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PREFACE

The Southwest Graduate Student Conference in Comparative Literature took place on March 19-20, 1982, at the University of Texas at Austin. This conference, like most, was the result of a year or more of planning and preparation. Unlike most, it was created by and for graduate students, and continued a tradition of such conferences begun in the spring of 1978 at Yale University. Yale's conference was a unique event: as the first of its kind it was innovative in inception and realization and its singularity was uniquely rewarded by an NEH operating grant. The Pennsylvania State University hosted the second graduate student conference and initiated the current tradition of self-funding. In 1980 Brown continued the eastern tradition and Indiana took the conference to the Mid-West, where it remained with Minnesota's conference in 1981.

The Southwest Conference differed from previous ones not only by virtue of its location--it was the first of its kind in the West--but also by virtue of its execution. The geographical size and location of the state of Texas necessitated organizational changes: the usual inter-university reading committee was impossible, for example. In addition, the Conference Committee's sense of the student orientation of the entire project led them to include four student speakers in place of the traditional "name" non-student speaker. These four speakers (Andrew Bush [Yale University], Jane Creighton [New York], Aurora Levins Morales [San Francisco], and Angelita Reyes [University of Iowa]) received airfare and a modest honorarium. They were underpaid and overworked, and we are still grateful. We are still quite proud of our own peculiar contribution to the student conference tradition, and feel that the presence of these peer speakers provided even more nourishment for that flowering communication which is both the goal and the end result of these conferences.

Many hands make light work, and the Southwest Graduate Student Conference in Comparative Literature was the product of all those many hands. We undertook the project with the support of both the Chair and the Graduate Adviser of the Program in Comparative Literature at the University of Texas at Austin, Professors Walter L. Reed and Lee Fontanella, respectively. With their help, we

gained the support of the Dean of Liberal Arts and the Dean of the Graduate School, Professors Robert D. King and William S. Livingston, who provided us with the majority of the funding necessary for the realization of the Conference as well as of this publication. Ms. Barbara McFarland of Liberal Arts was a constant and willing source of information and aid. The American Comparative Literature Association offered their sponsorship in addition to financial support. The Conference Committee, composed of Kofi Anyidoho, Stephen Field, Linda Ledford-Miller, Sandra Shattuck, and Jackie Vansant (from the Department of German), was responsible for all aspects of the Conference: organization, the reading and selecting of papers for the conference as well as for this publication, the editing of papers included herein, and all the hundreds of details which accompany such projects.

A special, personal thanks goes to Ms. Lori Franz, the Comparative Literature secretary, who cheerfully put up with it all and then still had the energy and grace to prepare this manuscript for publication.

Linda Ledford-Miller
August 1983

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SUSPENDED DISBELIEF AND MAGICAL REALISM IN ALEJO CARPENTIER'S Los Pasos Perdidos

Angelita Reyes

The following is an appropriate excerpt cited by Norman Holland in The Dynamics of Literary Response to exemplify Coleridge's theory of "the willing suspension of disbelief" within the realm of magical realism:

> The young executive had taken $100,000 from his company's safe, lost it playing the stock market, and now he was certain to be caught, and his career ruined. In despair, down to the river he went.
>
> He was just clambering over the bridge railing when a snarled hand fell upon his arm. He turned and saw an ancient crone in a black cloak, with wrinkled face and stringy hair. "Don't jump," she rasped. "I'm a witch, and I'll grant you three wishes for a slight consideration."
>
> "I'm beyond help," he replied, but he told her his troubles anyway.
>
> "Nothing to it," she said, cackling and she passed her hand before his eyes; "You now have a personal bank accout of $200,000!" She passed her hand again. "The money is back in the company vault!" She covered his eyes for the third time. "And you have just been elected first vice-president."
>
> The young man, stunned speechless, was finally able to ask, "What--what is the consideration I owe you?"
>
> "You must spend the night making love to me," she smiled toothlessly.
>
> The thought of making love to the old crone revolted him, but it was certainly worth it, he thought, and together they retired to a nearby motel. In the morning, the distasteful ordeal over, he was dressing to go home when the old crone in the bed rolled over and asked, "Say, sonny, how old are you?"
>
> "I'm forty-two years old," he said. "Why?"
>
> "Ain't you a little old to believe in witches?"[1]

Holland analyzes the anecdote in terms of psychological realism as the reader perceives it and within the actual context. The

executive is willing to suspend his sense of logic and to believe in the witch and her proposed powers at the expense of making love to her. The anecdote is further explained in the context of its oral (the old woman as the nurturing, trusting mother), phallic (the executive must make love to her), and oedipal (the executive makes love to the mother-witch figure). Through these interpretations of meaning, the reader is able to arrive at an understanding of the executive's character. Within the context of conceived reality (having lost $100,000 through embezzlement), he's quick to suspend his disbelief and accept the proposed magical powers of the witch. Thus, at that point reality becomes a merging of the real and the fantastic. Fantasy, the formulations of sub-conscious and eccentric desires or images, plays an important role in that the executive is hoping until the last moment something will prevent him from committing suicide.

I have loosely used the term "magic" as it pertains to reality and the above illustration. The magic in a realistic situation, for the purposes of this paper and as it may apply to Latin American literature, becomes the idea of magical realism. The concept of magical realism is purposefully paradoxical because as Raymond Verzasconi states in an unpublished thesis, it"...affirms the new world reality which at once combines the rational elements of a primitive America."[2] In his 1955 essay "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction," Angel Flores states that in magical realism "...one finds the same preoccupation with style and also the same transformation of the common and the everyday into the awesome and the unreal."[3] Of course, there are many definitions of magical realism as it pertains to modern Latin American literature. The theme of the 1973 meeting of Congreso Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana was "Otros Mundos, Otros Fuegos: Fantasia y realismo magico en Iberoamerica." At this meeting where he presents the paper, "Literatura fantástica," "realismo magico," y "lo real maravilloso," Enrique Anderson Imbert cites yet another approach to the concept of magical realism:

> El cuentista que estamos imaginando suele contar, además de aventuras sobrenaturales, aventuras extrañas. La diferencia está en que, en vez de presentar la mágica como si fuera real, presenta la realidad como si fuera mágica. Personajes, cosas, acontecimeintos son reconocibles y razonables pero como él se propone provocar sentimientos de extrañeza desconoce lo que ve y se abstiene de aclaraciones racionales. Antes lo vimos escamotear los objetos o alterar la indole de los

> objetos...La estrategia del escritor consiste en sugerir un clima sobrenatural sin apartarse se la naturaleza y su táctica es deformar la realidad en el magín de personajes neuróticos.[4]

Indeed, dialogues on defining "realismo magico," "del literatura fantástica," and "lo real maravilloso" go on and on. For my purpose here, I shall concentrate on magical realism and suspended disbelief. If we accept the concept of magical realism, we're accepting the idea of paradoxical reality in which there is an abundance of "awesome and irrational experiences." The paradox continues in that out of apparent absurdity an eventual intelligible conclusion (or less confusing) is derived. As Flores further states, "Magical realism is predominantly an art of surprises. From the very first line the reader is thrown into a timeless flux and/or the unconceivable, freighted with dramatic suspense."[5] If we can conceive of the previously mentioned anecdote as an extended literary piece, all the elements of magical realism could be applicable, that is, the elements of suspense, strangeness, the blending of the real with the unreal, a degree of neuroticism, etc. Even before reaching the dramatic punch line of the witch's reality (witches don't help out corporate executives), the reader has already willingly suspended elements of disbelief just as the central figure in the story has--that the unreal (the three promises) can and will happen.

To suspend one's disbelief presupposes an alteration of time for any given period. Real time may become fantasy time or "Once upon a time..." In suspending his disbelief, the executive believes that for spending one night (very short time period) with the witch a greater portion of his life will be gratified. Corporate pressures assist in altering the man's sense of real time. The rhetorical question is not how can a witch solve a 20th century executive's predicament, but how does he believe she can?

On a more complex literary level Alejo Carpentier's Los Pasos Perdidos[6] has a central figure who through a series of dynamic processes of unconscious rituals willingly suspends his disbelief within the realm of magical realism. Our central question becomes transposed: how does a 20th century musicologist arrive at believing that the primordial landscape of a jungle with the primordial figure of Rosario will solve his problems arising out of his own alienation, frustration and search for spiritual fulfillment? What important role does fantasy time play in the dynamics of the narrator's suspended disbelief? Indeed, at the conclusion of the return journey to the jungle when the narrator

can't find the entrance to the Valley because of seasonal changes, he realizes suddenly that the people had not taken him seriously; that is to say, for them Time had not stopped, however in the narrator's consciousness, Time had stopped. He realizes sadly that he had been suspended with Rosario and her people once upon a time.

Without doubt, from the outset of Los Pasos Perdidos we see the role that time has with the consciousness of the protagonist:

> Hacía cuatro años y siete meses que no había vuelto a ver la casa de columnas blancas, con su frontón de ceñudas molduras que le daban una severidad de palacio de justicia, y ahora, ante muebles y trastos colocados en su lugar invariable, tenía la casi penosa sensación de que el tiempo se hubiera revertido (p. 9).

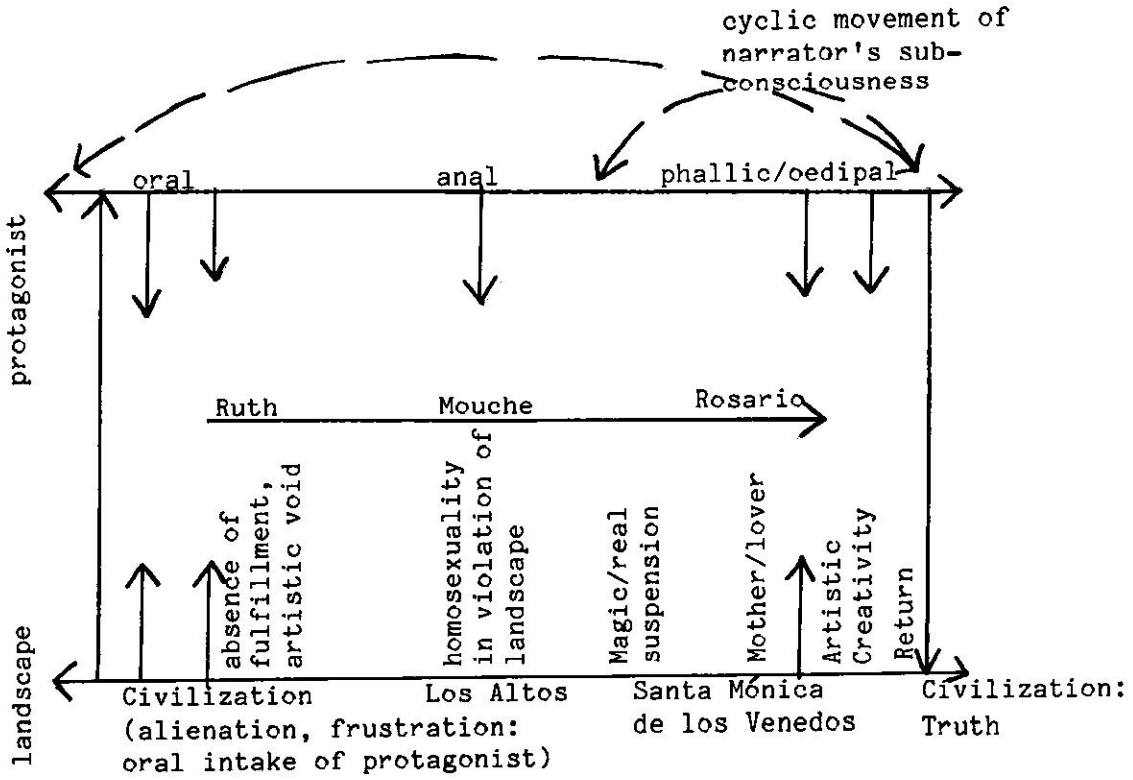
The nameless protagonist begins a metamorphosis during which real time becomes suspended. Through a series of incidents in his physical landscape and his responses to the incidents, the protagonist's sense of logic is altered in time and place; he lapses into the "willing suspension of disbelief" accepting all the implications of unrealities (in the jungle)--one being that he believes too much in the unreal, for he comes to the inevitable conclusion:

> La verdad, la agobiadora verdad--lo comprendo yo ahora--es que la gente de estas lejanías nunca ha creído en mí. Fui un ser prestado. Rosario misma debe haberme visto como un Visitador, incapaz de permanecer indefinidamente en el Valle del Tiempo Detenido. Recuerdo ahora la rara mirada que me dirigía, cuando me veía escribir febrilmente, durante días enteros, allí donde escribir no respondía a necesidad alguna. Los mundos nuevos tienen que ser vividos, antes que explicados. (p. 285)

The narrator is a "visitante insólito" going into the realm of suspended disbelief within the larger context of the real and magical world. Carpentier has incorporated myth (Euro-Caribbean), theories on the origins of music, symbolism and ritual into the process of the narrator's symbolic journey. Again for the purposes of this paper, I'll focus on symbolic implications of the narrator's ritual journey. The journey is not only physical, it is also a journey of subconsciously returning to the womb or source of reality. It's a journey of uterine nostalgia. As the narrator/protagonist moves physically through the Latin American

hinterland, he's simultaneously moving through the oral, anal and phallic/oedipal stages of his consciousness. The symbolic forces of the physical landscape (the floods, rivers torrential rains and so on) are capricious; at one level the landscape accepts the narrator; at another it rejects him.

The narrator sets out on a journey into a Latin American country in search of some primitive musical instruments for the University Museum. Until he finds the instruments, he constantly plays with the theory that music is a mimesis of nature as primitive man understood it. Because of an "artist's depression," he's not creating, he decides to make the trip into a vacation and take his mistress, Mouche, with him. They arrive in the foreign city but are forced to leave after two days when a military coup d'état erupts. Their expedition penetrates the jungle, but Mouche falls ill, is sent back to the capital and the protagonist falls in love with another woman, Rosario. With Rosario, he grows into a new realm of sexual and artistic consciousness. He wants to remain with her, however, the jungle reality is an unreal one for him; although he doesn't see at this point that he must return to civilization--the "back there" of his consciousness.



The above diagram illustrates the protagonist's journey of sub-consciousness and consciousness. Each phase of his movement is characterized by Ruth, his wife, Mouche, and Rosario. The physical or conscious movement is linear. However, the sub-conscious journey is cyclic--a reflection of mythic or fantasy time. An indication of this is the broken arch which shows the protagonist's awakening from the retrospect of the phallic/oral and oedipal/phallic phases.

Orality represents the narrator's negative sense of passivity; he's a victim of meaningless action. Repetition within and from society is the cause of this meaninglessness. And he daydreams:

> Atado a mi técnica entre reloges, cronógrafos, metrónomos, dentro de salas sin ventanas revestidas de fieltros y materias aislantes, siempre en lugar artificial, buseaba, por instinto, al hallarme cade tarde en la calle ya anochecida, los placeres que me hacían olvidar el paso de las horas.(p. 15)

One of the main characteristics of Freudian orality is the

subject's desire for pleasure. The narrator's search for pleasure is also a search for artistic and spiritual intercourse. And as I mentioned earlier, time is a key force in the narrator's consciousness of inactivity and alienation; the narrator is not Everyman, he is No-Man. His wife, Ruth, is like him in that she has become a slave to her job--a victim of a play that has gone "commercial." She works during the night and he works during the day; such an arrangement allows them to meet only on Sundays in order to sleep together and pretend their love for each other. Therefore, the protagonist lacks the nurturing comfort and continuous warmth he would ordinarily receive from a marriage. He begins to seek gratification elsewhere. Significantly, Mouche persuades the narrator to accept the Curator's offer of doing the research in Latin America. The first important step in the narrator's journey is the move from one female influence to another. The narrator's journey is a series of steps--a return to his mythic past, a past that is gained and lost again. And so, the second phase of the journey begins with Mouche after they leave the city during the coup. This second stage concerns the vital elements of the narrator's childhood, that is, his mother tongue:

> Y una fuerza me penetra lentamente por los oídos, por los poros: el idioma. He aquí, pues, el idioma que hablé en me infancia; el idioma en que aprendí a leer ya a solfear; el idioma enmohecido en mi mente por el poco uso, dejado de lado como herramienta inútil, en país donde de poco pudiera servirme. (p. 46)

Along with the linguistic awareness the narrator begins to experience the desire to control and master his own actions. Because of such a discovery, his relation with Mouche changes: he becomes increasingly disgusted with her. Mouche is ignorant of the language, therefore, she must rely on the narrator to speak to the people (and thus, the cultural environment) for her. Before, in the first stage, he had followed her will. Now as he reaches out to his own cultural or past cultural landscape for spiritual nourishment, Mouche succumbs to her own wish-fulfillments. Here, we have the conflicting sources of pleasure and elimination. The protagonist masters again his childhood language--this gives him pleasure. By the time the protagonist journeys to the next stage of his consciousness, Mouche has been eliminated from his mind and from the environment. By eliminating her, the protagonist undergoes a final act of symbolic defecation: Mouche leaves with

malaria and we learn she is a lesbian. In the world of the protagonist's new environmental consciousness, homosexuality is an unspoken abomination. Rosario responds to Mouche's physical advances in the only way she instinctly knows:

> Mouche, que presume de la belleza de su cuerpo y nunca pierde oportunidad de probarlo, que la incita, con fingidas dudas sobre la dureza de su carne, a que se despoje del refajo conservado por aldeano pudor. Luego, es las insistencia, el hábil reto, la desnudez que se muestra, las alabanzas a la firmeza de sus senos, a la tersura de su vientre, el gesto de cariño, y el gusto de más que revel a Rosario, repentinamente, una intención que subleva sus instintos más profundos. Mouche, sin imaginárselo, ha inferido una ofensa que es, para las mujeres de aquí, peor que el peor epíteto, peor que el insulto a la madre, peor que arrojar de la casa, peor que escupir las entrañas que parieron, peor que dudar de la fidelidad al marido, peor que el nombre de perra, peor que el nombre de puta. (pp. 156-157)

Rosario is the embodiment of beauty, antiquity, uninhibited womanhood and heterosexuality. In his critical study, La Temática Novelística de Alejo Carpentier, José Sanchez-Boudy states, "...Rosario que es una mujer verdadera, una mujer no adulterada. Una mujer que sí vive el ser-mujer, es decir, su ser sin falsía. Es por eso que Mouche, que es lesbiana, es decir, una mujer falsificada en el sexo, pues la mujer entera nació para entrañas de varón, es falsificada también en su vida. Es una intelectual espúrea."[7] In fact, Mouche's very name (fly) suggests the parasite, the artificiality of her being. With Rosario opposing dualities become evident: the narrator moves closer to a symbolic climax with nature (and a physical one with Rosario), and Mouche moves further away from nature. Rosario's violent reaction to Mouche enables the narrator to assert his own sexuality. Sanchez-Boudy further states that, "La adulteración del sexo, pues, se liga a la adulteración de la mujer. El acto sexual sólo se podrá dar puro, prístino, cuando la jujer no está falsificada, en forma alguna, como la está Mouche. Por eso, el acto sexual con Rosario tomará una nueva significación. Es el acomplamiento sexual puro. Es el que en realidad debe existir."[8] The narrator's consummation with Rosario precludes his acceptance of the landscape; a contrast to the previous alienation and sexual impotence he had with Ruth and Mouche. The phallic assertiveness is apparent in this stage of both the sub-conscious and conscious journey. Rosario represents the primordial essence and complete female arousal of the phallus:

> Es un abrazo rápido y brutal, sin ternura, que mas parece una lucha por quebrarse y vencerse que una trabazón deleitosa. Pero cuando volvemos a hallarnos, lado a lado, jadeantes aún, y cobramos conciencia cabal de lo hecho, nos invade un gran contento, como si los cuerpos hubieran sellado un pacto que fuera el comienzo de un nuevo modo de vivir. Yacemos sobre las yerbas esparcidas, sin más conciencia que la de nuestro deleite...Pero aún buscamos el mejor acomodo, cuando una voz ronca, quebrada, escupe insultos junto a nuestros oídos, desemparejándonos de golpe. Habíamos rodado bajo la hamaca, olvidados de la que tan cerca gemía. Y la cabeza de Mouche estaba asomada sobre nosotros, crispada, sardónica, de boca babeante, con algo de cabeza de Gorgona en el desorden de las greñas caídas sobre la frente. "¡Cochinos!--grita--¡Cochinos!" Desde el suelo, Rosario dispara golpes a la hamaca con los pies, para hacerla callar. (p. 157)

Sexual intercourse between the narrator and Rosario becomes an extended metaphor for the remainder of the journey. Indeed, the narrator finds the musical instruments with Rosario (she brings them to him). Simultaneously Rosario is the lover and the Earth mother figure. She replenishes him because she symbolizes the return to the womb, she satisfies his uterine nostalgia; she places him "en la edad de la inocencia...En estado puro." Thus, spiritual nourishment, sexual gratification and an embrace of innocence (the landscape) are now significant forces in the protagonist's consciousness. Through Rosario, this force of earthiness, the narrator comes into intimate contact with the energy of the jungle as well as with the creative energy level of his own body. Sexual fulfillment creates in him a renewed artistic drive. Not only does he find the rare musical instruments (which are commonplace for the local people), but he begins to write a concerto.

By the time the narrator arrives at Santa Mónica de los Venados, for him, el Valle del Tiempo Detenido (the Valley Where Time Had Stopped), he has journeyed from the complex to the simplistic. However, once in Santa Mónica de los Venados the narrator's artistic drive demands that he composes, and the need for the basics of composition, that is to say, the need for paper and pencil, triggers the need for civilization from where he has come. The artist who produces needs an audience for his art. Therefore, simplicity becomes a hindrance. Before this junction of realization, the artist has been in a willing suspension of disbelief with Rosario and with his landscape--that he could stay away from all his previous troubles, remain in the jungle and

compose symphonic music. He is trying to merge the real with the unreal--permanently. Rosario wonders why he's writing letters when there is no post office: a simplification of why does he need to write a composition that requires an orchestra and a concert audience? The realization finally comes to him:

> Y cuando más exasperado me encuentro, Rosario me pregunta a quién estoy escribiendo cartas, puesto que aquí no hay correo. Esa confusión, la imagen de la carta hecha para viajar y que no puede viajar, me hace pensar, de súbito, en la vanidad de todo lo que estoy haciendo desde ayer. De nada sirve la partitura que no ha de ser ejecutada. La obra de arte se destina a los demás, y muy especialmente la música, que tiene los medios de alcanzar las más vastas audiencias (emphasis added). (p. 232)

Rosario's question serves two purposes: one, it reveals to the narrator the absurdity of writing a concerto in the jungle where there will be no audience for it, and two, it jostles his consciousness back to "belief" and the real: in the Valley Where Time Had Stopped a concerto has no value. He decides to leave Santa Mónica de los Venados with the intention of returning. But the return is an illusion, for the protagonist has a consciousness of society and art that Rosario and her people who live in an unmediated present and past do not accept. The narrator attempts to go against the forces of nature and the cultural landscape (that same landscape which has given him the sense of suspended disbelief) and make the return. During his absence, Rosario has married someone else. The Greek tells him with compassion and surprise that, "Ella no Penélope. Mujer joven, fuerte, hermose, necesita marido. Ella no Penélope. Naturaleza mujer aquí necesita varón..." The shocking blow comes when he recognizes why he can't find the inscriptions on the tree that point to the entrance of the secret valley:

> Yo recordaba que cuando habíamos estado aquí con el Adelantado, los remos alcanzaban el fondo en todo momentos. Esto quiere decir que sigue desbordado el río, y que la marca que buscamos está debajo del agua. (p. 279)

Because he's not in tune with the landscape, he too late recognizes that the river's annual overflow has obliterated the markings. The river (the water which symbolizes the womb and protection) is illusive. It accepts; it rejects. At the primordial level the narrator wants to remain in the jungle; yet

it's "unnatural" for him to do so. Within the framework of real time and place (the journey from the North American city to the Valley Where Time Had Stopped), the narrator has been led to a willing suspension of disbelief. His consciousness moves through the stages of the oral, anal and phallic/oedipal. His world is both magic and real until he discovers that his artistic self cannot truly exist in the world of magical realism--perhaps only suspended there for a time.

In suspending his disbelief the narrator idealizes the landscape, he believes Rosario will make all his wishes come true. She knows that she cannot. She believes in him only for the suspended moment. In an unreal manner he has related his art (composed music) to a nature where music is functional and unrestrained. Indeed, functionality is significant in all the phases of his journey. The cultural landscape eliminates Mouche when she can no longer function as a merging component of its reality. Her homosexuality is a violation that's not tolerated. And even though the gratifying hetersexuality of the narrator and Rosario becomes synonomous with artistic productivity, the landscape eventually rejects him because of his inability to reckon with the forces of creativity and nature; that is to say, he simply does not belong there. Although their world is real, it's not real for him. He has come to believe in Rosario as she wonders about his naivete. He believes in her because he needs to; she is the Earth-mother figure capable of solving his twentieth century problems arising out his being an artist. My analysis of the journey which he undertakes is an attempt in showing how he believes in magical realism by suspending his disbelief. Bear in mind the world for Rosario and her people is not one of magic and the real; it's the narrator's perception of reality. In other words, he has been suspended in the realm of what is for him both real and magic. In addition, the negative oedipal implication of his relationship with Rosario (he has symbolically returned to the womb through sexual intercourse with her) conflicts with the psycho-cultural consciousness of Santa Monica de los Venados. Los Pasos Perdidos reflects the narrator's paradox of being a New World Man searching for a usable past realism. The past can't be denied, however, there is no permanent place there. If there is a return, we suspend our disbelief in an attempt to merge the real with the unreal; we vie with "magic."

In the end, we have made the full circle (the cyclic journey) to the understanding, to the certainty (for magical realism leaves no doubts) that our world, that is to say, the one that's immediate, is where we create.

The University of Iowa

NOTES

[1]Norman Holland, The Dynamics of Literary Response (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1975), p. 3.

[2]Raymond Verzasconi, "Magical Realism in the Literary World of Miguel Angel Asturias," Diss. University of Washington 1965, p. 17.

[3]Angel Flores, "Magical Realism in the Spanish American Novel," Hispania, 39, No. 12., May 1955, p. 190.

[4]Enrique Anderson Imbert, "Literatura Fantastica, realismo magico, y lo real maravilloso" in Memoria del XVI Congreso Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana, ed., Donald Yates, (Latin American Studies Center of Michigan State University, 1975), p. 42.

[5]Flores, p. 190.

[6]Alejo Carpentier, Los Pasos Perdidos (S. A., Mexico: Compania General de Ediciones, 1970). All subsequent quotes are from this edition.

[7]José Sanchez-Boudy, La Temática Novelística de Alejo Carpentier (Miami, Florida: Ediciones Universal, 1969), p. 175.

[8]Sanchez-Boudy

Terra Nostra: A HISTORICAL NOVEL FOR OUR TIMES

Norma Helsper

Carlos Fuentes' Terra Nostra is a book whose time ranges from the turn of the next century to the era of the Roman Empire. The major part of the novel, however, takes place in Spain, where a king named Felipe is building an austere palace to serve as his monument and his tomb. This is a historical time and place which the reader recognizes--however, we also note many aspects of the novelistic world which differ from, and add new elements to, the standard version of history. Most "traditional" historical novels would fit this description to one degree or another, and, in fact, Terra Nostra can be considered a continuation of the sub-genre whose patriarch was Sir Walter Scott. Terra Nostra is a historical novel and at the same time its interpretation and application of the scruples which have usually guided historical novelists is so different that it is a radical departure from the historical novel tradition. The way Fuentes deals with historical material makes a statement about the nature of history, and about the relationship between history and art. This study is an exploration of what Terra Nostra says in relation to these topics, and the ethical and aesthetic consequences of its statements.

Since the traditional historical novel is the take-off point for this analysis, it would be useful to give a brief characterization of the genre. In his study of the English historical novel, Avrom Fleishman offers what he considers to be the "usual criteria" for calling a novel "historical": It is a story placed at least forty years in the past with respect to the time of writing, historical events affect the characters' lives, and at least one character should be a "real" historic personage. He admits, however, that "...the value and, almost inevitably, the meaning of a historical novel will stand in some relation to the habitual demand for truth."[1] This ethical consideration is the one constant in the formulated poetics of historical fiction; all these writers seem to feel responsible to history in one way or another. In spite of his evident tampering with historical "fact," I would argue that Fuentes' feelings of "responsibility to

history" in part motivated the writing of Terra Nostra, although his conception of this duty is a long way from Sir Walter Scott's.

The first and most obvious difference between Terra Nostra and most traditional historical novels is that Fuentes' book begins in the future rather than the past. Thus any discussion of the novel's merits in terms of how accurately it depicts history is immediately squelched. The character presented as "El Señor" seems to be Felipe II, since he is building the Escorial, but his parents are identified as Felipe el Hermoso and Juana la Loca. Thus he seems to be a novelistic fusion of the historical Carlos I and Felipe II. When Fleishman said historical novels should have at least one real character, he, of course, had something very different in mind. Fuentes has stated in an interview with Robert Coover: "I am not interested in a slice of life...what I want is a slice of the imagination" and the elements of the novel just mentioned back up his affirmation.[2] Yet the fact that the main part of the book is set in a specific time and place in the past manifests an interest in "real" history. In another interview Fuentes states: "The novel presents an enigma, whose solution is another enigma. This is the function of art--to ask questions, not to answer them."[3] I would argue that many of the questions this work asks are about history. What kinds of documents are considered history? From whose point of view are they produced? How were the so-called facts handed down to us? Why are we so quick to accept them as Truth? Fuentes' interest in history does not lead him to write another chronicle of the epoch when Spain was establishing her rule in the American colonies, but rather to call into question all versions and our confidence in them.

The story of Felipe II is an especially fascinating one to a person interested in the accounts of the past which have been handed down to us as history, for he is both the heinous villian of Europe's Black Legend and the saintly hero of Spain's rebuttal, a type of White Legend. There could be no better protagonist for a historical novel which means to emphasize the relativity of historical truth. Fuentes illustrates how the history handed down to future generations is, at best, only one interpretation of events, and, at worst, a deliberate distortion and manipulation of information by those in power.

One manipulator presented in Terra Nostra is the painter Julián, pander for the queen, who urges "la Señora" to have a child by her latest lover. And she needn't worry if the baby doesn't resemble the king. "...la única prueba de la paternidad serán los rasgos del Señor que yo introduzca en los sellos...que

representen a vuestro hijo para el vulgo y para la posteridad..."[4] It is significant that in this illustration an artist in the service of the ruling class is used as the tool with which to alter history. In a related example, Felipe's mother, "La Dama Loca," tells Julián to make certain his painting of the foundling she wishes to establish as heir apparent is accurate. The painter warns her that the nature of art is not such that he can easily do as she asks. "¿--Constancia, Altísima Dama? La representación puede adoptar mil figuraciones diferentes. ¿Cual desea usted; la figura del que fue, del que es o del que será?...Ved...como esta imagen que pinto empieza a llenarse de imprevistos deseos, de gustos, caprichos y humores imprevistos por la invariable creación original..." (p. 234). Julián is saying that no representation of a historical figure is a true record, since it can only show determined moments of the person's life, and that, in addition, the act of perception itself is always a variable. In another exemplary illustration of this theme, the servant Guzmán talks to his sleeping king: "...me has hecho escribir tu confesión par que los hechos que allí cuentas existan, pues para ti sólo lo escrito existe y no habrá más constancia que la de un papel; bah, ahora mismo podría...reescribirlo, eliminar, añadir, escribir que también asesinaste a Ludovico y Celestina, y tú así lo creerías, porque así quedó escrito, y en ese hombre y esa mujer, si reapariciesen, sólo verías dos fantasmas (p. 146). We're reminded here of the strike against the banana company in Cien años de soledad. When 3,000 workers were massacred in the plaza, no one believed it because the government issued an edict saying the labor strike had been settled peaceably. Both Márquez and Fuentes utilize these episodes to emphasize the power that comes with the control of information, and the public's general acceptance of the version of events offered by the power structure, whatever it may be. This faith in written historical records is a central tenet of Western culture, and a belief Carlos Fuentes means to subvert, along with other generally unquestioned assumptions which are built on this fundamental faith in historical "Truth." Philosophies of history are based on observance of the course of past events. Normally, the way to perform this observation is through historical records. If, as illustrated by the preceding examples, the accuracy of these records cannot be counted on, all formulated visions of history are called into question.

Felipe, however, as befitting the novelization of the historic "rey burócrata," tries to defend the absolute truth of the written word. He states: "...nada existe realmente si no es consignado

al papel, las piedras mismas de este palacio humo so mientras no se escriba su historia" (p. 111). In order to carry this belief to its absurd consequences, Fuentes has other characters take advantage of the king's attitude. Julián advises the queen that since there is a written law stating that no Moslem or Jewish customs are practiced in the building, her husband will not recognize the existence of her Moorish bath. So the rebellious queen (resentful because Felipe, not wanting heirs, has refused to consummate their marriage) can have a palace of illicite pleasure within the confines of the Escorial as long as no one writes about it. This novelistic episode has a referent in the history of Spanish historiography. Most of Spain's prestigious historians (including Sánchez Albornoz and Menéndez Pidal) do not consider seven centuries of Moslem and Jewish presence to have altered in the slightest the essential substance of the people of the peninsula. Americo Castro became a controversial figure largely because he dared to suggest that hundreds of years of cohabitation with the semites had had some effect on the Spanish mentality.

Felipe is not such a fool as the previous Moorish bath example makes him sound, however. He meditates on the consequences of accepting one version of history, "that which is written," as "gospel." In fact, he completely subverts the equation of that word with the word "truth." A voice emanating from a magical painting in his chapel recites variations on the story of Christ: Jesus was really two people; Mary was impregnated by a camel driver; Joseph, angry at being taken for a fool, constructs the cross on which his foster son will hang. After hearing these tales, Felipe asks his servant: "¿...tú nunca dudas, Guzmán, a ti nunca se te acerca un demonio que te dice, no fue así, no fue sólo así, pudo ser así pero también de mil maneras diferentes, depende de quién lo cuenta, depende de quién lo vio y cómo lo vio; imagina por un instante, Guzmán, que todos pudiesen ofrecer sus plurales y contradictorias versiones de lo ocurrido...qué sucedería...si todos pudiesen escribir a su manera el mismo texto, el texto ya no sería único; entonces ya no sería secreto; luego... --Ya no sería sagrado" (p. 194). In his 1971 essay Tiempo mexicano, Fuentes relates the idea of the sacred text to his country's history: "Sería tentador interpretar la historia de México como una lucha entre textos sagrados y realidades profanas...las crónicas de Hernán Cortés y de Bernal Díaz del Castillo significan la llegada, al Nuevo Mundo, de un mundo nuevo, el de la Europa del siglo XVI y su creciente confianza en la empresa individual, el riesgo moral, la contaminación social y el

asalto contra la jerarquías. La realidad de la Contrarreforma pronto liquidó ese impulso..."[5] The opposition he sets up here between text and reality again suggests a questioning of the validity of chronicles and other official versions of history, and in Terra Nostra Felipe talks of the implications of recognizing that historical record is not the Word: "¿...en que se funda un gobierno sino en...el priviligio de poseer el texto unico, escrito, norma incambiable que supera y se impone a la confusa prolifeacion de la costumbre?" (p. 194). Felipe sees with perfect clarity what a loss of faith in his society's "sacred texts" would mean to him: "...si la duda transforma el dogma...entonces yo perderia mi poder y lo ganarian los locos, los rebeldes, los niños y los enamorados..." (p. 211).

The king recognizes the precarious position of the Word, but consciously rejects any variation on the dogma, any possibility of change. The embodiment of this rejection is his monument and mausoleum, the Escorial. whose motto is "Mundo inmóvil, vida breve, gloria eterna." Felipe wants his Escorial to be the place where Truth is finally known: "...para que todo se resuelva, todo sea comprensible...todo será cielo o infierno, sin la maldita etapa intermedia de la vida en la tierra..." (p. 501). The meaning the king wants for his Escorial is here revealed; it essentially opposes "...la maldita etapa intermedia de la vida..." To build the necropolis, the surrounding countryside has been ravaged, destroying all plant and animal life. One of the laborors observes: "Hemos dado la vida construyendo una casa para los muertos" (p. 186). The Escorial, central image of the novel, is associated throughout with orthodoxy, immobility, order and death. Life, on the other hand, is heterodoxy of ideas, change and movement, imbalance and disorder.

The construction of the Escorial continues throughout the novel, but not as rapidly as the king wishes. Forces are working in opposition to Felipe's project. As one character notes: "¿...y este palacio mismo, para la muerte edificado, no tiene ya la vida propia de todo lo creado...?" (p. 264) Even the central symbol of the novel cannot have one, and only one meaning--even this image of death contains life.

Felipe's mundo inmóvil is under attack from all sides; three different directions of movement are embodied in the three mysterious blond youths who, we eventually learn, are brothers, all bastard sons of Felipe el Hermoso--in this life, that is. They are also, as Peter S. Prescott notes in his review, "...unwitting agents of rebellion, spawned by the curse of the

Emperor Tiberius to be born without memory at critical times in history.[6]

Felipe's mother finds one of the boys on the beach and utilizes him for her pet project. Unlike her son, the Dama Loca wants to see their lineage continued, but in a unique way. Using black magic to take the blond youth's life to reanimate her dead husband's body, she proclaims the resulting "Príncipe Bobo" heir apparent to her son's throne, and envisions the Bobo's heir to be Felipe's grandfather, now lying in the pudridero, this pattern to be followed ad infinitum. She wants movement, but movement backwards: the ultimate reactionary.

The second boy, the Pilgrim, represents a threat to Felipe's order which is much greater than his brother's, for in his dreams he has traveled to the New World. Felipe's reaction to the boy's narration of his adventure there is to declare that such a place does not exist, for he realizes the enormity of its threat. He sees that a New World would provide the possibility for a new order, for change. "...si el mundo se extendiese una pulgada más allá de los confines que conocemos...tendría que aprenderlo todo de nuevo, fundarlo todo de nuevo, y no sabría más de lo que saben el usurero, el peón o tú mismo..." (p. 327). The New World...a chance for movement forward, for social equality; a space for heterodoxy of ideas, of religions, of races--for mestizaje, in a word. This is a possibility, but there is also another one, voiced by the king's advisors: "Destruídlo, Sire, convertidlo en espejo de España" (p. 511). "...impóngase, el fin, acá y allá, silencio a todos, pues por el menor resquicio pretextado de ciencia o poesía, cuélanse las heterodoxias, los errores..." (p. 504). Happily, it is too late. For the Pilgrim, in his dream, like a latter-day Prometheus, has already given the Word to the people. By doing so he has changed it, necessarily, from the Word to "only" language. As he leaves the American city, a chorus of voices is heard, and the Ancient tells the Pilgrim, "Hablan; y todo el poder del Señor de la Gran Voz no puede impedirlo. Diste la palabra a todos, hermano. Y por temor a la palabra de todos, tu enemigo se sentirá siempre amenazado" (p. 484). Again, the control of the means of communication is seen as power, but now it is no longer concentrated in the hands of a centralized authority. This section definitely constitutes one of the more hopeful moments of the novel. The New World is seen as if through the optimistic eyes of Europeans looking for a fresh start. The image of "the land where the streets are paved with gold" is, of course, yet another "sacred text" which often doesn't correspond with profane reality.

The príncipe Bobo represents movement backwards, while the Pilgrim is the symbol of forward movement. Their other brother embodies movement---opposition to the mundo inmóvil desired by Felipe--in still another direction. The third boy starts his career at the palace as the queen's lover, and eventually evolves to become Don Juan. Ludovico, the youth's foster father, offers insight into his son's fate. "--...no estoy triste. Encontró su destino. Y su destino es un mito" (p. 746). Don Juan is the representative of art, which can be termed mythic because of its capacity to return to eternal values while never losing its essential dynamic quality.

Much of what Fuentes has to say about art and literature as a life-force in opposition to the stagnation symbolized by the Escorial is in the form of an extended meditation on--and trifling with--the Quixote. Ludovico meets an enloquecido caballero on the road to the palace, and later relates the experience to Felipe, telling him that they have seen the adventures of the knight reproduced on paper thanks to a strange new German invention, and that due to this and to the nature of the text itself, "...el libro nunca termina de leerse" (p. 610). The existence of such a book and the invention of the printing press is, naturally, seen by Felipe as a threat to his control of the Word. The Quixote is seen as much a menace by Felipe (and as such a monumental text by Fuentes) because after dramatizing the madness of believing totally in a sacred text, this lack of correspondence between the text and the world is itself subverted: "El héroe se sabe leído...Y ello le obliga a crearse a sí mismo en su propia imaginación. Fracasa, pues, en cuanto lector de epopeyas que obsesivamente quiere trasladar a la realidad. Pero en cuanto objeto de una lectura, empieza a vencer a la realidad, a contagiarla con su loca lectura de sí mismo. Y esta nueva lectura transforma al mundo, que empieza a parecerse cada vez más al mundo del libro donde se narran las aventuras del caballero" (p. 673). Books, and one book in particular---the Quixote--present a serious threat to Felipe's plan--a life-force opposing his death wish. He can use force to stifle the rebellion of the comuneros, and declare the New World to the non-existent, but he no longer controls the infinite regenerative power of the Word, of words, of language and literature.

Because of his insistence on the mythic, timeless quality of literature, Fuentes has been accused of subscribing to a circular historical vision. Such a characterization, of course, has serious moral and political implications for anyone who doesn't

see our present world as ideal. My interpretation is rather that Fuentes sees literature as embodying one life-force, one direction of movement--with one of the three youths as its representative. He does not, however, discount movement in other directions, symbolized by the other two boys. More than a circle, the configuration which often comes to mind while reading Terra Nostra is a spiral, used by R. G. Collingwood in The Idea of History to describe a dialectical vision. So although Terra Nostra calls all formulated philosophies of history into question, the Hegelian dialectic seems to be (somewhat of) an informing model. It becomes clear just why representations of disorder, opposition, and heresy are positive and life-giving in the novel. These dissident forces sustain the dialectical movement and prevent the stagnation which is death.

To say Terra Nostra's historical vision is not totally hopeless is not to say it is overly optimistic, either. Expressions of despair are many. "Te digo, iluso de mí, que te cuento la historia para que la escribas y así, quizás, la historia no se repita. Mas la historia se repite:...Nada aprenden los hombres...Sin embargo, el enigma de la historia...es que, repitiéndose, no concluye: mira cuántas facetas de este hadit...han quedado como en suspenso, latentes, esperando, acaso, otro tiempo para reaparecer...(p. 658). Evidence tells Julián that people don't learn from history and yet he dares to hope that Spain could be, as Carlos Fuentes (influenced by Octavio Paz) has written, "Tierra baldía donde, porque nada germinó, todo puede florecer."[7]

This idea--born of the ability to see motive for despair and the inability to keep from hoping--is wonderfuly dramatized in Terra Nostra by the teatro de la memoria. Valerio Camillo, a mad Venetian genius, is its inventor. In his very special theater "los papeles se invierten. Tú, el único espectador, ocupas el escenario. La representación tiene lugar en el auditorio" (p. 564). The show, needless to say, if very special, too--first of all because it sounds suspiciously like a film, although Valerio Camillo is living at the time of the Renaissance. The subject matter presented is, as explained by the inventor, "...la más absoluta de las memorias: la memoria de cuanto pudo ser y no fue..." (p. 566). His invention has great significance in Valerio Camillo's eyes because of his philosophy of history: "Las imágenes de mi teatro integran todas las posibilidades del pasado, pero también representan todas las oportunidades del futuro...La historia sólo se repite porque desconocemos la otra posibilidad de

cada hecho histórico..." (p. 567). This vision of historical process does provide us with some hope--and underscores the significance of having the modern spectator occupy the stage, the place of the actor. The knowledge given by the Theater of Memory (or a good, critical reading of our history plus the courage to imagine something different) would help us to take active roles in shaping the future.

In the narrative device of the Theater of Memory one of the most fantastic elements of the novel is linked with our historic reality, and Carlos Fuentes displays the feelings of responsibility characteristic of historical novelists since Sir Walter Scott. It is evident, however, that if both Scott and Fuentes feel obligated to history, they must define the term differently.

Traditional historical novelists felt a responsibility to history as a record of past events that definitely happened a certain way. Carlos Fuentes, on the other hand, feels a responsibility to history defined as the process of human society's movement through the years. This emphasis on historical process has the aesthetic consequence of requiring a reader to be even more active than the active reader normally posited by much contemporary fiction. The reader must constantly be reordering and recreating the novel in a multitude of versions while attempting to comprehend it, but in addition we must be continually comparing Fuentes' version of history with the one we have learned in the conventional sources. The critical skills here gleaned can serve us well in other spheres, for certainly our reading of our world's history, past and contemporary, would benefit from this active, sceptical sort of reinterpretation.

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NOTES

[1]Avrom Fleishman, The English Historical Novel (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 4.

[2]Robert Coover, "Terra Nostra," The New York Times Book Review (7 November 1976), p. 3.

[3]Frank MacShane, "A Talk with Carlos Fuentes," The New York Times Book Review (7 November 1976), p. 50.

[4]Carlos Fuentes, Terra Nostra (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1975), p. 152. All further references are to this edition, page numbers noted in text.

[5]Carlos Fuentes, "Tiempo Méxicano, (Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1971), p. 125.

[6]Peter S. Prescott, "Spectors of Time," Newsweek (1 November 1976), p. 84.

[7]Fuentes, Tiempo mexicano, p. 55.

TLATELOLCO LITERATURE

Dolly J. Young

In the colonial history of Mexico there is a night known as "la noche triste": the massacre of Hernan Cortes' troops by the Aztecs of Tenochtitlan, June 30, 1520. In contemporary Mexican history the night of October 2, 1968, is known as "la nueva noche triste": the massacre of student protesters in the Plaza of Three Cultures (Tlatelolco) in Mexico City. It is also referred to as "la noche de Tlatelolco" or merely as Tlatelolco 1968. A variety of texts--literary and non-literary--appeared immediately after the incident and have continued to appear in contemporary Mexican literature. These texts refer either directly or indirectly to dramatic occurrences in the Plaza of Three Cultures and are known collectively as "Tlatelolco Literature."

Though no major work has been devoted to the study of Tlatelolco literature, some of Mexico's finest writers have acknowledged its status as a small but significant segment of Mexico's intellectual output in the last decade. Jorge Ibarguengöitia states: "Tlatelolco literature is the most surprising, vital and satisfactory phenomenon that has been produced in our literature in years."[1] Some writers contend that the student movement of 1968 and Tlatelolco are among the most important occurrences in Mexico since the Mexican Revolution, and that Mexico is profoundly different today because of them.[2]

The seed of the Mexican student protests of 1968, a brawl between two male students in July of that year, was a seemingly insignificant event. This escalated into a wider police-student confrontation when students objected to police intervention on the campus of the university, which, according to a 1929 law, was to function as an autonomous entity. In a series of subsequent marches and demonstrations the students made the following demands: amnesty; compensation for wounded students and families of students killed; dismissal of the Chief and Deputy Chief of Police; abolition of the tactical police corps (granaderos); freedom for all political prisoners; and repeal of the two articles of the Mexican constitution which define the crime of

"social dissolution." The government, on the other hand, was anxious to avoid the embarrassment of visible social unrest as global attention became fixed on Mexico City, scheduled host-city of the 1968 Olympics. On October 2, the mounting antagonism between student protestors and government authorities culminated in a bloody confrontation in the Plaza of Three Cultures. At least 2000 people were arrested. There are widely varying estimates of the number killed, but the officially acknowledged government count was 49. The correspondent of the New York Times estimated 200 to be a more likely figure.[3]

Evident in much of the subsequent literature was the feeling that the student discontent of this period was deeply rooted. Mexican leadership had efficiently implanted revolutionary ideas in the youth of Mexico and the students, surrounded by slogans stressing revolution, social justice and reform, and indoctrinated in the historical ideals of the Mexican Revolution, became discontented when they perceived the wide gap between "the official professions of the revolutionary mystique and the performance of the national elite."[4]

The social and political consequences of Tlatelolco were not spectacular. There were, however, significant literary consequences. The impression Tlatelolco made upon the intellectual consciousness of Mexico is evident in a variety of writings. After the October 2 massacre, the events of this period were recognized almost immediately as politically, historically and socially significant, meriting serious critical analysis. Some of the typical factors which motivated the writing of Tlatelolco texts are: to testify to the event; to denounce repressive government action at Tlatelolco; to market books by sensationalizing the massacre; to analyze and interpret the student movement historically, politically and socially; to legitimate government action; and to perpetuate the memory of Tlatelolco. It is not surprising, in light of this diversity of motivation and disparity of perspective, that the writers sought expression through several literary forms: essays, articles, documentary texts, chronicles, poems, short stories and novels.

Of all Tlatelolco Literature, perhaps the two most famous and popularly read works are Octavio Paz's Postdata (1970, English translation The Other Mexico: Critique of the Pyramid 1972) and Elena Poniatowska's La noche de Tlatelolco (1971, English translation Massacre in Mexico, 1971).[5]

In his essay Posdata, Paz both criticizes the Mexican government and interprets, historically and culturally, the events

of 1968. Paz sees student protest as a recurrent universal phenomenon in which participants become the spokesmen of "the collective conscience" of the people.[6] He contends that the community of higher education has a duty to prepare its students for their roles as analytical, even critical, members of society. The Mexican government's antagonism to the student movement of 1968 may best be explained by the government's antipathy toward such external criticism and its lack of self-criticism. According to Paz, the government "showed that it was neither willing nor able to examine its own conscience; but without criticism, above all without criticism, there is no possibility of change."[7] For Paz, the words "Olympics" and "Tlatelolco" symbolize the paradoxical development of modern Mexico, in which an underdeveloped Mexico coexists with its modern counterpart. For Paz, "this duality is the result of the Revolution and of the development that followed it..."[8] The dilemma is that "either the developed Mexico will absorb and integrate the other or the underdeveloped...will end up by strangling the developed Mexico."[9]

In the third section of Posdata, "Critique of the Pyramid," Paz discusses an "other" Mexico, distinct both from the developed Mexico and the underdeveloped Mexico. This "other," third Mexico, Mexico's subterranean or invisible history, is a vestigial past which impinges subtly, yet forcefully, upon modern Mexico. Paz does not feel that history is solely a complex of events, dates and persons; rather, he believes that "what took place is indeed in the past, yet there is something that does not pass away, something that takes place but does not wholly recede into the past, a constantly returning present."[10]

Paz links recent Mexican history with its Aztec heritage--a heritage brutally manifested in 1968--by interpreting Mexican history, society, and culture in the light of what the Aztec world view meant and still means in Mexico. The majority of Mexicans, Paz contends, "have made the Aztec point of view their own and have thus, without knowing it, strengthened the myth that is embodied in the pyramid and the sacrifice stone."[11] This myth undeservedly glorifies the Aztec heritage of sacrifice and domination. The Aztecs saw themselves as the guardians of cosmic order, just as the Institutionalized Revolutionary Party (PRI) (the dominant political party in Mexico) sees itself as the embodiment of political stability and order in modern Mexico. In the same way that the Aztecs usurped the heritage of their predecessors (the Toltecs), the Mexican government has usurped the revolutionary heritage. For Paz there is a link between

Tlatelolco (the sacrifice stone of modern Mexico), the Zócalo (the continuation of the Aztec heritage symbolized in the government) and the Museum of Anthropology (the glorification of Aztec Mexico at the expense of other indigenous civilizations). Posadata was strongly denounced by the political right who proclaimed that it was "nothing but an 'anti-Mexican tract'."[12] Both the right and center were offended by Paz's analysis because he spoke harshly of such treasured institutions as the Museum of Anthropology, the teaching of the national heritage in history classes, etc. (A comparable American example might be to attribute the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial to repressive imperialism.) President Díaz Ordaz even spoke against it on nationwide television. The political left, on the other hand, was dissatisfied with it for its mythic, poetic approach at the expense of "hard" political analysis. According to Fuentes, "both the radical left and the liberals were scandalized by Paz's psychological and anthropological analysis of the deep lying myths of the Mexican conscience."[13] Even the students did not understand Paz's purpose. They wanted him to become an active political leader or at least a directly political writer, to stop mythic speculation and send out a clear call for social revolution.

Elena Poniatowska's principle contribution to Tlatelolco literature is La noche de Tlatelolco. This work escapes clear classification as either a documentary work or a novel, and might best be considered an example of "documentary literature." For the purpose of this study, documentary literature is defined as those texts with definite literary qualities which are based on documents or on documented events. Such texts are not merely reports or journalistic accounts of historical, political or social events but have a distinctly literary texture. Historical fidelity is a typical characteristic of this type of literature; history and literature become identified. Classic examples of documentary literature are Oscar Lewis' The Children of Sanchez and Truman Capote's In Cold Blood.[14] La noche de Tlatelolco is perhaps the most widely read account of the massacre. Poniatowska's text is a series of accounts by people who were involved, directly or indirectly, in the student movement of Tlatelolco, many of whom later wrote their own accounts of the events of 1968: students and their parents, National Strike Council members, professors, university officials, dressmakers, beauticians, secretaries, granaderos, intellectuals, restaurant owners, and government representatives. Octavio Paz and Carlos Fuentes are among the contributors to Poniatowska's testimony of

Tlatelolco. Poniatowska's work is more than a random set of testimonial accounts of a historical event, however. Individual testimonies are interspersed throughout the book in such a way that the reader becomes acquainted with the witnesses to the massacre as one would the characters of a novel. Poniatowska is able to recreate the "lenguaje popular" so skillfully that her text weaves a colorful tapestry of Tlatelolco 1968 revealing much more than a chronicle of events. Consequently, even though Poniatowska treats an historical subject, her account does not have the same texture of everyday factual reality found in a newspaper report. She creates a reality infused with passion, but not with what Paz calls the "fantastic self-consistency of an imaginary reality" characteristic of fictional works.[15] In the foreword of the English edition, Massacre in Mexico, Octavio Paz states:

> It [La noche de Tlatelolco] is something that far surpasses a theory or a hypothesis: an extra-ordinary piece of reporting, or, as she calls it, a 'collage' of voices bearing historical witness. A historical chronicle--but one that shows us history before it has congealed and before the spoken word has become the written text... The passion that suffuses all her pages, from first to last, is a passion for justice, the same burning ideal that inspired the students' demonstration and protest.[16]

When a controversial newsworthy event of political or historical significance occurs, news articles, reports, essays and documentary texts frequently follow. Such works allow immediate discussion of the event. In this case, however, the theme of Tlatelolco was simultaneously incorporated into works of fiction, which may be of more lasting consequence. The Mexican Revolution produced the novel of Mexican revolution. Tlatelolco, 1968 also produced a body of fiction--novels wich incorporate the theme of Tlatelolco. Yet there is a distinct difference between the fictional accounts of the October 2 massacre and those of other genres.

It would be difficult today for a Mexican author to write a non-fiction version with the same intense reaction and passion of many Tlatelolco texts written shortly after 1968. Fiction, however, can recreate past events with immediacy and passion. Despite the fact that over ten years have passed since Tlatelolco 1968 and that popular concern for the event has "cooled," many still feel that Tlatelolco was such a significant historical event

that the Mexican people need to be continually reminded of it. This desire to perpetuate the memory of Tlatelolco is evident in the extent to which Mexican authors have treated Tlatelolco in novels. Many of these novels are conscious attempts to offer social, political or historical criticism of Mexico, to give their perception of the consequences of Tlatelolco (of the failure to produce the consequences hoped for), to recreate a fictional, yet plausible, picture of the participants and events of 1968, and to keep Tlatelolco within the consciousness of Mexico.[17]

It would be a mistake to believe that Tlatelolco 1968 produced substantive improvements in Mexico's social system. It would be just as wrong to say, however, that there were no political and social changes for the better as a result of 1968. Immediately after Tlatelolco, talk of an "apertura democrática" (democratic opening) was instigated by Díaz Ordaz's presidential successor, Luis Echeverría. Unfortunately Echeverría did not live up to his promise, and belief in an imminent, favorable change died away. Mexico today is not as it was in 1968: because of the wave of criticism that followed the Tlatelolco massacre, the Mexican government is much more reluctant to engage in large-scale repressive activities.

There are several specific points that may be concluded as a result of an investigation of Tlatelolco literature. In the first place, Tlatelolco literature manifests a critical consciousness by intellectuals, professors and writers, of a social movement in Mexico. Secondly, literature in this case was the immediate response to history, and thus helped to break down the traditional barriers between these two disciplines. Thirdly, there is a sense of searching in Tlatelolco literature on the part of Mexican youth and society for a new understanding, a new relationship, and perhaps a new ideology. The crisis of Tlatelolco 1968 could easily be seen as one of tradition versus the need for new alternatives.

In the same way that "la novela de la revolucion mexicana" announced the age of modernism in Mexico, Tlatelolco literature announces the inception of a new Mexican consciousness, a new political perception. It is difficult to predict how long the reality of 1968 will continue to be a factor in Mexican literature. As long as there are writers who are conscious of the significance of that reality there will be Tlatelolco literature.[18]

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NOTES

[1]Jorge Ibarguengöitia, La literatura de Tlatelolco" ("The Literature of Tlatelolco") Libro abierto, (November, 1971), pp. 38-40.

[2]Carlos Monsiváis, Diás de guardar (Days to Cherish) (Mexico City: Editiones Asociados, 1973), p. 16.

[3]Evelyn Stevens, Protest and Response in Mexico (Cambridge: MIT, 1974), p. 237.

[4]North American Congress on Latin America, Mexico 1968, No. 1, 1968, p. 5. Carlos Fuentes contends that the ideology of the Mexican Revolution had been institutionalized by the one-party government of Mexico to such a degree that it had lost the dynamism necessary to make it responsive to the needs of a changing Mexico (Carlos Fuentes, Tiempo Mexicano, Mexico City: Joaquin Mortiz, 1971, pp. 147-148). The students naturally felt alienated by the government's perception of itself as the institutionalization of the revolutionary ideology, the roots of which they had not directly experienced.

[5]Though this essay concentrates on these two books, the bibliography includes many other works which fall into the category of Tlatelolco literature

[6]Octavio Paz, The Other Mexico: Critique of the Pyramid, (New York: Grove, 1972), p. 13.

[7]Paz, p. 6

[8]Paz, p. 45.

[9]Paz, p. 45. Paz contends, however, that the intellectuals of Mexico no longer adhere to the long-kept truce between themselves and the government since the events of 1968.

[10]Paz, p. 76.

[11]Paz, p. 87.

[12]Carlos Fuentes, "Mexico and Its Demons," review of The Other Mexico: Critique of the Pyramid in New York Review of Books, 20 (1973), 16-21.

[13]Fuentes, p. 19.

[14]Oscar Lewis, The Children of Sanchez; Truman Capote, In Cold Blood. Poniatowska worked with Lewis and may have been influenced by him.

[15]Octavio Paz foreword to Massacre in Mexico by Elena Poniatowska, trans., Helen R. Lane (New York: Viking, 1971), p. viii.

[16]Paz, pp. vii-viii.

[17]This is not to say that all fictional accounts of Tlatelolco

even maintain the pretense of being serious social commentary. Several novels about Tlatelolco, such as La plaza by Luis Spota, were written merely to sensationalize and to sell books.

[18]The most recent work to deal with Tlatelolco is Fuerte es el silencio (Powerful is the Silence, 1980) by Elena Poniatowska. In it she reviews and reinterprets the events of 1968.

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THE PILLARBOX AND THE POSTMAN: TEXT AND RECEPTOR IN Finnegans Wake

John Willett-Shoptaw

In the brief history of reception theory, or reader-response criticism, we may see two camps emerging: one concerned with readers in or implied by the text, and the other interested in actual readers of the text. The former group although usually affirming the real reader's creative independence, tends to construct models that would channel his response. Behind every narratee (the fictive addressee of the narrator), implied reader, or reading convention lurks an ideal reader harvesting the ideal reading planted in the text for him by an ideal author. Gerald Prince's "zero-degree narratee," for example, masters all "semantic and/or syntactic ambiguities," remembers every narrative event and perfectly understands "the consequences that can be drawn from them." Gérard Genette's extradiegetic narratee (a narratee who is not a character in the text) irresistibly seduces real readers into uniform identification with it. Riffaterre's "superreader" is a team of a text's authoritative professional critics (lay readers need not apply) who are somehow yoked into agreement. Wolfgang Iser's implied readers like masons mortar gaps in the textual edifice. While denying that "for each work there is a single correct reading," Jonathan Culler ignores actual readers in favor of an ideal reader whose literary competance allows him to actualize "potential properties, latent in the [literary] object itself." His ideal reader is synonymous with acceptance by the literary establishment, but it is by no means clear on what they agree. Those critics, on the other hand, who oppose veiled or explicit worship of the one true text have problems talking about the actual readers they champion. Stanley Fish claims that "interpretive communities" stand between us and "interpretive anarchy." The unity of an interpretive community, however, is itself a matter of interpretation. Is Stanley Fish a reception theorist or of the Yale school? Is Wolfgang Iser a formalist despite himself? Who decides? Walter Benn Michaels may present, via Peirce, a more satisfying answer, that the very

identity of the reader "is already embedded in a context, the community of interpretation or system of signs." Michaels would preserve the reader's freedom with qualifications: "we can choose our interpretations but we can't choose our range of choices." Yet if, as Michaels holds, the self is a publicly inherited sign, our so-called choice of interpretations must itself rest on an interpretation of which we are not aware. Critics like Norman Holland or David Bleich who take refuge in the individual reader's subjectivity are also caught in an infinite regress of interpretation. Holland argues that our readings of texts are a reflection of our identities. An individual's identity is found by reading the "text" of the self. From this text we derive the "unchanging essence" of the self. Holland does not realize that his reading of personalities is itself an interpretation. He is a subjectivist when reading literature, a formalist when reading people. Bleich would have us read a text and then read ourselves in the pattern of our interpretation; we may learn, for example, that we side with the downcast. But of course someone else may see us differently. Bleich and Holland never have that neutral vantage-point from which they would become ideal readers of the self.[1]

The dilemma of reception theory, in my interpretation, is that we banish the ideal reader from the text only to find him in the world, either in our ideal reading of an interpretive community or of an interpretive self. Is there a way out, a model within the text, related to readers of the text, that avoids both an ideal reader and an ideal reading? An escape may be afforded by what I call a receptor: a figure in a text, appearing either explicitly as a character or implicitly as a narratee (some narratees are also characters), whose perspective on events or their rendering is less than ideal, yet who states, suggests, or symbolizes an interpretation of these events or their rendering. A receptor may be doggedly faithful to the narrator's account, or may undermine it, or may be somewhere in between. Of the first type is Dante the scribe, of the Paradiso, following in memory and reduced intellect his formal self, the voyager through paradise. In Spenser's Blatant Beast, traditionally associated with slander, we find an undermining receptor. The monster deals with surfaces, wounding both innocent and guilty for their apparent sins. The final book's hero, Calidore, cannot subdue the fiend, which "ne spareth...the gentle Poets rime" (VI.xii.40). Spenser's envoy, "therefore do you my rimes keep better measure, / And seeke to please, that now is counted wisemens threasure" (VI.xii.41),

suggests that the beast is the superficial reader, who denies the allegorical spirit of the narrative while wallowing in its salacious body of lush, enticing, or violent imagery. Most common is the receptor whose cooperation, as his insight, is qualified. Wordsworth of The Prelude, "incumbant o'er the surface of past time" (IV,263), sees a mesh of reflections composed of memories but also of imaginations, desires, and mysterious promptings, "motions that are sent I know not whence" (IV,260). I have tried to choose less obvious examples in order to suggest the limitless variety of possible receptors.

But isn't the sum of receptors in any work the ideal reader of that work? Often no easy addition is possible. We cannot, nor do we need to, reconcile the views of Iago and Desdemona. Real readers are bound to no combination of receptors, nor to any single receptor. Those that interest me suggest ways of reading, in addition to a content of interpretation. Dante the scribe implies reading with intelligence supplementd by faith; Wordsworth of The Prelude promotes imaginative reconstructions; the Blatant Beast, though Spenser the moralist frowns, shows us the voyeuristic pleasures of the text.

Receptors, fallen readers with no guarantee of a true reading or even the knowledge of its existence, are nowhere more apparent than in the notoriously unreadable Finnegans Wake: "whereabouts exactly at present in Siam, Hell or Tophet under that glorisol which plays touraloup with us in this Aludin's Cove of our cagacity is that bright soandsuch to slip us the dinkum oil?" (108.25-28), that "ideal reader suffering from an ideal insomnia" (120.13-14).[2] Such a reader, who would light our way with Aladdin's lamp out of the Platonic cave of intellectual darkness, is nowhere to be found. Joyce knows that the absence of an ideal reader entails the absence of both a unique kernel of significance governing all right readings and an omniscient author, twin of the ideal reader, who created the text ex nihilo out of his own original imagination. The nature of the fallen text is best seen in the figure who is constantly associated with it: HCE. In an early appearance as the recently dead Tim Finnegan he is laid out like a scriptural platter "with a bockalips of finisky fore his feet. And a barrowload of guenesis hoer his head" (6.26). But the communion is never consummated. Before the guests can partake of the text it is gone: "as you would quaffoff his fraudstuff and sink teeth through that pyth of a flowerwhite bodey behold of him as behemoth for he is noewhemoe" (7.13-15). Later, HCE is more simply referred to as "a dud letter" (129.7).

Finnegans Wake, like the proto-text, the "mamafesta," has never reached its destination and is forever lodged in the limbo of the postal service. The narrator wonders "Will it ever be next morning the postal unionist's...strange fate...to hand in a huge chain envelope..., will this kiribis pouch filled with litterish fragments lurk dormant in the paunch of that halp brother of a herm, a pillarbox?" (66.10-27). Consider Finnegans Wake as a "pillarbox," a monument under which or coffin in which HCE may be buried, a mailbox where the letter lies dormant, a womb which may be fertile, and finally as a book into which the ineffable and more worthy sense is rudely crammed. The question for readers of Finnegans Wake must be 'Is the coffin empty?' Is there a truer, more profound, meaning waiting to be disinterred, or is the book made up of surfaces containing nothing? Indications are contradictory; FW is called a "coach with six insides" (that is, six outsides), and is represented variously as an egg or corpse, excrement or breakfast, litter or letter, monument or phallus.

With the spirit of Finnegans Wake unattainable it would seem that we and the receptors must make do with the letter of the letter. Even this refuge is withheld. The primal scene, the master plot from which all action in FW is derived, is hopelessly unclear. HCE walks through Phoenix Park and sees two prostitutes (or his daughter and her alter ego, or his daughter and wife) urinating (or masturbating) whereupon he masturbates (has sex with them) while being watched by three soldiers (or his two sons and himself in his guilt), or he has sex with the soldiers, or his daughter sees him erect with ALP, etc.

A more profound (if that word makes sense in this discussion) difficulty in reading FW lies with the Viconian ricorso. Commentators from Beckett on have stressed the cyclical nature of events promising the periodic return of the original state of things in its primitive clarity. Yet the return to perfect knowledge never comes. Although we are promised "that, by the light of philosophy,...things will begin to clear up a bit one way or another within the next quarrel of an hour" (119.6), we are warned: "We shall perhaps not so soon see" (32.2). The ricorso is associated with rebirth, presence, the spirit of the text. But we also find in FW the notion of apocalypse which brings only the presence of death. The primal scene, the event that brings about the fall of HCE, is consistently linked with the prototext or "mamafesta." The middenheap where Biddy the hen (or ALP) digs up the letter is the site of HCE's fall. The letter comes from death, is buried with death, and is received in death. Note the

ironic statement of second coming: "the is coming to come" (598.10) where he, HCE, and "the," the final word of the text, are coterminous. Unlike Molly, ALP does not meet her lover at the end, but "my cold mad feary father" (628.1-2), the sea. The next voice we hear, the professorial tourguide of the opening chapters, bears no resemblance to that of ALP.

If the end or telos of FW is problematic, so is its beginning. Joyce, who brought Flaubert's notion of a God-like author into English literature, in FW disputes his existence. In the mamafesta chapter, IV, the devilish Shem expatiates endlessly on the document's textual intricacies until his impatient twin brother and auditor, Shaun, interrupts: "Say, baroun lousadoor, who in hallhagal wrote the durn thing anyhow?" (107.36-108.1). Shem counsels "now, patience; and remember patience is the great thing, and above all things else we must avoid anything like being or becoming out of patience" (108.8-11), before avoiding the question for another ten pages. Next Shem parodies Shaun's matter-of-fact literalism in a passage which Wake critics, revealingly, have taken at face value: "Anyhow, somehow and somewhere, before the bookflood or after her ebb, somebody...wrote it, wrote it all, wrote it all down, and there you are, full stop. O, undoubtedly yes,...but one who deeper thinks will always bear in the baccbuccus of his mind that this downright there you are and there it is is only all in his eye. Why?" (118.10-17). Shem's answer is that there is no one moment, place, or source or composition: "every person, place and thing in the chaosmos of Alle anyway connected with the gobblydumped turkery was moving and changing every part of the time: the travelling inkhorn..., the continually more and less intermisunderstanding minds of the anticollaborators" (118.21-26).

Reading and writing, like Shaun and Shem, are twins. Writing is always preceded by a reading, an interpretation which is itself a writing. Shem, the last avatar of Stephen Dedalus, is still forging the conscience of his race, not as an artificer but as a penman, who passes the "epical forged cheque" (181.15). Shaun's condemnation of his brother is truer than he knows: "how very many piously forged palimpsests slipped in the first place by this morbid process from his pelagiarist pen?" (182.2-3). All works are palimpsests, readings of other works, ancient or recent and ephemeral.

We are not speaking here of an orderly devolvement of truth. Readers, or receptors, are "anticollaborators" and confrontations are plays for power. These plays always involve the most

prominent receptor in FW, Shaun the Post. While Shem's role as writer, albeit dishonest, has promoted his identification as the artist figure, Shaun's role is less obvious. A postman delivers letters from writer to reader. Since FW is ultimately the "letter" in question, Shaun's real function is to deliver it to us, make it readable through commentary, rebuttal, interpretation, and recomposition.

This helpful figure first appears, however, as an invader. After the opening survey of events, we find ourselves as tourists guided by an affable narrator: "yet may we not see still the brontoichthyan form outlined aslumbered...peer yuthner in yondmist" (7.20-30). We are soon surprised by a primitive looking "carl on the kopje" (15.29). The fact that the narrator is surprised by anything in his own story means that distanced omniscient narration, as in Ulysses, is abandoned for physical immediacy. The narrator here is a receptor, with status and standpoint of a character as he begins to interrogate this carl, named Jute: "Lets we overstep his [Jute's] fire defences. ...Scuse us, chorley guy!...Let us swop hats and excheck a few strong verbs weak oach eather..." (16.2-8). Something unusual has happened. The first "we" and "us" refer to the narrator and the reader, like Dante behind his guide. The second "us" refers to the narrator (whose name in the dialogue is Mutt) and Jute. Where is the reader? Jute's role makes it clear. He has no patience for Mutt's manner of narration: "I can beuraly forsstand a weird from sturk to finnic in such a patwhat as your rutterdamrotter. Onheard of and umscene!" (17.13-16). The complaint is still being made about FW: it cannot be understood, it is obscene, it is composed of no language ever heard of. Mutt plays the historically sensitive tourguide as he did with us but Jute is unimpressed: "Stench!" (17.31). Yet Mutt maintains that the earth may be read: "He who runes may rede it on all fours" (18.6). After Jute's last speech the narrator suddenly returns to us but keeps speaking as if he were adressing Jute: "(Stoop) if you are abcedminded, to this claybook,...can you rede...its world?" (18.17-19). By forcing us into the role of Jute, Joyce has mocked our easy dismissals of his work and, more importantly here, shown us that reading is invasion. It is no accident that the guests at Tim Finnegan's wake include "raiders and cinemen" (6.18), readers and movie men who pick up the ashes.

A common variety of receptor in FW is the voyeuristic reader. Characters frequently sense outsiders. Issy, HCE's concupiscent daughter, admonishes her lover and brother Shem: "Musforget

there's an audience" (147.1-2). While in the "chapelofeases" making chamber music she whispers "Listen, listen! I am doing it. Hear more to those voices! Always I am hearing them" (571.24-5). The most titillated receptor in FW is HCE who, like Bloom, likes reading in the outhouse: "I have just...been reading in a (suppressed) book....Whilst...I have been idylly turmbing over the loose looves leaflefts jaggled casuallty on the lamatory...I am entrenched up contemplating of myself, wiz my naked I...I am highly pelaged...to see...that...I am big altoogooder. He beached the bark of his tale; and set to husband and vine" (357.20-358.17). HCE's reading fertilizes the text with the seeds of his amorous fancy. FW is itself the temptress. One way of reading the Phoenix Park incident is that James Joyce, cresting on the tide of Ulysses, committed an incestuously private creative act, for which he will be forever judged. The text itself is dirty. ALP signs her letter with a tea stain "marked...off on the spout of the moment" (111.20), "a cosy little brown study all to oneself" (114.29). The gossip of the washerwomen is born in the "dirty linen" of HCE and ALP: "Look at the shirt of him! Look at the dirt of it! I know by heart the places he likes to saale, duddurty devil!...That's not the vesdre benediction smell. I can tell from here by their eau de Colo and the scent of her oder they're Mrs Magrath's" (196.11ff, 204.30ff). One remark Joyce made to Nora suggests that the teastained mamafesta, dirtied underwear, and writing (including Shem's well-known method of making ink) are closely related: "Write the dirty words big and underline them and kiss and hold them for a moment to your sweet hot cunt [an anagram for Tunc, the page in the Book of Kells representing ALP's letter], darling, and also pull up your dress a moment and hold them in under your dear little farting bum. Do more if you wish and send the letter then to me."[3]

This is not to diminish the importance of ALP in FW. She seems to be the receptor Joyce most favors. ALP is a regenerative figure, salvaging the fallen HCE, as Humpty Dumpty, and serving him up to those in his wake: "if Humpty shell fall frumpty times...there'll be iggs for the brekkers come to mournhim, sunny side up with care" (12.12-14). More particularly, as Biddy Doran, ALP is the hen that both lays the cosmic egg and retrieves the buried mamafesta from the middenheap. As uncoverer and salvager ALP is a reader; as chicken scratcher she is a writer, the alleged author of the mamafesta: "The prouts who will invent a writing there ultimately is the poeta, still more learned, who discovered the raiding there originally" (482.31-32). ALP is prior to Shem

as a writer. She also completes Shaun's task of literary delivery, significantly borrowing "a zakbag, a shammy mailsack...off one of her swapsons, Shaun the Post" (206.9-11) to deliver Christmas presents. ALP, bearing her "ridiculous white burden" (112.20), is an intuitive receptor: "she just feels she was kind of born to lay and love eggs" (112.13). She suggests that much of our reception of FW is an incubation, neither analytical nor even conscious. The half-remembered connections, the trace of a melody, the sense that someone is doing something to someone else, the feeling that it all has happened before, are all experiences one has in dreams and all experiences one has in reading Joyce's "dreambookpage" (428.16). Shem himself advises us: "What has gone? How it ends? Begin to forget it. It will remember itself from every sides, with all gestures, in each our word. Today's truth, tomorrow's trend. Forget, Remember!" (614.19-22). Such passive immersion in the text, something like George Poulet's self-abnegating reading process (can the pun on "poule" be accidental?), brings the reader to a childhood freshness of experience: "nothing more is told until now,...And then. Be old. The next thing is. We are once amore as babes awondering in a wold made fresh where with the hen in the storyaboot we start from scratch" (336.14-18).

Whatever pattern of reading we choose, whatever hints we take from the receptors, we can all partake at Joyce's unreadable wake.

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NOTES

[1]The reception theorists appear in Reader-Response Criticism, ed. Jane P. Tompkins (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1980), Prince p. 9, Riffaterre p. 37, Iser p. 51, Culler p. 108, Fish p. 183-5, Michaels p. 199, Holland p. 120, Bleich p. 155. Gerard Gennette, Figures III (Paris: editions du seuil, 1972), p. 266.

[2]James Joyce, Finnegans Wake (New York: Viking, 1939). All subsequent citations will be in the text.

[3]James Joyce, Selected Letters, ed. Richard Ellmann (New York: Viking, 1975), p. 186.

The National Enquirer:
A SECRET METHOD FOR THE MASTERY OF LIFE

Stephanie Greenhill

Anyone who looks only at the cover of the National Enquirer might suspect that it has an undue and excessive concern with the lives of celebrities and the arrival of Unidentified Flying Objects. In fact, there is a great deal more going on inside the covers, much of which is apparently ambiguous. By looking at the Enquirer as a kind of Leachian mythology, "a system of ideas instead of a system of rules or a set of historical events," we can see that rather than being characterized by inconsistency, the Enquirer actually provides a systematic overview of its world.

The Enquirer is sometimes an apparent admirer of the representatives of hegemonic power in the U.S. It contains such examples of support for the status quo as a Ronald Reagan cartoon drawing contest. The entries are serious in attitude, and the winning picture shows:

> Reagan in a cavalry uniform atop an elephant to express the idea of a leader trying to get his country on the move again. The cartoon also shows two small mice razzing the elephant. "The mice represent third world countries," (the artist) explained. "In the midst of all the hassle, the problems with smaller nations, Reagan is trying to get the country and his party moving ahead, away from the small mice underfoot." (The second place winner) drew Reagan in a familiar pose--head tilted, eyes crinkled good-humouredly, with a gee-whiz grin on his face..."I saw him as a serious person, a leader with a good sense of humour," (the artist) said. "Reagan smiles an awful lot for a President."

However, the Enquirer's political stance is in fact generally anti-government and opposes law as it is presently practiced. Despite its admiration for Ronald Reagan, it has a regular series of exposés on government misspending, usually to finance academic research. For example:

> Blessed Waste of Your Tax $. Now our government's really gone loco with your tax dollars--blowing $6,719 to study how religion influences life in a small Spanish town!

Another issue contains the following joke, "The Breaks":

> The Senator's wife was awakened one night by a loud knocking at her door. Two men stepped in flashing police credentials. "Ma'am," said one of the policemen, "We're sorry to disturb you, but we have some good news and some bad news. The good news is that your husband has been arrested for drunk driving. He was in the company of a local stripper. Some reporters were there and took pictures. To avoid a scandal, we told the reporters the stripper was a friend of the family and that she and your husband were together only because you were in bed with two broken legs." "Oh my heavens!" exclaimed the wife. "If that's the good news, what on earth is the bad news?" Well, ma'am, we're here to break both your legs."

In many ways, the Enquirer has more similarity to television than to conventional newspapers, especially in the creation of the pseudo-event. Boorstin defines the latter as being planned, planted and incited for the purpose of reporting. Called by its perpetrators the media event, its relation to underlying reality is ambiguous, or that of self-fulfilling prophecy. Pseudo-events, which are staged only in order to be reported, have affinities, at least in their fictionality, to what may be called non-events in the Enquirer. The non-eventing strategy can be clearly seen in the story "Sophia Loren Tragedy--Husband Dying of Cancer":

> The glamourous sex goddess already knew her producer husband had terminal cancer when she left him in July for a dashing French doctor--and that's why she permitted her two beloved sons to live with Ponti in Switzerland, the insiders explain. "She didn't have the heart to take them away from him when he had so little time left," confided a close friend of the family.

It should be noted that "the insiders," and "a close friend of the family" are not even identified sufficiently to establish any connection with the Pontis. What insiders, and close friends of what family are never detailed, nor is any link between the Pontis and "a Rome socialite" who is another source. In fact, the latter and "a close friend of the family" seem to be the total of the "insiders." But note especially how the "insiders" in one

sentence leaps in the next sentence to being "a close friend of the family," implicitly establishing a connection which is never actually stated.

The glorious effect of innuendo is such that there need be no story whatsoever, as long as it is implied that there might be:

> "Ed has been saying to friends he's crazy about Shirley," said a mutual friend of the couple. "He says that romance is just what he needs in his life now. He's like a new man since he met her." And a longtime friend of Shirley revealed, "Shirley told me she was feeling lonely until she started working with Ed. She's very attracted to him. She says she and Ed think alike. I don't think Shirley minds if the public knows her feelings about Ed. She told me she thinks the world of him. She calls him 'a lovable teddy bear.'" What's more, a source very close to Asner on the 'Lou Grant' set revealed that just before their second date, "They discussed their relationship and agreed since they share warm feelings for each other and there's a romance in bloom, there's no reason to hide it."

Here we find that Shirley likes Ed and Ed likes Shirley, but the second date referred to could be with someone else, the "source," for instance, and many of the other remarks by the parties involved could be seen as hypothetical rather than specific.

The Enquirer, although it is a newspaper, does not deal with what is conventionally defined as news: high impact, conflict-oriented material dealing with a known principal, having proximity and timeliness. Of these, the only aspect of news which is characteristic of the Enquirer's content is high impact. In addition, there is a great deal of material indicating that what is being described is fantasy; "Lou Grant and Shirley MacLaine: A Fling or a Romance?" pairs a fictional character with an actress and "Archie Bunker Now Getting 250G a Week," indicates a salary which the fictional character would certainly never command. The implication--the Enquirer is never called a "newspaper," but it is called a "paper"--is that this paper's news is fantasy, and perhaps, by extension, that news in general is fantasy. Many people indicate their skepticism about the content of the Enquirer, but seem to feel that this is a reflection of their own perceptiveness, not the Enquirer's intended impression. Apparently, readers are supposed to think that the stories are believed by some. After all, it is "news." On the other hand, people are supposed to believe what they read in conventional newspapers, although their content is at times equally suspect.

Symbolic reversals and inversions are one source of the sense of ambiguity in the Enquirer. According to Babcock,

> "Symbolic inversion" may be broadly defined as any act of expressive behaviour which inverts, contradicts, abrogates, or in some fashion presents an alternative to commonly held cultural codes, values, and norms, be they linguistic, literary or artistic, religious or social and political.... In its cultural uses inversion is always symbolic.

The American family is one subject of such inversion and reversal:

> Short and Sweet--And Lots of Love. In one of the most unusual and touching love stories ever, two dwarf brothers found happiness beyond words by marrying two normal sisters.

It is considered a reversal of the norm in American society for two sisters to marry two brothers, for "normal" people to marry "abnormal" people and for women to marry men shorter than themselves. The pictures emphasize role reversals; the wives are shown piggybacking their husbands, one holds him in her lap, while the other is shown standing beside him with their children on his shoulders.

Although the headline emphasizes the brothers' happiness, the story itself presents material almost entirely from the sisters' point of view. They emphasize their husbands' sensitivity and love, but the pictures tell another story of "happiness beyond words." These sisters have the ideal familial situation, since they are married to men who can be treated as toys and children. Obviously, their husbands can be manipulated, carried around, and played with because physically, by their size, the women are in control.

Another example is:

> Miracle Baby. Love Overcomes Incredible Odds for Paralyzed Wife & Her Gentle Giant. In a romantic fairy tale come true, a champion weight lifter married a paralyzed girl--and now their joy is complete with the birth of a son.

Two opposites, an abnormally large man and an abnormally small woman meet and their product is also small: a child. The strength of the man is emphasized by the picture which shows him lifting

his wife on one arm and his son on the other, but the role reversal is found this time in the story which emphasizes the (male) courage of the wife and the (female) gentleness of the husband. The small child is obviously the symbolic synthesis of the two; being small like his mother he can have her courage, and being male he can have his father's gentleness and strength. The Enquirer here views life synchronically rather than diachronically; when the child grows up he will lose some of his symbolic advantages.

More subtle, less overtly bizarre examples are the photographs of everyday small objects magnified. Thus a salamander larva becomes "A Monster from Outer Space?" and threading a needle becomes an easy matter. This idea of the distorted view of the world is reinforced in a number of drawn optical illusions in a regular series called "Seeing Isn't Believing." In these cases, it seems that the Enquirer readers are being led to question their grasp of reality, or at least to view things from different perspectives.

We cannot hypothesize that the group of Enquirer readers is so homogenous that the people whose behaviour is reversed in it are what Babcock would call "significant others." The latter, less often found in reversed roles, are characters like the policeman, and institutions like the National Science Foundation. It is those charactes whose behaviour is not shown to be reversed who are most criticized. Reversal in the Enquirer tends to be an integrating mechanism, making those who are reversed part of the community.

However, there are examples about which symbolic reversal tells relatively little; the transvestite who changed his sex, then changed back and became an evangelist, or the photographs of cross-generational--mother-and-daughter and father-and-son-look-alikes. Even the material on the celebrities concentrates more on what makes them similar to everybody else--their personal lives--not what makes them different--their wealth. Many of the individuals discussed in the Enquirer's articles, in fact, are ordinary and not celebrated, except by their inclusion in that paper. Certainly the implication in most of these stories is that the reader should be thankful that he or she is normal, but on the other hand, being unusual is romanticized both by the fact of being reported and in what is said about it. The Enquirer seems more incorporative than critical of deviance and reversal, but there is always the ultimate inversion, that this is fantasy, not news and cannot be taken seriously. Although much of the

Enquirer's material can be viewed as a form of reversal or inversion, it seems valuable to consider its content also vis à vis the idea of control, or lack of control, over spiritual and physical matters.

One might suspect that the Enquirer would present the physical world as controllable and the spiritual world as uncontrollable, and this is in fact the most prevalent attitude. The controllable nature of the physical is seen in the example of "Gutsy Paraplegic Climbs 13,000-Foot Peak--With His Wheelchair," and the uncontrollable nature of the spiritual in "Demons Drive Family From House of Horrors." The idea that physical aspects of life can be controlled and spiritual aspects cannot provides both a strategy for dealing with reality and an excuse for lack of success at it. This kind of function is emphasized by the fact that the physical is not always controllable nor the spiritual uncontrollable. For example, "Psychic Stuns Police by Finding Body after 50-Man Search Fails," and:

> Hair Dye Horror... The terrified woman stared at the reflection in her bedroom mirror as an allergic reaction to hair dye transformed her into a frightening horror-movie monster.

Thus, control over each aspect is only relative, not absolute, providing further strategies and excuses for behaviour.

Some of the content of the Enquirer presents overt strategies for coping with reality from "How to be Happier in Just 7 Days," and "Cuddling is good for you" to "Your Best Food Buys in October." With this material on strategies can be grouped the large amount of material on health. Most prominent is the diet material:

> Solid Black Pill and Diet Plan. Shed Ugly Fat. The white powder in a SOLID BLACK PILL can -Stimulate Mental and Physical Activity; -Increase Alertness; -Suppress Appetite, and -Improve Mood.

Perhaps it also dances the tango. Obviously its colour is important, as is the case with many other pills advertised, perhaps in a Levi-Straussian sense that the white interior (Nature-Fat) is encased, and therefore controlled, by the black exterior (Culture-Slimness). It implies that by creating a balance between these opposites, a state of normalcy will result.

Another common concern is cancer. Most articles lull the

readers into a sense that they can continue to follow normal behaviour and avoid risks. "Warning--Anti-Cholesterol Diets Linked to Cancer" advocates balanced eating and maintains that the cancer rate for low cholesterol diets was "50% higher." There is, of course, no indication of the decreased mortality by heart disease from such a diet. The implication is that cancer is the only thing worth worrying about. Of course, if all else fails, the reader can try religion. One classified ad gives an example: "Millions of prayers wasted. Are yours? Learn the right way."

Through this analysis of the content of the Enquirer, a definite pattern emerges. The Enquirer admires strong personality and self-improvement, but is critical of waste and violence. Its readers are encouraged to become involved in the lives of the famous and non-famous alike. Using the oppositional material, the Enquirer tends to include a large number of people as overt subjects and underlying objects of its attention. It is in fact attempting to create a kind of community of readers.

It can be a very disturbing experience to read the Enquirer. One becomes almost seasick from being pushed and pulled in one direction or another between the symbolic reversals and the promises of instant success and/or beauty. The physical layout encourages the feeling of alienation. One's eyes are forced to search up and down in order to find everything on the page. One cannot even look only at headline-sized materials to get an overview; there are a number of single line quotations which force the eye to constantly refocus. Perhaps it is this format, rather than the content, which is the source of the subjective sense that the Enquirer is a fragmenting rather than a communal force.

Ambiguous invocations of community can be found in other aspects of mass communication, such as soap operas. Certainly, the Enquirer attempts to encourage the idea that it is involved with its readers, and there is apparently a definite group to which it addresses itself. Obviously, the Enquirer's community is a large one, but it need not be fragmentary or alienated because of this.

Most important in getting across the idea of a close relationship between the reader and the Enquirer is the large amount of second-person copy ("If you simply can't live without rich foods--like cookies and ice cream--why not compensate for the calories by walking them off?"); headlines ("How Adding Machines can be Rigged to Cheat you"); invitations to reader participation ("Check these tapes for phony totals"); and solicitation of material ("$5 for Happy Thoughts"). It can even provide a sense

that it is watching over its readers, running an ad about $5000 found which could be retrieved by the owner in several other newspapers as a "test" or "experiment in honesty." Significantly, there is no letters-from-the-readers section which might imply that a split between the readers and the publication exists, either symbolically or in their opinions.

The advertising in the Enquirer is one of the most direct appeals to community. Much of what the Enquirer advertises is part of its appeal to the control that readers may have over their lives through products that will give them youth, beauty, success and a direct line to metaphysical power. The Enquirer's community, as seen from its ads, is trying to protect itself from everything from roaches to unwanted intruders to the nuclear holocaust, but also attempting to improve its English, health, and so forth. This is not directed solely at women's concerns; there are ads for products which will build up a man's muscles, show him how to meet girls, allow him to secretly buy a wig, and cure his prostate problems. The community which the ads imply is an imperfect and insecure one, but the rest of the copy indicates that everyone is imperfect and insecure, and glorifies this post-Edenic state.

The Enquirer's invocation of community leads to a final suggestion. Many analyses of mass media culture suggest that it is entirely a fragmenting force, and that oral tradition is its polar opposite, a force of an entirely wholesome nature. However, similarities between the Enquirer and some bodies of folklore material suggests that this may not be such a simple dichotomy. Collections such as Flanders and Brown's Folk-Songs from Vermont deal with many subjects equally beloved of the Enquirer: illicit love, the bizarre, violence, death, satire and religion. Despite the number of people who are killed in unpleasant ways in these songs, some writers suggest that oral tradition is characterized by a felt sense of control, balance and sanity.

One writer on communication, Breed, comments that "tact, the use of the white lie, and the studied avoidance of stating unpleasant facts may be characteristic of all social--as distinguished from scientific--communication." If this is true, both the Enquirer and the songs from Vermont exemplify scientific communication. It becomes patently obvious that many writers on this subject have failed to analyze their materials deeply before making such generalizations, or do not qualify them sufficiently. For instance, Innis says:

> The quantitative pressure of modern knowledge has been responsible for the decay of oral dialectic and conversation. The passive reading of newspapers and newspaper placards and the small number of significant magazines and books point to the dominance of conversation by the newspaper and the pervasive influence of discontinuity, which is, of course, the characteristic of the newspaper.

The coherence of the oral tradition society is given rather than demonstrated. It is possible, however, to argue even against the fragmenting nature of mass communication and of mass society in general. For instance, soap operas, however alienating they may be as events, become sources of community contact, interpersonal communication and oral tradition. Certainly in many parts of North America, soap operas become a common topic for conversation among both men and women, and even a stimulus to discussion. In addition, the community sense presented by soap operas--everybody knows everybody else, most people are related in some way, and everyone is thoroughly involved in everyone else's life--can be seen as an ideal which can be emulated, or alternately as a substitute for real community life.

A publication such as the Enquirer is, at least from one point of view, an ethnoscientific analysis of some aspects of North American society and culture which, by combining appropriate symbols and meanings, makes itself profitable. The meanings which are found in the Enquirer are therefore predicated upon this understanding, anyone who buys that paper must understand the the "news" contained therein may have been reinterpreted in order to be made more relevant to the final end that the Enquirer be interesting and therefore worth buying. Thus, the Enquirer can only be very simplistically regarded as a description of the culture of the group who buys it. Neither is it only reflective of culture, as Geertz describes the Balinese cockfight to be, although the profit motive involves some of the same generation and regeneration of the subjectivity which, the Enquirer claims, is only displayed. In a sense, the Enquirer is a description of its own created world which refers to itself as much as to the culture which maintains it. The attractiveness of the Enquirer could be that its readers can pick and choose both their tales and their morals from a certain range of possibilities, and can know that others are doing the same thing.

The University of Texas at Austin

READING REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN IN FILM: TOWARD THEORETICAL ADEQUACY

Jackie Byars

Cinema, an "imaging machine," a producer of representations, is but one in a range of signifying practices involved in the production of meaning, social values, and subjectivity,[1] in short, the production of ideologically centered (sexed) subjects. In order to "read" the discourse that is cinema, it is necessary to develop a theoretical framework based on a rejection of the notion that ideology is "false consciousness," understanding instead the notion of ideology (in a general sense) as a lived relationship of individuals to reality, "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence." Not a pre-existent, separable entity, ideology is a process, has a material existence within the practices and rituals of a society, and interpellates (constitutes) individuals as subjects, indeed, enables a subject's recognition of individual subjectivity.[2] Numerous ideologies (in a specific sense--for example, capitalism or socialism), through a society's practices and rituals, compete for hegemonic dominance, and configurations of ideologies constitute a general (national) ideology within which individual subjects recognize identity. Cinema, an ensemble of interacting discursive activities, can be considered both practice and ritual, and operating with other such ensembles, functions ideologically to produce individual subjects and to reproduce ideology.

Most recent feminist film theory and analysis aims to describe this process by which sexed objects are produced within a capitalist and patriarchal society, specifically the role cinema plays within this process, and most draws on Freudian-Lacanian psychoanalysis and/or Marxism for its theoretical base. The most fruitful of these attempts have been those which blend these two most basic models for patterns of what Bill Nichols terms "sexual and economic communication and exchange." He describes the intersection of "sexual and ideological patterns of communication and exchange between viewer and screen, reader and text" that

brings together psychoanalytic textual analysis which has "traditionally used the text to speculate on the author's or his society's psychosexual disposition and, more recently, to consider the viewer's position vis-a-vis the text" and Marxism which "has traditionally attempted to relate any art product to the economic conditions under which it is produced and of which it is, in some way, indicative...[and] seeks to consider art from an ideological perspective."[3]

Inadequate attempts have resulted from, simply, failures to properly understand or contextualize the theories which contribute to this sort of analysis. One problem stems from the improper understanding of the notion "ideology." Some approach, for instance, the study of images by positing an ideological "level," implying that there is a "non-ideological" base upon which ideology is applied, to which one can return, uncovering a "real meaning" of the image. This obscures the fact that meaning always depends on interpretation, that images are always read.[4] A similar mistake is made by those who assume that woman as gender or social group is separable from representations of women, that there is a real entity, women, juxtaposed to "false," perhaps male images of women.[5] This mistake, based on the notion of ideology as "false consciousness," creates false oppositions and impedes progress in the study of woman as signifier in a sexist discourse.

Yet other problems arise when readers favor one theory to the exclusion of the other or fail to contextualize the theoretical framework with which they work. Psychoanalytic analysis is ahistorical, but the issues it addresses must be considered in terms of capitalism and bourgeois ideology, especially since "one of the dominant significations of woman is that of sale and commodity."[6] Psychoanalysis is a valuable tool, but used alone, it presents a skewed and ahistorical vision; use of Marxism alone tends to avoid the subject. In order to understand the overlap of the personal and the institutional--here, the space between the cinematic institution and the individual spectator-subject--attention to both theories is necessary.

Indeed, the theories themselves must be viewed with some healthy skepticism, as no theory can claim to be ideology-free. Raymond Bellour, who is (directly or indirectly, through his students and associates) responsible for some of the most imaginative psychoanalytic analyses of film texts, also works on literary texts that immediately predate psychoanalysis because it "allows one to understand psychoanalysis historically, to effect certain cleavages, to relativize the basic postulates which in

psychoanalysis are endowed with a transcendental value of retrospective and atemporal truth."[7] This attention to the historical conditions within which these theories developed prevents their overvaluation and enables an understanding of their limitations. It also encourages further development of the theories themselves.

A certain void, a "heart of darkness" exists within both Marxist and psychoanalytic theory--woman. Marxism has historically attempted to account for the production of capital, ignoring the all-important "reproduction of the labor force," woman's work. With the rise of Marxist feminism, the complexities involved in this seemingly innocuous phrase have become central to much Marxist cultural analysis. The labor force must, of course, be reproduced ideologically as well as physically, and the reproduction of "properly" sexed individuals is crucial to this endeavor. While it has never been uncommon for working-class women to work outside the home, the exodus of middle-class women from the home to the arena of wage-labor during and immediately following World War II brought into question the family structures traditional to bourgeois capitalism and focused much Marxist work on the ideological process (especially, of course, that work done by women) on the creation of sexual difference. Simultaneously, many feminists who had long scorned psychoanalysis--because they felt that Freud had, by and large, ignored women and that the work he did do in the area presented an erroneous and prejudicial view of women[8]--began to see psychoanalysis as an interesting description of the reproduction of patriarchal ideology in the individual.

Work on cinema based in psychoanalysis has concerned three areas: the narrative, the conditions of spectating, and the filmic techniques. Narrative analysis exposes the extent to which classic cinema[9] is based on reproduction of the basic patriarchal Oedipal scenario in which representations of woman as the site of masculine desire and sexual pleasure function to reproduce the particular subjectivity that internalizes the Oedipal and castration complexes.[10] Another sort of analysis focuses on filmic techniques that complement and implement the ambitions of the narrative. Some techniques are considered inherent to cinematic discourse, but while they enable the voyeurism, exhibitionism, and fetishism basic to cinema, they efface the marks of their enunciation.[11] Feminists, like Claire Johnston, have examined these notions as they relate specifically to the constitution of a sexed subject. In her article "Toward a Feminist Film Practice:

Some Theses," Johnston examines Oudart's concept of suture("the articulation of narrative and image flow in which the film constantly poses an absence, a lack in relation to the subject"), concentrating on the implications of cinema's mainstay, the shot/reverse shot, for feminist concerns, noting that it is an ideological operation which articulates a patriarchal system of subjectivity. She advocates willed intervention into the system of cinematic signification, such as a refusal of the reverse shot, arguing the possibility of producing a different kind of subject through different filmic techniques.[12]

Johnston's work exhibits the concern with reproduction of ideology which has become increasingly evident in psychoanalytic film analysis and theory, but she ignores the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism. Indeed, she ignores capitalism altogether. Considering that woman serves narratively as the passive site of masculine desire, definable only in terms of the male, and filmically as a commodity, the possessed object of the look, this negligence of capitalist patterns of exchange is surprising, even shocking. That woman is a signifier in a patriarchal discourse is important (but so is man); that she signifies as a commodity is more important, and a move toward theoretical and analytic adequacy must address both psychoanalytic and Marxist concerns.

The obvious question is: what does such an adequacy look like? How can these different theoretical assumptions be blended to produce an analytic methodology? The theoretical problems involve understanding relationships between the levels detail/text/context, as well as the relationship between text (film) and reader (spectator-subject).[13] I am concerned with both sets of relationships and the relationship between the two sets, and here I propose a series of questions/areas of concern as a step toward development of an adequate theory and an analytic methodology for reading representations of women.

1) <u>detail</u>/<u>text</u>: Elizabeth Cowie writes:

> The image is a point of production not as origin but in the setting into play of all other images and other significations from which it is distinguished as alike or not alike. The image will draw upon elements from other images, and will use notions, concepts, myths, etc. already available in the culture. The image will not just 'reflect' these, however, but in re-producing them will re-form them, producing new meanings as it sets in play its connotative system-- its 'rhetoric'.[14]

A representation in film involves an ensemble of images and words but operates in a similar manner, drawing not only on a variety of familiar elements but also on familiar designs/patterns of elements, re-forming the elements and designs in service to its own 'rhetoric', producing 'new' meaning which is, however, readable only through the specific historical context in which it exists and through knowledge of 'old' representations and the notions which made them understandable. The first questions here: what are the elements of the representation? how are they organized? what are the effects of the choice of elements and patterns of organization? how do they compare to other elements and patterns of organization (for instance, representations of men or objects)?

2) text/context:

2a) Placing a film text within its context as a step toward understanding the relationship between them involves an examination of the historically specific ideological situation from which it emerged. Representations of women in film, for instance, can only be read properly in relation to the economic and political position of women at the time the film was made, through social knowledge of related and external codes such as sexism and racism.

2b) Contextualizing a text also involves understanding the conditions of its production. In the case of 'classic' film texts, this means understanding the exigencies of the Hollywood studio system; this could concern such phenomena as the genre film or the star system.

2c) A complete analysis (itself a utopian project) would also include comparison of the representations within the text with others in the same genre(or in other genres).

2d) Completeness would also entail a comparison of representations from various discursive systems such as representations in novels, television programs, or advertisements.

3) text/reader: Theoretical adequacy in this endeavor includes the necessity to address the relationship between the individual spectator and the film text. For instance, certain phenomena identified in individuals by psychoanalysis can be seen to operate in the organization of the filmic text. Some recent work on representations of women has focused on Freud's essay, "On Narcissism, An Introduction," concerning the attraction women (especially beautiful women) hold for men. Sarah Kofman's reading of the article can be quite useful for film analysis; it focuses on, among other things, Freud's separation of the 'masculine' and

the 'feminine', which places narcissistic self-sufficiency as 'feminine' and object love (love dependent on possession of an object) as 'masculine.' Women are, in Freud's essay, likened to cats, large beasts of prey, humorists, and great criminals,[15] and it is far from difficult to use these notions in reading representations of women in film. Indeed, these notions of 'masculinity' and 'feminity' can be seen to operate both in the narrative and in the plastic and figurative aspects of representation.

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NOTES

[1]See Teresa de Laurentis, "Imaging," Ciné-Tracts 11, Vol. 3 (Fall 1980), p.3.

[2]For a fuller explication of these concepts, see the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies' journal On Ideology particularly Roisin McDonough, "Ideology as False Consciousness: Lukacs," and Gregor McLennan, Victor Molina, Roy Peters, "Althusser's Theory of Ideology." Published in London by Hutchinson & Co., 1978; it originally appeared as Working Papers in Cultural Studies, No. 10 (1977).

[3]Bill Nichols, "The Birds: At the Window," Film Reader 4 (Evanston, Illinois: Film Division/School of Speech, Northwestern University, 1979), pp. 121-122. Note: sexual patterns are, in fact, ideological patterns.

[4]For a more thorough explication of this argument, see Elizabeth Cowie, "Women, Representation, and the Image," Screen Education, 23 (Summer 1977), p. 17.

[5]See: Griselda Pollock, "What's Wrong With Images of Women?" Screen Education, 24 (Autumn 1977), p. 26.

[6]Pollock,p. 31.

[7]This is excerpted from Janet Bergstrom, "Alternation, Segmentation, Hypnosis: Interview with Raymond Bellour," Camera Obscura, No. 3/4 (Summer 1979), p. 96.

[8]This is, of course, on a theoretical level. Many women distrusted (and still do) psychoanalysis on a practical level because its practitioners have used (or misused) psychoanalysis as a tool to "keep women in line," to psychically flog them into submissiveness.

[9]The classic cinema--generally defined as the American cinema from the advent of sound to the demise of the studio system--has frequently been considered a relatively homogenous text, but this obscures the variability and development in the corpus of texts involved.

[10]See the interview with Bellour, pp. 90-93 and 101-102.

[11]See Christian Metz,"History/Discourse: Note on Two Voyeurisms," Edinburgh Magazine, Number 1: Psycho-Analysis/Cinema/Avant-Garde (1976), pp. 21-25.

[12]Claire Johnston, "Toward a Feminist Film Practice: Some Theses," Edinburgh Magazine, Number 1: Psycho-Analysis/Cinema/Avant-Garde(1976), pp. 50-59. Her ideas concerning intervention into filmmaking method could easily be extended to working and economic relations of filmmakers, for a

basic feminist tenet is "the personal is political," and it seems unlikely that a production apparatus which mimics the patriarchal Hollywood system would produce anti-patriarchal or non-patriarchal texts.

[13]The use of the term 'level' is here a theoretical and not a practical use: it is no more possible to separate a detail from a text or a text from its context than it is to isolate and understand 'brute' facts.

[14]Cowie, p. 22.

[15]Sarah Kofman, "The Narcissistic Woman: Freud and Girard," Diacritics (Fall 1980), pp. 36-45 (excerpted from L'Enigme de la femme: La femme dans les textes de Freud, Paris: Galilée, 1980).

HAMMER, SHOE, AND SPUR: THE STYLE OF AUTHORITY FOR ARENDT AND KAFKA

Dennis Crow

The purpose of political authority in our society is the arbitration of the diverse interests of citizens in ways that obtain their compliance to legislation and regulations. It could be said as well that reading is like negotiating one's way with and through the significations organized in a text in order to arrive at an interpretation which will compel the assent of other readers. Today, the justifiability of political authority depends on the degree of agreement citizens reach on the meaning of constitutions, laws, and other public documents. In this way, the study of political theory and comparative literature share problems of authority, writing, and interpretation. In what follows, I would like to explore these issues from both sides of the heretofore insurmountable disciplinary division.

For Arendt, authority is not silent. Silence would signify universal consent or uniform repression: either would be a violation of what is distinctly human, speech. What we take to be the voice of authority speaks with a definitely male accent. What does this have to do with Kafka? His parables or allegories illustrate the predominate imposition of this apparent authority through writing. Indeed, it is the prominence of the violence of public writing that we encounter in Kafka's work; for he was a civil servant himself. Speech and writing, as Derrida has argued, intertwine through the variety of literary and social orders that seemingly ground the authority of our culture. It is the metaphor of writing that embellishes our faith in the existence of a speaking subject capable of addressing the "truth." This metaphor of writing misconceived as technique and death must not be confused with what writing may actually be. For Arendt, the search for "truth" is only a guise of "coercion through reason" by which Plato displaced "coercion through violence." In The Castle, Kafka describes the futility of the instrumental search for the origin of authority. In In the Penal Colony, we witness, without the "enlightened" detachment of the "explorer,"

how public writing literally is employed as a form of execution. I would argue that until we understand the complicity of our notions of speech and writing with the imposition and abuse of authority, the repetition of such acts is bound to continue.

In "What is Authority," Arendt tells us that authority has disappeared from political life. Her concern is to distinguish coercion, persuasion, argumentation, and philosophy from authority. A sense of distinction, she argues, is what social science lacks. Social science perpetuates the disappearance of authority and freedom through its "universal functionalization." Arendt wants most of all to preserve the distinction between the natural and the human. To confuse the two is to exercise the violent or instrumental domination of nature upon human beings. To confuse the two is to strip individuals of their ability to speak. However, she is caught up in the effacement of differences as an author of political philosophy. The differences between men and women are effaced in the name of the search for "truth." These comments lead Arendt to make a statement which is embedded in her argument about authority that is consistently left uninterpreted. Concerning the "universal functionalization" practiced by social scientists, she writes that their "concern is only with functions, and whatever fulfills the same function can, according to this view be called the same. It is as though I had the right to call the heel of my shoe a hammer because I, like most women, use it to drive nails into the wall."[1]

This is one of the rare occasions in which Arendt mentions her sexuality in the context of a philosophical argument. The distinction between hammers and shoes not only establishes a sexual division in the use of tools, it also resonates with different styles of philosophizing and challenges the hierarchy of social scientific divisions of labor and authority. Hammers, in the hands of social scientists, may construct "frameworks" which enclose objects of study to reduce them to the "same" function or may pound the object into a uniform mass that can be measured, weighed, and quantified. Hammers, as tools of an academic discipline, drive arguments home into the walls of institutions. By rendering objects of study--whether economics, politics, or culture--the "same," distinctions collapse under the hammer blows which make theory possible. In contrast, Arendt's gesture has an ironic clumsiness which accentuates the remainder of her argument, but is so subtle that it is left uninterpreted, i.e. passed over as though it were a non-functioning analogy superfluous to the job at hand. The image is of a woman confronted with using the

"wrong" tool regardless of her ability to do the job. Arendt's gesture is also clumsy in that it falls one third of the way through the essay. The essay would read as well without it. This personal self-referential touch defies the canons of the impersonal mode of academic writing. Within this comment, however, a multitude of issues can be raised concerning the use of figurative language in social science, the appropriateness of social science methods to human action, the legitimacy of masculine domination of the discipline of political philosophy, and the style of authority in politics in general.

Arendt continues to argue that authority depends on a clear understanding of what political action is. Her taxonomy of action is controversial, to say the least, but there is an important point to be made about her understanding of speech and authority. Arendt distinguishes between the actions of making, fabricating, and producing from political action, or praxis. For Arendt, the latter is action in its truest sense. Making and fabricating predominate man's relationship to nature. That relationship is instrumental, uni-directional, non-discursive, and violent. Speech and action, lexis and praxis, belong to the human realm that is normative, interactive, and dialogic. Arendt interjects that Plato sought solutions to political problems which would not repeat the tyranny, violence, and chaos that Arendt believes shaped Greek politics. Despite this goal, Plato only substituted a model of fabricating action based on imitation of transcendental forms. The Platonic tool was "coercion through reason" framed by a theory of "truth" which reason could provide just as unambiguously as technical thought could provide goals and guides for carpentry, medicine, or navigation. This false analogy, Arendt argues, was derived from metaphors of vision--applicable only to man's relationship with nature and objects--not from speech which is the distinctly human feature of human beings' relationship to each other. As a result, political action became circumscribed by fabrication.[2] Aristotle, rejecting Platonic metaphysics, retained the predominance of man's fabricating mode of action as the model of politics. The "natural" order in the family, household economy, and school was transferred to political action in general. This order was construed as strictly hierarchical and technical. As a consequence each member of the community was thought to have a "natural" role to play in its operation. Establishing a model that would balance the one, the few, and the many was likewise taken to be the instrumental task of political theory. Technical action and unquestioned obedience

to authority became the model of politics. The modern understanding of authority, however, is rooted in Roman thought and political life. Arendt traces its origin to the verb "augere." The verb translates as "augmentation" and denotes a transference of meaning from the past that is continually to be enriched in the present. Arendt distinguishes the "past" from "tradition." "Tradition" is the amalgam of interpretations that have become enforced as dogmas. Loss of tradition is serious, but loss of the past is fatal. "With the loss of tradition, we have lost the thread which safely guided us through the vast realms of the past, but this thread was also the chain fettering each successive generation to a predetermined aspect of the past. It could be that only now will the past open up with unexpected freshness and tell us things no one has yet had ears to hear. But it cannot be denied that without a securely anchored tradition...the whole dimension of the past also has been endangered. We are in danger of forgetting...the dimension of depth in human experience."[3] The memory required to retain this depth is the memory of the founding of the political community. The "sanctity of the founding" must be preserved through speech.

A founding of a political community, however, is not an instantaneous disclosing of its meaning that can stand as the perennial basis of authority in that community. A city is not built is a day, nor by a single founding figure, except in mythology. Only an underlying mythology could provide the basis of such a faith in the instantaneous and unequivocal meaning of a founding. Subsequent inaugurations of this faith are renewed beginnings, and as such cannot be the "same." They are only representations of the founding. A representation embodies a temporal difference. This temporal difference must be reconciled by the construction of a narrative, the story of its progress or degeneration, a re-interpretation of the founding by the individuals involved. This tradition "orders the past, hands it down, interprets it, omits, selects, and emphasizes according to a system of pre-established beliefs."[4] What is tradition but the putative unity of thoughts and beliefs about the founding. The basis of this putative continuity is language, especially figurative language. The heart of authority, for Arendt, is speech and interpretation expressing a continuity that must necessarily be presumed for citizens to be bound by a political community. Arendt's contribution to the understanding of authority is in introducing the centrality of speech and interpretation to citizens' expression of and acceptance of

authority. The figurative language of Arendt's own gesture challenges the apparent authority which would deny this and which is perpetuated by the "universal functionalization" of social science.

The significance of the analogies of hammers and shoes surpasses Arendt's criticism of structural-fuctionalism in social science. Nietzsche, for instance, subtitled Twilight of the Idols "How to Philosophize with a Hammer." His transvaluative hammer blows were the terse, shocking, turns of irony; the hammer blows that turn philosophy against itself. In his hand, figurative language pierced the fabric of Western philosophy. In Spurs, Derrida reminds us that Nietzsche's style was a spur that opened up the texture of belief to interpretation. Here style is a refined and subtle hammer that pierces, but not smashes. The etymological link between "style" and "spur" provides the leverage with which to open up Arendt's comment to interpretation. From Derrida, we learn that "the spurring style is the long, the oblong, object that serves to parry as well as to perforate; the point is oblong-foliated, with an apotropaic power of cloth, fabric, veils, and sails that stretch, fold, and unfold themselves around it."[5] Nietzshe's spurs are his metaphorical constructions which confront the question of truth with indominable force. Nietzsche asks whether truth could be a woman. In this metaphor, the question of truth becomes the question of woman. For Nietzsche, woman is the unpossessable force always acting at a distance whose illusiveness is always fascinating. Truth as well cannot be possessed, yet remains fascinating. Derrida makes sense of Nietzsche's coments this way:

> That which will not be pinned down by truth is in truth feminine. This should not, however, be hastily taken for a woman's femininity, for female sexuality, or any other of these essentializing fetishes which might still tantalize the dogmatic philosopher, the impotent artist or the inexperienced seducer who has not yet escaped his foolish hopes of capture.[6]

According to Derrida, Nietzsche's misogeny turns into a figure for the illusiveness of truth; the distancing of philosophizing by style from the pursuit of truth. Arendt's analogy is also such a spur. The oblong "shoe" and its sharp "nail" are the metaphors for this. With this gesture she announces her personal use of the stylistic tools of philosophy, her distinction from the practices of established political philosophers, and her sexual difference.

In this way, Arendt turns, if not overturns, the style of authority in political philosophy. Inasmuch as she insists that interpretation and style expressed through speech is the source of authority, she challenges the possibility of grounding authority in a "truth" grasped by theory.

Arendt is reacting to the enforced silence of fascism. She argues as though the speaking subject were the last point of resistance to that silence. Arendt retains the myth of the speaking subject as though the use of speech resonated from a self in control of its language, that is capable of propelling its style, of telling its story. Derrida has taken pains to dispel this myth upon which so much of traditional philosophy depends. Derrida makes us sensitive to how the traditional privileging of speech and the derogation of writing structure our notions of nature, order, grounding, and life. Writing has been traditionally described as technical, indelible, orderly, and deadly. The traditional notion of writing is relevant to problems of authority in that it has a predominate influence in political theory and administrative practice. Kafka's writing of literature seems to displace problems of interpretation and writing from his production of public documents as a clerk of the state insurance administration. In The Castle and In the Penal Colony, Kafka seems to allegorize how little difference there may be at present between the two modes of writing.

In order to explain this, I would like to suggest an ancillary interpretation of Kafka's work to that of Henry Sussman's Franz Kafka: Geometrician of Metaphor. Sussman argues that in The Castle, "the novel's scenario of metaphysical innocence being supplanted by critical penetration becomes an endless and demonic process."[7] Kafka only discovers "spatial incoherence" and "temporal discontinuity" during his recorded stay in the village.[8] Sussman notes that the novel is no simple allegory of bureaucracy. Interpreting Kafka's work so simply would ignore instances of the shifting grids of domination and authority constructed by the interaction of the characters. Relations between Kafka, Barnabas, Olga, Frieda, Klamm, the Assistants, and Pepi are challenged, displaced, or overturned. All the characters have stories to tell about their relations with each other and the Castle. The veracity of their stories is always in doubt. As Sussman mentions, the "ur-text" which might confirm even Kafka's identity and justify his existence in the village has been lost. Finally, the landlady challenges his assertion that he is a land-surveyor and not a tailor. Even the disinction between the peasants and

the Castle is in doubt. During Kafka's first morning in the village, the teacher tells him: "There is no difference between the peasantry and the Castle." Kafka replies: "Maybe, that doesn't alter my position...."[9] Kafka is right that this does not change his "position." His position, that is, in the structure, the geometry, which it is his task to survey. Kafka is caught up in a complex geometry of character, geography, interpretation, fiction, and metaphor.

In the flux of conflicting accounts of the relationships of the peasantry and the Castle, any locus of authority is lost. In this conflict of interpretations no verifiable source of authority can be identified. The narrator builds on contrasts of illusion and frankness which Kafka is supposed to be able to straighten out. Rather, he is caught in a seamless web of interpretation. Furthermore, the duties of the assumed officers consist of reading books to themselves or aloud to secretaries desperately trying to record their murmerings. The secretaries in turn deliver vast quantities of documents each morning. The process of interpretation and reading only reveal further underlying fictions.

Sussman describes Kafka's experience as though here were an innocent observer entrapped by the impossibility of his task. Sussman is right that Kafka is a surveyor of "analogy, metonymy, synechdoche, and metalepsis."[10] However, I contend that Kafka is neither innocent nor is his task the metaphysical one of surveying the time and space of figures. Sussman's existential interpretation is only plausible if Kafka's identity as a land-surveyor is left uninterpreted. The significance of Kafka's being a land-surveyor derives from the theory and practice of surveying itself. Surveying and the surveyor's instrument, the theodolite, were derived from the gradual geometricization of thought during the middle-ages. The task of the surveyor is to divide a landscape into vertical and horizontal angles in order to facilitate construction of roads, buildings, bridges, fortifications, churches, and castles. Its first use was to demarcate the property boundaries of English manors. With this imposition of geometric constructions the domination of nature under the schematics of natural science begins. Kafka's task, if he were acting as a land-surveyor, would be to set similar limits to property. Without the surveying instrument, Kafka must apply his skills to human relationships. The demarcation of these relationships into geometric patterns and fixing limits to them is hardly an innocent endeavor. Kafka, however, finds that this

instrumental mode of analysis is not applicable to the interpretive and dialogical interaction of human beings. Kafka's failure results from a fundamental misconception and misapplication of knowledge not from his failure to solve a metaphysical quandry. The figures that enter into human communication and the construction of their relationships frustrates Kafka's instrumental approach. Just as Arendt's social scientists crush the objects of study to fit a quantifiable form, Kafka sets out to organize human relationships into a geometric pattern.

In the Penal Colony seems more frightening than The Castle, but more implausible if we assume that it has direct allegorical correspondence to politics. The horror and irrationality of a system that punishes the slightest indiscretion by the severe means of inscribing the violated rule through the body of the condemned seems unfathomable as a modern political practice. No defense is granted to the prisoner; only the officer's expertise in the operation of the machine is offered as the justification of the sentence. The system seems so encompassing that the officer cannot outlive the potential termination of the machine's function. The machine becomes anachronistic as the militarist rule of the colony is to be replaced by the formal-procedural rule of law. However, the colony is already westernized enough to have a military organization which will be enhanced by imitating its colonizers. The "explorer's" cooperation is all that is necessary to compete this. Like the land-surveyor, the "explorer" struggles to remain a detached observer--suitable to his position as an observer of "alien" geographies and cultures--in spite of the horrors he is to judge. When the "explorer" leaves the colony, he visits the grave of the putative originator of the practice. The grave is hidden in a tavern of sorts and is the object of ridicule despite the inscription prophesying the return of the Commondant. It is impossible to decide whether the "explorer's" visit to the grave is a sign of his complicitousness with the continuation of the practice or a recognition that, despite legal reforms he could recommend, their written imposition would fix the prophesized repetition of the same brutality. Ironically, the officer on whose expertise the system depended has destroyed himself in demonstrating its effectiveness. Either interpretation seems to account for the "explorer's" final abandonment of the soldier and the former prisoner. Unlike "Kafka," who seeks redemption from the authorities, the "explorer" violently extricates himself from them.

The "explorer," like "Kafka," is not innocent. This final violence of threatening the soldier and the former prisoner might signify another problem of writing exercised in an instrumental fashion. As the officer explains the operations of the machine when the prisoner is to be executed several puns on writing stand out: "the Harrow is the instrument for the actual execution of the sentence;" "how does the sentence run;" "our sentence does sound severe;" and "But surely he knows that he has been sentenced." "Sentencing" becomes a verb combining punishment and writing. The law that has been violated is inscribed through the body of the prisoner; a blotter absorbs the blood and water carries it away. The stylus pierces the body of the prisoner according to a pattern decipherable only by the officer. The text, "Be Just," is the most indecipherable of these. The officer finally demonstrates it on himself. Had the "explorer" expressed his views about this torture, the violence of a purely technical writing would have been displaced into the production of legal formulae. By brandishing a rope--or rather, a coiled line ready to be thrown, a punishment to be executed, a sentence to be written--does he demonstrate the division and uncompromising detachment indicative of an "explorer." This is also an instrumental action which cuts-off communication and interpretation. At the end of this allegory, Kafka seems to be putting in question the very possibility of non-violent writing. Kafka's work may be taken not just as an allegory of bureaucracy, but, more fundamentally, of the violence of public writing within such a system--and possibly writing per se when viewed within the confines of the traditional view of writing as technique.

In the writings I have examined, there are many needles, nails, hammers, and shoes. To varying degrees, they are all spurs, and styles, that are used to pierce or penetrate walls of philosophical or political authority. However, the work of Arendt and Kafka illuminate styles of instrumental division and technique that are confined to fabricating action to fix and inscribe an apparent authority. Arendt's recognition that politics is a matter of interpretation and communication challenges the view which justifies this apparent authority on the basis of its assumed fit with "truth." Kafka's work pierces that view of authority by revealing that it always depends on degrees of fiction that evade instrumental control. Arendt's and Kafka's use of figures and fictions not only expose the institutionalization of the false literalness and stylelessness of technical concepts or rigid maxims, but also put up a resistance of their own. The

style of authority is transformed by a more stylized writing. This conclusion, however, only engages us all the more in questions of ethics and writing, politics and literature.

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NOTES

[1]Hannah Arendt, "What is Authority," in Between Past and Future (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), p. 102.

[2]Arendt, p. 111.

[3]Arendt, p. 94.

[4]Hannah Arendt, Letter in The New York Review of Books, January 1, 1970, quoted in Stan Spyros Dreanos, "Thinking Without a Ground: Hannah Arendt and the Contemporary Situation of Understanding," in Hannah Arendt: The Recovery of the Public World, ed., Melvyn A. Hill (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), p. 215.

[5]Jacques Derrida, "The Question of Style," trans., Ruben Berezdivin, in The New Nietzsche, ed., David P. Allison, (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1977), pp. 176,177.

[6]Jacques Derrida, Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles, trans., Barbara Harlow, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 55.

[7]Henry Sussman, Franz Kafka: Geometrician of Metaphor, (Madison, Wisconsin: Coda Press, Inc., 1979), p. 127.

[8]Sussman, p. 142.

[9]Franz Kafka, The Castle, trans., Willa and Edwin Muir, (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), pp. 13,14.

[10]Henry Sussman, Franz Kafka: Geometrician of Metaphor, p. 130.

REFIGURING CLASS STRUGGLE: POLITICS AND LANGUAGE FROM THE EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE

Tres Pyle

1. Openings

> Hegel remarks somewhere that all the great events of world history occur, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.
>
> --The Eighteenth Brumaire

It is no accident that Marx opened this text with such a reference to Hegel. The passage announces the themes of historical chiasmus and farcical repetition and simultaneously brings to light Hegel's ommission--Hegel's "forgetfulness"--an ommission which must be supplemented by Marx. The supplement transforms Hegel or as Lenin has it--"decapitates" him. But if Hegel and his forgetfulness remain always in the background, in the foreground of this text are the two contemporary accounts by Victor Hugo and Pierre-Joseph Proudhoun. The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte is a treatment of history which diagnoses a "crisis" in bourgeois ideological formations and generates through their ruins the possibility of a new practice. The text is an interested effort to "make history" and simultaneously a reflection on the genre of history writing. Marx's preface to the Second Edition--added in 1869--describes his relationship to Hugo's Napoleon le Petit and Proudhoun's Coup d' état--the only contemporary accounts of Bonapartism "worth notice." Hugo's version--which presents Napoleon III as a "bolt from the blue" and Bonapartism as "an individual act of violence"--fails to situate Bonaparte historically thereby simply reproducing Bonapartist and bourgeois ideologies of the great individual as determining cause of history.[1] This rewrite grants Bonaparte full authorship of these events: it "makes this little individual great." On the other side, Proudhoun's historical reconstruction falls into the error of historical objectivity: Proudhon presents Louis Bonaparte simply as the necessary consequent of preceeding

historical development and, therefore, "imperceptibly his historical construction becomes a historical apology for its hero." The crucial omission in Proudhon's account is "class struggle"--that which allows a "mediocre and grotesque" actor to "play a hero's role." Class struggle is that concept which for Marx must come to refigure and rewrite all history.

2. Figures and Reading

> "Ambiguity is the figurative appearance of the dialectic."
>
> --Walter Benjamin, Charles Baudelaire, Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism

It is not far-fetched to suggest that The Eighteenth Brumaire is a text thoroughly marked by tropes and figures: metaphor, metonymy, synechdoche, metalepsis, chiasmus (a trope which involves both repetition and reversal) are all at work here. This rhetorical play informs an account which rewrites history through the thematics of the stage. Rhetorical markings and dramatic themes do not function in The Eighteenth Brumaire simply as embellishments of an otherwise straightforward historical text. This representation or "re-staging" of history could not be written, nor could the mechanisms of class struggle or ideology or state power be formulated as such without the operation of certain rhetorical "devices." We will keep our eyes on two figures--repetition and metalepsis--and follow their articulation in this text as they demonstrate that what is comfortably considered fictional artifice is at work in the writing of history.[2]

But we have already run the risk of giving this text over to literature. What is at stake is how we as students of literatures reach such a "historico-political" text, which of course says something about how we read any text. But we should keep a reckoning of the literary, political and "economic" implications involved in isolating two rhetorical figures for a textual reading. What should be avoided with particular vigilance is the tendency of such rhetorical readings--as Foucault puts it--to "honor and disarm:" to honor Marx for having generated such a sophisticated literary performance and as a result disarm the

threatening materiality of the performance.[3] This is not history as fiction: to read it as such simply reverses the prior privileges, hypostatizing tropes and figures as the new ground and neutralizing the disruptive play of the text. Readings which proclaim that Marx liberates the signifier or performs a "mental revolution" offer a very domesticated and comfortable revolution: such readings fail to account for the relations of power and history which always generate the production of discourse. A reading bent on simply privileging the literary over the political which does not account for the interests involved in such a gesture forgets the lesson that attention to figurality teaches: that truth claims are being made in the back room, in the shadows of figuration.[4] If--as Stalin asserted--language is neither base nor superstructure, the demand for close textual and rhetorical reading must be accompanied by considerations of institutional and disciplinary questions. Figures and tropes are not neutral literary devices; they are always (though often unannounced) ideological weapons, weapons Marx employs against the tradition of bourgeois historiography.

But let us move closer to the text of Marx. Rather than preparing a historical catalogue, he contextualizes the events of 1848-51 in France as the "story" or "theatre" of class struggle. He inserts the "subject," the "hero" of this historical drama, Louis Bonaparte, in an intricate process of repetitions and discloses as farce the coming to power of the "nephew." As Edward Said points out, this process of repetitions undermines bourgeois conceptions of "1) history as made up of free events and 2) history as guided by superior individuals."[5] Louis Bonaparte is the "second edition," an edition which rewrites the original. The French "have not merely acquired a caricature of the old Napoleon, they have the old Napoleon himself, in the caricature form he had to take in the nineteenth century." This process of repetition in no way protects the privilege of the "original." The arrival of Louis Bonaparte re-edits prior readings of his uncle; Napoleon is no longer the individual conqueror of history but the introduction or preface to the "Society of 10 December." Marx always understands this "prefacing" as it is bound up with questions of power and institutions. For example, Napoleonic centralization of state power is only a preface to its apparent perfection as the almost autonomous state machine under Louis Bonaparte: "Only under the second Bonaparte does the state seem to have attained a completely autonomous position" (p. 238).

But against appearances, the center of this historical text is

not Louis Bonaparte. For it is not the nephew who forces the re-reading of the uncle, but rather the process of repetition. Operated by a necessary metalepsis, Bonaparte is rewritten as an effect which must--in bourgeois ideology--look like a cause, the determining cause of the great individual exercising his will over history. This marks a disruption of that historical landscape upon which the hierarchical oppositions between uncle/nephew, tragedy/farce, original/second edition are so peaceably installed. Only in this better light can we re-read the example of the formation of state power.

> But the revolution is thorough...it goes about its business methodically... First of all, it (the revolution) perfected the parliamentary power, in order to be able to overthrow it. Now having attained this, it is perfecting the executive power, reducing it to its purest expression, isolating it, and putting itself against it. (pp. 236-237)

It is not the work of the Bonapartes that perfects the state machinery; they are the effects which in inversions of history like Victor Hugo's must be written as causes. Yet neither is Bonapartism the natural and inevitable result of a Proudhonist linear history. Through the operations of metalepsis and repetition The Eighteenth Brumaire situates Louis Bonaparte not as the effect of the development of state power but as the effect of class struggle. This is not simply one version of history among others. If Marx radically retextualizes or restages history, the new text or stage is class struggle.

3. Louis Bonaparte and Class: Crisis of Representation

> (Bonaparte) sees himself as the opponent of the political and literary power of the middle class. But by protecting its material power he recreates its political power. The cause must accordingly be kept alive, but the effect must be done away with wherever it appears. However, this cannot occur without slight confusions of cause and effect...New decrees are issued that obliterates the boundary line between the two. (p. 245)

How precisely does Louis Bonaparte and "Bonapartism" represent a

class or reflect its interests? How are they representatives of a certain class power? For Marx it was the "material conditions which made the feudal French peasant a small proprietor and Napoleon an "emperor" (p. 241). Still Louis Bonaparte is not the necessary representative of the peasant class. The economic conditions do not mandate a Bonaparte: here, politics supplements economic determination. Louis Bonaparte must constantly shore up the ideology of history as free "causes" and deny at all levels its "effects": he erects a state which "obliterates" effects and allows him to perform his solo comedy. This accounts for the texts' fascination with the sordid details of this farce. Issuing empty decrees which are immediately retracted, the Bonapartist stage endlessly repeats itself, draws attention to itself through a series of "mini-coups." In order to deny the situating effects of history the stage must continually amaze but always with the script of the "substitute."

> Driven on by the contradictory demands of his situation, Bonaparte, like a conjuror, has to keep the eyes of the public fixed on himself, as Napoleon's substitute, by means of constant surprises, that is to say by performing a coup d'état in miniature every day. (p. 248)

In this moment of slippage, of non-representation, Louis Bonaparte must maintain this metalepsis. The Second Empire can exist only by the constant shocks and surprises of a side-show with Bonaparte as low-rate conjuror and farcical substitute. Indeed, Louis Bonaparte can gain accession to the name of his predecessor only through the "Law of the Father"—the Code Napoleon which "prohibits inquiry into paternity." "By performing a coup d'état in miniature every day," by prohibiting inquiry into paternity, by fixing the eyes of the people on himself, Louis Bonaparte constructs a stage without apparent history which denies the unsettling effects of all genealogical investigation. Bonaparte has no proper name and no proper place: he really represents no class, but the moment is politically overdetermined and "Louis Napoleon" resides precariously in its contradiction.

4. Class/Struggle: Political Metalepsis

> In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their cultural formation from those of other classes and bring them into conflict with those classes, they form a class. In so far as these small peasant proprietors are merely connected on a local basis, and the identity of their interests fails to produce a feeling of community, national links, or a political organization, they do not form a class. (p. 239)

The class that Louis Bonaparte does not "represent" in this justly famous passage, is and is not a class. The small peasant proprietors,the most numerous group in France during the Second Empire, are not purely a class. This continues the process of metaleptical inversions in the text begun with Louis Bonaparte. The Bonapartes are not causes but effects which must appear as causes, and in The Eighteenth Brumaire the small peasant proprietor is not a class-in-itself which then gives rise to the Bonapartist state machine. The Class is itself an effect. This move does not reduce the concept of class to a mere trope: "class" exists but as the effect of struggle. This oscillation between "class" and "not-class" suggests Adam Przeworski's important formulation of struggle which constitutes class as its effect.[6] Such a reading radically questions the possibility of a "class-in-itself" as a continuous, self-identical class which exists prior to historically concrete political and ideological struggles. The implications of this are not simply literary but simultaneously economic and political. It entails a new understanding of what we call class as a discontinuous relation, one which cannot go without struggle. This suggests, as Coward and Ellis have asserted, that "struggle is the only absolute principle of dialectical thought."[7] The Eighteenth Brumaire as a political and historical text hinges upon these indeterminacies; they cannot be dismissed as the merely empirical problems of historiography. But re-reading the text around these indeterminacies does not result in a political paralysis, rather it liberates the notion of political and ideological struggle from its secondary position as a reflex of an economically determined, self-identical and continuous subject. Struggle is re-written as the constitutive "basis" of politico-economic action against capital. One example: Marx notes that the Party of Order attacks progressive legislation (freedom of the press, rights of petition, etc.) by labeling it "socialist." He recognizes that this label is "not merely a figure of speech, a fashion, or a piece of party tactics" but a "weapon" which, though it failed could have

generated the "dangerous turn which transforms every struggle against the state power into a struggle against capital" (pp. 189-190). As such, capital represents a historical limit against which all struggle is normed. State power and class formations are the terrains of this struggle against capital. The state in general and the example of Bonapartism in particular are the condensation of struggles.[8] In Przeworski's words, class struggle becomes a struggle about class, about state, about culture. The political, ideological, and economic implications of this are significant. For example, this emptying of the "class-in-itself" as the historical subject-object suggests that the results of class struggle are not preordained; there is no inevitable end of capitalism. But at this point, aware of the questions left suspended, I will move abruptly to questions of language and cultural practice suggested by this reading of The Eighteenth Brumaire.

5. Class Struggle and the Scene of Culture

Symptomatic of bourgeois politics for Marx is its uncritical appropriation of a past language. Bourgeois revolutions "needed world-historical reminiscences to deaden their awareness of their own content" (p. 149). The "content" of bourgeois revolution must be "deadened," because if allowed to overrun these superannuated "phrases" the "turn" will be made which transforms bourgeois revolution into a struggle against capital. Bourgeois cultural formations must deny this process of structuration because it will lead dialectically to its own overturning. Process must be drawn to a close by a Bonaparte, the old phrases of Roman heroes or liberal themes endlessly recycled. Therefore, while textualizing and situating Louis Bonaparte, Marx simultaneously initiates the struggle for a revolutionary language: a new linguistic practice is openly declared: which is not to say a "literary revolution."

> In order to arrive at its own content the revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury the dead. Previously the phrase transcended the content; here the content transcends the phrase. (p. 149)

The productive slippage between form and content, their

inadequateness--where the "content" outlasts the given "forms," where the "forms" themselves are marked by the "content"--is beginning to rewrite a revolutionary linguistic practice. As Terry Eagleton suggests, "what is implied by Marx's 'poetry of the future'...is a wholly new political semiotics," one in which we do not return to questions of adequation and representation, one which explodes such stable definitions moving instead to "processes of structuration and continual self-excess."[9] Such a political semiotics questions the final authority of language: for the "poetry of the future," language as an autonomous object endlessly recycled becomes a thing of the past, a chapter over and done with.

Linguistic signs are essentially arbitrary but not historically so. Language is always sedimented, underwritten by the materiality of history and economy. Language exchange is never the neutral transmission of coherent meanings: this model of linguistic practice resembles the ideology of the "free market economy" which must bracket the processes of production and distribution in order to be represented as "free exchange." Instead language production and exchange is an already charged site of struggle.[10] Therefore, these "crises" of language are not isolated superstructural matters. As Marx demonstrates, the slippages of language, problems of adequation and signification are political questions. Language has always been a constitutive political practice; what is suggested by this text is that a "poetry of the future" be woven through revolutionary political and economic struggle. Against the bourgeois stage which must work not to look like a stage, which must conceal its artifice, its production and its history, the revolutionary drama announced in The Eighteenth Brumaire marks a kind of "epistemological break" which must seek radically "new forms of expression."

> (P)roletarian revolutions, like those of the nineteenth century, criticize themselves constantly, interrupt themselves continually in their own course, come back to the apparently accomplished in order to begin it afresh, divide with unmerciful thoroughness the inadequacies, weaknesses and paltrinesses of their first attempts, seem to throw down their adversary only in order that he may draw new strength from the earth and rise again, more gigantic, before them, recoil ever and anon from the indefinite prodigiousness of their own arms, until a situation has been created which makes all turning back impossible, and the conditions themselves cry out: Hic Rhodis, hic salta! Here is the rose, dance here! (p. 150)

Terry Eagleton, among others, has noticed the undeniable similarities with Brecht: "Critical self-reflexiveness, self-interruption, ceaseless provisionality, oblique and zigzag progression: Marx's description could equally well be an account of the...epic theatre.[11] Several questions come to mind, questions which I think remain unanswered if not unattended: if this reading of the story of class struggle is capable of appreciating struggle as the basis of class formation what sort of political practice does it suggest? Does it remain the permissible and easily marginalized practice of the intellectual avant-garde, or can it mark the possibility of a cultural struggle and a cultural politics that can be linked to truly revolutionary political and economic change? These are the difficulties, as Michael Ryan has suggested, of "winnowing kinky theory from worthwhile practice."[12]

One index of the pressing nature of these problems for Marxist cultural theory is the dramatic resurgence of interest in the work of Walter Benjamin. He was crucially aware that Marxist political economy had failed to address the "ideological potency" of capitalist cultural codes and practices.[13] For Benjamin the critical re-reading of the cultural text provides a means of decoding material history allowing the revolutionary elements to re-surface, wresting cultural practice away from its ideological function and transforming it into a revolutionary tool. In his "Surrealism" essay of 1929 Benjamin begins a formulation of the relationship of rhetoric to politics, struggle to class, language to revolution not unlike the one suggested here.[14] His response is "organized pessimism":

> (N)owhere do these two--metaphor and image--collide so drastically and so irreconcilably as in politics. For to organize pessimism means nothing other than to expel moral metaphor from politcs and to discover in political action a sphere reserved one hundred percent for images.[15]

As such this resembled the typical formulations of the intellectual and artistic vanguard as it has faced questions of political action. With Benjamin the difference comes with the next sentence, and it changes everything: "This image sphere, however, can no longer be measured out by contemplation."[16] For Benjamin it is not a question of making "proletarian art" but of deploying cultural practices which begin to write scripts for revolutionary change. And though this is really no place for me to stop, with so many questions left unanswered, I will return just once more to the "Surrealism" essay in which the

relationships of "kinky theory" and "worthwhile political practice" is formulated again characteristically as a directive and as a question:

> (P)essimism all along the line. Absolutely. Mistrust in the fate of literature, mistrust in the fate of freedom, mistrust in the fate of European humanity, but three times mistrust in all reconciliations...But what now, what next?[17]

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NOTES

[1]Karl Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, in Surveys From Exile (New York: Vintage, 1974), p. 145.

[2]I follow Gayatri Spivak here in her readings of metalepsis as an effect which must look like a cause. And I would like to express my gratitude here for her close reading and invaluable criticisms of an earlier version of this paper. The directions it has taken are the attempts to address her questions and suggestions.

[3]I can point to two such accounts which, though both useful readings in their own way, result in domesticated recuperations of Marx within the ever widening field of "literature:" John Paul Riquelme, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Karl Marx as Symbolic Action," History and Theory (Volume XIX, Number 1), and Jeffrey Mehlman, Revolution and Repetition (Berkeley: University of California, 1977).

[4]To paraphrase Jacque Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," Disseminations (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 129.

[5]Edward Said, "The Text, the World, the Critic," in Textual Strategies, ed., Havari (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), p. 177.

[6]Adam Przeworski, "Proletariat into Class: The Process of Class Formation from Karl Kautsky's 'Class Struggle' to Recent Controversies," Politics and Society (Volume 7, Number 4).

[7]Rosalind Coward and John Ellis, Language and Materialism (London: Routledge & Kegan, Paul Ltd., 1977), p. 88.

[8]See Nicos Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes (London: New Left Books, 1975), especially pp. 79-81.

[9]Terry Eagleton, Walter Benjamin or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism (London: New Left Books, 1981), p. 170.

[10]Coward and Ellis, p. 79.

[11]Eagleton, p. 171.

[12]Michael Ryan, "New French Theory in New German Critique," New German Critique (Number 22), p. 146.

[13]For an important treatment of this question see Susan Buck-Morss, "Walter Benjamin-Revolutionary Writer," New Left Review (Numbers 128-129). Although "class consciousness" remains unquestioned for Benjamin, the experiences of the 1920's and 1930's, the co-option of workers' movements in Western Europe by trade unionism and an unusual sensitivity to the specificities of gender and race began to demonstrate to him the uncertainty as to

the inevitability of a proletarian revolution in the classical sense.

[14]Walter Benjamin, "Surrealism," One-Way Street and Other Writings (London: New Left Review, 1978).

[15]Benjamin, p. 238.

[16]Benjamin, p. 238.

[17]Benjamin, p. 238.

SIGN AND PRACTICE IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Kristin Koptiuch

The presentation which follows is extracted from a lengthier essay on the relevancy of literary criticism to anthropology. It represents an outsider's view of the project of criticism, sketching out some of its theoretical innovations which seem to offer revealing insight into the nature and practice of anthropological analysis. At the same time I have tried, from my position within the discourse of anthropology, to turn its insight out, and send it reverberating back onto criticism. This part of the essay is an attempt to situate anthropological discourse with respect to the sign and to its own signifying practice in an effort to unravel its authoritative premises.

In contrast to the literary critic, the lack of sensitivity and awareness on the part of the anthropologist to the nature of his own discourse is striking. Whereas the critic has been forced to confront the fact that his discourse is just as much a narration, a metaphor, an inauguration of meaning as the pre-text he analyzes, the anthropologist seems to hold on to the possibility that his discourse (ethnography) is an objectivist description of a society's concrete existence, a facile reproduction of the meanings contained in an original culture to which he obtained privileged access through the hallowed research method of participant observation. This is not to imply that the obverse of objectivism would provide a corrective. For the simple realization that the anthropologists's own concepts, tools of analysis, and perceptions are as subjectively contrived as the exegetical formulations of his informants would not redress this problem. Even with such a transposition we would still subscribe to the innocent illusion of denotation as found in the realist text. Rather, what must be recognized is that denotation is the final effect of connotation achieved by a closure of the process of the productivity of signification: the implicit relation between anthropological discourse and its object relies on an identity between signifier and signified, on the structure of the sign. The meaning of anthropological discourse as a signifying

practice is achieved in the fixing of the chain of signifiers, which naturalizes the arbitrary nature of the sign and assumes an origin of meaning (the society or culture being studied) existing prior and exterior to the continuing productivity of signification.[1]

Two points which suggest what can be construed as the weakness of anthropology on the one hand, and the source of its strength on the other, congeal in this last statement. Its strength lies in the fact that anthropology is equipped, I would argue, to explore the nearly inadmissible truth suggested by Derrida's statement: "From the moment that there is meaning there are nothing but signs. We think only in signs" (1976:50). I will return to this matter later.

First, the immediate implication harkens back to Derrida's evasive notion of the trace, for here we find anthropological discourse unsuspectingly "inhabiting" the structure of the sign, without assuming the Derridian deconstructive posture. In its reliance on the identity between signifier and signified, anthropology would be in a favorable position with respect to what Derrida postulates as the radical potentiality of Saussure's work (cf. Coward and Ellis 1977:23) to witness the inseparability of signifier and signified as two sides of a sheet of paper out of which a shape of meaning is cut. For the apparent need for a grounding limit, to halt interpretation, is a product of history and a valuation which has its impact outside the limits of discourse. But instead of ratifying this potentiality by adopting a reflexive view of itself as a signifying practice, anthropology envisions--and indeed consecrates its craft around--a transcendental signified presented as having a life of its own, a logocentric origin independent of anthropologist-subject and ethnographic-object: culture.

To clarify this point, let us briefly sketch some of the ways in which the discipline of anthropology has typically conformed with the heritage of logocentrism, the philosophy of truth as presence which Derrida argues has pervaded the tradition of Western metaphysics. The concept of the sign is singled out by Derrida as a particularly notorious culprit in this affair. We shall proceed by disassembling what has already been constituted as a montage of Derrida's statements on the sign as selected by Gayatri Spivak in her "Translator's Preface" to Of Grammatology (p. lxviii):

> The notion of the sign...remains within the heritage of

> that logocentrism which is also a phonocentrism: absolute proximity of voice and being, of voice and the meaning of being, of voice and the ideality of meaning... We already have a foreboding that phonocentrism merges with the historical determination of the meaning of being in general as presence, with all the subdeterminations which depend on this general form...(presence of the thing to the sight as eidos, presence as substance/essence/existence (ousia), temporal presence of the cogito, consciousness, subjectivity, the co-presence of the other and of the self, intersubjectivity as the intentional phenomenon of the ego, and so forth). Logocentrism would thus support the determination of the being of the entity as presence. (Derrida 1976: 11-12)

The schemata for organizing the following discussion are drawn from this quotation.

1. In the tradition of logocentrism we find first a "phonocentrism," the "absolute proximity of voice and being, of voice and meaning of being, of voice and the ideality of meaning." Anthropology likewise privileges speech over writing by the primarily oral nature of its evidence (informant interviewing), its concern with oral "literature" and culture, and by the locus of study in non-literate societies which characterized the anthropological enterprise until very recently. Derrida devotes a chapter in Of Grammatology to Levi-Strauss, whose Tristes Tropiques epitomizes this privileging of the full-presence of speech by heralding the advent of writing as the end of the purity and innocence of the Nambikwara.

2. "Phonocentrism merges with the historical determination of the meaning of being in general as presence." The tradition of ethnographic fieldwork literally imposes the anthropologist's physical presence on the society he studies. The notorious neglect of history by anthropologists further exhalts the concern with the temporal present. The concept of tradition freezes cultural process, and social change, when it is discussed, more often than not is held to originate externally and is projected in a linear development as the theme of progress which culminates in Western civilization.

3. "Presence of the thing to the sight as eidos, presence as substance/essence/existence (ousia)." The snapshot notion of "I was there" constitutes the basic evidence of ethnography, and the anthropologist's own analytical models often take on substantive proportion which, objectified, he then proceeds to observe as social institutions or cultural systems. The concern with cultural artifacts and customs, blood (kinship), land, "actual"

social behavior, "key symbols," and the essence of such concepts of being as "the person" are all markers of presence.

4. "Temporal presence of the cognito, consciousness, subjectivity, the co-presence of the other and of the self, intersubjectivity as the intentional phenomenon of the ego." Here within anthropological practice we can point to ethnoscience and the emic, the voice of the informants taken as the full presence of consciousness itself and the intention of meaning. Year-long periods of participant-observation, hallmark of the ethnographic method, presume an immediate proximity of human experience existing separate from and alongside of the anthropologist's own, data waiting to be collected.

In describing alien and remote societies, anthropology has latched on to culture, a universal common to all societies, as the final transcendental signified. It points to presence in the place where it obliterates itself, obliterates the sign. The play of differences is thereby neutralized and the erasure of the trace is arrested. While anthropologists, less predisposed to critical reflexivity of their own methods, may not have succumbed to the same collision-with-itself that is often the result of the tortuous reflection of the post-structuralist critics, they have instead tended to reify meaning, to allow signifier and signified to drift apart and become independently conceived. Thus culture is held to exist outside of the signifying practice of anthropological discourse; culture needs only to be described by a participant-observer in order for its pre-existent, original, meaning-fullness to be reproduced without distortion (barring human error in observation).

If we can learn anything from the critics it is that this position is untenable; more precisely, it is one <u>particular</u> position, a product of the fixing of the signifying process, which consequently evokes a unique signification of its own by its appropriation of the possibility of a continuous play of signifiers. We confront the same "superior myth" which defines literary realism, the identity between signifier and signified which facilitates the appearance of an innocent transcription of reality. To what extent, we must ask, is the purported outside of anthropological discourse (culture) actually its inside? Yet rather than developing a self-consciousness of theoretical practice by prefiguring the misunderstanding inherent in their own ethnographic rhetorical mode, far too consistently anthropologists "persist in the belief that ethnography is an authentic reproduction of an original culture not merely a member of a class of cultural productions" (MacCannell 1979:153).

To recognize ethnography as our own cultural production is to recognize anthropological discourse as a signifying practice, an active ideology, which inaugurates and sustains an order of meaning that cannot be reductively assigned to an originary cultural object even while depending upon it. What critic Raymond Williams has written of literary discourse on this process may be aptly extended to anthropology:

> Whatever else 'it' may be, literature is the process and the result of formal composition within the social and formal properties of a language. The effective suppresssion of this process and its circumstances, which is achieved by shifting the concept to an undifferentiated equivalence with 'immediate living experience'...is an extraordinary ideological feat. The very process that is specific, that of actual composition, has effectively disappeared or has been displaced to an internal and self-proving procedure in which writing of this kind is genuinely believed to be (however many questions are then begged) 'immediate living experience' itself.... What from another point of view might reasonably be taken as initial definitions of the processes and circumstances of composition are converted, within the ideological concept, to 'forms' of what is still triumphantly defined as 'full, central, immediate human experience'. (1977:46)

Likewise in anthropological texts, the element of composition or construct most often recedes from the front-line of description, displaced by the prominence of the "collected" data treated as "immediate human experience." Indeed, the admonition commonly tendered to the student of anthropology is "Let the data speak for itself," in effect obviating the realization that, like any signifying practice, anthropological discourse inevitably turns description and explanation towards the goals accorded to particular interests. It enables <u>particular</u> representations of the social, historical world, never an innocent conveying of it.[2]

Just as Paul de Man deliberately blurs "the usual distinctions between expository writing <u>on</u> literature and the 'purely' literary language <u>of</u> poetry or fiction" (1971:viii), and as Barthes deconstructs the commonly made contrast between fictional and historical narrative (1970), anthropologists must take a reflexive stance toward their rhetorical modes and cultural "texts." This would mean placing anthropological discourse and its cultural object into the same class of semiotic practices where their relationship as text and pre-text requires exploration, quite in the same manner as the critic's commentary and its pre-text. As

Robert Hefner has phrased this problem of order, in his discussion of the importance of Michel Leiris' work to anthropolgy:

> The bulk of the ethnographer's data in the first instance is dependent upon his own impressions. The ethnographer traffics most directly in that ethereal substance we call culture, and thus in symbols, their meaning and socially given matrices. As such, the ethnographer's object of investigation is itself not of a different order than his own tools of analysis, involving a (hopefully) self-conscious manipulation of and sensibility to both an empirical level of symbolically ordered systems of meaning and his own level of analysis. (1975:146)

Thus it seems clear that anthropological, like literary, interpretation, is best conceived as a narration (not description) of understanding, a repetition (not duplication) in which both difference and resemblance are immanent.

But following Derrida, we must exceed Hefner's statement to concede that the ethnographer's data is not dependent upon his impressions alone; to stop here would be to succumb to the logocentric fallacy once again, to posit the origin of his knowledge in the consciousness of the (speaking) subject, to subordinate the trace to an external referent perceived as presence. Derrida exposes why this is not sufficient:

> Ethnology--like any science--comes about within the element of discourse. And it is primarily a European science employing traditional concepts, however much it may struggle against them. Consequently, whether he wants to or not--and this does not depend on a decision on his part--the ethnologist accepts into his discourse the premises of ethnocentrism at the very moment when he is employed in denouncing them. This necessity is irreducible; it is not a historical contingency." (1970:252)

It is now commonly acknowledged that early anthropology developed hand in hand with the colonial expansion of the Western world (see for example Asad 1973). The relation between ethnography and its object, despite the anthropologist's often innocent intention to understand other cultures, embodied a symbolic fixing of meaning in ultimate complicity with the political-economic, historical movement to stabilize and appropriate societies of the Third World. What Derrida's statement implies, however, is that the lack of fit between intention and method is not inadvertent but

constitutive of anthropologial discourse.[3] We cannot presume that, whatever our conscious intentions, we can willfully extricate ourselves from the situation of those early anthropologists who nobly sought to understand a different humanity, never dreaming their efforts would be used to crush it. Rather, it is a question of confronting this constitutive limitation head on, by inhabiting it and "demonstrating the systematic and historical solidarity of the concepts and gestures of thought that one often believes can be innocently separated" (Derrida 1976:13-14). Or, to use Kristeva's term for this relation, it is a matter of rendering nondisjunctive our most primary oppositions (Babcock 1978a:110).

To take an example from one anthropologist whose work has been very influential, Victor Turner has suggested that the term "liminoid" be employed for the symbolic inversions and expressions of disorder in modern industrial society, while Van Genneo's term "liminal" should be retained for the ritual, myth-telling contexts of tribal and agrarian society (1974, 1978). The disjunction implied by these categories reveals (in the process of concealing) Turner's conception of tribal or agrarian society as defined in opposition to his own: while tribal society is simple, a-historical, kin-based, closed, and static, industrial society is complex, historical, class-stratified, multi-occupational, changing and dynamic. Whereas the ritual process of liminality reintegrates and reabsorbs symbolic inversions in tribal society, the experimental dramas, poems, carnivals, literature, etc. of industrial society offer a "wide spectrum of critical, reformist, or subversive forms" which may change and revolutionize society (1978:287). Thus there is a systematic and historical solidarity which relates the concepts Turner wishes to distinguish, a solidarity rendered invisible through anthropological discourse which posits a transcendental signified in the empirical anthropological object. By distinguishing terms which should otherwise be considered nondisjunctive, Turner neutralizes the very aim of the essays in Barbara Babcock's The Reversible World: Essays in Symbolic Inversions by appropriating into the center of anthropological discourse the radical potentiality of their celebration of marginality. Turner's other work should be reread with this point in mind.

Thus far, then, the anthropologist's lack of awareness of his own signifying practice infects his own discourse with two frailties. First, anthropology claims to interpret and define other cultures according to the form of representation that a society gives to itself (culture), but fails to realize that this

is a product of closure and fixity of meaning practiced on the part of the anthropologist as well as in the exegetical accounts of the people he studies. Consequently there has been a general tendency to place emphasis on identity and system, not contradictory processes; on stable reproduction, not the renovation of struggle and change. Creative practices on the margins which actively transgress or pose a counter-hegemonic challenge to this privileged image of centrality and coherence, whenever they are discussed, become deviations, exceptions, aberrations of the cultural code, or distorted, vestigial remnants of a linear history.

Second, anthropology fails to comprehend how its practice contributes to the process of construction and confirmation of Western identity and cultural ideology. This is inadvertently accomplished in defining our own culture not by ethnographic observation, but by its difference from the other, the culture of "primitive" or "underdeveloped" societies which are, inversely, described/inscribed on the basis of concepts forged in our self-image. It is a self-preservation under the guise of preservation of those other, distant societies now named, appropriated, constituted by our will. Indeed, as we have seen, the very opposition industrial/primitive is more accurately understood as a nondisjunctive, historical solidarity. As Dean MacCannell succinctly elaborates this process:

> Anthropology is a dialectical tension of center and periphery. During the most recent phase of anthropology's development, the center has been the positive pole of the dialectic. The system of Western values, of which anthropology is a part, reached its full expansion and, at the same time, our ethnographic descriptions of non-Western peoples attained their highest refinement. These two developments would seem to cancel each other out and, I think, this is the hope of some anthropologists whose entry into the field is motivated as much by a desire to question their own culture as to learn the secrets of another. But the hoped-for mutual cancellation has not happened in fact. Once relocated in an alien culture at the edge of their own world, their discipline requires of anthropologists a textual preservation of the core of cultural values, key symbols, and central themes they find there. Operating in this way, anthropology has built a bulwark around our civilization,...a frame of tightly described, 'unchanging,' little societies which mark the limits of our 'Western' world. (1979:149-150)

Hopefully, this pattern might be redressed by the recent interest

in American society, which has been veritably forced upon anthropology during the past two decades due to the active struggles of Third World peoples in their refusal to be appropriated--materially or symbolically--by the West.

At this point let us return to what may be considered as the positive strength of anthropology. We have seen that the anthropological method is founded on the principle of the fixity of the sign, that it has no built-in theoretical conception of the erasure of the trace. This gives anthropology a particular positionality in social relations of which it is not always aware, and it is this positionality which Derrida argues is effaced by a conception of signification as an ongoing play of signifiers.

But Derrida also writes that meaning is dependent on the closure of the sign and acknowledges we cannot do without it, if only momentarily: "We think only in signs." It would appear, then, that anthropological discourse could make use of its position inhabiting the sign to demonstrate the conditions of historical solidarity between signifier and signified for specific societies, to reveal the interest structures in particular sign systems which enable the practice of representation of a society to itself as natural.

But the sign is best understood as simply one stage in the process of signification which produces and fixes meaning, however briefly. By comprehending how and under what social and material constraints the positionality of the sign is produced and challenged, a theory of the practice of meaning and the constitution of the subject as a closure could be postulated.[4] Such a theory could reinstate a materialist conception of social history, rather than the ephemeral, temporal movement of the trace, for it would demand of discourse that it must open out onto an experiential field, a field quite different than discourse itself. For this, a reflexive anthropological discourse is again in a favorable position, so long as self-reflexivity is not allowed to become self-referentiality. Even if we acknowledge that material and social relations can appear in anthropological discourse only in discursive terms, those relations will still always already be something other than what is represented in language. That which resists language, the social text, as it were, occupies the space of that difference, and it is through positioning itself in that space that anthropology should seek an effective social practice.

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NOTES

[1]On the critique of the arbitrary nature of the sign, see Coward and Ellis 1977:6, 22, 47, 123; Derrida, 1976:32-33, 44ff.; Jameson, 1972:30-31; Williams, 1977:37.

[2]Perhaps the anthropological texts of Carlos Castefieda similarly expose from within the very unarbitrary process of signification, immanent to anthropological discourse. Casteneda invites a confusion between interpretation and observation, subject and object, the figurative and the literal, the upshot of which is to efface such neat oppositions and situate the discourse of anthropology in the space of their absence, amidst the play of signifiers.

[3]Paul de Man similarly argues that such a discrepancy between intention and method, or between assertion and meaning, is a constitutive part of the logic of criticism. (de Man, 1971:110,141) Thus:

> it follows from the rhetorical nature of literary language that the cognitive function resides in the language and not in the subject. The question as to whether the author himself is or is not blinded is to some extent irrelevant; it can only be asked heuristically, as a means to accede to the true question: whether his language is or is not blind to its own statement. (de Man, 1971:137)

[4]Coward and Ellis have sketched the framework of a theory of this kind in their book Language and Materialism. Their study primarily concentrates on an explication of the work of Roland Barthes, French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, and Julia Kristeva as these authors have dealt with the problems of the sign, positionality, the process of the speaking subject and its symbolic internalization of ideology through language. They demonstrate that:

> the relationship between the subject and meaning in the sign is a stage, but a stage which is continually crossed, destroyed, and reformulated. (1977:152)

By drawing on language theory, literature, marxism, and psychoanalysis, they bring together an impressive body of theoretical work. I feel it is important for anthropologists to confront the issues and propositions they arrive at, and it is towards working out some of these implications for anthropology that the current essay has been addressed.

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THE POLITICS OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE
PLENARY SESSION

Chair: Kofi Anyidoho Participants: Andrew Bush, Yale University; Jane Creighton, Freelance Writer, Poet; Aurora Levins Morales, Freelance Writer, Poet; Angelita Reyes, University of Iowa.

Good Afternoon ladies and gentlemen. This is supposed to be a formal welcome to all participants in this conference. It is the first time we all are getting together. We've had morning sessions--two panels running at the same time--and it seems that this is a very appropriate time to welcome everybody here. We can't be grateful enough to everybody who has come to answer our call for this conference, but we need to be particularly grateful to those who had to make a very special effort and to some extent very special adjustments in their personal programs to be able to make it here. There are people coming from as far away as Montreal in Canada, and people coming in from Iowa, San Francisco, and New York. It takes a certain level of belief in yourself and what you are doing to be prepared to go through all that trouble. We have our first and probably the last plenary session now and the theme is "The Politics of Comparative Literature." You look at all the brochures coming in from various programs and they tell you that comparative literature deals with literature across cultural, national, and linguistic boundaries. What is not often added is perhaps that above all else or below all else, comparative literature is constantly taking you across political boundaries. What is even more important is that quite often you don't get across the boundaries, rather you bump into barriers. And in the world of political reality you know that before you cross any of those boundaries there are a couple of things you need to take care of. You might have to deal with immunization against certain things which could happen to you when you cross the boundary from one political and geographic area into another. What are those things you need to immunize yourself against as you cross from one literature into another? You may also unfortunately have to deal with the immigration people. (Laughter.) We know that these are very obvious facts when you are dealing with politics in the open world. In the field of

scholarship we would like to convince ourselves that these things are not there, but it seems to me that when we get down to either the top or bottom of things we will have to face up to some of these problems. And we are very grateful to have here on this panel four people who have had to face up to some of these problems, not just at the level of creativity or scholarly pasttime type of activity, but on perhaps a day-to-day basis, and it is useful for us to share their experience. But we'll also hope that after their presentation the panel will sit down and take some questions and comments. Politics makes more sense when it's a two-way kind of process. There might be things you would like to remind them of. There might be issues you want to take up, but always hopefully in the spirit of reconciliation. That's the kind of politics which can take us to distances. When it ends in disagreement and fights you may not get very far.

We have Andrew Bush here who's coming from Yale, and that's very intriguing especially for those of us who are in comparative literature. If you go around asking people where do you go in this country if you're looking for a solid Comparative Literature Program, it's one of the places you might be referred to first.

But we would like to find out from someone who is already there whether indeed the story, the recommendations match up with the reality he's had to deal with. He may not feel too comfortable telling us everything (laughter) because that is also part of the political reality. There are things we just know and experience that you cannot talk about. If he chooses to keep quiet, we would understand. But certainly we would benefit much from his experience. Andrew is working on his Ph.D. dissertation now. He's had a very active life. You need to meet people like this once in a while to assure yourself that the world of academics has not entirely become an empty place where people play games with words. He's been all places, he's published widely, and that in itself will be something. He may have something very important for us to share with him.

We will also have the pleasure of listening to Jane Creighton. Jane is a graduate of Johnston College. Some of us may not know too much about Johston College but it's one place where they have very interesting things going on. The problem with us is that we don't care enough about what is happening on the other side, and with the background she's bringing into this we should find that also very useful. Beyond that she has tried to use her literary education for very specific cultural and political programs. She's had a very extensive editorial experience and we have

publications listed here. Usually scholars like to start with those things, but I think those are the last end of the real issue. The struggle that it takes for you to get to publication—at this point we would probably be more interested in those struggles than just a mere list of publications. We have a lot of teaching experience going into this. There are some of us who are here who have to teach other people. Perhaps trying to teach some other people the kind of knowledge you have will be something also we may want to take into account.

And we have Aurora Levins Morales, and again we have an interesting perspective here. She has been very much involved with a lot of cultural programs in which literature/poetry has to be put to very practical use, for example, producing radio programs in which you bring literature and music together, literature and dance together, and even literature and art--batik, paintings. We would like to listen to someone who has actually worked in this field of literature and other arts for quite a while.

We will also be listening to Angelita Reyes. Immediately from Iowa, but before she arrived in Iowa she obviously had been around quite a bit and brings with that a lot of experiences (laughter). We would like to benefit from that experience which has taken her across cultural barriers, across linguistic barriers, across geographic barriers, across all kinds of barriers before her arrival in Iowa. And what are some of the experiences that would come out of this? What are some of the problems? Maybe it's not even enough to be talking about problems. Politics need not just be all problems. We could also talk about solutions as well. At the moment she's finishing a Ph.D. program in comparative literature and her special interest lies in Carribean-Latin American literature. We would very much wish to benefit from that experience as well. The program this morning has gone off very well and we would hope that this is going to be another successful session.

Kofi Anyidoho

I Know What I Saw: Travelers Making Books

Jane Creighton

I make my entry into the subject of politics and comparative literature through two experiential points. One, I am a poet whose sense of reality has been for the most part informed by the active existence of an American feminist movement. And two, in 1977, finding myself at a cheerful impasse over what in the world to do with my writing and my life, I decided to embark on a trip with a close companion which would eventually take us overland from Europe to India. Roughly recalled, the goals were to provide firsthand experience of regions in the world that were completely unknown to me, fueling in turn a writing which would compel its author to understand herself not just as an inhabitant of a superpower, but as an inhabitant of a planet. That the one might cause numerous intellectual and physical complications for the other, I didn't consider at the outset. I merely desired, not in a journalistic sense but in a poetic one, to claim for my writing and for poetry an active and informational comprehension of the world. This claim may in the long run be justified but there is much in the way, as any student of the cultural sciences or international politics should know. My purpose here is to describe my own process of interpretation from that time to the present as it applies to the story. I would like to write about that experience, in the hope that the issues involved with creating a literary accuracy about one American's experience in some portion of the Third World might be clarified.

The immediate result of that trip, which began in Italy and ended in Pakistan where I went under with a severe bout of hepatitus, was my journal, which has survived intact as a fairly brisk piece of poetic writing. Referring to myself now as a character who writes a journal about her travels through Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, what emerges from the piece is a picture of a woman who wishes to operate under certain egalitarian and androgynous principles--the basis of her feminism, the effort towards self-determination, meaning, she can go where she wants to go. This image changes as it becomes clear that the route to India requires passing through four countries undergoing, in their various ways, what we have come to know through the United States press as surges of "Islamic fundamentalism," or, in fact, self-determination. Whatever the value of that description, it becomes clear in the journal that the daily physical and visual impact of moving through a world where unreadable men are ever present and

where women are for the most part voiceless and unseen, begins to tell in hostile ways on the traveler. The journal becomes not a judgment per se, but an increasingly troubled response to what this woman perceives as a profound judgment on her gender pronounced by a religious system that isolates its women in favor of its men. This, perhaps, is one truth among many. What appears also is her increasing awareness that all is not right with western impact on the middle east, something she of course knows from a general sense of her country's history. But this gains specific force as it becomes clear that she cannot occupy an unassuming observer's position, either as an American or as a woman. That to observe in a cross-cultural situation is really to participate in an interaction which instructs the judgment of both the observer and the observed. We all watch each other. It is also clear that developing an overt hatred of men in other cultures is not necessarily responsible to the presence, say, of numerous western pornographic films all over Turkey, or the frantic marketing of English and western luxury to a visibly small portion of Teheran. Nor is it finally possible as a traveler, who lives on images but has no recourse to the simplest conversation in the native tongue, to somehow maneuver the foreign into the realm of the familiar.

These things are obvious. What is not obvious is how to form a judgment of the experience. I read recently Flaubert's account of his travels in Egypt. While much entranced with the brilliance of the writing, I found myself at odds with certain light-hearted descriptions of "the Orient." In one passage he writes:

> All the old comic business of the cudgeled slave, of the coarse trafficker in women, of the thieving merchant--it's all very fresh here, very genuine and charming. In the streets, in the houses, on any and all occasions, there is a merry proliferation of beatings right and left. (pp. 42-43)[1]

This is essentially an account of Flaubert's enjoyable sojourn as a European among the "creatures" of a European-occupied country. It tells nothing substantive of the culture he visited. Yet a quote by Ira Henry Freeman on the back of the Academy Chicago Limited Edition of 1979 says of this "spicy little book...His observations on the landscape, the monuments and daily life of Egypt were sharp and, we found, mostly still valid." Bearing this contemporary assessment of a celebrated travel book in mind, it is my intention also to write a travel book of sorts. I recently

gave up the idea of trying to incorporate these events exclusively inside poetry, because the fact is, I have a story to tell, and it requires a narrative. But the story is never so simple as what I saw, or what I found out in such and such a place. The journal, surely, is a record of that, but it is limited by time and place, and by the character's naive embrace of her assumption of free intellectual movement in the world. The true telling of the tale, it seems to me now, has to do with how concrete events are communicated through the assumptions and interpretations of their perceptor, in turn presenting not the event itself but the predilection of the teller to judge, out of her own social and historical experience, what is and what is not important. This is a travel book about interpretation.

The structure is simple. There is the journal, to be embedded in a third person narrative which gives a history of who the characters are and what they did, let's say objectively speaking, on their travels in 1977. Then there is the woman, Alice will be her name, who speaks in the present, 1982 we'll have it, from the first person point of view. Her subject is the interpretation of her world fueled by her knowledge of the trip and what has occurred nationally and internationally to qualify that knowledge. To fictionalize what were and are real events and perceptions is to get at another kind of truth. What a character says and does need not be absorbed in a confessor status, i.e. "I said this and I did that, therefore..." Rather, the relationship of past truths and ever-receding present truths can be watched as a development of thought and judgment always redefined by what new information is presented to it. The problem of reportage, for my purposes, exists in its inability to reflect on itself or to ponder its own assumptions.

With this in mind, I do not back down from the initial impression of the journal that women generally are degraded in their social status and that this is a degradation that works against a right and good functioning of social systems. But to return with this as a final judgment of Islam would be to take very little information and put it to no use. Events in the world since 1977 and the corresponding journalistic and literary output occasioned by them suggest that there are problems in reporting the news or creatively interpreting "facts" brought back by people who, to use an extreme example, have been hostages in the American Embassy in Teheran. Edward Said, in his book Covering Islam, mentions the cable sent by Bruce Laingen from Teheran in August, 1979, which refers to the "Persian psyche" and the "'Persian

proclivity' to resist 'the very concept of a rational... negotiating process.'"[2] Said goes on to say that such remarks and others imply that "Persians" do not have a specific sense of either history or reality but exist in a kind of anti-progressive timelessness. He suggests that the apparent objectivity of the United States attaché in fact illustrates a U.S. proclivity to reject the history and reality which provoked the embassy attack in the first place. The corresponding attacks in the American press on Iranian barbarism and hysterical Islamic revolution must be seen for what they are--incomplete and uninformed reportage which, like much American literature on the subject, reflects what the United States holds at stake in the rest of the world, and little else.

A more troubling commentary on Islam and the Third World is apparent in the work of V.S. Naipaul. His current book, Among the Believers, fulfilled all my admitted expectations of distaste and discomfort surrounding Islam without imparting knowledge that could be gained from a prolonged exchange with even one of the countries visited. Naipaul's bitterness about what he sees as technological and intellectual failures in underdeveloped countries is difficult to contend with, much because of his descriptive acuity, but also due to his careful insistence that though he approves of western intellectual traditions, he is unaligned to them by either ancestry or experience. This allows him to function as a kind of quintessential free agent journalist with a brilliant eye to detail whose criticism of the Third World cannot be mistaken for that of an imperialist apologist. It is not my desire at this point to offer a critique of Naipaul, but I would suggest that his uniform sense of bitter nonpartisanship and doom may work against his ability to know the cultures he addresses. At the very least, it affirms a tendency in western thinking to assume that the intellectual and political life of underdeveloped countries is lost to grotesque ideologues without the benefit of western intervention.

There is an angle missing in this assessment which could be described as a language that is revelatory of the historical and imaginative circumstances out of which the actions of an individual or a nation arise. Literature at its best reveals process rather than proscribes a category for a particular people's "mind." It would seem that the impulse to attach a fixed value to any identified group works against the ability to know. Colorful designations abound concerning the Islamic mind, El Salvador "jackals," as the New York Post recently described

members of the FMLN, or the tedious slotting of feminists as narrow-minded, incomplete persons--"man-haters." All are meant to describe isolated, and probably crazed, special interest groups who have no logical or justified relationship to the rational will of a people. All deny the likely conclusion that historical movements, to which these names are applied, appear as a result of experiences which absolutely indicate the use of conquest and power to dominate what is every individual's special interest--self-determination.

In a more complicated but analogous context, the uproar provoked by Susan Sontag's recent equation of communism with fascism smacks of the old (and present) either/or of cold war language which not only does not tell the story, but, I submit, has its decided political uses in withholding information from a reader, or a public, who might then be able to responsibly act on what they know. The "to be or not to be communist" question engendered in this debate conceivably deters active analysis of what could be said to be happening in Poland, El Salvador, or anywhere else. Similarly, for me to decide that I simply hated Islamic men, an emotion easily available to me at the time, would not only have been a denial of the extraordinarily complex history informing the context of my visit to the East, but would have provoked a crippling inability to think as a feminist, and as a citizen of the United States, an inhabitant of the planet. The experience and the response are valid, simply because they happened. But their major import occurs in what they tell me about my own culture. Models for repression do not exist in isolation, and it is imperative to understand that the so-called relative lack of repression in the United States (not, I might vehemently add, the experience of all U.S. inhabitants) does not, and will not, promote the freedom to think and act responsibly. We have, after all, a massive hand in global relationships.

My own efforts to contribute to a body of literature will be, I hope, to participate in an exchange of ideas whose particular end is based in the self-determination of individuals, and of cultures. To claim that this exchange is most available in the United States is to ignore the fact that our intellectual and political knowledge has largely been sculpted and used forcefully against any such exchange elsewhere in the world. The aforementioned marketing of English in the Shah's Iran, the images of power relationships in the pornography shipped to Turkey, are a selling of culture finallly meant to homogenize a people into a uniformity which surrenders their diversity, their resources, and

their simple ability to think and act in their own behalf. Our reactive response to the revolutions that explode out of such circumstances indicate a crippling inability to think of ourselves as cohabitors of one world. To deny this is to freeze thought into a disastrous tableau of unjustifiable reaction and hate. It is in our interest that literature serve the comparative relationships among cultures, and not, as it has so often, the manipulations of heavily-armed power.

Writer and Poet in New York

NOTES

[1]Gustave Flaubert, Flaubert in Egypt, trans. and ed., Francis Steegmuller (Chicago: Academy Chicago Lmtd., 1979), pp.42-43.

[2]Edward W. Said, Covering Islam (New York: Pantheon, 1981), p. xxviii.

Aurora Levins Morales

Poetry
is something refined
in your vocabulary
taking its place at the table
in a silver bowl: essence
of culture.

I come from the earth
where the cane was grown
I know
the knobbed rooting
green spears, heights of
caña against the sky
purple plumed.
I know the backache
of the machetero,
the arc of steel
cutting, cutting
the rhythm of harvest
leaving acres of sharp spikes
that wound the feet--
and the sweet smoke of the llamarada:
rings of red fire
burning dark sugar
into the wind.

My poems grow from the ground.
I know what they are made of
heavy, raw and green.

Sugar,
you say, is sweet
one teaspoon in a cup of coffee
life's not so bad.

Caña, I reply
yields many things:
molasses
for the horses
rum for the tiredness of the machetero
industrial
alcohol to cleanse, distill,
to burn as fuel:

I don't write my poems
for anybody's sweet tooth.

My poems are acetyline torches
welding steel to steel
my poems are flame throwers
burning paths through the world.

My poems are bamboo spears
opening the air.
They come from the earth
common and brown.

That was my poem on the politics of Comparative Literature. Now what I'd really like to talk about is what literature really means to me, as a Puerto Rican woman living in the United States. What I want to talk about is how literature can save lives. I am a Latin American. My roots, my sense of history, my grasp of language, my voice, my hopes for the future are deeply enmeshed with the destiny of the continent as a whole. And what does literature mean in Latin America--in Latin America, where the most intense poverty is maintained by massive brutality and education is an expensive luxury for the few. In his powerful essay "In Defense of the Word," Uruguayan writer, Eduardo Galiano examines the possibilities and limitations of Latin American writing. He says, "We who want to work for literature that will reveal the voice of those who have no voice? How can we act within the limits of this reality? Can we make ourselves heard in the midst of a deaf-mute society? Ours are republics of silence." Much has been said about the direct forms of censorship, the forbidding of dangerours or uncomfortable books and publications, and the fate of exile, prison, or the grave for some writers and journalists. But the indirect censorship acts in a much more subtle way, and though less apparent, it is no less real. Little is said about it, yet in Latin America it's the one that most profoundly defines the oppressive and exclusive character of the system under which we suffer. And what is this censorship that never speaks its own name? It is the fact that the boat won't move because there's no water in the sea. If 5% of the population can afford to buy refrigerators, what percentage can afford books? And what percentage can really feel their necessity, receive their influence? The existing social order perverts or destroys the creative capacity of most people, and limits the possibility of creation, ancient response to human pain, and the certainty of death to the professional practice of a handful of specialists. And how many are we in Latin America? For whom do we write? Who is our real audience? "Let us distrust applause," says Galiano. "Sometimes they congratulate us but consider us harmless."

But there is more to this silence than the absence of voice. It is a silence made up of deafening noise. The first step in the conquest of the people is to shatter its self-image. As the ancient Greeks destroyed each other's temples to break the hearts

of their enemies, each wave of conquest has brought its assault on our vision. In Northern Chile, African slaves were muzzled so that through never speaking it, they would forget their language, forget how to name themselves and the world. And to replace the lost names of things, the conquerors create a culture for the colonized, an endless consumption of fantasies to resign us to the poverty of our reality. If we cannot remember who we are, how can we envision what we could become?

In Puerto Rico, this culture of the colonized is especially strong. Eighty-four years of direct colonial rule have isolated us from the rest of the continent, and the assault on our culture has been more intense. English is required in all the schools and for many years was the official language of the courts, universities, public schools, and government--in spite of the unanimous veto of our legislature. We are bombarded by rock music in English, radio-heavy, 24-hours a day, and dubbed reruns of Bonanza, while the Institute of Puerto Rican culture faces destruction by government sabotage. Our traditional literature portrays us as happy but simple peasants of purely Spanish and Indian descent, when in fact our agriculture has long since been taken over and destroyed. The peasants have migrated to New York to be janitors and maids, and our language, our music, our food all shout "Africa." Our colonial masters want us to look into the mirror and see nothing but a stain of mercury. And yet there is no return to a past that is anything but idyllic anyway. We write because of the voice within us that needs to speak, but that voice becomes all of ours when it helps us to name ourselves and each other.

There are places where this naming must be done in code, places where a forbidden word can cost us our lives: in Argentina where 30,000 people have disappeared, in Uruguay where one-fourth of the adult population is in prison, in Chile where a 1974 law imposed a three-year sentence on anyone caught telling an anti-junta joke. But there a new form of language has developed, new tactics for revealing ourselves to each other. In a society were the junta proclaims an end to change, suddenly there are plays about Darwin and the theory of evolution. Where political meetings are forbidden there are massive concerts with the themes of springtime or youth or Christian brotherhood, and the art of obscure political joking has reached its highest form. Those of us who live in the United States have, in addition to a much broader area of freedom, all the richness of the multiple cultures of this country to draw on. We have also had the experiences of the black

power, Chicano Mexicano, and Women's movements in creating a culture that redefines us. For U.S. Latins there is the task of claiming not only our Latin-ness, but also our U.S.-ness, of taking hold of our lives with both hands and shaping from them a name that no one else has given us.

This Bridge Called My Back, an anthology of writings by radical women of color, published last year by Persephone Press is a powerful example of literature doing its job. By speaking our secrets we hold up a mirror for each other that has become much more than just a good book. In tonight's and tomorrow's readings I'll be sharing a lot of the work from This Bridge. I'd like to end now with Tony Cade Bombara's introduction to the book as an example of what I see as the primary task of literature and, in fact, all culture in these days.

> How I cherish this collection of cables, esoesses, conjurations, and fusile missles. Its motive force. Its gathering-us-in-ness. It's midwifery of mutually wise understandings. It's promise of autonomy and community. And its pledge of an abundant life for us all. On time. That is to say--overdue, given the times.
>
> Now that we've begun to break the silence and begun to break through the diabolically erected barriers and can hear each other and see each other, we can sit down with trust and break bread together.... For though the initial motive of several sister/riters here may have been to protest, complain or explain to white feminist would-be allies that there are other ties and visions that bind, prior allegiances and priorities that supercede their invitations to coalesce on their terms. ...the process of examining that would-be alliance awakens us to new tasks
>
> and a new connection: US
> a new set of recognitions: US
> a new site of accountability: US
> a new source of power: US
>
> This Bridge lays down the planks to cross over on to a new place where stooped labor cramped quartered down pressed and caged up combatants can straighten the spine and expand the lungs and make the vision manifest.
>
> This Bridge can get us there. Can coax us into the habit of listening to each other and learning each other's ways of seeing and being. Of hearing each other as we heard each other in Pat Lee's Freshtones, as we heard each other in Pat Jones and Fay Chiang, et. al.'s Ordinary Women, as we heard each other in Fran Beale's Third World Women's Alliance newspaper. As we heard each other over the years in snatched time moments in hallways and conference corridors, caucusing between the sets. As we

heard each other in those split second interfacings of yours and mine and hers student union meetings. As we heard each other in that rainbow attempt under the auspices of IFCO years ago. And way before that when Chinese, Mexican, and African women in this country saluted each other's attempts to form protective leagues. And before that when New Orleans African women and Yamassee and Yamacrow women went into the swamps to meet with Filipino wives of "draftees" and "defectors" during the so called French and Indian War. And when the members of the marooned communities and women of the long lodge held council together while the Seminole Wars raged. And way way before that, before the breaking of the land mass when we mothers of the yam, of the rice, of the maize, of the plantain sat together in a circle, staring into the camp fire, the answers in our laps, knowing how to focus....

Quite frankly, This Bridge needs no Foreword. It is the Afterword that'll count. The coalitions of women determined to be a danger to our enemies, as June Jordan would put it. The will to be dangerous. And the contracts we creative combatants will make to mutually care and cure each other into wholesomeness. And the blueprints we will draw up of the new order we will make manifest. And the personal unction we will discover in the mirror, in dreams, or on the path across This Bridge. The work: To make revolution irresistible.

Angelita Reyes

I would like to address politics and the implications of Third World literature in American Comparative Literature departments. I think Kofi gave a very nice analogy in his introduction of how we look at Comparative Literature, as being a territory. We're crossing into new territory or to territory that we haven't experienced before. And in that sense we need immigration officials and we have to know what those barriers are. And I think the gist of my talk here is that traditionally Comparative Literature, as far as Third World literature is concerned, has been new territory and that many times we don't know what those barriers are.

What is Third World literature? The term "Third World" is a term I really don't like to use anymore in this decade of the eighties. There is the economic Third World, there is the cultural Third World, and there is the political Third World. As far as literature is concerned, it cuts across these boundaries. But of course for want of a better term I use Third World and I think we all know what that means, not only literature from Latin America, but from Africa as well as from the Far East and the Middle East. Traditionally Comparative Literature departments have concerned themselves with the literature of France and Germany and Hungary and, maybe some English literature from an American perspective because, of course, it would not be literature in translation. This has carried on for the last sixty years, and as you know, Comparative Literature's academic disciplinary is a relatively young one compared to so many other disciplines that exist. And in its youthfulness it has been exclusively European literature. But what is happening now, in the last ten to twenty years--the fact that Third World literature is coming into being--is becoming recognized as politically as these countries are becoming independent and people are speaking out; writers, artists are speaking out and they have important things to say. Therefore, as critics come to look into the literature, it has to be dealt with from an academic viewpoint, from a disciplinary viewpoint. We have the writers and, eventually, we have the critics. As far as Comparative Literature departments are concerned there is a new move, and I consider myself a part of that movement, to fully incorporate Third World literature into Comparative Literature, not to see Comparative Literature simply as being an experience in European literature.

Basically when we look at Third World literature, whether it's from Latin America, Africa, or the Far East, we're looking at

literature that has been written in European languages. For example, I'm exploring literature from Senegal, and most of the literature from Senegal is written in French now and not in an African language. But then what do you do when you look at literature coming from East Africa, from Tanzania or from Uganda or Kenya? Many of this literature that's written now in the seventies and the eighties is being written in Swahili. I think this would be a relavant issue for Comparative Literature departments since we all know that "Comp. Lit.", as we so fondly call it, has its linguistic implications. It is not enough to experience the literature in translation; that cross-cultural experience is supposed to happen with one looking at the literature, actually knowing the language. And I think this would be an issue that could be taken up in Comparative Literature departments since the so-called Third World literatures are now being written in different languages. Language, knowing that language, would be very useful for Comparative Literature but then this does not come naturally for Comparative Literature administrators because again that language is not a European language and would not be considered acceptable, at least not yet. Thus, in the future, perhaps in another twenty-five years, I see Comparative Literature not only having French, German, and Hungarian linguistic implications, but Swahili, Twi, Ewe, and other languages of the Third World that are being used in contemporary literature.

Not only is language now an obvious political barrier as far as Comparative Literature is concerned, but we have the attitudes of existing Comparative Literature departments. We have those attitudes that it is not a Third World literature that should be considered seriously. As Kofi mentioned, perhaps some of this politics may not be dealt with here. But I perhaps would like to share one with you that didn't necessarily happen in our department, but I was once told by a fellow graduate student that she was thinking of dealing with Brazilian literature, and she approached the chair of her department. He, being a very proper comparatist, told her that she should do Brazilian literature in her spare time and that of course you really don't need to do Brazilian literature since Spanish literature is enough for you. And, of course, the point is here he is someone who is versed in Comparative Literature and cross-cultural implications but he did not even have the knowledge that Spanish would not help her necessarily in Brazilian literature. So these are the attitudes that have to be dealt with, as far as the politics of Comparative Literature and Third World literature is concerned.

Perhaps in crossing into this territory, we also have the barriers of theory. We all know that the patron saint of Comparative Literature is Wellek, it's now Lucaš, maybe Freud, as I tried to show this morning Derrida, Frye, and so on. This is all very good and the knowledge, of course, is useful in applying to the text and looking at the works and so on. But do we use these indiscriminately for Third World literature? Do we have to make concessions when we're dealing with Third World literature? What is there about Third World literature that would necessarily involve other values, other valued theories? This is something that I think Comparative Literature needs to explore, to simply not look at a literature, particularly African literature that is still very close to its own tradition, tradition that is not necessarily European or Western, as a mere extension of Western literary tradition. The theories would involve anthropological, ethnographic, historical, political, as well as social considerations. In addition, of course, we would have to have the cooperation of those other disciplines to incorporate relevant aspects of those other disciplines into Comparative Literature. Basically this is what I have to say about the implications of Third World literature for Comparative Literature. Later, when we do have time for questions I would like to explore this with you, if you have any questions or suggestions. Thank you.

THE AFRICAN NIGHT IN THE POETRY OF NETO AND SENGHOR

Alberto R. Bras

It is not uncommon to associate the work of Agostinho Neto with Leopold Sedar Senghor's, or vice versa. The parallels in their poetry, and lives, are nothing short of remarkable. They are both Africans, poets and presidents. In fact, they are usually considered Africa's foremost poet-statesmen as well as two of its most eloquent voices. Furthermore, one's importance in Francophone Africa is analogous to the other's in the Lusophone, or Portuguese-speaking, areas of the continent. Senghor (b. 1906) and Neto (b. 1922) are both products of colonized societies, and their poetry, itself written in the national tongue of the respective "mother" nation, is to a considerable degree a reflection of the anomalous situation into which the two poets were born. The Senegalese and the Angolan, upon mastering the languages and cultures of France and Portugal, respectively, start to examine the problem in their verse. They utilize poetry as a means of liberating themselves, their peoples and their continent from European hegemony. The conflict between Europe and Africa or colonizer and colonized becomes central to the oeuvre of both poets, but their approaches to the subject differ substantially. The main difference seems to be one of ideology and this is perhaps most clearly evident in their treatment of the African night.

There are conspicuously few similarities between the African night depicted by Senghor and the one portrayed by Neto. The Angolan's principal focus is contemporary urban or semi-urban life, particularly life in slums or impecunious working-class neighborhoods. He attempts, he writes elsewhere, to "live Angolan culture," that is, to understand his nation's people as they are.[1] Thus the night he depicts in his poetry is a night of violence, a night of ignorance, drunkenness, screams, police raids. It is a time when a young woman finds herself alone as her lover is forcibly taken away to do contract labor; or when an older woman tries to sell fruit at midnight so that her son can pay taxes; or

when the police get a man out of bed, beat him viciously in front of his wife and children and finally send him to prison. There is little time for contemplation, be it political and philosophical or religious. Neto's is a night dominated by police and fear and death.

There is no such pervasive element of fear in Senghor's night. In "A New York," for instance, he proclaims that "la Nuit [est] plus véridique que le jour." Night:

C'est l'heure pure où dans les rues, Dieu fait germer
la vie d'avant mémoir
Tous les éléments amphibies rayonnants comme les
soleils.[2]

In the poet's African night there are no police raids in the wee hours of the morning; no family clashes between lovers, spouses or parent and child; no alienated men and women losing themselves in drinking bouts or dances of death as if in a desperate attempt at self-destruction. His night is not the time when the disruptive impact of colonialism is most widely felt, as in Neto's, but rather when one can best avoid that alien intrusion. Senghor's is an idyllic night; it is pastoral peacefulness. It provides the African individual with the opportunity to commune with the Ancestors and the Dead, and thus to at least momentarily forget the precarious socioeconomic realities of the day. It also enables him to rediscover his continent's traditions, to be himself.

Senghor's African night is consciously or subconsciously always juxtaposed to the colonial daylight. Indeed, it is an alternative to as well as a result of it, since the latter's unwelcome presence is obviously the ultimate consequence of this determined effort to deny the former. The poet insists throughout his work that the African night does exist. He affirms its existence, not by depicting modern life in the larger towns and cities of Senegal, but by focusing on its rural counterpart. His main emphasis is on the African's relations with his cosmos, especially as those relations existed prior to the arrival of the European "discoverers." Consequently, he explores the ethos of relatively unassimilated communities, such as his native village of Joal, in which the colonial presence is supposedly minimal if it exists at all.

To Senghor there is something mystical in night and the nocturnal rituals of his continent. They symbolize peace and harmony not only among men but also between men and nature. There

are no contradictions or obscurities in his "Nuit d'Afrique." It is, the poet writes in "Que m'accompagnent kôras et balafong," "noire, mystique et clare noire et/ brillante":

Nuit qui me délivre des raisons des salons des
sophismes, des pirouettes des prétextes, des haines
calculees des carnages humanisés
Nuit qui fonde toutes mes contradictions, toutes
contradictions dans l'unité première de ta négritude.

His "Nuit d'Afrique" is a demystifier, that is, it helps the individual to distinguish the truth from semi-truths or pure falsehoods. It is Africa itself but it is also far more than the continent. While it "repose accordée à la terre," it is simultaneously "la Terre et les colines/ harmonieuses."[3] It is both an intrinsic part as well as the whole.

The Senghorian image of the African night is inextricably intertwined with the poet's concept of negritude, his ideology.[4] Negritude was, among a plethora of other things, a forceful attempt to demonstrate the existence not only of an ancient African civilization (which would therefore negate the European cultural superiority upon which colonialism is so conspicuously predicated), but also of a venerable autochthonous humanistic tradition within that civilization. The concept is based on the premise that certain traits or characteristics are exclusively African and others exclusively European. It is from such a premise that Senghor rather unscientifically deduces that "L'émotion est nègre, comme la raison hellène."[5] It is also from that perspective that he rather arbitrarily divides his poetic universe into two distinct worlds, Africa and Europe or black and white. Night or darkness symbolizes the warm and innocent Africa, the poet's kingdoms of childhood and innocence; daylight represents the cold, cruel and mechanical Europe.

Senghor's portrayal of the controversial Zulu king Chaka, a figure whom Kolawole Ogungbesan asserts "Senghor, the poet-politician, sought to create...in his own image,"[6] illustrates the ideological significance of the African night in his work. His Chaka is a true statesman who, for the good of the masses, kills the poet in himself. Even Chaka's most abominable act, the assassination of his beautiful and beloved fiancee Noliwe, becomes a political sacrifice. The tragic-heroic monarch is not a mere warrior but "L'amant de la Nuit aux cheveux d'étoiles filantes, le créateur/ des paroles de vie." He is "Le poète du Royaume d'enfance."[7] Senghor seems to suggest that, despite colonialism, there has always been a definite element of continuity in African

history, a continuity which is largely due to the immense contribution of individuals such as Chaka. In "Lettre à un poète," a piece addressed to Aimé Césaire, he reminds the other great voice of negritude that his mission is to sing of "Les Ancêtres les Princes les Dieux." Those personages should not be forgotten, he adds because they are "légitimes."[8]

To Senghor daylight is the domain of the colonial power. Night is not. It is Africa itself with its traditions and rituals, and he seeks refuge and comfort in it. That is something Agostinho Neto obviously cannot do. Both his night and day are colonized; both alienate him as a human being. Moreover, night is the more negative of the two. It is almost always depicted as the symbol par excellence of the colonial past and present. (The poems in Sagrada esperança were written between 1945 and 1960, that is, before the eruption of the armed struggle in Angola.)

Neto's negative image of night emerges early in his work. Indeed, it actually surfaces in his very first poem, "Partida para o contrato," a short piece written in 1945. As the title indicates the poem focuses on one of colonial Portugal's most notorious legacies to Angola, "contract" labor, a system by which a worker was forced to labor in other regions of his native land as well as in other parts of the then so-called Portuguese overseas provinces. "Partida" is essentially the story of a young man's departure to the island of São Tomé and it is narrated from the perspective of the worker's bride or wife, his "love." The poem ends as the ship and the sun disappear simultaneously on the horizon, when:

> Não há luz
> não há estrelas no céu escuro
> Tudo na terra é sombra
>
> Não há luz
> não há norte na alma da mulher
>
> Negrura
> Só negrura...[9]

"Negrura/ Só negrura..." This is unquestionably a dark, utterly devoid of hope, finale. An extremely negative nature is attributed to night. Night or darkness is danger, uncertainty; it is the absence of hope, the absence of "stars," "light," the "north." But it is even more than that. Night, the author suggests in the poem of the same name ("Noite"), is sterility; it is the absence of life:

Eu vivo
nos bairros escuros do mundo
sem luz nem vida.

. . . . . .

São bairros de escravos
mundos de miséria
bairros escuros.

Onde as vontades se diluíram
e os homens se confu diram
com as coisas.

The process of dehumanization is more intensive during the night than at any other time and man loses himself, his identity, in it. As the poet concludes, "Também a noite é escura."[10]

The Portuguese scholar Manuel Simões has argued that "The presence of night as an absence of light is a constant in the poetic corpus of A. Neto."[11] The Angolan poet's work, adds Simões, functions dialectically between two times, today and tomorrow. Today is flagrant exploitation, ignorance and misery in the musseques (the predominantly African quarters of Luanda); tomorrow is independence and pride, freedom. The future tomorrow is consistently identified with light--not the present repressive colonial day, but a sun already envisaged albeit not yet seen--and with youth. As the poet himself puts it in "Adeus à hora da largada," "Nós [young Angolans] vamos em busca de luz/ os teus filhos Mãe/... Vão em busca de vida."[12] Life is equated with the sun of the new day which will dawn in Africa, not with the continent's present night or that of yesteryear, the night of "l'Afrique des empires."

There is a significant ideological difference between Neto's picture of the African night and Senghor's. The conflicting visions of the African night (and, by extension, of the future of the continent itself) are inherent in the antithetical symbols employed by the two poets. Neto's symbol of hope is the sun of tomorrow, the tomorrow he and all other Africans would create themselves, for themselves. That tomorrow, of course, could be realized only after the contemporary day and night, both of which he perceives as colonial creations have been destroyed. Thus the poet rejects the two. The extent to which he rejects the colonial day is evident in his numerous portrayals of marketwomen, porters ad contract workers forced to labor under an unforgiving blazing sun in order to subsist; or, even more directly so, when (in "Desfile de sombras") he states that "Nunca vi o sol/ que tenho a

recordar?"[13] However, his criticism of night is even more vitriolic than that of the day. Night is the antithesis of his vision or dream, his new Africa. To him it symbolizes oppression and obscurity. It is the time when Angolans are the most vulnerable to the surreptitious machinations of the colonial authorities--for the latter strike in the "silêncio da noite." It is fear, paralysis, vegetation. Night is, above all, the absence of life, the absence of Africa and the African.

Neto's solution is a revolutionary one. In his poetry he expresses the desire to overthrow the social and economic relations of his time. The poet is unable to reconcile himself and his world view with either the contemporary day or night; therefore, he searches for a viable alternative in the future. Senghor takes the opposite path. He is also unable to accept the humiliating realities of the day but, unlike the Angolan, he seeks inspiration and guidance from the past, from his African night. Historically Senghor's stance is important as a challenge to the hegemonical theories of Caucasian imperialists and thus, as mentioned earlier, as a means to help the African regain his dignity as a human being with a legitimate culture and history of his own. However, it has serious limitations. The poet's dichotomies are based on what are at best dubious premises, premises that lead him to praise certain characteristics for basically the same reasons that white racists downgraded them. Rhythm and emotion, for instance, were perceived by many Caucasian bigots as "low" qualities because they were supposedly <u>black</u> traits; Senghor sees them as noble and praiseworthy because they are <u>black</u>. There are no dramatic changes in the social relations of the author's poetic universe. What he does is reverse values, that is, what used to be considered negative becomes positive; nothing else is transformed. His remains essentially a reactionary alternative.

Ezekiel Mphahlele has written that there are poets, like Senghor and other voices of négritude, "who are in love with night," but not him, he says, because for him "night spells violence, police raids, screams. When I was a boy I became afraid of mountains and darkness because I was fully exposed to the terror they concealed while I wandered in search of cattle and goats. In the city, the night had other terrors for me."[14] Mphahlele's primordial fear of the seemingly threatening mountains ad darkness, like Neto's, has no equivalent in Senghor's ever understanding and friendly African night. The Senegalese, perhaps in an attempt to counter the colonialist presupposition that

Africa lacked an ethos of its own, develops an idealized view of the continent as a kingdom of innocence (night), which he then juxtaposes to the corrupt world of Europe (day). To suggest that night is somehow immune to the influence of the dominant alien presence, however, is to ignore the pervasive impact of colonialism on nearly every single facet of African life. Furthermore, as a Sengalese scholar has noted,[15] it is as well to ignore the cultural alienation created by colonialism, an estrangement against which Senghor himself writes elsewhere.

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NOTES

[1]A. Neto, "Sobre a literatura," in Ainda o meu sonho: discursos sobre a cultura nacional (Lisbon: Edicões 70,1980), p. 33.

[2]L. S. Senghor, Poèmes (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1973), p. 114.

[3]Senghor, p. 35.

[4]Senghor's favorite definition of négritude is as: "l'ensemble des valeurs culturelles du monde noir, telles qu'elles s'expriment dans la vie, les institutions et les oeuvres des Noirs." See his introduction to Liberté I: négritude et humanisme (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1964), p. 9.

[5]L.S. Senghor, "Ce que l'homme noir apporte," Ibid., p. 24.

[6]K. Ogungbesan, "A King for All Seasons: Chaka in African Literature," Présence Africaine 88 (4th quarter 1973), p. 204.

[7]Poèmes, p. 128.

[8]Poèmes, p. 10.

[9]A. Neto, Sagrada esperança (Lisbon: Sá da Costa, 1979), p. 37.

[10]Neto, p. 56. For Neto's views on colonialism as a process of dehumanization, see his "Introducão a um colóquio sobre poesia angolana," África 7 (Jan.-Mar. 1980), pp. 140-44.

[11]M. Simões, "A estrutura binária em Sagrada esperanca: da sombra para a luz," África 7 (Jan.-Mar. 1980), p. 158. My translation.

[12]Simões, p. 36.

[13]Simões, p. 61.

[14]E. Mphahlele, "African Literature: What Tradition?" in Voices in the Whirlwind and Other Essays (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), p. 150.

[15]See Daniel Garrot, Léopold Sédar Senghor: critique littéraire (Dakar: Les Nouvelles Éditions Africaines, 1978), p. 62.

CLAUDE MCKAY AND THE AFRO-AMERICAN SOURCES OF THE NEGRITUDE MOVEMENT

Micheline Rice-Maximin

In the world of artistic creation painters, musicians, sculptors, writers and poets frequently influence one another but very rarely acknowledge their intellectual and cultural debts. A notable exception to this rule was a group of black writers and artists living and working in Paris in the period from the late 1920's to the late 1940's. Coming chiefly from the French West Indies or from the francophone parts of Africa, they made up what has come to be called the "Négritude movement" when espoused pride in the black cultural heritage. Their immediate predecessors, whom they freely acknowledged, were a number of Afro-American writers from the United States who comprised a cultural movement in the 1920's known variously as the "Harlem Renaissance" or simply as the "Negro Renaissance." Many of these Americans also came to live and work in Paris where they readily interacted with blacks from other parts of the world. Most prominent among the Americans was Claude McKay whom we shall discuss in the second part of this essay.

For centuries Paris has been a melting pot for peoples of various races, cultures and political ideas. Black writers in Paris are no exception. Since there were no universities in the French African or Caribbean colonies, usually they initially came to Paris to pursue their education. Once there they mingled readily with other groups of blacks (and often with non-blacks), exchanged ideas, and started cultural clubs and literary journals. In the 1920's when they were joined by blacks from the United States, a very fruitful and mutually beneficial collaboration developed.

In the United States the idea of a black cultural revolt was already well-rooted. Some scholars see its origins in the anti-slavery campaigns of Frederick Douglass, others in the "back to Africa" notions of Martin Delaney in the latter half of the nineteenth century. At the turn of the century, two great Negro leaders, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Dubois, each in differing

ways, one conservative, the other liberal, advanced the idea of a separate black consciousness. Du Bois' The Souls of Black Folk was a seminal statement of the problem. However, all of the above figures were essentially political men. It was not until after World War I that their ideas were echoed in the black artistic milieu.

The 1920's were a high point in the history of American racism. The Ku Klux Klan was active everywhere, including and particularly in northern states; segregation extended even to the federal civil service; and distinguished (white) scholars and scientists were producing serious studies about the inferiority of the black race, arguing, inter alia, that slavery had been a benign institution and that its sequel, "Reconstruction," when freedmen actively involved themselves in politics, was a time of crime and corruption. Such distortions of historical fact were becoming rapidly embedded in popular mythology. Margaret Mitchell's celebrated Gone With the Wind (whose film version has been seen by more Americans than any other film) was accepted without question as an historically accurate portrayal of slavery and reconstruction. Other films, such as D.W. Griffith's The Birth of a Nation (1916), dealing with Reconstruction and the rise of the Klan, pictured blacks as "clowns" and "children," stereotypes which would be a long time dying in the American film industry. Although blacks picketted and boycotted, they could not stop this wave of cultural racism. Instead, their reaction did give birth to the "Negro (or) Harlem Renaissance" which stimulated pride in being black.

As the writers and artists of the Harlem Renaissance, or at least their works, moved across the Atlantic, they struck a kindred spirit among the African and West Indian students in Paris who had undergone a similar cultural brainwashing. As the somewhat blind victims of French colonialism and its doctrine of "assimilation" by which they were to be educated and trained as "little Frenchmen," even to the point of being told that their ancestors were "blue-eyed Gauls," the black francophone students easily made idols of the writers of the Negro Renaissance in America.

Who were these Americans? First, there were novelists and poets, such as Jean Toomer, Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes and Claude McKay. There were also painters, like Henry O. Tanner and William E. Scott, and sculptors, like Meta W. Fuller (one of Rodin's associates), Mae Jackson and Elizabeth Prophet. Alain Locke acted as the chief mediator between the American and the

francophone groups which met frequently in the salons of Andree Nardal or Rene Maran. Such meetings facilitated a cross-fertilization of talent, unity of purpose, and solidarity of color. Both groups came to appreciate their common ancestry, the similarity of their suffering and their common resentments. Although great geographical distances originally separated them, these varied descendants of Africa now shared the same cause.

Indeed, we cannot fully understand such French-speaking intellectuals as Aimé Césaire, Léopold Sédar Senghor or Léon Damas without reference to their keen interest in black America. Although they were chiefly indebted to the mainstream of French writing and culture, they also opened themselves up to the black literary movements in the United States. The effect of the Afro-American intellectuals on the West Indians and Africans was enormous. Senghor said that Countee Cullen's works had given him a new vocabulary and that James Weldon Johnson and Langston Hughes' songs celebrating black beauty, the black woman, and the black land (Africa) deeply inspired him. Similarly in his "Congo," Senghor evokes the black woman as the symbol of the earth, as the River Congo herself. He also translated into French many of the poems of Hughes, Cullen and Toomer. Indeed, Senghor wrote that the poetry of the Negro Renaissance:

> remains close to song; it is made to be sung or spoken, not to be read. Hence the importance of the rhythm, Negro rhythm, so despotic beneath its appearance of freedom. Hence the importance of the music, so difficult to render in translation.... In short [it is] a poetry of flesh and earth to talk like Hughes, a poetry of the peasant who has not broken off contact with the forces of the earth.[1]

Aimé Césaire, who first coined the term "négritude," saw it as the Afro-West Indian version of the Negro Renaissance in the United States. It was "the consciousness of being black, the simple acknowledgement of a fact which implies an acceptance, the taking over of one's destiny as a black, one's history and one's culture." To Senghor, it was "the sum of all values, cultural heritage, the values and, above all, the spirit of Negro-African civilization."[2]

Négritude embraced the exoticism of the Negro Renaissance with its longing for an imaginary Africa and its spontaneity and non-conventional rhythm. From Langston Hughes' Laughing to Keep from Crying, the Négritude writers learned to laugh from their hearts, and they had faith. "We younger artists," wrote Hughes,

> who create now intend to express our individual darkskinned selves without fear or shame. If White people are pleased, we are glad. If they are not, it does not matter.... If Colored people are pleased, we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure does not matter either.[3]

Such thoughts greatly inspired the entire Afro-West Indian community in Paris.

Soon Afro-Americans were also participating in or were becoming the subjects of several Négritude journals. Césaire's Tropiques, published in Martinique during the Vichyite occupation, although primarily emphasizing African culture, also focused on Afro-Americans, particularly their poetry, art, stylistic analysis, and, above all, spirit of revolt. For Cesaire, the Afro-American was the very symbol of the black race.

Earlier in Haiti another literary magazine, La Revue (begun in 1931) was designed to promote the values of Negro-African culture, presenting the works of such Afro-American writers as Countee Cullen. The Haitian reaction to white prejudice and arrogance had been inflamed by the occupation of the island by the U.S. Marines in 1915, but the négritude movement which developed there was inspired by Haitian students returning from Paris where they had been in contact with the writers of the Negro Renaissance. One of the more important Haitian writers was Jacques Roumain, whose Masters of the Dew (Gouverneurs de la Rosée, 1946) urged the people to struggle against resignation. Another Haitian negritude journal was Jean Price-Mars' La Relève (1932-1938) which also directed the island's attention to the North American writers. Price-Mars claimed that young Haitians knew Langston Hughes by heart.

Most of the other négritude journals originated in Paris. In 1934 Césaire, Damas and Senghor founded L'Etudiant noir in which the ideas of the Harlem Renaissance shone through. The journal was connected with the salon of Paulette Nardal which actively discussed the Afro-American writers. In fact Nardal launched another journal, La Revue du monde noir which pointedly published in both French and English so as to make the ideas of the Afro-Americans more easily accessible. Claude McKay was active with this group. The journal stressed the nobility of the Negro race and called for a re-evaluation of the traditional portrayals of African civilizations.

Etienne Léro's journal, Légitime Defense (1931) was perhaps the most significant of all the négritude publications, although it

appeared only once before being shut down by the police. Its "manifesto" was a seminal statement of negritude philosophy. In it Lero's group condemned not only assimilation but also the hypocritical humanitarianism of the West Indian bourgeoisie. Elsewhere in this important issue, Lero credited the influence of the Negro Renaissance: "The wind rising from black America will soon sweep the West Indies clean, we hope, of all the stunted fruits of its outdated culture." He added that the poetry of Langston Hughes and Claude McKay "had moved the entire world."[4]

We must not conclude that the Afro-American-West Indian-African relationship was exclusive. For one thing many Négritude writers were drawn to Surrealism. Moreover, the Afro-American influence was not limited to black francophone writers. They particularly aroused the keen interest of the French Communists whose Nouvel Age devoted several issues to the subject of black Americans, particularly their poetry, songs and "Negro spirituals." Many black Americans at this time, including not a few members of the Negro Renaissance, associated with Communist movements.

Négritude survived World War II and continued to flourish through continual interaction with black Americans. The main forum became Présence Africaine whose main Afro-American representative was Richard Wright. The new journal (founded in 1947) carried the Negritude fight to all three continents. It sponsored two congresses of Black Writers and Artists (Paris, 1956 and Rome, 1959) and the First World Festival of Negro Arts (Dakar, 1966). In all these activities Afro-Americans played prominent roles:

> the spiritual vitality and creative power of the black Americans [was] indispensable to the black world, even if [they] had almost totally forgotten their ancestral customs and had not escaped the influence of their confined and dehumanizing social setting.[5]

Wright helped his compatriots publish their works in France, and he obtained important financial backing for Présence Africaine. He was the authority on black American life and affairs in Paris and elicited support from important non-black organizations, like UNESCO, and such prominent figures as Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre. Wright's great success paved the way for succeeding generations of Afro-American writers, artists and poets. Their mutually-beneficial contacts with Africans and West Indians continue, though they now embrace a broader range of cultural exchanges, including film-making and the theatre.

Moreover, larger numbers of Africans and West Indians have had the opportunity to visit or live in the United States and to come to Harlem, the black capital of the world.[6]

Perhaps no other single work of the Negro Renaissance had so much influence on the early Négritude movement as Claude McKay's Banjo: A Story Without a Plot, which first appeared in 1929. McKay was actually both American and West Indian, having spent his first twenty-three years in Jamaica. Born into a prosperous peasant family in 1889, McKay was largely self-educated and worked for a while as a constable. Always inclined to writing, he published his first two works, Songs of Jamaica and Constab Ballads, in 1912. These he purposefully wrote in his native Créole, rather than in English, in order to affirm his attachment to the popular milieu. By doing so, McKay was already foreshadowing a popular device of the Negritude movement.

Also in 1912 McKay left Jamaica for the United States where, like his compatriot Marcus Garvey a few years later, he wanted to study under the great Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee so that he later could return home to help to improve Jamaican agriculture. McKay found life in the United States disconcerting. Although he had had no love for British colonialism, at least in Jamaica he had had the advantage of living in a predominantly black society mostly free of the segregation and overt racism he found in the United States. Partly in reaction he turned to radical Socialist politics. As a stevedore and then as a porter and dining-car waiter, he immersed himself in the life of the black working class.

In 1919 McKay was attracted to the Bolshevik cause, living and working with radicals in New York. In 1922 he visited the Soviet Union. However, his main concern always lay with the well-being of the black race, and his association with Marxists and Communists was only a means to achieve full freedom for blacks. From 1922 to 1933 he led the life of an expatriate in Europe (and for a time in North Africa). He had already published two volumes of poetry, If We Must Die (1919) and Harlem Shadows (1922). Now, in self-imposed exile, he wrote his two famous novels, Home to Harlem (1928) and Banjo (1929), both of which reflected the Harlem Renaissance. McKay fully identified with the American movement,

although he disapproved of the elitist attitude of some of its members.[7]

Banjo,[8] actually a sequel to Home to Harlem (about the rude experiences of a returning black soldier), takes place along the waterfront in Marseille, symbolic for being at the crossroads of Europe and Africa, a gathering place for peoples from all over the world. The novel's "plot" centers around Banjo's efforts to form a jazz band among the "beachboys." The main character's nationality, the music they play, and the instruments they use all reflect the incursion of Afro-American culture into this city of the Midi. The other characters are Africans or West Indians. Together they express a certain black universality in experience and ideas, "the common black denominator, the essential Negroness, the equivalent of Négritude to be generated by the poetry of Francophone blacks." It was a sort of "Pan-African Conference" in Marseille. Indeed, all three of McKay's novels (including the later Banana Bottom) are:

> vital to any study of Afro-American, Pan African or West Indian literature because of their stress on the necessity not only of attaining a defiant black pride and black consciousness through identification with the masses but also of taking from the white world what it has of value to offer.[9]

Banjo's life is the very expression of his art. He is "as unrestrained, free-spirited and vibrantly alive" as the music and songs he plays. He is the earthy, intuitive black man. The novel's use of language and tales (told by the Senegalese characters) reveals a constant obsession with Africa. Ray, the Haitian, the other main character, loves to listen to the various African dialects, "so rich and round and ripe like soft tropical fruit, as if they were fashioned to eliminate all things bitter and harsh to express. They tasted like brown unrefined cane sugar--Sousou, Bambara, Woloff, Fula, Dindie...." (pp. 201-202). There is also the dancing, the African symbol of the joy of the living, as Banjo describes it:

> Shake to the loud music of life playing to the primeval round of life.... Jungle jazzing, Oriental wriggling, civilized stepping. Shake that thing! Sweet dancing thing of primitive joy, perverse pleasure, prostitute ways, many-colored variations of the rhythm, savage, barbaric, refined--eternal rhythm of the mysterious, magical, magnificent--the dance of divine life. (pp. 57-58)

Banjo very accurately describes the life-styles of the blacks in Marseille, their relationships, disagreements, joys, sorrows, and their views of Western civilization. Indeed, the novel does not hesitate to criticize Christianity, Technology, Reason--all values of which the Western world has been so proud--because it has been in the name of these very values that she has colonized and oppressed other peoples. Hence, Ray

> was not unaware that his position as a black boy looking on the civilized scene was a unique one. He was having a good time of it. Italians against French, French against Anglo-Saxons, English against Germans....Oh, it was a great civilization indeed, too entertaining for any savage ever to have the feeling of boredom. (p. 136)

Ray finds the morality of the Christians:

> false, treacherous, hypocritical. I know that, for I myself have been a victim of it in your white world, and the conclusion I draw from it is that the world needs to get rid of false moralities and cultivate decent manners--not society manners, but man-to-man decency and tolerance. (p. 268)

The implication is that the Christian Church was only an alibi for the white subjection of blacks. (Ironically, however, at the end of his life, McKay would convert to Catholicism, working as a gardener at a church rectory!)

Moreover, Banjo presents Western technology as the deterioration of human possibilities and a depersonalization particularly painful for blacks. (McKay's approach is similar to that of Chaplin's Modern Times and Sinclair Lewis' Babbitt.) In Banjo Ray wonders how the black race would fare:

> under the ever-tightening mechanical organization of modern life.... The grand mechanical march of civilization had leveled the world down to the point where it seemed reasonable for an advanced thinker to doubt that what was good for one nation or people was also good for another. (pp. 324-325)

Perhaps, on the other hand, blacks could humanize the world by avoiding technological civilization altogether. For Ray, a black person,

> even though educated, was in closer biological kinship

> to the swell of primitive earth life. And maybe his apparent failing under the organization of the modern world was the real strength that preserved him from becoming the thing that was the common white creature of it. (p. 323)

How well Aimé Césaire would report these same thoughts in his Return to My Native Land (1939) when he praised:

Those who invented neither powder nor compass
those who never tamed steam or electricity
those who did not explore sea or sky
etc.

One may argue that all this was but a part of the "primitivism" so prevalent in the art and literature of the 1920's when the theme of the "decadence of the West" (following the uncivilized horrors of the Great War) was so rampant. Négritude writers certainly were not the only ones reacting against the sicknesses of Western civilization. The differnce was that McKay was not just denying the West, he was also affirming "Africa." His main concern was positive, to instill pride in blackness and in the black heritage and to promote communal solidarity among blacks. Certainly he wanted blacks to resist being assimilated into the dominant cultures, but he felt it was equally important for them to acknowledge and affirm their African culture.

McKay opposed anything or anyone who would inhibit the spiritual rebirth of the black people, even the controls of the black intelligentsia. Thus, in Banjo, Ray declares his preference for the "natural warmth of a people believing in themselves...the rugged poor and socially backward blacks" of Haiti to the colored intelligentsia who were only concerned that their white neighbors think well of them.

McKay was a seminal writer, the first West Indian or Afro-American to introduce the critical issues that fed into the mainstream of Negritude, and his prose was a model for later generations. He provided a sense of direction, a sort of cultural leadership. He particularly inspired young black students in France. Ironically he was revered more by the Africans than by the West Indians and Afro-Americans. Perhaps it was because McKay was promoting a cultural heritage of which the Africans were only too well aware, whereas the others were still searching for their cultural roots.

McKay directly influenced two Senegalese novelists, Ousmane Soce and Ousmane Sembene. The former notes that Banjo was

displayed on the bookshelves of the black students alongside the works of Delafosse, the anthropologist who had demolished the racial supremacist theories of Gobineau. Soce also borrowed a number of dancing scenes for his own Mirages de Paris. Sembene, although more frequently compared to Richard Wright, was probably more deeply influenced by McKay. Both men had worked on the docks in Marseille and associated with similar radical-liberal social groups. Both wrote for the masses, not the intellectual elite.

McKay also appealed to the West Indians. Joseph Zobel, the Martinican novelist, noted that Banjo was widely read (in French translation) in Martinique. Zobel's La Rue Cases-Nègres (1950) similarly focuses on the lives of poor blacks. Aime Cesaire found the greatness of Banjo in the fact that:

> the ordinary Negro, whose grotesqueness or exoticism a whole literature sets out to emphasize, is made a hero, drawn seriously and passionately.... To create a world, is that a small thing? To make a world where only the junk-shop's exotic inhumanity rose before!

Etienne Lero, for his part, described aspects of Banjo as "the West Indian as seen by an American Negro."

Above all Banjo helped both West Indians and Africans rediscover "Africa," especially the African feeling for life, the old primitivism, the longing for the motherland, and the voluptuous sensuality and vitality of the Africans. The Négritude writers did not slavishly imitate McKay, but they did pursue and elaborate on themes which the Afro-American had introduced. Thus Césaire, for example, could write that Africans "give themselves up, possessed, to the essence of things. Ignoring the shells but possessed by the rhythm of things, not caring to tame but walking in well with the world." Senghor wrote that "my side already burns with yearning a hundredfold for the darkland." Léon Damas said: "Give me back my black dolls/my black dolls/black dolls/black."

Certainly Banjo owed much of its success to its timeliness, appearing at a particularly propitious time for young blacks living, writing and studying in Paris. It was, as Césaire expressed it, "the first time Negroes were described truthfully, without inhibitions or prejudice."[10] Equally striking, however, is the novel's timelessness--the contemporaneity of its arguments, rhetoric, provocativeness and aggressiveness. Claude McKay

continues to challenge his admirers to produce a black art and literature, with its own integrity and independent of white European models.

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NOTES

[1]L.S. Senghor, Poèmes (Paris, 1964). See also Edward A. Jones, Voices of Négritude (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, 1971), pp. 36-37, and Janheinz Jahn, Neo-African Literature, (New York, 1968), p. 244

[2]Lilyan Kesteloot, Les Ecrivains noirs de langue française: naissance d'une littérature (Bruxelles, 1967), pp. 80-113, and Jones, op. cit., p. 120.

[3]Langston Hughes, "The Twenties: Harlem and Its Négritude," African Forum (Spring, 1966), p. 19.

[4]For more information on these journals and literary groups, see Kesteloot, op. cit., pp. 20-28, 56-57, 305-307. The intermediary, Alain Locke, interestingly enough, was a white American.

[5]Michel Fabre, The Unfinished Quest of Richard Wright (New York, 1973), p. 318.

[6]Fabre, p. 322; Robert Bone, Richard Wright (Minneapolis, 1969), pp. 31-32; Constance Webb, Richard Wright: A Biography (New York, 1968), p. 279.

[7]Wayne F. Cooper, ed., The Passion of Claude McKay (New York, 1973), a detailed biography.

[8]1961 edition, published by Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, New York.

[9]Jacqueline Kaye, "Claude McKay's Banjo," Présence Africaine 73 (1970), p. 165; James R. Giles, Claude McKay (New York, 1970), pp. 85,108; Robert Bone, The Negro Novel in America (New Haven, 1971), p. 68; Kenneth Ramchand, The West Indian Novel and Its Background (New York, 1972), pp. 14-15; and George E. Kent, "The Soulful Way of Claude McKay," Black World 20 (November 1970), pp. 37-51, for the above discussion.

[10]On Banjo's influence, see Jahn, op. cit., pp. 243-244, and Kesteloot, op. cit., pp. 20-28, 56-57, 72-73, 305-307.

IF TRANSLATING MEANS COMMUNICATING, WHAT DOES HADITHI ZA MJOMBA REMUS COMMUNICATE?

John L. Inniss

Translating has been variously conceived of as an art, a skill, a science and even as an artistic creation in its own right. And to be sure it is all of these things. But it is also much more. Fundamentally, to translate implies communication, "the passing of information from one point to another,"[1] or "who said what to whom, under what circumstances, for what reasons, and for what purpose."[2] Unfortunately, many translation efforts have naively overlooked the communicative aspect inherent in all translations, preferring instead to focus upon the author's supposed intent and the form of the message.[3]

Basically, four different factors need to be attended to if a translation is indeed to be successful in fulfilling its usually unstated goal, i.e., that of communicating. The four factors involved are: 1) the message (both in terms of 'form' and 'content'); 2) the audience; 3) the circumstances in which the translation takes place; and 4) the circumstances in which the message is received.[4] All of these factors interrelate, all affect the final outcome of any translation effort and all assume equal prominence insofar as good, accurate translations are concerned. Relative parity notwithstanding, however, the role of the intended audience ('receptors' in Nidian terminology), whose task it is to decode and understand the translated work, is an especially "integral element in the communication process." In fact, the very appropriateness of any translated text can only be realistically evaluated within the context of those for whom it is intended, i.e., its receptors. As Nida puts it, the

> capacities, interest, and presuppositions of the receptors are primarily responsible for the success or failure of any translation, and they largely determine the formal features any satisfactory translation must possess.[5]

Ultimately, then, the role of the skillful translator, according to Nida, is to reinterpret the original message from the (original) source in such a manner that the message is understood in approximately the same connotative sense by the new receptors (i.e., the intended audience of the translation) as it was/is by the original receptors of the message.[6] Further, a lack of ethnosensitivity and/or unawareness of the various semantic domains[7] that a given word may simultaneously occupy on the part of the translator for both audiences can sometimes result in meaningless, inappropriate, ludicrous, or worse, insulting locutions.

It hardly needs to be emphasized that producing an accurate, readable translation between languages, especially those that are associated with widely differing cultures, can be a complicated and toilsome endeavor. Without an adequate sociolinguistic theory of translating, one which takes into account both the relevant linguistic and ethnographic facts, choices involving grammar and lexical items will perforce be based on inconsistent and impressionistic whims. Such subjectivism cannot possibly address itself to the many sociolinguistic factors that can affect the quality of a translated work, such as "content, receptors' capacities, and the circumstances of communication."[8] Moreover, idioms and slang as well as proverbs ad their usage, all features of language that are heavily culture-bound, demand an accurate ethnolinguistic assessment on the part of the translator if the resulting translation is to enjoy the same relationship with the intended audience as the original work does/did with its audience.

Finally, we come to an area in which even skilled and careful translators are often confronted with seemingly insuperable ethnolinguistic problems in terms of translating from one language and culture to another. The problem is that of producing "in a receptor language a corresponding geographical or sociological dialect."[9] To do this artfully and with precision presupposes a thorough intimacy with both languages and cultures involved. As shall be observed later, failure to adequately comprehend the pertinent sociolinguistic facts of both languages will result in a poor translation indeed, especially in communicative terms.

This next section will critically examine a translated text, Hadithi 13 za Mjomba Remus ("13 Tales of Uncle Remus"), from the vantage point of a sociolinguistic theory of translating. I shall attempt to demonstrate that the Kiswahili translation, despite its having been "approved by the Inter-territorial Language (Swahili) Committee," is in fact not a faithful translation of the original

text. Not only does it fail to capture the language and tone of the original, but it also omits crucial sociological information, information necessary for placing the text in its proper historico-cultural context. Specifically, three points will be considered, those being: 1) the language of the translation versus that of the original; 2) the kinship term mjomba; and 3) the translator's concept of "receptors."

Translation from one standard variety to another is itself a difficult and problematic task. And, as has already been noted above, the translation of a nonstandard dialect of one language into an equivalent dialect of another is a formidable literary venture, one that compounds the initial difficulties confronted in translating from standard to standard. Unfortunately, difficulty of execution is scarcely an acceptable excuse for not trying to produce an ethnolinguistically accurate translation. In the case of Hadithi 13 za Mjomba Remus no perceptible attempt was made. Instead, the translator(s) were content to take a highly marked, ethno-historic American dialect (in this case, a form of Plantation Creole spoken by Black slaves and ex-slaves in the mid-19th-century American South) and render it in the standard, textbook variety of Kiswahili. The question is, can this be justified?

Sociolinguistics has clearly and irrefutably established that language, among its other functions, serves to convey important sociological information about the speaker.[10] In many cases, for instance, one can quite accurately ascertain a person's ethnicity, gender and even his or her socio-economic and educational background, based solely on a sample of natural speech. For serious translators, this has obvious implications. That is to say, the type of language used in a particular text communicates not only the message of the author, but social information about the author (or the author's characters) as well.

Here, one must ask just what kind of social information was conveyed to the original and subsequent receptors of Harris's text. Specifically, what does the language of the original text reveal about its main character, Uncle Remus? In what way, in other words, does language help to contextualize Uncle Remus?

Suffice it to say that, even were it not stated explicitly, the average American reader would have little difficulty in determining Uncle Remus's ethnicity. A bit more sophisticated reader might be able, based solely on the linguistic evidence, to place the text spacially and temporally: the postbellum South not too long after the Civil War. One could even further surmise that

he had little or no formal, American-styled education. Thus, gradually does a picture emerge of an old, Black ex-slave, one who has only recently been manumitted, living on a large Southern plantation (in all probability the same one on which he worked as a slave). This, of course, can lead to all manner of inferences concerning Uncle Remus's social position vis-à-vis power, or the lack of it, and status within both general American society and early post-slavery Black American society.

In marked contrast, the Kiswahili translation provides no linguistic clues as to Uncle Remus's ethnicity, socio-historical background or education; but then why should it, since Uncle Remus himself is not even in the translated tales? That is to say that in the Kiswahili version only the unclad tales appear, completely decontextualized. Thus, it seems as though the translator has striven for content alone, perhaps regarding the form of the message as a matter of minor significance.

However, even if Uncle Remus had been included, even if the translator had stressed integrity of form by, for example, including the relationship that existed between Uncle Remus and the little White boy,[11] the type of Kiswahili used in the translation would have still presented insuperable communicative problems. The net result of such insousiance, of course, is that Kiswahili readers unfamiliar with the original text are effectively precluded from appreciating the tales in a way similar to that of the original receptors.

In comparing these two works, the original and Kiswahili translation, the dissimilitude in language looms large. Earlier an attempt was made to point out some of the social informaion inferable from the variety of English attributed to Uncle Remus.[12] But one wonders what kind of social information is derivable from the variety of Kiswahili used in Hadithi 13 za Mjomba Remus?

The variety of Kiswahili used in Hadithi 13 za Mjomba Remus is Kiswahili cha kitabuni ("Book Kiswahili"), a dialect that is native to no group (except perhaps the members of the former Inter-territorial Language (Swahili) Committee for the East African Dependencies). Although in many ways an artificially contrived dialect,[13] it is nevertheless based upon a real Kiswahili dialect, Kiunguja spoken on Zanzibar. However, Kiunguja in general, and standard Kiswahili in particular, are not rural, country dialects, but rather are associated with an urban life-style and cosmopolitan world view. Both varieties suggest 'culture', sophistication, urbanity and refinement. Furthermore, a speaker/user of either of these two dialects would not

ordinarily be thought of as being uneducated or illiterate. Moreover, at the time of the Uncle Remus translation (1957), both dialects, and especially the Kiunguja one, connoted power and prestige. Strange, then, that a dialect like standard Kiswahili, given all that it connotes, should be chosen (without modification) to represent the dialect of a powerless, rural and largely illiterate group.[14]

In turning to the kinship term "Mjomba," we see that in Kiswahili there are four distinct ways of expressing the English kinship term 'uncle'. They are: a) baba mkubwa - 'father's older brother', b) baba mdogo - 'father's younger brother', c) ami (amu) - an Arabic kinship term used as a synonym for both a) and b); 'paternal uncle (i.e., father's older or younger brother)', and d) mjomba - 'maternal uncle (i.e., mother's brother)'. Additionally, mjomba, aside from denoting one's 'maternal uncle', can also be used as a general term for 'uncle' (paternal or maternal), as well as a "polite term of address (for people of the older generation)."[15] Thus, at first blush it would appear that the Kiswahili term mjomba is indeed the best all around candidate as a translation for the nonspecific English 'uncle', as used in the title of Harris's book. But is it really? This question can only be resolved by a consideration of the term 'uncle', especially in the context of the antebellum South.

According to the American Heritage Dictionary (1975), the term 'uncle' means, among other things, 1) the brother of one's mother or father, 2) the husband of one's aunt, 3) a form of respectful address to an older man, used especially by children, 4) one who counsels. 'Uncle', however, had an additional meaning in the antebellum and early postbellum South. It was used as a term of address for an 'ole darkie', i.e., an older Black man for whom the humiliating appelation 'boy' was deemed no longer apposite.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, then, the term 'uncle' when used by Whites to refer to other Whites was semantically quite different from the term 'uncle' used by Whites to address older Black males. 'Uncle' in the latter context was not used as a kinship term at all, but rather as a term of address that, while not conferring social acceptability upon the addressee, at least mitigated some of the opprobrium that attached itself to being Black in mid-nineteenth-century America. And it was in this sense that Joel Chandler Harris, a White southerner, used the term 'uncle'.

A native speaker of Kiswahili unfamiliar with the original text would in no way be able to infer the above specialized meaning

from the kinship term mjomba. Nor is this to suggest that the term mjomba is totally unacceptable. Close perusal of the other three choices, baba mkubwa, baba mdogo and ami, should reveal that, in fact, mjomba is the only acceptable translation of the term 'uncle' as it is used by Harris. But not without qualification. Thus, insofar as the title is concerned, a more accurate translation in Kiswahili that communicates the sociocultural subtleties embodied in the original text might be Hadithi 13 za Mzee Mtumwa Mweusi Mjomba Remus ('13 Tales of the Old Black Slave Uncle Remus').[16] Without this type of qualification the stories themselves become simply animal tales, not anchored in time and attributable to almost any ethno-cultural group.

As should be clear from the preceding discussion, this translation of Harris is not a sociolinguistically sensitive one. The communicative aspect of both source texts and their translations has been ignored completely. Thus, the role of the receptors, both of the source text and of the translation, has either been trivialized or idealized. This has resulted in a disregard for the receptors' task of decoding their respective texts. The idealization of the receptors, according to Nida, is based on the specious presumption that they (i.e., the receptors) are

> able to appreciate all the subtleties of the translator's art, since they are regarded, though erroneously, as already aware of the form of the source text. Such an approach to translation is obscurantist, for rarely if ever are there ideal receptors. There is no point in making a translation apart from a situation involving real interlingual communication and if this is so, then the capacities, attitudes, presupposition, and potential responses of receptors must be carefully studied.[17]

This paper has tried to show that a good, accurate translation depends on a number of interrelated factors, some linguistic others ethnological in nature. To recapitulate, the four most crucial factors affecting the ultimate acceptability of any translation are: the message, the receptors, the circumstances in which the translation takes place, and the circumstances in which the message is received. Of these four factors the message and the receptors are perhaps the most important. It has been shown,

convincingly I hope, that the Kiswahili translation of Joel Chandler Harris's Uncle Remus chose to disregard both.[18]

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NOTES

[1]R. R. K. Hartmann and F. C. Stork, Dictionary of Language and Linguistics (1976; rpt. New York and Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1972), p. 42.

[2]Eugene A. Nida, "Translating Means Communicating: A Sociolinguistic Theory of Translation," in Linguistics and Anthropology, ed., Muriel Saville-Troike, (GURT, Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1977), p. 217.

[3]Nida, p. 215.

[4]Nida, p. 213.

[5]Nida, p. 217.

[6]Nida, lecture at the University of Texas at Austin, 23 April 1980.

[7]Semantic domains, also called semantic range, are the "number of different contexts in which a word can occur" (Hartmann and Stork, p. 203).

[8]Nida, p. 220.

[9]Nida, p. 221.

[10]Peter Trudgill, Sociolinguistics: An Introduction (1976; rpt. New York City: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 14.

[11]This relationship was considered important enough to be included in nine out of the ten volumes of Uncle Remus tales published.

[12]Perhaps significant too, from a sociolinguistic and literary point of view, is that Uncle Remus's constant companion, the little White boy, spoke standard American English, an entirely different dialect from that of Uncle Remus.

[13]For an excellent summary of the rise and development of standard Kiswahili see Rachel M. Angogo, "Standard Kiswahili: Its History and Development," Master's Thesis, U.T. Austin, 1978, especially chapters 3 and 4.

[14]Given the fact that until quite recently (1964) de facto slavery existed on the island of Zanzibar, it is perhaps the ultimate irony that the dialect of Kiunguja is more associated with slave owners than with the slaves themselves.

[15]Charles W. Rechenbach, Swahili-English Dictionary (U. S. A.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1967), p. 323.

[16]A more complete translation would be Mzee Mtumwa Mweusi wa Kiamerika Mjomba Remus ('The Old Black American Slave Uncle Remus').

[17]Nida, pp. 215-216.

[18]Fairness and a sense of perspective compel me to state

something that, although not dealt with in the body of the present paper, is nevertheless germane to an unbiased appraisal of the translation's overall worth. While remaining critical of the translation for the reasons already enunciated, still I would like to point out that the primary objective of this effort was obviously not to produce a sociolinguistically accurate translation. Rather its aim was a pedagogical one: to fill a primary school void in written Kiswahili prose. After all, literacy is a fragile skill that, at least in the early stages, requires constant honing. And this can only be done in situations where appropriate reading materials are readily available.

Finally, it must not be forgotten that the former Inter-territorial Language (Swahili) Committee for the East African Dependencies, the committee that approved this translation for the publication, was ideologically committed to fostering its brand of Kiswahili among the residents of East Africa.

SOCIETY AND SELF IN ROUSSEAU AND KLEIST: A REEXAMINATION

Susan Wells Howard

The letters of Heinrich von Kleist demonstrate clearly that he was an ardent admirer of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In a letter to his fiancee, Wilhelmine Zenge, dated March 22, 1801, he writes:

> It would be hard to imagine a development that would be more advantageous to your higher development, than your inclination for Rosseau. As of today, I have decided that my second gift to you shall be the gift of the complete works of Rousseau. I shall then also outline for you the order in which they are to be read; for the time being, don't let anything stop you from reading Emile in its entirety.[1]

And in a letter dated the 3rd of June of the same year: "I would rather have you be educated by my dear Rousseau than by any one else." From these lines we note that Kleist not only admired the French author and considered him a guide to a "higher stage," but that he demonstrated a disturbing predilection to pattern himself after Rousseau's tutor figures with respect to Wilhelmine, programatically "educating" her to be a suitable helpmate.

This St. Preux-Julie, or perhaps even Emile-Sophie, relationship of intellectual dominance is also reflected in Kleist's essay of September 1800 written for Wilhelmine, "On the Enlightenment of the Woman," in which he states:

> And the better for you, that your function is so simple and limited! Through you Nature wants only to reach her goals; through us men the State wants additionally to reach its own particular purposes; and out of this often develop the most unfortunate contradictions.

Although some critics have addressed Kleist's affinities with Rousseau in terms of male and female roles, I wish to address here a related aspect which Kleist and Rousseau share, namely the concepts of the development of the individual in society and his relation to that society.

These lines written to Wilhelmine corroborate Rousseau's notion of a "state of nature," which Kleist claims is inhabited by women, whose role it is to produce and raise "virtuous children," the raw material for society. Society, then, is separate from the state of nature, but has a role and purpose analogous to nature's, to which men dedicate their activity. Thus both "natural" and "social" activity are purposive, and in Kleist's construct, organically distinguishable, related but not identical. This non-identity generates the troublesome contradictions.

In another letter written to Wilhelmine of August 15, 1801, Kleist reveals another kind of inherent contradiction concerning the role of knowledge:

> Assuming that Rousseau was right in answering "no" to the question whether the arts and sciences have made men happier, what strange contradictions would follow from this truth.

This letter was written from Paris, where Kleist experienced a revulsion to "cultured society" similar to Rousseau's. Indeed, after the Paris visit, Kleist tried to persuade Wilhelmine to join him in Switzerland, the land of Rousseau, to live in idyllic nature, at which point his fiancee broke off their engagement. From such letters and Kleist's insular seclusion, critics have assumed that Kleist subscribed to Rousseau's call to "return to nature," and have interpreted Kleist's essay "On the Marionnette Theater," published for the Berliner Abendblatter in 1810, as illuminated by Rousseau's account of the development of the stages of man in society, an account outlined in Rousseau's Second Discourse, On the Origin of Inequality Among Men.

I do not wish to dispute that there are certain resonances to be found between Kleist and Rousseau concerning the individual and society, but I do think that the critical studies on Kleist's relation to Rousseau have dealt mainly in cliches concerning the primacy of "natural" feeling, cliches which I will maintain represent a misreading of both Kleist and Rousseau. I will concentrate on Rousseau's Second Discourse and Kleist's late essay on the marionette theater to illustrate this point.

Rousseau's depiction of man's development from the "natural" state to a political being has traditionally been interpreted as a fall. He poignantly describes in this Discourse what he calls the "spirit of society":

> In reality, the source of all these differences is,

> that the savage lives within himself, while social man lives constantly outside himself, and only knows how to live in the opinions of others, so that he seems to receive the consciousness of his own existence merely from the judgment of others concerning him.[2]

Indeed, the theme is that of alienation, from nature and from other men, a theme which has informed nearly all political philosophy in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Property and the need for personal esteem were seen to be the sources of this alienation, so that the state of society is little more than an uneasy equilibrium held together by polite convention. Rousseau writes:

> Men no sooner began to set a value upon each other and know what esteem was, than each laid claim to it, and it was no longer safe for any man to refuse it to another.

Rousseau himself, writing in exile and dedicating his Discourse to the Republic of Geneva, is desirous of public esteem. He addresses his dedication to the "most honorable, magnificent and sovereign lords," though he does get around to the common citizens and even the women, and claims that this tract is the work of thirty years in order to make himself "worthy." In the Preface to the Discourse, he outlines the "wisely tempered" democracy of Geneva as that government under which he would choose to live, suggesting that while society may be a source of discontent when one belongs to it, it is a source of nostalgic longing under the conditions of exile.

The problem that Rousseau sets for himself in the second Discourse is to devise a set of configurations or strategies for representing the meaning of identity, or lack of it, within a social structure. The "natural" or "primitive" stage which Rousseau reconstructs historically in the first part of the essay is already acknowledged in his preface to be the work of imagination:

> For it is by no means a light undertaking to distinguish properly between what is original and what is artificial in the actual nature of man, or to form a true idea of a state which no longer exists, perhaps never did exist, and probably never will exist; and of which it is nevertheless necessary to have true ideas, in order to form a proper judgment of our present state.

This tension between the preface and the text is crucial to an understanding of Rousseau's project and one generally ignored by critics who wish to reduce his thinking to cliches about the "noble savage." In the Discourse, he will reconstruct the development of mankind in an attempt to determine what "natural" principles may serve as guidelines, such as commiseration--sympathy for others of one's own kind--which he finds more binding than law, since it is rooted in the principle of identity or sameness, whereas the law distinguishes between "mine" and "thine." He will argue that it is the breakdown of such "natural" principles that is the source of society's current ills, and formulate a strategy to restructure society so that it is grounded more closely upon such "natural" principles.

The problem is, of course, that if man were "naturally social" in this idealized fashion, there would be no need for Rousseau's program. But although he states in his preface that his reconstruction is a heuristic device, a mythology (and this fact is generally ignored by commentators) Rousseau wants nevertheless to maintain that his ideal of the natural man is necessary to understand and analyze the realities of the current age. Necessity, therefore, does not correspond to truth, and Rousseau's perfected state is based on an admitted fabrication. It is not, to use the 18th-century terminology, an attempt to reduce moral philosophy to natural philosophy.

Rousseau's mythology does allow him to spread out the problem of identity and alienation on a temporal axis. Whether the posited original state is a fiction or not, it is clear that the second stage in this narrative is to be taken literally as a representation of our current historical age. The third stage, only briefly discussed in the Appendix to this Discourse, but the central theme of Rousseau's Social Contract and one which runs through his novels and confessional writings as well as his other political writings, is a rationally programmed plan for the creation of a new state in which man enjoys the fiction of being "naturally social." That is, for men who have been properly taught to be social beings, selfhood and society would be co-constitutive. One of the chief means of socializing mankind is through education. Already in the First Discourse, On the Moral Effects of the Arts and Sciences, Rousseau states that it is easier to guide mankind than to enlighten it. In Julie and especially in Emile, he outlines the ways in which the tutors can instruct their charges so the appearance of necessity is produced by the conditions set by the guide, such that the illusion of

freedom exists under the most rigorous control. In the Social Contract, the god-like figure of the legislator assumes the tutor's role; the law, to which all are subjected and therefore no man made a master over others, embodies the very necessity associated with nature. Public opinion seen to be a source of alienation in the present age, becomes in the ideal state the means by which the individual will is morally obligated to subjugate itself to the common will.

What is disturbing here is that contrary to literary scholars' view of Rousseauism, what Rousseau is actually talking about is not a return to nature, either actually talking or sentimentally, but rather a complete loss of freedom under the guise of necessity. His is a classic plan for behavioral engineering: the common will is created through law by redefining freedom in terms of obedience to the state, and the state is an intricate, rational artifice. Given the fact that society to a large extent constitutes the meaning of the individual, reason must now provide us with that which nature could not, and service becomes "perfect freedom."

From the tripartite temporal structure of Rousseau's plan for reconstructing an ideal society, Kleist criticism has drawn parallels to the three stages of "marionette, man and God" in Kleist's essay, "On the Marionette Theater." Notably taking their cue from Hanna Hellmann,[3] who calls these stages a "rune" and a "hieroglyph" for all of Kleist's work and remarks, "The threads of connection which lead to Rousseau are unmistakeable," critics see in the marionette, whose movements are governed by a "Schwerpunkt," a center of gravity "in the center of the figure," a representation of man in his primitive stage, whose actions were governed not by volition but by necessity. What is produced by movement so governed by natural law is "grace," perhaps analogous to Rousseau's "virtue;" in the movements of their artificial limbs, "only everything in a higher degree," are proportion, symmetry and ease, qualities Rousseau attributes to the primitive man.

In Kleist's essay the narrator's interlocutor, Mr. C., compares the movement of the marionettes to famous dancers of the day, dancers whose self-reflexivity makes it impossible for them to reproduce motion as though it were derived from necessity, and worse, whose vanity produces affectations in their movements. Mr. C. also poses the examples of the dancing bear and the fencer as a similar pair: the fencer, though skilled and agile, is no match for the animal. The bear is not confused by his opponent's

attempts to trick him through exaggerated, artistic gestures: the bear's instinct enables him to ignore all motions that are mere artifice and to parry the thrusts which are potentially dangerous with the most minimally sufficient movement, without reflecting upon what it is he does. The dancer and the fencer represent the current condition of mankind, in which we are alienated from our instincts by our self-consciousness. The third stage in Rousseau's structural model is suggested by Mr. C.'s remarks that, as we have eaten of the apple of consciousness, it will be necessary to find some "back door" through which we may return to a state in which action is governed by natural reflex, producing harmony of movement. Thus, both Kleist's and Rousseau's essays can be seen as histories of consciousness, in which the first and last stages are considered to be more consonant with organic natural harmony than the intervening one, that is, the present.

What such interpretations fail completely to do, however, is to examine the structure of Kleist's essay. It is the report of a conversation between the first person narrator and Mr. C., a prominent dancer and therefore, one would assume, a critic of authority. It is Mr. C. who privileges the models of the marionette and the bear as more harmonious and graceful than the movements of humans. The narrator, on the other hand, remains a skeptic throughout the essay. When asked, for example, whether he had not found the movements of the marionettes gratiös, the narrator replies:

> That I couldn't deny. A group of four peasants, who danced a rondo in quick time, could not have been painted more beautifully by Tenier.

That is, he responds by comparing the dance of the marionettes not with a natural "folk dance," but with a painting, a representation even further removed from the movement of dance.

The narrator wants to understand the mechanics of the movements of the puppets and inquires both into the skills of the "Machinist," the puppeteer, and into the art of puppetry. On the one hand, the narrator remarks that the craft of the puppeteer does not represent an organic, natural activity at all:

> I responded that this whole business had been presented to me as something rather mindless; something like the turning of a cylinder which activates the notes in a hurdy-gurdy.

On the other hand, intrigued by Mr. C.'s fascination for this particular puppet show (he expressed his astonishment to find such an eminent artist so obviously enjoying a pastime considered fitting for "the masses"), he presses Mr. C. to confirm that this particular puppeteer had to be an artist, that he "himself is a dancer, or at least must have an idea of the beauty of dance." Mr. C.'s responses to the narrator's concerns about artistry reveal a certain tension within his own argument, for he wants simultaneously to maintain both the principle of organic necessity of motion in the lines and curves described by the movements of the marionette and the notion that this movement is somehow an expression of spirit, "the movement of the soul of the dancer." Motion which is "translated entirely in terms of mechanical forces" is at the same time "something very mysterious." Mr. C. is forced to acknowledge the movements of the puppeteer's fingers as "somewhat artistic," not "completely without sensitivity," but wishes to claim that the movement produced by art or skill is, mysteriously, not art, but nature, operating according to the strict laws of gravity. Superfluous movement, such as that exhibited by human dancers, errs in that it does not adhere to such necessity.

The narrator ironically comments on Mr. C.'s judgment that the movement of inanimate objects is necessarily more pleasing than that of self-reflective dancers, as if to remind Mr. C., that they are after all two entirely different activities, and that dance is a specifically human, artistic one: "Well of course, I thought, where no spirit is present, it cannot err."

The narrator counters Mr. C.'s proposals with an anecdote from his own experience that describes the loss of grace through reflection in terms that are specifically human. He describes a boy at the age of sixteen, the critical point between childhood and manhood when self-consciousness begins to assert itself, at the point when the "child of nature" begins to participate in society. The boy has seen a copy of the famous Greek statue of the youth pulling a thorn from his foot, a work whose grace of line and organic unity has been the subject of prolific commentary. Later, as the boy is drying his own foot, he unconsciously reproduces the posture of the statue. The boy is suddenly reminded of the work of art and thereby made conscious of his own natural grace. Vanity stirs in him, and as the narrator watches, he attempts again and again to recreate consciously the movement he had produced instinctively, his efforts becoming more and more arduous and the effect, comic.

For the narrator, this experience was a remarkable and unhappy occasion, a moment in which true innocence and charm were lost, as he describes how the boy, from that moment on, never recaptured the ease of gesture he had had as a child, when being and acting "instinctively" corresponded. Now the boy's gestures were calculated, designed to produce an effect, that is, esteem in others' eyes. He is caught in what Kleist calls "the iron net" of public opinion. Mr. C. summarizes the inverse relationship of grace to reflexive behavior:

> We see that in the organic world as reflection becomes weaker and more opaque, to that degree grace emerges more brilliantly and dominantly.

Since the front gate of paradise is barred to mankind as a result of his eating of the apple of self-knowledge, Mr. C. reiterates his proposal to find another way, to proceed through knowledge, "the journey around the world," to return to the same point of departure. This condition of total understanding, which Mr. C. posits as the telos of the activity of mankind, is tantamount to devinity and to inanimate nature:

> ...and so it is that grace re-emerges when knowledge has, as it were, proceeded through an infinity; so that it appears at the same time in its purest form in those human embodiments which have either no self-consciousness at all, or infinite self-consciousness, that is, in the puppet, or in God.

This, he states at the conclusion of the essay, "is the last chapter of the history of the world."

It is Mr. C.'s solution, then, that is in fact a reflection of Rousseau's program to forge an ideal society: to study the state of nature, learn from it, and, through reason and understanding, try to recapture that spontaneity of instinctive response which characterizes natural activity. But the narrator of "On the Marionette Theater," whose ironic voice I wish to privilege as being more closely aligned with Kleist's own, will not accept this solution. The last question which he poses in the essay (to which Mr. C. responds "But of course!") is not presented as a solution to man's condition but as an expression of continuing skepticism:

> ...You mean, we would have to eat again of the tree of knowledge in order to "fall back" into the state of innocence?

In his description of the sixteen-year old, the narrator has demonstrated the impossibility of consciously reproducing unreflected activity. More and more reflection, more and more knowledge, compound the problem rather than solve it. The problem of self-consciousness is the condition of mankind which alienates us from our selves and each other, but it is no solution to propose models of a mindless puppet (Rousseau's "socially conditioned" man) or an all-wise divine figure (Rousseau's legislator).

The marionette cannot even serve as an adequate heuristic model of primitive, natural man, for it is itself an artistic product, a cultural artifact. Had Kleist wanted to proselytize for Rousseau's program for the creation of an ideally civilized man, he might have emphasized more strongly the role of the puppeteer to demonstrate what man can produce through knowledge. But, Kleist would constantly remind us, this is an artistic construction, not derived from any natural or even supernatural laws of necessity, for the very ability to delight in nature and to see virtue in the activity of primitives is possible only through that sense of otherness that self-consciousness allows. Nor can the marionette, even the perfected puppet, be seen as the coterminous of the godhead. An object where no mind ever was cannot fittingly represent the locus of infinite knowledge. Kleist would not subscribe to the mere appearance of laws of necessity, the "well-regulated freedom" Rousseau speaks of in Emile, for it is based on deception. Self-consciousness, then, which entails an act of volition governing every action, constitutes authenticity for the individual. Such authentic existence would be defined out of existence by a programmed submission of the individual will to the communal. Even if such an act of submission were possible, Kleist sees that the problem would begin again. He writes in a letter to Wilhelmine dated August 1801:

> Man has an undeniable need to enlighten himself. Without enlightenment, he is not much more than an animal. A moral necessity compels him to the arts and sciences, even if no physical necessity would.

Kleist would not dispute the importance of the community as constitutive of individual identity; he would, however, insist that the tension between the individual and his relations to others is a necessary condition of our humanity and that to fabricate a construct which claims to resolve the tension would be

mere self-deception. Rousseau attempted to design a society which would provide a milieu in which feeling and reason could be incorporated and harmonized, so that, living in a state which the individual felt (through conditioning) to be in accordance with his "true" nature, happiness on earth was a genuine possibility. Thus despite his criticisms of society, Rousseau is still captivated by the 18th-century ideal of the possibility of a social order which reflected an organically unified and rationally ordered universe. For Kleist, the condition which makes us human forces us to define our activities in terms of their relation to the society; and the actions of men, though they always occur within a social context, may have a moral source outside common sense, the "communal sense." Thus "public opinion" cannot legitimately regulate behavior. Rather, human activity must constantly be interpreted with respect to our social structures, which, far from being designed according to any notion of natural necessity, are constructed artifices which attempt to codify our collective wisdom. There is, for Kleist, no privileged locus which legitimizes human action.

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NOTES

[1]All citations are my translations from Heinrich von Kleist, Werke und Brief in Vier Bänden, ed., Siegfried Streller et. al. (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag, 1978).

[2]Citations from Rousseau taken from Rousseau's Social Contract & Discourses, tr. G. D. H. Cole (London and New York: J. M. Dent & Sons and E. P. Dutton & Co.), 1943.

[3]Hanna Hellmann, "Über das Marionettentheater," 1911, reprinted in Kleists Aufsatz über das Marionettentheater Studien und Interpretationen. Jahresgabe der Heinrich-von-Kleist Gesellschaft 1965/66, ed. Walter Muller-Seidel. This collection published by the Kleist-Gesellschaft contains representative essays which are presented as an overview of the critical responses and interpretations of the marionette theater essay. No attempt is made, however, to criticize that critical tradition which the articles reflect. A notable departure from this tradition is the essay included in this collection by Walter Silz, who does address the traditional interpretations, but himself considers Kleist's essay a "feuilleton" ("Die Mythe von den Marionetten," pp. 99-111). It should be mentioned that an excellent summary of earlier Kleist criticism is contained in the work of Oskar Ritter von Xylander, Heinrich von Kleist und J. J. Rousseau, Berlin 1937. Dr. Xylander specifically comments on Hellmann's essay among others, but although he is in some instances critical of the scholarly tradition which addresss the issue of the relationship between the work of Rousseau and that of Kleist, I find in his own analysis of this question a continuation rather than a repudiation of the tradition I allude to in this paper. In this light, it is also interesting to note that a new collection of essays on Kleist, which includes one article specifically addressing the marionette theater essay, edited by Walter Hinderer and appearing in 1981, Kleists Dramen: Neue Interpretationen, Reclam, is still fraught with the old traditional conceptions of the relationship of Kleist to traditionally interpreted Rousseauism.

AESTHETIC AND ETHICAL SOCRATISM: A NIETZSCHEAN INTERPRETATION OF Rameau's Nephew

Susan J. James

Life, art and morals. The dialogue of Rameau's Nephew by Denis Diderot reflects the indissoluble link between these three human concerns. In order to examine the interrelation of the above, I have taken my frame of reference from ideas contained in a work which appeared about a century after Rameau's Nephew was completed. This work of 1871 is entitled The Birth of Tragedy: its author is the philosopher-classicist, Friedrich Nietzsche. What is relevant to Diderot in Nietzsche is not so much the latter's conception of the birth of tragedy, but instead, its death.

Although the topic of tragedy itself is not pertinent to the discussion here, what is important, and what bears directly on Diderot's work, is Nietzsche's analysis of the factors which brought about this historical phenomenon. Key concepts to be considered with regard to the dialogue are those of the Apollonian and Dionysian art impulses, the combination of which made possible the dramatic form known as tragedy. In addition, and even more important than these aesthetic influences, is the ethical phenomenon of Socrates and the influence of his life and thought on his Attic contemporaries and on humanistic thought in general. Brief remarks concerning these ideas preface my analysis of Rameau's Nephew, and hopefully this network of Nietzschean thought will serve to clarify positions taken in the dialogue by the interlocutors.

To begin with, the birth of tragedy grew out of the Dionysian music of the Greek chorus. Nietzsche's term "Dionysian" is meant to bring to mind the god Dionysos and thus describes states of mind and body associated with the wine god. Revelry, mystical sense of a loss of one's individuality, all forms of self-transcendence, are denoted in this term. Music was considered the most Dionysian of the arts, as through this medium the life of feeling shone through most transparently. In Section 8 of his work, Nietzsche describes the satyr chorus as the Urtragödie, the

totally Dionysian prototragedy which preceded the form of tragedy identified with Aeschylus and Sophocles, the latter only being made possible by the later introduction of the Apollonian element. Through the chorus, the votaries of Dionysos are transformed from Attic citizens into timeless, mythical satyrs and, through this transformation, each is able to see the wine-god. When this vision becomes an objectified image on the part of each satyr--the Apollonian function is that of individuating, objectifying and imaging--then the tragedy as dramatic form is complete, the figure of a hero emerges. "In the light of this insight we must understand Greek tragedy as the Dionysian chorus which ever anew discharges itself in an Apollonian world of images."[1]

Implicit in the Apollonian-Dionysian relation is the total dependence of the former on the latter. To sever the Apollonian image-forming faculty from its vital root-source in the Dionysian realm of feeling is to risk enervation of dramatic art. This is what developed later in the history of Greek drama with the appearance of the playwright Euripides, who was strongly influenced by the moral precepts of Socrates to turn away from the Dionysian current. This intellectual development, according to Nietzsche in Sections 11-15 of his work, was responsible for the death of tragedy as conceived by Aeschylus and Sophocles.

Referred to as "Socratism" by Nietzsche, the new Greek thought was derived from a predominantly ethical rather than aesthetic worldview. Euripides is considered by Nietzsche to be a representative of "aesthetic Socratism" in that he brought to his creative work a considerable fund of critical talent and a strong concern for mortality. The playwright's logical turn of mind allied him with the leading critic of his time, Socrates. Both thinkers found in the earlier tragic works of Aeschylus and Sophocles much that was objectionable, their critique centering around the fact that the content of the tragedies dealt with problems often incomprehensible to man's understanding. Euripides wished to scale down the monstrosities which pervaded the Aeschylean-Sophoclean theater in order to bring the problems they presented within the bounds of logical discourse. In this matter, the ethical problems of good and evil which, in Aeschylus, remain incommensurable, could be examined through dramatic dialectic. Life was passed through the sieve of human logic in Euripides' depiction, and consequently tragedy, which no longer reflected the irrational side of life, became a pronouncedly un-Dionysian art.

To separate this original and all-powerful Dionysian

> element from tragedy, and to reconstruct tragedy purely on the basis of an un-Dionysian art, morality, and world view--this is the tendency of Euripides as it now reveals itself to us in clear illumination.[2]

Socrates, of course, was the figure largely responsible for encouraging the trend toward the ascendancy of logic over intuition. From his guiding principle, "to be good everything must be conscious," was derived the aesthetic corollary, practiced by Euripides, that "to be beautiful everything must be conscious." The relationship between these two principles and between their proponents is the topic of Section 13.

In this section, Nietzsche identifies the characteristic which distinguishes the Socratic tendency: aversion to conducting one's life, or creating one's art, on the basis of instinct. The source of this aversion is Socrates' observation and examination of his fellow Athenians, the results of which never failed to reveal to him a gross lack of insight on their part, a lack which even extended to the area of their professions. Having perceived to his astonishment the extent to which all of life operates on blind, and thus often illusory, instinct, Socrates sets as his life's duty the task of enlightening his contemporaries, which effectively amounts to apprising them of their ignorance. This he accomplishes through the maieutic method of discourse. Teaching his countrymen, especially those of a younger, more impressionable age, to think for themselves was tantamount to cultural subversion. Unswervingly committed to his philosophical calling, Socrates ended up sacrificing his life, and his death, based as it was on his guiding principle of critical examination, offered to Athens and to the rest of the Western world a new ideal. The most visible conversion to Socratic principles was to be found in the person of Plato, who repudiated his calling as a poet to embrace dialectic in the capacity of poet-philosopher, as author of the Platonic Dialogues. Regarding Plato, Nietzsche remarks in Section 14:

> Here philosophic thought overgrows art and compels it to cling close to the trunk of dialectic. The Apollonian tendency has withdrawn into the cocoon of logical schematism; just as in the case of Euripides we noticed something analogous, as well as a transformation of the Dionysian into naturalistic affects. Socrates, the dialectical hero of the Platonic drama, reminds us of the kindred nature of the Euripidean hero who must defend his actions with arguments and counterarguments and in the

> process often risks the loss of our tragic pity; for who could mistake the optimistic element in the nature of dialectic, which celebrates a triumph with every conclusion and can breathe only in cool clarity and consciousness--the optimistic element which, having once penetrated tragedy, must gradually overgrow its Dionysian regions and impel it necessarily to self-destruction...[3]

In Section 15, Nietzsche takes up the question of what the phenomenon of Socrates signifies for Western culture in terms of science and art. In his view, Socrates introduced a profound metaphysical illusion into the fabric of Western thought:

> ...the unshakable faith that thought, using the thread of logic, can penetrate the deepest abysses of being, and that thought is capable not only of knowing being but even of correcting it. The sublime metaphysical illusion accompanies science as an instinct and leads science again and again to its limits at which it must turn into art--which is really the aim of this mechanism.[4]

We see here that the truths of science do not, and cannot, encompass all of reality. What cannot be rendered rational is relegated to art, which then becomes the complement of science, necessary to a total view of reality. Nietzsche ends his discussion of Socratism with the presentation of his concept of an "artistic Socrates," the model of the theoretical man who is cognizant of the limits of rational knowledge and, accordingly, practices some form of art--preferably music, as it is the most Dionysian artform and the one which often came to Socrates himself in dreams.

The concept of an artistic Socrates furnishes a springboard to discussion of Rameau's Nephew. In this dialogue, a similar figure emerges in the form of the narrator, the philosophe who refers to himself as "Moi" ("I"). Assuming the standpoint of ethical Socratism at the outset of the dialogue, Moi is initially blinded by his rationalist tendencies, such that he easily overlooks much of te irrational profundity in the morally perverse, thus despicable, Jean-François Rameau, nephew of the celebrated musician, Jean-Philippe Rameau. (As the narrator/philosophe refers to himself as "Moi," Rameau, the nephew, is referred to in the dialogue as "Lui" or "him.")

The factor contributing most to the philosophe's condemnation of the nephew, a gifted mime, is the latter's tendency to give his total consciousness over to vivid pantomime. The instinct which

governs this transformation of the mime's plastic features can justifiably be termed Dionysian and, as instinct, it is a source of both fascination and irritation to Moi, whose aesthetic Socratism recalls Euripides.

What Moi rejects in Lui is his ability to give himself over, body and soul, to states of self-transcendence. To relinquish (or to refuse altogether to take up) the quest for total consciousness as Rameau does, is morally irresponsible to Moi, who measures such matters in Socratic terms. Moi's censure does not stop at this point, however. He also condemns the mime for expending his energies in service to the moment, as opposed to creation of artworks that endure (such as those of Rameau's illustrious uncle). Though infused with a strong strain of the Dionysian, the nephew lacks the Apollonian capacity for image-making. For this lack, Rameau is hounded by the philosophe who sees clearly how the protean, pleasure-loving streak in the mime discourages the sustained concentration necessary to bring works of art into existence. Moi functions to goad Lui into admitting his moral turpitude and regretting (at least briefly) the lack of moral fiber in himself.

Conversely, Lui, for all his perversity and immoralism, functions to heighten Moi's consciousness as well. He does this through parading his own reprehensible character before the philosophe and making a strong case to him that the mime's role in society as a parasite is endemic to the system whereby society, and the human relationships within it, function. Though neither interlocutor is able to win over the other, still they part company at the end of the dialogue, each having had his perspective on life broadened by exposure to the other's viewpoint.

As the examination of specific passages from the text which follows will reveal, Moi's understanding of the human condition deepens beyond the limits of logic as Lui exposes the assumptions behind the view of a rational world order as a dubious set of premises, untenable in that they are at odds with empirical facts such as those comprising the world of Rameau. In his profound depravity and unsparing frankness, the parasite unmasks social relatons, revealing them all as involving varying degrees of parasitism, thus forcing Moi to take the position of either abandoning society or relinquishing his fastidious moral principles. Moi opts for the solitude of a Diogenes, a solution which is hardly satisfactory and difficult to recommend.

His aesthetic and ethical nature deepened by exposure to the

annoyingly affected, but also highly affecting Rameau, Moi becomes Nietzsche's ideal of the "artistic Socrates" as he comes to realize the value of the protean, elusive gestures of the gifted mime and thus desires to capture them in dialogue, to give them durable form, thus to preserve them, through the creation of a work of art.

The dialogue opens, after preliminary remarks by Moi, in the Café de la Regence in Paris. The philosophe frequents this spot on days when inclement weather forces him from his bench at the Palais-Royal to seek shelter from the rain. Occasionally, Moi encounters at the Cafe the nephew of the composer Jean-Philippe Rameau, whom he thus describes in his opening remarks:

> He is a fellow made up of insolence and cringing, of folly and good sense: notions of good and bad conduct must needs be strangely mixed up in his head, for he shows the good qualities of his nature without ostentation, and the bad ones without shame.[5]

Moi goes on to discuss the rapidly fluctuating vicissitudes of Rameau's fortune, a condition which is the result of the mime's tendency to live from day to day, according to circumstance. His happy-go-lucky attitude is clearly not what attracts the philosphe to this eccentric. What interests Moi about Rameau is the effect that a nonconforming personality such as his has on their fellowmen:

> A man of this sort joining a party is a grain of yeast, a ferment, which wakes in each something of his natural self. He stirs up and agitates, calls for blame or approval; he brings out the truth, reveals people's good qualities, unmasks the scoundrel; and your man of understanding listens, and sorts out his acquaintance. (p. 5)

Thus we see that Moi takes no personal interest in Rameau. At best, the philosopher's feelings toward the mime are ambivalent. Rameau is aware of this and, in his knowledge, he sums up succinctly Moi's attitude: "You have always taken an interest in me because I am a good fellow, whom you inwardly despise, but who amuses you." (p. 17)

Moi's ambivalence intensifies in its polarity of attraction and repulsion as he watches Rameau abandon himself to a pantomime depicting various situations in his precarious existence as a social parasite. In his commentary, Moi confesses that he is torn between laughter and indignation:

> I was confounded by so much sagacity and so much vileness, by ideas now so just and now so false; by such complete perversity of sentiment, by such utter turpitude, and by such very uncommon frankness. (p. 25)

Rameau himself reveals something of Moi's ambivalence: he is divided, at least unconsciously, in his attitude toward himself. This is demonstrated in the disparity between his rhetoric and his gestures. The former is a diatribe on the ultimate valuelessness of genius: "To rot under marble or to rot under the earth, is still to rot" (p. 26).

The above dictum forms the basis for his rationale that he is not the worse off for being mediocre. This conscious attitude, however, is undercut by his gestures, especially when he hits his forehead with clenched fist and bites his lip, both in frustration against his ordinariness. Undoubtedly, the main source of his frustration lies in the continual comparison he draws between his composer-uncle and himself. Thinking of music, he is drawn into another pantomimic mood, which he turns into a convincing portrayal of first, a violin solo, then a harpsichord performance. Through his virtuosity in rendering a predominantly audial artistic medium in strictly visual terms, Rameau manages to lessen (at least temporarily) his sense of failure as a creative artist. At the same time, his deeply impressive performance heightens the philosophe's interest in him and garners a modicum of respect for him from his critic.

Still on the topic of music, the mime and the philosopher discuss the latter's proposed education for his daughter. Rameau is critical of Moi's plan to exclude music from his child's upbringing. In his refusal to encourage cultivation of the arts, and in his emphasis on the study of ethics, Moi clearly reveals his Socratic turn of mind. His proposed overemphasis on the logical faculty would destroy the child's sense of balance and, for this reason, draws criticism from Lui as useless and even dangerous. The charge of inutility stems from Lui's realistic worldview which has grown out of seasoned, first-hand experience in the intrigues of society. To a toughened, street-minded sort such as Rameau, the philosophe's programme suffers from the

distorted vision and chimerical assumptions of a sheltered idealist. An incorrigible skeptic, Lui doubts finite man's ability to discover absolute truth, and in his sense of futility thus sees no value in even an attempt to discover it:

> The fact is that unless you know everything, you know nothing worth knowing: you do not know whither one thing leads, nor whence another has come; where this and that should find a place; which ought to be placed first, and which would be better second. Can one teach well without method? And method, whence comes method? (p. 33)

Rameau is thus critical of the goals of education. He himself has taught music, though by his own confession much of his instruction was pure feigning. He proceeds to discuss this in the context of other little hypocrisies that comprise the workings of society. Moi, however, is morally revolted by this, and with his stringent ethical standards, he views Lui's attitude as vile. Rameau, however, defends himself, saying that compared to the rest of society's members, he is no lower and thus, in a social context (if not an ethical one), he is not to be considered contemptible.

He exposes the discrepancy between the ethical standards avowed by a society and those actually practiced within it. He draws a parallel between language and morals: language is characterized by features of grammar common to all tongues, plus a number of idioms germane to the individual languages; in like fashion, there are general ethical standards which are accompanied by moral idioms. Implicit here is an attitude of moral relativism: relativity applies not just among different cultures but from individual to individual, profession to profession.

Attempting to describe this stance, Lui cannot think of the exact grammatical term on which he bases his analogy. He solicits the philosopher's aid in this and with humorous results. Moi's answer represents a play on words possible in French, but not in English: "Idiotismes." In its usage here, this term not only denotes a grammatical construction, but connotes as well a pathological state of mind. Moi's helpful reply reflects simultaneously his articulation of a concept and his condemnatory attitude toward the context in which the concept appears. In short, the philsospher plainly disapproves of the mime's moral relativism.

Continuing in his vein of relativism, Rameau points out that different professions have different standards; that honesty is not, in practice, valued highly at all by the ambitious, and that

the law. of the jungle prevails in human society as it does among the animals:

> In nature each species preys on the others; so all ranks devour one another in society. We do each other justice without any help from the law. (p. 39)

With this declaration, Rameau shows that he considers himself no more corrupt than his peers. He sees his questionable gains not as exploitation but within the framework of a symbiotic relation. Thus, because of the factor of reciprocity, he cannot be considered as a mere parasite. His virtue in all of this is not that he is above corruption, but that he views this tacit societal arrangement with a great deal more clarity than most.

In defense of his corruption, the nephew goes on to attack those who preach conscience as members of a social elite where such virtue is a privilege of the few. An incurable Magenmensch, Rameau points out to the philosopher that conscience and the practice of honesty which follows from it are luxury items, possessable only by those who are not beholden to others for their life-sustenance. The philosopher has clearly shown that he is in the minority in his thinking. Regarding this, Rameau says:

> People like you believe that happiness is the same thing for all—that is your notion. What a strange view! Your view supposes a certain romantic turn that is not ours, a particular taste, a singularity of mind, and you decorate this piece of oddity with the name of virtue, or call it philosophy; but are virtue and philosophy for every one? He has them who can, he keeps them who can. (p. 41)

With this, Moi is made to see that his philosophical ideal does not constitute a universal desideratum. Happiness can only be viewed relativistically, as its realization depends on particular tastes and different turns of mind. At this point, the two interlocutors plunge into a debate over the value of specific virtues.

Moi affirms the values of patriotism, loyalty to one's friends, civic duty, domestic responsibility and altruism in general. To Lui, however, these are just so many obstacles to personal happiness. To Moi's proposition that one must be good in order to be happy, Lui counters with the example of his recent dismissal from his patron's house on the grounds that he had been too candid in his opinions. Being good in this instance had not made Rameau a happier man.

The citation of this example is crucial, because it points up the perplexity of Rameau's position: why should he follow Moi's moral precepts when they are so alien to his own nature? He is a parasite and sycophant in a society which demands and rewards just such types. To act otherwise would be to denature his personality and complicate his life with unnecessary social problems. He is expected to live for the present and it is a felicitous aspect of his fortune that he is able to do this instinctively. He points out the realistic demands of the body for creature comforts, with which the philosopher has not dealt:

> We praise virtue, but we hate it; but we shun it; but it is as cold as ice; and in this world one must keep one's feet warm. (p. 46)

Rameau, in freely admitting his hedonism, cannot be charged with hypocrisy. But Moi cannot see what virtues Lui possesses: he is blinded by his revulsion of Rameau's seeming lack of all dignity. Though abject in comparison to a sublime ethical type such as the philsospher, he is nonetheless abject only at his <u>own</u> discretion; he refuses to demean himself unwillingly.

Increasingly fascinated by the parasite's singular sense of self-esteem, the philosopher does possess the magnanimity to laud Rameau on his occasional practice of candor. But the perverse Rameau disputes his judgement by admitting that he is only candid whenever the moment dictates frankness as the most opportune attitude to assume.

Continuing to disagree on the value of virtue, the interlocutors turn to discuss the plays of Molière. It is their rare consensus that these plays should be read for purposes of instruction. But the nature of that instruction differs and presents the point of disagreement.

For Moi, Molière offers instruction in one's moral development, in the love of virtue and hatred of vice. Lui, naturally, does not see the plays as a means to inculcate virtue; for him, they offer instruction in how to utilize vice for maximum effectiveness. His general rule:

> Keep the vices that are useful to you, but not their manner or appearance, which would make you ridiculous. To be safeguarded from such manner and appearance you must be acquainted with them. And these authors have made most excellent likenesses of them. (pp. 62-63)

Having stated the basis for his own code, Lui contends that he is not the only reader of Molière of this type. What distinguishes him from the rest is "...that I do by system and intelligence, by taking the true rational view, what others do by instinct" (p. 63). With this explanation of his method, Rameau has given the concept of rationality (as he has other concepts) a new, idiomatic twist of meaning.

The nephew's construction of other concepts is a source of irritation, and even horror, to the philosophe. Especially so is the unrestrained vitality and love of daring which he reveals as he relates the story of the Renegade of Avignon who sold out his Jewish master. The impulse to venerate whatever increases one's sense of well-being and self-expansion is an idea central to Nietzsche's philosophy as formulated in works following The Birth of Tragedy. The idea of "the will to power" became so central in the German philosopher's thought that he raised it to the level of a monism in his philosophy. The source of this concept can be traced back to the idea of the Dionysian, as discussed in the first section of this article. Nietzsche saw the Dionysian spirit as one which seeks out the terrors and difficulties of existence in an effort to discharge a sense of overflowing vitality.

In his love of daring, then, Rameau is akin to Nietzsche, though it ought to be noted here that he lacks the philosopher's quasi-moral imperative that individuals strive toward self-perfection, which for him implies self-overcoming. Unlike Moi, whose power of expression is limited by his Apollonian emphasis on rationality and intellectuality, the Dionysian Rameau is able to infuse ideas and images with life through his pantomimes.

So Moi and Lui square off in Apollonian-Dionysian terms. But the presence of the Socratic tendency returns in the person of Moi. The philosophe at this point steers the conversation from aesthetic to ethical concerns. Forced to confront his moral blindspot, the nephew offers, among excuses, the accursed "paternal molecule" which, he claims, rendered him, like his famous uncle, basically impervious to the ethical dimension of life.

Despite the critical attitude Moi reveals toward Lui's amoral stance, the philosophe continues to search for some filament of ethical sensitivity in the mime. He decides to confront him with questions regarding his duty to himself, since he does not seem able to elicit any response in an interpersonal context. He poses a very disturbing question to Rameau: Why, with all his exquisite mimetic talent, especially of musicians, has he not created

anything of substance? This question clearly strikes a deep vein of frustration in Lui, as it precipitates a new pantomime in which he pulls all sorts of grimaces, including the especially telling gesture of beating his fist against his forehead. He confesses to the philosophe that his writing requires a muse, a source of inspiration and an intellectual midwife, and that the low-life company he habitually keeps hardly encourages such creative endeavors.

Faced with the above situation to comment on, Moi sees no other alternative for Lui but that he choose the path of asceticism. This option, however, is undesirable to Rameau, as it implies a sacrifice his sensual nature is unwilling to make. The mime asks the philosopher how an artist is expected to nourish great thoughts and do fine work in the debilitating atmosphere of poverty? (Implicit in the mime's argument here is that want and its concomitant posturing occurs only in difference of degree.)

Having heard Lui's pessimistic conception of life, Moi is backed into an ethical corner such that his only recourse is to recommend total withdrawal from society. Lui counters this argument, citing basic needs such as food, clothing and sexual satisfaction, the fulfillment of which is dependent upon the cooperation of others.

The dialogue thus ends in a stalemate with agreement that Rameau's nature is incorrigible in its amorality. The interlocutors part with Rameau's flippant comment "He laughs best who laughs last." For the philosopher of aesthetic Socratism and the Dionysian mime, there is ultimately no resolution.

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NOTES

[1]Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner, trans., Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), pp. 64-65.

[2]Nietzsche, p. 81.

[3]Nietzsche, p. 91.

[4]Nietzsche, p. 95.

[5]Denis Diderot, Rameau's Nephew and Other Works, trans., Mrs. Wilfrid Jackson (London: Chapman and Hall Ltd., 1926), pp. 3-4. All further references to this work appear in the text.

WOMEN PRODUCING ART

Chair: Sandra Shattuck, Program in Comparative Literature, U.T. Austin. Participants: Jane Creighton, poet, New York; Aurora Levins Morales, writer, Berkeley; Rita Starpattern, Director of Women and Their Work, Austin; Kay Turner, Program in Folklore, U.T. Austin.

The following is an edited transcript of the workshop--Sandy Shattuck, ed.

Sandy: The idea for this panel came from some work I did with an article called "On the Question: Is There a 'Feminine' Aesthetic?" written by Silvia Bovenschen.[1] So I thought I would call the panel, "Feminist Analyses of the Question, Is there a Female Aesthetic?" When I spoke to one of the participants, who shall not remain unnamed, since she deserves the credit for the title change, Aurora said, "No one's going to come if you name it that." I think she was right on two accounts. Not only was the name a bit obstreperous, but I think what concerns us here is not so much the question of an absolute female aesthetic out there waiting to be found, but as feminists, perhaps we should be asking why it is that the woman artist makes thirty-nine cents to the male artist dollar. How does that come about? How can we change that? And since we are also in the business of interpreting art, how are we going to work with cultural images to change the presentation of women in society? The women who are here with us today are all practicing artists. Kay Turner will speak first, then Rita Starpattern, Jane Creighton, and finally Aurora Levins Morales.

Kay: I want to start out today by giving you some history of my involvement as a feminist in women's arts and then move on to some larger issues. In 1974, a friend and I went to Mexico to trace the biographical history of the moon goddess, who was worshipped by the Mayans during the classic era. We felt we needed to address the feminist issues which had come out of more pragmatic matters as artists by looking into the problem of production, the way in which images come into societies. We looked at historical production imagery in southern Mexico and northern Guatemala to

see what a culture was like at a time when there was a proliferation of women's images that were intrinsic to the culture. We came back with a strong notion that there could be no feminist revolution in this country without a revitalization and a retrenchment of image production. In other words, a very important aspect of feminism had to be the production of images which would empower women's lives, which would reflect women's lives, which would be more visible to the public. The upshot of it was that we started a journal in 1975 called Lady-Unique-Inclination-of-the-Night, named after this particular moon goddess we were researching. This is one of about 200 nominations that were left at the time of the conquest in one of three books that were not destroyed. This is a picture from one of the codices showing her going into the waning of the moon, which is what the inclination of the night means. Our particular intention in the journal was to address the development, history and reinterpretation of feminine imagery and to see what kind of political impact that could and should have.

In bringing some of this to you today, I would like to work off of Adrienne Rich's notion that she talks about in an essay she did in 1978 on feminism, racism, and gynephobia.[2] She quotes from Lillian Smith who said: "Freud said once that woman is not well acculturated; she is, he stressed, retarded as a civilized person. I think what he mistook for her lack of civilization is woman's lack of loyalty to civilization." She goes on to address the idea of disloyalty to civilization. I think it's an interesting way for us to look at feminists' work in the production of images and art in the past ten years, as being a type of disloyalty. I want to offer criticism of this to you as well. I think that what we've done very well is come together in institutions like the Women's Building in Los Angeles and the Feminist Art Institute in New York. In small groups across the country, artists very concerned with the production of a new aesthetic of women's imagery have been working very hard for a number of years now to create exciting images. What we have not done very well is to bring these images out into the public realm. We still see, almost without exception, images of women in the greater culture which show us to be loyal to the patriarchy, still as homemakers, still as sexual objects. The sort of radical imagery which women have been developing covertly as feminists has not had very much impact at all in the larger culture. I would refer you to the most recent issue of Art Forum, the February issue, which addresses this idea in a larger sense of the problem of artistic

images coming into culture. This issue refers to images coming out of, for example, rock-and-roll album covers, electronic games such as pinball machines and Pacman, advertising and the pop art movement. These are the images which have been most visible to the public eye. That we, as feminists, haven't been able to bring certain of our issues out into the public realm very well has to do with several things. One, for example, is that among women artists a high premium is placed on collaboration, on making images that are accessible to women by sharing those images back and forth. This collaboration has been done within the bounds of a precious intimacy which we uphold but which also gets us into the problem of sharing signs with each other in a very closed environment.

I want to give you an example of this, appearing in the next issue of our journal, which will focus on women's altars and shrines.[3] I'd like to show you the work of Amelia Etlinger, a collage artist who lives in New York State. She makes what she calls concrete poems, which are altar-like in their presentation. She gathers together found materials and fabric and does message writing on them. She then sends these to another woman in California, the art critic, whom many of you may know, Gloria Orenstein. Gloria then takes these poems out of their packaging and remakes them in order to place them in her living space. I've then been collaborating with them in interpreting this material as having an altar-like quality in that they communicate to each other through these vital images. These women have little verbal communication; they've never met each other, but this collaboration has been going on for a year and a half purely in the sharing of these signs. It's a wonderful thing, but the problem with it is that it is a very intimate sharing of the development of a sign language suggestive of the meaning and power of the feminine, which is to a large extent closed off; it's very covert. That's the major problem I see in the production of women's imagery. I think that the next advance in this in developing feminism would be to find ways to bring the collaborative process out into the public realm more in some way.

Question: Why do you call them altars?

Kay: I do my Ph.D. work on Mexican American women's altars. We're

looking at these concrete poem pieces as altars because the altar is one of the most profound art forms which functions as a site where communication can take place. Home altars, the altars that are made by traditional women, usually incorporate found materials at home--photographs of the family, icons which are important to establishing good relationships in the family and that kind of thing--and these concrete poems all have that quality as well as the communicative aspect.

Rita: I wanted to throw out a comment about what Kay just said and then maybe jump wildly over to something else, but I was going to suggest that it seems to me that the culture at this point is receptive to a certain kind of imagery and very antagonistic towards the type of female imagery that you're proposing, which would make all the difference between an image or an idea that accelerates into the general population. I'll begin by saying that I work with a non-profit organization based here in town that is called Women and Their Work. I became involved with the organization as one of the founders because I am a practicing visual artist. However, because I have been involved in this organization that has existed now for five years, I feel sometimes like I am really a person who is more in tune with small non-profit organizations, who does a lot of community organizing, who sometimes has a very myopic view and is more interested in filling out quarterly reports to the federal government having to do with taxes, insurance and liabilities, than I am a person involved with the arts. Nevertheless, having said this I want to share with you my very strong feeling about the importance of such organizations. The viability of putting together an organization that can act for itself, speak for itself and that does, throughout all the bureaucratic problems, speak for something.

As to the birth of the organization: three women were sitting around--one poet, one involved in video work, and myself with background in painting--having a drink. We said, wouldn't it be interesting if we had a festival here in Austin involving women in all the arts. It was a fatal drink. We took this idea to Lawrence Miller, the director of Laguna Gloria, and he immediately said, you're absolutely right, we will be glad to encourage you; and so we became a project of the museum. The three of us worked at this idea for eighteen months, and as we saw the idea become more public, one of the things we did--and this refers back to organizational development ploys--we formed an advisory committee in which various women in the city from different arts areas were

invited to participate in the planning of this project. So, a project that was an idea that started with three people over a drink and was taken to someone else and got a pat on the shoulder, then became the property of a larger group of people. Not that it was such a special and rare idea, but that many people were waiting to be organized and waiting to be invited. During this period it was like taking a tutorial on how to coordinate a conference and develop art exhibitions; we had more than 20 nationally known and central Texas women from different arts disciplines involved in the project. It was grueling and I thought I was going to die, but when it was all over I looked around and saw that there were so many women involved. I knew we were not a passing fantasy, we were not a fad; we're not the sort of project that can come along during one six-week period and effectively change attitudes within the community, within the state and also provide professional opportunities for women and share information. This is the sort of thing that is a long-term effort, that really involves an extensive commitment. Thus Women and Their Work as an independent organization was formed.

Because of my involvement with an organization, I tend to look at art productions within an environment and within an atmosphere. I'm interested in the sociology of art. There are all kinds of hierarchies in the art world. There are not only directors of museums but there are different levels of status at the museums, and the museums have different status than the art centers, and the art centers have an entirely different status than the community center. Artists are very sensitive, as low status people. With women earning thirty-nine cents to every male artist dollar and every male artist earning a medium income of about $12,500, we're very sensitive about our status, since we don't get paid well. You want the opportunity to produce your work and yet at the same time you want the opportunity to avoid the type of structures that exist in the museum world and the performance world, the differences between going to one of the main cities and participating in regionals. I think that within a woman's serious commitment and professional entry into the art world, you have to be aware of the sociological environment within which you operate that is transmitted to you from your education and that is continually enhanced or supported by the dominant art writing around you. Women and Their Work has been an attempt to provide support and a focus for women at different levels of professional activity, to provide a place of sharing and learning, and also to present multi-disciplinary activities in which the visual artist

meets the dancer, the dancer meets the writer. Sometimes I'm very critical of how significantly this works in depth. Nevertheless, I look around locally and I see writers showing up and expressing interest in the activitis of the visual artist, I see the visual artist also doing that to a certain degree. I'm personally more interested in shows in which artists are involved from the very beginning in the theme or concept of the exhibit as well as how their work will then be brought forth to the public. I think, especially concerning women, that there is not a good or bad aesthetic that is going to rise to the top. I don't think that there are wonderful creative activities that by their own merit are eventually seen by all and valued for what they are. I don't believe that exists. I think that there's an active atmosphere that pushes some things to the fore, that it is important for artists and cultural workers to realize this and to be very active in presenting their work.

Question: You mean specifically that there is a myth that time will tell us what is great art?

Rita: Yes. And even if that were the case, what good does it do me? Let me just summarize. I think it is important for artists to organize as professional creative producers, to organize across disciplines, and to push for the vitality and the importance of their images, their writing, their cultural response in order to recreate the culture that we live in.

Jane: What I'd like to talk about is in relation to the atmosphere that Rita's talking about, in which work gets created. I'd like us to think about certain questions of feminist criticism that are intrinsic to women who are producing art within a community. I think that criticism should have an active relationship to the writers. Criticism creates an atmosphere in which work can be understood and thought about; I think that this type of interchange is just developing in feminism. The way that I want to talk about that specifically is to trace my own development as a writer and editor and then see how some of those issues come up.

I began writing about ten years ago, and in 1973 decided to start a poetry magazine which was called Sailing the Road Clear,[4] which I published for five years. That poetry magazine and the

aesthetic that was designed to do it came out of my involvement, my training as a kind of post-Black Mountain poet. Those were the people that I read and that was where my ways of looking at the world were poetically defined. I went on to produce a magazine that was my idea of a pure forum for poetry in which there would be no editorial comment. It was to consist of a collection of writers that I admire, that I could just put out there and let their poems speak for themselves. After those five years it became clear to me that I was working at a losing venture. First of all, I had no business sense of how to distribute a poetry magazine through a culture that wasn't really much interested in reading poetry anyway, and that certain kinds of political and content issues were coming up that had to do with my relationship with feminism. Publishing women and men who were not specifically involved with political concerns was troubling my sense of aesthetic. I wanted to see if I could make a passage from a very aesthetic point of view to a political one, which is something that I think all women artists are trying to do basically. My way of doing that was to become involved in Out & Out Books in 1980, which published Ceres in an Open Field.[5] I went on to work as a co-editor/type-setter for the press. The press began in 1975 with a group of women, lesbian feminists, who were working and writing poetry together and decided that they wanted to publish their own work since the political content of their work was making it impossible for them to consider publishing their work elsewhere. Out & Out Books still exists, but we have suspended publishing at this point, because everyone who's working on the press is also writing and working, and we feel we can't continue in the editorial capacity. That work came out of a very identified community in 1975; women were working very hard in strong and close relatioship to each other and against a world that was basically informing separation among them. I think that that's changed a bit in 1980, '81, and '82; women are producing different kinds of work and this notion of a unified movement is not necessarily going along with various voices inside the community. A movement of women's small presses has predominantly involved white feminists with invitations to women of color to have their work published in those presses. This is something that has been overturned in the last couple of years, with presses like Persephone Press, publisher of This Bridge Called My Back, which Aurora's been talking about and the Kitchen Table Press.[6] That's a beginning of an understanding of diversity that goes against what white feminists have been establishing for themselves, which is a

sense of conformity that's been occurring in presses almost in spite of ourselves, I would say. Part of the way that happens is that a good critical response hasn't been developed to deal with work as it comes. The response has been primarily content-oriented as to what is good content and what is not. This is a response that's provoked by audiences who are very interested in identifying with the work that they hear and that's a basic way of understanding work, as opposed to listening to work and seeing how it provokes certain kinds of thinking. There's a sense of, "I want to see myself in that work," that's becoming a limitation on artists at this point. I'm really speaking specifically about poetry, but I think that this must apply in other disciplines as well.

This focuses in very specifically for me in that I just got a review of Ceres in an Open Field in the American Book Review. One of the criticisms of the book, or really of Out & Out Books for publishing Ceres, was that usually Out & Out Books publishes more lively ventures, overtly feminist poetry. This was the end line on that book, that it was not overtly feminist. Whatever that means is really a problem in terms of critical thinking. It brings up an image of what overt feminism should be, and I don't think it's an image that anyone should be carrying around in their heads with such solidity as this reviewer approached. It's not an avenue into talking about either the form or the content of the book as a unified situation. It brings up an image that poetry has a paraphrasable content that directs itself to a specific political end, and I think the problem with that is that women are having so many diverse experiences and ways of interpreting those experiences that this should be opening up in literary criticism in relation to feminism, as opposed to attaching those kinds of labels which are not thought out in their assumptions.

About the same time of this review, Jan Clausen, a lesbian feminist in New York (she is also a poet, fiction writer and co-editor of Conditions) published a critical inquiry into the movement of feminist poets.[7] Her article is about what it means to be writing in a community that has certain kinds of expectations and questions and how writers should be responding to them. She brings up three assumptions about what feminist poetry should be. The first is that feminist poetry is accessible, meaning it's accessible to certain people who hear it. This is probably a basic good notion for all literature, but what it comes to mean after a while is that it is successful, because "I had this experience, you're talking about my experience, and that's the

only way I can understand it if I absolutely and/or physically relate to this." So feminist poetry is accessible. "Feminist poetry is 'about' specific subject-matter: oppression, woman-identification, identity. It avoids both traditional forms and distancing techniques such as persona and third-person narration. It is a statement of personal experience or feeling, with the poet a first-person presence in the poem;" this is a difficult assumption if you're trying to work around certain ideas of how people think and what they do. The third assumption is, "Feminist poetry is a collective product or process; the individual ego plays a minimal role in its creation." In my sense of things, these assumptions are reductive, they reduce the possibility of thought and accessibility by an effort to eliminate difference. I think this happens in feminist criticism; it's not inherent in feminism. It's possibly a problem in political movements, it's also a taking on of the general culture's sense of eliminating difference among us so that we can't, in our various ways, be provocative. I think this is something that feminists have to think about when they're demanding a unity that doesn't allow difference.

Aurora: What I want to talk about is a movement of multi-media performance that I've been involved with in different ways. My own specific involvement has been through living in a cultural center in Berkeley, where we developed complex productions that involved fifty to one hundred people. Starting from a group of Chilean musicians presenting songs, adding translations of the first verse of each song, adding a historical context, putting in poetry, adding more narration, putting in a dance because a dancer happened to wander by, adding slides and so assembling a multi-media presentation, the power of which we didn't even realize until we were already well into it. The first production was about shanty towns in Latin America. The narration was actually boring, a lot of statistics and very dry. But we had incredibly moving slides going along with it. There were pictures of children living in Brazilian shanty towns; they had a collage series of images of slums from around the world, occasional bits of first person narrative about those kinds of experiences; and suddenly I discovered that people who had been doing specific political work around these issues for years were sitting there crying because the statistics had never gotten through to them the way the images were. So we began to think how to use that, to not have the message be so completely split between a verbal message

that was hitting the head and visual message that was hitting the gut. We developed a whole style of intense collaboration. We were coordinating so many people and on such an amateur level, because it was people who worked full-time and rehearsed just once a week; if we were lucky there was one full dress rehearsal before the performance and most people didn't meet each other until opening night. We developed a versatile art form that we used for three or four years in the Bay Area. With that many people involved and all the managers, it happened that the star of a certain scene might get bored and leave, the scene would have to be rewritten overnight, moved around.

What I think is most exciting about that kind of work is that I've been noticing that that kind of multi-media collaboration has been a bridge in the women's movement, specifically among Third World women. It seems to be a way of breaking down the formality of artistic constraints; it's not just collaboration, different artists coming together and doing something on the same stage, but it is creating a form that is really a blending of forms. Another example is the Wallflower Dance Collective, with whom I've been doing some work. They started out as a modern dance group and became interested in sign language as a way of combining words and movement, incorporated that into their dance, and now recite poetry, sign it and dance it at the same time. They also began collaborating with the Chilean group, so that they were doing multi-cultural material and were juggling more and more things, but very effectively. I think part of the reason that this is happening more, specifically in the Third World women's movement, is that it has to do with the reclaiming of traditional art forms, with a reclaiming of oral traditions, the history of poetry. If you go far enough back, the word is between poetry, theatre, dance, magic, ritual, storytelling. In an attempt to find those cultural roots, we're discovering new ways of breaking down disciplinary restrictions. I think <u>For Colored Girls</u>, Ntozake Shange's play, was really the first piece that had a mass impact in the women's movement, and certainly on everybody I know who's doing that kind of work. I could give twenty more examples, but I think I'll stop there and wait for questions.

<u>Question</u>: As somebody who does sometimes read works by women but who is not a feminist critic, I wonder whether publications that present poetry as feminist poetry aren't begging a sort of question that's a bad question as far as poetry, perhaps good as

far as the politics of feminism is concerned, but distracts from questions about the value of the poems themselves. Is there a way around this bad criticism that comes from the political boundaries or outline that the publications seem to draw?

Jane: I think it's a very complicated issue first of all, and I think it goes back to some extent to the question of how political groups are identified as fixed entities. I think that feminists, Third World or women of color are all identified as one group. There's an image in the general culture about what those groups represent and I think the effort to publish under something that's considered within the range of feminist experience is to understand, first of all, that feminism is not a fixity, it's a movement and it's a process and it's an activity of a wide range of individuals. I think that's a problem of the perception of a political movement, in the first place, both for feminists and largely for the outside culture which has put feminists into this very difficult corner of acting out a stereotype of political thinking, and that's something that confuses all of us. We should think about these movements in terms of diversity and not in fixity of thinking.

There is also a problem in assuming that so-called sraight presses somehow are not political. I know that there is a poetry world that's predominantly made up of men and that has, in fact, absolutely been altered by the presence of feminist publishing. I felt that I was being very much constricted by that world of male poets, although that is where a lot of my aesthetic sympathies and understanding lie; that continues to be something of a hard transformation for me today, because I have been experiencing both in my own thinking and in the thinking of my peers, in a sense, a constriction of thinking on the part of segregated feminism. But I think what's interesting is to bring that out into the open and see how it works and not assume that somehow there is just one pure place where poetry gets published.

Aurora: I think the restrictiveness within the feminist movement is something that is part of the process of embattled groups. One of the steps in creating an environment of common experience, of defining an experience as legitimate within that group, of creating a community out of a bunch of split up and embattled

people who are suffering some kind of common mistreatment in society is denying the difference, focusing on the commonality. And it gets to a point where this no longer is a positive unifying force, but becomes dangerous to the group itself. The denial of differences starts getting deeper and deeper. One of the reasons why This Bridge is controversial within the Third World community is that it's talking about differences within Third World communities. Within the feminist community, This Bridge is forcing people with holds on that community to deal with issues of race and class. And the Third World communities are saying feminism has to be talked about, we can't just say, "We've all got to stick together until racism is over, then settle their differences."

Question: How much self-criticism is built into the movement? I'm saying this coming from a tradition in which we've had at one stage to struggle against an outside force--the artist from a colonial experience. At one point, the critical stance of the art was directed outside. But in the process of fighting the outside forces, perhaps we forgot to take a look at ourselves.

Aurora: I think that's been a big part of the process of the birth of the Third World feminist literary movement within the feminist movement. For a long time, women of color within the feminist movement were directing a lot of energy outward toward the problems of racism in the white women's movement. One of the interesting things in the process of This Bridge is that it started out of a confrontation at the Feminist Writer's Guild in the Bay Area, which is a very white literary middle class conference; it began as a confrontation until it became a dialogue among women of color. In being part of an embattled group, there is a real danger in focusing too much outward in a defensive posture and not exploring the resources within.

NOTES

[1]Silvia Bovenschen, "Über die Frage: gibt es eine 'weibliche' Ästhetik?" Ästhetik und Kommunikation, 1976; "Is There a Feminine Aesthetic?" trans., Beth Weckmueller, New German Critique, 1977.

[2]Adrienne Rich, "'Disloyal to Civilization': Feminism, Racism, and Gynephobia," Chrysalis: A Magazine of Women's Culture, No. 7, 1979 and in On Lies, Secrets, and Silences (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1979).

[3]Lady-Unique-Inclination-of-the-Night cycle 6; for issues of this journal or any further information, contact Kay Turner, Folklore Department, SSB 3.106, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712.

[4]For issues of Sailing the Road Clear, contact Jane Creighton, 111 Court St., Brooklyn, NY 11201.

[5]Jane Creighton, Ceres in an Open Field (New York: Out & Out Books, 1980).

[6]This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color, eds. Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua (New York: Persephone Press, 1981). Persephone Press is no longer publishing. This Bridge may be distributed by Kitchen Table, Women of Color Press, Box 592 Van Brunt Station, Brooklyn, NY 11215. Out & Out Books, 476 Second Street, Brooklyn, NY 11215.

[7]Conditions, P. O. Box 56, Van Brunt Station, Brooklyn, NY 11215. Jan Clausen, A Movement of Poets: Thoughts on Poetry and Feminism (New York: Long Haul Press, 1982); now distributed by The Crossing Press, Trumansburg, NY 14886.

EPIC AND NOVEL IN THE THEORY OF GEORG LUKACS AND MIKHAIL BAKHTIN

Les Smith

Both Georg Lukacs and Mikhail Bakhtin wrote pieces entitled "The Theory of the Novel," the former as a chapter for his book, The Theory of the Novel, and the latter as an independent essay.[1] Like other writers on the novel, they conceive the novel as somehow connected with the epic, but they differ as to the nature of the relationship. On the one hand, Bakhtin perceives the novel to be at odds with the epic, as it is with all other genres, and so sees repugnance rather than attraction between them. On the other hand, Lukacs considers the two genres to be at peace with each other; in fact, he senses a kind of idyllic longing of the novel for its predecessor. Both theorists tend to personify the novel, but attribute to it different personalities--one a nostalgic soul, the other a voracious bully. Appropriately, Bakhtin couches his discussion in a sociological kind of language, while Lukacs uses a terminology which is reminiscent of nineteenth century philosophy.

From the outset of his investigation, Lukacs gives priority to the way men think over the way they create. On the first page he defines philosophy as "that which determines the form and supplies the content of literary creation."[2] The different developments that occur in literature, the emerging distinctions between genres, are consequences of what occurs in the worldview of man. The particular art forms of ancient times existed as they alone could satisfy the demands made by a given culture's unique thought processes. They evolved as a natural product of the way men perceived reality; art was a "becoming conscious." Hence, individuals did not think of deriving new forms. But in any event it would have been impossible for them to create differently anyway.

In the age of the epic, according to Lukacs, men perceived reality as a totality. There were as yet no insurmountable divisions between various aspects of existence, such as spirit and

matter, or idea and form. Despite the magnitude and complexity of the universe, the soul was "at home" everywhere. As Lukacs says, "there [was] not yet any interiority, for there [was] not yet any exterior, any 'otherness' for the soul" (p. 30). Every part of reality was imbued with the whole, so that any particular physical action always reflected the metaphysical. There was no absolute duality between life and essence because meaning was omnipresent. The epic form, concerned as it was with great deeds and adventure, was a formal way of representing the unity of life and essence.

As time passed, however, the immanence of meaning was lost forever as essence withdrew from life and necessarily ascended to a higher level. It became "true reality," while life became "not-being." The mind no longer perceived things as a totality, and the soul was no longer at home in the universe. The soul, isolated from its surroundings, turned inward to find true substance, but all that it found as it became more introspective was a greater chasm, which alienated it from the tangible world. Life, at one time an adventure imbued with meaning, has ever since been devoid of it. Man's search for meaning became the new problem.

The search is hopeless, however, because the chasm between thought and action is too great. Man cannot assume a correspondence between what he does and what he believes. Consequently, the work of his hands is always incomplete. His art embodies the search for meaning and a home in the universe, and the novel, the substitutive form that arose in conjunction with this change in worldview, is the archtypal form for expressing his anxiety.

The alteration of worldview, however, did not completely eradicate epic values from contemporary consciousness. According to Lukacs, epic values bleed over into the new age so that there is a sense in which totality still exists. It remains as man's desideratum. As such, the novel aspires to recover epic totality but fails. The hero's futile search for his place in the universe reflects this problem. The novel does succeed, nonetheless, in retaining some semblance of totality in an abstract and synthetic way. It can never recapture the complete harmony of the epic; this much is precluded by the rupture of worldview. But the novel can find a structural balance which approximates that of the epic. Although the novel can be balanced in different senses, it must ultimately address the meaninglessness of the outer world and the subjectivity of the inner one.

Lukacs calls the novel the "art-form of virile maturity." He

suggests that while the author recognizes the imperfection of the novel's world and an insistent demand that it be perfected, he also recognizes the futility of trying to meet this demand--thus his resignation. This is what Lukacs calls the irony of the novel: "the profound hopelessness of the struggle but also....the still more hopelessness of its abandonment" (p. 86). The author tries to achieve a balance between an active search for an ideal and a passive understanding of the fruitlessness of seeking, both of which derive from and concur with his present conception of reality.

The novel must also find a balance that prevents it from yielding to the implicit danger of a "bad infinity," in other words an infinite formlessness, because of its heroes' endless search. The novel must therefore contain elements which complete its form. If a given protagonist is negative (in other words grotesque, comic, and so forth), then the novel must be counterbalanced by some positive in order to achieve formal "roundedness." Cervantes accomplished this by "blending the sublime with the humorous" (p. 107). Such a balancing secures an immanence of meaning. Balzac's characters feel an intensely "inadequate relation to the outside world" (p. 108), but this is matched by the purely human character of the outside world, where everyone has "similar mental structures." This results in an "endless series of incidents in which souls are fatally at cross-purposes with one another." This concentration of events and characters, which is characteristic of Balzac's work, ensures some nuance of totality.

Bakhtin sees in the epic a completeness (or totality) which is similar to the one Lukacs sees (although Bakhtin's sense of totality differs from that of Lukacs in that the latter uses it in reference to reality in general, while the former uses it in a more formalistic way, referring to reality as concerned with the genre itself.) He says, "the structure of the whole is repeated in each part, and each part is complete and circular like the whole" (p. 31). This innate completeness in the epic precludes the need for the kind of formal completeness required of the novel (in other words, with regard to "plot-line"). The two theories diverge, however, in their conceptions of the source of totality.

As already suggested, Lukacs assumes that the elements of the epic are identical with those of the common individual's mentality. Lukacs conceives the Greek world as being homogeneous, the population conveniently molded to a particular type--"the Greek." But central to Bakhtin's theory is the isolation of epic

past from contemporary reality. As an art form the epic depends on an "absolute epic distance" which separates the epic world from contemporary reality. Bakhtin says, "the formally constitutive feature of the epic as a genre is...the transferral of a represented world into the past, and the degree to which this world participates in the past" (p. 13). The epic world does not correspond to reality, but is rather an artificial creation that is attributed to the past. The distance inherent in the epic separates the singer and his audience from the "utterly different and inaccessible time-and-value plane" (p. 14) of the heroes, whose world is "inaccessible to personal experience" (p. 16). Epic is always concerned with an "absolute past"--a "world of 'beginnings' and 'peak times' in the national history, a world of fathers and founders of families, a world of 'firsts' and 'bests'" (p. 13), which may or may not have been historical.

Bakhtin says that the source of the epic is not a particular cultural worldview, but a "national tradition." The epic is itself a genre, complete in form, which is handed down through generations. (Bakhtin is not interested in the question of its origin.) It is complete because its subject, the absolute past, is completely "walled off" from the time of the singer and listener. It is "absolute and complete" (p. 16). Its privileged communication even requires a particular mode of reception from the listener. It "does not permit an individual, personal point of view or evaluation" (p. 16).

The empirical individual plays a more vital role in epic processes according to Lukacs. No special point of view is required for understanding the epic; no adjustment on the part of the listener is necessary. The epic speaks his language and fits into his everyday experience. The hero himself is empirical ("the living epic man of historical reality" [p. 48]). Lukacs recognizes a certain possible distance between the hero and the typical human, but the two are still just "two instances of the empirical." There is an "indestructible bond" between the epic and "reality as it is" (p. 47). Lukacs explicitly states:

> For the epic, the world at any given moment is an ultimate principle; it is empirical at its deepest, most decisive, all-determining transcendental base; it can sometimes accelerate the rhythm of life, can carry something that was hidden or neglected to a utopian end which was always immanent within it, but it can never, while remaining epic, transcend the breadth and depth, the rounded, sensual, richly ordered nature of life as historically given. (p. 46)

The ancient writers drew their material from empirical reality without ever needing to transcend it.

Lukacs calls the epic hero the "empirical I," who is never an individual in the sense of being a personality, because at the time there was no interiority. There were no fragments, no parts of reality broken off from the complete and rounded epic cosmos. But this idea leads to some dubious consequences. It ignores the psychological aspects of man's nature, as if he existed without an independent will. Although Lukacs would likely counter that psychology as we know it did not exist then, that there were no "depths," we wonder what justifies the particular psychological conception that he projects back upon ancient man (in other words, his all-inclusive notion of "totality"). Much of his theory has the effect of leveling out distinctions in reality.

According to Bakhtin, there never was a totality in Lukacs' sense of the word. He denies the existence of a monolithic epic consciousness; a gap always stretched out between epic and reality. This leaves Bakhtin, however, with the need of accounting for the novel's inherited need for completeness (which is, after all, a major focus in Lukacs' theory.) He says:

> The absence of internal conclusiveness and exhaustiveness creates a sharp increase in demands for an external and formal completeness and exhaustiveness, especially in regard to plot-line. (p. 31)

The denial of any epic consciousness leaves room in Bakhtin's theory for explanation of why demands for completeness should be felt in the first place, but then, as a theorist who is to some extent in the formalist lineage, Bakhtin does not concern himself with ontological questions of genre.

According to both theories, a return to the epic is impossible, although Lukacs sees a potential birth of a consciousness similar to it prefigured in Dostoevsky's work. Perhaps the most significant distinction between Lukacs and Bakhtin is that Lukacs sees the novel as perpetually trying to return to the epic, while Bakhtin esteems the novel precisely because it contradicts the epic. He says the novel is directed towards the future, since it is so intimately concerned with the present, which continually unfolds toward the future. It exists as a genre because of various changes in the world which have liberated man from the epic mentality (including the birth of a polyglot society), and the novel, in turn, liberates other genres. The novel arose from forces that parody epic thought. Cultural laughter, for example,

eliminated the valorization of the absolute past by ridiculing its piety. Laughter led to the "familiarization of the image of man" (p. 35), and freed man to consider his own identity within reality. It allowed him to investigate freely realms that were once sacred. Unlike Lukacs' conception, the displacement of epic leads to the discovery of empirical reality.

Finally, an interesting and substantial difference between Lukacs and Bakhtin is that they perceive opposite directions in the general development of culture. On the one hand, Lukacs contends that in the age of the epic life was unity, and that only later, after the birth of tragedy and philosophy, was there any disparity between the realm of ideas and the material world. On the other hand, Bakhtin holds that the age of the epic was dualistic, that there were two hierarchically fixed orders in life and discourse: epic ideal and common life. But after progressive revolutionary developments in which the common man broke up the rigid limits within discourse, reality became more unified. Sacred words were brought down to earth to compete equally with other words.

Perhaps the differences between the two theories can be explained by where the two begin. Lukacs begins with historico-philosophical concerns, and to a large extent subordinates questions of genre and form to ontology. Bakhtin's foundation is primarily literary; he is concerned with the emergence and conflict of genres, which reflects his place in the formalist heritage. If the appropriate topos for Lukacs' conception might be a pastoral setting, Bakhtin's might be a combat zone.

To what, then, does this comparison of the two theorists lead? Well, it certainly does not conduce to a hasty opting for one point of view over the other, especially since our purpose has only been to explicate both theories by contrasting them. Indeed, the superficial opposition of the two may not ultimately hold, for in certain respects, one senses in Bakhtin a nostalgia for pastness (or "prehistory," as in the title of another essay appearing in The Dialogic Imagination) which is suspiciously like that of Lukacs. In the essay "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel" (still another essay in the new translation), for example, Bakhtin's longing for past ideals arises through his discussion of Rabelais. After about 80 pages of rather austere and dense elaboration of his concept of "chronotope" and of its history, the reader is suddenly confronted with a different style of language--one that is light, clearly inspired, and to a large extent self-indulgent. (At times Bakhtin must even apologetically

restrain himself from being swept away by Rabelaisian orifices.) Bakhtin delights in Rabelais' brand of chronotope, which recalls a folkloric sense of collective life, a time which was yet undifferentiated and where "the interior time of an individual life [did] not yet exist, the individuum [lived] completely on the surface, within a collective whole" (pp. 206-207). "Life is one, and it is all thoroughly 'historicized'" (p. 209); as with Lukacs, individuals were empirical through and through; the self was equal to its acts, to its manifestations.

At the heart, then, of this long essay which traces the diversified lineage of the novel (interestingly a project that Bakhtin repeatedly undertakes in various essays) is the impression of an ecstatic fulfillment via the resurrection of past and sub-social elements. Bakhtin has a totality comparable to that of Lukacs, but locates it in folklore and not in classical epic. Bakhtin's version of the novel has its own irony, also, though different from that of Lukacs, in that his theory is Janus-faced; while the novel is the live, progressive genre which constantly unfolds toward the future, Bakhtin is continuously preoccupied with looking backward at its folkloric roots which Rabelais succeeded in reviving.

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NOTES

[1]Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, trans., Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1981). Hereafter page numbers for Bakhtin refer to this text.

[2]Georg Lukacs, The Theory of the Novel, trans., Anna Bostock (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1971), p. 29. Hereafter all quotations from Lukacs are taken from this text.

HOW TO TALK LIKE A RABBIT IN KHMER: REPORTED SPEECH IN ORAL NARRATIVE PERFORMANCE

Frank Prochan

One of the greatest artistic resources available to the folk narrator is the reported speech of the story's characters. When dialogue is imbedded in a narrative, there arise many possibilities for intonation, characterization, and interpretation. This is especially true for an oral performance: the storyteller can bring to life the characters and their words, performing with a wide range of linguistic and prosodic features, some from everyday speech and others particular to narrative performance. Reported speech is defined succintly by Bakhtin as being at once "speech within speech, utterance within utterance and at the same time also speech about speech, utterance about utterance."[1] It thus takes in quotation, direct discourse, indirect discourse, free indirect discourse, and represented speech, to list just some of the terms that have been used to name one or another kind or reported speech. The topic or reported speech has concerned philosophers, linguists, literary critics, anthropologists, and folklorists for well over two thousand years. But, with rare exceptions these scholars have been concerned exclusively with written sources, neglecting the rich area of living speech, whether informal conversation or artistic narrative performance. Yet it is precisely in the realm of speech that we find the most frequent and varied uses of another person's words and style of speaking.

I will discuss the Cambodian tradition of stories about Judge Rabbit, Sophea Toensaay, using several written and oral versions of one tale, "Rabbit Wants to Cross Over to the Opposite River Bank." The stories of Sophea Toensaay are part of a pan-Southeast Asian tradition of animal tales, many deriving ultimately from India. Rabbit's place is taken by Pelandok the Mouse-Deer in Malaysia. In the Laotian, Cham and Vietnamese tales he may be a rabbit, monkey, or dog. Regardless, the hero is a trickster, ever able to escape danger or to turn affairs to his own advantage by virtue of his superior intelligence and his verbal abilities.

Before I present my analysis, however, some introductory remarks on reported speech are required.

Plato, in his Republic, was among the first to consider reported speech when he discussed poetics in the model city. Plato has Socrates analyze a passage from the Iliad to illustrate his definition of style.[2] Midway in the Iliad, Homer switches style: "in what follows, he speaks as though he himself were Chryses and tries as hard as he can to make it seem to us that it's not Homer speaking, but the priest, an old man."[3] Homer's use of reported speech is identified by Socrates as "imitation" [mimēsis], because Homer "likens his own style as much as possible to that of the man he has announced as the speaker" (p. 393). Finally, Socrates typologizes narrative genres:

> one kind proceeds wholly by imitation--as you say, tragedy and comedy; another, by the poet's own report--this, of course, you would find especially in dithyrambs; and still another by both--this is found in epic poetry and may other places too....(p. 394)

This latter mixing of imitation and reporting, of reported speech and straight narrative, is doubtless far more frequent, both in our daily conversation and in storytelling, than are either of the two pure styles. It was not until twenty-three centuries after Plato that it became apparent just how pervasive reported speech is in almost every type of discourse, and that insight belonged to the great Soviet philosopher, literary critic, folklorist, and semiotician Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975).

A consistent vision runs through all of Bakhtin's work, in a half-century of wide-ranging and diverse scholarship. Rejecting both narcissistic idealism and abstract objectivism. Bakhtin had a radical social-interactional vision of life: consciousness is an ideological or semiotic phenomenon that arises only in interaction; the self exists only because of the others with which it comes in contact. For Bakhtin, dialogue in speech is both the quintessential context of this interaction and its metonymic sign. To understand what someone is saying to us, we must actively orient ourselves with respect to it: "For each word that we are in the process of understanding, we, as it were, lay down a set of

our own answering words.... Any true understanding is dialogic in nature" (M, 102; emphasis in original). We could expect that this mental process of orienting ourselves to another's words would be as notoriously indescribable as are most mental processes, but, Bakhtin notes,

> What we have in the forms of reported speech is precisely an objective document of this reception...[which] provides us with information...about steadfast social tendencies in an active reception of other speakers' speech, tendencies that have crystallized into language forms. (p. 117)

Bakhtin sees reported speech very broadly. It is not just direct quotation of even indirect discourse: the "syntactic means for formulating the transmitted speech of another are far from exhausted by the grammatical paradigms of direct and indirect discourse: the means for its incorporation, for its formulaton and for indicating different degrees of shading are highly varied."[4] Thus in written literature there is a large catalogue of devices for incorporating another's words into the narration. Another set of devices, partially overlapping with those used in writing, exists in normal conversation and in oral narrative. However, these oral devices often depend on such ephemeral phenomena as intonation, emphasis, stress, and other paralinguistic features which are much harder to analyze than the syntactic and semantic devices frozen onto a written page.

There are countless ways and degrees of incorporating another's speech into one's own speaking or writing, and a particular mode or means may prevail for one or another language, genre, era, author, speaker, or context. Bakhtin identifies two broad opposing tendencies or styles. On the one hand, in what he calls the linear style,

> the basic tendency in reacting to reported speech may be to maintain its integrity and authenticity; a language may strive to forge hard and fast boundaries for reported speech...to demarcate the reported speech as clearly as possible, to screen it from penetration by the author's intonations, and to condense and enhance its individual linguistic characteristics. (M, p. 119)

In contrast there is a pictorial style in which

> language devises means for infiltrating reported speech

> with authorial retort and commentary in deft and subtle ways. The reporting context strives to break down the self contained compactness of the reported speech, to resolve it, to obliterate its boundaries. (M, p. 120)

Bakhtin also stresses that the relation between the reported speech and the framing context--the narration and especially the verba dicendi that introduce the quotation--is a chemical bond and not a mechanical one, and both elements must be taken into account (DI, p. 340).

We must leave Bakhtin after this brief and incomplete exposition in order to mention at least in passing some of the others who have given attention to reported speech in narrative. The aspect of oral performance that has received most attention is the narrator's assumption of a specific voice or tone of voice to speak the words of one or all of the characters in a story. Using written sources, Friedrich seeks to identify an idiolect distinct to Achilles by analyzing his reported speech in the Iliad;[5] elsewhere he uses reported speech in Russian novels as data to examine pronoun usage. Silverstein analyzes the use of verba dicendi in Chinookan narrative, discovering larger structural organizations of the stories from the sequential distribution of these verbs of saying. His description of Chinookan narratives so perfectly describes the Cambodian tales of Judge Rabbit that we should read them before turning to the Cambodian corpus:

> [They] provide a window to understand the cultural concepts underlying speech usage, since they seem to consist, to a high degree, of descriptions of speech interactions (and equivalent) which constitute the very textuality, the cohesion and framework of the narrative art. Texts seem to consist of highlighted or foregrounded descriptions of interactions, including especially speech quotation as framed by metapragmatic verbs of saying...[6]

What, then, can we learn of Cambodian "concepts underlying speech usage" (Silverstein) and "steadfast social tendencies in an active reception of other speakers' speech" (Bakhtin) by examining reported speech in folk narratives?

Four texts serve as my principal data in this analysis.[7] The

first two, Texts A and B, were narrated to me by Cambodian emigré Bun Hor So in Berkeley, California at the beginning of 1981. I had asked Bun Hor So to recount some of the Toensaay stories, and he agreed although he is not a storytelling specialist. Text B was delivered first, and the longer Text A came in response to my question as to whether there was any distinctive voice that Rabbit would use, or Crocodile, or Snail. Unlike many cultures, the Khmer do not seem to have such sterotyped voices,[8] but Bun Hor So explained that he could tell the story again with expressive intonation (Text A).[9] Texts C and D are from written collections of Khmer texts, the first from Midan and Text D from Aymonier.[10] Regrettably, neither author provides information on the sources of the stories or the circumstances under which they were recorded, other than Midan's offhand remark that they came "from the mouths of peasants and bonzes [Buddhist monks]" Jenner's suggestion agrees with my informants' speculations:

> One can only suppose that after hearing them told in a number of variants, probably in the course of several years, Midan had them written down by an uncommonly astute storyteller who was neither so learned nor so unconscious of his art that he felt he had to reshape them into what they were never meant to be....Midan himself refrained from tidying them up...[11]

For both written versions, French and English translations are available and are sometimes cited here. Finally, an additional French version is given as Text E, but again no information is provided as to teller or provenance.[12]

The story I will discuss involves Rabbit's desire to cross over a river. He sees Crocodile (also his adversary in other episodes) and decides to trick him into providing transportation across the river. Rabbit mentions that he knows of a place on the other side where the water and ground are sweet, and Crocodile begs to be taken there (Texts C and E). Alternatively, Rabbit promises to cure Crocodile of his skin disease if he is taken across, and Crocodile agrees (Texts A, B, D). Rabbit does not wish to sit on Crocodile's scaly back, so he places a leaf underneath himself, explaining that it is because his own buttocks are dirty and he does not want to dirty or dishonor Crocodile. Crocodile, further flattered (or at least mollified), carries Rabbit across, and when Rabbit is safe on the other bank, he insults Crocodile, breaks his promise, and leaves.

Rabbit's verbal abilities are the core of the story, and

perhaps of the entire corpus. His superior intelligence allows him to turn every event to his own advantage, to profit even when things seem to be headed for disaster. Maspero characterizes him as "no less a braggart than a brilliant talker."[13] But, we must also wonder about a world where animals speak. Midan argues that among people who believe in reincarnation (the Indian influence on Cambodian culture and religion), it is not unusual that animals speak.

> We well know that animals do not speak. The Cambodian does not make the animals talk, the animals talk and he is content to report their words. The animals will be humans in a future life; they have already been so, perhaps....In the point of view of the Cambodian people, it is perfectly natural that the animals speak. (p. 6)

And speak they do. Every text in the collections has a high proportion of reported speech. Sometimes almost half of the words in a text will be direct quotations of the characters (indirect discourse is avoided in Khmer). By contrast, there is a sparsity of descriptive language, and even action is often advanced in reported speech. Jenner notes:

> There is no description for description's sake; images of scenic vistas are entirely wanting....The vigor of each tale is most prominent in the dialogue, which is racy and to the point. Whatever their function, the animal characters necessarily speak with the tongues of the men and women who project them.[14]

Jenner is certainly right that the characters must speak with human tongues (although the practice in other cultures of providing assumed voices for the characters is an attempt to circumvent somewhat this rule). However, this is not to say that the reported speech of the characters must necessarily be an absolutely faithful and accurate representation of the way humans would speak in the same situations. In semiotic terms, reported speech is presented as an iconic sign, one that resembles the original speech for which it stands. However, like any icon, this similarity is tempered by dissimilarity and difference. What interests us is precisely how, when, and where the reported speech converges or diverges from what we would expect, based on our knowledge of everyday speaking. In any language, certain features are obligatory and cannot be avoided, while others are sociolinguistically variable and/or artistically expressive.

Importantly, even the obligatory features may sometimes provide opportunities for the narrator's creativity (even though the creativity hides behind the presumption of obligatoriness).

One such obligatory feature is the selection of pronouns. While many European languages require a distinction between "formal" and "informal" second-person forms (address forms), Cambodian has a wider range of levels of politeness and respect and additionally requires similar distinctions in the selection of a first-person pronoun. That is, there are many ways to say "you" and as many ways to say "I," which collectively form a very elaborate, explicit, and conscious system of politeness and respect. This story especially is about how words can be used to flatter and to deceive, to solicit boons and to deal out insults. Within the story world, the character's selection of terms of address and self-reference has the potential to be highly creative, to "establish overtly the social relations of the individuals in the roles of speaker and hearer...,"while outside the story world, in the world of the story telling, these terms are presupposing (again to use Silverstein's terms).[15] That is, the social relations of the characters are presented to the audience as given, not as being created. Yet, while the narrator purports to present accurately what the characters say, his or her artistic goals are advanced by the intentional selection of one or another term.

In Bun Hor So's longer version, Text A, Rabbit's first statement to Crocodile is highly respectful. The kinship term baaj ("brother") is used among adults who are intimate friends, by wife to husband, or in other polite but friendly situations. qaaj used alone is a familiar address form, appropriate to use to children or inferiors but impolite when used to an equal. When it is used along with another pronominal, it is a polite emphatic or reflexive, "you yourself." This polite usage is involved here. The first person knhom literally means "your slave"; it is a polite yet not unfriendly term, "a safe and polite word for the foreigner to use except to monks and royalty."[16] The seemingly unnecessary repetition of synonymous words (baaj krapaa, baaj krapaa, baaj qaaj) is consistent with a pervasive tendency in Khmer to use reduplicaion for intensification and other expressive purposes. (Contrast Martini's misguided note to a set of translations of Khmer tales: "in Cambodian, repetition and monotony of turns are hardly stylistic effects, rather facts of language; hardly artistic intention, but grammatical indigence or stylistic poverty."[17] He

could hardly have been more mistaken.) Consistent with what seems to be a Khmer aesthetic of indirection, Rabbit does not overtly request transportation across the river, he plants a seed in Crocodile's mind that results in Crocodile inviting Rabbit to ride across. Crocodile's use of kñom signals his reciprocal respect to Rabbit. Even though Crocodile is puzzled by Rabbit's use of a leaf to sit on, he inquires politely why he needs a leaf, again using kñom. Rabbit flatters Crocodile with his explanation, continuing to use kñom and baaj qəəj. Crocodile remains polite to the end, but once Rabbit is safely on the river bank, he lets loose: he uses qəəj alone, as the possessor of skin disease and ancestors; here it is insulting. He also uses the highly derogatory qaanaa ("nobody"). qaa is a very familiar address form, used to children or to servants; in this context it is patronizing and rude. Bun Hor So's previous rendition, Text B, demonstrates exactly the same progression from politeness to contempt. Text B is shorter and less elaborated, with fewer interchanges, but the crucial markers are the same: baaj qəəj and Kñom at the beginning; qəəj and qaanaa at the end.

Text C (Midan) also reflects the same progression. Rabbit's first quotation is a reported thought; speaking to himself he can use the familiar first-person qañ (which would seem somewhat rude if used while speaking to Crocodile). When he does speak to Crocodile, he is almost obsequious: qao baaj krapəə qəəj "dearest brother Crocodile." He also uses baaj qəəj, kñom and baaj. Crocodile's response to Rabbit's flattery is equally polite and respectful, using baaj souphıə qəəj, kñom, and baaj qəəj. The expression, mıən meetəə kñom means "to be good enough to me" or "to be so kind to me." Rabbit responds using the polite first person plural form, yəəj. Again, even when Crocodile is puzzled by Rabbit's need for a leaf, he remains polite, and Rabbit explains politely (after all, he is not all the way across yet). Safely on dry land, Rabbit spews out the insults: kbaal qac qəj ("head of shit"), again the rude qaanaa ("nobody"), qəəj ("you" familiar), and the first person qañ, used only to a child, inferior, or intimate. Contrast the abrupt words of Rabbit here: tık pqəəm dəy pqəəm with the gentler and more mellifluous phrasing when he said it earlier: tık kaa pqəəm dəy kaa pqəəm lqaa nah ("sweet water, sweet ground" vs. "water that's sweet and ground that's sweet, both particularly nice").

Text D, from Aymonier, is the oldest, and reflects a different attitude on the part of the narrator. Here the animals are respectful to one another, but in animal terms, not in human terms. Thus, while they both use baaŋ qaaŋ for direct address, they consistently use qaañ or self-reference. It may well be that qaañ was perfectly acceptable a century ago even for polite human speech, but that a greater sensitivity to the covertly patronizing tone has rendered it inappropriate in modern speech. In any case, the breakthrough at the end is the same: qaa qaaŋ ("you" disrespectful), and qaa naa "nobody" disrespectful).[18]

A comparison of the French translations demonstrates a similar although less elaborate use of pronominal shifters. In Text CFr, Rabbit speaks to Crocodile using vous; Crocodile responds by using the polite convention of replacing second person with third person. Unaccountably, however, Crocodile switches to tu to ask why Rabbit needed leaves. Rabbit's final remarks use tu as well, and the euphemistic tête de bois instead of "shithead." In Text DFr, Rabbit and Crocodile mutually use tu, so the final insults are unmarked by any pronoun shift. In Text E, Rabbit and Crocodile again reciprocate tu, but Rabbit greets him with "mon grand frère Crocodile," and Crocodile responds using the polite third person, Si mon frère Sophea veut bien...." Crocodile angrily asks why Rabbit needs leaves, but Rabbit placates him again with "O grand frère."

The other large area in which the pragmatics of reported speech is manifest is unfortunately not accessible from these written texts, for it is the area of paralinguistics. Many languages have an elaborate means of describing the paralinguistics of a quotation in the verba dicendi or other framing devices that introduce the reported speech (e.g., "mutter," "mumble," "boast," or "say boastingly," "say shyly," "say angrily.") I do not mean to suggest that such description or characterization is impossible in Khmer, for it is certainly possible to specify more fully the way that something is said. My claim is merely that these texts exhibit none of those devices to describe paralinguistics. With the single exception of one instance of sraek ("shout"), all of the other verba dicendi are unmarked and relatively uninformative: suə ("ask"), thaa ("say"), niqyiəy ("speak"), nɨk ("think"), win ("reply"), cləəy ("answer"), kɨt ("think"), prap ("tell").

The paralinguistics are evident, however, from the recording of the two oral renditions by Bun Hor So. As far as general

intonation patterns (sentence tunes), the reported speech follows the general patterns of conversational Khmer speech, with rising pitch at the end of a non-terminal phrase or a question and falling pitch at the end of an affirmative statement. Exclamatory particles in the reported speech all seem to have a rapidly rising pitch, which may rise quite a distance from an abnormally low pitch to a very high one.

More important than pitch variation is variation in tempo and amplitude witin the quoted speech (and as compared to the narrative speech). The early, polite utterances by Rabbit and Crocodile are "soft" and "low," in Lieou Phin Oum's description, while the closing remark of Rabbit is pronounced with the voice a "little bit high" and choppier. The polite speech is at a moderate tempo, while the insults at the ends are almost spat out. In the first rendition, Text B, Bun Hor So strung together the insulting words with rising intonations. In the later version, Text A, Rabbit begins with a loud, rising exclamation, then quickly rattles out discrete words, each with a falling pitch. It is all said much louder and faster than the rest of the story.

Where does this Khmer corpus of stories and style of storytelling fit into the broader phenomenon of reported speech? Somewhere in the middle, I would suggest. Because indirect discourse is avoided in Khmer and direct discourse is favored, the stories fall at the extreme pole of syntactical demarcation of reported speech from reporting context. Yet at the phonological level, the speech of Rabbit is the same as Crocodile and the same as the narrator, in stark contrast to the common examples of animal characters in other cultures who speak in markedly distinct voices. (So, to respond to the title of this paper: Rabbit talks much like any other Cambodian and any differences that may exist are the subtlest semantic shadings.) At the level of lexicon (and specifically, the choice of pronouns), the speech of the characters is presented as given, as an icon of how in fact they speak. Yet in reality it is infiltrated with "authorial retort and commentary in deft and subtle ways" (M, p. 120). Some balance between the two opposing tendencies of multivoicedness and singlevoicedness, between the linear style and the pictorial style of Bakhtin, between the reported voices and the reporting voice,

is characteristic of every instance of reported speech. Each language, culture, genre, context, author, or speaker achieves a slightly different balance, a unique and particular style. Is this not in fact what characterizes life itself--the struggle to find one's own voice in the chorus of other voices, and once found, to take responsibility for it?

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NOTES

[1]Mikhail Bakhtin, Marxism and the Philosophy of Language, trans., Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Titunik (New York: Seminar Press, 1973), p. 115. Hereafter cited in text as M. Current consensus holds that Bakhtin was also the author of the books attributed to V. N. Voloŝinov, and I have listed this source under Bakhtin's name in the interest of simplicity.

[2]Consider the cosmic irony of Plato using the reported speech of Socrates to advance his (their?) ideas about reported speech. Then consider the further irony of quoting from Plato's report of Socrates' words--in a paper analyzing reported speech, I make my points by referring to the "authoritative words" of others (to use Bakhtin's expression).

[3]Plato, The Republic, trans., Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), p. 393a.

[4]Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, trans., Carol Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 339. Hereafter cited as DI.

[5]Paul Friedrich and James Redfield, "Speech as a Personality Symbol: The Case of Achilles," Language, 54 (1978), pp. 263-288.

[6]Michael Silverstein, "The Culture of Language in Chinookan Narrative Texts; or, On Saying that...in Chinook," unpublished typescript, p. 7.

[7]Due to publication limitations, we are unfortunately unable to provide the texts with this article. (Ed.)

[8]Most of my informants agree that there is no conventional practice of using such voices. However, Sam-Ang Sam reports a virtuoso storyteller attached to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh who did occasionally use stereotyped voices, but this is an exceptional case.

[9]I must express my gratitude to Bun Hor So for his gracious agreement to tell me these stories, to the family of Ouk Channy who have helped me with transcriptions, to Lieou Phin Oum who has introduced me to many aspects of Cambodian culture and has guided me through my work, and to Sam-Ang Sam who provided important aesthetic judgments and suggestions. The attached transcriptions are word-level phonemic transcriptions, representing Phnom Penh pronunciations, and are not an attempt to represent phonetically Bun Hor So's pronunciation and expressive devices.

[10]Paul Midan, "Histoires du Juge Lièvre. Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises, n.s. 8-4 (Oct.-Dec.), p. 1-116; Etienne Aymonier, Textes Khmèrs (Saigon, 1878).

[11]Philip N. Jenner, Tales of the Hare: An Elementary Khmer Reader (Honolulu: The University of Hawaii, 1977), p. iv.

[12]Version CFr, Midan (see note 10); CEn, Jenner, Tales of the Hare, trans., from Midan, unpublished typescript, 1965; DFr, Aymonier (see note 10); DEn, Jenner, Tales of Judge Hare, trans. from Aymonier, unpublished typescript, 1967; E, M. Percheron, Contes et légendes d'Indochine (Paris: Librairie Fernand Nathan, 1935).

[13]Georges Maspero, "Literature khmère, in Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine, ed., Georges Maspero (Paris: G. Van Oest, 1929), Vol. 1, pp. 297-305.

[14]See note 11, p. iv.

[15]Michael Silverstein, "Shifters, Linguistic Categories, and Cultural Description," in Meaning in Anthropology, eds., Keith Basso and Henry Selby (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976), p. 36.

[16]Judith M. Jacob, Introduction to Cambodian (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 165.

[17]Francois Martini and Solange Bernard, Contes populaires inédits du Cambodge (Paris: G.P. Maisonneuve, 1929), p. 12.

[18]One informant insisted that he would not permit his children to read the Aymonier text because it would provide a bad example to them by using qaa at the beginning of the story. Using qaanaa at the end (both in this story and in Text C) and using kbaal qac qəy (shithead) were not objectionable, but misusing qaa was.

APPENDIX

FIRST SESSION

1. Modern Latin American Literature
   chair: Andrew Bush
   participants: Norma Helsper
   Angelita Reyes
   Dolly J. Young
2. Modern Times
   chair: John Willett-Shoptaw
   participants: Pauline Greenhill
   John Willett-Shoptaw

SECOND SESSION

1. The Celluloid Word

   chair: Jackie Byars
   participants: Jackie Byars
   James Hay
   Willi Winkler
   note: "You say neether, I say niither: Managing Social Conflict in the American Film Musical" by James Hay withdrawn for publication as "The Ritualization of Redressive Action in the American Film Musical." 7th Annual Purdue Film Conf., Apr., 1983.

2. Authors of Authority

   participants: Dennis Crow
   Kristin Koptiuch
   Tres Pyle

PLENARY SESSION

1. The Politics of Comparative Literature
   chair: Kofi Anyidoho

   participants: Andrew Bush
   Jane Creighton
   Aurora Morales
   Angelita Reyes
   note: Andrew Bush's response to the topic was later withdrawn for personal reasons.

THIRD SESSION

1. Comparative Perspectives on African and Afro-American Literatures

chair: Kofi Anyidoho
participants: Alberto Bras
John Inniss
Michiline Rice-Maximin

FOURTH SESSION

1. Translation Workshop
chair: Stephen Field
participants: Andrew Bush
Aurora Levins Morales
Angelita Reyes
note: Due to time limitations we were unable to include this section in our publication.

2. Les Pensees Françaises a la Allemand
participants: Susan Wells Howard
Susan J. James

FIFTH SESSION

1. Workshop: Women Producing Art
chair: Sandra Shattuck
participants: Jane Creighton
Aurora Morales
Rita Starpattern
Kay Turner

2. Mikhail Bakhtin: A Literary Invasion of the World
chair: Vern McGee
participants: Les Smith
Frank Prochan
Susan Blalock
note: "The Novel in The Ring and the Book: A Reassessment" by Susan Blalock withdrawn for publication as "Browning's The Ring and the Book: (A Novel Country)." Browning Institute Studies, special issue on Victorian Modernism, Spring 1983.