

Contents

RUSSELL M. WYLAND

Disciplinary Anxiety and Interdisciplinary
Methods: Rewriting the History of English
to Accommodate “New” Approaches

3

MICHAEL ZEITLER

Stem-stressing Hopkins’s “The Wreck of
the Deutschland”: Victorian Philology and
Poetic Practice

15

DAVID KALOUSTIAN

The Fearful Symmetries of Aesthetics and
Ideology in the Literature Classroom

26

L. ADAM MEKLER

“Altered by a thousand distortions”: Dream-
Work in Mary Shelley’s Early Novels

38

HELENE KRAUTHAMER

Being Everywhere and Nowhere Again:
Balancing Online Teaching

50

VALERIE SEDLAK

Graham Greene’s Forgotten Man

58

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Disciplinary Anxiety and Interdisciplinary Methods: Rewriting the History of English to Accommodate “New” Approaches

Keynote Address
2003 Conference of CEAMAG

Good morning. I am honored and delighted to be here. Bureaucrats get too few opportunities to be among the people we serve and even fewer to be among those with whom we share a disciplinary interest. Before I continue, however, I must betray the fact that I work for Uncle Sam and offer this disclaimer: my words and opinions in this address are my own and do not reflect official NEH policies or positions.

For the next thirty minutes or so, I hope to engage your conference theme—Balancing Acts—in some modest way. The theme is unusually rich, and there are many possible balancing acts to explore: family and school, public and private, or teaching and researching to name but three. I have chosen instead to examine the balancing act we strike when we choose to work outside our discipline. My position at the National Endowment for the Humanities provides me, I think, with an unusual perspective on how the humanistic disciplines blend, interact, and change over time, and this vantage point has shaped—some might say warped—my own scholarly interests in the evolution of English as a subject worthy of study. My goal here is not to define what is and what is

not interdisciplinary. That would remain interesting, I fear, for about five minutes. Rather, I want to use my time to say something about a culture of anxiety and excitement that has formed around teachers and scholars in English working outside their discipline and, further, how this anxiety has given rise to a re-writing of our disciplinary history that has only brought us back to the place English has inhabited all along.

Across the humanities, the breakdown of disciplinary boundaries over the last two decades elicited both cheering and hand-wringing. In their introduction to *Redrawing the Boundaries*, Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn took stock of our discipline as it entered the 1990s and put forward a view that interdisciplinarity had become the norm:

Literary studies in English are in a period of rapid and sometimes disorienting change. In addition to the configuration of new areas of teaching and research, from medieval studies and postmodernist studies to African American literary studies and subaltern studies, the last several decades have witnessed the development of a variety of methodological and interdisciplinary initiatives: deconstruction, cultural materialism, gender studies, new historicism. (1)

Let me make two observations about this quotation. First, Greenblatt and Gunn link interdisciplinary efforts to methodological approaches; they do not link canons of literary works to working across boundaries. Their observation reflects a larger theoretical shift away from the idea that some works (our discipline's canon) are inherently more worthy of study than others. In this vision of what we do, literary works become a part of an undifferentiated collection of texts. This diverges from the way we have traditionally understood the history of our discipline as one organized around the work of Shakespeare-Milton-Spenser-Dryden-Wordsworth. Greenblatt and Gunn organize us around

how we do our work, not which works we use.

My second observation about Greenblatt and Gunn's overview of the discipline is that they posit that the shift to interdisciplinary method is new—described as rapid and sometimes disorienting. Was this new? I will leave my full answer to this question for later, but I have no doubt that for Greenblatt and Gunn, the brave new interdisciplinary world probably seemed so. Their formative years in English began during the reign of New Criticism when canons dominated scholarly inquiry and formed a nucleus for English. New Criticism declined as interdisciplinary methods emerged.

I remember *Redrawing the Boundaries* because it appeared the same year that I began working at the Endowment, and about the same time as Lynne V. Cheney, the Chairman of the NEH at the time, fought the cultural wars against, primarily, people in literature departments. Although not explicitly responding to Gunn and Greenblatt, Cheney held a view very different from theirs. Discussing the teaching done in English departments, she notes that “the idea of replacing truth with politics . . . has energized development of many theories—from poststructuralism and deconstruction to Marxism and feminism” (22-23). Cheney understands the interdisciplinary methods of Greenblatt and Gunn as political, concerned less with truth and constancy than with expedience and intellectual dishonesty. This “new” way of thinking about the discipline, according to Cheney, was based on the “notion that there are no truths to pursue, but only political purposes.” Truth is found in a corpus of literary works—Matthew Arnold's “best of what's been thought and said in the world.” Thus, we have an uncomfortable opposition. On one side, we have politics, interdisciplinary work, and method while on the other side we have truth and literary canons. It's a hell of a choice. If we cross

boundaries, we abandon truth and canon. If we hold on to truth and canon, we disengage with the world and other disciplines.

I remind you of this debate because it caused real anxiety about the kind of research and teaching we do: these contrasting views have increased the prestige of interdisciplinary work by putting it at the forefront of the debate, but, and at the same time, the debate has made scholars aware that English had become difficult to define. If disciplinary English is defined by methods that break disciplinary boundaries as Greenblatt and Gunn suggest, doesn't English cease to be a discipline? If we have abandoned works of literature, as Mrs. Cheney says, doesn't literature again cease to be a discipline? We were damned either way. Out of this environment of anxiety, something curious emerged: a significant swell of interest in the history of disciplinary English. Until the mid 1970s, only a small number of books addressed the origins of English literary study. At just the moment when English seemed to have fragmented, some of the brightest lights began to look for ways to put literature back together again. Why? To find English's Garden of Eden—that pristine point when all agreed on what it meant to be a teacher and researcher in English—we needed, according to Robert Scholes, a way to reconstruct English as a discipline. Some of these many books will no doubt be familiar to you: Chris Baldick's *The Social Mission of English Criticism* (1983), Robert Crawford's *Devolving English* (1992), Franklin Court's *Institutionalizing English Literature* (1992), Terry Eagleton's *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983), Gerald Graff's *Professing English* (1987), Brian McCrea's *Addison and Steele are Dead: The English Department, Its Canon, and the Professionalization of Literary Criticism* (1990), Thomas Miller's *The Formation of English Literary Studies* (1997), Scholes's *The Rise and Fall of English* (1998), and the list continues with both books and articles.

These works vary a good deal, but they all begin their retelling of English's disciplinary history with the classical curriculum, paying particular attention to classical ethics and classical rhetoric. Ethics gave the study of literary works moral authority. Anglican bishop Robert Lowth, the author of the widely used 1762 English grammar, claimed that language was "the gift of God, and correctness within such a framework connotes using language as God intended it be used" (Olivia Smith 8). Scholars such as Graff and Eagleton, both of whom emphasize the path of ethics, understood the rise of literary study as a replacement for a declining religion in nineteenth-century England. English's early practitioners revered secular texts, and evangelized Shakespeare to groups outside the mainstream such as religious dissenters, the Scots, and the working classes, and English literature enjoyed its modern manifestation in the fervor of the New Critics. Not surprisingly, this group holds up Matthew Arnold as central. In the decline of religion, literature took on religious qualities. Exemplary teachers of this view were, in Graff's words, "professing literature," with the zeal of a clergyman—which, in fact, was the profession of most early teachers of English.

Perhaps the more popular view in these historical narratives was the importance of rhetoric. Rhetoric had always provided a way for students to approach the widest array of topics through a method that had been discussed and refined since the Sophists. Scholes's *The Rise and Fall of English*, my favorite example of this approach, appears to follow Graff in important respects. He recalls English's "peak of influence and prestige" at the turn of the nineteenth century under teachers such as Billy Phelps, who "represents a moment between philology and New Criticism, a moment when it was indeed possible to profess literature with evangelical fervor" (13-14). Scholes is no fool. His nod to the religious component

of literature draws in many who, like most of you I'd guess, slaved away in graduate school because you felt some deep truth in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* or something profound about the human spirit in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. Unlike Graff, however, Scholes proposes recapturing that religious fervor through rhetoric, a classical art that Aristotle defines as "the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever." Rhetoric becomes the center for all interdisciplinary education: "Rhetoric," according to Scholes, "had been organized around a canon of methods" whereas "English literature organized itself around a canon of texts, relegating the methods of rhetoric to a minor role" (111). Without a canon of literary texts on which to rebuild the discipline, Scholes's remedy is tough medicine. To fix English, he conceives of an updated version of the medieval trivium—grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric. Gone are courses about Shakespeare's history plays, Milton's heroes, Faulkner's major novels, and the second generation of Romantic poets. Scholes envisions "a discipline based on rhetoric and the teaching of reading and writing over a broad range of texts" (179). This should sound very much like the Greenblatt-Gunn vs. Cheney / method vs. text debate. For Scholes, courses such as "Subjectivity and Language" and "Systems and Dialectic" would take the place of standard core classes and would necessarily traverse disciplinary boundaries. What we now call "literature" might become part of these new interdisciplinary courses in the trivium, but literature itself would lose its disciplinary identity.

Now, you might be anticipating that finally, after ten minutes of remarks, I am about to come down conclusively on one side or the other. Does he favor a rhetoric-based, methodological approach to literature that allows for interdisciplinary work? Or does he favor an ethics-based, great books approach that maintains

disciplinary boundaries? I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I cannot embrace either one. Both approaches, it seems to me, are misguided returns to the classics and fall into the trap of oversimplifying the past. While none of these literary historians embrace a full-scale return to the classics, they are searching for a model, and classics offer a powerful model of cohesion and order. In searching for that moment of unity, I suspect that we have been suckered into thinking that a unity once existed. Latin and Greek texts were not as plentiful as the vast expanse of literatures in English, so a canon, we like to think, was less problematic. This view is romantic. Academicians teaching the classical curriculum argued as forcefully about which texts should be taught as we do. Edward Latham at Lincoln College earned a place in the history of Oxford University for arguing against powerful Christ Church Dean Cyril Jackson about standardizing the classical texts studied by undergraduates. Jackson favored Aristotle in almost every subject, while Latham would not hear of anyone other than Cicero. The debate had something to do with Aristotle and Cicero, but it had a lot to do with the hegemony of large, powerful colleges over smaller, weaker colleges.

A better model can be found in the *belles lettres* movement that flowered most brilliantly in Scotland. Belletrism was the transitional moment between the study of classics and modern literature and, as I see it, is both the hero and the villain of the story. While its practitioners broke tradition by promoting equality between classical and modern languages, they also sought to differentiate the vernacular from the classic and, in doing so, changed the way we think about both. The civic function of the classics—the idea that debate led to public virtue—seemed less important in a time when compliance, rather than dissent, was desired. “The belletristic perspective,” according to Thomas Miller, made “the study of English synonymous with

the study of literary discourse, eliminating rhetoric as a domain of scholarly study in the humanities” (61). In other words, when the discipline of English emerged in its current-day form, the classical tradition died.

Although all the discipline’s historians in question acknowledge the belles lettres movement, they have not acknowledged its importance when thinking about today’s departments of English. When first translated into English as “polite literature” by Oxonian Basil Kennett, belles lettres covered a broad set of writing in history, philosophy, poetry, and eloquence. Indeed, one of belletrism’s great virtues is that it made few distinctions between imaginative and factual works. If you worked in literature, you worked in “the word.” Like the classical rhetoric from which it grew, belles lettres allowed its practitioners to cross disciplinary boundaries, but belles lettres also diverged from traditional rhetoric in at least one important way: whereas Aristotle and Cicero had always been concerned with the speaker or the producers of the utterance, the belles lettres movement privileged the listener, or the receiver of the utterance; it was rhetoric turned on its head. Suddenly, the judgment of the reader became important in its own right. The critic was born.

How did one usefully criticize? By becoming what Adam Smith called an impartial spectator. Drawing on Joseph Addison’s *Spectator*, Smith found a model for the impartial spectator in the gentleman who was able to observe from a distance and comment critically on the world around him. In number 370, Mr. Spectator says: “I, who am a spectator in the World, may perhaps sometimes make use of the Names of the Actors in the World.” Despite Addison’s claim to being “in the World,” Smith realized that this perspective neither encompassed the traditional civic function of rhetoric that embraced advocacy nor reflected the more politically neutral stance of Quintilian’s “good

man speaking well.” The impartial spectator should be able to follow standards of “complete propriety and perfection” or, said somewhat differently, standards that “the greater part of men commonly arrive at” (I.i.5.9-10). Such a sliding scale of standards indicates that the critic is not a philosopher; he uses first principles when expedient and concerns himself with contingent things. The object under scrutiny is a particular, and the critic’s judgment must be guided by that particular and not by outside considerations such as, one may suppose, political affiliation. As guide to a particular, the critic had a social function of delivering a basis for judgment and increasing sympathies.

But what did Smith mean by “impartial”? Smith develops the answer in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Early in Part I he uses “impartial,” as did Addison, to describe the relationship between the audience at a play and the actor (I.i.5.4), subsequently substituting the terms “cool” (I.ii.3.8) and “indifferent” (I.ii.4.1; III.4.4). These uses and variations of “impartial” emphasize that the spectator is the personification of the public, in a point of view that abstracts in a relevant way from that of the agent. If the critic identifies too closely with the actor who is caught up in the portrayal of a character, the critic will fail to see the success of the other half of the communication, the audience. Insofar as the critic is directed by his own feeling and not by that of the actor, the critic engages in a form of self-love and is unable to be objective. Put another way, the impartial spectator simultaneously takes on roles as audience member, speaker, and observer: he tries to understand all and forms a critique based on his or her own judgments. Elaborating on Smith’s impartial spectator, Stephen McKenna describes the device as “an audience, either real and present or imagined and internalized, before whom one modulates one’s emotions and sentiments, and whose agreement one seeks in discovering the propriety (i.e., the moral

fitness) of these emotions and sentiments” (60). It is in this detachment from both the actor and self that the “impartial spectator” is born. “Impartial,” however, should not be confused with disinterested. The spectator sympathizes to some extent with the actor and is also aware of how his emotions move him. For a properly impartial critic, Iago should still be worthy of contempt. He should not, however, create feelings of passion, particularly of revenge or hate: the critic must remember that the play is but a play.

The ideal of the impartial spectator was the driving “method” in English literature for the first century. Belles lettres societies in Scotland, Ireland, and the United States read and discussed Smith’s concept. In nineteenth-century Oxford, Stephen Potter observes, students and dons progressively adopted the perspective of what he called “*voyeur* criticism” (53), a restatement of Smith’s “impartial spectator.” The student letters of both Thomas Arnold—future headmaster of Rugby, education reformer, and father to Matthew Arnold—and J. T. Coleridge—future editor of the *Quarterly Review*, judge, and nephew to S. T. Coleridge—seized on the concept of spectatorship. Coleridge regularly referred to himself as the “spectator” or the “unconcerned spectator,” be it when he watched the political posturing during the election of a new chancellor in 1811 (d 128, 51, 9 Nov 1811) or when he observed his own struggle to commit his poetry to paper (d 128, 33, 12 May 1810). Arnold and Coleridge were so committed to the idea that they gathered other undergraduates together to start their own review—to be called *The Oxford Review*—as a way to encourage the spectator position in the reader. It would not inform the reader how to interpret the issues of the day, but present the issues in a way that would allow the man of taste to interpret for himself. Early nineteenth-century England was in no mood for democratizing criticism, however, and the journal died

before its first number appeared.

What, then, does all of this amount to? First, I don't think we need to venture back to the classics if we are looking for models to guide us. I recently listened to a conference paper that began with a five-minute video clip of Ethel Merman performing "There's No Business Like Show Business." The point of this unusual display was to emphasize the point that the English teacher, like the great Broadway diva, had to "sell a song." For English to remain relevant to students who value their own entertainment above all else, teachers and researchers need to find a way to couch their material in an intellectual song and dance. Although my initial reaction to this paper was not entirely positive, I realized that, knowingly or not, the speaker had chosen a variation of the impartial spectator method from English's early days. If students today can grasp the idea of spectatorship, is there not hope for the impartial spectator's again providing some hope for teaching about the balancing act that we face every day as teachers and researchers in English? The impartial spectator is a method that has continued its usefulness. Its reliance on personal and ethical judgment (usually referred to as taste) insures a certain canon of works. Caught as it was between the classics and the modern English department, *belles lettres* seems to harmonize what we have found so unharmonious. It encourages interdisciplinary work and holds the literary works protected. In forgetting about spectatorship, we have forgotten about an important moment in our history when interdisciplinary work was the norm. When Mrs. Cheney lamented the abandonment of the literary work or when Gunn and Greenblatt praised the "rapid and sometimes disorienting changes" in English (1), they failed to see the discipline as it really was. Practitioners of English literature—whether in the classroom or in the archives—remain true to their discipline's roots when they sally

forth across our disciplinary boundaries as well as when they assign literary merit. So where does this leave us? I am reminded of T. S. Eliot's lines in *The Four Quartets*:

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time

When you read these histories of English, remember the anxiety to which they respond and remember too that English is itself a historical balancing act: inherently interdisciplinary and inherently value-laden. Deny one and imbalance results.

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Stem-stressing Hopkins's "The Wreck of the Deutschland": Victorian Philology and Poetic Practice

In 1932, F. R. Leavis placed the then almost unknown Gerard Manley Hopkins in the canon of great English poets, beside "Shakespeare, Donne, Eliot and the later Yeats" (24). "He is likely to prove," Leavis concluded, "for our time and the future, the only influential poet of the Victorian age, and he seems to me the greatest" (36). To thus elevate a poet unrecognized in his lifetime and unpublished for thirty years after his death, Leavis had to differentiate Hopkins from his contemporaries ("no relation to Shelley or to any nineteenth-century poet" [26]) and claim for him the status of a modern. In emphasizing the qualities that Hopkins shared with T.S. Eliot, Leavis turned his subject into a test case for modernist poetics over and against what he perceived as standard Victorian diction. Hopkins's "own direct interest in the English language as a living thing" (24) is contrasted in Leavis's account with "the Victorian love of a continuous literary decorum" (18).

The argument of this essay takes as its point of entry Leavis's use of this organic metaphor. "Living language" links his sense of what is "modern" or "influential" in Hopkins's poetry to a set of nineteenth-century concerns about the nature of language, con-

cerns which Hopkins shared and which contributed to shaping his own poetic practice. These concerns of language, situated quite specifically within the emerging discourse of Victorian philology, account for Hopkins's being simultaneously of his time and yet so "counter, original, spare, strange" ("Pied Beauty") that he remained all but unknown to his contemporaries. Hopkins's radical poetics, based upon the philological concerns of his time, anticipated by thirty years the "living language" of Pound (M.A. at Penn, studying philology, Anglo-Saxon, and Provençal), Eliot (M.A. at Harvard, taking classes in Sanskrit), and Yeats (immersed in Gaelic culture, language, and folklore) and created the necessary climate for his later critical acceptance and canonization.

For the Victorians indeed studied language as a "living thing." F. Max Müller, the Oxford scholar whose popular lectures were first published in 1861 as *The Science of Language*, always talked of language's "growth," not its "history." Philology for Müller was a branch of physical science, which "deals with the works of God," rather than historical science, which deals with "the works of man" (1: 22). For Müller and other early linguists, language was always "an organism that can maintain its identity as it grows and evolves in time; that can remember, that can anticipate, that can mutate" (Kenner 96).

By Hopkins's arrival at Oxford in 1863, Müller's "new science" was just beginning to establish its academic legitimacy. Although the academic concerns of classical philology still dominated Oxford language study, Müller's lectures had proved immensely popular—he was, in fact, soon to become the university's first Chair in Comparative Philology. It is not surprising, then, to find in Hopkins's earliest undergraduate notebooks references to Müller and to the methodological and etymological concerns of the *Lectures*. In these early writings, some dating to his first months at

Oxford, Hopkins is already collecting words, vovelling them out, and speculating as to their root meanings:

Grind, gride, gird, grit, groat, grate, greet, . . . crush, crash, . . . etc. Original meaning to strike, rub, particularly together. That which is produced by such means is the grit, the groats or crumbs, like fragmentum from frangere, bit from bite. Crumb, crumble perhaps akin. To greet, to strike hands together (?). Greet, grief, wearing, tribulation. Grief possibly connected. Gruff, with a sound as of two things rubbing together. I believe these words to be onomatopoeic. Gr common to them all representing a particular sound. In fact I think the onomatopoeic theory has not had a fair chance. Cf. *Crack, creak, croak, crake, graculus, crackle*. These must be onomatopoeic. (Hopkins 90)

Since the publication of these notebooks in the 1930s, critics have often noted the similarity between Hopkins's early linguistic speculations and his later poetry. Until recently, critical accounts have focused largely on the word lists as poetic raw material.¹ Entries such as these, however, are clearly more than early exercises in alliteration. They illustrate, for example, Hopkins's interest in how a sound can bring a subject, an object, and a verb into one figure: *grind* becomes *grit, crumbling, crumbs; frangere, fragments*. Anticipating the poet's later conceptualizations, one could say that the stress of *grind* produces an inscape of *grit*. Equally important is the reference to "onomatopoeic theory." The "*gr*" sound "common to them all" is never arbitrary, but refers to nature, to the world. This interest in root-stems as primordial sounds already focuses Hopkins's attention on those linguistic elements that could be used for poetic expression.²

The linguistic theories that underlie these early journal entries connect the inquiries of Victorian philological research into the origins of language to Hopkins's religious belief and poetic practice. Hopkins,

with his religious and philosophical idea of divine inscape and instress, could use the emerging discipline of philology to support his own impulse to render reality. He saw, in the formal structures of Indo-European roots, if not a directly imitative (or onomatopoeic) representation of God's formal patterning of the world, at least a kind of coded equivalence. Beginning with the belief that God created things and human beings found words to express them, Hopkins discovered in his etymological studies evidence to support his view that these *ur*-words (words philologists were calling "root-stems") were close to the essence of what they named—close to their uniqueness, their materiality, their special "ring" or "taste." They were, for Müller and other nineteenth-century philologists, the "ultimate facts . . . whatever, in the words of any language or family of languages, cannot be reduced to a simpler or more original form" (Müller 2: 375). Root-stems express a connection to nature compatible with Hopkins's belief that both nature and man have a common source, a common creation. If, as scientific philology asserted, traces of these original meanings remain through subsequent derivations, poetry, then, must be aware of (and responsive to) the essence or "pitchness" of words and express that essence in sound combinations reverberating to that unique original sound. Root-stems dominate Hopkins's poetry, not only as poetic devices or simple alliteration, but as central to the meaning of his poems, encoding this "meaning" in much the same manner as a genetic code.³ Let me suggest how such an approach could work to construct a reading of "The Wreck of the Deutschland."

One root-stem, traceable and identifiable in the period (and thus available to Hopkins from Barnes, Skeat, Müller, etc.) is *STR*. This Indo-European root reaches English in two main variations: *STER*, with connotations of "strew," "spread," "stray"; and *STREDH*, the root of such words as "strike," "strive,"

"assail," "*streben*" (Ger.), etc. Thus Müller takes as the root of "stars" the Sanskrit "Staras"—strewers of light (2: 465). From "roots meaning strike," Müller tells his readers, "it was possible to name an axe, the thunderbolt, a fist, a paralytic stroke, a striking remark, a stroke of business" (12: 450). It is my contention that "The Wreck of the Deutschland" vibrates to this *STR* pitch: the sound echoes in almost every line and combines into the poem's key words.

"The Wreck of the Deutschland" is not merely composed of these sounds, however. The words created thereby are also derivatives of the root meanings. Hopkins has chosen words that are about acts of striking and spreading. Thus, thematically and alliteratively (if not strictly etymologically) allied with "strew," the poem clusters *STR* combinations into "strand," "stars," "settler," "smother," "stir," "cast her," and "stray." These words generate images of spreading, sowing and scattering. Similarly aligned with "Strike" we find "astrain," "smart," "stress," "struck," "startles," and "stride"—words that make us feel the pressure or stress of "God's finger." Hopkins uses other words—"storm" or "burst" are examples—to combine the sense of force or power with the concept of spreading. Finally (and this, perhaps, is divinely fortuitous), the poem's religious register is dominated by these same sounds: "Christ," "Master," "sister," "Prophetess," "priest," "Easter," or "Simon Peter."

Thus, the *ur*-meanings of the *STR* root-stem can be said to master the poem; it is about acts of striking and spreading as the wording of Christ. The juxtaposition of these word/sound combinations simultaneously iterated on a number of registers (the inner-spiritual, the outer-physical, the transcendental-religious) is given narrative form by the events of the poem. The poem speaks of acts of force (striking) and acts of grace (spreading). It does so in sounds that, for Hopkins, connect back to humans' original understanding of

these events. Language itself can be understood as a demonstration of God's presence. God is thus conceived in aggressive, assertive, masculine terms as the "Orion of Light"—the hunter who strikes—but also as "the light that spreads." The play of the sound combinations of *STR* from "strike" to "strew" thus confers a unity onto even the most contradictory attributes of God.

Throughout the poem's narrative, both aspects of this root meaning are developed. Narratives of striking and spreading are told as word combinations arranged largely around *STR* sound clusters. For the purpose of this discussion, the narrative structure of the poem can be divided into three movements. The opening section (stanzas 1-10) are a meditation on God's power. Hopkins focuses on the fearful double aspect of God, his beautiful yet destructive force as it is reflected in nature and felt in the body. He calls out, feeling the force of God conquering him and mastering his sense of separation and isolation. The poem opens, then, with a consideration of the use of force, or, in the terms I am proposing, the "striking" power of God. The middle sections (11-31) deal with descriptions of the shipwreck and the narrative of the heroic Nun. These two sets of images construct a pattern of force (the wreck) and grace (the Nun). Finally, in the third section (32-35), the speaker's submission to God's will ends with a call for the spreading of His word. The poem as a whole moves from force to grace to the spreading of that grace throughout the individual soul and the world. As the poem expands its focus from the individual/internal to the physical/external and religious/transcendental registers, the earlier meanings never disappear. Force, for example, is never absent from the world, only transformed and recirculated. Nevertheless, certain key words from the *STR* clusters predominate in each of the various sections. The first section mediates an internal/external separation by

shifting between "heart" and "stars"; the second section juxtaposes "storm," "sister," and "Master"; and the third section is increasingly dominated by a theological vocabulary—"Christ," "Easter," "sovereignty," "spirit."

"The Wreck of the Deutschland" begins by concentrating on the subjective activity of the poet. The speaker desires to feel the presence of God, to bridge the chasm perceived between the individual soul's solipsism and its desire for transcendence. How can sensations from the physical world connect the internal to the universal? How can our senses connect us with God's presence? The answer is through God's power, his "striking" or force. Hopkins balances the internal and personal "hearts" ("And fled with a fling of the heart to the heart of the Host") and the universal "stars" ("I kiss my hand / To the stars, lovely-asunder / Starlight"). The two images are then forcibly pushed together: "Not out of his bliss / Springs the stress felt / Not first from heaven (and few know this) / Swings the stroke dealt— / Stroke and a stress that stars and storms deliver, / that guilt is hushed by, hearts are flushed by and melt—" (stanza 6). The poem moves from "mystery" to "understanding," and it does so by stressing the force of God, His suffering, his passion, Christ's gift: "His mystery must be instressed, stressed; / For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand" (stanza 5). Hopkins celebrates God's force, Christ's gift. This outpouring is immediately followed by its after effects: first the images of strewing/spreading in stanza seven ("discharge," "swelling," "flood"), then, the heart conquered: "melt him but master him still: / . . . / Make mercy in all of us, out of us all / Mastery, but be adored, but be adored King" (stanza 10)). The first part of the poem begins and ends with a plea for Christ's mastery.

The second section immediately challenges this celebration of God's force. The poem's images break loose from the figurative and enter the physical world.

Key metaphors of the first part—"strand," "ocean," "lightning," "storm"—come to refer to real and historical objects. The narrative of the shipwreck strikes the reader with the full power of God's force. Hopkins represents that power in a series of images that "unmake" our sense of self, our sense of our physical and mental integrity. The force of God harvests us with its "sour scythe"; "Flesh falls within sight of us . . ." (stanza 11). The passengers on the "Deutschland" are equally unearthed, rootless settlers without a home. The striking power of the storm confuses, disorients. A cluster of *STR* sounds in "sitting Eastnortheast" (stanza 13) reflects the disorientation of the self under the pressure of God, and stanza thirteen ends by completing this process of psychic destruction and physical unmaking: "the widow-making unchilding unfathering deeps." Powerless before God's fury, the ship "drove in the dark to leeward, / She struck—not a reef or a rock / But the combs of a smother of sand . . ." (stanza 14). With the shift from "struck" to "smother," Hopkins opens another reserve of meaning. The destructive force of God is balanced by the possibility of grace. Instead of reef or rock, the ship strikes "a smother of sand."

With the introduction of the heroic Nun, Hopkins supplies the poem with a new, doubling structure. Earlier the poem had depended solely upon an acknowledgement of God's force. The self could understand its own nature only in relation to God's presence, only through being "unstressed, stressed." Yet the force of that presence threatens the self with disintegration. It must be balanced by acts of grace.

Hopkins accomplishes this by reversing images of striking and spreading. He uses images that simultaneously perform both functions. "Breast," for example, is conceived of in stanzas sixteen and seventeen as the part of the body that receives the blow. The heroic sailor is one who "was pitched to his death at a blow, /

For all his dreadnought breast . . ." (stanza 16), and the Nun is a "lioness" who arose "breasting the babble, / A prophetess" (stanza 17). Yet, in stanza twenty, masculine force becomes feminine comfort. The image of the breast is Christ's grace—that which transcends good and evil: "Christ's lily and beast of the waste wood: / From life's dawn it is drawn down, / Abel is Cain's brother and breasts they have sucked the same." Similarly, the uprooted flowers, symbols of mortality and victims of the "sour scythe," now blossom and transform the image of the storm, becoming symbols of Christ's suffering. The flowers once doomed to death now become "Storm flakes . . . sweet heaven was astrew with them" (stanza 21). These moments of transformation—of receiving the force of God and spreading that force as Word—are speech acts in which Christ can "make words break from me here alone" (stanza 18). These moments of "Wording it how but by him that present and past, / Heaven and earth are word of, worded by" (stanza 29) result in pitches of spiritual ecstasy released into the poem as bursts of *STR* sounds: "Sister, a sister calling / A master, her master and mine!" (stanza 19) and "calling 'O Christ, Christ, come quickly': / The cross to her she calls Christ to her, christens her wild-worst-Best" (stanza 24).

The poem's final section is dominated by its religious vocabulary: "Christ," "Master," "easter," "sovereignty." The spreading of Christ's mercy is now to the "uttermost mark" (stanza 33), and the poem ends, again with a crescendo of *STR* sounds: ". . . high priest, / Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire, our thoughts' chivalry's throng's Lord" (stanza 35). The final image is of Christ as daybreak, spreading light into our hearts and thoughts. The movement from force to grace is completed.

Hopkins, of course, never published "The Wreck of the Deutschland." The poem was rejected twice

by *The Month* and only published by Robert Bridges forty-two years after its composition. Placing Hopkins's verse within the context of Victorian language study, however, shows its idiosyncrasies to be part of a larger cultural project. That project, devoted to uncovering language as an organic process evolving over time, was also capable in Hopkins's view of revealing words in their original relationship to divinely created phenomena. The poetic impulses connecting sound and meaning led Leavis to declare the poem a modernist masterpiece. Both its formal patterning of "verbal echo, alliteration, rime and assonance" (26) and the organicism of its metaphysical conceits had their roots in the nineteenth century's fascination with language as a living organism. Hopkins's poetry, in this sense, was not only of his time but also as empirically uncompromising in its desire to render the world realistically and mimetically as any other product of Victorian thought and imagination.

Notes

¹ See, for example, Austin Warren's 1944 essay, one of the earliest demonstrations of Hopkins's connection to Victorian philology, the study of which he notes, with specific reference to George P. Marsh's *Lectures on the English Language* (1859), "is full of matter calculated to excite a poet" (187).

² Cary Plotkin has recently suggested in *The Tenth Muse* that Hopkins's poetic practice "follows, reflects, and embodies—indeed *translates* into the language of poetry—patterns and categories common to Victorian language study generally" (144). Hopkins's interest in Indo-European root-stems seems to be of special relevance to his poetic production.

³ Hugh Kenner has commented on the connection between genetics and information theory in *The Pound Era*: "We are joined—this is the theme of Comparative Philology—as much to one another as to the dead by continuities of speech

as of flesh" (96).

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The Fearful Symmetries of Aesthetics and Ideology in the Literature Classroom

significant problem facing teachers of literature to undergraduates is that of balancing aesthetic and ideological considerations. There are three typical responses to the question of what sort of method to adopt with respect to the increasing polarization of the discipline. One response is the apparently relentless reformist push from the ideological left, whose members often express in one way or another that the literary classroom is the battleground for the hearts and minds of those being culturally colonized by a literary canon dominated by the works and therefore values of dead white European males. For the extremists in this camp, it is the height of hypocrisy to sow a false consciousness by suggesting that literature engages the free play of the imagination in any way divorced from political considerations. The second type of response, coming from the reactionary right, usually begins with an expression of a wistful nostalgia for a prelapsarian world (i.e., before feminist, Marxist, and cultural criticism, not to mention deconstruction, gender theory, post-colonial theory, and the new historicism)—a world wherein *the* canon *does* warrant the definite article; and though politics may be mentioned in polite company, it is usually restricted to casual observations about Pope's friendship with Lord Bolingbroke or Wordsworth's political apostasy—subjects that can be made safe for apologists and critics alike. This yearning of the old guard for the good old days of sweetness and light

undiluted with the tawdriness of politics is bolstered by a disavowal of any ideological considerations whatsoever in their practice; and, like Louis in *Casablanca* condemning gambling while raking in his winnings, it is also accompanied by a condemnation of those who would stoop to canon formation and interpretive praxis based on ideology. I have, of course, dramatized the situation a bit; what is here presented as a polarity might in certain quarters be thought of as a continuum. But the point is that these opposite tendencies do exist, and at the end of the day the instructor must position herself somewhere within this continuum.

There is a third camp that should be mentioned, led by Gerald Graff and his “teach the conflicts” campaign. Graff encourages instructors to come clean with students about their own ideological predispositions by actually basing a curriculum *upon* ideological rifts. While this is an attractive alternative to the potential divisiveness of the first two scenarios, this approach too has its drawbacks. The main problem is simply paradigmatic context. Many undergraduates simply have not read enough literature to contextualize and therefore grasp abstract conflicting theories about literature at the outset.

I used to begin my upper-level course on Romanticism by having students read seminal statements by A.O. Lovejoy and René Wellek on the relative coherence of Romanticism as a movement. True, this is perhaps not the best example, because though they come to different conclusions about Romanticism, Lovejoy and Wellek, two old-school humanist critics, were in essential agreement about the provenance and function of literature, but the point is this: lacking the context of the literature itself, the niceties of the arguments of these scholars were lost upon most of my students, and the only thing they took away from the readings was the idea that while Lovejoy thought that Romanticism meant a lot of different things to dif-

ferent people, Wellek thought it meant a few clearly discernible things to those who had ears to hear. After I had begun the class this way a few times, I began to question the wisdom of this procedure, which I felt sidetracked us from our essential task, which was to examine the Romantic poets themselves.

But, one might argue, the proposition that our main task was to study the Romantics “themselves” is itself fraught with ideological commitment, and so it is. The days of a pre-critical unexamined life are over. We now understand (or at least many of us tentatively agree) that the object is largely constituted by the theoretical approach and that some theoretical approach is always present. Terry Eagleton, by way of chiding those who disclaim theory in general, is fond of quoting a remark by the economist J. M. Keynes to the effect that “those economists who disliked theory, or claimed to get along better without it, were simply in the grip of an older theory” (vii). My tacit acquiescence to Wellek’s position is underscored by the very fact that I teach this group of poets—the canonical six Romantics—as a unit, and this is tantamount to an act of aesthetic hegemony that privileges their aesthetics over others. In my own defence (and perhaps this is a bit unfair, and too easy a mark) may I suggest that Eagleton, Edward Said, Elaine Showalter, Lillian Robinson, Gayatri Spivak, and other critics, whether feminist, Marxist, post-colonial, or cultural, all have a tolerably good command of the Western Canon and are able to make their denunciations and canonical amendments from the vantage point of an impossibly high standard for textual exegesis, which they attained through a rigorous curriculum that included the very canonical works they now quite ably critique. And so while I have great sympathy for many of their political aims, I still suggest that our students should read the traditional works of Western literature.

But I will not go so far as that aestheticising

Übermensch Harold Bloom, who contends that what he dubs the “school of resentment” (i.e., those he sees as intent on overthrowing the Western canon as we know it) is going to be the undoing of literary studies—though I do give him credit for chiding those on the right who are equally intent upon reducing the canon to some sort of reservoir of moral imperatives to keep the masses in check. As a corrective to Bloom’s unqualified championing of the Western Canon, and to his latest cause, cheerleading for genius itself, we might remember Walter Benjamin’s famous observation on the relationship of the high achievements of culture to the oppression which made those achievements possible. “The products of art and science,” wrote Benjamin, “owe their existence not merely to the effort of the great geniuses that created them, but also to the unnamed drudgery of their contemporaries. There is no document of culture which is not at the same time a document of barbarism” (233).

Thus chastened and subdued, we point out to our students that the emancipatory potential of Conrad’s critique of imperialism in *Heart of Darkness* is overshadowed by the novella’s racist leitmotiv, or that *Moby-Dick* is a phallogocentric novel, or that Wordsworth was being condescending to Dorothy Wordsworth in “Tintern Abbey,” and so on, toting up the social sins of authors, which procedure, if untempered with attention to more traditional aesthetic considerations, and taken to its logical conclusion, lands us in the seventh circle of an identity-politics / political-correctness hell, where we might well utter with Conrad’s Kurtz, “The horror! The horror!”

This dilemma, however, it appears, is not lost even upon those whose allegiances are with a critique of power. Benjamin’s friend and fellow Frankfurt school theorist, Theodor Adorno, acknowledged Benjamin’s radical reading of cultural hegemony in the classics, but balked at privileging the critique of power to the

exclusion of aesthetic concerns. Inquiring into the possibility of art after Auschwitz in his book *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno contends, “Whoever pleads for the maintenance of this radically culpable and shabby culture becomes its accomplice, while the man who says no to culture is directly furthering the barbarism which our culture showed itself to be” (qtd. in Arato and Gebhardt 188). The reasons for his refusal to jettison the aesthetic for a strictly analytical critique of power may be seen in Adorno and Max Horkheimer’s critique of what they call “instrumental reason” in their brilliant book *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, first published in 1944. Adorno and Horkheimer’s thesis is that the fascism which the world had so recently witnessed was not an aberration of reason conjoined with utilitarian philosophies, but rather a terrifying extension of it. Science, technology, and the rise of the bourgeoisie, all enlightenment projects, had promised first to liberate humankind from submission to nature; next, it supposedly heralded social liberation in the overthrowing of the old feudal order and establishment of a new egalitarian social order. After achieving progress in these directions, the progress turns upon itself and instead results in a social, political, and economic order which itself replicates by other means the domination of the subject theretofore associated with totalitarian regimes. Reason itself, if not checked as a socially organizing principle, is ultimately cashiered for a return to myth and superstition through its insistence upon a blind adherence to a system that demands conformity. The system reduces all things to its likeness, which is to say, it values and condones only those things which perpetuate the system itself. Everything is therefore reduced first to its use value and then, under capitalism, to its exchange value; and this brand of utilitarian evaluation of things is put to work not to eradicate social stratification, but in order to reinforce it.

As if all of this were not disturbing enough, the

situation is complicated by Horkheimer and Adorno's contention that despite enlightened thought's recursive trajectory towards self-destruction, the alternative—the total rejection of it (even if we could pursue such a program)—is even more unpalatable. So, they are dedicated to enlightened thought as the only currently viable mode, despite its negativity:

We are wholly convinced—and therein lies our *petitio principii*¹—that social freedom is inseparable from enlightened thought. Nevertheless, we believe that we have just as clearly recognized that the notion of this very way of thinking, no less than the actual historic forms—the social institutions—with which it is interwoven, already contains the seed of the reversal universally apparent today. If enlightenment does not accommodate reflection on this recidivist element, then it seals its own fate. If consideration of the destructive aspect of progress is left to its enemies, blindly pragmatized thought loses its transcending quality and, its relation to the truth. (xiii)

Thus, they go on to argue in later chapters, utilitarian reason, after breaking with myth and superstition to set up a system for the ostensible benefit of humankind, and indeed, making huge strides in conquering the physical world, ultimately loses sight of its original goals and turns into the unreason and political totalitarianism which it sought to dispel. It is true that their theory was stated in this fashion some sixty years ago, in the wake of the great destructiveness of transparently totalitarian regimes, and so we might wonder whether they overstated the case. But lest we come to that conclusion, we have only to consider the gross mismanagement of resources endemic to the huge bureaucracies necessary to administer large urban centers; the criminal indifference of those who hold institutional power, whether those institutions are public or private, and whose pandering to special interests is made possible by layers of legal gerrymandering and buffers of

bureaucracy; the manipulation of mass perceptions by the media owned and controlled by monied interests; the violence consequent upon capitalism's constant need for imperialist expansion and the tautologies spun out in justification of such violence; and indeed, the moral bankruptcy of capitalism itself, a system which, it is increasingly apparent, is devised for the benefit of the few at the expense of the many.

It is in this context, then, that the Frankfurt theorists, although concerned over the potential voiding of the aesthetic were art to be wholly subsumed under political discourse, were even more concerned about what happens willy-nilly to art in a capitalist, consumerist society. Art itself, they held, loses its emancipatory potential to the extent that it becomes a product of the culture industry. The culture industry is that part of the political and economic structure of a society that induces mass deception by creating entertainment needs and then satisfying those needs, in a self-perpetuating cycle of false consciousness and consumerism.²

In consumer society, the use value of art (which has ever been a perplexed value, hanging between the *dulce* and the *utile*) becomes subordinated to its exchange value, and, according to Horkheimer and Adorno, this changes everything:

The principle of idealistic aesthetics—purposefulness without a purpose—reverses the scheme of things to which bourgeois art conforms socially: purposelessness for the purposes declared by the market. At last, in the demand for entertainment and relaxation, purpose has absorbed the realm of purposelessness. But as the insistence that art should be disposable in terms of money becomes absolute, a shift in the internal structure of cultural commodities begins to show itself. The use which men in this antagonistic society promise themselves from the work of art is itself, to a great extent, that very existence of the useless which is abolished by complete inclusion under use. The work of art, by completely assimilating itself to need, deceitfully

deprives men of precisely that liberation from the principle of utility which it should inaugurate. . . . No object has an inherent value; it is valuable only to the extent that it can be exchanged. (158)

Thus the nature of art changes radically when it becomes one commodity amongst others; and it too, therefore, is reduced to just another dimension of instrumental reason. There is, paradoxically, I would contend, a similar reductionism when literature is seen exclusively in its ideological dimension. I am contending, in other words, that it is a more or less tacit allegiance to instrumental reason and all that it entails to interpret the significance of literary works exclusively in the dimension of overt ideological affect—that is, as ciphers of progressive or reactionary politics. In response to this position, what I propose that the aesthetic offers is one of the few potential avenues left to us for interrogating, if not subverting, the totalizing paradigms of instrumental reason. Thus, paradoxically, to read aesthetically *is* a political act inasmuch as it is a negation of the pervasive encroachment of utilitarian reason. What this means can be illustrated with an example from a work of literature.

Since the vision of the future in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* most closely resembles the Frankfurt school theorists' prognostications about hegemony achieved through media manipulation and consumerism, we could certainly turn to it for an example, but I'd like instead to look at few passages from that other great twentieth-century dystopia, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston Smith acts out his rebellion against Big Brother by engaging in a number of illegal acts, from writing a journal, to having his affair with Julia, to reading the exposé of oligarchical collectivism supposedly written by Emmanuel Goldstein. But his most interesting act of political subversion (to me at least) begins with the

scene in which he encounters the glass paperweight in the antique shop run by one Mr. Charrington, who later, of course, turns out to be a member of the Thought Police:

It was a heavy lump of glass, curved on one side, flat on the other, making almost a hemisphere. There was a peculiar softness, as of rainwater, in both the color and the texture of the glass. At the heart of it, magnified by the curved surface, there was a strange, pink, convoluted object that recalled a rose or a sea anemone.

“What is it?” said Winston [to the shopkeeper], fascinated.

“That’s coral, that is,” said the old man. “It must have come from the Indian Ocean. They used to kind of embed it in the glass. That wasn’t made less than a hundred years ago. More, by the look of it.

“It’s a beautiful thing,” said Winston.

“It is a beautiful thing,” said the other appreciatively. “But there’s not many that’d say so nowadays.” He coughed. (94-95)

Not many would say in the twisted world of Orwell’s novel that the paperweight is beautiful because beauty is a function of subjectivity, an inducement to “ownlife” and “thoughtcrime,” and therefore inimical to conformity. The system is for this reason hostile to art. At this point in the narrative, the shopkeeper tells Winston that he can purchase the paperweight for four dollars, although, he says, back in the days when people cared about antiques, it would have fetched a higher price. Winston pays the four dollars, but he immediately realizes that the shopkeeper would have accepted less. Interestingly, in this passage, beauty is indeed reduced to exchange value (which itself has been devalued in a system that does not condone beauty); but the mental calculations which reduce the object to its exchange value recede in symbolic importance in the face of what really attracts Winston:

What appealed to him about it was not so much its beauty as the air it seemed to possess of belonging to an age quite different from the present one. The soft, rainwatery glass was not like any glass that he had ever seen. The thing was doubly attractive because of its apparent uselessness, though he could guess that it must once have been intended as a paperweight. It was very heavy in his pocket, but fortunately it did not make much of a bulge. It was a queer thing, even a compromising thing, for a Party member to have in his possession. Anything old, and for that matter anything beautiful, was always vaguely suspect. (95)

Winston is rightly sensitive to the peculiarity of the object and therefore its potentially politically compromising nature; and his sensibilities also acutely register its complex of beauty and apparent uselessness. It is in the context of his internal rebellion against a totalitarian regime where instrumental reason has run amok, where every minute of every day and even every bodily gesture has to be accounted for and where even every thought must be put to work to conform the individual to the designs of the system of oppression itself, that Winston's fascination with this useless beauty *is* the ultimate act of rebellion. His is a nostalgia for a place in time when instrumental reason's grip on the individual was not so pervasive. Later, without quite knowing why, Winston associates the paperweight with his relationship with Julia. After sleeping with Julia in their little hideaway, Winston

lay gazing into the glass paperweight. The inexhaustibly interesting thing was not the fragment of coral but the interior of the glass itself. There was such a depth of it, and yet it was almost as transparent as air. It was as though the surface of the glass had been the arch of the sky, enclosing a tiny world with its atmosphere complete. He had the feeling that he could get inside it, and that in fact he was inside it, along with the mahogany bed and the gateleg table and the clock and the steel engraving and the paperweight itself.

The paperweight was the room he was in, and the coral was Julia's life and his own, fixed in a sort of eternity at the heart of the crystal. (148)

The paperweight, ostensibly useless (or at least denuded of its intended function as paperweight), becomes for Winston a medium whereby he can more fully realize his humanity because of its very aspect of not conforming with the utilitarian demands of the dehumanizing society in which he has lived. Through it, he feels that he can approximate in his own mind a world in which human relationships are not defined by the madness that obtained in the world of Big Brother; and the paperweight, whose intended use value as paperweight he rejects for something far more personal and domestic, and therefore more important, functions as a beacon to him to his own humanity, but not in an overtly political way.³ It is no coincidence then, that when the henchmen of the Thought Police finally come for Winston and Julia, the first thing they do is smash the coral paperweight: "The fragment of coral, a tiny crinkle of pink like a sugar rosebud from a cake, rolled across the mat. How small, thought Winston, how small it always was!" (224).

Coral reefs, let us remind ourselves, are composed of countless organisms that communally build the complex structures on which the individual organisms thrive—a kind of metaphor for the body politic. If the coral of the paperweight awakens in Winston an association with real, integral human relationships that contrast sharply with the dehumanized relationships that are enforced in the world of Big Brother, he does not make this association in an overtly political and instrumental way—he just enjoys it because it makes him feel more human. On the other hand, perhaps the glass of the paperweight, magnifying the coral as it does, is emblematic of the optics by which such structures of social meaning may be magnified and by whose agency

they may achieve greater clarity and significance to the viewer, and so, in the context of an exegesis of the novel, the paperweight does have an overt political function. Whatever the case, and in whatever insane world of totalizing thought—whether the world of 1984 or that of 2003, I think that, yes, it is important to make overt statements against systems of oppression and unmask whatever methods power uses for self-perpetuation; but I also think it just as important not to smash the coral paperweights available to us.

Notes

¹A Latin phrase used in logic which means “begging the question.” It refers to a logical fallacy in which the truth of the conclusion is assumed by the premises. *Footnote mine*.

²It is not without reason, therefore, that Mr. Bush, in the wake of the 9/11 catastrophe, says that in order to perpetuate the American way, the American public should go out and spend some money, take our families to Disney World, etc. (not sit down and read, say, *Remembrance of Things Past* but consume).

³It is interesting to note that the first time he and Julia have sexual relations, Winston interprets this afterwards as a political act against the party (128).

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“Altered by a thousand distortions”: Dream-Work in Mary Shelley’s Early Novels

I

n each of her first three novels, as well as in her novella, *Mathilda*, Mary Shelley includes the description of a dream that occurs at a crucial moment of the story. While Victor’s dream of his dead mother in *Frankenstein* (1818) has been thoroughly investigated in terms of its Oedipal implications, its significance in relation to the dreams in her other works—*Mathilda* (1819), *Valperga; or the Life and Adventures of Castruccio, Prince of Lucca* (1823), and *The Last Man* (1826)—has not yet been adequately analyzed.¹ Shelley’s works were all written between 1816 and 1823, during which time she was experiencing tremendous emotional turmoil in her own life. Her use of a series of central dream episodes in these works can be viewed in terms of her attempts to work out her own conflicts arising from her relationships with her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, her father, William Godwin, and her husband, Percy Shelley.

In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Sigmund Freud suggests, “Most of the artificial dreams constructed by imaginative writers are designed for a symbolic interpretation . . . : they reproduce the writer’s thoughts under a disguise which is regarded as harmonizing with the recognized characteristics of dreams” (129). In the dreams she describes, Shelley does in fact structure her descriptions to invite a symbolic interpretation. At the same time, though, by incorporating consideration of Shelley’s biographical context, these dreams can also be

analyzed using the “decoding” method Freud’s clinical practice better approximated. The major disadvantage, to be sure, is the inability to determine directly from Shelley what associations exist with regard to the different images in the dreams she presents. Nevertheless, insightful conclusions can be drawn from such an analysis.

One of the first questions that arise when examining the dream scenes that Shelley employs in her early writings is why she felt such a strong need to employ the same plot technique in each of her first four major writing projects. As various critics make clear, such a strategy was certainly not unprecedented. Jonathan Glance, for example, lists a number of literary antecedents, including Samuel Richardson’s *Clarrisa* (1740), Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk* (1794) and *The Castle Spectre* (1798), Charlotte Dacre’s *Zofloya; or, the Moor* (1806), and Percy Shelley’s *Zastrozzi* (1810) (4). Interestingly, with the exception of Richardson, whose dream scene is not quite as fantastic as the others, each of these texts falls into the genre of the gothic, whereas, arguably, only the first of Shelley’s works would qualify as such, yet she persists in utilizing the same device.

Although lack of creative sophistication could account for this persistence, a less judgmental possibility exists in Shelley’s actual experiences with dreams in her own life. One of the best-known Mary Shelley anecdotes involves the dream she reports having on the night of Saturday, March 18, 1815, twelve days after the death of her first child, born two months premature on February 22. Her journal relates, “Dream that my little baby came to life again—that it had only been cold & that we rubbed it by the fire & it lived—I . . . awake and find no baby” (*Journals* 70). The sentiments expressed in this entry, based as they are in wish fulfillment fantasy, have important correlations to her letter to Thomas Hogg that had announced the child’s death: “My dearest Hogg my baby is dead — . . . It

was perfectly well when I went to bed—I awoke in the night to give it suck it appeared to be sleeping so quietly that I would not awake it—it was dead then but we did not find that out till morning” (*Letters* 1:10-11). In both descriptions, the line between life and death is a very obscure one, further blurred by the mother’s need to believe her child is alive despite the evidence to the contrary. I do not mean to suggest that Shelley should have known that her baby was dead or perhaps could even had saved her had she checked on her more carefully in the middle of the night. However, there is always the possibility that at some level, Shelley might have reproached herself with such thoughts.

Regardless, this experience did certainly contribute to Shelley’s developing association between maternity and mortality, which had its origins in her own birth, followed so closely as it was by Wollstonecraft’s demise. In this experience, though, Shelley would find an idea—the powerful suggestive potential of dreams—that she could recast later when she embarked on her literary career. In fact, an equally well-known story from Shelley’s writings also involves her experience of a dream. In her 1831 introduction to the revised third edition of *Frankenstein*, Shelley describes how the idea for the novel first came to her in a “waking dream” she had shortly after the story-writing contest at Villa Diodati had commenced:

. . . I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half vital motion. Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world. (Norton Critical Edition 172)

Shelley discusses the same essential elements in this one. Again, the focus is on bestowing life where it has already been withdrawn, utilizing the aid of a secondary device, here a mechanical engine, whereas previously it was simply the warmth from a fire. What this dream adds, though, is the final commentary on the folly of “playing God.” But, one might ask, couldn’t childbearing, even in its natural form, represent a human effort to “mock” the creative power of the original Creator? To be sure, even at this still early stage, Mary Shelley had become acquainted with the potentially frightful effects of such efforts.

Thus, the dream Victor has on the night of his creation has clear connections to Mary Shelley’s own experiences, connections that have been well established by Ellen Moers, Margaret Homans, and so many other critics that they require little revisitation here. In one way or another, such thought goes, Mary Shelley places herself in the dream, usually as Elizabeth, whose existence requires the elimination of the mother figure, whether Caroline Beaufort Frankenstein or Mary Wollstonecraft, only to herself become subject to her own elimination as she enters into maturity and maternity.

Unfortunately, as fate played out, Shelley would be frequently reminded of this precariousness of the motherhood experience, enduring several more losses in the years following publication of *Frankenstein*, and the treatment of such losses through literary symbolism continued to be a useful one for her. In each of the subsequent dream episodes, threads can be seen weaving connections to previous incarnations, thus reinforcing this continuing autobiographical significance.

In *Mathilda*, for example, perhaps the single most autobiographically motivated of Shelley’s works, the significance of the climactic dream episode is essential. Shelley wrote *Mathilda* during the period of her

life that, excepting only the period following Percy's death, was most fraught with pain and resentment. Her son William's death on June 7, 1819, threw Mary into a despair from which she never fully recovered and which caused her seriously to reconsider her view of the world. "William's death," Emily Sunstein asserts, "eclipsed the faith in her benign star and her power to master life on which her stoicism was based; indeed, for months her hope was transmogrified into belief that an evil Providence ruled the whole of existence" (169). This loss also led Mary to examine the relationship between parent and child, in several of its various incarnations, both biological and literary. In each form, this relationship had caused pain and guilt for Mary. In *Mathilda* she reveals the implications of this type of distress.

Already feeling distanced from Percy at this time, Shelley found her sorrow compounded by the cruelly unsympathetic stance her father assumed following William's death. "He claimed that she was overreacting selfishly to her losses instead of to his own . . .," Sunstein reveals (174). Rather than offering consolation, Godwin continued to demand money from the grieving Shelleys and actually criticized Mary for feeling grief at all: "What is it you want that you have not? You have the husband of your choice, to whom you seem to be unalterably attached. . . . You have all the goods of fortune, all the means of being useful to others, and shining in your own proper sphere. But you have lost a child: and all the rest of the world, all that is beautiful, and all that has a claim upon your kindness, is nothing, because a child of two years old is dead" (qtd. in Nitchie 92-93). Godwin's stoic, logical argument against Mary's selfishness is marred not only by his inability to get William's age right, but also by an unwillingness to consider the importance of emotional attachments between parent and child. Even though the letter arrived after Mary had completed *Mathilda*,

Nitchie explains, “the expostulations for which he claimed the privilege of a father and a philosopher must have seemed only a confirmation of her feeling that she had lost him” (92). Because her feelings for her father had been so strong during her early years—described by her both as an “excess of attachment” (*Letters*, I. 296) and as an “excessive & romantic attachment” (*Letters*, II. 215)—her loss of him as a figure worthy of idolatry would have been exceptionally difficult. William’s death, therefore, enacted in Mary a feeling of alienation on three levels: as wife, daughter, and mother.

Of course, it is the role of daughter that has most immediate relevance to the understanding of this work, especially in terms of the premonitory dream Mathilda has of her father’s death: “. . . I saw him at some distance, seated under a tree, and when he perceived me he waved his hand several times, beckoning me to approach; there was something unearthly in his mien that awed and chilled me, but I drew near” (205). Situating him beneath a strong, firm tree, symbolic of his phallic power, Mathilda presents a much stronger picture of her father than during her earlier inquisition of him regarding his incestuous desires for her. At that time, it is Mathilda who wields the power, leaving her father lamenting that he is “struck by the storm, rooted up, laid waste” (200). Now, again in control, he is able to dictate the course of their relationship, which he quickly terminates by jumping off a cliff while Mathilda helplessly watches (205).

The tree imagery that Shelley employs may be considered conventional on some levels, but it also significant in its correspondence to similar language in *Frankenstein*. There, it is the explosive destruction of a magnificent oak by a flash of lightning that invigorates young Victor’s interest in science (23), though he later employs the same language to describe his fall: “But I am a blasted tree; the bolt has entered my soul; and I

felt then that I should survive to exhibit, what I shall soon cease to be—a miserable spectacle of wrecked humanity, pitiable to others, and abhorrent to myself” (110). In *Mathilda*, Shelley further develops this blasted-tree imagery to depict the devastation involved in flawed parent-child relations, a devastation felt powerfully by her in the fall of 1819, when she describes the destruction of another oak. On her journey in search of her father, Mathilda tells her companion, “Mark, Gaspar, if the next flash of lightning rend not that oak my father will be alive” (213). Of course, Mathilda’s suggestion immediately comes true, as the destruction of the tree brings together the images introduced during her earlier inquisition of her father. While at that time she has urged her father to confess his secret, “though it be as a flash of lightning to destroy me” (201), now the true target of that punishment is revealed. The phallic power of the father, threatened by Mathilda’s authority, and reclaimed in some measure by his final letter, reaches an end at this moment. Mathilda confirms that the proper placement of blame rests on her father and his destructive, and ultimately self-destructive, desire. Now, although she may continue to seek communion with him, the threat of his incestuous desires becomes alleviated by the loss of his bodily existence. In Shelley’s case, she is able to recognize her father’s flawed response to William’s death as the culmination of his own self-centered desires and inability to maintain a proper relationship with his daughter following her elopement with Percy five years earlier.

In her next novel, *Valperga*, completed at the end of 1821, Shelley again incorporates a dream episode, and she again maintains connections to her earlier works and experiences. Of immediate relevance when examining the character of Beatrice, whose recurring nightmare could be seen as the darkest of the three so far, are the beliefs Sunstein recognizes in Shelley’s life following William’s death. This perception of an evil

Supreme Being ruling over existence certainly becomes embodied in Beatrice's adopted Paterin beliefs, which find expression in her description of the dream: "There was a vast, black house standing in the midst of the water; a concourse of dark shapes hovered about me . . ." (3: 131-32). The dreariness of these images intensifies later when Beatrice includes the climactic encounter with her doppelganger: ". . . I leaned against the hangings, and there advanced to meet me another form. It was myself . . ." (3: 132). In his introduction to the Woodstock edition of the novel, Jonathan Wordsworth identifies the literary parallels to the introduction of this doppelganger, but the true significance of its presence in the dream can be found in its relation to Euthanasia's model of the mind. In reuniting with her second self in death, Beatrice exemplifies the separation of the different parts of the mind that Euthanasia has earlier hypothesized in her discussion of her model of the mind as "a vast cave, in which many powers sit and live" (3: 99). As Sunstein acknowledges, this model of the mind is an interesting precursor to Freud's description of the unconscious (189). Like Freud, Euthanasia divides this cave into two compartments, a "vestibule" and "an inner cave, difficult of access, rude, strange, and dangerous" (3: 99-100). The complexity of the unconscious and the methods for understanding it will be the basis for Freud's work. Here, Euthanasia seeks to help Beatrice understand herself, believing, as William Brewer notes, that "if Beatrice can envision the inner workings of her own mind, perhaps she will be able to control them more effectively" (141). Self-comprehension, Euthanasia anticipates, will enable Beatrice to help herself recuperate.

Ironically, Beatrice's dream also reveals the strength of her prophetic powers. Earlier, she has told Euthanasia that she has actually discovered the scene of her dream after having had it numerous times

(3: 83). Now, even though she doesn't realize it, she describes a premonition of her own death. In each case, regrettably, the confirmation of her predictive powers signals the severe lack of power outside of herself. After coming to the scene of her dream, Beatrice passes out, waking up in the castle of her three-year confinement. After portraying the union of the two parts of her soul in death, she proceeds quickly to that death.

In all of these respects, parallels can be drawn between Beatrice and her creator. As the daughter of two of the most important thinkers of the late nineteenth century, Mary Shelley experienced considerable pressure, as she admits, to "prove myself worthy of my parentage, and enrol [sic] myself on the page of fame" (Introduction 170). Like Beatrice, Shelley had been taught to view her mother ambivalently. Whereas the saintly Wilhelmina is discovered after her death to have been the leader of a blasphemous sect that drew strength through the divinity of the female, Mary Wollstonecraft received serious damage to her reputation after the posthumous publication of her memoirs and letters by her husband William Godwin, revealing a number of her indiscretions. In one way, Beatrice, Wilhelmina, Wollstonecraft, and Shelley all have to struggle with their own doppelgangers, the divided life inherent in a woman's attempts to straddle the line between the public and private sphere, a balancing act that often represents a serious breach of social norms, the consequences of which are all too frequently fatal, on some level, for the trespasser.

Similar analysis can be performed on the next major dream episode, which occurs in *The Last Man* when Lionel falls asleep during his search for Raymond after the fall of Constantinople. Lionel recalls, ". . . my friend's shape, altered by a thousand distortions, expanded into a gigantic phantom, bearing on its brow the sign of pestilence. The growing shadow rose and

rose, filling, and then seeming to endeavour to burst beyond, the adamantine vault that bent over, sustaining and enclosing the world” (146). Much analysis of this dream focuses on the political implications of this episode, where Raymond’s explosive demise represents the fatal consequences of misplaced male ambition and aggression.² To be sure, such a reading is a valid one, especially in terms of the traditional association of Raymond with Lord Byron, whose death at Missolonghi shortly preceded composition of the novel. But there is also a more intimately autobiographical connection to be seen.

In fact, in her presentation of Perdita’s reaction to the news of Raymond’s death, Shelley dramatizes her own response to Percy’s death two years before Byron’s. “I care not,” Perdita tells Lionel, “so that one grave hold Raymond and his Perdita” (147). Repeatedly throughout her journals and letters for the years following Percy’s death, Shelley expresses a similar desire for reunion in death with Percy, for example, and her desire to ensure his proper recognition as a poet is echoed by Lionel: “While the earth lasts, his actions will be recorded with praise. Grecian maidens will in devotion strew flowers on his tomb, and make the air around it resonant with patriotic hymns, in which his name will find high record” (148). Shelley would spend over fifteen years playing the role of the Grecian maiden here, unceasing in her efforts to secure Percy’s reputation, finally succeeding with the publication of his poetical works in 1839.

Recognizing such parallels to Shelley’s posthumous portrayal of Raymond allows for another interpretation of Lionel’s dream. Indeed, it can be argued, it is the very spirit that inspired Percy to write the poetry Shelley sought to immortalize that also motivated the reckless actions that led to his death on the Gulf of Spezia. Shelley’s description of the inflated male ego in Raymond’s shape, then, suggests a not too subtle

critique of Percy's enlarged self-image and his resulting destructive behavior.

To be sure, the dangers of placing oneself inside the psyche of a long-departed author are real ones. Nevertheless, given Mary Shelley's own documentation of her perspective on the painful experiences she endured during her early adulthood, and her careful cataloging of her reading in books that influenced her understanding of the powers of dreams on both a personal and literary level, such a practice is not without its validity and does allow for an enhanced understanding of the work of this important author.

Notes

¹An important exception to this statement is William Brewer's insightful 1995 essay entitled "Mary Shelley on Dreams," which provides a very interesting discussion of the major dream episodes from *Frankenstein*, *Mathilda*, *Valperga*, and *The Last Man*, as well as the short story "The Dream." However, Brewer grounds his investigation not so much in Mary Shelley's life experiences as in the prevalent dream theories of her time, most notably the theory of the "association of ideas" developed by David Hartley in *Observations on Man* (1749) and Erasmus Darwin's discussion of the subject in *Zoonomia; or, the Laws of Organic Life* (1794).

²See, for example, Steven Goldsmith (especially 293) and Pamela Clemit (especially 202).

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Being Everywhere and Nowhere Again: Balancing Online Teaching

Online teaching is the new frontier, and many of us are eager to begin the adventure. Having taught a course entirely online once before (as described in my CEAMAG 2000 presentation “Being Everywhere and Nowhere”) without completely positive outcomes, I was somewhat skeptical of teaching totally online again. The course, in short, seemed lifeless. However, when the University of the District of Columbia Roundtable on Teaching and Learning with Technology asked for volunteers to teach what would be the first wholly online course, I raised my hand. The university wanted a first-year survey course, one that had numerous sections in case some students decided to back out, as well as one that could be replicable. English Composition I fit those requirements, and besides, I was already teaching it as web-enhanced. Immediately I began to plan the class. In contrast to my previous experience when I had to design a complete website for the course, this time I only had to load material onto the Blackboard course platform. Rather than accept just anybody into the course, I developed a screening procedure that would eliminate those students who were not technologically ready. I advertised the course online, providing only an email for contact information. I created assignments to promote interaction among the participants and selected readings and writing themes relevant to the online environment. I planned frequent online formative assessments. In this

paper, I will describe what worked and what did not.

The first course I taught online was a seminar in Advanced Composition for four graduate students in English at Bowie State University. Before teaching this course, I had undergone a series of committee hearings at the university to determine if the course would be approved. I had developed the course as a website with email interaction. The course was taught over an eight-week summer session. We had one face-to-face meeting at the first class, and, although we had planned to have a face-to-face final together, the participants came separately at three different times. One person was unable to complete the work, saying that she could not keep up because of family circumstances. Although the other three students submitted adequate assignments in a timely fashion and reported being satisfied with the course, overall I had been disappointed in the experience. I did not feel that there had been adequate enthusiasm on the part of the students or interaction among them, although interaction was built into the syllabus. The blame, I believed, was in the low enrollment, the short term, and the lack of interactivity on the website itself, which was designed solely with Netscape Composer.

After moving on to the University of the District of Columbia and becoming involved with the Roundtable on Teaching and Learning with Technology, I found myself being an advocate for online teaching, this time using Blackboard, a course-delivery platform widely used in higher education. All the courses I taught had a Blackboard component, where I could post all written materials for the course, communicate with students in both synchronous and asynchronous settings, keep an electronic grade book, and collect and return assignments to students. There did not seem to be any disadvantages to using Blackboard in this web-enhanced course. The Roundtable decided that it was time to experiment with

wholly online teaching, and since I had been so happy in my hybrid courses, I was selected to be the first.

In an effort to recruit students, I prepared a flier that would be distributed to the deans of all the colleges and that would be posted in registration areas and circulated via email, and of course posted on the UDC Blackboard itself. The only way a student could register for this course was to contact me by email. I would then be able to correspond with the student to determine if he or she had the requisite computer skills: ability to use email, word processing, and attachment features. After the initial registration period, I had five names, and the class needed at least eight students. Another round of publicity ensued, and in the late registration period several more students contacted me. Although I had initially requested contact by email as a screening procedure, by the end of the registration period students were coming to my office and were involved in face-to-face interviews and hands-on demonstrations. Some even phoned. By the time registration closed, I had eighteen names on my roster, although I was not totally confident that all were truly prepared to take the course.

Even as registration was taking place, and prior to the official start of class, English Composition I Online was in progress. I had developed an initial ungraded assignment that asked the students to create a home page on Blackboard where they could post pictures of themselves and write a few paragraphs introducing themselves to the others in the class. They were also asked to comment on the pages of the other students in the Discussion Board area, to begin interacting with each other. This was equivalent to the first-day introductions we conducted in my traditional classes, except that we were not using up a class period, and even latecomers were able to participate. Students enthusiastically engaged in this activity, even though it received no credit, and the participatory nature of the class was

established.

As we were waiting for the class roster to stabilize, I created an online “Syllabus Quiz” that required students to study the syllabus so that I would not have to keep answering questions such as “When is the final exam?” or “What happens if I don’t pass the final?” For this they received a bonus point, and they could repeat the test as often as they needed until they received maximum credit. Most of the students took this optional quiz, and I did not have to answer questions that were answered by the syllabus, as I usually do in the traditional class.

Once registration was over, we had our first face-to-face meeting. We met in a computer lab where we had a brief orientation to Blackboard, a chance to take digital pictures of each other, and an opportunity to write an in-class diagnostic paragraph so that I could assess their initial writing skills. These “Penny Paragraphs” (they were asked to write about a penny that I gave them) became the basis for an online discussion of “What is good writing?” I retyped their handwritten paragraphs (a bit laborious, but worth it) and posted them online. This accomplished at least two things: They were able to view and comment on each other’s paragraphs, as well as see their own paragraphs in an objective, non-threatening context. Their purpose in the Discussion Board forum was to identify the features of good writing in each of the paragraphs, so that everyone was able to receive positive feedback, as well as serve as peer reviewers. In my traditional classes, although we engage in the same activity, we do not have the opportunity for each student to read and comment on every other student’s paper, leaving a written record behind. Although no credit was given for this activity, the students participated very enthusiastically, commenting on how useful it was to view their writing this way.

Now that introductions and diagnostic paragraphs

were behind us, we were ready for the first graded assignment. I decided to give them an authentic assessment: I asked them to write an essay in which they select the textbook for the class. We had at least four options: the traditional textbook, which was being used by all the other English Composition I classes, an online textbook that could be integrated with Blackboard, an online textbook that included reading selections about online topics, and no textbook at all. To my surprise, nobody selected the no-textbook option, obviously the cheapest alternative, and a viable one in my mind, since they could find many online reading materials in the “reading corner” I had constructed on our Blackboard course that included the online *New Yorker*, *Village Voice*, and several newspapers. Most of the students selected the traditional textbook (*Subjects and Strategies*) saying that they preferred a hard copy book to read. I allowed them the option of abiding by their selections, and made all the assignments flexible enough to include them all, although they did have to demonstrate that they were using some textbook by referring to the articles they were reading. The outcome was that the assignments all reflected a high degree of reading outside material, based on their personal preferences, and the lack of a uniform textbook was not a problem at all.

After the first assignment had been submitted, it became clear that not all the students who came to the first class were still actively participating. Out of the eighteen students on my roster, four had not submitted any assignments. Two of those students had been pregnant (one of their reasons for taking an online course) and had not come to the first class. Eventually, they did submit assignments. Two others who had been at the first class and who had created home pages did not submit any assignments. One of these participated in the Discussion Board area, but said that she was having technical difficulties submitting assignments. I

suggested alternatives to the Drop Box, and eventually she submitted her assignments in the message box of email—not the best method, but at least something. The emails sent to the other student came bouncing back, and eventually she withdrew. The others in the class, however, caught on quickly to the Drop Box, learning to convert documents to Rich Text Format when I could not open their files.

To encourage more of the feedback and interaction developed at the start of the class, I asked them to post their assignments in a Discussion Board forum and to comment on the other essays posted there. Again, this accomplished several objectives not achieved in the traditional class: We could immediately “publish” their essays and peer review them. Overall, this was quite successful, with one drawback that the students themselves observed in one of the Discussion Board Forums – all the comments had been positive. Apparently, nobody felt comfortable offering negative critiques of the essays, even though they all agreed that it would be useful.

One of the real advantages of the online environment came, of course, with the President’s Day snowstorm of 2003. I sent out an email to all the students announcing that there would be a Virtual Chat session at 11:00 on Monday night and 11:00 on Tuesday morning. The evening session drew a “crowd” of six students, whereas the morning session had only one student and me. The discussion in both groups centered on questions concerning the upcoming midterm exam, but it also served to bring at least two students out of a shell. Whereas prior to the Virtual Chat they had been less participatory in the Discussion Board area, in the Virtual Chat area they were responding to comments, jokes, and questions, and afterwards they seemed more engaged in the course. One of the problems with the Virtual Chat, however, was that several students reported that they did not have the opportunity to participate

since their computer access was confined to work. Obviously, home access to a computer would be a real advantage for online students.

The midterm exam gave us another opportunity to meet face-to-face, although there was no real interaction. The exam was a two-hour simulation of the final exam, given primarily to assess their in-class writing. Of the original eighteen, fourteen came to the midterm. Their in-class essays were similar to their at-home assignments, with comparable grades, although two of the students did demonstrate a sloppy handwriting that may in fact be the outcome of lack of practice. Also, time was a problem for two of the students who had difficulty writing under pressure. Since the final exam is a hand-written two-hour exam, I advised these students to practice keeping a handwritten journal.

At this point, a midterm survey was given, to which fifteen people responded. The comments were predominantly positive, with all students reporting a good to high level of satisfaction with the course and their progress in it. The negative aspects concerned online reading, suggesting that the students were not comfortable reading materials online and that traditional reading materials should be used. They all reported feeling comfortable using technology, although two users said that they wished they were not in an online course. The amount of face-to-face interaction seemed appropriate for the majority of students, although two said they wanted more and two said they wanted less. Based on this survey, I would probably keep things as they are, although I might reconsider asking the students to select an online textbook as an option.

One problem that has emerged is the inevitable plagiarism. A student who had not received a passing grade on the midterm submitted an assignment afterwards that I suspected had been plagiarized. Unlike in the traditional setting where I would have turned to my bookshelf and thumbed through several old textbooks

before giving up and writing a comment on the paper alluding to my suspicions but not firmly stating them, in this circumstance, I copied and pasted a phrase that I knew she could not have written into a Google search box and within seconds found almost the identical essay on a site called “Sparknotes.” I then copied and pasted the URL for this essay directly into my comments for her paper with a grade of “0” for the assignment.

By the end of the semester, there were thirteen active students in the class. The final was a face-to-face essay exam handwritten in two hours. The outcome was that all students passed the class, and the average final exam score, determined by other faculty, was a relatively high 84%. A final survey revealed an overall high satisfaction with the course, although some students did miss the face-to-face interaction. Most of the comments expressed appreciation of the easy access and relatively quick feedback available in the online environment, as well as the convenience.

The course was not repeated, however, although several students requested more online courses. I myself prefer to meet with students face-to-face, and my subsequent classes have been hybrid, usually meeting one day in a traditional classroom and another in a computer lab with the option of attending online. Blackboard has been particularly helpful for keeping students and me connected to each other, even through family emergencies, weather inclemency, and other situations. Nevertheless, it is always good to be there.

Graham Greene's Forgotten Man

According to Graham Greene, *The Tenth Man*, written in 1944 but not published until 1985, is a novel that this disciplined and exacting writer forgot he had written. When Greene explains the genesis and the publication facts of the manuscript in his introduction to the novel, he begins by saying that when he was writing *The Third Man* in 1948, he appeared “to have completely forgotten a story called *The Tenth Man* which was ticking away like a time bomb somewhere in the archives of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in America” (11). As he considers the sequence of events that brought *The Tenth Man* out of those archives, he indicates that in 1983 he received a letter from a stranger in the United States informing him that MGM was offering to sell his story to an American publisher. At the time, none of this concerned Greene, who to the best of his recollection had written nothing more than a two-page outline proposing a film as part of a contract he had signed with an MGM representative in London in 1944.

Greene's reasons for signing that contract prove easy to understand. He feared that when he left his government job after World War II, he would not be able to support his family, as he had “no confidence in [his] future as a novelist” (11-12). Thus, Greene says, he “welcomed in 1944 what proved to be an almost slave contract with MGM which at least assured us all of enough to live on for a couple of years in return for the idea of *The Tenth Man*” (12). In 1983, Anthony

Blond, the buyer of the book, sent the manuscript to Greene for possible revision. To his consternation, Greene received “not two pages of outline but a complete short novel of about thirty thousand words,” which he was surprised to find “very readable” (12).

Intriguing as all of this may sound, it is also important to realize that a manuscript of *The Tenth Man* has been in the collection of the Humanities Research Center of the University of Texas at Austin for some time. According to Judy Adamson, a Canadian Greene scholar who studied the manuscript in 1975, MGM was not the only group to have a copy of this narrative (Personal Conversation, October 26, 1985). In addition, a catalogue outlining the holdings of the Graham Greene Papers at the Georgetown University Library indicates that “numerous drafts of *The Tenth Man*” are part of that collection as well. Apparently, the time bomb was ticking away in multiple locations.

Yet Greene found the manuscript and its location enough of a mystery to stay on a personal alert for any traces of it in his own papers. Finally, he “found by accident in a cupboard in Paris an old cardboard box containing two manuscripts, one being a diary and commonplace book which I had apparently kept during 1937 and 1938” (12-13). Here he discovered a description of a story that he had discussed with an American film director on December 26, 1937, and these notes for a “future film” seem to be what might today be labeled as a “pitch” for a movie script:

Two notions for future films. One: a political situation like that in Spain. A decimation order. Ten men in prison draw lots with matches. A rich man draws the longest match. Offers all his money to anyone who will take his place. One, for the sake of his family, agrees. Later, when he is released, the former rich man visits anonymously the family who possess his money, he himself now with nothing but his life. . . .
 . (13)

If the script had been written in 1937, this would have been *The Tenth Man*. At the same time, through his entire career, Greene had consistently believed that his stories and any problems relating to those stories could be resolved in the unconscious. That belief serves him well in the case of his forgotten man, for he claims that during the war years “all memory of the slender idea was lost in the unconscious” (13). In retrospect, Greene says that in 1944, when he “picked up the tale of Chavel and Janvier” and wrote *The Tenth Man*, “I must have thought it an idea which had just come to my mind, and yet I can now only suppose that those two characters had been working away far down in the dark cave of the unconscious while the world burned” (13).

Regardless of the conjecture, Greene’s forgotten man and his story emerged in 1985 as *The Tenth Man*, a slender volume that explored in brief the human heart, conscience, and spirit. The story is quintessential Greene, set in France toward the end of World War II. Jean-Louis Chavel, a lawyer-gentleman and a man of position and property before the war, finds himself in a small prison being held hostage along with twenty-nine other Frenchmen. Here the German occupation army kills a hostage each time that the Resistance forces in the nearby town manage to kill a German soldier. When two Germans are killed, the prison commander demands that three hostages from among the thirty be shot the following morning. A German officer tells the prisoners that they themselves must choose the one man in every group of ten who will be executed. Hence, when Chavel draws a piece of paper marked with an X from a shoe, he becomes a tenth man, a man set for execution. Afraid of dying, Chavel offers a large sum of money and finally all of his worldly property, including his ancestral home at Brinac, to any man who is willing to take his place in the morning. Janvier Mangeot, a sick and poor young man, accepts the offer

in order to leave this wealth and property to his mother and sister.

When France is liberated and the prisoners released, Chavel returns to Paris with a new identity as Jean-Louis Charlot. Unable to find a job, he travels to his former home at Brinac, where he meets the old Madame Mangeot and her daughter Thérèse, now in residence in their new home. The mother expects her son to join them now that the country has been liberated, but Thérèse knows the entire story of the tenth man, and she is waiting for that man to reveal himself by coming back to the home he has given away. She lives in hatred each day, wanting to confront him and to spit in his face. Not suspecting that Charlot is really Chavel, she hires him as a servant and handyman.

Very quickly Charlot falls in love with Thérèse, but before he can tell her of his feelings, Carosse comes to the door. This collaborator and murderer claims to be Chavel, and because he fears being identified as the real Chavel, whom Thérèse hates, Charlot supports the imposter's lie. Carosse takes Thérèse's spittle in his face and pleads his case, moving with ease to charm and court the naïve girl. Only after the ailing Madame Mangeot dies in her bed does Charlot accuse Carosse of being a fraud, this in an attempt to stop him from using Thérèse to gain the safety and wealth that Brinac offered to a man on the run. In the end, Carosse shoots Charlot, who takes the bullet knowing that Thérèse will not marry a murderer and believing that his death is appropriate for the tenth man.

In the twelve major novels published before 1985, Greene mapped the contours of human experience and desire, at the same time using a number of religious, philosophical, and ideological traditions as contexts in the search for meaning. No one, including Greene, expected a novel written in 1944 and thus falling directly in the middle of his four early so-called Catholic novels to appear as late as 1985. But because *The Tenth*

Man was unavailable to readers until that time, it is not surprising that no major or extended analyses have come forth. Indeed, the novel has yet to be studied in relation to or as part of the Catholic sequence. Nor have scholars or critics considered it in any depth as part of the full canon, although Peter Wolfe did begin the process in 1985 (“The Old Anew: *The Tenth Man*”) and continued the study in 1990 (“The Coward and the Cheat”). In general, though, the book was left to reviewers who publicized the vagaries of the manuscript’s history, outlined the plot, and concluded that it is an interesting but thin anomaly within Greene’s canon. While it is essential to grant that *The Tenth Man* exhibits neither the degree of artistic attention nor the craftsmanship of the original four Catholic novels—*Brighton Rock*, *The Power and the Glory*, *The Heart of the Matter*, and *The End of the Affair*—it is also important to recognize that it belongs in this series chronologically and thematically.

More than a period piece, *The Tenth Man* is a valuable map, coming as it does exactly at the mid-point of Greene’s fictive journey through the Catholic tradition. In it Greene does not retrace the steps taken in *Brighton Rock* or *The Power and the Glory*, but rather initiates thematic lines that lead to later novels, such as the belief, non-belief, and half-belief triad that comes into clearer focus in *A Burnt-Out Case*. In it Greene also forecasts the “comedian” theme, as for the first time in the novels, characters play parts: Carosse, a professional actor, pretends to be Chavel, while Chavel, the tenth man, pretends to be Charlot. The fact that Chavel proves by dying for love that he is not a comedian also sets a pattern that will be developed in some detail in the humanistic novels, which begin in 1965 with *The Comedians*. Furthermore, in *The Tenth Man*, where the themes and plot pivot on irony in what appears to be a straightforward narrative with a few flashbacks, Greene experiments with a circular structure through the use

of three images (a cinder track as a place of death, 7 a.m. as a time of death, and a false persona as a substitute for true identity), and a rounding-off technique that he develops and tightens in later novels. But in this map of fictive routes to be taken, an especially rich path emerges because Greene presents religion in a relaxed, assumed, non-combative way. Instead of posing Catholicism against another religion, philosophy, or ideology as he did in the first two Catholic novels, *Brighton Rock* and *The Power and the Glory*, Greene looks beyond orthodox belief in the teachings of a church for a different spiritual imperative in the character of Jean-Louis Chavel, who with a minimum of metaphysical argument finds a broad spiritual sense in a personal affirmation of human or divine love to illuminate his choices.

Yet when viewed in its place at the middle of the Catholic novels, *The Tenth Man* contains the normal thematic construct of two worlds. Almost as if he needs to certify that the religious dimension is still an issue in this narrative, Greene points explicitly to its presence in clear references to both worlds. Hence on the last day of Madame Mangeot's illness, it is as if Charlot "had moved close to the supernatural: an old woman was dying and the supernatural closed in" (143); but as soon as he considers the estate that could be his again, the "visible world" seems to "come back into focus" again (144). At the same time that *The Tenth Man* confirms perceptions of the mingling of the supernatural with the phenomenal world, this novel also demonstrates that Greene is not simply writing with a vague religious overlay.

Instead, within this text are at least four characters who possess, discuss, signify, or quietly reject Catholicism. One of these, Madame Mangeot, is a further development of Greene's pious Catholics who need the trappings of the Church, including its rules and social life. However, she sees herself in a precari-

ous situation as an outsider from Paris who has taken over Brinac; and feeling like an intruder rather than a member of the community, she fears the local villagers. Although this fear does not stop her from keeping to her religious duties, it does pervert the full expression of her Catholicism, in that she limits physical contact with the Church to weekly Mass. Furthermore, when she attends Mass, she appears only for the essential parts of the service, never entering “until a few moments before the Gospel was read,” and leaving “at the very first moment, when the priest had pronounced the *Ita Missa*,” thus avoiding “all contact outside the church with the congregation” (89). Regardless of those self-imposed limitations, she engages in serious prayer at home. As her daughter indicates to Charlot, there is a nightly recitation of the rosary, and true to the form of the pious Catholic, Madame Mangeot calls to Thérèse in her “praying voice,” demanding that her daughter observe and participate (123). As might be expected, therefore, when Madame Mangeot becomes ill, she does not call for a doctor. In her case, religious needs win out over those of the physical world, as “the priest was of more importance to the sick woman” (130). Since she dies with a priest in attendance, assuring her good standing with the Church, she has the advantage of what the Church calls “a happy death”—one in which the Catholic repents, confesses, and receives both communion and the last sacrament of Extreme Unction. At the least, because of the priest, she dies with her religious sense fulfilled.

Unlike his predecessors, the kind and comforting priest in *Brighton Rock* and the fugitive, martyr whisky priest in *The Power and the Glory*, the official representative of the Church in *The Tenth Man*—an unnamed, impersonal, dissatisfied priest—looks down “with asperity” on the “country people” in his parish, as well as on his predecessor in the position (131). Since Greene does not reveal the inner life of the man, it

is impossible to determine the reasons for his acrimony. Indeed, vacillating between two images in his portrait of the priest, Greene does not settle upon a central metaphor for either the priest or the way that he ministers to others. At first the priest is “a dark youngish man with the brusque air of a competent and hardworking craftsman” who packs “the sacrament in his bag as a plumber packs his tools” (130). But then Greene shifts from the craftsman image to a businessman image. The priest remains “a man with his tools,” but his bag becomes a “little attaché case,” and his manner “brisk and businesslike,” especially when he gives his blessing, “rubber-stamp[ing] the air like a notary” (131). While all of this has to do with how he appears to execute his duties in the visible world, as a professional in the world of religion, he impresses Charlot as a man with too many answers and the “appearance of enormous arrogance and certainty” (148). After Madame Mangeot dies, for example, his insistence that Thérèse have “a companion from the village” provokes Charlot to argue against “the man’s assumption that human actions were governed incontestably by morality—not even morality, but by the avoidance of scandal” (148). In the course of that argument, it becomes apparent that the priest has gained substantial psychological insight from the confessional and that he is concerned that Thérèse is “ignorant of life” (148) and emotionally vulnerable. In his own defense, the priest addresses Charlot as “a man of education” who “won’t retort that this is none of my business” and insists that he is motivated not by prudery but rather by “a knowledge of human nature which it is difficult to avoid if you sit like we do day after day, listening to men and women telling you what they have done and why” (149). Essentially then, even though he appears to have an abrasive personality, this priest expends his own sense of religion in his work, where he tries to protect his parishioners in both the

visible and the invisible worlds.

The priest's concern for Thérèse Mangeot is all the more revealing because he, of all people, is aware that she no longer practices her religion. Seeming to understand that she is an immature Catholic, he does not importune or berate her about it. Without doubt, Thérèse believes in the teachings of the Church, but her view of those teachings is both simplistic and naive. Her approach to Chavel, for example, reflects quite clearly the level on which she operates in both the seen and the unseen worlds. Hence, she claims that if Chavel ever returns to Brinac, she will spit in his face and shoot him, given the chance. This action in the physical world has its counteraction in the non-physical one because there, according to Thérèse, when Chavel dies, "you can take your oath it will be in a state of grace with the sacrament in his mouth, forgiving all his enemies. He won't die before he can cheat the Devil." She, on the other hand, is certain that she will "be the one who's damned," because she does not plan to "forgive" or to "die in a state of grace" (87). For her, all is black and white, which is perhaps appropriate given her youth and lack of secular or religious sophistication. Eventually she does forgive and begin the re-entry process into the Church, but not without the help of Charlot, and not with any substantial maturation of her own understanding of the tenets of the Church.

Yet hypocrisy is one thing that Thérèse does understand, and her refusal to be a religious hypocrite is what beckons Charlot to help her and to exercise his own sense of spirituality. Not knowing Charlot's true identity, she explains to him her hatred for Chavel as something that "goes on and on all day and all night," all the while comparing it to "a smell you can't get rid of when something's died under the floorboards" (97). But she immediately clarifies the framework of this emotion by connecting it to her choice to drop out of the Church. She has lost faith—that is, her faith

in the Roman Church. Dismissing the import of this action, she says, "That's a little thing that can happen to anyone, can't it? God wouldn't pay much account to anyone losing faith. That's just stupidity and stupidity's good" (97). In terms of good and evil, it is all right or "good" to be nothing more than stupid. But this is not the real reason she no longer practices. ". . . it's the hate that keeps me away," she says. "Some people can drop their hate for an hour and pick it up again at the church door. I can't. I wish I could" (97). Thus Thérèse confesses her unwillingness to be a hypocrite and at the same time reveals her desire to be a practicing Catholic. Charlot's response has a dual function. When this fallen-away or lapsed Catholic says "You're one of the unlucky ones who believe" (97), he recognizes her belief in Catholicism and acknowledges his own lack of belief. But more importantly, Thérèse's admissions and Charlot's realization that he loves her combine to set his sense of spirituality into motion.

This sense is the engine that drives Charlot, but he seems unaware that something beyond traditional church doctrine is at work. He thinks in terms of replacing Thérèse's hatred with love, for example, but at first is unsure of the validity of his own motivation. "If he could substitute love for hate, he told himself with exquisite casuistry, he would be doing her a service which would compensate for anything. In her naïve belief, after all, he would be giving her back the possibility of salvation" (100). Without ever admitting his love to her, Charlot does serve Thérèse. She is unable to do the forgiving herself, but he works steadily—at the cost of his own life—to erase the hate she carries. Before he dies, she verifies that the hatred is gone, which means that in an orthodox context, he has given back to her the Catholic's possibility of salvation. If Charlot is saved—or needs to be saved—it is outside of the Catholic context, because he thinks and functions in spiritual terms of love.

To show which sense is operative, Greene generally uses two sets of code words: “good and evil” relate to a sense of orthodox belief, while “love and hate” direct attention to a sense of inward spiritual affirmation of love unrelated to any particular value system. Having firmly established the good and evil set as correspondences related to church doctrine in *Brighton Rock*, on the whole Greene does not deviate from the pattern, regardless of the orthodox religious, philosophical, or ideological tradition that a novel explores. In *The Power and the Glory*, however, he seems to experiment on a tentative basis with the love and hate set. But in *The Tenth Man*, he uses both sets of code words to distinguish clearly between these two different fictive realms. Hence, the issue for Thérèse as a Catholic believer is good vs. evil, while for Charlot as a non-believer it is love vs. hate. Of particular import, however, is the fact that Charlot understands the difference and is able to apply spiritual terms to a Catholic doctrinal frame for Thérèse. Thus after taking a bullet from Carosse, he says to her, “You’re all right now, aren’t you? All the hatred’s gone?” As soon as she says “yes,” he categorizes her achievement as “good” (156). He knows that she is attuned to good and evil, but his concern is love and hate, love that no longer relates to desire, but rather to “a certain pity, gentleness, and the tenderness one can feel for a stranger’s misfortune” (156). For the first time, Greene introduces a spiritual love that cannot be confused with physical love or any love that feeds on the ego. This love risks pain and loss by choosing to give of the self to grow and to help others to grow in the realm of the spiritual. As she leaves him for the last time then, he assures her that she will “be all right now,” while at the same time speaking to her “as to a child” (156) with an immature grasp of any religious reality. In the visible world, she is safe from the likes of Carosse; in the invisible world, she is ready to return to her Church. When Charlot admits that he is the actual

Chavel and then gives his life to promote her further growth in the physical and spiritual life, the tenth man dies in a “tide of peace” (157), all the while emphasizing the dialectic of belief vs. faith and the concomitant code words associated with these terms.

Forgotten by Greene, virtually unknown by most readers, and generally given just a cursory nod by reviewers and critics alike, *The Tenth Man* stands nonetheless as a significant novel that serves as a thematic connector or more aptly as a missing link in the midst of the first four novels written in the Catholic tradition. It clearly contains valuable key elements, such as Greene’s early attempt to distinguish between belief and faith and his introduction of the code words related to these two terms that carry through to the next two novels, *The Heart of the Matter* and *The End of the Affair*. In *The Tenth Man* Greene also links to the earlier *Brighton Rock* and *The Power and the Glory* by continuing his exploration of the priesthood and by bringing forward and stabilizing the image of the pious believer, as well as the construct of the visible/invisible world. In all, it is an unhappy circumstance that this novel was not available to readers until 1985, as they lost an opportunity to observe some rather clear points of reference on the spiritual journey in the novels, for here was a book midpoint in the Catholic series that showed Greene processing the spiritual and taking crucial steps in his search beyond the restrictive dogmas of a church.

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