to enjoy literature."¹ Although the English upper classes recognized the intellectual abilities of women, the extent of Anne Bradstreet's education, and more particularly her career as a writer, were the exception and not the rule. Perhaps even more surprising than her creation of a body of significant poetry is that she found the time to write. She eventually had eight children, all the while suffering from bouts of recurring illnesses. When Anne arrived in Massachusetts, the conditions were appalling: there was little food, only primitive shelter, and rampant disease which killed scores of the settlers. Toward the end of her life, Bradstreet wrote of her initial disillusionment with life in the New World, "I . . . came into this Country, where I found a new world and new manners, at which my heart rose . . ."² by which she meant her heart "rose" in rebellion.

Much has been written about Anne Bradstreet's rebelliousness against the Puritan ethos. She was, indeed, disillusioned with the Puritan enterprise during her first months in America. Moreover, there is other evidence that supports the view of her as a rebel. In her first collection of poems, entitled *The Tenth Muse*, Bradstreet displays her awareness of the scorn she may encounter as a female poet writing at a time when poetry was written primarily by males:

I am obnoxious to each carping tongue
Who says my hand a needle better fits.

("The Prologue" 11. 25-6)

In addition, like many other people in the seventeenth century, Bradstreet experienced strong doubts about her faith:

Many times hath Satan troubled me concerning the verity of the Scriptures,
many times by Atheisme, how I could know whether there was a God; I never
saw any miracles to confirm me . . . (182).

There were moments when she doubted her own election:

Beclouded was my Soul with fear
Of thy Displeasures sore,
Nor could I read my Evidence
Which oft I read before.

("For Deliverance from a fever" 11. 9-12)

Anne Bradstreet certainly had moments of spiritual crisis. I do not, however, find in them any evidence of a long-lasting antipathy toward the Puritan ethos. In her elegies, which would have been read by family and friends, her grief over the deaths of those close to her is ultimately

resolved, and she expresses her assurance of God's mercy. While one expects such an attendance to orthodoxy in public verse, Bradstreet's private poems also reveal her adherence to the fundamental tenets of the Puritan Faith. I believe Bradstreet's expressions of spiritual doubt and despair to be part of a historical and Biblical tradition which finds its fullest expression, perhaps, in the Psalms and in the Book of Lamentations, in which she, like all other Puritans, was steeped.³

That Bradstreet identified with the Psalmist is evidenced in her prose where she describes her "afflictions" and their power to move her towards repentance:

Then have I gone to searching, and have said with David, Lord search me and try me, see what wayes of wickedness are in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (180).

Throughout her poetry, there are echoes of the Psalms. For example, one of the primary images in the Psalms is that of God inclining his ear to hear the psalmist's petitions:

Bow down they ear to me; deliver me speedily:
be thou my strong rock . . . (Psalm 31:2)⁴.

Like the psalmist, Bradstreet conceives of God as actively listening to her:

I sought him whom my Soul did Love,
With tears I sought him earnestly;
He bow'd his ear down from Above,
In vain I did not seek or cry.

("By night when others soundly slept" 11. 5-8)

Because the Puritans believed spiritual sanctification was achieved only through God's grace and that God revealed himself directly to the individual, they conceived of their relationship with God as a personal one, in which God "spoke" to them directly, usually through the Bible.

In several of her poems, Anne Bradstreet expresses her sense of estrangement from God in terms of being unable to speak. In the Book of Lamentations, Jeremiah, after describing how God has "shut out [his] prayer" (3:8) and abandoned him, attributes his silence to his state of humility before God:

He sitteth alone and keepeth silence,
because he hath borne it upon him.
He putteth his mouth in the dust;
if so there may be hope.

(3: 28, 29)

In her elegy upon her grandson Simon's death, Bradstreet takes the same posture as Jeremiah: God appears to have forsaken her and her only refuge is in silence.

Ann Stanford suggests that in this elegy "the goodness of God, though piously mouthed, seems to be weighed and found wanting."⁵

Although Ms. Stanford's assertion that Bradstreet appears close to despair is just, I do not find evidence of the poet's "reluctant acceptance" (114) of God's will. Rather, it is only through thoroughly accepting her grandson's death as the will of a "merciful" (1. 8) God that Bradstreet finds consolation.

The elegy's regular meter and rhymed couplets give a sense of emotions held in check. Unlike two earlier elegies to her other grandchildren, where she writes in the first person singular, Bradstreet uses the plural "us." That she includes her audience, or readers, in the expression of feelings may have been an effort on her part to find a way of coping more readily with her grief or perhaps of helping others to cope with theirs.

The elegy can be broken up into three sections, each of which can be thought of as representing three distinct phases of Bradstreet's grief. In the first two and a half lines, she remembers the "three flours" of her grandchildren who were "Cropt by th'Almighties hand," and then comes to a stop. Ms. Stanford finds the rest of the line--"yet he is good"--"intensely ironic" (113). To the modern reader, Bradstreet's sudden insistence upon God's goodness in spite of her grandchildren's deaths does appear incongruous. Instead of its being ironic, however, I find the sudden stop to represent acknowledgement of her need to put her grief in perspective, for her memories have brought her near despair. As Rosamond Rosenmeier notes, Bradstreet's "personal identity is defined by a relationship to God" (134), and in lines three through eight she humbles herself before Him.

In the Psalms, the psalmist often makes the same type of abrupt assertion of God's goodness:

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
Why art thou so far from helping me . . .
O my God . . . thou hearest me not . . .
But thou art holy . . .
Our fathers trusted in thee . . .
and thou didst deliver them . . .

(Psalm 22:1-4)

The psalmist's despair comes from what he perceives to be a breakdown in communication between himself and God, which he attempts to put into perspective by remembering God's past evidence of mercy. Bradstreet's muteness is not only a symbol for her humility but represents the same anguish experienced by the psalmist: she cannot understand why God has allowed her to suffer and must stand in "dreadful awe" (1. 5) before his will.

Bradstreet notes she can either "dispute" (1. 6) God's will or be "mute" (1. 5). Her rejection of the former permits her to look into the future--in the same way the psalmist looks to the past--in order to be consoled. She looks forward to the time when Jesus will "return, and make up all our losses" (1. 9). Although certainly not cheerful, the emotional tone of the last lines of the poem seems genuinely hopeful and not a feigned attempt at being pious.

Like many other seventeenth-century poets, Bradstreet expresses her grief in religious terms. Perhaps what makes this elegy so moving is that Bradstreet does not open the poem with the reassuring consolations of the elegy's last four lines but, instead, acknowledges her "muteness" before God. As Ms. Rosenmeier suggests, Bradstreet's relationship with God is "everchanging" (134): she admits to moments of spiritual despair and doubt while seeking for reassurance throughout much of her personal verse.

Bradstreet's private poems were meant to be read by her children after her death and, therefore, are probably more reflective of her genuine state of mind than her public verse. Most of her personal poetry centers around illness and the absence of loved ones. It is possible she

wrote many of these poems during sleepless nights such as the one she describes in "by night when others soundly slept":

By night when others soundly slept,
And had at once both ease and Rest,
My waking eyes were open kept,
And so to lye I found it best.

(11. 1-4)

Bradstreet's capitalization of "Rest" indicates, as do the following stanzas of the poem, that she is searching for a spiritual rest or peace. Most of these poems from her personal manuscript share the same theme: her suffering, God's response to it, and her subsequent praise of Him. Her poems about her physical illnesses, in fact, are so similar in tone and content that they form their own particular genre. Two of these poems even share the identical line, "Then didst thou rid me out" ("For Deliverance from a fever" 1. 4, "For the restoration of my dear Husband . . . 1661" 1. 2). These poems are for the most part metrically regular and, in them she abandons the rhymed couplet form of her earlier poetry for the verse.

In "Deliverance from a fitt of Fainting," Bradstreet's frustration and despair are established in the first two lines. The poem opens with a dactyl, although the rest of the lines are iambic, and echoes the form of the *Benedictus es, Domine*, which repeats every other line "Blessed art thou, O Lord . . ." Ending in an exclamation point, the first line reads as a declaration which seemingly establishes the poem as a straight forward hymn of praise. The metrical shift in the second line, however, not only signals Bradstreet's change in focus from God to herself, but also underscores her sense of despair. Bradstreet begins a poem of praise, but is reduced to "But ah!" after she has written the poem's first line.

In the poem's second stanza, Bradstreet offers up one of her most memorable metaphors: "my life as Spider's webb's cutt off" (1. 5). Notably, she breaks the poem's ABAB rhyme. In many of her earlier poems written in rhymed couplets, she often strains to achieve an end-rhyme, as in "The Four Elements":

Some say I swallow'd up (sure tis a notion)
A mighty country in th' Atlantique Ocean.

(11. 371-2)

The image of the spider's web suggests not only a fragile and intricate beauty, but also something undesirable (at least in the well-kept home of an industrious Puritan!). As a metaphor for her life, the conflicting associations of the spider's web mirror the paradoxical Puritan view of humankind: that while humans are made in the image of God, they are also mortal creatures of sin.

In the second stanza, Bradstreet confesses that during her illness she believed God had abandoned her. By leaving the fifth line "cut off" from the poem's rhyme scheme, Bradstreet emphasizes her sense of isolation. Facing death, her assurance in an after-life is shaken. She fears that she will be "cutt of" from God and "layd" forever in "silence" (1. 8) never to "see" (1. 7) or know God. In "As weary pilgrim, now at rest," Bradstreet, now seemingly at peace with herself and reconciled to God, uses "silence" as a metaphor for the death of the body:

Oh how I long to be at rest
and soare on high among the blest.
This body shall in silence sleep.

(11. 23-25)

In "Deliverance . . .," Bradstreet uses "silence" as a metaphor for God's utter rejection of her in the manner of the psalmist:

Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my rock;
be not silent to me: lest, if thou be
silent to me, I become like them that go
down into the pit.

(Psalm 28:1)

In the third stanza Bradstreet acknowledges that God healed her not only of her physical illness but of her spiritual doubts. He "revive[d]" her "feblee Spirit" (1. 9) and "chide[d]" the "Doubting" (1. 10) alluded to in the second stanza. In line eleven Bradstreet refers to her recovery from her fainting spell in terms of the Resurrection: "And tho'as dead mad'st me alive."

Bradstreet's allusion to the Resurrection directs her reader back to the third line of the poem, in which she pleads with God to "raise" her "sinking heart." Although God has shown mercy towards her, Bradstreet requires another "Resurrection" of her spirit. God has brought her back from death and now she "here a while might 'bide" (1. 12). The word "'bide" suggests a passive existence. In the fourth stanza, Bradstreet asks, "Why should I live but to they Praise?" as if, indeed, to "'bide" is not enough.

If she is to live, Bradstreet asserts in the last lines of the poem, then she must be "fruitful" (1. 16). Her children would have been aware of the line's reference to Matthew 7:17, in which Jesus uses the metaphor of a "good tree bring[ing] forth good fruit" to describe a person faithful to God. Bradstreet is "fruitful" when she is able to compose a poem in praise of God. Evidence of this conviction is found, among other places, in her poem "For the restoration . . . 1661": "My thankful heart, with Pen record / The Goodness of thy God" (11. 9,10).

Steeped as she was in the Psalms, it is not surprising to find that much of her later verse can be set to music. "Deliverance . . . Fainting" is in the common meter (4.3.4.3), which is used for many hymns dating back as far as the sixteenth century. That Bradstreet conceived of herself as a poet who, like the psalmist, sings forth the praises of God, is evidenced in her metaphor of the bird in "In reference to her children . . . 1665":

In shady woods I'll sit and sing,
And things that past, to mind I'll bring.

But sing, my time so near is spent.
And from the top bough take my flight,

And there with Seraphims set song.

(11. 69, 70, 74, 75, 78)

Like other seventeenth-century poets, Bradstreet wrote about deeply felt religious matters. Her expressions of spiritual anguish and doubt are similar to some of Donne's religious poetry. (Interestingly, a nineteenth-century critic, Moses Tyler, criticized Bradstreet's poetry on the grounds that she had been "badly instructed by . . . literary guides" such as Donne.⁶) The Reformation, which stressed the importance of people's direct relationship with God, may have inspired such poetry, which, as I have shown, is ancient in its literary origins. Bradstreet and her contemporaries, such as Donne, were like the writers of the Old Testament in their attempts to bridge the inherent distance between the human and Divine through discourse with God. I find, therefore, Bradstreet to be part of the literary tradition of her times, and believe any feminist criticism must take into account her literary sources and context in which she wrote. To suggest that Bradstreet was subtly--or even subconsciously--a "rebel" is a theory for which I have found no hard evidence.

NOTES

¹ Wendy Martin, *An American Triptych* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 21. Other biographical information has been taken from the introduction to *Poems of Anne Bradstreet*, ed. Robert Hutchinson (New York: Dover, 1969), and Rosamond R. Rosenmeier, "The Wounds Upon Bathsheba: Anne Bradstreet's Prophetic Art," in *Puritan Poets and Poetics*, ed. Peter White (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1985). I have also profited from discussion with the Rev. Joseph M. Elliott.

² Hutchinson 180. All quotations from Bradstreet's writings are taken from Hutchinson's edition.

³ See Josephine K. Piercy, *Anne Bradstreet* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1985), 79.

⁴ All Biblical quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible.

⁵ Ann Stanford, *Anne Bradstreet: The Worldly Puritan* (New York: B. Franklin, 1974) 114.

⁶ See Robert Daly, *God's Altar: The World and the Flesh in Puritan Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 204.

Lady Mary Wroth's Sonnet Sequence *Pamphilia To Amphilanthus*

Doris Stewart

The sonnet sequence *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* reflects Lady Mary Worth's awareness of herself as a poet in the Sidney family tradition. In critical comments embedded in the poetry, she shows a strong professional pride in her mastery of a demanding technique. I am going to consider four sonnets from the sequence, one from each of the sections into which Wroth divided it. They each have as their speaker the self-conscious writer, and they serve to illustrate the progression of the speaker's thought on the subject of love, her musings on the relationship between art and life, and her aesthetics.

Led by the powre of grieffe, to waylings brought
By faulce consiete of change fall'ne on my part,
I seeke for some smale ease by lines, which bought
Increase the paine; grieffe is not cur'd by art.

(P 9, ll. 1-4)¹

Because of misunderstanding--"faulce consiete"--of how her situation has changed, the speaker, in her grief, has been brought to "waylings," that is, to wailing the "ceases teares" of line 8. In line 3 she seeks relief in verse, but must struggle--pay--for every line: they are "bought" from the muse. This struggle for inspiration is also suggested by "faulce consiete." Once written, the lines make her grief all the more tangible (l. 4).

The second quatrain of "led by the powre" concerns the paradox of the speaker's situation: the constancy of her love for her philandering lover. Constancy is the speaker's great virtue; she examines it throughout the sequence, and her understanding of it grows as the sequence progresses. She had thought that the joy of loving would be reciprocated in the joy of being loved, but has been disappointed:

Ah! how unkindnes moves within the hart
Which still is true, and free from changing thought:
What unknowne woe itt breeds; what endles smart
With ceases teares which causelessly ar wrought.

(ll. 5-8)

The couplet is noteworthy as an example of the balance and generally good crafting that her poetry exhibits and of the directness and pithiness of the speaker's diction at its best:

Yett though I darke do live I triumph may;
Unkindnes, nor this wrong shall love allay.

(ll. 13-14)

Within the conventional diction, her thoughts are clearly expressed.

In the sonnet "Iff I were giv'n to mirthe" (P 45), the self-conscious writer is more prominent and outspoken. "Crost" (l. 14) and "cross" (l. 1) with envy, she is unable still to find pleasure in her poetry. Unlike "those pleasant witts" (l. 5), she is not "giv'n to mirthe" (l. 1): she is given to

thought. "Silently" (l. 3) suggests an emotional depth which is not being revealed. In the second quatrain she dismisses her verse as gross matter skimmed from the surface of her more rarified thoughts and again, as moss, growing out of but obscuring them:

Nor can I as those pleasant witts enjoy
My owne fram'd words, which I account the dross
Of purer thoughts, or reckon them as moss
While they (witt sick) them selves to breath imploy.
(ll. 5-8)

Her "framed words"--a reference to the sonnet form--are contrasted with the poetry of her contemporaries. Using the disciplined framework of the sonnet, she is weaving her thoughts according to its strict patterns, using the Petrarchan conventions and the traditions of the courtly romance as opportunities for exploring the subject of love. In line 11 the voice switches to directly address those "witt sick" poets (l. 8) who "imploy" themselves to excesses of words and imagery. She defends her style as opposed to theirs on the grounds that her restraint shows deeper feeling: they are swept up in admiration for, and delight in, their own creations. "Plenty" (l. 9) refers to the general extravagances of Jacobean love poetry, while "words are more scant" (l. 10) suggests a control of vocabulary rather than literally fewer words. "Neglected" (l. 12), she is envious.

The turnabout in lines 11-14, by which she ends the poem disparaging herself rather than her "witt sick" contemporaries, is indicative of the speaker's point of view throughout the sequence: although the sequence is written to Amphilanthus, it is the ideal of love within herself which increasingly occupies the speaker, and, consequently, vices within herself, such as envy, which delude and distract her from her constant love, emerge as her real enemies.

These people of pleasant wit are not in touch with the depths of love "wher most feeling is" (l. 10). This shallowness of feeling and self-absorption of thought are the source (l. 9) of the "want" that "shows" in the "plenty" of their verse. She dismisses these shallow people in line 11 and acknowledges her own responsibility for her state of mind.

The "fram'd words" of line 6 also suggest to me a woman seated at a tapestry of weaving frame, a loom; and I see the figure of Penelope, faithful and constant while bearing the absence of Ulysses. The different poems in the same "frame" parallel Penelope unraveling and replacing her previous day's work in the same place. I have no idea if the author intended that parallel, but I find the image compelling. The speaker is moving inwards, toward contemplation, working and reworking the theme and imagery through the form of sonnet after sonnet.

The sonnet "Unprofitably pleasing" (P 87) is a part of the Corona, a "Crown of Sonnets," interlinked by having each begin with the last line of the one before it. The form imposes a certain thematic unity on the material within it, and the circle is closed by ending the last sonnet with the opening line of the first. Mary Wroth's crown of fourteen sonnets is the longest complete corona in English, exceeding her uncle Philip Sidney's by four, and the ambition of its undertaking is another indication of her seriousness as a writer.

The opening line is of course taken from the sonnet which preceded it, where wantonness is described as an error against reason and love. The poem is a comment on the debilitating effects of both erotic and artistic wantonness. The "witt sick" poets of "If I were giv'n to mirthe" (P 45) reappear here, and the self-indulgent "plenty" of their verse is repeated, and elaborated through the vegetation metaphor, to show how lack of discipline and restraint ultimately robs poetry of its power. At the volte, this argument against artistic "wantonness," developed in the first two quatrains, is brought to the defense of erotic constancy: "Then joy wee nott in what wee ought to shun" (l. 9) because the power of the guiding principle, "heaven" (l. 2), will be corrupted and diminished. The extended conceit of rank-growing vegetation unifies the two themes. In line 4, even when "ripest"--at its most elaborate--the poetry of the "sick-witts" (l. 7) is found

wanting. This suggests a contrast between Wroth's disciplined style, which follows traditional parameters, and the more popular style, which incorporates everything on earth but is "unprofitably pleasing, and unsound" (l. 1). Their poetry, "planted in ill, in worse time springing" (l. 6), grows, unstructured and unevenly, into something positively harmful: the fruit of their wit itself poisons their minds (ll. 7-8). "Rounde" (l. 8) I take as a direct reference to poetry: they turn verses, which in turn circle upon themselves, swirling around in the "vapors" (l. 8) of their own excessiveness. The vegetation imagery, through line 10's "shady pleasures," is linked to the fire imagery (ll. 10-12) by playing off coolness and dimness against heat and light. By indulging, in life and in art, in those "shady pleasures" which a constant lover would shun, the "true borne fires" of love are "quite quench'd out" (l. 11), or, at best, only "poore" ashes remain, and the heat of real passion reduced to indifference.

The couplet closes the argument with an appeal to celebrate love, not "those coole, and wan desires" of line 12, which smolder in its ashes. The speaker finds them unfit subjects for consideration in art, or for the engagement of human emotions, because there is no profit in them (l. 1). Indulgence in wantonness is at root "unsound": those who practice it lose themselves in the unmanageable "plenty" of line 3. Forgetting heaven's role as the giver of this "liberty" (l. 2), they are entrapped and overrun by diversity. Swimming in "endless rounde" (l. 8) also suggests loss of the ideal--heaven--and entrapment in the repetitiveness and triviality of earthly concerns.

Love's "glory" (l. 13) originates in heaven, and he who draws his power, his "might," from that eternal source will triumph. Constancy to one who is himself untrue is defensible only from the perspective of the ideal vs. the limited and transient, such as heaven giving liberty to "frayle dull earth."

Pamphilia to Amphilanthus concludes with the self-conscious writer, in the sonnet "My muse now hapy" (P 103). The speaker has completed her task and (coincidentally) come to terms with her situation:

My muse now hapy, lay thy self to rest,
Sleepe in the quiette of a faithful love.
(ll. 1-2)

Having explored the many paths in the labyrinthine framework of the sonnet sequence, both her muse and her heart are satisfied, and so have come to rest. Should her muse stir itself again, she counsels it to "study" love no longer (line 5), but "truth," and the ideal, the constant. To "young beeginers" (l. 10) is left the writing of love poetry, and here again, in lines 9-12, the activity of the muse is depicted as influencing the activity of the heart. The preceding 102 sonnets and songs, "what's past" (l. 13), chronicle her experiences in the ways of love. Further writing on the subject would stir up her passions again. Uncompromising to the last, in the couplet the speaker adjures her muse not to undermine the great labor it has accomplished by being drawn back into those endless rounds, but to rest steadfast in the truth it has discovered:

And thus leave off, what's past shows you can love,
Now lett your constancy your honor prove.
(P ll. 13-14)

This inflexible constancy is not easily bought. In the "Corona" section of the sequence, the nature of love, its power and fascination, and the appropriate human responses to it are considered, and its joys are discovered. As a sequence within the sequence, the Corona brings the material considered in the main body of the work under closer scrutiny yet. The focus is on discovering the true nature of love rather than articulating the emotions of the speaker.

Because the opening image of the first poem of necessity recurs in the last, the Corona is neatly enclosed within the confines of a labyrinth, a singularly apt metaphor for the bewildering complexities which confront the speaker as lover. The enclosed maze of possibilities also suggests the sonnet form, in which the thread of dilectical argument must be followed if there is to be a sensible outcome. The speaker's explorations of possibilities are reflected in her gropings among the unmarked avenues of the maze:

In this strang labourinth how shall I turne?
Wayes are on all sids while the way I miss:

I must thes doubts indure with out allay
Or help, butt traveile find for may best hire.

(P 77, ll. 1-2, and ll. 11-12)

Love's power is well represented by the labyrinth: the speaker is quite captive within it and moves among its maze of possibilities without gaining knowledge of its makeup through her travels (another meaning for "traveile"). Her spelling of "labourinth" to include the word "labour" also suggests her difficulties. Love, in the Corona, is clearly being explored in its ideal aspect: love as the phenomenon from which joy springs, the reward of truth and source of appreciation. The power which dwells within the heart of Wroth's labyrinth is not the savage monster of the Cretan myth, but a mysterious force of unclear intent, which must be understood if it is to be safely met. The labyrinth is thus also a rarified environment, a place of mystery and secret power, in which the faculties of the speaker will not be adequate to direct her. In line 7 the speaker finds she can neither proceed, "nor fainte though crosses with my fortunes kiss." "Crosses" literally refers to the many intersections of the maze which constantly undermine the speaker's sense of direction. From a Christian writer in a Christian century, it may also suggest the hardships she must bear, as Christ bore his cross, and also, with the last word "kiss," that Cross itself, as an object of veneration and a symbol of human helplessness and humility. In the couplet the reference is classical, and the speaker concludes that blind faith in Love is her only hope:

Yett that which most my troubled sence doth move
Is to leave all, and take the thread of love.

(ll. 13-14)

The speaker recognizes her helplessness and the futility of her own efforts. She is enthralled in both senses of the word: both fascinated and unable to escape. Unable to free herself by her own faculties, her "troubled sence" is moved to surrender and seek guidance from that power which has mastered her, which the second sonnet in the corona makes clear:

Is to leave all, and take the thread of love
Which line strait leads unto the soules content
Wher choise delights with pleasures wings doe move,
And idle phant'sie never roome had lent.

(P 78, ll. 1-4)

"Soules" and "pleasures" are clearly in the possessive case despite the lack of punctuation. The line of love leads straight to the "soules content": its happiness, and also its substance, that which it contains, and within the cloister its delights are of a rare refinement.

Constancy and chastity are linked in the second quatrain and throughout the sequence as a whole. Chastity does not preclude a state in which "idle phant'sie never room had lent." Besides referring to misguided illusions of love, the lack of room for "idle phant'sie" also suggests sexual fulfillment rather than speculation only. There is a sexual tension created by the words "chaste"

and "constant"--structurally, by their positions at the extremes of the quatrain, and tonally, by the sexually charged connotations of both of them. Sexuality is implicitly accepted.

To take that good which ills from us remove,
Light of true love, brings fruite which none repent
Butt constant lovers seeke, and wish to prove.
(ll. 6-8)

This could be a reference to physical love and its natural fruition in children. Line 12 supports this reading:

"Image of fayth, and wombe for joys increase."

The sonnet "And bee in his brave court" (P 80) contains the strongest suggestion of sexuality in the corona and articulates the dilemma of the idealistic speaker in the world of human love:

Till Sunn, and Moone doe leave to us dark night,
And second Chause once againe doe free
Us, and the world from all devisions spite.
(ll. 6-8)

This problem of division plagues the speaker, who, convinced that love is rightly the source of joy not pain, struggles throughout the sequence to reconcile her role as neglected lover with her faith in her ultimate vindication through constancy. Paradoxically, it is her inescapable confrontation with her own dissatisfaction and Amphilanthus' recurrent scorn which is the catalyst for her exploration of love as constant and idealized.

Lines 9 ff. continue from the vision of final, cataclysmic reconciliation:

Till then, affections which his followers are
Governe our harts, and prove his powers gaine
To taste this pleasing sting seek with all care
For hapy smarting is itt with smale paine,
Such as although, itt pierce your tender hart
And burne, yett burning you will love the smart.
(ll. 9-14)

Stinging, piercing, smarting, burning--these are the attributes of desire, and their suggestion of physical lovemaking cannot be dismissed.

The next two sonnets further develop this connection of physical with idealized love:

And burne, yett burning you will love the smart,
When you shall feele the weight of true desire,
Soe pleasing, as you would nott wish your part
Of burden shold bee mission from that fire.
(P 81, 1-4)

The connection is made in the second quatrain, where "the weight of true desire" and thesexual fire of line 4, through the refinement of constancy, abolish the sin associated with lewd passion:

Butt faithfull and unfained heate aspire
Which sinne abolisheth, and doth impart
Saulves to all feare, with vertues which inspire
Soules with devine love, which showes his chaste art.

(ll. 5-8)

In the sixth sonnet of the Corona (*P* 82), this divine motivation, which compels the lover to endure and indeed "Love the smart" (*P* 80, l. 14 & *P* 81, l. 1) of "affections" (*P* 80, l. 9), is discovered by those constant lovers who let "blest love" (*P* 81, l. 13) be their "profit" (with a play on prophet) and "Tuter" (*P* 81, l. 14 & *P* 82, l. 1):

Itt doth inrich the witts, and make you see
That in your self, which you knew nott before,
Forcing you to admire such guifts showd bee
Hid from your knowledge, yett in you the store.

(*P*. 82, ll. 9-12)

The above quatrain articulates the speaker's fundamental argument for persevering in this elusive love. The constant lover will "love the smart" of love's pain because it is the doorway to transcendence.

The first line of sonnet *P* 84 elaborates: "Hee that shunns love doth love him self the less." The physical and the ideal are reconciled in this sonnet, and constancy is the element which joins them:

Nor coldly pass in the persuites of love
Like one longe frozen in a sea of ise,
And yett butt chastly lett your passions move
Noe thought from vertuose love your minds intise.
Never to other ends your phant'sies place
Butt wher they may returne with honors grace.

(ll. 9-14)

With the ninth sonnet in this circle of fourteen there is a volte: "Butt" begins the last line of the eighth (*P* 84) and the first line of the ninth (*P* 85). The first eight sonnets followed the "thread of love" and explored its exalted properties. Here the divisive duality of love among human beings emerges as a force to be considered. The metaphor is classical, vilifying Venus in her role as fickle and self-indulgent concubine who falsely nurses inconstancy in the innocent Cupid. I think Venus is being used here to represent secular love--love as it can first be known to humans, which should then lead the innocent spirit to its divine qualities, but which, corrupted by wantonness, instead impedes the soul's progress by deliberately confusing lust with love (*P* 85, ll. 7-8). "Wikednes," the speaker declares, sets a "fayrer gloss" (l. 10), a more honorable name, upon the vice of lust:

which els makes men asham'd
In the owne frase to warrant butt begett

This childe for love, who ought like monster borne
Bee from the court of Love, and reason torne.

(ll. 11-14)

People would naturally shrink from authorizing ("to warrent") the begetting of lust upon love as its natural child, but they are deceived, by a tradition going back to antiquity, into confusing the one as belonging to the other. Lust in the guise of love, the resultant "monster borne," must be turned out of the court of love, if reason is to be restored to its place of guiding human hearts from secular to divine love.

Lust, as "wantonness," is the subject of the next two sonnets. Its deceptive attractiveness is isolated, and amplified, in an extended conceit of fruition which is begun in the couplet of *P* 86 and runs through the first quatrain of *P* 88. Lust, the

Fruit of a sowre, and unwholsome ground
Unprofitably pleasing, and unsound

(*P* 86, ll. 13-14)

is compared to the fruits of constancy, whose

blossoms fayre
... fall for good, and lose theyr coulours bright
Yett dy nott, butt with fruite theyr loss repaire.

(*P* 88, ll. 2-4)

The last two sonnets of the Corona serve as a sort of couplet to this extended sonnet, of which each poem is a line. In *P* 89 the properties of love which have been considered throughout the Corona are catalogued, and love is formally addressed as an all-powerful ruler, "Great King of Love" (l. 11), and is offered the "crowne" (l. 13) of sonnets to glorify him, and the speaker herself and all that she has, until she is brought up sharply in line 14: "Except my hart which you bestow'd beefore."

The line emphasizes the arbitrary character of the "Great King" and returns the speaker, and the reader, to the sobering consideration of the speaker's situation in the opening sonnet of the Corona (*P* 77). Both sides of love's "pleasing sting" (*P* 80, l. 11) are present, and inextricably mixed with the speaker's resolution to persevere in constancy (*P* 90, ll. 5-8) is her constant battle with the scorn of her inconstant lover (*P* 90, ll. 9-12). In this final sonnet the speaker has progressed to certainty--the thread of love now firmly connects her to the ideal--but this very connection, enforced by her inescapable plight (she is not in possession of her own heart), makes her prey to those false vices which have historically ensared lovers:

As enimies to you, my foes must bee;
Curst jealousie doth all her forces bend
To my undoing; thus my harmes I see.

(*P* 90, ll. 10-12)

Despite her constancy and hard-on "trust" (*P* 89, l. 12) in the "Ruller of owr affections kinde, and just" (*P* 89, l. 10), she is still enthralled in love's labyrinth, and must continue to seek her way within its impassive austerity, among the many crossed paths of human intimacy:

Soe though in Love I fervently doe burne,
In this strange labourinth how shall I turne?

(*P* 90, ll. 13-14)

NOTES

¹ All quotations from *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* are taken from *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth*, edited with introduction and notes by Josephine A. Roberts (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1983).

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Wordsworth and Tao Yuanming: Different Roots For Their Return to Nature

Zou Zhen

When Wordsworth was first introduced to Chinese readers, he was regarded as "England's Tao Yuanming" (Zhang ZeZhi and Li XiangGuo). Interesting enough, the contemporary American poet Robert Bly refers to Tao Yuanming as "the spiritual precursor of the nineteenth-century English poet Wordsworth (Wang Zuoliang, 37). The similarities between these two poets lie in the fact that both of them turned to Nature and expressed profound love toward Nature in their poems. This essay investigates their different reasons for turning to Nature and at the same time explores the roots of their differences in their respective cultural backgrounds.

After graduating from Cambridge University, Wordsworth traveled widely and in the end settled down in the beautiful Lake District. Similarly, Tao Yuanming returned to his homestead after resigning from his official position. Although both poets returned to Nature and wrote a number of Nature poems, what caused them to do so was quite different.

Wordsworth often contrasts Nature with the city. To him, Nature is the incarnation of beauty and serenity, while life in the city imposes manacles and limits freedom. "The Reverie of Poor Susan" illustrates this contrast. Susan is a girl from the country who comes to earn her living in London. Although she lives in the city, the girl misses the pastoral environment and her country home. In the morning, hearing a thrush singing in the London streets, an illusion of beautiful natural scenery appears before her eyes:

She sees

A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
Bright volume of vapor through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,
Down which she so often has tripped with her pail.

In the mirage, she also sees her little cottage on the farm, "The one only dwelling on earth that she loves." Obviously, she prefers her country home to London, though London is claimed to be one of the largest cosmopolitan cities in the world.

Talking about the composition of this poem, Wordsworth said, "This arises out of my observation of the affecting music of these birds hanging in this way [*i.e.*, in cages] in the London streets during the freshness and stillness of the spring morning." (Wordsworth, 1975, 217). In the 1800 edition, there was a fifth stanza calling poor Susan the "Outcast" to return to her father's house on the farm where she

May'st hear the thrush sing from a tree of its own.

Evidently, the poet had the caged bird in his mind while composing this poem. To him, the poor girl living in the city is no better than the caged bird in the street. Like the thrush, she has

lost her freedom. The symbolic meaning thus becomes evident; London is not a suitable place for her to stay. She should go back to her little cottage on the farm. She ought to return to Nature, where she can sing "of her own."

Wordsworth lived during the industrial revolution, a time when large cosmopolitan cities developed. Apart from the technological progress it made for society, the industrial revolution also brought with it pollution to the air, noise to the tranquil life, and hastiness to people's activities. Certainly, such circumstances were not good for people's health.

To Wordsworth, city life is not only harmful to people's body, but also deleterious to the human soul. The narrative poem "Michael" illustrates this view. Having lived his whole life in the natural world, the old shepherd Michael, though aged eighty-four, remains

Stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of and unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs.

Country born and country bred, Michael's son, Luke, grows up to be a healthy and innocent young man. Unfortunately, Luke has to be sent to work in the city in order to pay some debt. However, not long after he arrives in the city, the young man

..... began
To slacken to this duty, and at length,
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses.

Luke's depravity not only ruins him, but also breaks the hearts of his aged parents. Their hope is completely crushed. The whole family is totally destroyed. If Luke did not go the city, he would not become degraded, and would continue to live an innocent and tranquil life as his forefathers had done. The family would remain peaceful and happy. It is the degenerate city life that has contaminated Luke's spiritual innocence and destroyed the young man and his family. Therefore, in this narrative poem, Wordsworth again praises the pastoral country life and condemns the evil life of the city.

Some people might argue that Wordsworth also loves city life, or at least the city. Their evidence is Wordsworth's poem "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge." It is true that this is a poem in praise of London. But we must not forget that the poet is not praising the busy, noisy, clamorous city life. What he really extols is the quiet beauty of London in the early morning, when

The very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still.

In its undisturbed tranquility, the city is beautiful and serene. Yet, one can easily imagine that after the city awakes, after people start to hurry and scurry in their busy life, its wonderful stillness and quietude will be relentlessly destroyed. The breath-taking view will soon be replaced by the hustle and bustle of city activities. Wordsworth appreciates in particular "the smokeless air." Yet, as soon as the factories open and the machines start to run, the air will be polluted, and the atmosphere will become fume and unhealthy. No doubt Wordsworth would never love a city like that. In fact, the undisturbed beauty and tranquility of the city on the fresh early morning offers a striking contrast to people's usual impression of the city-- busy, squalid, and boisterous. What causes such a contrast? What renders the city into such an unhealthy and miserable place? It is none other than the Industrial Revolution. Reading this poem, we can almost hear the poet say, "Look! Without industrial civilization, what a wonderful place our city

will be!" Therefore, by extolling the beauty of the sleeping London, Wordsworth is actually impeaching the industrial civilization that has destroyed the serenity and tranquility of the city.

Wordsworth once lived in London. He resented the "cloud of smoke" and the busy life there. What is more, the poet was surprised to find that since everybody was busy with his own affairs, people in the city became selfish and indifferent toward each other:

Above all, one thought
Baffled by understanding: how men lived
Even next-door neighbors, as we say, yet still
Strangers, not knowing each the other's name.

(*The Prelude*, Book 7, ll.114-117)

This inhuman life is intolerable to the poet, so he anxiously escapes from the city, and returns to nature that he loves so much. Freed from the obstructions of urban life, the poet feels overjoyed:

..... escaped
From the vast city, where I long had pined
A discontented sojourner: now free,
.....

The earth is all before me
.....

Long months of peace
Long months of ease and undisturbed delight
Are mine in prospect ;

(*The Prelude*, Book 1, ll. 6-27)

In fact, Wordsworth not only loves Nature himself, but also calls other people to walk out of the study and return to nature:

Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your Teacher.

("The Tables Turned," ll. 15-16)

Wordsworth's idea of "Return to Nature" has its Western origin. He inherits this idea from the great French thinker Jean-Jacques Rousseau. After Rousseau expressed his ecstatic Nature worship, "the next and all-important step in poetry was taken by Wordsworth" (Bloom and Trilling, 125). Rousseau holds the conviction that Nature is opposed to man, in that it is always good, while man as he is in society is always evil (Beatty, 133-134). Having absorbed this conception from Rousseau, the core of Wordsworth's view is to return to Nature. To him, the industrialized city is the embodiment of falsehood, ugliness, and evil. It leads people to the abyss of depravity, as is shown in the narrative poem "Michael." On the other hand, Nature is the incarnation of truthfulness, virtue, and beauty. She exerts her moral power on people and guides them to sympathy and friendliness. Wordsworth illustrates this power in his famous poem "The Old Cumberland Beggar." Seeing Wordsworth making a beggar the hero of his poem, Francis Jeffrey, a renowned critic in Wordsworth's time, was indignant at the poet's compassionate depiction of a social outcast. He condemns Wordsworth and other Lake Poets; he regards his choice of imagery merely as a "spleenic and idle discontent with existing institutions of society" (392). But Jeffrey ignored the positive moral function the old beggar performs in the village. Miraculously, the seedy outcast spreads among people a feeling of tenderness instead of disgust:

Where'er the aged Beggar takes his rounds,
The mild necessity of use compels
To acts of love.

(ll. 98-100)

Undoubtedly, it is such "acts of love" which people cherish in their treatment to the beggar that render their soul to "virtue and true goodness." This wonderful feeling makes people happy and full of hope in heaven, as is shown in the case of the poet's neighbor who, in spite of her own want, never hesitates to bestow an unsparing handful of meal to the aged beggar when he comes to her on his "regular visit," which makes people more humane than ever. As Harold Bloom points out, "No poem, unless it be 'The Old Cumberland Beggar', humanizes us more" (1971; 140).

Why does the obscure and squalid beggar have such power? What makes him capable of achieving strong moral effects on people? A careful analysis of the poem tells us that it is none other than his contact with Nature. Throughout the long years, the old beggar has breathed the "freshness of the valleys," his blood has struggled "with frosty air and Winter snows," he has shared his food with woodland birds, and "the chartered wind" has beat his grey locks against his withered face. Namely, he has always been close to Nature, closer than most of us. Evidently, it is Nature that has bestowed the power of morality to him. She has employed him as a medium to spread love and hope among people. Nature is the source of such virtues. Therefore, the poet hopes sincerely that the old Cumberland beggar should never be separated from Nature:

May never HOUSE, misnamed of INDUSTRY,
Make him a captive!

As in the eye of Nature he has lived,
So in the eye of Nature let him die.

Obviously, Wordsworth regards Nature as the ideal settlement for human beings. As Nature purifies people's soul and sows seeds of love, hope, and sympathy in their hearts, it is desirable that we should return to Nature. Since a mere aged beggar can spread morality so effectively among people after living in Nature for many years, what a wonderful world it would be if more people would return to Nature!

Like his English counterpart, the Chinese poet Tao Yuanming (365-427) also found an ideal settlement in Nature and wrote a number of idyllic poems. Yet, in his time, there was no industrial revolution in China. Therefore, what caused him to turn to Nature was something quite different.

When Tao Yuanming was young, there was a wide-spread learning of Confucian teaching in the districts of Jiangzhou and Yuzhang, not far from his country home. A great scholar of Confucianism, Fan Xuan, advocated teachings of Confucius in these areas in 380 A.D., and the campaign lasted quite a number of years. Later, in 390 A.D., another scholar of Confucianism, Governor Fang Ning of Yuzhang District, further promoted the teaching of Confucianism. He established schools and enrolled hundreds of students to learn Confucian thought. As a result, Confucianism became especially popular in those areas. History has it that, at the time, "people of Jiangzhou were all interested in learning Confucianism" (Lu Qinli, pp. 204-206). In 380 A.D., Tao Yuanming was fifteen years of age, and in 390 A.D., he was twenty-five. Growing from

adolescence to adulthood in such a cultural environment, Tao was heavily influenced by the teachings of Confucius, as is shown in his poem:

In my youth I cared not the world of men,
My interest lay in classical works of Confucianism.

(Fang, "Drinking Wine," 6)

One of Confucius' important ideas is that "Those who are academically successful should become officials." Men Ke, the second most prominent sage of Confucianism throughout Chinese history, advised intellectuals: "In poverty, keep your personality intact; in prosperity, try to serve the world." These ideas rooted deep in Tao's mind. Besides, Tao's family background also exerted great influence on him. Tao Yuanming's great-grandfather, Tao Kan, has been one of the founders of the Jin Dynasty, and his grandfather and father had also been high officials of the government. Tao was very proud of them. In his poem "Commanding Sons," he traces his remote ancestors who served as officials in various dynasties and mentions in particular his great-grandfather Tao Kan. Professor Li Zehou rightly pointed out that "Tao Yuanming's family history and his youthful ambition made him interested in politics" (104). Indeed, keeping in mind his forefathers' glory and the teachings of Confucianism, Tao Yuanming naturally cherished the ambition of doing something great for society and for the nation. This is in fact common among ancient Chinese intellectuals. Confucius himself traveled from one kingdom to another to persuade rulers to put his theories into practice. During the Seven Kingdoms Period, the famous patriotic poet Qu Yuan of the Chu Kingdom drowned himself in the Miluo River when the king would not accept his judicious advice and thus brought the kingdom to the verge of ruin. Later, many great poets, such as Li Bai, Du Fu, Bai Juyi, and Wang Wei of the Tang Dynasty, Su Shi, Xin Qiji and Lu You of the Song Dynasty, and Ma Zhiyuan, Wen Tianxian and Gong Zizhen of subsequent dynasties, all cherished the ambition of making a great contribution to the welfare of the nation. Under the Chinese feudal system, one had to try his luck in politics if he were to play an important role in the nation. The common root for the political ambition of ancient Chinese intellectuals was traditional Chinese culture, especially Confucianism. Professor Zhu Guangqian said, "Most Chinese poets have a Confucian background, the most notable example being Tao Yuanming and Du Fu" (43). Like many other Chinese intellectuals, Tao often expressed his political ambition in his poems:

In my youth I was full of spirit and vigor,
Carrying my sword I went strutting all alone.
The distances I covered were none too short,
From Zhangyie to Youzhou you may count the miles.

(Fang, "Poems of Ancient Style," 8)

Not only did the poet express his political ambition in verse, but he also made several attempts to make it come true. At the age of twenty-nine, he began to try his luck in politics, but "not made for the position, he returned home soon afterwards" (Xiao Tolng, 11). Later, he served under Huang Xuan several times, but all for a short time. When Tao was thirty-nine, an apparently promising political figure Liu Yu seized power. Overjoyed at the hopeful situation, Tao did not hesitate to grasp this opportunity. He decided to work for Liu Yu at once. Before leaving home, Tao composed a poem entitled "Rose of Sharon" which ends with this stanza:

Have I fallen away
From the teaching of the sages?
Should a man of forty who has accomplished nothing
Not be respected?

Greasing my cartwheel
And whipping my horse!
Though a thousand Li is very far,
Who dares not go there?

[*Translation Mine*]

Unfortunately, things turned out to be quite different from what he had expected. The ruler and his courtiers were not nearly as wise and as broad-minded as he had expected, and his judicious suggestions were often gratuitously rejected. Completely disappointed with Liu Yu, Tao Yuanming left him the next year. This in effect marked the end of Tao's interest in politics.

Apart from his ambition, there also existed another factor that drove him on to politics--the need to support his family. Although Tao was born into an official family, his father died when he was only eight. As a result, the economic condition of the family gradually deteriorated. Supporting his family with only limited yield of the fields, Tao began to know cold and hunger in middle age. As a government official was granted a regular income, he would have had no economic problems if he attained a position. Therefore, "what with poverty and an aged mother at home he began to join the petty ranks in the local prefecture" (XiaoTong, 5).

However, to earn a living as a local official, he had to observe trivial rituals and bow to his peremptory and ignorant superiors. That meant losing his freedom and personality, which was unbearable to him, because Tao, as he himself stated, was "obdurate by nature" ("A Note to Zi Yan and Other Sons"). Inevitably, he was left with two choices: he could either maintain his personality and suffer from hunger and cold, or abandon his integrity in order to keep the body whole. The poet's answer was to keep his personality intact in spite of physical suffering:

There was a time when hunger oppressed me;
I threw away my hoe, I donned the official cap.
But should I lose my soul by keeping the body whole?
Rather welcome hunger and cold, native to my fate.

(Fang, "Drinking Wine," 20)

Tao Yuanming has a well-known motto, "I would never bow to the yoke for five pecks of grain!" This reflects a major aspect of Tao's character, which remains one of the most important reasons for the respect he has enjoyed among Chinese intellectuals throughout the centuries.

Consequently, Tao resigned from his local position and returned to his long-cherished pastoral home. Shortly after that, he wrote "Ode: Come Away Home" to express his joy of living in the natural world. In this ode, the poet tells us that he has followed a wrong track in pursuing a career in politics. Having returned to Nature, he has now found his real fulfillment and the right way of living. By describing his homecoming process and the leisurely pastoral life that he appreciates so much, the poet makes vivid and unmistakable his disgust with the corrupted official life and his pleasure after casting off the fetters of official court. As Li Zehou pointed out, Tao Yuanming is the man "who truly finds happiness of life and consolation of the soul in rural life" (105).

The above analysis shows that Wordsworth returned to Nature because he hated the city life during the industrial revolution, whereas Tao Yuanming returned to Nature because he was fed

up with politics. Although they both returned to Nature, their reasons for doing so were not nearly the same. Yet, though they had different reasons for turning to Nature, their motivation was quite similar: they both wanted to cast off the shackles that bound them in order to lead a free, unfettered life.

From this analysis, we see that it was Tao Yuanming's original desire to have a political career and realize his long-cherished ambition. But, unfortunately, he lived in dark political times. Besides, taking an official position meant the loss of his personality, which he regarded as the most precious thing in him. Therefore, he had no way out but to turn to Nature. If politics were not so dark and dirty at the time, if his superiors would have listened to him, and if he could have retained his personality intact while keeping an official position, he would not have spent his life in the country. Instead, he would probably have been a man of politics and eventually have become a high government official. The following stanza is convincing evidence of the roles of politics and Nature in Tao's mind:

Our ancient sage left us his teaching:
"Worry not about poverty, but society."
That being beyond my ability,
I therefore turned to my fields.

("Composed in My Country House in Early Spring," *Translation Mine*)

But in the case of Wordsworth, it was quite different. Wordsworth loved Nature wholeheartedly. His feeling toward Nature was so deep that even the best university in Britain--Cambridge University--did not appeal to him. According to himself, the highlight of his college years was a walking tour through France and Switzerland undertaken with his friend, Robert Jones (Harris and Abbey, 382). After he left Cambridge, Wordsworth refused to take any profession because a profession would deprive him of his freedom to roam about in the natural world, and a certain spirit of independence warned him against taking orders. "All professions are attended with great inconvenience" (Darbshire, XII). Thus, he defied the wishes of his friends and guardians, and for four years indulged himself in "willful idleness."

Evidently, to Wordsworth, Nature was of paramount importance. He put the enjoyment and communication with Nature above everything else. Nature to him "was all in all," as he told us in "Tintern Abbey." Although Wordsworth showed his dislike for the industrialized city and turned to Nature to escape it, yet from his whole-hearted love for Nature, it is safe to say that even without his dislike for industrial civilization, he would still turn to Nature and become a Nature poet. This presents a contrast between Wordsworth and Tao Yuanming: the English poet "loves Nature for its own sake alone" (Bloom, 1971, 46), while his Chinese counterpart would like to have had a political career, but returns to Nature after he had failed.

This difference exists not only between Tao Yuanming and Wordsworth, but also between most Chinese and English poets. As I stated above, most ancient Chinese intellectuals were educated under the teachings of Confucius and cherished a political aspiration. Besides, the long existing system of *Keju* (selecting officials through examinations) encouraged many intellectuals to take a political career. Only those who excelled in the examinations could become officials and had a bright future before them. But, unfortunately, the emperors were not always so wise, the political situation was not always good, and the poets' political careers were more often than not unsuccessful. Inevitably, they found themselves in an awkward situation: on the one hand, they showed great interest in politics; on the other, they had to escape and avoid politics. Apart from Tao Yuanming, other poets such as Ruan Ji, Wang Wei, Du Fu and Su Shi are notable examples of this contradiction. Alas! A tragedy of many ancient Chinese intellectuals.

In the West, there was no tradition of poets becoming officials, and there was no system of *Keju* (selecting officials through examination). Consequently, most Western poets cherish little

desire for political positions, and Western Nature poets, such as Keats, William Cullen Bryant, and Robert Frost, did not turn to Nature out of disappointment in politics. Like Wordsworth, they loved Nature for her own sake. The cause of this difference between Chinese and Western poets lies in their different cultural backgrounds.

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The Wife of Bath's Triumphant Departure from Patriarchal Ideology

by Alexandra Wilde Langley

"That I have had my world as in my tyme."

Our first introduction to Dame Alys in the *General Prologue* presents us with a *wife*; her gender alone describes her role in society. That she is a cloth-maker, for instance, is secondary matter, which does not even surface in her own prologue or tale, (though many may see her prologue and tale as a finely textured, though perhaps somewhat gauche, tapestry); on the other hand, all the other Canterbury pilgrims (save that of the narrator-figure Chaucer) are defined and classified by their positions and trades. And yet it is precisely this: for Dame Alys wifehood/womanhood is her position and trade; her life experience is a *seemingly* inescapable consequence of "auctoritee"--the authority of the fathers of the church and the antifeminist literature she so often calls to witness, the authority of clerical "glossing" or exegesis of holy writ.

In a very real sense, the Wife of Bath is a personification of the antifeminist glosses, "an embodiment of the letter of the text as Jerome has imaged it in his paradigm of proper reading" (Dinshaw 114). As such she is a grotesque. The equation generally goes something like this: the Wife of Bath is the sum of her "experience," that is, something in great part as a consequence of "auctoritee," which is the ideology belonging to antifeminist literature. And this is just the way she has been viewed by critics, even those from quite opposite camps--the traditional critics, like D.W. Robertson, Jr. who side with the medieval clerk's attitudes toward women, and the feminist critics, who are opposed to the Robertsonians in principle, but agree with an interpretation of the wife as a fulfillment of clerical (*i.e.*, masculine) exegesis. This paper will examine how Alisoun of Bath in fact *transcends* "auctoritee" in her presentation of herself₁ by exposing the injustice of patriarchal misogyny--revealing it in the shape of herself, outwitting it in her arguments, and (most importantly) showing how she exists outside of its narrow definition of what a woman should be.

The Wife of Bath's tapestry--warp, weft, yarns and all--if we can force the metaphor, warrants the scrutiny it receives. It is a difficult text, and it is natural that she should be continually misunderstood, labeled everything from comic to psychopathic. Not surprisingly has she, long recognized as the fulfillment of masculine expectations, generated controversy and opposing readings. Relatively recent, and for quite some time definitive, critical interpretations of the Wife recognized in her certain qualities which, apparently, marked her as woman. Robertson, for example, gives us this reading: "the Wife of Bath is a literary personification of rampant 'femininity' or carnality; and her exegesis is, in consequence, rigorously carnal and literal" (321). The point of course should be that her exegesis is not a consequence of her femininity at all, but rather vice versa: her "femininity" is a consequence of patriarchal exegesis of her. Robertson adopts not only medieval Christian ideology, but embraces medieval misogyny as well:

Alisoun of Bath is not a "character" in the modern sense at all, but an elaborate iconographic figure designed to show the manifold implications of an attitude. She is, in some ways, typically "feminine," but the femininity she represents was in Chaucer's day a philosophical rather than a psychological concept. That she still seems feminine to us is a tribute to the justness of ideas which produced her (330-31).

And Robertson is not alone:

[The Wife] herself is a grotesque exemplar of most of the female vices: nagging, scolding, deceiving, chiding, grumbling, spending, gossiping, lying and betraying. She is vain, egotistic, hypocritical, . . . possessive and licentious. Chaucer brilliantly catches the smothering destructiveness of females in these lines (Wittcock 124).

What these readings blatantly overlook is the Wife, as a manifestation of masculine paranoia, as an exemplar, in all her grotesqueness, points to the *un*-justness of the ideas which produced her. In Alisoun's world, womankind is forbidden to be anything but a travesty (of one sort or the other), if the scriptural glosses are granted respect.

That she is a victim of the prevailing misogyny is certain--what else could she be? And yet she is hardly "imprisoned by the antifeminism of her culture," as some contemporary feminist critics have argued (Weissman 105). To see her as a casualty, trapped within or even between the lines of patriarchal exegesis and stereotyping, is to neglect the sense that emerges from her presentation. To read her as one who so defies basic feminist ideals that one critic could write: "So far I find nothing of the feminist in her, unless one chooses to define a feminist as a tricky combatant who loves to persecute men" (Diamond 70) is to overlook her design. It is not with trickery, but with some planning and the skill and knowledge resulting from "experience" that the Wife weaves her argument, in which "auctoritee" is combatted, but even more importantly, it is revealed by the Other's point of view, and--crucially--revealed for what it is worth exactly. The Wife presents, in effect, a gloss on the antifeminist glossing, an interpretation of the interpretation. The gloss manifest. She appears as an absolute "nightmare" (Diamond 70) because she is performing the role she is expected to play. Yet far from "prov[ing] in her own person the correctness of everything in Jankyn's book [of wicked wives]" (Diamond 71), she offers the subject in her own person, and does so without truly subjecting herself, for, as the revealer, she becomes the agent rather than the subject. The Wife of Bath's purpose is to expose antifeminism, "To speke of wo that is in mariage" (3). And doing so is her triumph.

And yet the Wife is like the realization of Aladdin's wishes: once materialized, the truth (*i.e.*, the antifeminist word) is recognized for its shortcomings. One would hope.

Nevertheless, critics of both camps respond to the Wife's performance (she is, as some have noted, *sermonizing* before that sondry folk) without the recognition that she is self-consciously adopting a role prescribed by the Latin glossators, the sort of role described in Jankyn's book. Feminist critic Arlyn Diamond, remonstrating against such critics as Robertson, issues the following complaint:

"Experience" is female, "auctoritee" male. "Auctoritee" tells us that Chaucer's portrait of the Wife of Bath is a masterpiece of insight into the female character. Yet the general consensus on this point, which is familiar to anyone who has read Chaucerian scholarship, does not convince me. My disbelief is based on my inability to recognize myself or the women I know, or have known in history, in this figure compounded of masculine insecurities and female vices as seen by misogynists (68).

One would hope Ms. Diamond would never encounter such a creature as Dame Alys in the flesh for she is a self-made caricature, a flagrant exposé of the masculine text. If the Wife of Bath cuts a figure formed, (or, rather, deformed) by patriarchal definition, she actively resists the very "maistrie" that has made her until finally it is clear she has fashioned herself to suit the occasion, to suit her purpose. One might say all Alys wants her audience to recognize is how ludicrous masculine expectations really are. She may not, in fact, be a feminist, but her moral--if we allow such a word--is, if not feminist, then at best one which attempts to disaffirm antifeminism. She seems to be saying, "You asked for it? You got it." And so she will nag, scold, deceive, and so forth (see Wittcock above), but throughout it all, the Wife achieves control, "maistrie" of the situation.

Her method involves a bit of chicanery, but it does so by necessity--for she exists to fulfill stereotypes and thereby divulge their wrong. Her method shows commandment: she knows authority as well as she knows experience. And experience argues that the word of authority distorts and lies. The Wife's application of glosses and proverbs consistently points to her message. In the opening of her prologue, she counters Jerome's gloss of the Bible. She demonstrates her failure to perceive the logic in Jerome's supposition "That sith that Crist ne went but onis/To weddyng, in the Cane of Galille,/That by the same ensample taughte he me/That I ne sholde wedded be but ones" (10-13); by simply reiterating the gloss, she reveals the fallaciousness of patriarchal reasoning. The biblical source (John, ii, 1-2) presents no such lesson. Likewise, she continues:

"Herkne eek, lo, which a sharp word for the nones
Biside a welle, Jhesus, God and man,
Spak in repreeve of the Samaritan:
'Thou hast yhad fyve housbondes, 'quod he,
'And that ilke man that now hath thee
Is noght thyn housbonde,' thus seyde he certeyn.
What that he mente therby, I kan nat seyn . . ." (14-20).

Her audience need only consider the source to recognize that the biblical story (John, iv, 5-26) has nothing whatever to do with a reproof of marriage or bigamy or "octagamy," as Jerome would have it, but serves to illustrate the prophetic wisdom of Christ. And so subtly does the Wife again controvert the prevailing doctrines of her time.

Alisoun's clever appropriations include allusions to the classics as well as the Bible.² And it becomes increasingly clear throughout her presentation that there is always a meaning beneath the surface. This subterfugal method supports the idea that the Wife is keenly aware of her unvarying motive, of the self she presents. The Wife's resourceful use of allusion is one of the strengths of her argument. Still, her prologue and tale captivate us as they do because her experience is individualized.

Her depiction of her first three husbands establishes the ground rules of medieval misogyny (which Alisoun of course defines, as Theophrastus might expect), both in her responses to patriarchal texts and in the manifestation of antifeminist stereotypes she presents. These unions boil down to cold, hard "sexual economics," to borrow Sheila Delany's term. Her account of these early marriages gives her an opportunity to exploit every antifeminist stereotype there is: she boasts of deceiving, nagging, sexually taunting, wearing out, and bribing these old husbands. With all of her "Thou seyst's" and "seistow's," it becomes increasingly clear that Alisoun is generalizing: all three husbands represent upholders of antifeminist stereotypes. She likewise universalizes her condition as woman's condition, a catch-22 in the mire of medieval ideology:

But folkes of wyves maken noon assay,
Till they be wedded--old dotard shrewe--

And thanne, seistow, we wol oure vices shewe (290-92).

And yet it is in her account of her fourth husband that we, as her audience, truly sense her personal rage and exactly what she has had to forfeit in her life experience. She describes the husband who was not true to her:

My fourthe housbonde was a revelour--
This is to seyn, he hadde a paramour--
And I was yong and ful of ragerye,
Stibourn and strong, and joly as a pye.
How koud I daunce to an harpe smale,
And synge, ywis, as any nyghtyngale,
Whan I had dronke a draughte of sweete wyn
Metellious the foule cherl, the swyn,
That with a staf birafte his wyf her lyf . . . (453-61).

The imagery of her youth is joyful, wanton, free. She equates her fourth husband's betrayal with the murder performed by Metellius of his wife; her youthful happiness has likewise been put to an end by a husband. The digressive remembrance of her youth, which occurs a few lines later and which follows so closely on the word "experience" (468), confirms her sense of loss as a direct result of experience. Clearly, Alys does more than fulfill stereotypes; she vehemently opposes injustice. Clearly, her experience proves to be more than a mere by-product of anti-feminist authority; her past, her youth, as she describes it, shows a *joie de vivre* that exists outside of and in spite of masculine expectations. And of course, even if only temporarily, this is what Alys regains in her tale.

If we reexamine the last line cited above, "That with a staf birafte his wyf her lyf," we cannot overlook the analogy to the knight's rape of the maiden in her tale. This line reinforces the connection between the prologue and the tale and unifies the singular message it is her purpose to deliver. Just as the Wife corresponds to the hag, so does she correspond to the maiden. Indeed, we must say that the prominent women in her tale are all allegorical manifestations of the Wife herself (just as the knight of her tale represents masculine authority--the husbands and glossators of her world). It is the Wife's dream that the maiden shall obtain justice. And in the guise of the loathly lady, she does achieve such a justice. So a possible function of her tale is to provide a new text to correct the old.

And yet her tale's ending seems to much to be a concession, a surrender to masculine will. It poses *the* essential problem for the feminist critic. Hope Phyllis Weissman, who is cited above, decries: "The Wife of Bath is most truly the feminist in her efforts to dispense with images of women altogether, but the Wife of Bath is also imprisoned by the antifeminism of her culture, for in her tale's conclusion the image becomes her will" (105). Given woman's stature in Alisoun's time, it is practically a given that, like the maiden in her tale, what happens to her happens "maugree her heed,/By verray force" (887-88). And yet we miss the mark if we read the tale's conclusion simply as the realization of misogyny.

What, then, are we to make of that "fairy tale" ending? Feminist critical response is somewhat persuasive and altogether predictable. Weissman's argument continues:

This promise of imminent gratification becomes the young knight's signal; the moral conundrum which she now presents to him he refers back to her with perfect security, for his gesture of submissiveness is actually the psychological trap which the lonely old wife has prepared for her fall. The knight's guise of relinquishing the mastery springs the mechanism which maneuvers the wife into using her powers of self-determination against herself. Willingly she uses them

to transform into the courtly damsel men most desire--and women only because they most desire men's love (109-10).

Such a reading forces several questions. Is not the dilemma the knight faces in his marriage bed a by-product of patriarchal ideology? (An option found in the analogues to the Wife's tale, in Ovid?) Is his relinquishment merely a guise, a gesture? Can we assume that the quite malignant knight in this instance can foresee the outcome of his submission? And is the desire of men's love the true reason that the hag is transformed? The love of the knight might be her laurels, but an even greater prize is her reformation of his authority. Indeed, the hag's earlier avowal: "I nolde for al the metal, ne for oore/That under erthe is grave or lith above,/ But if thy wyf I were, and eek thy love," (1064-66) seems more a ransom demand than it does a longing. For if we believe the hag is sincere in her speech about "gentillesse," "poverty," and "elde" (1107-1212), we are to understand that such possessions mean very little to her--just as, perhaps, the knight does.

In another feminist critique of the tale, Arlyn Diamond sees a knight who "gain[s] from his crime the perfect wife 'trewe' and 'humble', one who will never act against his wishes, and who will always be beautiful for him" (72). The wife's final curse (1258-1264), according to Diamond, "is vitiated by the message of the tale itself. The most aggressively virile males need not be afraid--even witches will capitulate to their need of masculinity, if they are given some token of respect (73). Of course it is the reader's inclination to wince at the hag's reconciliation, her apparent reward for the knight's crimes. But the question that begs to be answered is whether this is token respect. Is not the knight, in his marriage bed, face to face with an additional sentence for his crime: he must confront the antifeminist text personified--a wife who will be old, ugly and true or a wife who will be young and fair and untrustworthy. Does not his acquiescence free her (i.e., the wife/hag as embodiment of the text) from the curse set upon her by patriarchal discourse? Might it not follow that once the stereotypes are done away with, there can be a balance achieved in marriage; that once the brutal, masculine force that the knight represents is subdued, there can be a happily-ever-after ending?

Well, the Wife of Bath, given her experience, can hardly believe so. The very real battle for sovereignty is a battle against harmony and balance. Alisoun probably recognizes this as she invalidates the fairy tale couple's "parfit joye" to deliver her malediction, and, even just prior to that final outcry, she has uncovered "the achievement of respectful relationships of husband and wife" for what it truly is in her experience and lore--"only a fantasy" (Dinshaw 130).

And yet she *has* her fantasy, and the true nature of that fantasy is worth examination. Consider her nostalgic longing for lost youth, for the days when she was "joy as a pye" and "koude . . . daunce to an hapre smale,/ And synge . . . as any nyghtyngale." The Wife apostrophizes:

But--Lord Crist!--whan that it remembreth me
Upon my oywthe, and on my jolitee,
It tikleth me aboute myn herte roote.
Unto this day it dooth myn herte boote
That I have had my world as in my tyme.
But age, allas, that al wole envenyme,
Hath me biraft my beautee and my pith.
Lat go! Farewel! The devel go therwith! (469-76).

The hag's transformation must be viewed as a wish-fulfillment that allows the Wife the fantasy of regaining that which was lost or even taken away. The hag's transformation, accordingly, is hardly a surrender to masculine desire, but a personal triumph for the Wife. If in her tale and prologue and nowhere else, Alisoun of Bath in her holds the "bridel in [hir] hond" (813). She has had her world in her time.

And yet her final curse indicates that the triumph is only partial. Alas, as long as there exists that incompatibility between patriarchal ideology and the feminine, as long as that unjust ideology forces itself upon the feminine, there will always be woe between men and women. And this is Chaucer's point.

NOTES

¹ I treat the Wife of Bath as a character who exercises deliberate self-presentation. The reader should of course keep in mind that outside of the Wife's self-presentation is Chaucer's presentation of her.

² One of Alisoun's more clever appropriations is her allusion to Ovid's tale of Midas. Lee Patterson, in what seems to be the most cogent explanation of the retold-tale-within-a-tale provides the following postulate:

[In Ovid] the ears have a crucial significance. They are Midas' punishment for his foolish incapacity as a listener: called upon to judge between Pan's satyr songs and Apollo's divine hymns, he all too eagerly chose the carnal before the spiritual, the body before the mind (657).

Here we encounter an instance in which what seems to be a gender-demeaning sentiment--women cannot keep secrets (950)--is not so at all. With Patterson's reading, we can how this allusion to Ovid relates to her tale of the knight who rapes the maiden and must learn twice from his mistakes, like Midas. Carried further, we draw the fundamental connection between the knight as Midas and the husbands and glossators of the prologue. Alisoun's retelling of the tale is perhaps one of the most persuasive examples of her motive.

³ See Leicester for an interesting discussion of the Wife of Bath's subversion of the tale's analogues. Leicester cites E. T. Donaldson's description of her sources in which the "real point [is to] demonstrate the courtesy of the hero who weds the hag uncomplainingly and treats her as if she were the fairest lady in the land," who shows virtue in his actions. "In Chaucer," Leicester quotes Donaldson, "the polite knight becomes a convicted rapist who keeps his vow only under duress and in the sulkiest possible manner." Leicester continues:

I take the differences in detail and structure between Chaucer's version of the tale and its analogues as evidence of the speaker's agency, evidence that the wife knows the traditional version, recognizes its male bias, and deliberately alters it to make her own feminist message more pointed and more polemical (141).

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DECONSTRUCTION AND COMPOSITION

Richard A. Hamilton, Jr.

The Postmodern literary theory known as "deconstruction" is essentially not a literary theory at all, but a critique of the logocentric nature of Western metaphysics. Those following in the footsteps of Jacques Derrida's playful romp through Plato, Rousseau, Saussure, Levi-Strauss, Husserl and Freud, (among others), have broadened the initial focus away from primarily philosophic treatises to include literary works as well. This effort seems particularly apropos when one considers what has influenced Western literature (even before it was named, as such) is exactly that "metaphysics of presence," that is evident in all areas of thought, especially in the Humanities. Through a thorough and rigorous regimen of questioning the "close reader" arrives at the endpoint or origin of meaning, but for the deconstructionist there is no end or origin--in fact, it is precisely these "end-points" or "origins" of interpretation, (and language in general, as the interpretation of experience), that a deconstructionist perceives as a "loose end," as the underlying presupposition from which the bulk of the text may be unravelled (Barthes, 159).

Hence the so-called value of deconstruction: the demystification of language, in response (but not necessarily in rejection) to the "grounded" systems and hierarchies that have accumulated through time from Western traditions. Deconstruction is not a practice, but a tool: one cannot suppose to escape the tradition of logocentrism using a language that does not recognize itself as teleological, as having a definitive end or meaning. As a result the language of deconstructive criticism is increasingly obtuse in its self-awareness, and paradoxically loses the idea of "self" in the complex web of intertextuality. Deconstruction seeks to reveal the veils of "meaning" as veils, to point toward the places where language collapses in on itself, to demonstrate the instances of surety and positivist type thinking (might it be called, "convenient amnesia") that preserves the faith of the structure, and the self, by simultaneously (perhaps paradoxically) concealing and erasing the possibility of a center, of certitude, forever deferring meaning at the moment it seeks affirmation.

This is what Derrida (at least at one step in his career of the ever-evolving terminology) has seen as the "play" of a language that is always already aware of the finitude of its existence (Derrida, "Structure, Sign, Play"). If language is a closed and finite system, as Derrida here claims, then it necessarily has no origin or end; a "finite system" is a moment that is "infinitely repeatable" because it lacks a center, an "other," a transcendental "voice" or phenomenological "origin." This radical existential supposition flirts dangerously with nihilism, as many opponents of Postmodern theory are quick to point out, because once the fabric of the text is pulled apart, what are you left with but a pile of thread (Barthes, 159).

It almost seems safer, for the pure deconstructionist, to wind up with that pile of thread rather than attempting a justification for a practice that would, after all, negate the theory with dangerous *a priori* intent. Surely deconstruction, viewed as a literary theory, is a rupture with positivist and structural ideologies, but the moment it attempts a reconstitution of meaning, based on yet another linguistic model, it fails miserably, it falls back into the arena of logocentrism, it overreaches its limited aims and is as guilty (or perhaps even more guilty) of

supplanting itself into a hierarchy it has sought to dismantle. So it goes with most revolutions, and it is hard to see how and where deconstruction might escape this fate.

The Possibility of a Question

All this is here mentioned to provide the background for the continuing debate on whether or not a deconstruction of language might be of any use to a composition instructor, or if in fact the relegation of deconstructive theory in the composition classroom is truly the death of deconstruction. Any way you want to look at it, it seems inevitably like a violent and bloody affair. Before this (provocative?) phase may be reached, however, deconstruction must first come to terms with the positivist process models of composition instruction already instituted and grinding away like a well-oiled machine. Guilty of predetermined forms and styles and manners of composing that are defended paradoxically by citing the "freedom" and "empowerment" of the individual voice, of creating a "dialogue" between discordant parties that result in the "liberation" of the man and woman from the structures of subjugation, positivist composition theory ultimately forgets or suppresses the inevitable: "process" is geared toward "product."

Yet a similar dim outlook on deconstruction would perhaps be relevant here. Imagine walking into a classroom without a structured syllabus, where there was no "objective" standard for grading, where men and women encountered one another through insurmountable incommunicability, where the "voice" was disputed for mere rhetorics and recombinations of readily available material, where there was no escape from solitary existence through expression. Students would indeed be encouraged to master syntax, but only so far as it is perceived as sophistry. Students would be asked to revel in the game of life by playing with the language in all of its supplemental glory, through shrewd and economical critiques of texts that are ultimately agreed to say nothing new, to mean nothing more than the death of meaning, to simply be unimportant. The total effect of the class is a consensus of nothingness, that time and history are but manufactures of man, that we are doomed, whatever we do, to repeat the process.

Perhaps both instances are overstated, but to a point: is there the possibility of any pure theory? Does practice necessarily dictate a compromise of ideology? Often it seems that proponents of these diverse "methodologies" are often either too adamant to accept a discussion between theories or too fearful to tread from a safer middle course. Neither of these positions on position are plausible, especially the latter. Yet it would appear that the latter is exactly the sort of trap that theorist, and this paper, would fall into. What happens when theorists start tinkering and adapting otherwise "simple" theoretical ideas and turn them into complex practices--practices that bear little resemblance to philosophy, practices that carry with them elaborate rationalizations that seek not clarity, ultimately, but justification. Yet even when I speak of "simple" philosophies I err, for if it is possible for them to be known in such a way (*i.e.*, pure, virginal, "whole," to use a loaded term) then they must also be ineluctably complex, products themselves of any realm of knowledge and desire, parts of things that are no longer of the things they started from, *etc.* In this case, the practice devised would be a simplification itself, a fractured piece of the whole doled out to an expectant audience. Where does one stand if one cannot, on the one hand, be completely a purist, or, on the other hand, completely yoke together the heterogeneity of ideas, of theory with theory, practice with practice, theory with practice, *etc.*, *ad infinitum*? Perhaps the question is unanswerable, but does that make it not worth asking? What appeal to "worth" are we making? I believe such questions lead to an approach which does not necessarily seek an answer, but further questions, and that it might unlock the treasure chest of language for ourselves and for our students. If there is yet another box inside the chest, so be it.

If the possibility of such a "question" that does not necessarily need an answer is

granted, then justification and clarification of matters informing our own "potential" answer become moot points. Instead, it might be helpful to look at these matter without feeling the gravitational pull of their theological, moral, or political weight, in other words, to extract them from their "context-cultural" surroundings, to momentarily (assume/believe) that they are separate issues that merit our full (yet detached) attention, and that through such a separation we might re-place them in light of a fair and equitable re-ordering of possibility. That this always exists as a possibility never actually realized is essential. I should be an "impossible possibility." Once there is the hint of suggestion that this re-ordering is anything but manipulative and illusory we have breached our complicity with the text. Is an "expression" of intellectual curiosity that seeks nothing more than the exercise itself without value in and of itself? Aren't these habits of mind what we would engender in our student?

Commenting on Commentators

Curiously, deconstruction is perceived as either completely nihilistic and abysmal or empowering and liberating. Commentators who perceive "either/or" forget the flip-side "both/and;" even more curiously they seek justification where none can be due. The temptation is to strike a balance where everything is always already off-kilter. The desire for a "stable ground" from which to operate is "difference," written "in the text of our selves" (Spivak, Introduction to *Of Grammatology*).

It has already been well developed by Nicholas C. Burbles and Suzanne Rice ["Dialogue across the Differences: Continuing the Conversation," *Harvard Education Review*, 61, 4, (November 1991)] that Postmodernist applications can manifest themselves in polar opposition, *i.e.*, the difference between the "Postmodernist" who "reappropriate[s] and expand[s] modernist concepts such as democracy, liberty, rights, citizenship" (394) and who inevitably provides for the "grounding of community on more flexible and less homogeneous assumptions" (402), and the "antimodernist" who wants merely to reject the old modernist assumptions wholesale without reappropriating them, who posits no "positive" emphasis to the liberation from modernism, and who ultimately leads an argument for the sake of itself, into an *aporia*. This distinction between the post/anti modernist viewpoints is manifested throughout the essay as "important" and "helpful," but only to set the trap for the ultimate rejection of the "rejectors"--the antimodernists--because in the end it is viewed as "unsustainable either intellectually or practically," and is a "deep understanding of the nature of difference" (401).

Because the Postmodern view is more "defensible" than the antimodern, it is perceived as a more proper interpretation of all Postmodern intent. In fact, the article by Burbles and Rice goes on to discuss exclusively the ramifications of a Postmodernism that is viewed not as a break or rupture with modern positivism, but as a "bridge" between them. The critical component of the "bridge" is dialogue--from within and without the traditions and experiences of diverse groups--that helps to foster a "framework of understanding" (405). Yet this "dialogue" they would foster has already been established through the suppression of the "antimodern" view that dialogue is impossible. The article seeks to strike a balance between two viewpoints, but the possibility that antimodernism ultimately rejects "consensus" altogether is too much of risk for the argument, so it is excluded. How is it that the different "degrees" of understanding (seemingly diversity of the parties involved, as if exposure is necessarily going to enable liberation? How dialogue both fosters understanding and maintains difference is questionable. The main purpose of the argument seeks to clothe the old positivist belief into a "new" rhetoric that is deceptively labeled as "Postmodern."

It should become very clear that any notion of "dialogue" to a deconstruction-styled practice is a shaky endeavor, for a number of reasons. Primarily, dialogue supposes individual speakers. There are no individuals in the deconstructive classroom. This would suppose the romantic movement's notion of "voice." We have talked about the different "communities" and

even "levels of discourse" in the classroom, but always as a way of placating so called socialist or Marxist pedagogues, and eventually reiterating the importance of the participation of the individual, specific student, the final atom in the great molecular structure we have come to know as American Education. We have indeed romanticized our own heritage, and we need to keep ourselves believing that every voice is important, that every person can and does make a difference in the balance of the classroom. For all our individualism, however, the key point is the balance, *i.e.*, "consensus."

John Trimbur's point ["Consensus and Difference in Collaborative Learning," *College English*, 51, 6, (October 1989)] is that Kenneth Bruffe's desire for establishing a collaborative "classroom language" is a Utopian idea that is naively centered upon an ideal speech situation, a conversation that adequately conveys thought and knowledge in a clear and simple manner. "Thought is internalized conversation," Bruffe writes, "thought and conversation tend to work largely in the same way" ["Collaborative Learning and the Conversation of Mankind," *College English*, 46, 7 (November 1984), 639]. Hence for Bruffe collaborative learning is a "natural" extension of mankind's capacity to communicate and interpret meanings. Bruffe's students "converse about and as a part of understanding. In short, they learn, by practicing it in this orderly way, the normal discourse of the academic community" (643). Trimbur's view is a bit more sophisticated. In order to avoid interpretation that is "orderly" and part of a "normal discourse," which itself is a construct of preexisting hierarchies of control and domination, he proposes a consensus that "depends paradoxically on its students achieving consensus . . . as in their using consensus as a critical instrument to open gaps in the conversation through which differences may emerge" (614). In this manner manifestation of alternative solutions to the problem of domination and control, a "heterogeneity without hierarchy" (615).

This type of alternative thinking, this type potential visualization, of making the impossible momentarily possible, is essential to deconstructive criticism, and especially fostering analytic and critical thinking in our students. Indeed, the idea of seeing alternatives, both sides, (but of particularly how both sides are manifest in and dependant upon the other) is not a new one. Ann Berthoff has been talking about the "dialectical" process of discovery for years now, the notion of "tolerating ambiguities," (the invisible lines that blur the distinction between dichotomies), of using these moments, these ruptures of incomplete expression or rationalization, as the starting point for writing instruction.

How then is this process of "recognizing ambiguities" and then "tolerating" them any different from a deconstructive critic who simply assumes that the ambiguities are illusory? For Berthoff meanings "emerge" through this process, for a deconstructionist the process only pushes meaning further away, makes it all that more unreachable. In a sense, the choice is an intensely personal one. However, surely the "analogy" that Berthoff (and her hero, I.A. Richards) believes in can be viewed in either case: analogy can (momentarily) be accepted as a representative expression, yet always with the possibility of further clarification, or analogy can be denied as expressing or representing anything, other than itself, and then not even that, because further atomization of the analogy leads to further analogies into infinity. Clearly this is again the choice between the New Critic and the Postmodernist. It is also the debate between rational and irrational philosophy.

In her article "Rhetoric as Hermeneutic," Berthoff lambastes deconstruction as a practice of indeterminate "golly-gee wonderment," where texts are read (or misread) in a "new mystical mode . . . [where] my misreading is probably more provocative than yours" [*College Composition and Communication* 42, (October 1991, 280)]. Without accepting even the slightest bit of credence in Postmodern theory, Berthoff goes on to relate a methodology that refutes the Saussurian semiotics in favor of Peirce's "triadic" semiotics, which in fact (but not according to Berthoff's interpretation) are an expression of Postmodern ideas. The very criterion for our ability to mediate language, to be the "Third" that Berthoff talks about, is that the reference of

language is indefinite ultimately. Derrida, after a discussion of Peirce's semiosis in *Of Grammatology* notes that "the thing itself is a sign" (Derrida, 107). The indefiniteness of the thing in some manner legitimates Berthoff's desire to be a "mediator" between language and the world.

Desire to Understand

So much of a writer's *angst* comes from the desire to have something important to say-- something meaningful, something true. This is, in a sense, what is at stake when we enter the game of college: there is some element of anxiety about what the words that get down on paper have actually pinned there; are we making sense or are we fools? Deconstruction theory demystifies the illusion of language: that there is a key to the code, that the signifier has even the remotest connection to the sign. Words seen not as the embodiment of meaning themselves, but as vessels that have the potential to carry meaning, many meanings, simultaneously lose their hypnotic effect and gain greater effectiveness when used by the writer. Berthoff talks about the consciousness of consciousness in the dialectic process of writing, Freire talks about the *conscientization* of writers who view the world differently once they abstract themselves from it and recognize that they are subjects. In both cases we see a removal from the self, an awakening to the "swerve of origin" that writing (as supplement to the immediate, self-presence of speech) takes and turns into its own system of swerving, of differentiation from the other. Moffett as well wants to move the writer away from the internal "dialogue" toward further and further abstraction. In all these senses, then, a deconstructive approach to writing permits students be very aware of the language they use and how they use it (which is what we want), and not try to reinvent the wheel.

Which is exactly what structural interpretation (and, hence, a structural approach to composition) desires to accomplish. No written work can really mean anything. My students have cornered me on more than one occasion this semester with the questions, "What does this mean," or "What do you think this means," and so on. When I answer that a) it could mean anything and b) it doesn't matter what I think it means, (that is, if it could mean anything who is to say I am right, that I have some sort of shared intentional complicity with the author), they are very dubious, as is to be expected: traditional structural interpretation supposes the old idea about intentionality, that a writer has an intent to convey certain ideas that he wishes, and that "good" or close readers have a better chance at finding out the answers to the riddles he presents, as the structure is revealed to the reader. But this also presupposes that our language has inherent internal structures. Students were taught that once they recognized the structure (which in many instances was nothing but a mere conventionality) they would be led, willy-nilly, to meaning, if the teacher had not blundered and already pointed that out. The text, therefore, becomes a static, "canonical" force that defies the critical judgment. There is a true meaning-- the teacher has said so--and pointed to renowned scholars to back up her version of it. It is no wonder students come to expect the gallery of the Great Minds of History to come to their rescue, to tell them what it means and to rescue them from any thinking on their own. A deconstructive approach demystifies this self-justifying agenda and throws the student back into the primordial "chaos" of unordered experience from which the text found its analogies.

Language does not exist as an artifact of knowledge: it is important for composition teachers to realize that writing probably reflects as much uncertainty and fear as it does some relatively stable and abstract "standard" that the individual student is measured against. What is this constant obsession with "grading" anyway? As teachers, we wonder why our students are motivated more toward the trivial alphanumerical value we place on their work than with what has been learned and integrated into their system of knowledge and beliefs. How does one stress that these communities of discourse we admit our students to should be vivified through their inclusion, instead of continuously excluding new dialogue within our discipline? No matter how objective and fair the grading system you propose, it is still subject to scrutiny on some level that surpasses its whole ethical and moral basis--whether you use politics, religion, or some

appeal to a transcendent ideal, the final say in judgment of a writer is that he or she either rests on the scales of your belief or remains outside the realm of your justice.

That is, in another fashion, accepting your provisional status as an interpreter engaged with a text at a particular time in a particular place. There is no escape from the temporality of individual existence, we will always read and re-read texts on the basis of what is known now that was not known yesterday, and our knowledge of these things will obviously alter our perception of what is being read. We should come to expect that the reader of an historical document or literary text from a previous century will find it elementally anachronistic, displaced from the milieu that fashioned its conventional arrangement and mode of expression. But whether or not we allow those relative perceptions and biases to influence the historical or literary worth of such texts is another matter entirely.

Desire for an End

Sometimes I think deconstruction is a nice joke that TA's can play on/have with their professors. It perhaps presents more problems than it is prepared to deal with, and perhaps this has always been the problem with intellectual curiosity. The vision of the totality of language that deconstruction catches in the shadows, the glimpses, the reflections, can only be hinted at and alluded to through an imperfect medium.

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IRVING HOWE'S VIEW OF THE QUESTION SECTION IN *THE SOUND AND THE FURY*.

Guerita Gilmour

Irving Howe, in an essay on William Faulkner's novel, *The Sound and the Fury*, maintains that Quentin Compson's section is stylistically and creatively inferior to Benjy's section, an assertion that negates the essential genius of the chapter: Faulkner's ability to intertwine passionate and universal themes and emotions through the hauntingly believable, self-destructive journey of Quentin's riddled mind.¹ The brilliance of technique employed in Benjy's passage is self-evident, yet in no way negates the more intricate artistry of Quentin's section, in which we are carried into the inferno of a psyche while simultaneously exposed to the roots of his torment through a labyrinth of complexly layered themes and strikingly disturbing emotional images. Nowhere do we hear the voice of William Faulkner. It is Quentin Compson, who evokes in us a sense of the burdens of history, family, and the struggle for self-definition; an accomplishment that Irving Howe's interpretation has relegated to the stance of a one-dimensional tale of sexual obsession.

Irving Howe views Quentin's section as a monologue on a boy's preoccupation with virginity, stating that "the whole section, and particularly the running debate between Quentin and his father, requires us to assume that he is meant as a center of intelligence, an ethical agent, and a critic," when in fact he is "too weak, too passive, too bewildered for the role of sensitive hero . . . , merely a psychological case" (p. 168). Howe continues, contending that the symbolism in Quentin's chapter is "imposed," and often inaccurate, citing as an example the supposition

that Faulkner wishes us to take Quentin as a modern, if lesser, Hamlet figure--thoughtful, melancholy, troubled by the ways of women, [while] Quentin lacks anything that might resemble the dash and intellect of Shakespeare's character; it is surely no kindness to press upon him comparisons beyond his capacity to bear (pp. 169-70).

Howe complains that Faulkner's symbols are heavily "didactic," patterned "as if they were an end in themselves, rather than a means for validating the narrative." After quoting the window scene from the "watchmaker passage," Howe asserts that "Faulkner, not Quentin, needs the visit to the watchmaker" (pp. 170-71).

Quentin Compson's section is infinitely more complex than a clinical study of a boy's incestuous obsession. The essence of the passage lies not in Quentin's failing mental health but in the unfolding forces that drive him to that decline. Themes of alienation, family disintegration, decay of Southern tradition, perversion of Christian ethics and destruction of ideals are, in Quentin's mind, embodied in the last intact shred of honor in the Compson family--Caddy's virginity. Her "sin" violates the isolation of the Compsons, setting growth, decay and time in motion.² Her act spews chaos on a fixed world that Quentin is desperately attempting to preserve. Thus, "the total picture of a man which emerges in [Faulkner's] novels offers more inclusive insights than one finds in the clinic."³

In order to comprehend Quentin's mental degeneration, we must first examine the core of his decline and the decisive factor in his self-destruction--his relationship with his sister Caddy.

Caddy is the sole nurturing force in the Compson family; therefore, Quentin is abnormally dependent upon her. He wishes to stifle her maturation, which carries with it her inevitable departure. Quentin attempts to transform Caddy's sex into incest as a means of imprisoning her in his own fixed world. He attempts to preserve her through the "negative salvation of his suicide" and escape from time; he would rather possess Caddy in Hell's isolation than lose her.⁴ Yet, Caddy, who is not frozen in time, continues to fulfill a natural metamorphosis into womanhood.

Quentin is the product of the chivalrous social code of the South⁵, the embodiment of a fearless defense of honor and womanhood: "Father and I protect women from one another from themselves our women" (p. 119). Quentin bestows upon himself the role of protector of the Compson honor. Quentin is not only tormented by this failure to commit incest, but is equally haunted by his inability to kill Dalton Ames and his later failure to prevent Caddy from marrying Herbert Head, for "no Compson has ever disappointed a lady." He is further mortified by the realization that Dalton Ames "wasn't thinking of me at all as a potential source of harm, but was thinking of her when he looked at me was looking at me through her like a piece of coloured glass" (p. 217).

Quentin struggles to mold history. As he is preparing for suicide, he relives Father's words: "and he you wanted to sublimate a piece of natural folly into a horror and then exorcise it with truth and it was to isolate her out of the loud world so that it would have to flee of necessity" (p. 135). Quentin struggles to stop time in order to prevent it from corrupting an ideal. His suicide becomes an attempt to transform meaningless disintegration into "significant doom."⁶ Quentin seeks ethical standards and values in a world that has not only lost them, but remains indifferent to their demise. Quentin is not obsessed with virginity, but with the ideal of Compson honor it represents.

Mr. Howe contends that Quentin, who he believes is intended to be portrayed as "sensitive hero," does not adequately fulfill his role, citing the running dialogue between Quentin and Father as supporting textual evidence. Howe overlooks one of the novel's central themes, "the relation between the act and man's apprehension of the act, between the event and its interpretation."⁷ The novel presents multifaceted perspectives surrounding a truth; Quentin's section is his version of that truth, lending emotion and depth to Benjy's objective vision. Neither Quentin's nor Father's extremes are presented as viable. They are obsessed with isolation and abnormally puzzled by the character and the degree of reality:

you are not lying now either but you are still blind to what is in yourself to that part of general truth the sequence of natural events and their causes which shadows every man's brow even Benjy's your are not thinking of finitude you are contemplating an apotheosis in which a temporary state of mind will become symmetrical above the flesh and aware both of itself and of the flesh it will not quite discard you will not even be dead and I temporary and he you cannot bear to think that someday it will no longer hurt you like this (p. 220).

From the onset of Quentin's dialogue until his suicide, he is presented as tragic rather than heroic. His error lies in the separation of his ethical code from the total context of humanity. The foundation of Quentin's romantic ideal is based on the stability of a mutable human being rather than a tangible, definite truth. He suffers Caddy to live beneath the terms of an ethical "word," a task she cannot fulfill.⁸ Caddy is "in time"; thus, she inevitably breaks the fixed pattern of Quentin's world. Quentin's heroism is self-created and never checked against the reality of his surroundings. Like a Jamesian hero, Quentin is allusive, intellectually isolated and abstract; yet, unlike Jamesian heroes, Quentin is romantically self-indulgent. "He thinks of acting heroically

for a 'cause', but the cause is absorbed, assimilated, vitiated by his ego."⁹ His heroism lies in his torment over the degradation of his sister and Compson tradition; yet, his thoughts and actions are not admirable. Ironically, Quentin mirrors his mother's choice, opting for death and decay over endurance and life. His suicide negates heroism because the cause is never successfully projected beyond himself.

Howe maintains that Quentin is a Hamlet figure who fails to exemplify the sensitivity and virtue implied in the balance; yet, textual evidence indicates that although both characters share common motivations, neither is intended to be heroic. Apparent in both is a staunch moral base, without which neither would suffer such extremes of spiritual torment and revulsion. Their past paralyzes them, rendering them unable to evolve. Hamlet and Quentin witness the decay and ruin of their families--a disintegration representative of wider cultural fatality--and neither can withstand the unavoidable facts of time and change. Their actions are a direct over-reaction to neglected, inherited cultural ideals, serving to illustrate John Wesley Hunt's formula:

unless the controlling purposes of the individuals are related to those that other men share, and in which the individual can participate, he is indeed isolated, and is forced to fall back upon his personal values, with all the fanaticism and distortion to which isolation is liable.¹⁰

"Pressed upon" Quentin is; all of the spiritual agony of Hamlet and the roots of his torment are explored through a maze of universal, social and psychological mechanisms, equivalent in depth to any existing literary work. Quentin evidences "fanaticism and distortion: through his inverted Christianity, a theme Howe touches upon yet fails to appreciate as an important catalyst in Quentin's obsession with virginity. Quentin harbors an idea of Christianity based on guilt and retribution severed from any conception of divine grace. His self-destruction is fueled by incestuous desire coupled with his belief in a Christian order protected by divine retribution. He cloaks his sacrificial impulses under religious sanctions, clothing his suicide in Christian terms of pseudo-martyrdom.¹¹

Through a warped vision of guilt, honor, salvation, and punishment Quentin seeks damnation for Caddy and himself, viewing his suicide as their retribution. In one sense, he sees himself as a Christ-figure, "Maybe a pattern of blood he could call that the one Christ was wearing" (p. 213). Yet his sense of eternity is framed by an image of eternal punishment, "If it could just be a hell beyond that clean flame the two of us more than dead. Then you will have only me then only me then the two of us amid the painting and the horror beyond the clean flame" (p. 137). He desires to possess Caddy in Hell where he can "guard her forever and keep her forever more intact amid the eternal fires." He echoes the Prayer of Confession, "Father I have committed . . ." (p. 117), evidencing his appropriation of religion to his own ethical standards. Quentin is deluded, confusing his suicide with Christ's sacrifice and a restoration of values to the Compson household: "Say it to Father will you I will am my father's Progenitive I invented him created him say it to him it will not be for he will say I was not and then you and I since philoprogenitive" (p. 141).

Father is the basis of Quentin's torment and the motivation behind his flight from time--time becoming a dominant and unifying symbol throughout the novel. Father's vision of time is introduced on the first page of the section and haunts him until his death: "I give it to you not that you may remember time, but that, but that you may forget it now and then for a moment and not spend all your breath trying to conquer it. Because no battle is ever won he said. They are not even fought. The field only reveals to men his own folly and despair, and victory is an illusion of philosophers and fools." Quentin reacts to his father's philosophy by attempting to destroy time; to disprove its accuracy and challenge its control of human affairs. Time is, to Quentin, a sign and measurement of human decay which he strives to arrest before it further defiles his ideal.¹²

Howe asserts that Faulkner overworks his symbols, pointing specifically to his "time" symbolism and the "watchmaker's scene." Howe is again ignoring the absence of the voice of William Faulkner and the presence of the stream of consciousness narration of an emotionally anguished, alienated boy. Quentin speaks to us during the last hours of his life; therefore, he is naturally obsessed with each passing moment. He is intensely concerned with the movement of the sun that signals his passage from life to death.

Time has destroyed the honor, tradition, dignity, and hope for reparation of the Compson family. Quentin, in a hopelessly confused heroic gesture, challenges time, which relegates him to a despairing final loss of self; "all stable things had become shadowy paradoxical all I had done shadows all I had felt suffered taking visible form antic and perverse mocking without relevance inherent . . . (p. 188).

Mr. Howe approaches Quentin's section from the external basis of technique and presumed conventions, blinding himself to a depth of passionate intensity unparalleled in modern literature. The chapter cannot be examined on any one level, or from any preset expectation or perspective until it has first been thoroughly internalized, without risk of judgment, without full comprehension. Faulkner purposefully and ingeniously inundates us with complex time images and symbols, forcing us to reexamine our own conceptions of time and "past" through the unraveling of Quentin's interior monologue. The essence of Quentin's isolation lies in his extreme, yet profoundly human battle with time that drives him persistently and urgently to scrutinize all the more the role of Father, his intimate relationship with Caddy, and the haunting and religious patterns he has inherited.

Faulkner's symbolic motifs unify the novel, serving as references of time, place, and level of despair. Initially obscure, his symbols unfold themselves with new and deeper clarity at each recurrence until they become vividly emotional reminders of the novel's wider themes. Contrary to Howe's assertion, the symbols in Quentin's section are tightly woven and neatly structured. Quentin prefers the virginal white dogwood and milkweed to the sexual reminder of the honeysuckle that echoes Mississippi, Caddy's wedding, and the unavoidable facts of time and change, growth, and decay. The sun is Quentin's reality and his shadow, his clinging past, family tradition and natural order--a recorder of the inescapable passage of time. His walk, winding and without destination, becomes a metaphor for his life, recreating his idle, purposeless wandering and his ever restless longing and desire. The gull signals Quentin's frustrated motionlessness, while the trout, the antithesis of Quentin, exemplifies the healthy order of sacrifice and renewal; "then in a quick swirl the trout lipped a fly beneath the surface with that sort of gigantic delicacy of an elephant picking up a peanut The trout hung delicate and motionless among the wavering shadows" (p. 145).

Contrary to Howe's reading, Quentin's section must be read, always, as an entity--from the core outwards; as a discovery, captured through the delicate interplay of finely woven symbols, gripping imagery, and broad sweeping themes. We are initially struck by his father's cynicism, which awakens the terrifying doubt we all harbor, but agonizingly deny--that all experience is meaningless. Each time Quentin's section is reread his father's words strike a more agonizing blow. Faulkner's imagery dominates the subconscious, willing you to identify with Quentin, although in doing so, you are forced to relive cherished ideals you have risked all pain to protect, and the terrifying emptiness accompanying the discovery that a part of yourself has been constructed on a decaying foundation of self-inflicted lies. The ticking of the clock becomes reminiscent of buried moments, striking the agonizingly vivid realization that survival depends upon endurance and renewal; tiny, secret moments when you have prayed time would stop and allow you to sleep forever: "I see not goodbye the marquee empty of eating the road empty in darkness in silence the bridge arching into silence darkness sleep the water peaceful and swift and goodbye." In essence, Irving Howe neglects the essential poetry of Quentin's monologue, either through lack of empathy or an insistence that Quentin Compson must in some way be inextricably linked to the voice of William Faulkner, relegating the passage to a clinical documentation rather than the universal voice of a suffering young man.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Irving Howe, *William Faulkner: A Critical Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 166-74. William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (New York: Modern Library College Editions, Random House, 1956), all subsequent citations appear in parenthesis in the text..
- 2 Frederick Hoffman, *William Faulkner* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1966), p. 55.
- 3 J. Robert Barth, S. J. *Religious Perspectives of Faulkner's Fiction: Yoknapatawpha and Beyond* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972). p. 96.
- 4 John T. Irwin, *Doubling, Incest, Repetition and Revenge in Faulkner's Fiction* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. 59.
- 5 Barth, p. 97.
- 6 Irwin, p. 51.
- 7 Hoffman, p. 62.
- 8 Barth, p. 92.
- 9 Irwin, p. 35.
- 10 John Wesley Hunt, *William Faulkner: Art in Theological Tension* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1965), p. 29.
- 11 Hunt, p. 35.
- 12 Irwin, p. 29.

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BOOK REVIEW

James Still, *River of Earth*. University of Kentucky Press, 1978.

by Myrna King

What I found most remarkable about James Still's novel *River of Earth* is the narrative achievement which is captured through the voice of a seven-year-old boy. It is in part, Still's extraordinary command of hillfolk dialect that establishes him as a master of the Southern Renaissance, along with Elizabeth Madox Roberts and William Faulkner. Still's style is not forced. He possesses an acute sensibility for capturing a mood, a sense of place and, more importantly, a realistic dichotomy of industrial and agrarian aspirations. James Still is a regional writer, yet his work can not be simply deemed "local color writing," which relies "mainly on a sentimental or comic representation of the surface peculiarities of a region, without penetrating to deeper and more general human characteristics and problems." (Abrams, 97) Still does penetrate these characteristics and the fact that he is able to do so without quaint circumlocution and vastly overstated sentimentality is what makes his work so powerful. As H. R. Stoneback recently observed in *The Kentucky Review*, "the successful regional writer is never insistently self-conscious regarding his regionalism. He writes out of, not about, a profound sense of place" (9). First published in 1940, *River of Earth* has long been regarded as an Appalachian masterpiece; with this recent reprinting, Still's fine novel should reach a wider audience.

Right from the start we see that our youthful narrator possesses a strong sense of self worth and vision:

Sitting there I though that I would grow up into such aman as Grandpa Middleton had been before he got killed, learning to read and write, and to draw up deeds for land; and I would learn to plow, and have acres of my own. Never would I be a miner digging a darksome hole (21).

It's easy to see that this child values a simple self-sufficient life. He wants to have a colt and some land of his own that he can be proud of. This desire for self-sufficiency is not an ideal dreamt of only by the mountain farmer. It is a universal ideal, and advice from Father, the practical voice of experience, is universal as well, "There ain't no sense trying to see afar off . . . , it's better to keep your eyeballs on things nigh, and let the rest come according to law and prophecy" (25).

Still's keen awareness of human struggle is prevalent in his images of hunger throughout the book. Once again, it is the child-like, metaphoric description of hunger that makes the constant lack of food even more disturbing. "Hunger leaped inside me, higher than the ash hill where the bread was buried" (115). Dean Cadle points out in his foreword to *River of Earth*:

James Still had presented the heart breaking account of what it means for a human being to live out his life hungry and cold. His is not a socioeconomist's collection of figures, causes, and possible cures, but the dramatized plight of human beings accepting poverty without accusations or judgments or rantings against outside institutions (viii).

Still also expresses this sense of incessant hunger by reiterating food images and metaphors throughout the novel. For instance, Still employs constant reminders with pert phrases such as, "All you fellers have buttermilk mustaches," a recurring image of the "empty meatbox" and repetitive notice of anyone's Adam's apple is noted--"Kell's Adam's apple leaped" (220); "Uncle Jolly's Adam's apple jerked" (151), and "Kell Haddix's Adam's apple quivered" (199). The names of characters even remind us of fruits and grains, as with Oates and Fruit Corbit. The images of food accentuate the plight of inescapable hunger, yet Still's people uphold integrity in their ability to joke, play and sing their way out of desperate situations. It seems as though, by an act of will, they find a richness in their hope that we often don't see in characters faced with such adversity. Mother says, "I ain't ashamed of what we got. We've done right proud this year" (174).

This inexorable will seems to come--as it often does in southern literature from the land itself. The people are part of the land so cannot be destroyed by it (only by the extraneous forces of industrialization and the coal mines). The characters' communion with nature is depicted in Still's dialogue and narrative descriptions. There are personifications of animals, "Something there had nibbled the mosses, something small-muzzled and shy . . .," (71) and the people are imagined as animals, "He stood gentle as a sheep dog" (188). Inanimate objects of nature are a part of this community as well. "The seams of her face were like gullied earth" (211). Even everyday phraseology abounds with nature diction as one often has "no chance earthy." What we hear is much more than mere colloquialism. The voice portrayed is one of the earth.

Another quality in Still's writing is his extraordinary economy and understatement, somewhat akin to Hemingway's "Theory of Omission." Dean Cadle writes in his Foreword to *River of Earth*: "Still seems to be saying, so why should I muddy the story for the reader by intruding my directives, commentaries, and evaluations" (ix). *River of Earth* becomes the epitome of the complete opposite of a novel of saturation. What other writers may describe in several paragraphs or pages, Still does in one sentence. A seven-year-old's impressions of a funeral are summed up, "I couldn't sleep, feeling the strangeness of so many people in the house and the unfamiliar breathing" (180). A harrowing experience for the boy and his sister, Euly, occurred at the schoolhouse when Jonce, their teacher, was shot in cold blood for punishing a farmer's boy. All dreams of finally learning what the "scholar" boys know vanished for them because of an instant of pride-mixed rage:

Hodge came into the churchhouse yard, bending a little to search the windows. We heard his feet clump on the front steps, the floor boards rub under his weight, and a pistol shot. I turned and ran down the creek road, sick, with loss, running until there was no wind in my body. Euly came swiftly behind, soundlessly as a fox runs (97).

This is powerful writing. There is no need for authorial commentary about how hard it will be on the children now that another teacher is gone and their chances of learning diminished. Instead, Still writes with a visual acuity. The end of the story completes this barrage of visual understatements:

The coffin box had been taken away. The chairs sat empty upon the hearth. I ran outside, and there were only wagon tracks to mark where death had come into our house and gone again. They were shriveled and dim under melting frost. I turned suddenly toward the house, listening. A baby was crying in the far room (245).

This implies the unstated notion of the cycle of life--with death, there is birth. Life goes on. Still's writing provides a perfect example of "showing" as opposed to "telling."

In short, James Still provides vivid imagery by way of few words. His choice of boy narrator is extremely effective because a youthful point of view exemplifies these people's strength of hearth and will to endure. In a lecture about southern writers, Donald Davidson observed that "the South still possessed at least the remnants, maybe more than the remnants, of a traditional, believing society" (12). Still has realistically portrayed this "believing society" by describing the optimism and endurance of the Appalachian people under strife. Many have deemed Still the master of Appalachian literature and an important writer of the Southern Renaissance. I believe *River of Earth* is a masterpiece of American literature, a compelling narrative for readers everywhere.

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NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONTRIBUTOR PROFILES

CATHERINE C. ALLGAUER earned a BA in Communication Arts with a concentration on Public Relations and Media Studies at Mt. St. Mary's College, Newburgh, NY. Presently, she is enrolled in the MA program at New Paltz, and is a member of the Administrative Staff at Mt. St. Mary's College.

PROFESSOR DAVID BOOY (Ph. D., Cambridge University, United Kingdom) was a visiting professor from Anglia College of Higher Education, Cambridge. Professor Booy taught graduate courses in Shakespeare, Sixteenth-Century Literature, and Seventeenth-Century Literature during the 1990-1991 academic year. Professor Booy, with Professor Kempton, supervised the 1991 Graduate Symposium on Medieval and Renaissance Women Writers.

SARA GARDNER holds a BA in English from Vassar College and an MS in Elementary Education from SUNY/New Paltz. Currently, an MA candidate in the English Department, she is a full-time faculty member in the Learning Resource Center at the College at New Paltz.

GUERITA GILMOUR was a Teaching Assistant in the Freshman English Program and, having completed her Master's degree, now teaches in Montgomery, NY.

RICHARD A. HAMILTON, JR. is presently a Teaching Assistant in the Freshman English Program, and has a particular literary interest in theories of literature and language.

ANN ROSALIND JONES (Ph. D., Cornell University) is Professor of Comparative Literature at Smith College. She is the author of *The Currency of Eros: Women's Love Lyric in Europe, 1540-1621*, and has published widely on Renaissance literature and culture and on contemporary feminist theory. Professor Jones delivered the Major Lecture in English Literature at the Third Annual Symposium.

PROFESSOR DANIEL KEMPTON (Ph.D., University of California Santa Cruz) recently came to SUNY/New Paltz from the University of California Los Angeles and currently teaches our graduate courses in Anglo-Saxon, Middle English, and History of the Language in the Graduate Program. He has published several articles on Chaucer. Professor Kempton, with Visiting Professor David Booy, supervised the 1991 Graduate Symposium on Medieval and Renaissance Women Writers.

MYRNA KING has a B. A. in English from SUNY Albany. She has done a number of book reviews for the Art Times of Woodstock, NY, and is presently pursuing a Master's degree with a special interest in 20th-century American Literature.

ALEXANDRA WILDE LANGLEY holds a BA and MA in English from SUNY/New Paltz, and was a Teaching Assistant in the Freshman English Program for two years. Presently, she is Assistant to the Publisher at McPherson & Company in Kingston, NY and works as an Adjunct-Instructor of Contemporary Literature and College Writing at Marist College's Special Academic Programs. She also instructs a Vocabulary-Building module course for the Learning Resource Center at the College at New Paltz.

MICHELE MORANO has completed the Master's Degree in English Literature at the College in May, 1991. She was a Teaching Assistant in the Freshman Program for three semesters. Presently, Michele is teaching English at the Universidad de Oviedo, Spain for the academic year of 1991-1992, but will embark on doctoral studies next year at the University of Iowa.

KIERAN MURPHY has been a Teaching Assistant in the Freshman English Program and completed his course work for the Master's degree.

RACHEL ELLIOTT RIGOLINO holds a BA in English from Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY. She is a candidate for the MA degree and has been a Teaching Assistant in the Department. She has a special interest in Middle English literature.

NIA ROCKAS holds a BA cum laude from Amherst College, and has been teaching at the Oakwood School in Poughkeepsie. She will have completed all her work for the Master's degree this May.

DORIS STEWART earned a BA in English from Fordham University in New York City. She is presently enrolled in the Master's program at the College, and has a particular literary interest in medieval and late Renaissance English literature.

PROFESSOR H. R. STONEBACK (Ph.D., Vanderbilt University) is *EGR* co-editor, Director of Graduate Studies, and Professor of English at SUNY/New Paltz, where he has taught since 1969. He has published extensively on Faulkner, Hemingway, Durrell, and modern fiction, and he is currently working on a book-length study of Hemingway. Professor Stoneback has been Visiting Professor at the University of Paris and Fullbright Professor at Peking University.

LAWRENCE SULLIVAN, (Ph. D., University of Michigan), *EGR* co-editor, served as Chair of the Editorial Board of the Congress on Research in Dance (**CORD**), editor of the **CORD Newsletter**, whose research is in dance-theatre history, having written on Stravinsky's *Les Noces*, Nikita Baliev's *Théâtre de la Chauve-Souris*, Arthur Schnitzler's *Der Schleier der Pierrette*, and the Russian theatrical scene designer Sergei Soudaikine, teaches the Proseminar in Poetry and 17th-Century Literature in the graduate program.

ZOU ZHEN is a visiting scholar in residence at SUNY/New Paltz from Peking University, Beijing, China. He holds a BA in English from Jiangxi Normal University and an MA in English from Peking University in China. He has published several essays in comparative studies of Chinese and English languages and literature and has recently edited a book, *Western Scholars' Views of Oriental Culture*, in Chinese, published in Jiangxi, China.

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Master of Arts Graduate Program at New Paltz offers several graduate curricula emphasizing the study of English and American literature and language. The MA degree requires ten courses (30 credits) at the master's level; the writing of a thesis is optional. The MA, MS (7-12), and MAT degrees may lead to New York State certification in secondary-level English.

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

Teaching Assistantships are available to qualified MA candidates. A teaching assistant normally takes two or three courses while teaching one freshman course each semester. Stipend: approximately \$3,300 per year and free tuition for six credits per semester. The degree program for Teaching Assistants requires 30 credits in language and literature and 3 credits in Modern Theories of Writing.

RESEARCH AWARDS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS IN LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES

To encourage and facilitate research by outstanding Master's candidates in Liberal Arts and Sciences, awards will be made for expenses incurred in the preparation of a Master's thesis. This program has been made possible through the generosity of the Arethusa Society. While most of the awards will be for amounts of \$400 or less, the review committee will award the maximum dollar amount for those projects with budgets that justify the expenditure. Students are encouraged to submit applications with budgets that call for \$400 or less.

ELIGIBILITY: Applicants must be matriculated Master's candidates who have completed and filed a formal thesis application approved by their department. Applicants must be presently enrolled in a course for preparation of a thesis or have registered for such a course in a previous semester and presently have an H (Hold) on their record. Except for extenuating circumstances, previous recipients of these awards are ineligible. Projects must be sponsored by a member of the Graduate Faculty who will direct the project. Upon completion of the project, awardees will be required to provide a report on their accomplishments during the grant period.

EVALUATION: Projects will be judged by a faculty panel on the basis of merit, design, and feasibility.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE: Applications are available from the Dean's Office (Faculty Tower 614). **Deadline:** April 15th of each spring semester. Awards will be announced by the Dean on May 1st.

SOJOURNER TRUTH FELLOWSHIPS

Qualified minority students are eligible for a full fellowship, an award that includes full financial support for tuition and supplies. Typically, fellowships can average approximately \$8,000 for an academic year; expenses for the year are about \$7,000.

APPLICANTS must be of Black American, Hispanic American, Mexican American, or Native American origin, must be accepted (matriculated) in a registered graduate degree program, and must enroll on a full-time basis (12 credits). The fellowship is renewable until the graduate degree is completed. Of course, students must remain in academic "good standing" to retain their matriculated status and, therefore, their scholarship. While admissions criteria vary by discipline, the basic requirements include a cumulative GPA of 3.0 for prior work, and acceptable scores on a nationally-normed aptitude test, such as the GRE or MAT. When appropriate, fellowship recipients will be given a service assignment, such as research or teaching assistant, counselor, etc.

TUITION SCHOLARSHIPS

This program provides a full waiver of tuition and College fee at any SUNY Institution for New York residents, even temporarily, in a **SEEK**, **HEOP**, or **EOP** program. Other aid sources, such as **TAP**, **GSL**, **CWS**, may be needed to provide students with full financial support.

APPLICANTS: To qualify for the tuition scholarship program, applicants must certify participation in **EOP**, **HEOP**, or **SEEK** as an undergraduate, must be accepted (matriculated) in a registered graduate degree program, and must be enrolled on a full-time basis (12 credits). The tuition scholarship may be renewable until the graduate degree is completed. Students must remain in academic "good standing" to retain their matriculated status and, therefore, their tuition scholarship. While admissions criteria may vary by discipline, the basic requirements include a cumulative GPA of 3.0 for prior work, and acceptable scores on a nationally-normed aptitude, such as the GRE or MAT.

THE LYLE OLSEN GRADUATE STUDENT ESSAY PRIZE IN SPORT LITERATURE

The award, to be given annually by the Sport Literature Association, will be given for the best essay on sport literature submitted by a graduate student who is currently enrolled full-time in a graduate degree program. Essays must focus essentially on some aspect of sport literature (including drama and film). One winner will be chosen to receive a \$100.00 prize, publication of the essay in the journal, and a year's subscription to *Aethlon*.

Essays must be previously unpublished. Minimum length is 12-typed pages. The deadline for the 1992 award is May 1, 1992. The winner will be announced at the annual SLA meeting. Consult the journal *Aethlon* [formerly *Arete*]: Professor Don Johnson, Editor, *Aethlon*, Dept of English, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN 37614.

THE SIGMA TAU DELTA INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH HONOR SOCIETY announces to the members of the Society its annual awards of three scholarships and one award, at \$1,500.00 each. Eligibility for these awards are open to a junior, a senior, a graduate student, and a senior who will teach high school English upon graduation. Applications are due January 31st and awards will be announced by May 1st.

In addition, Sigma Tau Delta offers writing awards from \$500 to \$1,000 for outstanding work published in the STD journal, *The Rectangle*. The categories are poetry (\$500), short story (\$500), the critical essay (\$500), and an open category (\$1,000) awarded to the best piece of creative writing in any genre, appearing in *The Rectangle*. Deadline for submissions is May 1st for the Fall Issue.

Another special award offered by Sigma Tau Delta is the P. C. Somerville Award of \$1,500 to a student who will begin teaching English and/or language arts in a high school the following academic year. Applications are due January 31st. The recipient of the award will be announced by May 1st. The local Chapter may nominate one student for this award. For further details, contact Professor Lawrence Sullivan, CHE 108.

THE THAYER FELLOWSHIPS IN THE ARTS

TWO THAYER FELLOWSHIPS are awarded each year to outstanding candidates for graduation from State University of New York, funded through an endowment established in honor of Jeanne C. Thayer, Trustee of SUNY from 1974-1984.

The purpose of the fellowships is to serve as a *bridge* between study at State University of New York and first-time entry into a professional career in the creative or performing arts: namely, music, theatre, dance, film and video, creative writing, and the visual arts.

Two awards of \$7,000 are given annually to individuals selected for talent, achievement, and potential as professional artists. The fellowships are available to candidates for graduation in the arts of both baccalaureate and advanced degree programs. They are not intended for students going on to graduate school; those students should apply at the end of their graduate degree program.

ELIGIBILITY: Applicants must be enrolled as candidates for baccalaureate and advanced degree programs in the arts in State University of New York. The degree must be completed in **SUNY**. Application must be in the academic year of completion. Students who have returned to the university for advanced study after establishing professional careers are not eligible; the fellowship is intended for those entering a career in the arts for the first time. Applications must

be complete when submitted and postmarked by October 30. See the Department Chair for further information regarding application, CHE-105.

DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Master's Comprehensive Examination Dates:

Fall 1992 -- Saturday, November 7th

Spring 1993 -- Saturday, March 27th

Both MA and MS candidates take Part I of the examination, given in the morning (9-12 AM). MA candidates take Part II, given in the afternoon (1-4 PM). Sample examinations are on file at the Reserve Desk in the Library.

THE 1992 GRADUATE SYMPOSIUM TOPIC

The Graduate Symposium will take place on April 23, 1992, at the Music Recital Hall in College Hall G, 3:00-5:00 PM, and will be dedicated to the theme of Influences in Literature. Please submit papers for consideration for the afternoon Symposium to Professor Daniel Kempton (Medieval) and to Professor Anthony M. Cinquemani (Renaissance). Papers accepted for the Symposium will be published as a proceedings in the *English Graduate Review* for the occasion. Later in the evening, Yale University Professor of Comparative Literature, Thomas M. Greene, the Guest speaker, will lecture on Andrew Marvell's "An Horatian Ode Upon Cromwel's Return from Ireland." After the college-wide lecture by Professor Greene, a reception will held at the Lecture Center.

GUIDE TO CONTRIBUTORS

The English Graduate Review is an annual publication by the Department of English, SUNY/New Paltz, carrying the best papers submitted by the graduate students enrolled in the program. All submissions are restricted to graduate students in good standing at the institution. Manuscripts submitted should be original material on literary biography, history, theory and methods, analysis and interpretation, and critical syntheses that may emerge from courses or seminars taken at the College. Manuscripts are *blind reviewed* by the Director of Graduate Studies and the journal editors. Manuscripts should be prepared in the preferred style published by the *Modern Language Association Manual of Style* or in that of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Please submit *three* clear copies of the manuscript. The entire manuscript, including notes, bibliography, and indented long quotations should be double-spaced. Illustrative materials, such as tables, maps, and graphics, should be done in black ink and should be in camera ready copy. Photographs should have a glossy finish. All manuscripts, on a separate page after the title page, should include an abstract of 50 words or less and biographical information of four to six lines that indicate the author's professional, research, and literary interests. The deadline for submission is April 15th of each year. All manuscripts should be sent to the Director of Graduate Studies, College Hall E, 105.

BOOK REVIEWS are invited that relate to specific courses or to literary interests having general appeal to the graduate student body. Please submit two copies. The heading should include the name of the author (s) or editor (s), the title of the book (underlined), place of publication, publisher, date, number of pages, (cloth or paperback), and price. Approximate length of a book review is 1,000-1,500 words. The review should be scholarly in orientation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR are invited to promote scholarly discussion and debate.

ABOUT THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

The College at New Paltz, founded in 1828, is located 75 miles north of New York City in the Mid-Hudson valley. Its 216-acre campus is approximately equidistant (c. 10 miles) from Newburgh to the south, Poughkeepsie to the east, and Kingston to the north. The College employs approximately 300 full-time and 150 part-time faculty. The undergraduate enrollment consists of 6500 students (27% of whom are part time) and the graduate enrollment of 2,000 students (89% part time). The student population is multi-ethnic and multi-racial with a significant percent-age of returning students in the undergraduate and graduate programs.

The College has five units: School of Fine and Performing Arts, School of Education, School of Business and Engineering, Division of Health and Physical Education, and a College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The English Department is one of the nineteen departments and programs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. It offers a major in literature, journalism, creative writing, and teacher education on the undergraduate level and an MA in language and literature, an MAT, and MS in English and Education. English Department courses comprise 12% of all FTE in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: it is, in terms of FTE, the largest department in the College. It offers full time in residence fieldwork experience for journalism majors who publish a weekly newspaper, the *Legislative Gazette*, at the state capital in Albany. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences maintains a student overseas exchange program with Middlesex Polytechnic Institute in the United Kingdom.

The English Department numbers among its full-time staff twenty full time and thirty part-time adjunct faculty and teaching assistants. Among the full-time staff are several noted scholars: a SUNY Distinguished Professor Arthur Cash (*Laurence Sterne: The Early and Middle Years, Laurence Stern: The Later Years*); John B. Alphonso-Karkala (*Bibliography of Indo-English Literature: 1860-1966, Jawaharlal Nehru: Literary Portrait, Anthology of Indian Literature*); Richard D. Hathaway (*Sylvester Judd's New England*); Rudolf R. Kossmann (*Henry James: Dramatist*); Harry Stoneback (ed. *Selected Stories of William Faulkner, Cartographers of the Deus Loci*). Other members of the graduate faculty publish in a wide variety of areas, such as Carley Bogarad, Anne Trensky, and Jan Schmidt in feminist studies and poetry; Daniel Kempton in medieval studies, Anthony M. Cinquemani in seventeenth-century and modern Italian literature, Anthony C. Robinson, a novelist, in creative fiction, Barry Bort in Japanese literature and in film studies, and Lawrence Sullivan in dance-theatre history. It is an active and engaged department of varied intellectual, research, and publication interests.