Connotations

A Journal for Critical Debate

Volume 8 (1998/99) Number 1
Waxmann Münster/New York

Editor's Note

When it is my turn to say farewell to one member of the Editorial Board and bid welcome to another at the same time, the association that, willy nilly, comes first, is Ulysses' portrayal of Time, the "fashionable host / That slightly shakes the parting guest by th'hand, / And with his arms out-stretch'd, as he would fly, / Grasps in the comer." What a cynicism, and what an outcry for sincerity.

Professor Alastair Fowler tells us that, because of urgent scholarly work, he wishes to resign from our Editorial Board. Though we regret this very much we cannot but accept it, thanking Professor Fowler sincerely for having honoured us with his support and whishing him all the best for the future.

Our new member on the Editoral Board is Professor Leona Toker of the Hebrew University Jerusalem. Having worked together for some years now in the most congenial manner, we are very happy and grateful that she has accepted our invitation.

Inge Leimberg

Connotations: A Journal for Critical Debate
Published by *Connotations: Society for Critical Debate*

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Waxmann Münster/New York

Connotations wants to encourage scholarly communication in the field of English Literature (from the Middle English period to the present), as well as American and other Literatures in English. It focuses on the semantic and stylistic energy of the language of literature in a historical perspective and aims to represent different approaches.

Each issue consists of articles and a forum for discussion. The forum presents, for instance, research in progress, critical hypotheses, responses to articles published in *Connotations* and elsewhere, as well as to recent books. Contributions will be published within five months after submission so that discussion can begin without delay.

Articles and responses should be forwarded to the editors. As a rule, articles should not exceed 12,000 words and follow the MLA Handbook. Responses should be limited to 4,000 words. If possible, all contributions should be submitted by e-mail or on diskette (preferably in WordPerfect or Word for DOS/Windows), accompanied by a hard copy; they should be in English and must be proofread before submission. Manuscripts and disks will not be returned.

Connotations is published three times a year. Private subscribers are welcome to join the *Connotations Society for Critical Debate*. Members receive the journal as well as invitations to the *Connotations* symposia. The suggested annual fee is DM 80 (EUR 40, $ 45; DM 40 for students). Please write to: *Connotations*, Department of English, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, 48143 Münster, Germany. Email: connotations@uni-muenster.de.

Libraries and other institutional subcribers write to: Waxmann Verlag, Steinfurter Str. 555, 48159 Münster, Germany; or: Waxmann Publishing Co., P.O. Box 1318, New York, NY 10028, U.S.A. Email: connotations@waxmann.com. Annual subscriptions are in Europe DM 75 / EUR 39, in the U.S. and all other countries $ 60, including postage.

A selection of articles and responses is freely available on the internet (http://anglisti.uni-muenster.de/connotations).

Printed in Germany
ISSN 0939-5482

Connotations is a member of the Council of Editors of Learned Journals. Contributions are indexed, for example, in the *MLA Bibliography*, the *World Shakespeare Bibliography* and the *IBZ/IBR*.

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ARTICLES

A Place Revisited (III)

DISCUSSION

Connotations
Vol. 8.1 (1998/99)

The Madness of George III: Shakespeare, the History Play and Alan Bennett

BRIAN GIBBONS

In 1961 Alan Bennett, one of the four performers of the revue *Beyond the Fringe*, claimed in the programme to be writing a thesis on the retinue of Richard II. Given the parodic-satiric nature of the show, one assumed this was a joke, but while "The Retinue of Richard II, 1388-1399" strikes one as perfectly parodied academic style it also really was Bennett's Oxford thesis, and a source of sharp anxiety to him in 1961. The next year he gave up the idea of being a professional historian when the show transferred to Broadway; but history, and Bennett's failure to give it up, remain important factors about this writer.

Today, unlike other National Theatre playwrights such as David Hare or Tom Stoppard, Bennett also has a successful career as a performer, especially as a reader of children's books, for which he has a large affectionate public, and then there is his diary, a best-seller under the title *Writing Home*. Through television he has a popular image as self-deprecatory, ordinary, always garbed in tweed jacket, tie and v-necked pullover. This persona contains elements of self-parody and presumably is a useful mask; certainly it scarcely prepares one for the serious intelligence and often desolate, lonely imagination which lies at the heart of his work, in characters either "perfectly ordinary"—as in *Talking Heads*—or very much the reverse—as with *Single Spies* and *The Madness of George III*. The air of naturalistic indirection on the surface of dialogue and action, with word-play, jokes and minor absurdities, gives a subtlety which may disguise the underlying clarity and solidity of design and dramatic structure. Not surprisingly however, in a cultural climate such as today's, the dramatist whose moral intelligence is subtle, but also very definite, risks being not understood, not just misunderstood. This essay sets out a case for taking Bennett seriously as an imaginative artist, and

For debates inspired by this article, please check the Connotations website at <http://www.connotations.de/debgibbons00801.htm>.

it does so by considering Bennett's use of other playwrights' work: his critical—as well as his creative—intelligence.

In *The Madness of George III* Bennett is dealing with English nationhood, no less, with national and with private integrity. *Forty Years On*, Bennett's first independent play (which features everything one tries to forget about school) was, however hilariously, historical in subject as well as somewhat Brechtian in mode, and Bennett's preoccupation with history is also clear in *A Day Out*, which has World War I in the background. In 1988 Bennett's emphasis became much more explicit in *A Question of Attribution* (subsequently filmed for TV) about Sir Anthony Blunt, Keeper of the Queen's Pictures, homosexual, secret agent, traitor; a play which also features the reigning monarch Queen Elizabeth II. Bennett's portrait of the Queen is striking, by comparison with Shakespearean monarchs, for its humorous detail. At the same time there is a distinct, chill element about this monarch, and Blunt (who perhaps may be a hero) endures persecution which would appear more blankly cruel and hypocritical were it not so understated—so British—in style. We should note that the author's preface to the published playscript discusses patriotism and national decline.

The Madness of George III focuses on the English monarchy at a point midway on its long downhill road from Queen Elizabeth I to King Charles III, and it looks in both directions: it offers an oblique perspective on the United Kingdom and its monarchy today, using the filter of Hanoverian culture, and it has a short, unexpected time-shift in which a twentieth-century doctor explains the modern medical diagnosis of the King's illness as porphyria. It is also full of Shakespearean allusions and echoes. Bennett's play therefore invites recognition of parallels between the reigns of Shakespearean kings, Georgian Britain, and the present day United Kingdom. It shows King George III's Court as dull and stuffy, a mere prosaic residue of former grandeur—but goes on to show that however dull, a court will also generate real oppression. It is not for nothing that Bennett has studied Kafka: in this play he exploits Kafka's vision of institutional and bureaucratic menace. *The Madness of George III*, then, has three historical layers: Georgian, modern, Shakespearean. It is also interested in the corresponding history of drama—not only eighteenth-

century Shakespeare, which is obvious, but twentieth-century Shakespeare, and its rediscovery of the Shakespearean History Play.

In Elizabethan drama, plays involving kingship or individual kings were on the whole no laughing matter. Shakespeare, confronted by the ramshackle efforts of other playwrights in dramatising the chronicles, developed a distinct dramatic kind, dialectical in conception, generically hybrid, with no shyness about anachronism. English history offered three tests of the monarchy by usurpation, King Henry VI, King John, King Richard II. Shakespeare, it may be noticed, deals with all three. The verdict of Andrew Gurr, after considering Elizabethan censorship of Shakespeare's *Richard II* and that play's contemporary political allusiveness, is that on the Elizabethan stage an "astonishing amount of political comment or display seems to have been acceptable."[1]

The revaluation of Shakespeare's History Plays is a landmark in twentieth-century theatre, but particularly in the theatre in the 1960's, when Bennett was starting out; and his conception of the History Play is, as I shall show, influenced by the sixties' staging and theorising. I believe this to be the key to Bennett's conception and integral to this play's mode: I want to argue that *The Madness of George III* is in this sense a modern History Play.[2]

* * *

Bennett began as a parodist, and has always showed a stylist's as well as a historian's acute interest in period. If there is Georgian furniture and Georgian silver, there is also Georgian theatre and Georgian Shakespeare, and Bennett is interested in that too. King George III was not the only one to draw comparisons between Hanoverian and Shakespearean monarchs, this was in fact a very popular journalist's and satirist's sport in Georgian England. Moreover, Shakespeare was remodelled and rewritten to make him fit the age politically, not just artistically: in George III's lifetime the Nahum Tate version of *King Lear* and the Cibber version of *Richard III* held the stage. Bennett makes an allusion to Cibber's version right at the end of *The Madness of George III* in the play's last line (93) when George asserts "The King is himself again."[3] If we look this up in its original context,

we find that it is pure Cibber, one of his famous additions to Shakespeare. But right beside it is a phrase ("Babling dreams") that in George III's time acquired dangerous topicality when the King's dementia and logorrhoea became public.

> *Cat.* 'Be more yourself, my Lord: Consider, Sir;
> 'Were it but known a dream had frighted you,
> 'How wou'd your animated Foes presume on't.
> *Rich.* Perish that thought: No, never be it said,
> That Fate it self could awe the Soul of *Richard*.
> Hence, Babling dreams, you threaten here in vain:
> Conscience avant; *Richard*'s himself again.[4]

Richard's boasts don't prevent him losing his horse, his crown, and his head in short order. George III, in Bennett's play, is doomed too, though not so promptly. Bennett may give his play an ending superficially jubilant, but it is undermined in advance by a time-shift in which a modern doctor reminds us that George III's illness returned, the relapse ended only in death, and the disease may in fact be hereditary—so it may still run in the family.

The Madness of George III already seems the natural and obvious subject for the end of the 1980's, dramatising the dilemmas of today's House of Windsor (Prince of Wales included), and their continuity with those of the Georgian House of Hanover. If the present House of Windsor is tempted to look back in some envy to the historical Georges, Bennett's Hanoverian King is more likely to compare himself to some fictional, some Shakespearean monarch; and what is so striking is that the Shakespearean monarchs he refers to have such troubling implications—Richard II, Richard III, and Lear—and that they were, in historical fact, among the favourite sources for allusions to the monarchy and politics during George III's reign. Hanoverian politicians and cartoonists themselves displayed a remarkable interest in adapting Shakespeare for satiric and ironic allusive commentary on contemporary politics: so much so indeed that when the King suffered his late relapse into madness, the London theatres were prohibited from putting on performances of *King Lear* for nine years, from 1811 to 1820. In George III's lifetime the Tate version of *King Lear*, with its happy ending, held the stage (although, for a text to read, informed

taste turned back from Tate to Shakespeare); and it was Cibber's version of *Richard III*, for all its vulgarity, that appealed to audiences—indeed its stage life lasted until the recent past; it has also influenced the way modern productions of Shakespeare's play adapt the text: sometimes they retain a favourite line or two of Cibber, as in Laurence Olivier's film version.

Near the end of his play Bennett makes explicit allusion to *King Lear* when King George (80) reads the scene in Shakespeare where Lear awakes and is restored to his daughter Cordelia. This is the way the eighteenth century English theatre preferred *King Lear* to end—as it does in Nahum Tate's adaptation, where Lear is restored to sanity and to his throne. In fact Tate restored the ending from the historical sources which Shakespeare had deliberately changed in order to add incalculable force and darkness to the tragedy. Bennett, too, departs significantly from his historical sources, choosing to end his play well before George III's reign is over, and before the King's relapse. Notice that Bennett does to the historical record of George III the opposite of what Shakespeare did to the historical record of Lear, but in so doing Bennett fits eighteenth century history to eighteenth century theatrical taste, creating in effect a Nahum Tate version of King George III.

The audiences of today in the National Theatre seem, ironically, to prefer *The Madness of George III* as a Tate-style drama with a mock-eighteenth century happy ending, something which the playwright had not expected and which he disapproves as a misreading and over-simplification of the play: "I had not anticipated," Bennett writes, "that the audience would be so whole-heartedly on the king's side" and wryly goes on to record that in performance the line "The King is himself again" was taken by audiences to mean that they could once more "take pleasure in his eccentricities, enjoy the discomfiture of his doctors" and receive the conclusion as a "nice, sentimental" one (ix).

This makes clear that Bennett by no means thinks of the play as a comedy or a tragicomedy; in my view it confirms that he aimed at a History Play, but with a special modification: Bennett has in mind not only Shakespeare as we know him now but also the eighteenth-century Shakespeare, a source of scandalous parallels to contemporary Hanoverian times.

Bennett's King George III says (80) of *King Lear* "It's my story." This will also remind us of what Elizabeth I said of Shakespeare's *King Richard II*: "Know you not that I am Richard II?"[5] In Shakespeare's own time censorship had ensured that the deposition scene in *Richard II* was omitted from the published quarto, and in the eighteenth century it was again the deposition scene that upset the censors: so much so that they banned even an adapted version of *Richard II* by Nahum Tate from stage performance.[6] Bennett has remarked about *The Madness of George III*: "Any account of politics whatever the period must throw up contemporary parallels. I think if I had deliberately made more of these it would have satisfied or pandered to some critics who felt that was what the play should have been more about. But it is about the madness of George III" (xviii). Well yes, it is understandable that the author should in the first place want recognition for the new thing his imagination has created; but after all in this play Bennett contrives that the madness of George III should acquire all manner of configurations; the king himself insists (41) he is mad only nor-nor-west:

> Not mad, though, me. Not mad-mad-mad-mad. Madjesty majesty. Majust just nerves nerves nerves sss . . . .

His doctor, Willis, coldly comments "The state of monarchy and the state of lunacy share a frontier . . . . Who is to say what is normal in a king?" (47).

Bennett's Prince of Wales, on the point of declaring himself Regent, forcibly refuses his mother access to the King, and alludes to his father's tendencies, in madness, to lechery, when he tells his mother (32): "in his current frame of mind His Majesty does not seem to care for you." He then uses the words of Shakespeare's Claudius, commenting on Hamlet's behaviour in the Nunnery Scene: "His affections do not that way tend."[7] Now presumably the Prince of Wales is consciously quoting, knowing that his German mother will not recognise the ironic allusion; and certainly Bennett the playwright is quoting in the expectation that at least a proportion of the audience will get the allusion. For those who do recognise the allusion, there is much food for thought. In *Hamlet* it is the son not the father who seems mad. In Bennett's play it is the reverse. In *Hamlet* it is the mother's taking a second husband that causes the son great

suffering, whereas Bennett's Prince of Wales is cynical about his father's adultery and callous towards his mother, who remains faithful. Parallels between the two plays are therefore obvious food for thought—a politically corrupt court, a frustrated heir to the throne, and the issue of royal madness. So in fact Bennett's play provokes his audiences, via this detour not only in Hamlet but also in Prince Hal, to think about what is also a topical issue now, today—the psychological and political frustration of being heir apparent, which as the play says is "not so much a position as a predicament."

Today's audiences hearing this are likely to think it an allusion to our Prince Charles, but one should remember that his recent predecessors include Edward VIII, the abdicator, and Queen Victoria's eldest son, who as Edward Prince of Wales had to endure his mother's regal disapproval for so long, his only consolations being horseracing, mistresses and an ever-expanding girth. Bennett admits in his Introduction that strict historical truth was a casualty in his portrait of the Prince of Wales, explaining that "the play works only if the antipathy between father and son, never far below the surface with all Hanoverian kings, is sharpened" (xi). Certainly the Shakespearean allusions work because Bennett makes the antipathy between father and son sharp, and this permits some close parallels to be made: in *King Henry IV Pt. II* the King on his deathbed rebukes the Prince of Wales for taking his crown away:

> I stay too long by thee, I weary thee.
> Dost thou so hunger for mine empty chair. (4.5.93-94)

Bennett's King George is angry in the same way, using the same turn of phrase:

> KING . . . Well, I am old and infirm. I shall not trouble you long.
> PRINCE OF WALES I wish you good health, father.
> KING Wish me, wish me? You wish me death, you plump little partridge. (28)

The fact that George's outburst interrupts a concert in the presence of the whole Court signals a cross-reference to *Hamlet*, where in the play-scene the heir apparent provokes the king to disrupt the performance. King George at the very end of the play (93) makes another allusion to *Henry*

IV Pt. II when, restored politically and personally, he rejects his doctor, using exactly Prince Hal's words when Falstaff interrupts his coronation procession and Hal rejects him (5.5.56): "Presume not that I am the thing I was." This parallel is, again, not so straightforward in its implications. Even the veteran opportunist Falstaff miscalculates the sheer tough impersonality, the difference, that royalty involves, learns the hard way that monarchy is proof against sentiment; and whatever hard-hearted greed the episode may expose in Falstaff, it even-handedly exposes a sheer sourness in the Prince also. Shakespeare's scene has wider interests than in the persons themselves, it is interested in the laws of power, showing that the crown is pitiless in diminishing humanity, whoever wears it.

There may be an especial irony residing in the fact that the present Prince of Wales is so stout a defender of Shakespeare for his language whereas he is not heard to say, as Ben Jonson said of Edmund Spenser, "I would have him read for his matter."[8] But certainly Bennett's George III is quite clear that it is Shakespeare's matter that counts: that is why he keeps quoting him. The complication in such a deliberate use of allusion as Bennett deploys in this play is that there can be no delimiting its implications: the nature of irony, its strength and its risk as a rhetorical mode, is its open indefinition.

* * *

The Madness of George III begins the way Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* ends, with a royal procession interrupted by a woman petitioner. Bennett wrote the final draughts of his playscript, so he informs us, in collaboration with the play's National Theatre director, Nicholas Hytner; I suspect it to be significant that Hytner had not long before directed a modern-dress *Measure for Measure* for the Royal Shakespeare Company, a production which visually suggested the present day and the 1930's and in which Shakespeare's Duke was comparatively young and resembled King Edward VIII at the time of his abdication. At the beginning of *The Madness of George III* the woman (a Mrs Nicholson) who petitions George III, first submits her paper crying "I have a property due to me from the Crown of England"—"Give me my property or the country will be drenched in

blood"—then suddenly takes out a knife and strikes the King. George III's reaction is phlegmatic: "Well, not with this, madam. It's a dessert knife. Wouldn't cut a cabbage" (1).

Evidently this is not the world of Shakespeare, and to stress the point that this is 1786, Handel's Music for the Royal Fireworks is playing. Furthermore, coming on top of the assassination attempt, the woman's prophecy is made to seem melodramatic, altogether un-British, quite foreign, in point of fact actually mad. Shakespeare in another play, *Julius Caesar*, had dramatised an assassination in which the killers conceal their intent by submitting petitions, and there the outcome is bloody enough to warm the heart of a Charlotte Corday; in *Measure for Measure*, however, Isabella is as ineffectual as the Mrs Nicholson who attacks George III, and, also like that Mrs Nicholson, Isabella's passionate outburst is dismissed (at least for the time being) as merely mad (5.1.33 ff.).

Mrs Nicholson was a historical person; her attempt on the king's life was made in 1786, not long before the storming of the Bastille: it was already by that date a different world from Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* of 1768, with its memorable beginning: "They order this matter better in France": subsequent history lends the phrase retrospective irony. In Bennett's play King George says of his would-be assassin (3): "She is fortunate to live in this kingdom, hey? It is not long since a madman tried to stab the King of France. The wretch was subjected to the most fiendish torments—his limbs burned with fire, the flesh lacerated with red-hot pincers, until in a merciful conclusion, he was stretched between four horses and torn asunder. We have at least outgrown such barbarities." Presumably George III has in mind his predecessor King James I, who decreed very similar punishment for the Gunpowder Plotters, ending in dismemberment without the use of horses.[9] What neither the audience nor King George anticipate at this point is that he himself will soon be subject to torture, as sanctioned by the Royal College of Physicians, and that then the King will invoke the past, an Age of Faith, in a vain attempt to stave off being tortured in the name of science.

* * *

A better term for Shakespeare's History Plays would be Political Plays; there would then be the added advantage of signalling how much is owed by our modern critical and stage interpretations of these plays to the modern masters of political theatre, Bernard Shaw and Bertolt Brecht. Bennett has wryly noted that critics of *The Madness of George III* describe his staging as "Brechtian," a term which Bennett says is nowadays "as two-edged a compliment as 'Shavian'" (Introduction xxi). I think he is right to object to such modish disparagement of Shaw and Brecht. It is complacent. In fact it took decades for the modern English theatre to catch up with Brecht in seeing that intelligence about politics is a dramatic strength in Shaw and in Shakespeare—for example Brecht made parodic use of *Richard III* in satirising Hitler in *Arturo Ui* in 1941 (he knew Jessner's great 1920 Berlin production of *Richard III*—more of this below), but in England the dominant stage interpretation of *Richard III* continued undisturbed in its traditional stress on the individual villainy of Richard. It is a reflection on the tenacity of the tradition-bound culture of British Theatre generally and its Great Actor cult in particular, that according to Laurence Olivier, in 1944 *Richard III* was "at this time a stale cup of tea"[10] and therefore a suitable choice as a vehicle for his individual star performance of sheer acting, whereas in the same year Olivier's choice of a play to make into a popular film, as his contribution to the war effort, was of course *Henry V*, which he presented traditionally in doublet and hose but with a brief patriotic dedication tacked on.

Olivier's star-actor's performance as Richard III, first seen on stage in 1944, was reinforced by the film version released in 1955, prolonging its influence. Intervening productions in New York[11] had suggested superficial analogies to recent tyrannical regimes in Germany and the USSR but English audiences had to wait until 1963 for a coherent staging of *Richard III* with modern political implications—this was the Peter Hall-John Barton production, which formed the concluding part of the first tetralogy collectively titled "The Wars of the Roses." Peter Hall records that he was reading a proof copy of Jan Kott's book *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* as he travelled to the first rehearsal. The next year a production by Peter Brook of a play by Peter Weiss, the *Marat/Sade*, which presents the world as an asylum full of murderous lunatics, against a background of the French

Revolution, powerfully alluded to the phenomenon of political terror in modern regimes. The impact of these two famous productions of the early 1960's is apparent in subsequent staging of Shakespeare's History Plays and certain tragedies in particular; indeed the very recent film version of *Richard III* by Ian McKellen and Richard Loncraine (based on the National Theatre production of 1990) is distinctive not for its much-advertised Nazi period setting and the visual resemblance of the film's Richard to Hitler, but rather because it ignores the issue of Richard's madness, thereby reverting to an older Brechtian-style interpretation of the play as a political warning against totalitarian tendencies in contemporary society.

Although non-Elizabethan settings for Shakespeare are currently something of a vogue in the cinema and virtually de rigeur in the theatre, when Bennett was beginning his career around 1960 the staging of Shakespeare in non-Elizabethan terms was still only in the process of becoming intellectually respectable. Bennett began as a writer of parody, participating in *Beyond the Fringe* (1960) which included an admirable spoof of the mindless-but-well-spoken style of performing Shakespeare's History Plays in the pre-Peter Hall era: the Fringe parody climaxed with Jonathan Miller's[12] extravagant imitation of Olivier's long-drawn-out death-agonies as Richard III. The sixties, when Bennett was making his name, saw the establishment of politically aware theatre, and politically aware Shakespeare—not only the Hall-Barton "Wars of the Roses" in 1963 but Peter Brook's *King Lear* of 1964 and Stoppard's *Rosencranz and Guildenstern are Dead* of 1967. The action of *The Madness of George III*, though itself very confined to the King's confinement for madness, is placed precisely between off-stage events which make their presence felt, events of epic scale and historic importance—the American and French Revolutions. If this reminds us of the *Marat/Sade*, can it be a coincidence? Whether subconscious or conscious, the parallel is close and associates the institutionalisation of madness with state bureaucratisation, and the development of state terrorism as an instrument of state policy—something featured in the 1963 Peter Hall production of *Richard III*.

Now Bennett says in his Introduction to *The Madness of George III* (xxi): "When I was writing the play I had no notion of how it could be put on

except that I knew there was a flight of stairs at the rear of the stage" and that the play should begin and end with the King and Court descending these stairs. The designer of the National Theatre production devised a flight of steps running the full width of the stage at the rear. The book Peter Hall was so engrossed by when planning "The Wars of the Roses," Jan Kott's *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, became highly influential and intellectually fashionable in the sixties, particularly among the younger generation which included Bennett. I still have my own fading copy from that period. Here is the book's leading idea: "We began our considerations with a metaphor of the grand staircase of history. It was on such a staircase that Leopold Jessner set *Richard III* . . . . That metaphor has philosophical consequences and is also dramatically fruitful. There are no good and bad kings; there are only kings on different steps of the same stairs. The names of the kings may change, but it is always a Henry who pushes a Richard down, or the other way round. Shakespeare's Histories are dramatis personae of the Grand Mechanism . . . which forces people to violence, cruelty and treason."[13] Is it coincidence that Bennett's idea for staging is a grand staircase? Is it not extremely tempting to think Bennett subconsciously, if not consciously, influenced by Kott's metaphor of the staircase of history?

In any case Jessner's staging of *Richard III* at the Berlin Schauspielhaus in 1920, to which Kott refers, is well worth pausing on. Jessner said his aim was not to offer historical realism but to place vivid symbols on the stage. The actor of Richard was instructed not to impress the audience with his personal magnetism but to perform as merely one element in the political allegory. The set had a high stone wall stretched across the entire stage, pierced at the centre by a small portal. Slightly behind the first wall another higher wall rose, forming a terrace for Richard's ultimate entrance to the citizens and Lord Mayor. Above the second wall, outlining it at the top of sight lines, was a narrow framework of sky—lit in a foreboding crimson. Action in the first half was all on the horizontal plane in front of the wall; only in the second half was there vertical action, enhanced by a flight of red steps rising to the throne; an eye-witness recorded how all the heightened movement there produced a memorable contrast when Richard slowly descended the red staircase at the end in utter lassitude.[14]

Peter Hall's 1963 production designed by John Bury likewise featured dominating grey walls; it was described as catching the "true grand Nazi horror of the play, with its imbricated black metallic wall and throne emerging from the shadows and receding again."[15] Significantly Richard III himself, played by Ian Holm, avoided extravagant mannerism and gave an interpretation deliberately understating what Olivier had stressed, while at the same time bringing a new emphasis: Richard was clearly mad. He was progressively afflicted by sudden blinkings and twitches, credibly developing megalomania. A reviewer[16] wrote that Holm's Richard was "not so much a villain as an insane manipulator of events" and considered this detracted from the suggested parallel with Hitler: "the anachronistic jack-boots, far from striking a note of fear, are somehow out of place, an irritant." The issue of madness dominated RSC productions in 1970 and 1975. The 1975 *Richard III* directed by Barry Kyle recalled the *Marat/Sade* in being set in an asylum with some characters costumed to suggest mental patients or concentration camp prisoners, and the conflation of Richard the madman with Richard the modern tyrant has been influential in many subsequent productions including the schizophrenic Richards of Al Pacino, 1973, Michael Moriarty, 1974, and Brian Bedford, 1977. Nevertheless Kott's concern with power politics, playing down the interest in the clinical-psychological idea of Richard, is still influential, as one sees from the very recent film derived from the National Theatre's Ian McKellen blackshirt *Richard III* of 1990; and moreover that production recalls significant aspects of Michael Bogdanov's at the Young Vic in 1978 in which the men wore lounge suits, dinner jackets or battledress, the women black cocktail dresses; Richard himself was "a fatly smiling boardroom type wearing slovenly worsted like a professional asset-stripper looking for companies to liquidate." Stanley telephoned nervously from a public phone box. Richard did not make his famous offer of a kingdom for a horse, being hemmed in by machine-guns at the time.[17]

* * *

Bennett's layered references to and quotations from Shakespeare, mainly concerning Richard III and Richard II, Prince Hal, Hamlet and Lear, suggest that *The Madness of George III* is in part a meditation on Shakespearean kings

and that the particular verbal allusions gain significance when related to their original Shakespearean contexts. There is a pattern of visual reference as well, the words also having a context of stage action. In Bennett's play at the point where the King's new doctor, Willis, begins his treatment, he breaks Court decorum by daring to look at the King directly (which Court etiquette forbade), then speak to him directly (which was also forbidden), then he takes physical hold of the King's shoulder (which was absolutely unthinkable). The King first freezes rigid with anger, then goes for Willis but falls. He just stays sitting on the ground:

> WILLIS Your Majesty must behave, or endeavour to do so.
> KING Must, must? Whose must? Your must or my must? No must. Get away from me, you scabby bumsucker.
> PAPANDIEK Easy, sir, easy.
> KING No, no. Leave me boys. Let me sit upon the ground and tell . . . tell-tell-tell-tell . . . . (50)

There are parallels and quotations here to two key episodes in Shakespeare's *Richard II*, from 3.2. and 4.1. In fact these are prepared for by an allusion to *Richard II* much earlier but which it is easy to overlook, because not tagged by a verbal quotation. This is when King George refuses to sign urgent state papers handed to him by his Ministers: he is having difficulty with his sight as well as his mind, and cannot read properly; he insists, "I do not sign anything I do not read. I might be signing my own deposition." The idea of deposition, coinciding with the stage business with the paper he is urged to accept, recalls 4.1. of *Richard II*. There the King is given a list of crimes he must confess and retorts—"Must I do so? and must I ravel out / My weav'd-up follies?" (4.1.228-29). However in Bennett's play the parallel is half-obscured because King George is immediately distracted from deposition by the random triggering of another idée fixe, America. To recall his American colonies' rebellion is torture to George III:

> All ours. Mine. Gone. A paradise lost. The trumpet of sedition has sounded. We have lost America. Soon we shall lose India, the Indies, Ireland . . . . (25)

The King foresees in the loss of one colony the falling away of the entire British Empire; his Ministers have until now considered this a minor

obsession; but now, when the King's illness seems to be intensifying, the outburst about America suddenly looks as if it could be a symptom of real madness. To the theatre audience, of course, it is clear that the King is not exaggerating (except about the pace at which the empire will dissolve), though it is impossible to gauge whether the King's insight is shrewd intuition or paranoid fantasy induced by his disease.

But to go forward to the episode already quoted where King George is sitting upon the ground: In 3.2. of *Richard II* the king laments the falling away of his supporters which he sees will lead to the loss of his crown to the rebel Bolingbroke. He indulges in sweeping emotional rhetoric—"For God's sake let us sit upon the ground"—(3.2.155) rather than act decisively in such a moment of crisis, so giving his supporters an impression of self-pitying defeatism and bad judgement; and yet from a longer perspective, that of Shakespeare's audience, or of George III, Richard's sense of incalculable loss (though he cannot give rational justification for it) is not disproportionate to the true scale of the process as Shakespeare presents it: there is, definitely, much more in this rebellion than the deposition of a single king.

Bennett suggests a parallel between George III and Richard II, but also another figure in the same Shakespeare play—one who is aged and sick: John of Gaunt. Indeed for Bennett these two figures Richard and Gaunt seem to coalesce as a complex image of self-division. Gaunt laments England, prophetically seen as betrayed by the corrupt king, "England, that was wont to conquer others" (2.1.65), "This other Eden, demi-paradise" (2.1.42). Gaunt in his sickness can play nicely with words, whereas George III in his sickness is the opposite, suffers from uncontrollable punning and verbal diarrhoea. An even sharper parallel with Bennett's King George is in Gaunt's warning Richard to beware physicians: Gaunt is speaking metaphorically, but the force of his metaphor is in its implications, in its insistence on the mortal and vulnerable body, not any supposed divine right, of a king:

> And thou, too careless patient as thou art,
> Commit'st thy anointed body to the cure
> Of those physicians that first wounded thee. (2.1.97-99)

In Shakespeare's *Richard II* the figure of Gaunt, mortally sick—"Gaunt am I for the grave"—is an image of the sick body politic and also a mirror in which the king's fate is foretold, though King Richard cannot yet recognise it himself. Clouded vision also affects King George—it is one of the actual symptoms of his sickness—Bennett leaves the metaphoric significance implicit—but whereas George III like Richard II prays for death to release him from his sufferings, Bennett's play ends not in tragedy but with the King's restoration to health and rule, although as everyone knows (and as Bennett makes explicit in a deliberate anachronism, bringing on a twentieth-century doctor to tell), the historical George III later relapsed into irrecoverable madness.

Bennett's George III performs an actual fragment of Shakespeare's *King Lear*—recognising as he does so its ironic application to himself—and thereby prompts us to recognise parallels in earlier scenes concerning King George's madness and his subjection. What, for instance, of those images of the King strapped in Dr Willis' chair, scenes which at first sight probably seem redolent of a Foucault version of the Age of Enlightenment (or, less loosely, may for some spectators bring memories of the 1960's Theatre of Cruelty and Peter Brook's *Marat/Sade*).

Yet if we do ask where a chair is required in Shakespeare's *King Lear* the answer may be surprising: for the episode George actually reads aloud, when Lear is brought on unconscious in a chair, to awake and be restored to Cordelia, is preceded in the play by two grimly different instances: first the chair of state, which is needed for 1.2. when Lear fatefully divides his kingdom, and second, the chair required for Gloucester's blinding—"Bind fast his corky arms . . . . To this chair bind him" (3.7.29-34) as Cornwall orders, and Gloucester's eyes are gouged out—and with his own son Edmund's acquiescence. The complete subjection and humiliation of the king is marked by physical suffering in both plays: Bennett makes a visual parallel between George III and Lear by showing George progressively reduced to filthy rags, as his mental disorder reaches a peak; but in Bennett's play the King is not physically tortured in a chair—the chair is associated with psychological torture—the physical torture is applied to the king by doctors (in *King Lear* the doctor gives Lear comfort) and it is atrociously painful, causing the king to scream, but it is done in a different

position—the King is held face down as the candles burn for his flesh to be blistered. It seems probable that here Bennett is alluding to the twin of *Richard II*, Marlowe's *Edward II*, memorably revived in the theatre in the 1960's by Ian McKellen, and which features perhaps the most terrible torture in all Elizabethan drama, as the king is held face down, to die screaming in agony as Lightborn thrusts a red-hot poker into his rectum.

* * *

The entire plot of *The Madness of George III* is devoted to insisting that to be an English king is to be subject to systematic deformation, only the difference in Bennett's play, compared to Shakespeare, is that the level of normal domestic existence is more clearly invoked while at the same time shown to be inaccessible to the monarchy, and this is achieved by a much greater use of humour. In the play George III calls his queen affectionately Mrs King, and her concern for him is strongly, even sometimes movingly expressed; but the royal pair are also shown in a contrary light, blankly indifferent even to their immediate household once the crisis is over and normal service is resumed. Bennett makes emphatic the repercussions on the royal servants, particularly those who make the mistake of responding with sincere humanity, such as Papandiek and at the higher rank, Greville (there is a complex parallel to be drawn with the servants in *King Lear*). Shakespeare does not show monarchs experiencing domestic intimate normality: not even in *Antony and Cleopatra*, where privacy is somehow always made public and intimacy always precarious. King George III may aspire to be a normal "farmer George" but the play shows the deformation of monarchy is inherent in the institution: the King at one point is put into an actual straitjacket, but metaphorically he is always wearing one; this is ironically underlined by Bennett's stagecraft, juxtaposing the King's straitjacketing to the sight of the tubby Prince of Wales being laced tightly into a corset, a slave to fashionable tailoring (59). This is a Brechtian gestus; the play shows continuously that the closer an outsider comes to the life of the Court, the greater is the deformation suffered.

At the same time an audience today, used to current fashions of modernising Shakespeare to encode political comment, will also be aware that another perspective altogether is being invoked: for modern history, particularly in totalitarian states, offers notorious instances of the medical profession allowing imprisonment and torture to be carried out in the name of medical science—and there is Kafka, for instance his story "In a Penal Settlement," with its scientifically precise machine which inscribes a description of the crime in the flesh of the prisoner strapped down for the punishment. The King's disease, which modern medicine has identified, is not in the play the object of single-minded medical curative intent. The king's own doctors have other priorities, as do his Ministers. The king's sickness is a means to prestige and power. Each doctor's diagnosis is an assertion of his status and also an expression of his power against his rivals. Furthermore each treatment is powerful in relation to the prestige of the patient; the more the patient is reduced to subjection, the more the doctor's power increases, and the best sign of the doctor's power is the greatness of suffering imposed on the King—power increases in proportion to the violence of the torture. Willis, whose method of treating the king is terror rather than physical torture, is perfectly clear that however incompetent and destructive he may consider the treatments his rivals prescribe, he must acquiesce in them to maintain the prestige of medicine as an institution, without which his own power could vanish. He exactly appreciates the cultural politics which makes medical science challenge monarchy, and instinctively senses that in the long run history is on his side. More close to home, the doctors' violence towards their royal patient is an abuse of their power as scientists and is parallel to, is a figure of, the imminent degeneration of reason into terror on a national scale in revolutionary France, to which Bennett gives explicit emphasis at the close of the play:

> KING The Bastille? The terror is in the word. It is no different from the prison I have been in these last few months. (89)

There is a memorable etching in which Goya illustrates the maxim "The sleep of reason breeds monsters." In *All's Well* 2.3. Shakespeare endows old Lafeu with eloquence on the subject: "They say miracles are past, and

we have our philosophical persons, to make modern and familiar, things supernatural and causeless. Hence it is that we make trifles of terrors, ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge, when we should submit ourselves to an unknown fear" (2.3.1-6). In Bennett's play about King George III, England may pride itself on its age of reason, on having outgrown barbarism, but when the king experiences subjection to those other Enlightenment watchwords, *surveiller et punir*, and suffers torture by his doctors, he will cry out "I am the Lord's anointed," thereby invoking the ghosts of his Shakespearean predecessors such as Richard II:

> Not all the water in the rough rude sea
> Can wash the balm off from an anointed king; . . . . (3.2.54-55)

Modern history also furnishes complicated perspectives on the supposed diminution or disappearance of the sacred aspect of the monarch in Western culture: how is the public reception of the assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas to be interpreted? At the time it was experienced as a kind of tragedy, yet it is striking what a hit-and-miss affair the sacralisation of a ruler seems to be: consider the failed attempt by gunmen to shoot President Reagan getting into his limousine, or the escape of Prince Charles when shot at from close range in Australia: the Prince was mercifully unharmed and reacted with admirable sang froid; but is sacredness conferred if the assassination attempt succeeds—as seems the suggestion in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar? (This paragraph was written before the events of 31 August 1997).

The Madness of George III is designed to demonstrate the precarious practicability of the (post Glorious Revolution) Georgian formula, that the monarch must conform to a public idea of being royal and of being a good fellow. It is a recipe for survival, but it does require the constant promotion of the idea of royal family—that is to say as long as it appears satisfactory nobody cares about the reality—which is a very different thing from the old conception of royal secrecy, the mystery of rule. In the movie version of the play Bennett gives the King new dialogue. He is seen standing on the steps of St Paul's—the location which for modern television viewers, if not theatre audiences, is irresistibly associated with the royal wedding of Charles and Diana—and it is there that the King marshals his

large family and tells them: "Let the people see we're happy. That is why we are here."

If the King is to be king it is a matter of being seen to be so; near the end of the play (81-82) Thurlow tells him "Your Majesty seems more yourself" and the King replies "Do I? Yes, I do. I have always been myself even when I was ill. Only now I seem myself. That's the important thing. I have remembered how to seem. What, what?" If we recognise the allusion to Cibber's King Richard III (Catesby's "Be more your self, my Lord") we will recognise the implied irony—the King indeed can only seem himself, his illness is not cured, this is only a remission. On the other hand if we do not attend to the allusion and take the exchange at face value, so to speak, another allusion presents itself—for to seem royal, to seem every inch a king is thereby resoundingly to deny the credo of Hamlet, for whom as Shakespearean heir to the Danish throne, kingship is integrity or it is nothing:

> Seems, madam? nay, it is. I know not "seems." (1.2.76)

Would Bennett have his audience reconsider the issue, in a modern context of mass-media influence on the reputation of the monarchy, and consider whether such a belief as Hamlet's "I know not seems," in any royal person, must constitute a tragic flaw? And could that be the point of *Measure for Measure*, as well as *Henry V*? One ruler, the Duke, has to learn to seem, the other, Henry, never has a need, alas, to learn it, is perfect in his part from the beginning ("I know you all" observes the supposedly engaging youth) and needs no stringent lacing-up to fit the role. Henry V never had any excess of humanity to discipline and punish in the first place. Bennett sympathises with his King George's humanity, but shows with strict consistency that the humanity is only uppermost when the king is deranged. Bennett plainly did not write a sentimental melodrama nor a play with one star part, whatever his first audiences and his actors might think. He wrote a History Play, and that is what the allusions to Shakespeare tell us.

Bennett does not allow his George III to forget that he is separated by the Glorious Revolution of 1688 from British monarchs of Shakespeare's time: not for George III is there the illusion of choice open to the perverse reigning monarch of Shakespeare's time, James I, who is alluded to by Shakespeare when he makes his Duke in *Measure for Measure* (1.1.67-68)

say "I love the people, / But do not like to stage me to their eyes";—but notice that Shakespeare's Duke, whatever he might say there, does just the opposite, and takes good care to absolutely act his socks off before his people in a fantastic Act V.

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NOTES

[1]See *King Richard II*, ed. Andrew Gurr (Cambridge: CUP, 1984) 10.

[2]I wish to record my thanks to Dr Elizabeth Cook who with great generosity read and commented on an earlier version of this essay.

[3]Alan Bennett, *The Madness of George III* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992).

[4]Colley Cibber, *The Tragical History of King Richard III (1700), Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare*, ed. Christopher Spencer (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1965) V.v.79-85.

[5]See E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, Vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1930) 326-72.

[6]Gurr 44.

[7]See *Hamlet* 3.1.162. This and all subsequent quotations from Shakespeare are from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans, 2nd ed. (Boston: Mifflin, 1997).

[8]*Explorata: or Discoveries*, 2237-39 in *Ben Jonson, The Complete Poems*, ed. George Parfitt (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975).

[9]A detailed description may be found conveniently in Richard Marienstras, *New Perspectives on the Shakespearean World*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: CUP, 1985).

[10]Laurence Olivier, *Confessions of an Actor* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982) 135, cit. Scott Colley, *Richard's Himself Again* (New York: Greenwood P, 1992) 178.

[11]Directed by Richard Whorf, 1949, and by Margaret Webster, 1953. See Colley 183-85.

[12]Jonathan Miller, *Subsequent Performances*, has an excellent discussion of the whole issue of modernising and adapting Shakespeare. He has been a friend of Bennett's since *Beyond the Fringe* and they live across the road from each other in the same street in Camden. According to Bennett, the idea of George III as a possible subject for a play was suggested to him by Miller.

[13]Jan Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (London: Methuen, 1964) 32. Kott more expansively still asserts "The greatness of Shakespeare's realism consists in his awareness of the extent to which people are involved in history" (16).

[14]This description is taken from Colley 158-59.

[15]Roger Gellert, *The New Statesman*, 30 August 1963.

[16]Don Chapman, *The Oxford Mail*, 21 August 1963.

[17]Benedict Nightingale, cited by Colley 197.

Connotations
Vol. 8.1 (1998/99)

A Pattern of the Mind: The Country House Poem Revisited

JUDITH DUNDAS

Criticism of country house poems of the seventeenth century has been largely concerned with generic characteristics. What has been for the most part ignored is the essentially playful nature of the genre. Instead, critical emphasis tends to be placed on the moral value of country life. But in these poems, goodness itself is so married to pleasure that the epicurean permeates all features. It is true that morality helps to supply structure for the poem but does not, at its best, weigh down the meditation on an ordered, yet free, space enclosed by architecture and the boundaries of a park or estate.

It is also important to recognize that experience in these poems is retrospectively described. In that sense, these are poems of revisiting, even when the present tense is used. Imagination converts the original experience—always asserted to be real—into a play of fancy. A quality that memory retains is given form by a more or less extravagant use of metaphor, culminating, as we shall see, in Marvell's "Upon Appleton House." One could say that the words of the poems do not simply recreate experience but create it. In effect, the country house poem, in the greater part of the seventeenth century, evolves in the direction of an emphasis on subjective response, rather than on objective description. Playfulness, or the *quodlibet* mode, helps to explain the mixed genre of these poems.

The description of a country house and estate is a subject favored by a number of seventeenth century English poets. The reasons are complicated and will not be the focus of the present essay.[1] Suffice it to say that architecture was increasingly attracting the attention of writers as a fit subject for gentlemen to study. Henry Peacham, in his *Compleat Gentleman* comments that "this admirable Art"—by which he means geometry in general—"dares contend with nature selfe, in infusing life

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as it were, into the sencelesse bodies of wood, stone, or metall."[2] It is this art that "with her ingenious hand reares all curious roofes and Arches, stately theaters, the Columnes simple and compounded, pendant Galleries, stately Windows, Turrets, &c."[3] If before Inigo Jones introduced a new concept of architecture to England,[4] it was the surveyor who drew plans for country houses, nevertheless the way was being prepared for a more theoretical approach to building, with renewed study of Vitruvius and with the growing taste for symmetry in the building of houses. And yet the country house poems of the seventeenth century are predominantly concerned with the older style of architecture, rather than the new Palladian style. No doubt a nostalgia for the past was partly responsible, but so was the conviction that the older style was more natural. Foreign architects are derided; indeed any notion of the professional architect has little place in these poems. Nature dominates not only the parkland but also the house, with a sense that the Golden Age is reborn only when human beings live in close harmony with nature.[5]

This moral emphasis pervades the poems that celebrate country life with the country house at the center. "Decor," Sir Henry Wotton notes in his famous work *The Elements of Architecture* (1624), "is the keeping of a due Respect between the Inhabitant and the Habitation."[6] It may seem paradoxical that the country house poem should have so little to say about architecture, but it is the house and estate as expressions of the owner's mind that matters. For another, partial, answer to the question of why it does not have more to say on this subject, we must turn to the myth of the Golden Age. As such Roman poets as Virgil, Horace, Martial, and Ovid stressed in their works, artifice interferes between man and nature. As a version of pastoral, the country house poem is committed to the house that serves human needs rather than the one that is built for ostentation: "Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show."[7]

As "an ancient pile," Penshurst is exempt not only from the luxury associated with newer houses but also from the meddling hand of the architect. Already, in this, one of the first, and certainly most influential, poems of the genre in England, we see the past invoked for its simplicity, as well as for the memories it provides. The allusion to the Golden Age deities—Dryads, Pan, and Bacchus—evokes a time when all nature was

inhabited by such beings; a link is made to a distant past and a land of the imagination where man lived in harmony with nature and where he can still dwell through poetry and where present, past, and future are brought together. But Jonson returns to historical reality with a reminder that this house was the place where Sidney was born: "At his great birth, where all the Muses met. / There, in the writhed bark, are cut the names / Of many a sylvan, taken with his flames" (14-16). The spirit of Sidney lives on in the celebrations of love by other poets. All is liveliness where the human spirit is free to expand in its most natural environment. Hence the "ruddy satyrs" chase the nymphs to another tree where the present lady of the house first felt labor pains. Fertility on all levels is commemorated through allusions both mythological and historical. The interpreting mind of the poet has identified the significance of place.

All this is familiar in critical commentary on this poem. Seldom noted, however, are the signs of fanciful treatment of the moral theme. For example, the persistent personifying of the house—"Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show"—signals not only allegory but also a whimsical approach to the subject. Another poem, Margaret Cavendish's "The Knight and the Castle," carries personification to greater lengths by having the castle engage in a dialogue with the knight who wishes he had the means to rebuild it. Abraham Cowley puts his entire poem "On the Queen's Repairing Somerset House" into the mouth of the house itself, singing its own praises. There is something about the genre that seems to invite the excursion into an almost childlike fantasy.

Similarly, Jonson's "Bright eels that emulate them [carps and pikes], and leap on land / Before the fisher, or into his hand" (37-39), as an instance of the *sua sponte* theme from Roman poetry, typifies the penchant for English poets to treat country house and estate encomia as a play of wit. At the same time, it is the continuum of history that supplies the structure needed to accommodate the moral emphasis.[8] Not only does the poet as guest "reign" here, but he is reminded that the reigning monarch, James I, was also a guest—and an unexpected one at that—at this house. As for the future, the children "may, every day, / Read, in their virtuous parents' noble parts. / The mysteries of manners, arms, and arts" (96-98).

It has often been noted that the words "proud, ambitious heaps," applied in Jonson's poem to the wrong kind of architecture, suggest the House of Pride in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, for certainly that was "a goodly heape for to behould"—in the words of Spenser's ironic praise.[9] This allegorical house, so closely related, as it seems, to such prodigy houses as Burghley,[10] supplies the implicit contrast for a great many country house poems that stress a continuity with the past. Lucifera's house, on the other hand, shows the attempt to be rid of the past by concealment: "And all the hinder parts, that few could spie, / Were ruinous and old, but painted cunningly." More virtuous in its acknowledgment of the claims of the past, Geoffrey Whitney's country house poem compares a house built by man to a bee hive and thus a place that the wanderer must return to. As "the bees at length return into their hive," so the poet:

> Even so myself; through absence many a year,
> A stranger mere, where I did spend my prime.
> Now parents' love doth hale me by the ear,
> And saith, Come home, defer no longer time:
> Wherefore, when hap, some golden honey brings,
> I will return, and rest my weary wings.[11]

Few country house poems refer so explicitly to a return or revisiting, but this poem is not based on actual experience so much as on an argument from the analogy of the bee hive. In this sense it is more emblematic than the other country house poems that we shall be considering; these may make use of emblematic imagery, in keeping with the habits of the age, but they are more rooted in the memory of the poet.

Emilia Lanier's "Description of Cooke-ham" is an elegiac evocation of the past:

> Therefore, sweet Memory, do thou retain
> Those pleasures past, which will not turn again:
> Remember beauteous Dorset's former sports . . . .[12]

The poem, written at the behest of the Dowager Countess of Cumberland to commemorate her stay at this estate, describes how the great lady took her leave of the trees that grew there: ". . . when with grief you did

depart, / Placing their former pleasures in your heart; / Giving great charge to noble memory, / There to preserve their love continually" (153-57). The personifying of trees is a way of projecting feeling into the landscape as a mirror of the grieving person; yet at the same time, it illustrates the fancifulness that pervades the country house poem in general. Since feeling matters more than descriptive detail and since such detail is conventional (*pace* Fowler's comment on this poem that "observations of landscape are unusually specific for its date," coupled with the examples he gives, 51), the poet avoids static enumeration of the sort to be found in rhetorical examples of *topographia*. The mind of the lady commemorated, as well as of the poet herself, is at the center of the poem, and memory is commemorated as the keeper of past experience.

But before pursuing the house as a "pattern of the mind" and a keeper of memory, let us consider briefly another reason, besides the Golden Age anti-architecture theme, for the absence of detailed architectural description in these poems. Rhetorically, the country house poem is an example of the scheme known as *topographia*, defined by Henry Peacham as "an evident and true description of a place . . . . To this figure refer Cosmography, by which is described countries, cities, townes, temples, orchards, gardens, fountaines, dens, and all other maner of places."[13] His caution is: "In the use of this figure diligence ought to be used, that no necessarie circumstance be omitted, the want whereof may appeare a maime in the description." All rhetoricians, from Cicero and Quintilian on, stress the importance of setting a scene before the reader's eyes by including a sufficient number of circumstances, or details, to make the picture convincing. The most popular author of *Progymnasmata* in antiquity and in the Renaissance, Aphthonius, defines description as "an expository speech, distinctly presenting to view the thing being set forth."[14] Poets of course knew instinctively that a description of a place must not merely enumerate features in the way that Aphthonius exemplifies in his description of the temple of Serapis in Alexandria, together with the Acropolis. They knew the importance of unifying details by means of the selective eye of the poet himself, who writes not only from a particular point of view but chooses his details for an affective purpose.[15] Any architectural features, then, mentioned in a country house poem will be

acting more symbolically than descriptively. We do not turn to these poems for a history of seventeenth-century architecure or gardens.

What we do find often is a playfulness in the description that charms the reader. The poets seem to be on holiday from the more serious business of life. We see them as travelers visiting stately homes in a manner not so very different from the way we visit them today, for a breath of fresh air combined with a bit of history and a glimpse of how the other half lives. It is in this spirit that Richard Corbett, who became Bishop of Oxford in 1628, describes a vacation jaunt with three friends to Warwick Castle in 1618 or 1619. The owner, Fulke Greville, greets them:

> 'Please you walk out and see the Castle? Come,'
> The owner saith, 'It is a scholar's home,
> A place of strength and health; in the same fort,
> You would conceive a castle and a court.'[16]

Even the notion of combining a fortified castle with a court is whimsically stated as Corbett continues: "The orchards, gardens, rivers, and the air, / Do with the trenches, rampires, walls compare: / It seems nor art nor force can intercept it, / As if a lover built, a soldier kept it" (413-16). As they climb a steep road up to the tower, he says that they "do not climb but walk; and though the eye / Seems to be weary, yet our feet are still / In the same posture cozened up the hill: / And thus the workman's art deceives our sense, / Making those rounds of pleasure a defence" (418-22). He keeps the metaphor of court and fort moving along to express the delight of the viewers. Rejecting detailed description, he avoids the static by keeping a double perspective on the castle and its grounds.

What I have called the playful aspect of country house poems may also be called, rhetorically, conceitedness of the kind associated with metaphysical poetry. Still another term that may be used here is *cappriccio* or *cappriccesque* for its connotations of fancifulness, such as the personification of the house.[17] It is this mode of description that often denies the expository purpose as Aphthonius defined it. Instead, it purposely helps to create a "pattern of the mind," whether of the owner of the house or of the poet himself. The metaphors go beyond the enumeration of physical features, taking the reader into a quality of experience as identified through

memory; they simultaneously contribute to the usual purpose of these poems: encomium. How well these two aspects interact within a poem is a measure of the satisfactoriness of the poem. Subjective description alone would not have served their purpose; nor would adulation. The fanciful or playful approach has a unifying effect by placing the poet at the center of his work.

Thus Thomas Carew, writing to his friend G.N. from Wrest Park, describes the double moat around the house, praising the watery constellations within the moats more than those in the heavens:

> This island mansion, which, i' th' centre placed,
> Is with a double crystal heaven embraced,
> In which our watery constellations float,
> Our Fishes, Swans, our Waterman, and Boat,
> Envied by those above, which wish to slake
> Their star-burnt limbs in our refreshing lake,
> But they stick fast nailed to the barren sphere,
> Whilst our increase in fertile waters here
> Disport, and wander freely where they please
> Within the circuit of our narrow seas.[18]

The hyperbole charms as a flight of fancy: what is below, on earth, surpasses what is above, in the heavens. So neat is the parallel, and yet so playful, that we readily accept the conceit as depicting the mind of the owner who does not "decline . . . all the work of art" (69), though making "things not fine, / But fit for service" (56-57). Again, the simplicity of life with nature is praised above the "prouder piles, where the vain builder spent / More cost in outward gay embellishment / Than real use" (52-55). The narrowness of the house and moat is transformed into a limitless freedom within bounds.

This theme is repeated over and over in the genre. Mildmay Fane, for example, turns the familiar bird catalogue into a praise of small creatures, such as the owl "Ruffed like a judge, and with a beak, / As it would give the charge and speak."[19] Or his ducks "dive voluntary, wash, prune, play" (68), like the poet himself. And like Carew, he finds in water an image of the heavens;

> . . . the spring-head, where
> Crystal is limbecked all the year,
> And every drop distils, implies
> An ocean of felicities;
> Whilst calculating, it spins on,
> And turns the pebbles one by one,
> Administring to eye and ear
> New stars and music like the sphere;
> When every purl calcined doth run,
> And represent such from the sun. (91-100)

It is typical for the country house poet to find his heaven on earth and to find "books and learning" when "clad in water tissue suit" superior to anything the "best of scholars" might disclose.

The topos of much in little is central to George Aglionby's poem on Bolsover Castle as it had been reconstructed by Robert Smythson:

> Yet, Bolzor, 'tis thy greatest grace,
> To have such perfect symmetry,
> And so much room in so small space.
> Nature's best workmanship we see
> In the industrious little bee.[20]

Here architecture is excused by its littleness. Aglionby gives a brief catalogue of architectural features: "Such pillars, floors, stairs, lights, and vaults, / Such marble roofs, all without faults" (21-22). Such features, as the poets realized, cannot fittingly be described in poetry without the tedium of an inventory. What the poet is concerned to express is that the castle represents the mind of the owner: "'Tis like the Master's mind, compact and high, / Uniform, fit for nobility" (47-48). His platonizing encomium finds "Architecture itself, if it could be / Exposed to outward view, we sure should see / Clothed in the shape of Bolzor" (15-18). In a style reminiscent of some of Ben Jonson's own platonizing descriptions of beauty, this poet dwells on the theme of perfection, as if the castle were a woman. It seems that personification of a building is one of the most readily identifiable features of the genre but one that expresses its *serio ludens* just as much as its allegorical tendencies.

Whether a house has been reconstructed from a fort or from an abbey, the poets will praise the transformation in terms of the appropriateness to the owner's mind. Welbeck Abbey is large, unlike Bolsover; nevertheless, according to Richard Flecknoe, it is "Justly proportioned to the owner's mind: / All great and solid, as in ancient times / Before our modern buildings were our crimes."[21] But this owner is, after all, the Duke of Newcastle, so that even his stables appear like a palace or a temple, in which the horses are venerated as "semi-gods." It is to his credit that he exemplifies courtesy, not pride, and that he converts greatness to "an art of nobleness."

The wife of the Duke, Margaret Cavendish, is praised, in another poem by Flecknoe, for her closet. So learned is she that she "Makes each place where she comes a library, / Carrying a living library in her brain / More worth than Bodley's or the Vatican."[22] The ingenious hyperbole is not only acceptable as a compliment to a very learned woman but as a playfully worded tribute, rather than mere adulation. One critic has indeed commented on the "sycophantic abasement" of this piece,[23] missing, as it seems, the conventions of the genre and the inherent playfulness. It is a not unfamiliar weakness of criticism to take more seriously the encomia of the period than they were intended to be. Convention justifies much of what would otherwise seem excessive.

For poets, many of these conventions suggest the mind at play. In one of Edmund Waller's Penshurst poems, he praises Dorothy Sidney, eldest child of Robert Sidney, second earl of Leicester, for bestowing order on the grounds of the house. The comparisons with Orpheus and with Amphion are designed to portray her spirit as the inspiration by which a wood turned into a garden:

> Amphion so made stones and timber leap
> Into fair figures from a confused heap;
> And in the symmetry of her parts is found
> A power like that of harmony in sound.[24]

The platonizing that runs throughout these poems is itself both playful and poetic, though some would add "political," like the court masques. In fact, one could find many parallels between country house poems and

the masque: both are essentially cavalier in spirit; both use classical mythology as central to the encomium; both idealize individuals and nature by emphasizing beauty and harmony; both are forms of entertainment couched in moral terms. But while the masque will have some sort of plot, and probably an antimasque, as well as music, dancing, and stage sets, the country house poem is often narrative and digressive in form.

Nevertheless, artifice is omnipresent in the two genres. For the country house poem, more concerned with description of an actual place than is the masque, nature is nevertheless nature tamed. Everywhere the human hand is at work reducing wild forests and raging rivers to a more civilized pattern. England thus takes its rightful place as the garden of the world, and the classical deities are domesticated to become part of the familiar landscape, while enhancing the visible with their invisible presence. Another poem by Waller, "On St. James's Park, As Lately Improved by His Majesty," is devoted to eulogizing the reformed order of the old St James's Park by the new monarch, Charles II, in 1660.[25] In turn this new order—again epitomized by the "voice of Orpheus or Amphion's hand" (15)—serves as a model for the reformation of the nation. The inevitable reference to "the first paradise" appears at the beginning of the poem; though that paradise has long since vanished, "the description lasts," as Waller hopes that his own description of the park will last. Past, present, and future are contained in the image of this park as a type of earthly paradise.

Poems of rebuilding inevitably suggest a new order imposed upon old materials. Again, Waller commends the queen's rebuilding of Somerset House.[26] That this is more than mere compliment to the queen is indicated by the fact that she played an active part in the design of the reconstruction, having herself a considerable interest in architecture. The symbolic significance of reconstruction was irresistible to poets of the Restoration. Waller asks:

> But what new mine this work supplies?
> Can such a pile from ruin rise?
> This like the first creation shows
> As if at your command it rose. (19-22)

But Waller can be more specific, as in his reference to the well-proportioned staircase that the queen built. Here is an opportunity for the poet to show his wit in an often repeated topos of the genre: the pride of the owner in its combination with humility:

> She needs no weary steps ascend;
> All seems before her feet to bend:
> And her, as she was born, she lies;
> High, without taking pains to rise. (41-44)

He sums up the building, "by the Queen herself designed, [one might add, with the help of Inigo Jones] / Gives us a pattern of her mind" (31-32). In this phrase, "a pattern of her mind," Waller also sums up the theme of most, and perhaps all, country house poems. The very abstractness of the word "pattern," with its platonic implications, underlines the purpose of these poems, not as constituting an architectural record but as a eulogy of the mind of the owner.

Sometimes a poet will contrast the house and estate of his own mind with the actuality of these as commended by other poets. Thomas Randolph describes his mind as his "manor-house," in which he is complete master. Addressing an imaginary owner of a country house, he notes: "Thou hast the commons to enclosure brought / And I have fixed a bound to my vast thought."[27] In another contrast, he uses the growing fashion for owners to have pictures painted of their estate: "Thou hast thy landscapes, and thy painters try / With all their skill to please the wanton eye" (143-44). The difference between outer and inner supplies the "hinge" or invention for this poem:

> Within the inner closet of my brain
> Attend the nobler members of my train.
> Invention Master of my mint grows there,
> And memory my faithful Treasurer. (47-50)

In keeping with this emphasis on memory, Randolph contrasts his study of the past with the landowner's concern for the future: "He on posterity may fix his care, / And I can study on the times that were" (89-90). Withdrawal into the mind, and the traditional image of the mind as a

building or a landscape, come together in this allegorical poem. It is of interest here as representing the inner life, of which outer experience, in the shape of the sight of a country house and estate, is only a pale reflection.

The emphasis on proportion and symmetry in some of these poems seems to draw its chief significance from the demand that the house be "justly proportion'd to the owner's mind," in the words of Flecknoe. The newer architectural theory in a sense made a building reflect the claims of the owner's mind to reason. We even find a reference to Sir Henry Wotton's influential book *The Elements of Architecture* in Mildmay Fane's poem "To the Countess of Rutland, upon Her New Re-edifying of Belvoir after It Had been Ruined by the Late Civil War":

> Where all to architect prescribe may see
> Their observations and their Cymentry
> So well scored out that it might give content
> To curious Wootten and his *Element*.[28]

The new conception of the architect as a theorist here makes its first appearance in a country house poem. It may be that the intellectual aspect of architecture as it is capable of reflecting "a pattern of the mind" is coming to the fore, in contrast with the older negative conception of the architect as belonging to a fallen world. Biblical references to the evils of architecture are numerous in the literature of the time, from the Tower of Babel to the Book of Revelations, where the Heavenly City does not even have a temple. Only the building not made with hands is truly significant.

To justify the building or rebuilding of country houses, various strategems were adopted by the poets, such as the communal need for hospitality. But for the later poets of the period, retirement and solitude figure as the greatest value, especially for Royalists at the time of the Civil War. In the words of Mildmay Fane, in his poem "To Retiredness," "I am taught thankfulness from trees."[29] Free from ambition and strife, he studies nature: "For every field's a several page, / Deciphering the Golden Age" (33-34). Such poems look back to Horace's second epode, translated by a number of seventeenth century poets, including Fane himself. But in

Fane's own poem, he adds to the epicurean pleasures of country life the religious contemplation that sanctions communion with trees and fields. Above all, the freedom to wander animates another of Fane's poems:

> Earth's here embroiderd into Walks: some straight,
> Others like serpents are, or worms to bait
> Occasion's hook, till every humour come,
> And feed here fat as in Elysium.[30]

The "humour" of wandering at will along serpentine paths shows the playful spirit that animates these poems at their best and that will culminate in Marvell's "Upon Appleton House," a poem in which wandering takes on a significance beyond the epicurean. But retirement from the world seems inevitably to imply the union of pleasure with virtue, as Thomas Pestel indicates in his "General Hasting's Bower":

> Where men may die contemplative
> On pleasures that three senses give;
> Nor minding two, whereby they live.[31]

It is the higher senses, especially sight, that dominate Marvell's "Upon Appleton House," with the difference from many other country house poems that after the initial emphasis on the mind of the owner, Lord Fairfax, the poet moves to a portrayal of his own mind, in which he becomes high priest of the place.

Lord Fairfax himself wrote a short poem "Upon the New-Built House at Appleton," in which he denigrates architecture on religious grounds:

> Think not, O man that dwells herein,
> This house's a stay, but as an inn,
> Which for convenience fitly stands,
> In way to one not made with hands;
> But if a time here thou take rest,
> Yet think, eternity's the best.[32]

Fairfax also translated a poem by the French poet Saint-Amant under the title "The Solitude," in which the speaker explores "ancient ruinated towers" and climbs a rock for a vista over the sea.[33] As he descends "at

[his] leisure," he marvels at the hollow caves, "A work so curious and so rare / As if that Neptune's court were there" (109-10). Like Marvell in "Upon Appleton House," the poet enjoys his own play of fancy, such as his view of the calm sea as like a "looking glass" in which the sun sees himself:

> The sun in it's so clearly seen
> That, contemplating this bright sight,
> As 'twas a doubt whether it had been
> Himself or image gave the light,
> At first appearing to our eyes
> As if he had fallen from the skies. (135-40)

This doubleness of vision also appears in Marvell's "Upon Appleton House" as a way of involving the poet's experience directly in the description of topographical features.

But before we turn to Marvell's most famous country house poem, let us glance at the poem he wrote on another of Lord Fairfax's houses, Bilborough. Describing not the house but the hill and grove on the estate, Marvell turns the hill into an epitome of the world, as well as symbol of humility compared with the mighty mountains, symbols of pride, exemplified in Marvell's related "Epigramma in Duos Montes" as Almscliff:

> See how the archèd earth does here
> Rise in a perfect hemisphere!
> The stiffest compass could not strike
> A line more circular and like;
> Nor softest pencil draw a brow
> So equal as this hill does bow.
> It seems as for a model laid,
> And that the world by it was made.[34]

The superiority of nature over art is implied, whether the hemisphere is drawn by means of a compass or by the painter's brush. The stage is thus set for the theme of communion with nature in its dual aspect of hill and grove, where the trees speak "More certain oracles in oak" (74). For metaphorical "mountains raised of dying men" and for "groves of pikes," Fairfax has now chosen retirement amid nature and created a living

memory of his wife by engraving on the oaks her name, Vera; but these trees already knew by sympathy her virtues, as well as his advancement: "But in no memory were seen, / As under this, so straight and green" (55-56). The whole park is imbued with the spirit of Fairfax and the order that it exemplifies. Even the hill does not strive to attain height for itself "But only strives to raise the plain" (24). The conceit is conventional in that it repeats the often stated paradox that true greatness is joined to humility.

The same paradox informs the description of Lord Fairfax and his house in Marvell's "Upon Appleton House." He begins with the familiar denunciation of ambitious architecture, which is not only an insult to nature but which demands unseemly mental effort on the part of the architect:

> Who of his great design in pain
> Did for a model vault his brain,
> Whose columns should so high be raised
> To arch the brows that on them gazed.[35]

Such houses are "unproportioned" to man, who should build like the tortoise a low-roofed but "fit case." At Appleton House, "all things are composèd here / Like nature, orderly and near" (25-26). Once again, architecture is subordinated to nature and "Things greater are in less contained" (44), while the gardener's art too gives way to nature's own:

> Art would more neatly have defaced
> What she had laid so sweetly waste,
> In fragrant gardens, shady woods,
> Deep meadows, and transparent floods. (77-80)

Here are all the classical features of the *locus amoenus*, an instance of the "disorderly order" of nature that is shortly to be turned into an expression of subjective experience.

The emphasis in the poem will be on mind, despite the attention given to sensuous experience, because perception itself here implies memory: memory not only of specific moments but memory of other moments in time and place. Here we have an ordering principle at work in arranging

the whole time sequence of the poem, as well as the significance of the events it recalls.

The role played by memory in Marvell's poem turns actual experience into a reliving colored by the imagination. As Kitty Scoular remarks, "Often he [Marvell] appears to be recollecting rather than inventing, as though he had kept a common place book during his residence at Nun Appleton and were referring to it during the composition of his poetry. Perhaps this was no more than an excellent memory."[36] For all the pertinence of this comment, Scoular omits the link between memory and imagination as acknowledged by Renaissance psychology, drawing upon classical and medieval tradition. Aristotle had specifically joined memory and imagination:

> It is then obvious that memory refers to that part of the soul to which imagination refers; all things which are mental pictures are in themselves subjects of memory, and those which cannot exist apart from imagination are only incidentally subjects of memory.[37]

It is safe to assume that Marvell was indeed remembering something from past experience and that it is now reconstituted with the hues of the imagination—witness his constant use of paradox and images that are less descriptive than interpretative. Besides the chronological order used in the poem is this other ordering principle of paradox. At first glance, this may seem rather a principle of disorder than of order, but it is designed to show significance in terms of the more general artistic principle, believed to derive from nature: "disorderly order."[38] There are thus at least two kinds of order imposed on sense experience: the chronological and the paradoxical.

In relating the history of the house, Marvell situates it in the past and commends the work of reconstruction as a spiritual, not merely physical, rebuilding: "A nunnery first gave it birth / (For virgin buildings oft brought forth)" (85-86).[39] The attempt on the part of the nuns to kidnap the betrothed of an earlier Fairfax is recounted with the expected irony. When, with the dissolution, it fell to the lot of the very Fairfax who had carried off his bride from the walls of the convent, it began to turn into a truly religious house (280).

The laying out of the gardens was conducted by a military Fairfax, perhaps Marvell's employer. Instead of the guns of a fort, flowers aim at the senses, and when they shoot, "the shrill report no ear can tell, / But echoes to the eye and smell" (308-09). Throughout the several stanzas devoted to this playful analogy, reminiscent of Corbett's "court and fort" paradox, Marvell reminds us of the Civil War and its devastation. He laments the time when "The gardener had the soldier's place" and "The nursery of all things green / Was then the only magazine" (337-40). Now "war all this doth overgrow; / We ordnance plant and powder sow" (344).

The most remarkable part of the poem begins with the poet's personal journey through the parkland, at stanza 47.[40] Insensibly Marvell shifts from the house and estate as reflecting the mind of Lord Fairfax to his own experience as he revisits through memory a scene fraught with symbolic meaning.[41] Following up on his paradox of "Things greater . . . in less contained" (44), he begins his journey through the fields with a relativizing of size:

> And now to the abyss I pass
> Of that unfathomable grass,
> Where men like grashoppers appear,
> But grasshoppers are giants there:
> They, in their squeaking laugh, contemn
> Us as we walk more low than them:
> And, from the precipices tall
> Of the green spires, to us do call. (369-76)

He continues to work with these paradoxes of above, below, / big, little, / land, sea, / within, without, / rightside up, upside down.[42] They are partly a way to order the kaleidoscope of perception through finding a pattern of nature's wit, partly a way to moralize on the theme of man's littleness amid the universe, and especially the universe of nature. Lord Fairfax is all but forgotten in a realm that belongs only to the poet.

When the meadow turns into a green sea hiding the farm laborers, they re-emerge bringing up flowers "so to be seen, / And prove they've at the bottom been" (383-84). Before long the sea divides for the mowers and then turns into the Red Sea with the slaughter of birds. Their plight goes

to show that building below the grass's root is no protection: "lowness is unsafe as height" (411).

The constant changes inevitably remind Marvell of masque scenery as the most striking example of shifting perceptions but also of the playfulness intrinsic to the genre. Among the notable examples of allusions to the shifting scenery of masques are the following: "No scene that turns with Engines strange / Does oftener than these meadows change" (st. 49); "This scene again withdrawing brings / A new and empty face of things" (st. 56); "Then, to conclude these pleasant acts, / Denton sets ope its cataracts" (st. 59); "And see how Chance's better wit / Could with a mask my studies hit" (st. 74); "So when the Shadows laid asleep / From underneath these banks do creep, / And on the river as it flows / With eben shuts begin to close" (st. 84); "And men the silent scene assist, / Charmed with the saphire-winged mist" (st. 85). Perhaps rightly, Muriel Bradbrook, who has discussed the relationship of this poem to the masque most extensively, sees even the extraordinary image of the behavior of the house at the approach of its master as masquelike:[43] "But where he comes the swelling hall / Stirs and the square grows spherical" (st. 50). As Bradbrook says, "Alteration of scale, like that of the masque, enlarges the central figure; Marvell is giving to Fairfax the kind of praise that the masquers gave to royalty, but he is paradoxically giving it in praise of an abdication of power" (215). I would only add that here, as everywhere in the poem, Marvell is playing with his perceptions in a perpetual exaggeration designed to illustrate significance and, above all, wonder. And it is wonder that is at the heart of masques. Even the ending of the poem with the appearance of the young Maria Fairfax as the genius of the place suggests the *deus ex machina* with which masques traditionally ended, to reassert divine order controlling the apparent disorder of earth.

In what is almost a free association of ideas, or at least the appearance of such an association, Marvell continues to use masque imagery to describe the shifting panorama. From the allusion to hills for obsequies in Roman camps, "This scene again withdrawing brings / A new and empty face of things" (441-42). The level space evokes at first three analogies, one to Sir Peter Lely's canvases, another to the tabula rasa of the newly created world, and finally, to the *toril* at Madrid, before the bulls

enter. But even these three are not enough to satisfy the poet: he reminds us of the Levellers, who took their pattern from such a level space. The cattle who next appear on the scene—"th' universal herd"[44] are visually characterized in terms of both the very small and the large: they are like fleas and they are like constellations, but the size of these is relative, depending on how they are viewed. The allusions to "a landscape drawn in looking glass" and to "multiplying glasses," or microscopes, suggest the illusionistic tricks that fascinated people who had learned to see in them not only a model of the fallacies of perception but also of the artifice that cheats and pleases at the same time.[45]

When the flood gates are opened and the meadow literally becomes a sea, Marvell revels in the overturning of nature's order: "Let others tell the paradox, / How eels now bellow in the ox" (474). The exchange of water and land is like the other exchanges in the poem between big and little and above, below. We shortly are given another of these exchanges as the poet withdraws to the "sanctuary" of the wood: "Dark all without it knits; within / It opens passable and thin" (506-07). The contrast of within and without will reappear when he returns to the meadow, which "with moister colour dashed, / Seems as green silks but newly washed" (627-28). As the river withdraws within its banks and again becomes a crystal mirror, in it "all things gaze themselves, and doubt / If they be in it or without" (637-38).

Alongside these paradoxes of vision, Marvell reflects on the religious message to be derived from nature. Death and destruction seem to be part of the pattern, just as much as peace and quiet are. Even the sad but pleasing sound of the stock-doves spells the fate of humanity: "O why should such a couple mourn, / That in so equal flames do burn!" (527-28).[46] Meanwhile the oak tree has fed "A traitor-worm" within it, just as "our flesh corrupt within / Tempts impotent and bashful sin" (555-45); and yet the worm has fed the wood-pecker's young, "While the oak seems to fall content, / Viewing the treason's punishment" (559-60).

The digressiveness of the poem, and of country house poems in general, has been identified with the georgic mode. Marvell carries this feature, described by Erasmus as for relief and delight,[47] to new lengths. He allows himself to be carried along on wave after wave of visual experience. Such

passivity in the face of experience, which is part of his whole invention, implies an experience that can be grasped only in fragmentary images and conceits. But this passivity also means that the speaker makes himself available for play, since he appears not to be controlling the direction in which he moves or seeking to dominate what he is exposed to in the way of images. Yet this in itself is a fiction: as already noted, he balances opposites in so consistent a way that a pattern emerges. The emphasis on the visual certainly has the appearance of recreating an original experience but, in fact, reshapes it in keeping with the artistic principle of "disorderly order"; that is to say, the desirability of variety as stated, for example, by Spenser's commentator, E.K., in *The Shepheardes Caldender*.

Like the masque imagery, the "disorderly order" of nature has an intrinsic playfulness, removed as it is from the rigid structures of a more formal aesthetics. The poet invents a role for himself in the realm of nature: his spirit crows at the transformations he alleges that he witnessed, as much as it does at his own incorporation into nature, so that he is no longer mere observer but part of the scene he describes. This latter aspect occurs only gradually. It begins with his retreat from the flood into the wood, an emblem of the ark:

> But I, retiring from the flood,
> Take sanctuary in the wood,
> And while it lasts, myself embark
> In this yet green, yet growing ark . . . . (st. 61)

The pronoun "I" now appears in place of the previous detachment of the observer who recorded the cattle as seeming "within the polished grass / A landskip drawn in looking-glass" (st. 58).

The estate becomes more a microcosm than ever. But Marvell has to move back to encomium of the owner, just like a masque. He does this smoothly enough by invoking the spirit of the owner's daughter as the giver of order. The place used to be Nunappleton, controlled by nuns, but now by Maria Fairfax, in tune with nature and with a higher sense of order. Although this kind of praise is conventional as a topos of estate poetry, what is new is the apotheosis of the poet—no longer the purveyor of conventional compliments but moving outside these into an exploration of the landscape

that becomes both a subjective experience and an epitome of the times he lives in, as well as of the whole of human history. This mingling of the personal and the historical makes of place a symbol of what it is to be both a perceiving eye and a philosopher. Wearing his "antic cope" of oak leaves, he calls himself "easy philosopher," relaxed in his acceptance of himself as birdlike or treelike:

> Give me but wings as they, and I
> Straight floating on the air shall fly;
> Or turn me but, and you shall see
> I was but an inverted tree. (566-68)

His passivity allows him to be part of nature; he does not make decisions but stretches out on the bank like a river god or an angler. Even the fleeting reference in this passage to "th' osier's undermined root" and "its branches rough" suggests a deep fall into nature's very workings. Chance's "better wit" takes charge of him. But because he is so passive, he is without what we call personality. He simply is. It is a new conception of order that the poet proposes: not that of the prioress of the original nunnery, but the order of "loose nature."

If he is to conform to this order, placing himself inside it, he has to give up control. This is why he becomes the prisoner of woodbines and gadding vines: "And oh, so close your circles lace, / that I may never leave this place" (st. 77). He goes further and asks to be chained by brambles and nailed by briars, in a magic circle. In this kind of safety from the warfare of the world, he has encamped his mind: "But I on it securely play, / And gall its horsemen all the day" (st. 76). The verb "play" tells the whole story of the poet's purpose. Which is not to say that it is not serious. There is a balancing of order and disorder in the poem that is of the essence of this "easy" philosophy. The river must withdraw within its banks, becoming once more "a crystal mirror," and it is Maria Fairfax who symbolically bestows order: "Nothing could make the river be / So crystal pure but only she; / She yet more pure, sweet, straight, and fair, / Than gardens, woods, meads, rivers are" (st. 87). So the human being in the ideal paradisal state, in which he finds Maria, represents an order of mind and spirit that transcends anything nature has to offer. Marvell gradually extricates

himself from his briars and brambles, even though they are more "courteous" than those of the outside world, to return to the reality represented by the "rational amphibii," human beings who go about their everyday tasks while living in two worlds at once: the world of nature and the world of reason.

Inseparable from human kind, however, in interpreting experience is memory. Thus Marvell has in mind images of other gardens, such as Tempe, Aranjuez, Bel-Retiro (st. 95); it is as if he were restating the kind of outdoing comparison that he used in his Bilborough poem: "But in no memory was seen, / As under this, so straight and green" (l. 55). Memory compares and contrasts, and the garden of Marvell's poem is shaped in recognition of this fact. Although he uses the present tense for recording what he saw on one particular day, he is like the novelist who chooses to give immediacy to his narrative by the pretense that it is all happening now.

The number of times that Marvell uses the adverb "now" in the poem is interesting. For all the emphasis on the present, he moves backward in time, and, toward the end of the poem, forward in time, as well as outwards in space to allude to his contemporary world of politics and art. To mention a few of his "now's," they first appear with st. 47: "And now to the abyss I pass"; they punctuate a number of other moments, such as "The mower now commands the field" (st. 53); and at the end of the last stanza, "But now the salmon fishers moist." Interspersed among the "now's" are a few "then's" to mark the next phase of the journey: "Then languishing with ease" (st. 75). These adverbs help to situate the poet's journey in time as well as in space.

But it is memory above all that assists the ordering of experience, placing it in a context, helping to give it a meaningful narrative structure. To make it compatible with play, these memories must, however, seem spontaneously allusive. Here Marvell succeeds by referring to the parting of the Red Sea or to Lely's blank canvases in a manner that seems whimsical, albeit artificial in both the Renaissance and modern sense. For they do not supprt an argument but enlarge a perceptual experience and give it significance in terms of history, which is another form of narrative with a grander meaning than what one individual sees or hears.

If the outside world is a confused, or rude, "heap together hurled," the lesser world of the estate contains the same: "But in more decent order tame: / You, heaven's centre, Nature's lap, / And paradise's only map" (767-68). By the time he has identified the salmon fishers with their canoes on their heads as "rational amphibii," "tortoise-like, but not so slow," he has come full circle to the initial idea in the poem of a house as like a tortoise-shell—a low roof hut richly adapted to the creature that dwells in it. The balance between the actual sight of the salmon-fishers with canoes on their heads and the emblematic comparison—"How tortoise-like, but not so slow"—is a perfect example of how the mind of the poet interprets experience. He has found a substitute for Corinthian columns, not entirely in the "loose order of nature," but in the order of reason and poetry. He has also brought the chronological sequence of his walk through the estate to a natural end with the coming of night.[48]

The beauty and vividness of the imagery make this poem credible as an example of revisiting through memory. It is memory that not only preserves experience but, in this instance, transforms experience into topoi. These in turn become subject to an "easy" philosophical interpretation. Although various kinds of ordering principles, including the chronological, the paradoxical, and the comparative are used, they must not seem to obtrude in a poem that acknowledges another artistic principle: disorderly order and the digressiveness that goes with it. Like Constantine Huygens, Marvell could say, "How much more comes to our vision / Than our minds may comprehend."[49] Too strict an order would deny the impossibility of understanding the meaning of everything seen; the freedom and playfulness of *capriccio* are intrinsic to his genre as he defines it.

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NOTES

[1]See, for example, G. R. Hibbard, "The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 19 (1956): 159-74; William A. McClung, *The Country House in English Renaissance Poetry* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1977); Alastair Fowler, "Country House Poems: The Politics of a Genre," *The Seventeenth Century* 1 (1986): 1-14; Alastair Fowler, "The Beginnings of English Georgic," *Renaissance Genres: Essays on Theory, History and Interpretation*, ed. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1986) 105-25.

[2]Peacham's *Compleat Gentleman* (1634), with intro. by G. S. Gordon (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960) 73.

[3]Peacham 73.

[4]For Inigo Jones, see John Summerson, *Architecture in Britain 1530 to 1830* (London: Penguin, 1953, 4th ed. 1963), chapters 7, 8, 9. See also John Summerson, *Inigo Jones* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966).

[5]*The Myth of the Golden Age in the Renaissance* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana UP, 1969).

[6]Sir Henry Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture* (1624), facsimile reprint, intro. and notes by Frederick Hard (Charlottesville: U Press of Virginia, 1968) 119.

[7]Quotations from country house poems are drawn from *The Country House Poem: A Cabinet of Seventeenth-Century Estate Poems and Related Items*, ed. Alastair Fowler (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1994). "To Penshurst" (*The Forest* [1616]) is on pp. 53-56, ll. 1-6.

[8]On this subject, see Charles Molesworth, "'To Penshurst' and Jonson's Historical Imagination," *Clio* 1 (1972): 5-13.

[9]*The Faerie Queene*, 1.4.5.

[10]On this parallel, see my "Elizabethan Architecture and *The Faerie Queene*: Some Structural Analogies," *Dalhousie Review* 45 (1966): 470-78.

[11]Geoffrey Whitney, "Patria Cuique Cara: To Richard Cotton Esquire," *A Choice of Emblemes* (1586), Fowler 31-32, ll. 43-48.

[12]Emilia Lanier, "The Description of Cooke-ham," *Salve Deus Rex Iudaeorum* (1611), Fowler 45-50, ll. 117-20.

[13]Henry Peacham, *Garden of Eloquence* (1593), ed. William G. Crane (Gainesville, Florida: Scholar's Facsimiles and Reprints, 1954) 141.

[14]Aphthonius, *Progymnasmata*, trans. Ray Nadeau, *Speech Monographs* 19 (1952) 279.

[15]See, for example, my "The Refusal to Paint: Shakespeare's Poetry of Place," *Comparative Drama* 23 (1989-90): 331-43.

[16]In *Iter Boreale* (1647), Fowler 409-12, ll. 409-11.

[17]On this word as a critical term, see my "The *Capriccio* in Literature," *The Jest and Earnestness of Art*, ed. Philipp P. Fehl and Stephen S. Prokopoff (Urbana, IL: Krannert Art Museum, U of Illinois, 1987) 13-18.

[18]"To My Friend G. N. From Wrest," *Poems* (1640), Fowler 89-95, ll. 79-88.

[19]Mildmay Fane, "My Happy Life, to a Friend," *Otia Sacra* (1648), see Fowler 206-15, ll. 59-60.

[20]Fowler notes that the poet is possibly George Aglionby and that the poem was probably written between 1621 and 1642. The text is taken from BL.Harl. ms. 4955, fol. 188, Fowler 167-72, ll. 38-42.

[21]Richard Flecknoe, "On Welbeck," *A Farrago of Several Pieces* . . . (1666), Fowler 176-77, ll. 10-12.

[22]Richard Flecknoe, "On the Duchess of Newcastle's Closet," *Poems* (1645), Fowler 179-83, ll. 12-14.

[23]Henry Ten Eyck Perry, *The First Duchess of Newcastle and Her Husband as Figures in Literary History* (Boston: Ginn, 1918), cited in Fowler 180.

[24]"At Penshurst[I]," *Poems* (1645), Fowler 181-83, ll. 17-20.

[25]"On St. James's Park, As lately Improved by His Majesty," from the broadside of 1660; reprinted in *The Poems of Edmund Waller*, ed. G. Thorn Drury (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1893). Fowler 187-96.

[26]"Upon Her Majesty's New Building at Somerset House," from the broadside 1665; reprinted in Thom Drury. Fowler 197-201.

[27]Thomas Randolph, "On the Inestimable Content he Enjoys in the Muses . . . ," *Poems, with the Muses' Looking-Glass* . . . (1638), Fowler 138-44, ll. 67-68.

[28]Fulbeck Hall ms. "Poems 1665," fol. 971. Fowler 255-58, ll. 15-11.

[29]*Otia Sacra* (1648), Fowler 216-19, l. 30.

[30]Mildmay Fane, "To Sir John Wentworth . . .," *Otia Sacra*, Fowler 227-32, ll. 57-60.

[31]Thomas Pestel, "General Hasting's Bower," Fowler 202-04, ll. 16-18.

[32]Bodl. ms. Fairfax 40, p. 593. Fowler 328-29.

[33]From Bodl. ms. Fairfax 40. Fowler 330-34, l. 62.

[34]In *Miscellaneous Poems* (1681). Fowler 302-05, ll. 1-8.

[35]In *Miscellaneous Poems* (1681). Fowler 281-301, ll.1-9.

[36]Kitty Scoular, *Natural Magic: Studies in the Presentation of Nature in English Poetry from Spenser to Marvell* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965) 165.

[37]Aristotle, "On Memory and Recollection," *Parva Naturalia*, trans. W. S. Hett (London: Heinemann, 1957) 287.

[38]In a forthcoming article, "'Disorderly Order': E.K.'s Analogy between Poetry and Painting," I discuss this artistic principle.

[39]These lines occur in a section of the poem omitted from Fowler's text. See *Andrew Marvell: The Complete Poems*, ed. Elizabeth Story Donno (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972) 78.

[40]On the gardenist background of the poem, see John Dixon Hunt, "'Loose Nature' and the 'Garden Square': The Gardenist Background for Marvell's Poetry," *Approaches to Marvell: The York Tercentenary Lectures*, ed. C. A. Patrides (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978) 331-51.

[41]The possible connections between Marvell's poem and Huygen's "Hofwik" are examined in Peter Davidson and Adriaan van der Weel, *A Selection of the Poems of Sir Constantijn Huygens, 1596-1687* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam UP, 1996) 211-14. Reference is made to the way Huygens, like Marvell, describes a moralized walk around an estate. They also mention Huygens' use of the Art of Memory in associating specific ideas with specific places in his garden.

[42]Among the most illuminating and provocative treatments of the paradoxes of Marvell's poem is Rosalie L. Colie's *"My Ecchoing Song": Andrew Marvell's Poetry of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970) 181-294.

[43]Muriel Bradbrook, "Marvell and the Masque," *Tercentenary Essays in Honor of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Kenneth Friedenreich (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1977) 204-23.

[44]Marvell alludes directly to Sir William Davenant's *Gondibert* II.vi., in which he describes a painting of the creation, with"th' universal herd" appearing on the sixth day.

[45]Cf. Sir George Mackenzie, "Caelia's Country House and Closet" (c. 1667-68), *Works*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh 1716-22), Fowler 344-53, ll. 123-24: "She here an artificial rock has raised, / By which, even whilst we're cheated, we are pleased."

[46]See Donno edition for this passage and the following ones.

[47]Erasmus, *On Copia of Words and Ideas*, trans. Donald B. King and H. David Rix (Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette UP, 1963) 54-55.

[48]Ann E. Berthoff, in her *The Resolved Soul: A Study of Marvell's Major Poems* (Princeton: (Princeton UP, 1970), refers to the correspondence between "the picture of a salmon-fisher with his boat over his head" as "an image of the earth and its heaven" (193). One could also say that this image is another example of the "upsidedown" theme. Berthoff emphasizes everywhere in this poem the correspondences that serve as a unifying theme.

[49]Huygens, "Batava Tempe" 215-16, *A Selection of the Poems of Sir Constantijn Huygens* 45.

Connotations
Vol. 8.1 (1998/99)

Gerard Manley Hopkins Revisiting Binsey

CHRISTIANE LANG-GRAUMANN

Binsey Poplars
felled 1879

My aspens dear, whose airy cages quelled,
Quelled or quenched in leaves the leaping sun,
All felled, felled, are all felled;
Of a fresh and following folded rank
Not spared, not one
That dandled a sandalled
Shadow that swam or sank
On meadow and river and wind-wandering
weed-winding bank.

O if we but knew what we do
When we delve or hew—
Hack and rack the growing green!
Since country is so tender
To touch, her being só slender,
That, like this sleek and seeing ball
But a prick will make no eye at all,
Where we, even where we mean
To mend her we end her,
When we hew or delve:
After-comers cannot guess the beauty been.
Ten or twelve, only ten or twelve
Strokes of havoc únselve
The sweet especial scene,
Rural scene, a rural scene,
Sweet especial rural scene.[1]

When Hopkins in December 1878 started his duties as curate at St Aloysius' Church in Oxford, he returned to a place he had been treasuring since his undergraduate years. Oxford with its countryside had always been very

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dear to him; he even nourished a deep personal affection for the city expressed in three early "love" sonnets addressed to Oxford (one of them begins: "New dated from the terms that re-appear / More sweet familiar grows my love to thee"). His journals relate that he especially liked the way by the upper river from Medley Weir northwards to Godstow or Binsey Village.[2] This particular way he took either by boat or on foot on various occasions.[3] After sixteen years, on the thirteenth of March 1879 he retraced this path on a walk to Godstow and found that all the poplars lining the river near Binsey had been cut down. Hopkins, to whom the cutting down of trees was always very distressing—as shown in a couple of notebook-entries—,[4] mentions this sad experience in a postscript of the same day to a long letter to Richard Watson Dixon, begun in February: "I have been up to Godstow this afternoon. I am sorry to say that the aspens that lined the river are everyone felled";[5] and although he otherwise could find little time to write because of his parish work (as is stated in the same letter), he was so stirred by the mutilated landscape that he began the composition of "Binsey Poplars" that very evening.[6]

Man's cutting down of a couple of trees, with which he sometimes even tries to "mend," can, of course, be necessary and useful. But to Hopkins man's interference with nature, though to all appearances only partial, is a cause of deep sorrow and lament.[7] He experiences the destruction almost as a personal bereavement, all the more so as his feeling for the beauty of the landscape amounts to personal love.[8] This is shown by the very first line of the poem, which seems addressed to friends: "My aspens dear . . . ." Moreover, the place he revisits is said to have been "unselved" by "strokes of havoc," that is, its unique and distinct and, so to speak, personal nature, which can by no means be repeated, has been destroyed. And, in addition to that, this destruction, to Hopkins, is not limited to a well defined and isolated area but endangers nature as a whole, just as "a prick will make no eye at all."[9]

Seen against the background of Hopkins' incarnational or sacramental vision of nature, in which the world appears as "word, expression, news of God,"[10] it becomes quite clear why the proportions of the catastrophe caused by this seemingly negligible intervention are so horrendous. For, when the whole world is realized as "charged with the grandeur of God"[11]

(though in "Binsey Poplars" not in a markedly Christian but rather a pantheistic way) man's ill-treatment of God's work is felt to be sacrilegious. For this reason the poet fundamentally questions the goodness of mankind's doing by using words reminiscent of the words of the dying Christ on the cross (Lk. 23:34: "Father forgive them, they know not what they do"):[12] "O if we but knew what we do / When we delve or hew—." Then he goes on to make audible the brutality with which man acts: "Hack and rack the growing green!"

To Hopkins each separate species or, rather, each individual creature (and therefore also each tree) manifests through its inscape a particular, necessary and unrepeatable aspect of the indivisible perfection of its maker. This is in keeping with Duns Scotus' doctrine of the *haecceitas* or individualizing form, which says that an object is not merely a member of a species, as for instance a poplar, but this individual and particular poplar.[13] Hence every creature not only contributes to the beauty of the whole but is essential for its existence.[14] And only in being entirely itself each thing is able to "deal out"[15] that inner energy which makes it an integral part of the whole. Therefore by taking away only one single "self," the whole is in danger of being destroyed, God's work of art, the great chain, is broken.[16] In this interrelation lies the "tender[ness]" and "slender[ness]" of "country," mentioned in lines 13 and 14, which is as delicate and vulnerable as an eye and therefore should be taken care of as if it were, indeed, "this sleek and seeing ball"; for once it is destroyed it cannot be mended, it is no more.

The image of the eye in line 16 varies the metaphor "seeing ball" of line 15; the "seeing," moreover, is evoked and echoed at the end of the poem four times homophonously in "scene." This suggests that especially the visual quality of the once beautiful scene is gone. Its inscape can non longer be taken in through the eye. But in destroying the scene, which here clearly is meant to be something seen, man inevitably blinds himself, as there is an essential relation between seeing and being seen. This also means that man's ill-treatment of nature will, in the end, fall back upon himself. The implied interrelation of observer and observed or of seeing and being seen is further corroborated by Hopkins' notion of instress[17] as an energy emanating from the perceived object with which it makes itself known.

This energy is neither a product of the observer nor imposed on the observed by the mind but it is an intrinsic quality of the observed object itself. Perception, therefore, is a reciprocal, dialectical, almost dialogical process in which observer and observed interact. A journal entry pinpoints this idea: "What you look hard at seems to look hard at you."[18]

Although this particular scene as something seen is forever lost so that "after-comers cannot guess the beauty been," the poet revisiting Binsey recalls what he saw and felt when the trees were still lining the river. There are, in fact, two revisitings taking place simultaneously, one real in an autobiographical sense, facing the mutilated landscape, and another one, imaginary, returning to the scene in memory.[19] The sight may be lost to the physical eye; it is, however, still present to the eyes of the imagination. The first line of the poem suggests this simultaneity of vision, bringing into view the present and the past state at the same time, as the implicit ambivalence of the verb "quelled" demonstrates. Although it is, in this context, used in the active with the "leaping sun" as object, it also rhymes with and semantically already implies "felled" of line 3.[20] Thus "quelled" carries also the implication of passivity, with the aspens, or rather their "airy cages," as subject. This gives the impression that the aspens not only "quell" the sun but that they themselves are "quelled," that is put to death, as they are indeed "felled." From the first line onwards, therefore, the vision oscillates between present and past. It is as if the poet could still see the trees lining the river, for his earlier and happier vision somehow prevails over the vision in which the revisited place appears: facing the spectacle of devastation Hopkins nevertheless begins his poem with a lively description of the poplars: "My aspens dear, whose airy cages quelled, / Quelled or quenched in leaves the leaping sun"; and only then starts he to lament: "All felled, felled, are all felled." But he immediately reminds himself of the scene treasured in his memory "Of a fresh and following folded rank," only to interrupt it once more ("Not spared, not one") before he comes to the end of his recollection: "That dandled a sandalled / Shadow that swam or sank / On meadow and river and wind-wandering / weed-winding bank."

Moreover, Hopkins in "Binsey Poplars" not only laments the beauty lost but preserves it both visually and audibly in transforming it into poetic

instress. This is done by means of the images and the stories, memories and feelings evoked by them, as well as by the poem's musical appeal.[21] In creating the *altera natura* of the poem the poet fulfils his task as a maker, translating the art of the divine artificer into poetry. With his loving recollection of the aspens near Binsey, Hopkins makes the "Sweet especial rural scene" transparent for the divine archetype by which it is sustained and in doing so he somehow saves[22] what after-comers can no longer perceive. The poet as maker and translator, therefore, is able to fill the gap man has deliberately made by laying hands on the trees. In the *altera natura* of his poem the "aspens dear" and the beauty of the scene live on transformed into a reality less liable to destruction.[23]

That the reality of something as uniquely beautiful and vulnerable as the scene presented by the trees lining the river indeed subsists though seemingly gone for ever, is a notion arising from the belief in the realism of ideas advocated by Duns Scotus[24] ("Of realty the rarest-veinèd unraveller")[25] which is completely in keeping with Hopkins' idea of inscape and instress. This can be shown more clearly in "The Leaden and the Golden Echo," a poem Hopkins (in a letter to Bridges) declared to be similar to "Binsey Poplars" in "kind and vein."[26] There the questions whether, how, and where a destroyed reality can be saved ("How to kéep—is there ány any . . . to keep / Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty, . . . from vanishing away?" 1-2) are eventually answered in the affirmative. The "Despair" over its destruction repeated over and over again at the end of the first part of this poem is echoed by, and transformed into, "Spare!", the very first word of the second part. There is, indeed, a place where beauty is kept, as the speaker firmly believes that "not a hair is, not an eyelash, not the least lash lost; every hair / Is, hair of the head, numbered" (36-37),[27] and that "the thing we freely fórfeit is kept with fonder a care, / Fonder a care kept than we could have kept it, . . . Yonder, / Yonder" (43-48).

Even after being destroyed and having become invisible to our physical eyes beauty is kept, transformed into something invisible but nevertheless existing. It is given "back to God, / beauty's self and beauty's giver" (35).

Besides this religious preservation of beauty, there is, however, the "running instress" mentioned in an entry in Hopkins' *Journal* of 14

September 1871, which also lays open Hopkins' idea of revisiting a place. The passage focuses on the idea that, in spite of a new instress felt while seeing a particular scene for a second time, the very first instress and impression this scene made on the observer will continue to make itself felt:

> By boat down the river to Hamble, near where it enters Southampton Water, and a walk home. On this walk I came to a cross road I had been at in the morning carrying it in another 'running instress.' I was surprised to recognise it and the moment I did / it lost its present instress, breaking off from what had immediately gone before, and fell into the morning's. It is so true what Ruskin says talking of Turner's Pass of Faido that what he could not forget was that 'he had come by the road.' And what is this running instress, so independent of at least the immediate scape of the thing, which unmistakeably distinguishes and individualizes things? Not imposed outwards from the mind as for instance by melancholy or strong feelings: I easily distinguish that instress. I think it is this same running instress by which we identify or, better, test and refuse to identify with our various suggestions / a thought which has just slipped from the mind at an interruption."[28]

The very instress that is said to "distinguish and individualize" a thing, exists as a reality independent of both the "immediate scape of the thing" and of the observer who revisits the same place, under different conditions, at another time of the day. The "running instress" makes itself felt in exactly the same way as in the first instance and this is possible only because it is real in the Scotist sense,[29] that is because it exists as an individual entity for the equally individual mind of the observer.

This notion greatly helps to elucidate the theme of revisiting. A certain location or scene may always evoke what is here called "running instress" independent of the changes that took place in the meantime. This is exactly what happens when Hopkins revisits Binsey and it is only because of the subsisting reality of this archetypal instress that he knows what visible beauty has been destroyed and, what is more, how to keep it. He revisits Binsey, recalls its former beauty made manifest in the "running instress," and then restores this beauty in his poem.

The source shaping this idea, and mentioned by Hopkins in the passage just quoted, will make this clearer, namely John Ruskin's "Of Turnerian Topography" in his *Modern Painters*.[30] In this chapter on landscape painting

Ruskin indicates that an artist with inventive power, either painter or poet, does not give "the actual facts"[31] but the "impression on the mind" (32), this being, to him, the only and true reality he has set to work. What Ruskin calls "impression on the mind" is very likely the model of Hopkins' "running instress," as Ruskin goes on to explain that the artist

> . . . receives a true impression from that place itself, and takes care to keep hold of that as his chief good; indeed, he needs no care in the matter, for the distinction of his mind from that of others consists in his instantly receiving such sensations strongly, and being unable to lose them; and then he sets himself as far as possible to reproduce that impression on the mind . . ." (33).

It is not a rational process but wholly intuitive, in which the vision also called "imperative dream" (38) "takes possession of him [i.e. the artist]; he can see and do, no otherwise than as the dream directs" (38). The example that follows in Ruskin's text is Turner's "Pass of Faido," the drawing Hopkins mentions in his *Journal*. It is always the very first impression on the mind that is preserved. Ruskin stresses that Turner used to paint and repaint places "as first seen, . . . , never shaking the central pillar of the old image" (42). He then compares two drawings of Turner on the same subject, the castle of Nottingham (one is of 1795 the other of 1833), to prove that it is always this first impression which carries the truth and essential character of a scene and that even after such a long time as thirty-five years "*every incident* is preserved" as the artist has "returned affectionately to his boyish impression" (44).

Ruskin's "On Turnerian Topography" is not only a very likely source for Hopkins' concept of "running instress" but also makes clear that "running instress" is an "impression on the mind" of such a kind that its substantial quality cannot be lost and that it is exactly this very first impression or dream or vision which shapes the work of the artist, both painter and poet.[32] This is why Hopkins in revisiting Binsey and seeing the mutilated landscape returns to the first substantial instress, the impression on the mind. What is more, in turning the instress of the scene into poetic instress, or nature into art, he averts the destiny of the "Sweet especial rural scene."

The vision and instress itself, though lost to after-comers, is preserved in the poem in a way that it is (again in Ruskin's words) "capable of producing on the far-away beholder's mind precisely the impression which reality would have produced, and putting his heart into the same state in which it would have been, . . ." (35-36). And as the impression on the mind of the artist with inventive power " . . . never results from the mere piece of scenery" (33) but from a vision far deeper "he finds other ideas insensibly gathering to it, and, whether he will or not, modifying it into something which is not so much the image of the place itself, as the spirit of the place . . ." (36).

Hopkins' loving recollection of his "aspens dear" and of the beautiful scene they composed before they were destroyed on the one hand makes the loss even more grievous: "All felled, felled, are all felled . . . Not spared, not one." It is especially their unnatural death, not due to the course of nature but deliberately caused by man, that is felt to be almost sacrilegious. On the other hand his revisiting of Binsey also motivates the urgent wish to save the beauty lost in recalling the first impression. As poet and Christian, however, Hopkins perfectly knows that this salvation or restoration is only possible in and through a metamorphosis, hoping that the destroyed landscape may be restored in being changed "Into something rich and strange."[33] And this is exactly what happens: there is indeed a metamorphosis, as the aspens live on, transformed into the language of poetry; moreover, it is done in a way reminiscent of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. And as Hopkins' mind is like Ovid's "bent to tell of bodies changed into new forms"[34] it is, therefore, not at all surprising that in revisiting Binsey and recalling the poplars lining the river he also goes back to the literary models that shaped his vision.

There are a number of indicators for his literary return to Ovid; the very first is, of course, the personification of the aspens. This is augmented by the water imagery implied in the two verbs "quell" and "quench"[35] with the aspens as subject and the "leaping sun" as object, which clearly points to the metamorphosis of the daughters of Helios, the so-called Heliades, who so much grieved over the death of their brother Phaethon that they were changed into poplars. As Ovid tells this story,[36] Phaethon, not able to hold the bolting horses (that is probably why the sun is said to "leap"[37])

and finally struck with Jupiter's thunderbolt, was buried by Nymphs and bewailed by his mother and sisters. As Phaethon's sisters weep, they begin to sprout twigs and leaves from their upraised arms and their mother, trying to pull their bodies out of the growing trees, only breaks the tender twigs, making her daughters cry even more, each one imploring her: "O spare me, mother, spare; I beg you. 'Tis my body that you are tearing in the tree."[38]

Moreover, the aspens being called "dear" fits well into this mythological context, because "dear" meaning "precious" may well refer to the tears of the Heliades or poplars that were, according to Ovid, changed into beads of amber.[39]

Once Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are recognized as a literary source revisited, it is much easier to get hold of the instress of the poem and to understand the poet's warning lament: ". . . if we but knew what we do / When we delve or hew— / Hack and rack the growing green!" Another classical story evoked by "Binsey Poplars" is that of Erysichthon,[40] "a man who scorned the gods and burnt no sacrifice on their altars,"[41] and his unlawful and impious cutting down of a tree dedicated to Ceres. In this story the felling of a tree is condemned as a sacrilege because Erysichthon not only kills the tree but also the tree-nymph living in it who cries out: "I, a nymph most dear to Ceres dwell within this wood, and I prophesy with my dying breath, and find my death's solace in it, that punishment is at hand for what you do"[42]—Ceres then punishes with unappeasable hunger the transgressor who, at last, eats up himself.

The prospect opened up by this story shows what in Hopkins' poem is felt throughout, namely that over and above the destruction of the trees' bodies the hidden and invisible though nevertheless real life, the spiritual energy of nature, imagined and experienced in mythological and folk-lore as nymphs, dryads, fairies or elves, is destroyed too.[43] And trying to save the vision of this hidden life Hopkins revivifies it in his poem. This is, again, done by means of personification in describing the "shadow" as being "sandalled" and "dandled" by the trees, thereby suggesting that this shadow is less a "comparative darkness,"[44] or an "image cast by a body intercepting light,"[45] or a "shelter from light and heat" [46] but a personal incarnation of some nature-spirit, either fairy or elf.[47] This recalls

A Midsummer Night's Dream, where the fairies and elves are called "shadows," Oberon being called "king of shadows" and, of course, Puck's epilogue: "If we shadows have offended . . . ."[48] Moreover, when Hopkins represents this shadow as being "sandalled" another literary model that possibly shaped his vision comes into view and corroborates the fact that "shadow" here really means something like a nature spirit. As he was well read in the Romantics he could also have thought of an early poem by Coleridge, "The Songs of the Pixies." There the almost invisibly small fairies are said to "tremble" on "leaves of the aspen trees" (50-51) or "silent-sandel'd, pay . . . [their] defter court, / Circling the Spirit of the Western Gale, ..." (63-64).[49]

The mythological background makes clear that, according to Hopkins, what was really destroyed by man when the trees were cut down, was the spirit of the place, its charm and hidden, real life. However, Hopkins preserves this form of spiritual reality not only by an imagery laden with mythological associations but also in the sound and letters of the words, making imagery and sound both carry the same vision. In quite a number of resonances the personified spirits of nature, the elves, are still present: "When we d*elve* or hew," "When we hew or delve"; "Ten or tw*elve*, only ten or tw*elve* / Strokes of havoc uns*elve*." "Delve" is as much suggestive of "elf" in Hopkins as is, in a more playful way, "twelve." In "The Starlight Night" "delve" and "elve" form an internal rhyme, "elve" echoing "delve": "Down in dim woods the diamond delves! the elve's eyes!"; and the numbers "ten" and "twelve," leaving out "eleven," the German "Elf," at the same time omit but in sound and idea bring to mind the "elf."[50] In addition to that the elves are present in the repeated "elled" of the first stanza (twice in "quelled," three times in "felled"—which can also be seen as an near anagram of "elf"—and, at least acoustically, in "sandalled") which, in this context, evokes a related name for an elf, namely "elle-maid" meaning elf-girl.[51]

Thus transformed into poetic instress the spirit of the scene lives on, when in the echo-like murmuring of the concluding lines "Rural scene, a rural scene, / Sweet especial rural scene" the imagery of the first stanza is, at last, turned into a song. The poet, in the end, takes on his role as Orpheus, whose task it is to preserve and to mediate by way of trans-

formation into the music of his poetry what had been destroyed, realizing in the imagery and language of the poem the rich impression the scene made on his mind. Though "after-comers cannot guess the beauty been," the aspens may be clearly seen with the eyes of the imagination. In a way Hopkins makes the aspens return to Binsey, and in doing so he again seems to trace and follow Orpheus, who, as Ovid has it, by his powerful song made the trees, and among them the Heliades or poplars, return to a place that, like Binsey after the felling of the trees, was lacking shadow:

> A hill there was, and on the hill a wide-extending plain, green with luxuriant grass; but the place was devoid of shade. When here the heaven-descended bard sat down and smote his sounding lyre, shade came to the place. There came the Chaonian oak, the grove of the Heliades, the oak with its deep foliage, the soft linden, the beech, the virgin laurel-tree, the brittle hazel, the ash, ...[52]

The poet as maker and "Earth's . . . tongue"[53] fulfils his task to save and "keep back beauty"; a beauty which cannot be kept "by marble nor the guilded monuments / Of princes" but only by "this powerful rhyme."[54]

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NOTES

[1]Hopkins' poems are cited according to *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, eds. W. H. Gardner and N. H. MacKenzie, 4th ed. (Oxford: OUP, 1967, rpt. 1970).

[2]See *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, eds. H. House and G. Storey (London: OUP, 1959) 135-39.

[3]For the biographical background see Norman White's most valuable study, *Hopkins: A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) 309-11; for the frequency with which Hopkins visited Binsey see Jude V. Nixon, "'Sweet especial rural scene': Revisiting Binsey," *Hopkins Quarterly* 16.1-2 (1989): 39-60.

[4]See *Journals* 189: ". . . a grievous gap has come in that place with falling and felling"; 230: "The ashtree growing in the garden was felled . . . I wished to die and not see the inscapes of the world destroyed any more."

[5]*The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon*, ed. C. C. Abbott, 2nd rev. ed. (London: OUP, 1955) 26.

[6]The autograph (MSS. A) gives the exact date: 13 March 1879; see note on "Binsey Poplars" by the editors, *Poems* 272.

[7]Peter Milward in his *Landscape and Inscape: Vision and Inspiration in Hopkins's Poetry* (London: Paul Elek, 1975) 67 rightly points to a parallel in Shakespeare's *King Lear* 1.4.370: "Striving to better, oft we mar what's well."

[8]For a discussion of the "extended personification" in "Binsey Poplars" see Ricks Carson, "Hopkins's 'Binsey Poplars,'" *Explicator* 54.3 (1996): 162-63. The implied identification of the trees with human beings is, of course, topical and well known through the Bible, mythology, emblem literature and proverbial sayings. Cf. *OED*, "tree," 1.c; *Emblemata: Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, eds. A. Henkel and A. Schöne (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1967) 145-258; Kurt Erdmann *et al.* "Baum," *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, eds. T. Klauser, U. Dassmann *et al.* vol. 2 (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1954) 1-35, esp. 12-14, 19; see also the comparison of the young sailors with oaks in "The Loss of the Eurydice" 5-6 to which Norman H. MacKenzie points in *A Reader's Guide to Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981) 108.—Hopkins may well have seen in the very name "poplar" another corroboration of the personal, almost human, existence of the trees, as "poplar" is derived from the Latin *populus* whose primary meaning is "people," see *ODEE*, "poplar." Paul Celan, for instance, made use of this etymological fact in his poetry, as in "Landschaft" 1: "Ihr hohen Pappeln–Menschen dieser Erde!" For the poplar image in Celan's poetry cf. Mary Flick, "Paul Celan's Use of the Poplar Image: A New Approach," *Neue Germanistik* 1.1 (1980): 25-34. In the discussion at the 1997 Halberstadt symposium on "A Place Revisited," where this paper was first presented, Professor John Russell Brown drew attention to the erotical imagery implied in words like "country," "ball" and "prick" which, again, underlines the personal character of the trees.

[9]Myrl Guy Jones' discussion of "unselve" corroborates this interpretation, see "Hopkins's 'Binsey Poplars,'" *Explicator* 50.2 (1992): 83-84.

[10]Unpublished retreat notes of 1882, quoted in J. Hillis Miller, "The Creation of the Self in Gerard Manley Hopkins," *ELH* 22 (1955), rpt. in *Victorian Subjects* (New York: Harvester/Wheatsheaf, 1990) 1-23, esp. 8. Cf. also Paul Turner's chapter on Hopkins in *English Literature 1832-1890 Excluding the Novel, The Oxford History of English Literature*, gen. eds. J. Buxton and N. Davis, vol. 11.2 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989) 140-58, esp. 145.

[11]"Gods Grandeur" 1; see also *Journals* 199-200

[12]This has been mentioned by MacKenzie 109 and Milward 66.

[13]The discussion of the theme of *haecceitas* and self and Duns Scotus as a main source of Hopkins' philosophical and theological background is since C. Devlin's "Hopkins and Duns Scotus" (*New Verse* 14 [1935], rpt. in M. Bottrall, ed., *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Poems: A Casebook* [London: 1975] 113-16) and W. H. Gardner's introduction to his edition of Hopkins' poetry of 1948 so frequent in Hopkins criticism that it defies documentation.

[14]Cf. Miller 5-9.

[15]"As kingfishers catch fire," 3-7: ". . . each tucked string tells, each hung bell's / Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name; / Each mortal thing does one thing and the same: / Deals out that being indoors each one dwells; / Selves–goes

itself; myself it speaks and spells, ..."

[16]Cf. *On the Origin of Beauty*, in *Journals* 97: "But if from one single work of art, one whole, we take anything appreciable away, a scene from a play, a stanza from a short piece, or whatever it is, there is a change, it must be better or worse without it; in a great man's work it will be—there are of course exceptions—worse." Cf. Miller 12. For the actuality of this notion in Hopkins' time see also John Ruskin, for example, *Modern Painters*, III.4.10 §19, *The Works of John Ruskin*, 39 vols., eds. E. T. Cook and A. Wedderburn, vol. 5 (London: George Allen, 1904) 187, where Ruskin says of "the noblest pictures" that ". . . every atom of the detail is called to help, and would be missed if removed."

[17]The most comprehensive study on this subject is still Leonard Cochran's "Instress and its Place in the Poetics of Gerard Manley Hopkins," *Hopkins Quarterly* 6.4 (1980): 143-81.

[18]*Journals* 204. For a further corroboration of this dialectical or rather dialogical quality of sense perception see also, for instance, "The Candle Indoors" 4: ". . . to-fro tender trambeams truckle at the eye"; *Journals* 199: "all things hitting the sense with double but direct instress"; *Journals* 200: "My eye was caught by beams of light and dark . . ."; cf. also John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III.17. § 43: ". . . things . . . produce such and such an effect upon the eye and heart . . . as that they are made up of certain atoms or vibrations of matter."

[19]Jude V. Nixon reads "Binsey Poplars" in the light of the theme of nostalgic return as it is found in the Romantic tradition especially in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" and compares Hopkins' use of the theme with that of Richard Watson Dixon; see her "'O Ubi? Nusquam' and 'Binsey Poplars': Influence or Approximation," *Hopkins Quarterly* 17 (1991): 139-47.

[20]*OED*, "quell," *v.*[1], 1. and 2.; and "fell," *v.* 1. esp. 1.†c.

[21]The musical quality of "Binsey Poplars" is stressed by Jerome D. Cartwright, "Hopkins' 'Binsey Poplars,'" *Explicator* 33 (1975): item 72, with reference to Jim Hunter, *Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London: Evans Bros., 1966) 79, and Paul L. Mariani, *A Commentary on the Complete Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1970) 128-29.

[22]Or perhaps better: "salves" what has been "unselved."

[23]Professor Bernd Engler pointed to the immortalize-by-poetry-topos in the discussion following this talk. But Hopkins in "Binsey Poplars" so to say exaggerates and transforms this topos in a characteristic way. Title and subtitle "felled 1879" are suggestive of an inscription on a tombstone and so the poem is to keep the memory of the trees; but what is more, the poem itself becomes a reality able not only to commemorate and represent but also to manifest the former being of the trees by means of its instress.

[24]Cf. Étienne Gilson, *Johannes Duns Scotus: Einführung in die Grundgedanken seiner Lehre* (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1959) *passim*.

[25]"Duns Scotus's Oxford" 12.

[26]*The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, ed. Claude Colleer Abbott, 2nd rev. ed. (London: OUP, 1955) 157.

[27]Mt. 10:30: ". . . the very hairs of your head are all numbered"; Lk. 21:18: ". . . there shall not an hair of your head perish."

[28]*Journals* 215.

[29]Cf. Gilson 315-16 and 475-84.

[30]Turner (141-42) also sees Ruskin's "impression on the mind" as a source for Hopkins' "instress." For the trinitarian and incarnational meaning of Hopkins' "instress" and "inscape" see Inge Leimberg, "Die Andromeda der Zeit: Inkarnation und dichterische Verwirklichung bei Gerard Manley Hopkins," *Anglia* 107 (1989): 344-79, esp. 355.

[31]John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, V.2; 5: 27.

[32]Cf. Ruskin, "Of Turnerian Topography," *Modern Painters* V.2. § 7 and § 8. The artist with inventive power should not give "the actual facts." He may, while revisiting a place, actually realize that the former beauty has been destroyed but this should not impede his work of art. The actual destruction "ought . . . to be ignored . . ." (32).

[33]Shakespeare, *The Tempest* 1.2.404.

[34]Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, I.1-2: "In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas / corpora . . ."; Ovid is cited following the Loeb Classical Library edition, transl. by F. J. Miller, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1960).

[35]"Quell" is an ambiguous verb, meaning both to kill, slay etc. and to well out, flow (reminding of the German word *Quelle*); see *OED*, "quell", *v.*[1] and "quell", *v.*[2]. As to "quench": Hopkins uses "quench" in connection with "tears" in "Felix Randal" 10.

[36]*Metamorphoses* II.1-366.

[37]Especially as one meaning of "leap"—though obsolete now—is: "to break out in an illegal or disorderly way," see *OED*, v.1.b. Cf. *Metamorphoses* II.203-04 where it is said of the horses: ". . . quaque impetus egit, / hac sine lege ruunt . . . ."

[38]*Metamorphoses* II.357-63, esp. 362: ". . . nostrum laceratur in arbore corpus!" There is also the famous warning of the poplar in *The Greek Anthology* not to injure it because of its sacredness, being dedicated to the sun-god: "I am a holy tree. Beware of injuring me . . . for I suffer pain if I am mutilated . . . . If thou dost bark me, as I stand here by the road, thou shalt weep for it. Though I am but wood the Sun cares for me." This warning is attributed to Antipater of Thessalonica (and not to Antipater of Sidon, as MacKenzie 110 has it); see *Greek Anthology*, 5 vols., transl. by W. R. Paton (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1917, rpt. 1983), Book IX, The Declamatory Epigrams, No. 706, 3: 389-90.

[39]*Metamorphoses* II.364-66.

[40]*Metamorphoses* VIII.738-95.

[41]*Metamorphoses* VIII.739-40: ". . . qui numina divum / sperneret et nullos aris adoleret odores."

[42]*Metamorphoses* VIII.771-73: "nympha sub hoc ego sum Cereri gratissima ligno, / quae tibi factorum poenas instare tuorum / vaticinor moriens, nostri solacia leti."

[43]For Hopkins' use of "fairies" in his poetry cf., for instance, "The Vision of the Mermaids"; but his *Notebooks* and *Journals* also relate of Fairies, see *Journals* 156: 197-98.

[44]*OED*, "shadow," I.

[45]*OED*, "shadow," II.

[46]*OED*, "shadow," III.

[47]Milward sees the aspens as children (66).

[48]Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 3.2.347, 5.1.409, ed. H. F. Brooks (London: Routledge, 1979, rpt. 1991).

[49]Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Complete Poetical Works*, 2 vols., ed. E. H. Coleridge (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912, rpt. 1962) 1: 40-44.

[50]See Christian Morgenstern's poem "Der Zwölf-Elf" in which he plays with this twofold meaning of "elf." In another poem of the *Galgenlieder*, "Das Problem," this ambivalence becomes thematic: "Der Zwölf-Elf kam auf sein Problem / und sprach: 'Ich heiße unbequem. / Als hieß ich etwa Drei-Vier / statt Sieben – Gott verzeih mir!' // Und siehe da, der Zwölf-Elf nannt sich / von jenem Tag ab Dreiundzwanzig"; *Alle Galgenlieder* (Wiesbaden: Insel, 1947).

[51]*OED*, "elle-maid." I would like to thank Matthias Bauer for this hint.

[52]*Metamorphoses* X.85-91, 2: 70-71: "Collis erat collemque super planissima campi / area, quam viridem faciebant graminis herbae: / umbra loco deerat; qua postquam parte resedit / dis genitus vates et fila sonantia movit, / umbra loco venit: non Chaonis afuit arbor, / non nemus Heliadum . . . ."

[53]"Ribbesdale" 9-10: ". . . what is Earth's eye, tongue or heart else, where / Else, but in dear and dogged man?" Cf. also Rainer Maria Rilke's expression "Mund der Natur" when speaking of man as poet and follower of Orpheus, *Die Sonette an Orpheus*, Erster Teil, XXVI.14, *Die Gedichte*, ed. Ernst Zinn (Frankfurt: Insel, 1957) 692.

[54]Shakespeare, Sonnet 55.1-2, *The Sonnets*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Cambridge: CUP, 1996).

Connotations
Vol. 8.1 (1998/99)

The Place Revisited in T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*

INGE LEIMBERG

Music and place

The *Four Quartets*[1] belong to those poems of Eliot's in which words beginning with *re* play a constructive part.[2] The word "revisit" occurs in the last Quartet, at a cathartic moment: "So I find words I never thought to speak / In streets I never thought I should revisit" (LG 123-24). But, implicitly, the theme of the revisited place is struck already in the individual titles, which are, moreover, subsumed to an overall musical and numerical one. According to these signals the *place revisited* is not a peripheral motif but a main theme closely related with the other "dominants" of the structure. The coupling of the term *quartet* with the names of places clearly suggests, in fact, the analogy of programme music.[3]

The places named in the titles are all revisited places in an autobiographical sense.[4] Eliot really went there, the *re* gaining personal intensity and historical importance as the poetry progresses from the country house Burnt Norton to the village of East Coker, the "home" from which the Eliot family "started," to the rocky isles near the seacoast where Eliot used to spend his holidays as a boy and, finally, to Little Gidding, which well deserves the name of a *place revisited* in English history[5] before Eliot makes it the climax of his tetrad of revisited places. It adds to the importance of this thematic pattern that, in a way, he tried it out first (again, autobiographically as well as poetically) in the short "Landscapes" and the "Five Finger Exercises."[6]

Eliot had, of course, been concerned with places and musical analogies from the very beginning.[7] But it is in the *Four Quartets* with those four places named that both components become integral parts of an organic whole. This has to be told by the poems themselves but it helps to have

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the poet's own word for it when he speaks with the voice of the critic. In *The Music of Poetry*,[8] which is contemporaneous with the *Four Quartets* and, indeed, reads like a theoretical commentary to them, the "music of a word" is *placed* at the centre of an ever expanding context of relations with other words and meanings.[9] This kind of *placing*, however valuable as an interpretative hint, is soon followed by another one of a clearly geographical, ethnological and even socio-political nature:

> The music of poetry . . . must be a music latent in the common speech of his time. And that means also that it must be latent in the common speech of the poet's *place*.[10]

That poetry and music are one and the same is as much a matter of course to Eliot as it is, for instance, to Plato, or St. Augustine, or Goethe . . . .[11] And it is a kind of poetological imperative with him that it be perceived not in the music of the spheres but in the common speech of the poet's time and, therefore, of his place. This corroborates the working hypothesis that the overall musical title and the place-names functioning as individual titles are mutually expressive, and that only via this mutuality the meaning of the revisited place can be approached.

Place and the objective correlative

The rapport of place and music begins to work when the words of the poem begin to speak for themselves. It is true that the first "thematic group" ("Time present and time past / . . . ," BN 1) is ruled by the concept of time which is, moreover, the very sphere of poetry as well as music for

> Words move, music moves
> Only in time: (BN 138)

But just as music and poetry are twins, poetry and painting are sister arts.[12] What time is to the musician, space is to the painter, and the poet is a master of rhythm and melody as well as pictorial evocation. Assuming the "double part" (LG 97) of a composer of programme music is an ideal

way of indicating this duality. When we really begin at the beginning, the first words of the *Four Quartets* are not "Time present and time past / . . ." but "Four Quartets" and "Burnt Norton" (not to mention the Heraclitean mottos). Music and place come first, so that, when the theme of time is struck, it is already felt to be part of an alternating rhythm—not, as most critics will have it,[13] of time and eternity but of place and time-and-eternity as components of a musical *order* chiming in with the λόγος of the first motto.[14]

It is the poet's office "to make" "words move . . . in time" but also to "give to aery nothing / A local habitation and a name."[15] A "nothing" coupled with "aery" denoting the element (*air*) which conveys a melody (*air*) to the intersection point of music and the human soul, the *ear*,[16] is a likely paronomasia of "noting." This has been convincingly shown with reference to *Much Ado About Nothing*.[17] Such a *melodious* or *rhythmical noting* has been claimed by Eliot (as by many other poets) to be the nucleus of poetic composition.[18] But when that musical germ is to expand into the music of a real poem the "aery nothing" must be given "a local habitation and a name," and this, according to the *Four Quartets*, appears to be one way of realizing Eliot's inevitable mimetic postulate, the "objective correlative."

In the *Hamlet* essay of 1919 in which that idea originated, one of Eliot's examples of an "objective correlative" is a "situation."[19] This, according to the *OED*, means (3.b.) "A place or locality in which a person resides, or happens to be for the time." This definition fits as a tangent to the epigrammatic description of Little Gidding in *Four Quartets*:

> Here, the intersection of the timeless moment
> Is England and nowhere. Never and always. (LG 52)

The "always" in the last line of the first part of Little Gidding corresponds to the "this way" in the first (repeated like a Wagnerian *leitmotif* in this part of the poem). "If you come this way" means: *if you come here, to this place*, "From the place you would be likely to come from" (LG 22). And "always" (in opposition to "never") means *at all times*.[20] So "always" indicates our everyday practice of measuring time by space and *vice versa*. And it is Little Gidding, historically as well as topographically clearly

defined and now revisited, where this point of intersection is fixed and declared to be the very "intersection of the timeless moment" (LG 52).

When the "always" comprises the intersection of time and place, the "nowhere" includes "the timeless moment" since, in this context it says *now here*, too. The coincidence of nowhere, now here, and always is summarized in the formula "Quick now, here, now, always-" which marks the end of the beginning (BN 174) as well as the end of this quartet of "*Quartets*" (LG 252).[21]

There are, of course, other places where "the intersection of the timeless moment" may be looked for

> But this is the nearest, in place and time,
> Now and in England. (LG 36)

For time to become *redeemable* it must be coordinated with place.[22] Perhaps to Eliot the objective correlative is so compelling aesthetically because it helps us realize the idea that the here and now is the very foothold of man's individual, social, and metaphysical self-awareness and responsibility. This is Donne's theme throughout: "here on this lowly ground, / Teach mee how to repent";[23] and there are parts in the *Four Quartets*, especially "The Dry Salvages," which sound like an homage to *Death's Duell* and *The XVII. Meditation*[24] as *loci classici* for solidarity arising out of our human "incarnation" in the here and now of mundane existence:

> The tolling bell
> Measures time not our time, (DS 35-36)
>
> We appreciate this better
> In the agony of others, nearly experienced,
> Involving ourselves, than in our own. (DS 108-10)[25]

To Eliot (or Donne, or Dickens[26]) there is perhaps no correlative more objective, no place more exactly intersecting with time and the timeless than the grave which, together with the tombstone, is a *locus memoriae* as well as a place revisited of the first order. Its "silent motto" (EC 20), "A symbol perfected in death" (LG 195), testifies to the absolute singularity of one human life as well as to its being "involved in *Mankinde*," especially

when the individual data have been engraved in "old stones that cannot be deciphered" (EC 195). And it is just such "an illegible stone" that, in "Little Gidding" is said to be "that . . . where we start" (227). This is a predication shared by "home," for "Home is where we start from" (EC 189); but "home," again, is a desideratum of poetry, for the poet aims at making "every word . . . at home" in his sentences (LG 217). The argument resembles a syllogism proving beginning and end, individuality and solidarity, created nature and the poetic word to have a common denominator, with the grave and the tombstone for an objective correlative. Therefore the definition

> Every poem an epitaph (LG 225)[27]

holds true and, moreover, invites the analogy: *every poem a requiem*, because the "aery nothing" (or *noting*) of music is a perfect paradigm of the intersection point of place and time felt to be (mysteriously and ecstatically) surpassing the realm of both these postulates. In the vertical order of the musical chord time seems momentarily arrested while continually flowing on in horizontal polyphony.[28]

Number and measure

Eliot not only implies, as Shakespeare does, that the "aery nothing" to be realized has musical qualities but he says so in so many words: these poems are to be regarded as quartets in a musical sense (which in the common speech of our time is the primary meaning, anyway)[29] and they are, moreover, four in number. This refers to the very oldest layer of musical theory, that is to say the so-called Greater Perfect System of Aristoxenus, which (in its diatonic form) consisted of two tetrachords separated by a tone.[30] Strangely enough the musical system based on this principle (which fitted so ideally into Pythagoras' world-forming Tetractys)[31] symbolizes order even more rigorously to us than to the successors of Pythagoras. For whereas to them the system of musical modes was an open one it has become a "perfect" circle since we have begun to think in terms of enharmonic equation.[32] With us the two tetrachords

function as links in the unbroken chain making up the circle of fifths, the lower tetrachord being the higher of the preceding key and the higher being the lower of the succeeding one.

To the poet whose poetry is music, this is only another "way of putting" (EC 68) what the second motto of the *Four Quartets* says: "The way upwards and the way downwards are one and the same,"[33] from C to C (via F sharp interpreted as G flat) upwards and downwards in circular progression. Since the number four is instrumental in this circularity, the symbol of the circle squared seems to emerge. In the *Four Quartets* this idea (beautifully expressed by a "common word exact without vulgarity," LG 221) comes up in the search for the echoes of the children's laughter in the first part of "Burnt Norton":

> . . . Shall we follow?
> Quick, said the bird, find them, find them,
> Round the corner. (BN 18-20)

Seen in the light of Donne's *Holy Sonnet* already mentioned, "At the round earth's imagined corners," this appears as one of Eliot's characteristically "broken images."[34] It refers in "complete simplicity" (LG 253) to the mysteries of cosmic geometry being quite literally grounded in the elements, for the square (and implicitly the number four) is an emblem of the earth:

> Vierfach ist das Ackerfeld,
> Mensch, wie ist dein Herz bestellt?[35]

as it says in the German Watchman's Song. But the most elemental of elements would be nonexistent without being regarded by man's mind,[36] which has been created capable of contemplating the square in relation to the circle or not at all.[37] And this, in Christian iconography, is a paradoxical scheme, for the square is an emblem of the earth as the circle is of God and eternity but there is also the opposite view:

> Die Welt scheint Kugelrund dieweil sie sol vergehn:
> Gevierdt ist GOttes Stadt: drumb wird sie Ewig stehn.[38]

These numerical and geometrical connotations show the idea of *Four Quartets* to be determined by the co-ordinates summarized in "now, here, now, always," even before the revisited places (that is to say the "programmes" of the quartets) come into play.

This is confirmed when *number* and *measure* (not to speak of *weight*)[39] are considered in the light of musical metrics. When the division of the monochord, that is to say, a "spatial" operation, leads to the two tetrachords making up (together with the tonus) the octave, the temporal order of musical metrics quite as easily yields to a quaternion explanation. This is borne out by such a congenial source as St. Augustine's *De Musica*, which is a treatise of metrics before it turns out to be one of metaphysics.[40] Here, strangely enough in the Saint's trinitarian system, the four is, indeed, the "golden reed"[41] of musical measurement: in the music of metrics time is measured by space. What in a metrical pattern we call one *time* is the *space* that is occupied by a short syllable. Up to four such *times* find their *place* in a metrical pattern sharing the name of *foot* with that member of the human body and age-old unit of spatial measurement.[42] And when, in the *Confessions*, the question comes up *where* time is, or rather *where* time past, present, and future are to be measured, this musical (that is to say, metrical) consideration prevails:

> Ubi est qua metior brevis? Ubi est longa quam metior? Ambae sonuerunt, avolaverunt, praeterierunt, iam non 'sunt'.

The well-known answer to the question *where* the vanished sounds or metrical feet still are when they are here no more and *where*, therefore, time can be measured is:

> . . . in memoria . . . In te anime meus, tempora metior.[43]

Musical metrics are essentially fourfold, and trying to get hold of them, even in theory, means transposing temporal progression into spatial co-existence: "Zum Raum wird hier die Zeit."[44] And not only the space is measured where the four *times* find their *places*, but the objectivity, the "local habitation" of what otherwise would be "melted into thin air"[45] comes again into play: the earth, the "here" where the "now" takes place.

"Footfalls"[46] which "echo in the memory" denote musical rhythm but they also speak of earthbound living beings touching the ground with their feet. Doing this in a musical rhythm is dancing.

Pursuing the pattern

Dancing is as closely related to music as the word χορός indicates or as Sir John Davies has shown in the *Orchestra*[47] or as it appears in the sequence of dance-movements called suite, followed historically by the so-called sonata which up to Beethoven retained, and sometimes still retains, the menuet (and other elements) from the old suite.[48]

The dance pattern is Eliot's paradigm of man's moving in the now-here of reality. In it the number four in all its arithmetical contexts is reflected in a kind of musical geometry, time and space are juxtaposed in a choreogram, that is to say a fixed, ornamental pattern of movement which seems to serve as a kind of parodic squaring of the circle or vice versa. Dancing is an objective correlative of cosmic order, including the human microcosm as well as the body politic.[49] It goes some way towards Eliot's own "Definition of Culture" being a constellation of unity and diversity placed in time.[50]

The *Four Quartets* are, like the *Orchestra*, very much of *A Poem of Dancing* from the first mention of the moving "in a formal pattern," and "The dance along the artery" which is "figured in the drift of stars" (BN 31, 52, 54), to the final statements on "The complete consort dancing together" (LG 223). It is, however, in the country dance in "East Coker" that the theme of dancing comes into its own and the compositional elements appear as parts of a choreographic pattern:

> In that open field
> If you do not come too close, if you do not come too close,
> On a Summer midnight, you can hear the music
> Of the weak pipe and the little drum
> And see them dancing around the bonfire
> The association of man and woman
> In daunsinge, signifying matrimonie—
> A dignified and commodious sacrament.

Two and two, necessarye coniunction,
Holding eche other by the hand or the arm
Whiche betokeneth concorde. Round and round the fire
Leaping through the flames, or joined in circles,
Rustically solemn or in rustic laughter
Lifting heavy feet in clumsy shoes,
Earth feet, loam feet, lifted in country mirth
Mirth of those long since under earth
Nourishing the corn. Keeping time,
Keeping the rhythm in their dancing
As in their living in the living seasons
The time of the seasons and the constellations
The time of milking and the time of harvest
The time of the coupling of man and woman
And that of beasts. Feet rising and falling.
Eating and drinking. Dung and death. (EC 23-46)

There are the coordinates of place and time, of the field and the midsummer night, of hearing the music and seeing the dance. There is the squared circle of men and women dancing around the bonfire or leaping through it and coming down to earth with their "earth feet, loam feet" which are, at the same time, "rising and falling" in iambic or trochaic rhythm. It is "here on this lowly ground" that this poetry and music and dancing takes place;[51] it is real, everyday "Eating and drinking" that appears in a sacramental context and "Dung and death" mark the end of all the "necessary conjunctions," but "earth" rhymes with "mirth" and, what is more, it does so in the form of the cross:

Earth feet, loam feet, lifted in country mirth
Mirth of those long under earth.

In this equally stylised and realistic little genre-painting Eliot portrays country-dancing, square-dancing which, in the history of folklore (as well as in musical history) is an offspring of the quadrille.[52] This dance indeed "betokeneth" social "concorde,"[53] especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when it was practised in the ballroom and adapted for the village-green, with men and women forming four quartets of two pairs each, proceeding from a central square in continually changing patterns of "stars" and "chains" and "mills" and "squares" and "crosses" and

"circles" both large and small, and dancing in squares round the centre in concentric circles[54] till the end becomes one with the beginning,

> To which first points when all return again,
> The axletree of heaven shall break in twain. (*Orchestra* 36, 6-7)[55]

Faring forward

Eliot makes us hear the music and see the dance but he insists that we can do so only under one condition:

> If you do not come too close, if you do not come too close,
> On a Summer midnight . . . (EC 24)

Otherwise it is by us that these "shadows" are "offended"[56] and the "dancers [will have] all gone under the hill."[57] The poet-magician is a necromancer conjuring up the "Mirth of those long since under earth."[58] Terpsichore is Mnemosyne's daughter; memory is the place where time past and time future are present and where, therefore, time can be measured. And we can grasp this, perhaps, by an awareness of "footfalls echo[ing] in the memory" provided we ". . . do not come too close." Men and women, like country dancers, hold each other by the hand or arm or, like dancers in a quadrille, put "dos à dos" only to loosen that hold and performing the next figure,

> . . . keeping the rhythm in their dancing
> As in their living in the living seasons.

"Fare forward" is the password. There is no returning to quite the same place or as quite the same person but *moving on* (as Dickens has it in one of the most moving of his figures)[59] in continuous "Attachment and detachment." There would be no dance without the dancers continually faring forward, they and the places where they find themselves never quite the same.

It is the same with music, especially programme music. Coming "too close," that is to say describing the programme too directly would render

the music a persiflage, not a realization of musical painting,[60] and if not obeying the law of faring forward, music would cease to exist.

It is the same with poetry. Sound is the "matter," and musical rhythm may be the germ of an idea and image of poetry, but the poet must not "work too closely to musical analogies"[61] or artificiality might be the effect. And this would be contrary to a poetry which (like Shakespeare's) comes into being by first getting rid of artificiality and regaining simplicity, that is to say, "return[ing] to common speech."[62] This implies the poet's awareness that "language is always changing."[63] And here again (as in so many aspects) human nature and the *altera natura* of poetry connect, for "Words move, music moves / Only in time" (BN 148-149), similarly "We must be still and still moving" (EC 203). Then the stillness, the moment in the movement can be felt to be a chance rather than a privation:

> Not the intense moment
> Isolated, with no before and after,
> But a lifetime burning in every moment (EC 191-93)

In the "movement" wholly devoted to the theme of *faring forward*, "The Dry Salvages" III, a figural pattern emerges which reveals the different constituents of the course of life and poetry seen in this way:

> You are not the same people who left this station
> Or who will arrive at any terminus,
> While the narrowing rails slide together behind you;
> And on the deck of the drumming liner
> Watching the furrow that widens behind you (DS 139-43)

The traveller here is placed not at "The point of intersection of the timeless / With time, [which] is an occupation for the saint—" (DS 201-02) but at one of his own moments of intersection in the world of place and time which resembles the intersection point of the St Andrew's cross or an optical diagram making clear where "the unseen eyebeam crossed" (BN 28).[64] A cruciform pattern is discernible in the lines of the human wayfarer's life in the "Dry Salvages." This is confirmed by the structural rhythm of the passage:

Fare forward (137)
the past . . . any future (138-39)
the narrowing rails (141)
the furrow that widens (143)
the past . . . the future (144-45)
Fare forward (149)

In the spiritual autobiography of the *Four Quartets* again and again the cross makes itself felt as a compositional element: it is, logically, implied in the paradoxes and the antitheses dominating the structure, but it is also clearly signalled, for instance in "East Coker" I:

In my beginning is my end. Now the light falls
Across the open field, (EC 14-15)

This is the "open field" (echoing the "open field" of line 4) where we can "see them dancing around the bonfire" provided we "do not come too close" but keep listening to the crossed structures in the poet's music, for instance in the chiasmus mentioned before:

Earth . . . mirth
Mirth . . . earth

or in the antithetic pairing of

. . . Feet rising and falling.
Eating and drinking. Dung and death. (EC 37-46)

Furthermore, the word "restore" is used again and again to rivet the reader's attention on the cross. All the words beginning with *re* help explain the architectural "ground-plot"[65] of the work. Many of them are repeated more than twice and placed in an exposed position, but *restore* stands out among them by being repeated five times. On its first occurrence, in the third line of "East Coker," it is preceded by "destroyed," which comes near to being its anagram, with sound and sense intersecting. Twice it is coupled with "revive," positively when used at the point of intersection where "approach to the meaning restores the experience / In a different form . . . the past experience revived in the meaning" (DS

94-97) and, negatively, when degraded to signify mere political restauration: "We cannot revive old factions / We cannot restore old policies" (LG 185-86).[66]

There is, perhaps, one "restored" in English poetry to end all others:

> All losses are restored, and sorrows end.[67]

When that happens ". . . all shall be well and / All manner of thing shall be well" (LG 255-56) and that is, certainly in Eliot's perspective and possibly in Shakespeare's, too, when the cross of the Passion becomes the cross of triumph. *Restore* derives from σταυρός. A diagram of life's journey in *Four Quartets* would not show a single line but lines intersecting, charged with the ethos and pathos of "Attachment" and "detachment," in continuous motion from "unredeemable" (BN 5) to "redeemed" (LG 234), with meeting and visiting and being re-visited foreshadowing (in *broken imagery*) the reality of eschatological return.

Compelling the recognition

Geometry knows of innumerable regular planes but only of five regular bodies; similarly, there are next to innumerable places visited in the pilgrimage of life, but the revisited places named in the spiritual autobiography[68] of the *Four Quartets* are only four in number. That means, apart from all the quaternion symbolism, that the places to be revisited are select ones, charged with the presence of past and future, connected with the elements of personal existence, felt to be meeting places, places of accepting and being accepted, visiting and being visited, points of intersection where "the unseen eyebeam crossed" and experience is full of meaning,[69] in other words, places of recognition. That is the English word for ἀναγνώρισις. Looking up *visito* in an etymological Latin dictionary one is at once referred to *video*, and in English common speech "Come and see me" is a way of expressing an invitation to pay someone a visit.

The word "recognition" occurs in the passage leading up to "revisit" which begins with placing the scene in the when and where "between" night and morning and "between" three districts. There the meeting of the "I" and the "you" (who do not exist as a "we") takes place, and there the one *recognizes* while the other *revisits*:

In the uncertain hour before the morning
Near the ending of interminable night
At the recurrent end of the unending
After the dark dove with the flickering tongue
Had passed below the horizon of his homing
While the dead leaves still rattled on like tin
Over the asphalt where no other sound was
Between three districts whence the smoke arose
I met one walking, loitering and hurried
As if blown towards me like the metal leaves
Before the urban dawn wind unresisting.
And as I fixed upon the down-turned face
That pointed scrutiny with which we challenge
The first-met stranger in the waning dusk
I caught the sudden look of some dead master
Whom I had known, forgotten, half recalled
Both one and many; . . .
In concord at this intersection time
Of meeting nowhere, no before and after,
We trod the pavement in a dead patrol.
I said: 'The wonder that I feel is easy,
Yet ease is cause of wonder. Therefore speak:
I may not comprehend, may not remember.'
And he: 'I am not eager to rehearse
My thought and theory which you have forgotten. (LG 78-112)

But, as the passage now presents no hindrance
To the spirit unappeased and peregrine
Between two worlds become much like each other,
So I find words I never thought to speak
In streets I never thought I should revisit
When I left my body on a distant shore.' (LG 120-25)

The metaphor of the stage is omnipresent in *Four Quartets*,[70] but in this passage it is of outstanding importance. First there is the situation of the meeting, stressed by the wordplay on "metal": "I met one," "The first-met

stranger," which faintly resembles the stage direction: *Enter X, to him Y.* This resemblance seems intentional in the light of the words "So I assumed a double part" and "re-enactment" (LG 138). Then the "recognition" takes place at this "intersection time / Of meeting nowhere," and finally, "wonder" is felt, which together with the assumed part and the recognition in meeting, completes the pattern of a tragedy defined by place and time and action, culminating in the *meeting* of peripeteia and anagnorisis, ending in a catastrophe and answered by pity and wonder.

The anagnorisis of the *Four Quartets* is closely modelled on the prototype of Sophocles' Oedipus meeting (or rather being met by) Tiresias.[71] The double part the speaker assumes mirrors the confrontation with the self when, meeting and being met by the seer, the speaker sees because he is seen: "And as I fixed . . . That pointed scrutiny . . . I caught the sudden look . . ." (89-92).

The idealist notion[72] that knowing is being known is as strongly reminiscent of Pauline theology as is ". . . time . . . redeemable" in Eph. 5:16 as a positive foil of "Time . . . unredeemable" in BN 1-5 (which is, quite literally, "redeemed" in LG 206 and 234). Three times St Paul varies the notion that knowing is being known: "then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor 13:12), "after ye have known God, or rather are known by God" (Gal 4:9), and "that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:12). Here Luther has "ergreifen" and "ergriffen" (captured), which is the *mot juste* for *being moved* by the pity and wonder of tragedy.

The theme of recognition is struck as early in *Four Quartets* as in the description of the Garden in "Burnt Norton," which is a place revisited in memory and experience, a place inhabited by echoes to be found "round the corner," where guests are "accepted and accepting," where the roses have "the look of flowers that are looked at," and where

> . . . the bird called, in response to
> The unheard music hidden in the shrubbery,
> And the unseen eyebeam crossed,
> . . . (BN 28-30)

Here we are back in Sir Thomas Browne's *Garden of Cyrus* with the quincunx pattern of the trees as a paradigm of God's garden, the world, "artificially," "naturally," and "mystically" considered.[73] There the crossed eyebeams serve as an optical emblem for the *res in mundo* making an impact on the mental retina, so that intellectual recognition ensues which, in the precincts of an idealist ontology, is a necessary condition of existence: creation had not been effected before, on the sixth day, man had been made and the music otherwise unheard and the eyebeam otherwise uncrossed were met by the ears and eyes of the body and mind of man who, on his part, would be non-existent when unknown to God.[74]

Eliot "stages" this complex of ideas in the recognition-scene of "Little Gidding," placed in the time of all-clear after a London air raid. The characteristic realism of meeting in the nowhere and now-here of historical reality makes us feel Sir Thomas Browne's Christian idealism, for all its metaphysical similarity, to be somewhat remote. A modern existentialist's view may perhaps serve for a more congenial example of questing for truth by making contraries meet:

> Die Idee ist Wahrheit, die ich hervorbringe, indem sie aus einer Welt entgegenkommt.[75]

While the idea is the philosopher's immediate concern, the poet's is the word. And this is the theme struck by the master who comes to revisit "these streets," having left his "body on a distant shore." As an impersonation of Brunetto Latini in the *Purgatorio*, or of Yeats, or any other master representing the wisdom of old age he, too, assumes a double part: he is like Tiresias meeting Oedipus, so that recognition takes place and he is, once more, Tiresias visiting the waste land of the modern metropolis now actually sharing the fate of "Jerusalem Athens Alexandria Vienna." He is a "spirit unappeased and peregrine / Between two worlds," a sojourner in the land of the dead, in other words, he speaks in the name of Orpheus; and therefore it is not surprising when this Tiresias, revisiting the London of the air raids, finds words which, dramatically speaking, are an anticlimax because they do not concern hell and purgatory and the apocalypse but, of all things, the craft of the poet:

> Since our concern was speech, and speech impelled us
> To purify the dialect of the tribe
> And urge the mind to aftersight and foresight,
> Let me disclose the gift reserved for age
> To set a crown upon your lifetime's effort. (LG 126-30)

Now, that does indeed recall the *Apocalypse* though not apocalyptic revenge but reassurance:

> be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life (Rev 2:10)

And this, in the *Four Quartets*, is not the crown of victory or martyrdom but one awarded to a master of his craft, who tries to make the word at home in the sentence, so that it can start working; who seeks for the objective correlative of the intellectual emotions he wants to impart;[76] who makes it his office to find the meanings enclosed in experience; and who wants to work up towards the recognition of peripeteia fulfilled in the tragic catharsis. All this can only be achieved by trying to make human speech an echo of the footfalls echoing in the memory which, in a musical way, ring true. To reach this end, the poet revisits Little Gidding.

How the poetry matters

Listening for the echoes of the unheard music of the mind is, according to Eliot, the first step to writing a poem.[77] Having entered the precincts of music, he actually goes and revisits places reverberating with the meaningful echoes of past experience. In "Little Gidding" the autobiographical pattern is projected onto an historical one of strong personal impact: Little Gidding may well be compared with London suffering the visitation of the air-raids because it, too, was "slaine" by "warre . . . tyrannies / Despaire, law, chance . . . ,"[78] and it is, moreover, the prototype of a place revisited. King Charles (the last time just before his execution) and Crashaw and Herbert did, indeed, come that way ". . . to kneel / Where prayer has been valid" (LG 44-45).[79]

Long before he wrote *Four Quartets* Eliot had come to regard Herbert not as a "minor poet" but as a master only to be compared with St John

of the Cross for the "expression of purity and intensity of religious feeling, and for . . . literary excellence," using his skill, moreover, to realize in his poems "the experience of man in search of God and trying to explain to himself his intenser human feelings in terms of the divine goal."[80] In "Little Gidding" the old master comes to revisit the younger one to remind him that "our concern was speech." But throughout this Quartet we are reminded that even this crowning act of a "lifetime's effort" is subordinated to valid prayer for "prayer is more / Than an order of words" (LG 46-47). In this poetic manifesto the shadow of Herbert revisiting Little Gidding is very present and the words "Wherefore with my utmost art / I will sing thee" and "Small it is, in this poore sort / To enroll thee," (from "Praise [II]" which is said to have been Eliot's favourite anthem)[81] "echo in the memory."

Measured against the divine Word (BN 156) the words of the poet are, indeed, "Small" and "poore" and "The poetry does not matter" (EC 71). But when Eliot says

> . . . prayer is more
> Than an order of words

or Herbert

> *Lesse than the least*
> *Of all God's mercies,* is my posie still. ("The Posie" 12)

both poets are speaking of the poetic word not in terms of contrast but comparison with divine matters, which is a humble and yet a proud thing to do.

Eliot makes it very clear at the end of "Little Gidding" that poetry does matter and that in the new style of his late poetry[82] he strives, in his own way, for an "utmost art"

> . . . (where every word is at home,
> Taking its place to support the others,
> The word neither diffident not ostentatious,
> An easy commerce of the old and the new,
> The common word exact without vulgarity,
> The formal word precise but not pedantic,
> The complete consort dancing together) (LG 217-23)

The phrase "The poetry does not matter," taken in an absolute sense, would render this ideal valueless but taken relatively helps to define it. The very lines just quoted are an example for the words of poetry serving the real matter, prayer, for they function as a kind of preparatory prayer, giving way, at last, to the prayerbook of the Bible, the Psalter, which is recalled in a paraphrase of the 126th Psalm:

> He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. (Ps 126:6)
>
> See, they depart, and we go with them.
> . . .
> See, they return, and bring us with them. (LG 231-33)

True to his description of the use Herbert makes of art in the service of "man in search of God," Eliot, again and again in *Four Quartets*, is concerned with the poet's lifelong effort "to learn to use words" (EC 173).[83] What one uses is a means to an end. "End" is Eliot's code word for the metaphysical oneness of beginning and end, that is to say the first and final cause. Learning to use words is a means to enter this mysterious circle in the world of space and time, provided the learner is aware that "every attempt / Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure" (EC 173-74) because

> The detail of the pattern is movement,
> As in the figure of the ten stairs. (BN 160-61)

The rule that in poetry "every phrase / And sentence" has to be "right" and "every word . . . at home" could never hold without the poetry so ordered being understood as an integral part of "another intensity" (EC 204); and the poet's "utmost art" would become valueless or even self-contradictory when carrying with it the pretension that it *mattered* in itself, instead of being "involved in humanity."[84] Here, again, poetry is found to be analogous to life, for the here-and-now, too, which is the one chance of man's moral existence would be rendered illusory when treated as a permanent home instead of as a step on the stairs. The actual analogy is echoed by rhetorical similarity: "The poetry does not matter" because ". . .

prayer is more / Than an order of words," and "Here and there does not matter" because "Love is more nearly itself / When here and now cease to matter" (EC 199-200).

In *The Music of Poetry* there is a passage which comes as a godsend to the literary historian who wants to realize what the words of the text want to express:[85]

> The music of a word is, so to speak, at a point of intersection: it arises from its relation first to the words immediately preceding and following it, and indefinitely to the rest of its context; and from another relation, that of its immediate meaning in that context to all the other meanings which it has had in other contexts, to its greater or less wealth of association. (32-33)

In the first sentence the *verbum substantivum* is, surprisingly, used as a full verb: the music of a word has its being, exists at a point of intersection and it does so, arising from its relation to a wealth of words and meanings in its own or other contexts. One such context to be associated with the music of Eliot's words in this passage are Walt Whitman's in the "Song of the Exposition" concerning the creation of the New World: "E'en while I chant I see it rise."[86] The parallel might be pursued further because in Whitman's incantatory free verse as in Eliot's measured prose the world seen to *arise* when the "music of a word" is called into being, is of an essentially relational character. The very largest or least of parts does not matter in itself but only in its context, bordering on or overlapping with other contexts in every imaginable dimension and in ever extending proportions. A poem or even a poetry that pretended to matter in itself would belie this rule governing the "music of a word." For if the word really is of this musical kind, the *word* is the *work* meaning a *world*, analogous to the whole Bible being the *Word of God* and "All things" being made by the Word,[87] also named *deus poeta* or *The Divine Orpheus*.[88]

The expression "music of a word" would not make sense outside such a basically "harmonical" world picture. In it each species and each individual and each art strives for perfection only to reach the point where it intersects ("artificially" and "naturally" as well as "mystically") with another one. This is, in the world not of the Saint but of natural man, the point where echoes of childhood are heard, unseen eyebeams cross, and

places revisited provide recognition. This would, however, be without tragic impact, if it did not follow the rule of "moving / Into another intensity." So the recognition won in the *now here* of the London streets where the master "find[s] words [he] never thought to speak" is placed within the revisited place named in the title, "Little Gidding," where one comes not "to verify" but "to kneel / Where prayer has been valid."

The idea of music and poetry leading up to prayer fills, of course, a whole chapter in the history of music. With special reference to the *Four Quartets* it is realized in Stravinsky's beautiful twelve tone setting (in "complete simplicity") of "The dove descending breaks the air," and it is, once and for all, prefigured in Beethoven's string quartet op. 132 containing the "Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit in der lydischen Tonart."[89]

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NOTES

[1]T. S. Eliot, *The Complete Poetry and Plays 1909-1950* (New York: Harcourt, 1950, rpt. 1952) 117-45; the abbreviations used for the individual titles of the *Four Quartets* are: BN, EC, DS, and LG.

[2]The series is, semantically, highly significant and calls for a separate study. I append a diagram, connecting only the three thematic nuclei *redeem, remember,* and *restore* with their repetitions and nearest synonyms. It will easily be seen that the semantic consistency goes much further than this. Other works to be compared are *The Waste Land* (containing surprisingly few *re-* constructions) and *Ash Wednesday,* which is full of them.

BN		EC		DS		LG	
5 7 26 38	(un) redeem- able remaining response reflected	3 21	removed . . . restored refracted	3 8	recognized reminder	7	reflecting
51 63 71 78 88	reconciles reconciled release . . . releave resolution remembered	77	receipt	59 60 62 94 97 102	reliable renunciation resentment restores revived recorded	80 88 93 102 110 111 124 129 138 140 145	recurrent (un)resisting recalled recognition remember rehearse revisit reserved re-enactment revealed restored
		132 133	requiring repeating	127 151 156	regret . . . regret receding receive	168 185 186	renewed revive restore
		151 155 156	resolving remind restored	174 176 181	repeat returning reject	206 211	redeemed remove
		185	recover	185 189 193 219 231	report release recurrent reconciled reversion	231 234 243	return redeemed remembered

[3]See *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. S. Sadie, 20 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1980) 15: 283-87. This is full of helpful suggestions as regards *Four Quartets*. For instance the invention of both the terms "programme music" and "symphonic poem" by Franz Liszt, or Liszt's definition of a programme as "'a preface added to a piece of instrumental music, by means of which the composer intends to guard the listener against a wrong poetical interpretation, and to direct his attention to the poetical idea of the whole or to a particular part of it.'" Cf. Beethoven's description of the Pastoral Symphony as "'mehr Empfindung als Malerey' ('more the expression of feeling than painting')." Coupling *quartet* and *musical programme*, Eliot obviously wanted to heighten the tension with absolute music. See also the article "String quartet", *New Grove* 18: 276-87, esp. 284-85.

[4]This has been commented on meticulously and extensively. The texts to go to first are, perhaps, Helen Gardner, *The Composition of* Four Quartets (London: Faber and Faber, 1978) and Nancy Duvall Hargrove, *Landscape and Symbol in the Poetry of T. S. Eliot* (Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1978).

[5]See, for instance, Gardner, *Composition* 58-63.

[6]See Gardner, *Composition* 33-34.

[7]Cf. titles like "The Love-Song of . . . ," "Preludes," "Rhapsody on a Windy Night," "A Song for Simeon"; for the merging of music and place, "Portrait of a Lady," "Burbank with a Baedeker . . ." (with a reference to "The Phoenix and Turtle" in line 5), "Sweeney among the Nightingales," and, needless to say, *The Waste Land* are telling examples.

[8]See *The Music of Poetry* (The Third W. P. Ker Memorial Lecture delivered in the University of Glasgow, February 24, 1942), in *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957) 26-38.

[9]*The Music of Poetry* 32-33: "The music of a word is, so to speak, at a point of intersection: . . . ." This passage will be dealt with in detail in the last part of this essay.

[10]*The Music of Poetry* 31; cf. 29: "the law that poetry must not stray too far from the ordinary everyday language which we use and hear." Cf. also T. S. Eliot, *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), ch. III, "Unity and Diversity: The Region," esp. 54: "The clearest among the differences to be considered is that of the areas which still possess languages of their own. . . . structure, idiom, intonation and rhythm . . . (vocabulary is of minor importance) . . . ."

[11]See, for instance, Plato, *Republic* 376e and 549b; St Augustine, *Confessiones* X.33.49; Goethe, *Tag- und Jahreshefte* 1805 (in the description of the Temple of Friendship in the house of Friedrich Wilhelm Gleim).

[12]See Jean H. Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1958, rpt. 1965) 94-95; Eliot is mentioned particularly for his then much discussed theory of "sensuous thought" esp. in seventeenth century English poetry.

[13]See, for instance, Grover Smith, *T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays: A Study in Sources and Meaning* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1956; rpt. 1965) who begins his chapter on the *Four Quartets* with some remarks concerning the *Landscapes* (251-52) and music, including counterpoint and instrumentation (252-53), only to maintain: "Thus the central theme of *Four Quartets*, the union of the flux of time with the stillness of eternity

. . . involves several philosophical meanings of 'time.'" (253-54). See also C. A. Patrides' most elucidating essay "The Renascence of the Renaissance: T. S. Eliot and the Pattern of Time," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 12 (1973): 172-96. The preference for the theme of time is so frequent that it defies documentation. Two further examples perhaps to be mentioned are Ole Bay-Petersen, "T. S. Eliot and Einstein: The Fourth Dimension in the *Four Quartets*," *English Studies* 66 (1985): 143-55, and Laurent Milesi, "'Suspended in Time, Between Pole[s] and Tropic': Eliot's *Four Quartets*," *Q-W-E-R-T-Y* 1 (1991): 159-80.

[14]The theme of order in Heraclitus' fragments has been commented on in the author's essay "The Name of the Bow is Life: Rhyming Structures in Hopkins' 'That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection,'" *Zum Begriff der Imagination in Dichtung und Dichtungstheorie: Festschrift für Rainer Lengeler*, ed. M. Beyer (Trier: WVT, 1998) 95-116.

[15]Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 5.1.16-17, ed. Harold F. Brooks, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Routledge, 1979, rpt. 1991).

[16]See D. P. Walker, "Ficino's Spiritus and Music," *Annales Musicologiques* 1 (1953): 131-50.

[17]See Paul A. Jorgensen, "Much Ado About *Nothing*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 5 (1954): 287-95.

[18]See *The Music of Poetry* 38: ". . . I know that a poem, or a passage of a poem, may tend to realize itself first as a particular rhythm before it reaches expression in words, and that this rhythm may bring to birth the idea and the image; and I do not believe that this is an experience peculiar to myself." One instance to prove this last statement is Nietzsche's summary of Schiller confessing to the original musicality of poetry: ". . . for he does, in fact, confess that the initial stage of the *actus* of poetic composition did not present to him a series of images in causally ordered progression but was felt to be a musical mood ('The mood is, with me, at first without a clear and distinct subject; this belongs to a later stage. A certain musical mood comes first, and this, with me, is followed only later on by the poetic idea.')." Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik, Studienausgabe*, ed. Hans Heinz Holz, 4 vols. (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1968) 1: 44 (my translation). To give just one, even more far-reaching, example: the identity of music and language is the main theme of ch. XX in Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus*.

[19]"Hamlet," *Selected Essays* (1932; London: Faber and Faber, 1966) 145; see also F. O. Matthiessen, *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot: An Essay on the Nature of Poetry*, 3rd ed. (1958; New York: OUP, 1959), ch. III. Among Eliot studies Matthiessen's, to me, is still of outstanding value. As to Eliot's musical poetics see ch. IV.

[20]*OED*, "Always," 1. ". . . at all times."

[21]For Eliot's partiality for this simple device cf., for instance, *The Family Reunion* I.2, "*Harry*: . . . Now that I am here I know I shall not find it"; *Murder in the Cathedral* pt. 2, "*First Knight*: No! here and now! . . . *Thomas*: Now here!"; notice also the *here* "extracted" by means of aphaeresis from *there* and *where*, a device used frequently in *Four Quartets* (cf. esp. DS II and V.216-220). *Here* occurs remarkably often in an exposed position in Eliot's poetry.

[22]This is, perhaps, a periphrasis of *incarnation* which has been rightly claimed to

be Eliot's foremost thematic concern in *Four Quartets*; see Julia Maniates Reibetanz, *A Reading of Eliot's* Four Quartets (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1970) *passim*. There is, moreover, a firm link between Eliot's and Donne's evaluation of the here-and-now, and the real Little Gidding: In the *Conversations at Little Gidding* the Patient tells an anecdote ("told by" Brunetto Latini in *Purgatorio* X) of Traian being urged to immediate action by a poor woman. See *ibid.*, "On the Retirement of Charles V," "On the Austere Life," ed. A. M. Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1970) 9-10. For the availability of at least a part of the *Conversations* long before this edition (initiated by the editor's reading of *Four Quartets*) see Introduction XI-XII.

[23]"At the round earths imagin'd corners . . ." 12-13, John Donne, *The Divine Poems*, ed. H. Gardner (1952; Oxford: OUP, 1964).

[24]See John Donne, *The Sermons*, eds. E. M. Simpson and G. R. Potter, 10 vols. (Berkeley: U of California P, 1956) 10: 229-248, esp. 245 on *Conformitas*: "Now thy *Master* (in the unworthiest of his servants) *lookes back upon thee*, doe it now" (246-47). See also John Donne, *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, ed. A. Raspa (New York: OUP, 1975) 86-90, esp. 86: "Now, this Bell tolling softly for another . . ."; 87: "Any Mans *death* diminishes *me*, because I am involved in *Mankinde*"; and *passim*.

[25]A detailed evaluation of Donne's *Devotions*, esp. the "XVII. Meditation," is a desideratum of Eliot studies, not least because of Donne's musical consideration and local imagery. See, for instance, *Devotions* 88: ". . . this bell . . . I heare that which makes all sounds / *musique*, and all *musique* perfit"; and 87: *"Iland . . . Continent . . . Clod . . . Sea . . . Europe . . . Promontorie . . . Mannor . . . ."*

[26]In Donne this is the central idea; see, for instance, Inge Leimberg, *"Heilig öffentlich Geheimnis": Die geistliche Lyrik der englischen Frühaufklärung* (Münster: Waxmann, 1996) 147-63. To name just three further examples in Dickens: Scrooge being shown his own grave by the third Spirit; Little Nell and the Sexton; and Lady Dedlock finding her place near Nemo's grave.

[27]Cf. Donne, "A Nocturnall upon S. Lucies Day, being the shortest day" and Shakespeare, *Sonnet* 81. There are, of course, good historical reasons for the generalization in Eliot's dictum. Most interesting information on the early Greek grave-epigram is provided in Marion Lausberg, *Das Einzeldistichon: Studien zum antiken Epigramm* (München: Fink, 1982) 102 and *passim*.

[28]The intersection (or even identity) of the vertical and the horizontal in music is a foremost concern in the metaphysics of Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus*, see esp. ch. IX.

[29]*OED*, "Quartet, quartette," 1.a. *Mus.* "A composition for four voices or instruments . . . ."

[30]See "Greece," *New Grove* 7: 664-65.

[31]See, for instance, S. K. Heninger, Jr., *Touches of Sweet Harmony: Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics* (San Marino: The Huntingdon Library, 1974) 96-97, and B. L. Van der Waerden, *Die Pythagoreer: Religiöse Bruderschaft und Schule der Wissenschaft* (Zürich: Artemis, 1979) 100-15.

[32]See "Circle of Fifths," *New Grove* 4: 409.

[33]Harmony as a principle of the Heraclitean κόσμος is discussed in fragm. 10 (with the editor's reference to Aristotle, *De mundo* 5. 396 b.7.). For the cyclical nature of the

κόσμος see esp. fragm. 30 and 103. All references to Heraclitus follow *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, transl. by H. Diels, ed. W. Kranz, 2 vols. and supp. (1951; München: Weidmann, 1985) 1: 150-82.

[34]See *The Waste Land* 22. This image looms large in Ezra Pound's *Cantos*, see, for instance, Canto IV.2, and it is, of course, originally Heraclitean, see fragm. 124 with the editor's reference to Theophrastus, *Metaphys.* 15p. 7a 10.

[35]"Fourfold is the ground that's tilled, / Man, how is thy conscience willed?" (my translation). According to *Deutsche Lieder*, ed. Ernst Klusen (Frankfurt: Insel, 1980) 831, this part of the traditional German song was first printed in 1821.

[36]The work of Sir Thomas Browne is, perhaps, a source to be treated with some reticence where Eliot is concerned (see Gardner, *Composition* 30 with note 4, and 202 with note 1). I should, however, be much surprised, if Eliot did not have at least a sort of Platonic pre-remembrance of the *Religio Medici*, in which the idealistic tenet of creation fulfilled by understanding finds one of its classic realizations (see *Religio Medici and other Works*, ed. L. C. Martin [Oxford: Clarendon, 1964] I.13, 13-19).

[37]This basic antinomy has been finely documented and elucidated by Heinz Heimsoeth, *Atom, Seele, Monade: Historische Ursprünge und Hintergründe von Kants Antinomie der Teilung* (Wiesbaden: Frank Steiner Verlag, 1960).

[38]Angelus Silesius, *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*, ed. Louise Gnädinger (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1984) IV.117: "The world seems globular, / because it's bound to end; // Foursquare God's city is: / therefore 't will always stand" (my translation).

[39]The *locus* first to be remembered is, perhaps, the first chapter of Book 2 ("Of Proportion Poetical") in Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie*.

[40]See Augustinus, *De musica libri VI*, *Opera omnia*, Migne (Paris, 1841) 1: 1081-1194.

[41]Rev. 21:15.

[42]See *De musica*, II, ii.3, 4; II, iii.3; II, iv.4 and esp. 5: "Videsne ut progressio nisi usque ad quaternarium numerum fieri non potuerit, sive in pedibus, sive in temporibus?"

[43]See *Confessiones* XI.27.35-36.

[44]Richard Wagner, *Parsifal: Ein Bühnenweihfestspiel*, ed. W. Zentner (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1958) 1. Aufzug, 24: "Time here becomes space" (my translation).

[45]Shakespeare, *The Tempest* 4.1.150, ed. Frank Kermode (1954; London: Methuen, 1985).

[46]Strangely enough the word "footfall" is (according to the *OED*) first "used by" Caliban, see *The Tempest* 2.2.12. Another echo in the reader's memory are the "*Echoing Footsteps*" of ch. XXI in Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*.

[47]I beg to take issue with Dame Helen Gardner, who (*Composition* 31) states that ". . . literary echoes and allusions are less fundamental as sources than places, times, and seasons, and, above all, the circumstances in which the Quartets were written." Literary associations constantly "echo in the memory" as shown in *The Music of Poetry* (32-33); among these the *Orchestra* functions like a continuous undertone. See *Orchestra Or a Poeme of Dauncing, The Poems of Sir John Davies*, ed. R. Krueger (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975) 90-126.

[48]See "Suite," *New Grove* 18: 333-50, esp. 348-49, and "Sonata form," *New Grove* 17: 497-508, esp. 506-07.

[49]The source to be selected from the vast material concerned with this commonplace where the *Four Quartets* are concerned is the sequence of chapters on dancing in Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Book named The Governor* 1: XIX-XXV.

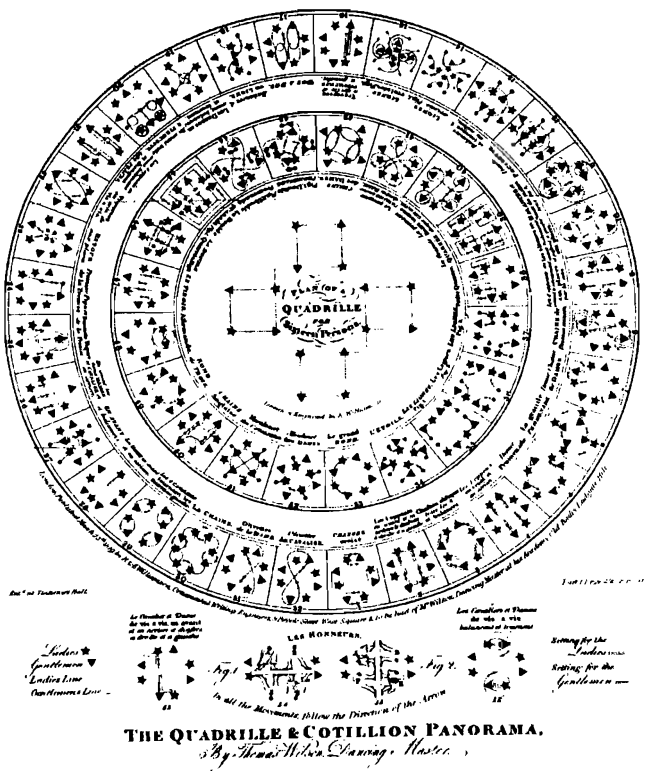
[50]See *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, ch. III, "Unity and Diversity: The Region" 50-66.

[51]The echo of Eccles. 4:1-7 in lines 42-46 of EC has been commented on, for instance, by Patrides 188-89.—Discussing my paper in Halberstadt, Professor Leona Toker mentioned this. Unfortunately the theme was not pursued then but, hopefully, may be in the critical debate following publication.

[52]See "Quadrille," *New Grove* 15: 489-91, and "Square-dance," *New Grove* 18: 30. In this context the article on "Square," *New Grove* 18: 29, is also most informative.

[53]The verbal quotation from Sir Thomas Elyot's *Governor* as well as T. S. Eliot's variation on the dance-metaphor *betokening concord* have an objective correlative in the use of the quadrille as well as country dancing as a social function. The use of the quadrille in musical parody (not least of Wagner-"Hits") makes it especially interesting for Eliot's own parodic style.

[54]See, e.g., Thomas Wilson, *The Quadrille and Cotillion Panorama* (London, 1819):



[55]The image of "heaven's axletree" appears once more in the *Orchestra* (64, 6-7). That the metaphor goes together with "rounds and winding hays" and "rings" and "the two Bears" and "a round dance for ever wheeling" must have been noticed and commented on by readers of the *Four Quartets*, but I have not found such a reference. The loss is mine.

[56]Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 5.1.409. Matthias Bauer draws my attention to a German baroque source for a verbal anagram (as here in the components of *Mid-summer-night*) being executed in a dance-pattern. See Georg Philipp Harsdörffer, *Frauenzimmer Geprächspiele*, ed. I. Böttcher, part 3 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1968) 234-45, and part 6 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1969) 186-93.

[57]The allusion to Evelyn Underhill here seems quite characteristic of Eliot's *placing* of ideas. See her *Mysticism*, 12th ed. (1930; repr. London: Methuen 1960) esp. ch. IV, "The Illumination of the Self," containing the discussion of "The mystic dance."

[58]Cf. Shakespeare, *Sonnet* 30.

[59]Here I refer, of course, to Jo in *Bleak House*. The tragic *condition humaine* of having to "move on" is, in the context of *Four Quartets*, perhaps most stringently prefigured in Heb. 11.13.

[60]See above note 3 concerning programme music.

[61]*The Music of Poetry* 38.

[62]See *The Music of Poetry* 31; neither must the critic "work too closely to musical analogies," or an appearance of structural sterility might be the effect. I am afraid I cannot see eye to eye, here again, with Dame Helen Gardner in her study *The Art of T. S. Eliot* (1950, New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1959), ch. II, "The Music of 'Four Quartets,'" 36-56. The terms she borrows from the theory of music (e. g. "transition," "development," "contrapuntal arrangement," "return"), all used in an imprecise way, show the poem to be a kind of vague structural allegory of some equally vague kind of musical composition. All the structural "musical" components Gardner notices in *Four Quartets* might be found in many other poems (Donne's *Anniversaries* spring to the mind).—The "musicality" of *Four Quartets* is not a direct, descriptive, or imitative, or allegorical one; it is, rather, metaphorical, to be looked for at more than one remove, highly involved. Poetry, as realized in *Four Quartets*, is shown to be rooted in the same ground as music but flourishing in its own way.

[63]*The Music of Poetry* 37.

[64]Here again (see above note 36) a parallel in Sir Thomas Browne suggests itself: the description of eyesight (be it of body or mind) in the form of the St Andrew's Cross, with the *res-in-mundo* being gathered in the point of sharpest vision are then projected onto the retina. See *The Garden of Cyrus*, in *Religio Medici*, ed. L. C. Martin, 167.18-168.18, with note to 168.10-13.

[65]This refers to Sir Philip Sidney; see *An Apology for Poetry*, ed. G. Shepherd (1965; Manchester: Manchester UP, 1973) 124.23-27.

[66]The words recur in *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* 53: "what is wanted is not to restore a vanished, or to revive a vanishing culture under modern conditions which make it impossible, but to grow a contemporary culture from old roots." There is an equivalent to this conservative creed in chapter III of Stravinsky's *Poétique musicale* of 1942.

[67]*Shakespeare's Sonnets* 30.14, ed. S. Booth (New Haven: Yale UP, 1977).

[68]See Ronald Schuchard, "'If I think, again, of this place': Eliot, Herbert and the Way to 'Little Gidding'," *Words in Time: New Essays on Eliot's* Four Quartets, ed. E. Lobb (London: Athlone, 1993) 52-83.

[69]See DS 93-100.

[70]Cf. the scenic interpretation of the garden in BN by the expression "box circle," 32, or the simile developed in EC 113-117: "As in a theatre, ..." A study of *place-landscape-scenery-scene* in Eliot is a desideratum. An example of the information to be gained that way is the role-playing of the family members of Little Gidding. They called themselves by names often not descriptive but providential, and they called themselves "actors"—playing, of course, on the ambiguity of *act*. See *Conversations at Little Gidding* XXXIII (cf. above note 22).

[71]That re-cognition is the foremost purpose of the Tiresias figure is confirmed in Eliot's own dictum: "What Tiresias *sees*, in fact, is the substance of the poem." See the discussion of the "objective correlative" in Matthiessen 60.

[72]See Johannes Kepler, *Harmonice Mundi*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 6, ed. M. Caspar (München: Oldenbourg, 1940) 223: "Neque dixeris, rem esse posse, ut scientia ipsa rei non sit . . . ."

[73]See Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici* 127.

[74]See above note 36.

[75]See Karl Jaspers, *Von der Wahrheit* (1947; München: Piper, 1958) 614: "The idea is truth, which I produce in that it comes to meet [me] out of a world" (my translation). A comparison of Jaspers' observations on "Erscheinung der Idee" (appearance of the idea), and Eliot's concept of the "objective correlative" could be very helpful. Patrides (188 with note 59) quotes Jaspers most aptly, though Jaspers would have refused the title of "a modern theologian," which Patrides awards him.

[76]See T. S. Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets," *Selected Essays*, rev. ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1934, rpt. 1966) 281-291.

[77]See above note 18.

[78]Donne, "At the round earths imagin'd corners . . ." 6-7 (see above note 23).

[79]See, for instance, *Conversations at Little Gidding* XV-XVII (and cf. above note 68).

[80]Quoted from Schuchard 63 (cf. above note 68).

[81]See Schuchard 81.

[82]See Matthiessen ch. II and VIII.

[83]The poem in which the theme of the *word* comes into its own (moreover in company with *restore* and *redeem*) is, of course, *Ash Wednesday*, esp. pts. IV and V.

[84]See above note 24.

[85]The following passage from *The Music of Poetry* reads much like an epigrammatic version of what Roman Ingarden has to say on the various correlations within the literary work of art. Cf. *Das literarische Kunstwerk*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1960, rpt. 1972) 25-30 and *passim*.

[86]Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, eds. S. Bradley and H. W. Blodgett (1965; New York: Norton, 1973) 199.81.

[87]John 1:3; cf. BN 156 and *Ash Wednesday* V.

[88]Very probably Eliot thought of this *topos* in terms of Calderon's *auto sacramental El Divino Orpheo.*

[89]"A Sacred Song of Thanksgiving to the Godhead by Someone Restored, in the Lydian Mode" (my translation).

Connotations
Vol. 8.1 (1998/99)

"But the names remain": Dylan Thomas's *Return Journey*

MATTHIAS BAUER

Feature into Play

In February 1941, Swansea suffered its severest air-raids. Dylan Thomas was staying in Bishopston at the time but returned to his home town for a visit on the morning after one of the bombings. "Our Swansea is dead," he said to a friend who went with him.[1] The destruction of this "ugly, lovely town," as he called it two years later in *Reminiscences of Childhood*,[2] seems to have made him aware of a past that was forever lost. Or rather, it seems to have made him aware that the world of the past which was always present to his mind was dead. He emphatically stresses the liveliness of childhood reminiscences: "The face of one old man who sat, summer and winter, on the same bench looking over the swanned reservoir, I can see more clearly . . . than the city-street faces I saw an *hour* ago."[3] To Dylan Thomas, childhood memories connect persons, including his former self, with particular places. Thomas puts this quite simply when he says, also in *Reminiscences of Childhood*: "This sea-town was my world."[4]

The adult speaker uses the past tense here: ". . . was my world." But if the world of his childhood and adolescence belongs to the past and exists only before his mind's eye, how can it be reached by his revisiting the real town now destroyed? This is, I think, what Thomas tries to explore in his thirty-minute radio piece *Return Journey*, which was first broadcast on 15 June 1947. It was commissioned by the BBC "for a feature series, itself called *Return Journey* and consisting of twenty-four programmes between 1945 and 1951, in which well-known writers recalled the place most closely associated with their childhood."[5] Thomas revisited Swansea in February 1947 in order to collect material, in particular concerning the air-raid damage.[6] He probably adopted the title of the feature series for his radio

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piece because it described what actually happened: the listener is presented with the story of a journey and not only with the author's memories of a place. At the same time, *Return Journey* is not just a piece of autobiography or travel literature or a mournful tribute to Thomas's home town. Even though it was announced as a feature programme, it is in fact a radio play,[7] in which Dylan Thomas imaginatively transforms his personal experience into a more generally human one.[8] The relationship between the personal and the general is a theme of *Return Journey* anyway, for the revisiting of a particular place connected with the particular remembrances of the poet's eccentric younger self leads to his regarding himself as the representative (and spokesman) of common humanity.

This is already indicated by the fact that the first-person narrator never identifies himself as "Dylan Thomas," nor is he ever identified by the people he meets. In the script, he is just called "Narrator." Even though his journey back to Swansea is a search for "Young Thomas" who lived there fourteen years ago the narrator does not openly regard him as his former self but calls him "a friend" and always speaks of him as a third person. One might object that this is a fiction to be seen through at once. But this is exactly the point. Thomas deliberately "fictionalizes" his experience by using such an obvious device, for while he thus barely hides the fact that he wants to learn about his own self, his speaking of "a friend" also indicates that this self is different from his present one. Young Thomas is, as it were, the narrator's double, who, although sought in the Swansea now gone, is not to be tied to a particular time or place. This search for himself as an elusive (or fictional or fairy-tale like) being on whom no one is able to set eyes is brought home by the auditory nature of the medium and by the author's employing certain techniques which are characteristic of the radio play as a dramatic genre. Thus there are rapid changes between the narrator's eye-witness reports, pieces of dialogue with persons he meets and asks about Young Thomas, flashbacks in which voices of the past are heard, present-day voices describing memories without addressing anyone in particular, and a passage of free indirect discourse in which the narrator addresses his *present* self in the third person (185).

Past and Present, Life and Death

The narrator's "epic" presentation of episodes and speakers contributes to a distinction of temporal levels, for instance when his pointing out that "there the Young Thomas whom I was searching for used to stand at the counter on Friday paynights" (181-82) is followed by a flashback to the former scene in the bar, or when the words of the (present-day) Promenade-Man are introduced by the narrator's "he said: . . . ." But not all the episodes and speakers are introduced in this manner, so that the listener may sometimes wonder for a moment whether they belong to the past or the present. Thus it is not immediately obvious that the voice of the Minister (184) belongs to the present or that the voices of the girls (187) belong to the past. This feeling of being on two time-levels at once is reinforced by a number of sounds characteristic of particular places both in the past and the present. The narrator's walk through the town is marked, for example, by "Bar noises in background," "School bell," "Funeral bell," "Noise of sea, softly" and, finally, "The park bell . . . ." Especially the ring of bells as a sound by which a place makes itself known unites the Swansea of Young Thomas with the dead city revisited by the adult narrator. Just as the famous bell that "tolling softly for another, saies to me, Thou must die,"[9] the bells of *Return Journey* connect the living and the dead, linking the poet-narrator with his former self and his listeners in a *memento mori*. A similar relationship between revisiting one's past, an awareness of death, and the sound of bells is established in "Poem on His Birthday," in which Thomas presents himself as "the rhymer . . . who tolls his birthday bell" and "Toils towards the ambush of his wounds."[10]

In *Return Journey*, the narrator toils towards death as well, or rather he finds it at every station of his way and upon each level of time. Both in the past and the present, however, death goes together with life. They are connected in a parallel as well as a crosswise manner. The fourfold relationship resulting from this (past life and present death, past death and present life, past and present life, past and present death) is the main theme as well as the organizing principle of *Return Journey* with its interplay between adult and youthful self, destroyed and undestroyed town, encounter and remembrance. The dialectical relationship between these poles becomes visible in the overall structure of *Return Journey*. The

narrator's journey is a twofold one: while he moves on in time he probes deeper and deeper into the past.[11] In terms of space, the downhill road of his life (ending in the pub) is reversed by his ascending the hills above the sea-town.[12] Each place he revisits is connected with an earlier stage of Young Thomas's life: from the bar he frequented as a young newspaper man, when he was a "bombastic adolescent provincial bohemian with a thick-knitted artist's tie made out of his sister's scarf" (180) he goes back to the place where the Kardomah Cafe used to be, in which Young Thomas and other "poets, painters, and musicians in their beginnings" once talked about "Einstein and Epstein, Stravinsky and Greta Garbo, death and religion, Picasso and girls" (183). Further back in time, this is followed by the empty space that once was a bookshop, by the school, and by the seashore where girls first became aware of the boy who "swallowed a dictionary." Then come the shops and houses of the Uplands, where, as the narrator says, "the journey had begun of the one I was pursuing through his past" (188). The last stage, even further up the hill, is Cwmdonkin Park where Young Thomas played as a child, recklessly, cruelly (pelting the old swans, for example) but where, as the Park Keeper thinks, "he was happy all the time" (189).

The Suffering Place

The ending of the narrator's journey meets its beginning. "What has become of him now?" he asks the Park-Keeper, whose answer rings like the funeral bell, "Dead, dead, dead . . ." Here we are back at the narrator's starting point, where he compares past and present and describes the present town as dead:

> It was a cold white day in High Street, and nothing to stop the wind slicing up from the Docks, for where the squat and tall shops had shielded the town from the sea lay their blitzed flat graves marbled with snow and headstoned with fences. (179)

The whole town has become a graveyard in which man's work of building and destruction is complemented or completed by forces of nature; both

are described in terms of animation, only to stress the presence of death: the wind is implicitly personified when it is said to be "slicing up" from the Docks; this is further emphasized a few lines later when it "cut[s] up the street with a soft sea-noise hanging on its arm." A corresponding image of destruction, as well as of animation going together with petrification, is presented by the "blitzed flat graves" of the once "squat and tall" shops. The shops not only look like graves now that they have become mere heaps of stones but they are themselves buried in graves "marbled with snow and headstoned with fences." Death is further multiplied by the word "blitzed." Not the shops are blitzed but the graves, destruction is heaped upon destruction. "Blitzed" itself is a word linking man's deadly work with nature's destructive force in the German expression for lightning. As the past participle of a verb derived from a noun, "blitzed" corresponds to "shielded," "marbled," and "headstoned."

Noun-derived participles have been recognized as a distinctive feature of Thomas's style and it has been suggested that they indicate "the reciprocal participation in one another . . . of what would ordinarily be thought of as isolated objects."[13] Later in the passage when the shopping women are described there is another sequence of such participles ("Fish-frailed, netbagged, umbrella'd . . ."), which are heaped up in a way emphasizing the passive, suffering element in those women. This is underlined by the ambiguous use of "crunched" in "crushes of shopping-women crunched in the little Lapland of the once grey drab street," which denotes the women's making their way "with crunching"[14] but also suggests the women themselves being crunched or ground to pieces.[15] In the first sentence of *Return Journey* the noun-derived participles serve to stress the temporal relationship of things, the transforming effect they have upon each other and the marks they leave upon a place. Thus the fences have become headstones of the graves of shops. There is a kind of petrification implied in this process, especially since fences, different from walls but fending off opposition as walls do, would not normally be expected to be made of stone. This unexpectedness gives additional verbal energy to the syllable "stoned" in "headstoned" as the result of an activity, which is all the more noticable since the verb *to headstone* is not recorded by the *OED*. In 1947 "stoned" did not yet mean intoxicated

(*OED* 1952 ff.) but of course it meant "put to death by pelting with stones" (*OED stone v.* 1.a.). This in turn makes us note, upon rereading the sentence, the component "bled" in "marbled," and, more clearly heard as a syllable with a meaning of its own, "dead" as a component of "shielded." The echoes of the cruel activity that led to the destruction of the revisited place are still to be heard in the words used to describe it.

Thomas's combining references to animation and petrification in the language of the opening passage contributes to the impression that his (or the narrator's) revisiting his home town is presented as the transformation of a biographical event into a literary or fictional one. For in describing the place revisited, Thomas speaks a language suffused with literary echoes, and in particular he alludes to his favourite master of prose fiction, Dickens.[16] This concerns the general atmosphere as well as such telling details as the use of "headstoned," a word in which life and death are united. Dickens's Bradley Headstone, for example, whose name indicates that he "belongs in a churchyard,"[17] represents death in life, as he is the victim of demonic life-forces that make him, while still alive, turn into a stony being covered with ashes.[18]

In *Return Journey* the shops and pubs and other places of social intercourse are shown to be victims of similarly pulverizing forces; they are like beings that have entirely dissolved into dust, and are covered by a layer of snow. This is confirmed later when the narrator comes to the place where the bookshop used to be and the Minister whom he meets there simply comments: "Ashes now, under the snow" (184) or when the narrator speaks of plodding "through the ankle-high one cloud that foamed the town, into flat Gower street, its buildings melted" (186). In the opening passage, the dissolution is emphasized by the "powdered fields of the roofs of Milton Terrace and Watkin Street and Fullers Row." The narrator leaves it open whether the roofs themselves have dissolved into powdered fields or whether it is only the snow that makes them look like powdered fields; at any rate, another noun-derived participle, "powdered," is used that rings with the devastating effect of war action.

Childhood and the Knowledge of Death

At the same time, the narrator stresses that the destruction paradoxically leads to his seeing things he hasn't seen before: "I could see the swathed hill stepping up out of the town, which you never could see properly before, and the powdered fields of the roofs . . . ." Upon revisiting Swansea, a new perspective has literally opened up to him. The blitz, however disastrous, has enlightened him. Taking the beginning and the ending of *Return Journey* together, the listeners realize that the Uplands and the hill that now have come into view are to become the goal of the narrator's search. What becomes visible to him is the world of Young Thomas's childhood, which used to be obliterated by structures belonging to later stages of his youth.

In the opening passage of *Return Journey*, Thomas links the subject of "A Place Revisited" with the perennial theme of death and recognition, or death and knowledge. This theme defies annotation but since John Donne already made himself heard in the background, one may also recall his "huge hill, / Cragged, and steep," where "Truth stands" and which the speaker strives to reach before "death's twilight."[19] What the narrator of *Return Journey* reaches when "Dusk [is] folding the Park around, like another, darker snow" (188) is the knowledge of Young Thomas's death. At this point we are once more confronted with the basic paradox of *Return Journey*: if Young Thomas is dead, he belongs to a different world from the narrator's. But then death also belongs to the present, where the narrator, beginning his "search through Swansea town," moves about like a ghost or shadow. Thus the hotel-porter ignores or fails to hear his greeting. To him, he is just another "snowman" (or no-man or [k]now-man). Similarly, when he enters the bar, nobody takes notice of him. "I said Good morning, and the barmaid . . . said to her first customer: . . . Seen the film at the Elysium, Mr Griffiths, ..."

If the present is some kind of world beyond death (however un-Elysian the deadly "white wastes" [181] of snow may be), then the past must be living. In accordance with this paradox, the narrator looks for Young Thomas as for a living person and describes him to the barmaid as someone who is missing or who is a wanted criminal ("Thick blubber lips; snub nose; curly mousebrown hair; one front tooth broken . . .," 180). But then

the past is also dead. Young Thomas cannot be found again as a living person. The "death" of the place revisited is, from this perspective, most profoundly appropriate to the fact that the person whom the narrator tries to find is dead, too. The presence of death unites the narrator and Young Thomas, but all the same there is an insurmountable barrier between them. Talking about the child's wild games, the narrator thus realizes that there are "No fires now where the outlaws' fires burned and the paradisiacal potatoes roasted in the embers" (188).

Thomas's concern with the theme of childhood has been compared to Vaughan's or Wordsworth's view of the child as belonging to or representing an unfallen state. Especially poems such as "Fern Hill" invite such a comparison.[20] *Return Journey* also focuses on the "retreat," on the way back to *Kinderland*, as Brahms's song has it.[21] Like the speaker in Vaughan's poem "Childhood," the narrator of *Return Journey* "cannot reach it." He arrives at "the last gate" of Cwmdonkin Park but this gate remains closed (or is being shut). There are several voices of the past to be listened to but the voice of Young Thomas is never heard. As distinct from Vaughan or Wordsworth, however, Thomas does not stress the innocence of childhood. When in Thomas's poem "The Hunchback in the Park," the wild boys are called "innocent as strawberries," this does not imply saintly innocence. In this poem, the hunchback is cruelly mocked, as in *Return Journey* the old swans are pelted and the children go "snip, snip through the dahlias." The cruelty uniting man and nature (cf. the stoning and the cutting wind at the beginning) already belongs to childhood.

Thomas's Eden is lost through man's fall, but this consists in his loss of ignorance (or unconsciousness) of death. The knowledge that kills the childhood world is the inevitable knowledge of death itself. This emphasis on death as the necessary condition, as well as distinction, of adult human life has much in common with existentialist tenets such as Heidegger's stressing that man is the only being that is capable of death.[22] In Thomas's poem for his son Llewelyn, the child is oblivious to the fact that everything is doomed to death: "This side of the truth, / You may not see, my son, / King of your blue eyes / In the blinding country of youth, / That all is undone, . . . / Before you move to make / One gesture of the heart or head" (192).

Fellow-Passengers to the Grave

At the same time, the knowledge of death, which is the result of a return journey to the destroyed country of youth, implies a new kind of solidarity with "Young Thomas," or indeed with any child. The child does not see "this side of the truth" but, according to the ambiguous syntax of the poem, the child *and* the adult speaker dwell on "this side." If the child has to die in the process of growing to consciousness, the adult remains under the sentence of death. "I saw time murder me," the speaker says in "Then was my neophyte," a poem on an unborn child, but he also says, in the present tense, "Time kills me terribly." Realizing the death of one's former self means realizing the common destiny of all human life. In "Then was my neophyte" the "unborn" child is called "undead." To be born means to die; birth is, to quote John Donne once more, "a delivery over to *another death*, the manifold deathes of this *world*."[23] Or, as the Reverend Ely Jenkins puts it so simply in *Under Milk Wood*, we are "all poor creatures born to die."[24] Therefore, the narrator's solidarity with the dead in *Return Journey* is also a solidarity with the living.

Thomas here again can be seen to refer to and continue the tradition of a literary as well as philosophical theme prototypically realized in Donne's funeral bell which tolls for the living; the sign of death makes its listener bear in mind not only his or her own death but the fact that "Any Mans *death* diminishes *me*, because I am involved in *Mankind*."[25] The solidarity with the living that results from the awareness of death is of course also a characteristically Dickensian theme: other human beings are not to be regarded as "another race of creatures bound on other journeys" but as "fellow-passengers to the grave."[26] This holds true, too, for the reflection of one's own dead former self as a means of considering the common human destiny, which figures so prominently in *Return Journey*. Thus Gwen Watkins, in her recollection of a conversation with Dylan Thomas in 1951, remembers comparing *Return Journey* with Dickens's contribution to *The Haunted House*, in which the narrator meets the "ghost" of his "own childhood" in the form of a mirror-image and a skeleton "allotted" to him for his "mortal companion"; but never with his "man's stride" is he able "to come up with it."[27] However, it is this very fact of knowing one's own former self to be dead that brings back the

childhood world of imagination and, accordingly, the child's life itself.[28] Similarly, in Scrooge's revisiting his own boyhood self it is his being separated from it by the borderline between life and death that enables him to identify with the boy and brings about his solidarity with the living in the present.[29] The revisiting of the former self is a catabasis to the "shadows"[30] in the realm of death which leads to a meeting with life.[31]

In *Return Journey*, this becomes clear through its circular structure. Looking at its beginning in the light of its ending, we see that the narrator's circular journey not only links death with death but also life with life. Even though, at the end, the garden in which Young Thomas once played is found to be forever closed, it still exists or is newly created upon the ruins of the town: "Boys romped, calling high and clear, on top of a levelled chemist's and a shoe-shop, and a little girl, wearing a man's cap, threw a snowball in a chill deserted garden that had once been the Jug and Bottle of the Prince of Wales" (179). Young Thomas for whom the narrator looks is dead but he is also to be found again. If the town and the park have become a grave, the grave has also become a garden; a "chill deserted garden" but a garden nevertheless, and not so deserted either since a little girl plays in it.[32] The graveyard turned into a garden by a little girl is again a Dickensian motif: Little Nell attends to life by literally keeping green the memory of the dead,[33] giving evidence to the schoolmaster's conviction that there is "nothing innocent or good, that dies, and is forgotten."[34] In *Return Journey*, even though on a more existential than ethical level (the question of "goodness" is never addressed) a similar continuance is pointed out. The child, though dead, nevertheless lives on—not so much or not only in the adult person into which he has grown but in the child now present, just as the garden continues to exist in a new location. The place has changed and yet remains the same, and so does the person belonging to it.

Lots of Thomases

This has to do with the fact that although the narrator looks for one particular person with certain idiosyncrasies such as wearing a "conscious woodbine" and although "there couldn't be two like him," as one voice

says who remembers him, he is also the embodiment of any youth and child. In *Return Journey*, the solidarity with the living that originates in the knowledge of one's own death is characteristically expressed by the recognition of the prototypically human in the individual self. When the narrator has succeeded in making the barmaid listen to him she wants to know the name of the friend he is looking for. "Young Thomas. BARMAID: Lots of Thomases come here, it's a kind of home from home for Thomases . . ." (180). The "-mas[s]es" forming the latter part of "Thomases" underline the "Lots" being found when inquiring after the lot of the one Young Thomas. This sense of the individual having once been or having become (depending on which way you look) a kind of everyman or everychild emerges as the narrator proceeds. Thus the man he meets at the sea-front who, like Melville's water-gazers, "Year in, year out . . . always came to look at the sea" says he remembers Young Thomas well: ". . . but I didn't know what was his name, I don't know the name of none of the sandboys. . . . Oh yes, I knew him well. I've known him by the thousands."[35] The very same words are used by the Park-Keeper, another observer of mankind, towards the end of the narrator's journey: "Oh yes, I knew him well. I think he was happy all the time. I've known him by the thousands." The one happy child is all children, and even though this particular child, like all children, has grown up to be dead, he has been or become the prototypical child that will never cease to exist. In negative terms, Thomas expresses a very similar idea in the famous last line of "Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London": "After the first death there is no other": the one individual case is all that matters; other deaths are not different ones but a re-experiencing, a sharing of the first (which also, vicariously, has already annihilated death itself).[36]

The narrator searches for one particular Young Thomas, who cannot be recaptured, but because he does so he will learn from the place revisited that he was one of "thousands." This is also a possible answer to the question in how far the world of childhood is affected by the poet (or his persona) revisiting its locality. The narrator, walking through the destroyed town, becomes increasingly aware of the general nature of the individual fate, a process reflected by the form or genre of *Return Journey* as a piece of autobiography becoming fictional narrative or drama.

This relationship between the personal and the general, as well as the autobiographical and the fictional, corresponds to the connection between the material and the spiritual, which also characterizes the narrator's return journey. Both Young Thomas and the narrator are men of words, as is pointed out in the encounter with the minister on the site of the former bookshop. The clergyman remembers rubbing shoulders with Young Thomas

> by the shelves in the back corner on the right—just by there it would be. You see, poetry and theology was next door to each other. He was swimming out of his depth in a flood of words, and I was toiling up high mountains of biblical exegesis. (184)

This passage may be taken as a hint regarding the poet's view of his own calling. He shares with the priest the concern for words and their meaning. The true life of persons and things, in which the coincidental and individual goes together with the general and typical, is a spiritual one, and this means, in *Return Journey*, the life of language.

The Life of the Name

To the narrator, the link between the material reality of places and persons and the spiritual reality of language consists in their names. This is already suggested by the opening verbal image of the shops' graves "marbled with snow and headstoned with fences," by which the return journey is shown to be like a visit to a cemetery, where the physical remains of the dead will, to use Keats's words, "from this mortal state . . . Be spiritualised"[37] in the memory evoked by their names on the gravestones. The narrator revisits names just as much as places; twice the empty spaces of former shopping streets are structured by the names of stores and other buildings which have ceased to exist. To be exact, the houses have not ceased to exist, because their names are still there, they have only become "invisible": "Down College Street I walked then, past the remembered invisible shops, Langley's, Castle Cigar Co; T. B. Brown's, Pullar's, Aubrey Jeremiah, Goddard Jones, Richards, Hornes, Marles, Pleasance and Harper, Star Supply, Sidney Heath, Wesley Chapel and nothing" (184-85). The sequence

of names suggested by empty spaces guides the narrator to Young Thomas's school, where, in a similar way, absence and annihilation lead to the remembrance of names. Here, too, by the poet's remembrance of individuals' names that which is dead and past is eternized or entered into the book of life: the school-building "has changed its face" and

> the names are havoc'd from the Hall and the carved initials burned from the broken wood. But the names remain. What names did he know of the dead? Who of the honored dead did he know such a long time ago? The names of the dead in the living heart and head remain for ever. Of all the dead whom did he know? [FUNERAL BELL] VOICE: Evans, K. J., Haines, G. C., Roberts, I. L. . . ." (185-86).

This is the passage in which the narrator addresses himself in the third person in a kind of free indirect discourse or interior dialogue. Thomas thus creates an effect of both personal involvement and distance. Personal recollection goes together with such general statements as "The names of the dead in the living heart and head remain for ever." In this formula, "poetry and theology" are indeed "next door to each other." For the words chosen point to religion, and the way they are used and put together signalizes poetry. As regards theology, the poetic formula which sums up the hope for a life in spite of death rings with biblical echoes. Besides Revelation 3:5 ("I will not blot out his name out of the book of life") there is Ecclesiasticus 44:14 ("but their name liveth for evermore"), and perhaps most pertinently, the prophet Isaiah's vision of "the new heavens and the new earth," which will remain before the Lord just as "your seed and your name [shall] remain" (Is. 66:22). In this context, the "return" of *Return Journey* suggests a rebirth, for the remaining of the name does not mean changeless duration but is to be brought about by an act of the living heart and head. Without making direct reference to the Gospel, Thomas' formula echoes, and to a certain degree, shares the Biblical message that man is "Being born again" by the word "which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:23).[38]

Thomas, characteristically, locates the life of the name (and thus, implicitly, the new heavens and the new earth) in the spoken word of the remembering narrator-poet. And this is where "poetry" joins "theology," as the author points out by making language speak of and for itself, for

instance in the paronomasia "names . . . remain," which sounds as if to suggest that *name* is called name because it is that which "re-mains."[39] The "return" just as much consists in a turning of words as in an actual journey, and the boy's "beat of his blood" (185) is not to be separated from the beat of rhythmical, poetic language. Moreover, Thomas draws attention to poetic language by using, in a prose context, devices typically belonging to verse, such as rhyme ("dead"-"head"), alliteration ("heart and head") and a rhythmical flow resembling the alternating stress of "iambic" verse (with two short beats in "of the" and "in the").[40] The triadic rhythmical arrangement ("The names of the dead / in the living heart and head / remain for ever") makes language itself melodically come alive. This grouping of words is not merely a formal device but is truly poetical in that it generates the distinctive meaning of the phrase: the poet's book of life is "the living heart and head" in which the dead shall remain. This is not a question of permanent remembrance. The sentence occurs in the context of an act of remembering ("Of all the dead whom did he know?"). The word order, however, is not "The names of the dead remain for ever in the living heart and head" but "The names of the dead in the living heart and head remain for ever." Once the act of remembering has been achieved by the living head and heart, the names will remain—quite independently of those who once remembered them. Those who remembered will of course die but the names will remain "for ever." What gives them permanence is the one moment of thinking and loving remembrance brought about by revisiting the place to which these names once belonged.

The Knowing Place

This connection between place and person bears a certain resemblance to Gerard Manley Hopkins's concept of the "running instress" of a scene which is kept as something real by its viewer though the place may have changed when he returns.[41] In Thomas's *Return Journey*, however, the opposite or counterpart of this phenomenon is dramatically realized. Here it is the place which retains and preserves the person once connected with

it so that revisiting the place implies meeting again a human being. Even though there may be "nothing to stop the wind" (179) like the Psalmist's wind that "passeth over" the grass or flower of man, in *Return Journey* Psalm 103 (in which "the place thereof shall know it no more") is as it were ironically reversed, since the place goes on knowing the man.[42] This is mainly an auditory process. The place, even when it lies in ruins, preserves the voices of the people who once dwelt there. Thus the narrator notes that "The voices of fourteen years ago hung silent in the snow and ruin, . . ." (183). In a radio play, the reality of the voices kept by a place is quite easily affirmed, especially since in radio a person is identical with his or her voice. There is, in principle, no difference between the voice of a person actually heard and a remembered or imagined voice. Even though the narrator speaks of "silent" voices, they are to be heard by the listeners who accompany him on his return journey. Different levels of time and reality coalesce. The Minister, for example, whom the narrator meets where the bookshop used to be is, on the one hand, simply a passer-by who addresses him: "Lost anything—under the snow? A bookshop. Yes, I knew it well." On the other hand, it is no accident that the Minister's voice is heard at this particular place, for it belongs to it: Young Thomas talked to him only there.

Other voices, like those of the girls on the promenade, entirely belong to the past, but they are also kept and evoked by this particular place. What, technically speaking, is a flashback is also a statement about the properties of a location. The place revisited really speaks, such as the houses of the Uplands, where a voice which is not the narrator's suddenly declares: "Here was once the flea-pit picture-house where he whooped for the scalping of Indians with Jack Basset and banged for the rustlers' guns" (188). This voice of the place immediately stirs the narrator's memory and provokes his reply: "Jackie Basset, killed."

The idea of a place actually keeping the voice of a person over a long time and giving it back is also predominant in Thomas's "Poem in October," written three years before *Return Journey*. It is far more exuberant and joyful in tone than the radio play but there are strong parallels. On his birthday, the poet ascends the hill above a sea-town where he suddenly finds himself revisiting (or being revisited by) the country of his childhood

and where the voice of the boy has been kept for him by the "water and singingbirds" belonging to this place: "These were the woods the river and sea / Where a boy / In the listening / Summertime of the dead whispered the truth of his joy / To the trees and stones and the fish in the tide. / And the mystery / Sang alive / Still in the water and singingbirds."

As in *Return Journey*, here is an interplay of death and life. The living boy whispers to the "listening / Summertime of the dead," while the "summer noon" in the presence of the speaker gives back the dead child's message: "And the true / Joy of the long dead child sang burning / In the sun." In *Return Journey*, we remember, the voice of Young Thomas is never heard but town and park keep the life of the child the narrator has come to find. Even though he was "happy all the time" his truth is a sad one. It is the mystery of death itself, with which the place truly rings since it has been destroyed.

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NOTES

[1]See Gwen Watkins, *Portrait of a Friend* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1983) 92; cf. also 115. Thomas's statement is also quoted in John Ackerman, *A Dylan Thomas Companion* (London: Macmillan, 1991) 27.—I am grateful to Professor Inge Leimberg for her critical, as well as stimulating, discussion of this contribution to the *Connotations* symposium on "A Place Revisited" in Halberstadt, July 1997.

[2]*Reminiscences of Childhood (First Version)*, as included in *On the Air with Dylan Thomas: The Broadcasts*, ed. Ralph Maud (New York: New Directions, 1992) 1-8, here 3; see 16 for the 1945 version. *Return Journey* is also quoted from this collection (177-89). It was first published in *Quite Early One Morning* (New York: New Directions, 1954).

[3]*Reminiscences of Childhood (First Version)* 3.

[4]*Reminiscences of Childhood (First Version)*, *On the Air* 3; cf. *On the Air* 16 for the 1945 version.

[5]Peter Lewis, "The Radio Road to Llareggub," *British Radio Drama*, ed. John Drakakis (Cambridge: CUP, 1981) 72-110, here 92.

[6]Cf. Ralph Maud's introduction to *Return Journey* in *On the Air with Dylan Thomas* 177, referring to Thomas's notebook.

[7]Even though making a clear-cut distinction between the two genres is notoriously difficult, it seems useful to agree with John Drakakis, who points out that "At each end of the spectrum [i.e. from feature to radio play] the roles of journalist and dramatist could be clearly distinguished." See his introduction to *British Radio Drama* 8. Drakakis goes on to quote Laurence Gilliam who "in a more epigrammatic vein, asserted that 'Features deal with fact, Drama with fiction'" (8). Drakakis' source is Val Gielgud, *British Radio Drama 1922-1956* (London: Harrap, 1957) 48.

[8]*Return Journey* is appreciated as a work of radio art by Lewis, especially 95-97, who discusses it as a congenial precursor of *Under Milk Wood*; cf. also Douglas Cleverdon, *The Growth of Milk Wood* (London: Dent, 1969) on *Return Journey*: "With his poet's insight and his practical experience of broadcasting techniques, Dylan knew exactly how to create a work of permanent value from the fluid medium of radio. I doubt whether there has ever been a better thirty-minute radio piece" (15).

[9]The heading of Donne's seventeenth meditation is quoted from *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, ed. Anthony Raspa (New York: OUP, 1987) 86.

[10]Dylan Thomas's poetry is quoted from *The Poems*, ed. Daniel Jones (London: Dent, 1971; rev. ed. 1974; repr. 1987). "Poem on His Birthday" is no. 163 in this ed.

[11]Cf. Lewis 97 ("as the day advances the memories regress in contrary motion").

[12]For Thomas' spatializing of time, cf. his well-known coinage "once below a time," e.g. in "Fern Hill."

[13]J. Hillis Miller, *Poets of Reality: Six Twentieth-Century Writers* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1965) 198.

[14]*OED* "crunch" *v.* 3.

[15]*OED* "crunch" *v.* 2.

[16]Cf. Ackerman 216: "We must always remember that his favourite prose writer was Dickens."

[17]*Our Mutual Friend*, ed. E. Salter Davies (Oxford: OUP, 1952) 793. The motif of the incognito return journey and the search for "a friend" strengthens the link with *Our Mutual Friend*, in which the "mutual friend" John Harmon, supposed to be dead, returns to London.—On the subject of grotesque animation in Dickens, see Dorothy Van Ghent's classic essay, "The Dickens World: A View from Todgers's," *Dickens: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Martin Price (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967) 24-38. Cf. also my article on "*Little Dorrit*: Dickens and the Language of Things," *Anglistentag 1996 Dresden: Proceedings*, ed. Uwe Böker and Hans Sauer (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1997) 351-61.

[18]See, for example, *Our Mutual Friend* 800: "Rigid before the fire . . . he sat, with the dark lines deepening in his face, its stare becoming more and more haggard, its surface turning whiter and whiter as if it were being overspread with ashes, and the very texture and colour of his hair degenerating."

[19]John Donne, "Satire 3" (79-80, 83), quoted from *The Complete English Poems*, ed. A. J. Smith (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971; repr. 1986).

[20]See Alastair Fowler, "Adder's Tongue on Maiden Hair: Early Stages in Reading 'Fern Hill,'" *Dylan Thomas: New Critical Essays* (London: Dent, 1972) 228-61, especially 238-42.

[21]Op. 63, no. 8. For the text of Klaus Groth's poem ("O wüßt ich doch den Weg zurück"), see *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Ivo Braak and Richard Mehlem, vol. 5: *Hundert Blätter* (Flensburg: Wolff, 1960) 44.

[22]See, for example, "Das Ding," *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1954) 157-75: "Die Sterblichen sind die Menschen. Sie heißen die Sterblichen, weil sie sterben können. Sterben heißt: den Tod als Tod vermögen. Nur der Mensch stirbt. Das Tier verendet. Es hat den Tod als Tod weder vor sich noch hinter sich. [The mortals are the human beings. They are called mortals because they are able to die. To die means: to be capable of death as death. Only man dies. The animal perishes. Death as death lies neither before nor behind it]" (171). Cf. also Karl Jaspers on the borderline of death (or the end) as the true origin of our consciousness of being ("der eigentliche Ursprung unseres Seinsbewußtseins") in *Von der Wahrheit* (München: R. Piper, 1947; new ed. 1991) 173.

[23]Quoted from his "Deaths Duell" sermon (25 February 1631); John Donne, *Selected Prose*, ed. Neil Rhodes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987) 313.

[24]Dylan Thomas, *Under Milk Wood: A Play for Voices* (London: Dent, 1954; reset ed. 1985) 82.

[25]Donne, 17. Meditation, *Devotions* 87.

[26]Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol, Christmas Books*, ed. Eleanor Farjeon (Oxford: OUP, 1954; repr. 1987) 10. Even though the statement specifically refers to one's attitude to people 'lower' on the social scale ("to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave"), the context of *A Christmas Carol* makes clear that it lies at the heart of Dickens's (to use Cazamian's term) "philosophie de Noël."

[27]Charles Dickens, *Christmas Stories*, ed. Margaret Lane (Oxford: OUP, 1956) 252.

[28]In *The Haunted House*, the child's imaginative world disappears when he learns about the death of his father. See *Christmas Stories* 251.

[29]See Lothar Cerny, "Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*: Revisiting and Reformation," *Connotations* 7 (1997/98): 255-72, especially 263-65 on Scrooge's "experience of being two persons at one and the same time" (263).

[30]*A Christmas Carol*; *Christmas Books* 27.

[31]In discussion, Leona Toker has drawn my attention to the "Boy at Winander" passage in Book V of Wordsworth's *Prelude* (364-425 in the 1850 text; see *The Prelude: A Parallel Text*, ed. J. C. Maxwell [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971; repr. 1986]), in which the speaker also appears to meet himself when he visits (and remembers visiting) the grave of a young boy in the churchyard of his home village. The speaker who stands "Mute, looking at the grave in which he lies" (397) a few lines earlier identifies with the boy to such an extent that, for instance, he knows "a gentle shock of mild surprise / Has carried far into his heart the voice / Of mountain torrents" (382-84). Maxwell in his note (p. 548) points out that "In the original version, written in Germany 1798-9, Wordsworth is the boy."

[32]Cf. the garden in Louisa Alcott's *The Secret Garden* to which a girl brings new life.

[33]See her churchyard conversation with the sexton in chapter 54 of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, ed. the Earl of Wicklow (Oxford: OUP, 1951) 404: "I will make this place my garden."

[34]*The Old Curiosity Shop* 406.

[35]Again a Dickensian echo makes itself heard here. The one boy who is known "by the thousands" is related to the "Hundreds of people" who, according to Miss Pross in *A Tale of Two Cities* come to pay their attentions to Lucie Manette. See *A Tale of Two Cities*, intr. Sir John Shuckburgh (Oxford: OUP, 1949) 92-94 ("Hundreds of People" is the heading of ch. 6 in Book II). The "hundreds of people" are in fact "only One," i.e. Charles Darnay. He represents the archetypal man and wooer just as Young Thomas represents the boy and the adolescent.

[36]Cf. also the lines Vernon Watkins remembered Thomas to have spoken to him during a London air-raid: "In London, when the blinds were drawn / Blackening a barbarous sky, / He plucked, beneath the accusing beams, / The mote out of his eye. / In the one death his eye discerned / The death all deaths must die. / 'My immortality', he said, / 'Now matters to my soul / Less than the deaths of others . . .'" (quoted from Gwen Watkins 106).

[37]*Endymion* IV.933.

[38]The action of turning and returning in connection with destruction and everlastingness suggests yet another Biblical context: in Psalm 90, relevant to *Return Journey* anyway for its subject of learning about death ("teach *us* the number of our days," 3), the Lord who has "been our dwelling place" (1) "even from everlasting to everlasting" (2) is asked to "Return" (13), as it is also man's task to do so: "Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men" (3).

[39]Again, Donne's 17. Meditation is not far off: "No man is an *Iland*, intire of it selfe; every man is a pèece of the *Continent*, a part if the *maine*; . . ." (*Devotions* 87).—In the context of Thomas's revisiting his former school it may be allowed to point out that Latin *manes* (from *manere*, 'remain') is an anagram of *names*. Among the literary echoes of the name that remains, the ironical one of Shakespeare's Coriolanus is not to be forgotten, of whom "Only that name remains" (4.5.74) as a sign of what this soldier did for his country (cf. 5.3.147).

[40]The "iambic" flow is another Dickensian feature of *Return Journey*. In *A New Spirit of the Age*, 2nd ed. (London, 1844), Richard Hengist Horne already pointed out that Little Nell's funeral in ch. 72 of *The Old Curiosity Shop* can be read as blank verse. The relevant passages are also published as "Nelly's Funeral: The Versification in Dickens's Prose," *Dickensian* 12 (1916): 154-55. Thomas could also have read about Dickens's metrical prose in T. W. Hill, "The Poetic Instinct of Dickens," *Dickensian* 12 (1916): 272-74 and 293-96.

[41]See Christiane Lang-Graumann's essay in this issue of *Connotations*.

[42]"As *for* man, his days *are* as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more" (Ps. 103:15-16).

Connotations
Vol. 8.1 (1998/99)

Gary Snyder, Dôgen, and "The Canyon Wren"

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I. Conversing with the World

Gary Snyder's *Mountains and Rivers Without End* (1996) is an anthology of ways of communicating across the boundaries perceived between species and spaces.[1] We can speak with the world and with all of the creatures in it, and the songs collected in the long poem show how this may be done. Readers may nonetheless find themselves puzzled by this poem, a four-section *mandala*?—or a 165 page *koan*?—in which each of four sections is composed of about ten shorter poems, each ranging from a few lines to several pages in length. Bones, roads, gods and goddesses, mountains, rivers, people, habitats, creatures, cities, and ideas are some of the categories that could be used to sort the elements of this world. What does it mean? Who is the poet talking to, and what is he saying? It is an archaic idea, Paleolithic in fact, that our songs are ways of communicating with the inanimate world around us; in today's poetic marketplace, alas, the most prestigious critics would not agree that literature should teach us to speak with the world. Or even other people in it: Harold Bloom has contended that it is the job of poetry not to teach us how to talk to others but rather to instruct us in how to speak with ourselves.[2] Snyder "strongly" resists the presuppositions inherent in Bloom's view of literary self-creation. Challenging the borders separating Bloom's Freudian self from others and from the world, Snyder offers a poetry that teaches us how to talk not just to ourselves or even just to other people; the poems of *Mountains and Rivers Without End* are about how we talk to the world, and how the world talks to itself. His works, in poetry and prose, insist that our "self" is not contained within the membranes of our bodily skin, but rather that we permeate the world we see and hear. To show how this

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kind of communication comes about, I will focus on one seemingly simple poem in the collection, "The Canyon Wren."

Snyder's 35-line poem narrates the return to a place that will soon be lost, and thus a place that we cannot hope to visit again. As the poet looks forward from the moments narrated in the poem, the canyon in which the titular wren sings his song will soon be engulfed by the waters that will power a large hydroelectric plant. Despite this most ominous of ecological situations, the poem does not bemoan alienation and loss in the manner of any number of environmentalist texts. Rather, this poem points to ways in which we make a home in the world even though the world is utterly transient and even though so much of the world is strange to us. "The Canyon Wren" is not just about how we express ourselves in the world: it is the public record of the world speaking back to us.[3]

It could be said that the canyon in the poem, speaking through the bird, calls the poet home, and that the poet in restating the experience similarly calls the reader home. Keep in mind that the poet is, in this poem, visiting a place that he will never visit again, at least not in its present form. We tend to think of "home" as a most stable form of place—almost as an unchanging place—but one mark of modernity seems to be that "you can't go home again."

If Snyder's sense of place is on the one hand an alternative to provincialism, on the other it is a challenge to egotism in that he pictures not the mind dominating the land, but something rather more like a two-way conversation. His representation of the landscape speaks back to Wallace Stevens' jar on a hill in Tennessee, for the jar is really an object of meditation to focus the self in relation to the land and to facilitate the dominion of the self over the land. Drawing on the pragmatism of William James, Stevens energetically presents the focussing mind as the active principle in a passive landscape. Drawing on inclusivist philosophies of T'ang era China and medieval Japan while invoking the sensual, historical, and biological connections that give place its transient but real existence, Snyder's poem "The Canyon Wren" is a recognition the "agency" of the landscape.[4] Against the feelings, moods, and intuitions that we gather together and call common sense, Snyder's poem presents the landscape to us as a *person*. We can speak to it, and it speaks to us.

II. The Problem of Home in America

In the most well-known texts of American literature, we typically know home through its loss or estrangement.[5] It is the place one cannot revisit because it has been outgrown, or because it has shifted with the passage of time. The canonical texts of American literature generally present the American protagonist as alienated from any sure sense of home, and the most celebrated writers of postwar America have lamented the power and variety of American alienation. The classic American narrative of homelessness is one in which the inability to feel at home on the personal level parallels a shifting sense of place at the national level. While Huckleberry Finn headed out for the territory rather than meet the demands of civilization, the American national identity was expanding into the westward territories, the limits of which would soon be exhausted. Or we have Ishmael, who takes to the sea along with comrades like Bulkington, for whom the land burned beneath the feet. With the closing of the frontier, as announced in the Turner Thesis in 1893, Americans did not settle down; the transience just lost its linear East-to-West simplicity, and this pattern of homelessness continues unabated in the twentieth century. Consider the beginnings of two great American literary works, *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner and *Sula* by Toni Morrison. Each begins with the tragic awareness of homeland that has been sold and made into a golf course—and what better way to dominate a landscape than to build a golf course? Over and over again American writers have returned to this theme: you can't go home again.[6]

There is a small counter-tradition. Thoreau stubbornly insists on his right to a place, even if he appears to be squatting there, but American writers generally are not supposed to feel at home, and so, precisely because he has a sense of place, Snyder is a bit out of place in the context of American writers.[7] With poems and essays that invite readers to compose a home in the world, he answers this American tradition of psychic homelessness. Snyder's expression of home-love stands out like a high peak in the literary landscape, as we see in one of his shortest poems, "On Climbing the Sierra Matterhorn Again After Thirty-One Years":

Range after range of mountains
Year after year after year.
I am still in love.[8]

As is proper for a true haiku, this poem is *shockingly* abrupt. The poem and its title are nearly equal in length, which adds to riddle of the poem: many readers will ask "Why?" The problem is not in the first two lines, wherein great spaciousness flows into or is parallel to an abundance of time—this abstract vastness in no way challenges the modernist values that underwrite canonical American literature. The third line, however, declares love, and it is this simple declaration that catches the attention. It is not the convention of a transient gather-ye-rosebuds love, nor does line three imply that the poet has suddenly discovered true home in the midst of spots of time. Nothing is being transcended. Rather, the poem reports that one may feel at home in America—generally and regularly—and it is not just the notion that one *can* go home, year after year and tomorrow after tomorrow, that challenges our expectations, but rather the idea that we already *are* at home. We might wonder how Snyder came to feel differently about home than other writers in the American mainstream.

III. Buddhism, Dôgen, and Snyder's Sense of Place

Perhaps the Buddha is to blame. It might be putting the cart before the horse to say that Gary Snyder came to see rocks and stones and trees as his "constituency" *because of* his study and practice of Buddhism, but it is certainly true that he has often articulated his beliefs about the interdependence of humanity and nature through Buddhist references and symbols.

Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism specifically, has questioned not just that there is an ontological separation between human beings and other life forms, but also that such a categorical difference exists between the animate and the inanimate. Mountains and rivers are said to walk and talk, Dôgen tells us, just as a human being does. This point has never been a settled one within Zen Buddhist discourse, and it is certainly not a simple

matter; when the monk Tung-shan repeatedly asked the elder teacher Kuei-shan for an explanation of the idea that the Earth itself proclaims the Dharma, Kuei-shan raised his fly-whisk for an answer. Perhaps this gesture proclaims that we ourselves are voiceless without inanimate media, or perhaps the whisk, in symbolizing the authority of the teacher, likewise tells us that there can be no communication of meaning apart from gross material reality or without hierarchical value systems.[9] Perhaps the gesture raises the question, Who is teaching—the man or the flail? This concern about the division between animate and inanimate "beings"—and I must put beings in quotation marks because it seems utterly illogical to refer in English to an "inanimate being"—was a major controversy in T'ang China that becomes reborn in the lines of the twentieth-century American poet.[10] In other poems Snyder ventures into a similar set of ideas through a different vocabulary, such as when he refers to rock people or tree people in the poem "Burning the Small Dead" in a manner reminiscent of a Native American storyteller, but more often it is an Asian philosophical notion or literary conceit that he will draw upon to stage communications between animate and inanimate beings.

The poet on the mountaintop cannot promise that love never dies, however much he enjoys the discovery of its rebirth, moment after moment. Recalling that Snyder's happy reunion with the Matterhorn peak took place after thirty-one years in 1986, we are lead back to the young Snyder of the 1950s. We are very close to the moment when Snyder began his forty-year-in-the-making poem, *Mountains and Rivers Without End*. Was the Snyder of the early Fifties eternally at home, wherever he went? The first sentence of the first essay of his recent collected essays *A Place in Space* would suggest otherwise. In the essay "North Beach" Snyder tells us that "In the spiritual and political loneliness of America of the fifties you'd hitch a thousand miles to meet a friend" (3).[11] These are clearly not the words of a man who feels at home.

Snyder left America in the middle of the Eisenhower decade to study Buddhism in Japan. Given the typical American writer's desperate alienation from a sense of place, what could the Buddhist philosophy of leaving home possibly have to offer to the American writer? The thirteenth century Zen master Dôgen presents the virtue of homelessness directly

in his essay "Guidelines for Studying the Way": "Long ago Shakyamuni Buddha abandoned his home and left his country. This is an excellent precedent for practicing the way."[12] Would the Buddhist practice of leaving home in order to discover true emptiness (and this concept might better be translated "interdependence as opposed to individual existence") not imply an exacerbation of this problem? That this Buddhist non-attachment could actually worsen American ungroundedness is certainly a risk, but it is a risk Snyder has negotiated skillfully.

Among the tributaries leading into the long poem are Snyder's lifelong Buddhist practice, his evolving ethic centered on concepts of reinhabitation and ecological justice, his vast knowledge of ethnopoetic lore, and, more specifically, his lifelong interest in Chinese landscape painting, but Snyder has singled out Dôgen among all these influences. In "The Making of *Mountains and Rivers Without End*," he notes that "in the late seventies my thinking was invigorated by the translations from Dôgen's *Treasury of the True Law* just then beginning to come out," and he draws our attention in particular to Dôgen's *Mountains and Waters Sutra* from this collection (157).[13] In 1985 a selection of Dôgen essays entitled *Moon in a Dewdrop* was published, and this quintessence of Dôgen has become the primary reference in English. Snyder refers to Dôgen in a number of the essays collected in *A Place in Space*, he quotes Dôgen for one of the two epigraphs to *Mountains and Rivers Without End*, and he refers again to Dôgen in one of the shorter poems that make up the epic work, "The Canyon Wren."

Dôgen also makes frequent appearances in Snyder's recent prose. Snyder's essay "Nets of Beads, Webs of Cells," which was published under the "Ethics" section of *A Place in Space*, first appeared in 1990 in *Ten Directions*, the journal of the Los Angeles Zen Center, and the essay is a meditation on the first of ten precepts taken by Zen Buddhists. The primary ethical injunction within Buddhism is found in *ahimsa*, the Sanskrit word for "not harming." This rule or aim is easy to state and hard to keep, and Snyder's essay respects the complexity of the problem completely; he calls the precept our "existential koan" (*A Place in Space* 72), and discusses the expanding and contracting scales within which we might attempt to practice "not harming." We have the large end of the matter, such as when Snyder writes "The whole planet groans under the massive disregard of

the precept of *ahimsa* by the highly organized societies and corporate economies of the world" (73), but we also can go in another direction, one hardly considered from the human perspective, and it is Dôgen who suggests this direction to Snyder. Snyder quotes Dôgen's idea that we should consider matters beyond the human perspective:

> One can wonder what the practice of *ahimsa* is like for the bobcat, in the bobcat Buddha-realm. As Dôgen says, "dragons see water as a palace," and for bobcats, the forest is perhaps an elegant *jikido*, dining hall, in which they murmur *gathas* of quiet appreciation to quail, sharing them (in mind) with demons and hungry ghosts. (72)

Snyder follows these delightful and elegant thoughts directly with a quotation from Dôgen's *Mountains and Waters Sutra*: "You who study with Buddhas should not be limited to human views." Dôgen and Snyder urge anyone who hopes to see the world fully to set aside the hierarchies of anthropomorphic vision. Ultimately, this multiplication of possibilities must mean that, when we are eaten by whatever it is that will eat us, be it cancer or tiger, we ought not blame our predator but only wish that there is no waste in the process. We forego our position at the top of the food chain, but, in accepting this vision of life as an infinite web, we also spare ourselves the resentment of being prey and the guilt of being predators.

Snyder refers to Dôgen in another essay, "The Old Masters and the Old Women." He reports in this essay a poem by "the most highly regarded Sung dynasty poet, Su Shih (Su Tung-p'o)" (104) that inspired another fascicle by Dôgen. In this essay Snyder identifies "direct perception" as the common ground between Sung dynasty poetry and early Zen Buddhism. From China, Snyder writes, "Japan inherited and added on to its own already highly developed sense of nature the worldview of T'ang and Sung" (104). One aspect of this worldview is the notion that the world teaches us—not just that we learn from it, but that it is our Teacher. The title of Dôgen's rather mystifying "Mountains and Waters Sutra" becomes a clue to how this belief works when we remember that a "sutra" is, basically, a teaching of the Buddha himself. So if we regard mountains and waters as a sutra, then nature is doing the teaching—it is not merely the case that Dôgen-as-Buddha is teaching us and is using the material

world for classroom props. This point is made explicitly in what is perhaps the most profound statement of Japanese religious belief, Dôgen's essay "Actualizing the Fundamental Point." Snyder translates key sentences from this idea in his own essay "Language Goes Two Ways" and illustrates the point with reference to a wren. He translates Dôgen this way: "'To advance your own experience onto the world of phenomena is delusion. When the world of phenomena comes forth and experiences itself, it is enlightenment'" (179). This thought might seem a mere philosophical game outside of actual experience, but Snyder's wren illustration actualizes the concept: "To see a wren in a bush, call it 'wren,' and go on walking is to have (self-importantly) seen nothing. To see a bird and stop, watch, feel, forget yourself for a moment, be in the bushy shadows, maybe then feel 'wren'—that is to have joined in a larger moment with the world" (179). The homey bird, then, is the teacher to show us the way home, the way to return to any place in such a way that we may find our original mind. This origin, this enlightenment, exists precisely in forgetting the self in the way that allows true understanding within the most ordinary contexts. Snyder's claim that his poem *Mountains and Rivers Without End* may be thought of as "a sort of sûtra" (*Mountains and Rivers* 158) is thus not an arrogant claim of his own enlightenment ("his own" since the words of a sûtra are conventionally considered to be the reported speech of the actual Buddha) but is rather an affirmation that the Buddha's authority can be heard in the songs of birds, seen in the beauty of mountains and rivers, or felt between the covers of a book of verse.

IV. "The Canyon Wren"

This idea, that the wren is not only our teacher but our own mind, receives its fullest expression in "The Canyon Wren," a 35-line poem that appears in section III of Snyder's four-movement epic poem. The first third of the poem is a rather matter-of-fact description of a raft voyage. Notice the many signals in this environment that call our attention up, down, over, around, back, and through:

I look up at the cliffs
but we're swept on by downriver
the rafts
wobble and slide over roils of water
boulders shimmer
under the arching stream
rock walls straight up both sides.

Words such as "wobble" and "slide" behave in the mouth like the raft on the river, and the language manifests the alterations of the experience in other ways as well. Snyder coins "downriver," which would ordinarily describe a direction, to bring the river's active force into the poem: downriver sweeps the raft along. The illusion of absolute independence from nature that we might habitually maintain through language is surrendered, and instead the rafters settle into an environment of constantly shifting forces and perceptions:

A hawk cuts across that narrow sky hit by sun,
we paddle forward, backstroke, turn,
spinning through eddies and waves
stairsteps of churning whitewater.
Above the roar
hear the song of a Canyon Wren.

We notice not only the poet's attention to detail but also how that experience of attention is shaped by the movements and swirls of the water. It is in the next third of the poem that the Canyon Wren gives its teaching:

A smooth stretch, drifting and resting.
Hear it again, delicate downward song
ti ti ti ti tee tee tee
descending through ancient beds.

Snyder has written in *The Practice of the Wild* that our senses are shaped by the physical landscape around us, and here it is possible to see that the birdsong itself is patterning itself on the slow fall of river water. With the next perceptual shift, there is an acceleration as wildlife, rivers, and literary connections suddenly combine, just before the poem comes to a strange and beautiful pause:

A single female mallard flies upstream—
Shooting the Hundred-Pace Rapids
Su Tung P'o saw, for a moment,
it all stand still.
"I stare at the water:
it moves with unspeakable slowness."
Dôgen, writing at midnight,
"mountains flow
water is the palace of the dragon
it does not flow away."

What a strange thought—but much of the strangeness begins to come together here. The poet is hearing a birdsong throughout this experience, and the song holds all the small impressions and identifications together as a thread unifies a set of beads. Among these beads are prior incarnations of the poet at play on the river—Su Tung P'o and Dôgen before Snyder. For all three men (and for the bird) the object of meditation is the winding, roiling river.

Snyder has, in "The Old Masters and the Old Women" previously conjoined Dôgen and Su Tung P'o, but this poem is also the return to the matter of the wren, to what it means to witness such a bird. The matter of the wren arises in the essay "Language Goes Both Ways," and we now see that the title indicates that language goes from humans to the world but also comes back to humans from the more-than-human world. In line 13 of "The Canyon Wren" the poet and his companions "hear the song of a Canyon Wren," and this might be akin to the simple, referential designation of "wren" Snyder referred to initially in the essay. But then, quotidian as the detail might seem, the poet returns to the wren, and with deepening attention, enough to notice its "delicate downward song": "ti ti ti ti tee tee tee." The wren in this poem is singing the river, catching the ever-downward motion of the water, and has directed the poet's attention to the ways in which our language and thoughts are formed by the shapes and forces of our world. The falling water and the drop of the wren's song are suddenly there for the poet to perceive directly. Like Su Tung P'o he can see "it all stand still."

Which leads us back to Dôgen, our philosopher of place who, against monastery rules, preached his "Mountains and Waters Sutra" in the "hour

of the Rat" (*Moon in a Dewdrop*107), meaning around midnight. In calling attention to Dôgen's willingness to break monastic rules by preaching at midnight, Snyder echoes Dôgen's insistence that we must step beyond humanistic conventions and boundaries. In conventionally humanistic terms it is absolutely meaningless to say that water is the palace of the dragon (line 26) and that it does not flow away. To say that a river is palatial might be an acceptable bit of poetic hyperbole, but to say that river water does not flow away violates the logic inherent in a human being's point of view. A fish may experience the water as not flowing, and so may a human being—if he or she is at home within the transience of "downriver."

Snyder's lines reformulate Dôgen's words pointing to a moment of non-dualistic realization. Snyder gestures toward what Dôgen is writing about when he claims that "Mountains and waters right now are the actualization of the ancient buddha way" (*Moon in a Dewdrop* 97), but there is an important difference between the language of "The Canyon Wren" and that of Dôgen's fascicle. Dôgen's words throw a heedless rider faster than a wild horse:

> Because green mountains walk, they are permanent. Although they walk more swiftly than the wind, someone in the mountains does not realize or understand it. "In the mountains" means the blossoming of the entire world. People outside the mountains do not realize or understand the mountains walking. Those without eyes to see mountains cannot realize, understand, see, or hear this as it is. (98)

Green mountains walk because they are permanent? If you can recognize yourself as "walking" but do not see that you are also the mountains you walk on, then you have dualistically split yourself from the mountains that condition your existence. Dôgen calls this being "outside the mountains." Those who walk on mountains and understand that they are continuous with mountains also know that not only do mountains walk—they play in water: "All mountains walk with their toes on all waters and splash there" (101). Snyder on the river, Su Tung P'o shooting the Hundred Pace Rapids, and Dôgen's mountains have each had this experience. Like people, mountains refresh themselves in mountain streams. Dôgen's writing manifests a casting off of the dualistic separation

of subject and object, and his essays express the world from this non-dualistic standpoint. The experience reported in "The Canyon Wren" is an experience of the mingling of mountains and waters in the most personal way. The reference to Dôgen in "The Canyon Wren" does not take us into the world where "Dôgenese" is spoken, but it brings us to wonder, What do Dôgen's assertions that mountains splash their feet have to do with the everyday problems of real human beings? What is the value of seeing things "all stand still" as the poet Su Tung P'o reportedly did and as the poet in "The Canyon Wren" momentarily does? Are these perceptions of any use? The poem suggests they are.

After referring to Su Tung P'o and Dôgen, the poet and friends make camp along the river, and the poetic register shifts from natural and literary to historical referents:

> We beach up at China Camp
> between piles of stone
> stacked there by black-haired miners,
> cook in the dark
> sleep all night long by the stream.

The brief acknowledgement of the historical, economic, and political events that condition our world is then followed by a hauntingly beautiful statement that quietly sits somewhere in between the elegiac and the celebratory:

> These songs that are here and gone,
> here and gone
> to purify our ears.

Purify our ears of what? Of the illusion of separation. Our sense that place is external to our being divides us from the land, but it also divides us from each other. After the experience of wholeness brought to him by the song of the Canyon Wren, the poet reports that he and his friends pull out of the river at China Camp, where piles of stones were stacked "by black-haired miners." Place-names like China Camp mark the reduced status of some people within the political scheme of things, although the poet judiciously avoids an uncritical apprehension of such hierarchies.

The poet is actualized by long dead miners just as much as he is by the wren.

The experiences of the poet in the poem (like those of Dôgen and Su Tung P'o before) have the effect of personalizing the world itself, animate and inanimate beings both included, and one corollary of this effect is that the wren is a "person." The Chinese pronunciation of one character meaning person is "ren." The wren's song purifies our ears of the notion that our lively awareness, which we mistakenly call our humanity, is the singular, unique possession of human beings. Chinese workers, poets from various centuries, and birds all have this awareness, and it can be shared.

All of the poems from *Mountains and Rivers Without End* were first published outside of this volume, and the poem "Canyon Wren" appeared in Snyder's *Axe Handles* and his selected poems *No Nature*.[14] In the selected poems, however, the poem carried an appendix to give us a bit more information about the stretch of the Stanislaus River in which the events of the poem occur. Snyder tells of the gorges cut from "nine-million-year-old latites," and that friend Jim Katz and other friends had asked Snyder "to shoot the river with them, to see its face once more before it goes under the rising waters of the New Mellones Dam."[15] The song stayed with them during the whole voyage, and Snyder wrote the poem after dark in China Camp. The canyons beautifully sung in the poem are gone, but in a sense they remain, an eternal moment ducking, floating, paddling, turning, and riding in the skin of the poem, "The Canyon Wren." The "ti ti ti ti tee tee tee" that was engulfed in water sometime after the poem was written in 1981 cannot really be considered gone from this present moment, the only one in which we can be at home.

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NOTES

[1]This paper was first presented at the *Connotations* conference, held in 1997 in Halberstadt, Germany. The topic of the 1997 conference was "A Place Revisited." I would like to thank Lothar Cerny for his always helpful suggestions.

[2]Bloom says in an interview that "people cannot stand the saddest truth I know about the very nature of reading and writing imaginative literature, which is that poetry does not teach us how to talk to other people: it teaches us how to talk to ourselves." *Criticism in Society: Interviews with Jacques Derrida, Northrop Frye, Harold Bloom, Geoffrey Hartman, Frank Kermode, Edward Said, Barbara Johnson, Frank Lentricchia, and J. Hillis Miller*, ed. Imre Salusinszky (New York: Methuen, 1987) 70.

[3]In Zen Buddhism, particularly in the discourse of the Rinzai sect, the "koan" is literally a "public record," but is usually far more puzzling an utterance than one finds in the typical town hall file cabinet. The most famous *koan* is probably Hakuin's "sound of a single hand," which is, according to Foster and Shoemaker, "perpetually misquoted" as the sound of one hand clapping. See *The Roaring Stream: A New Zen Reader*, ed. Nelson Foster and Jack Shoemaker, foreword by Robert Aitken (New Jersey: The Ecco Press, 1996) 325. For an overview of the use of the *koan* in Rinzai Zen Buddhism, see Isshu Miura and Ruth Fuller Sasaki, *The Zen Koan: Its History and Use in Rinzai Zen* (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1965).

[4]For statements from Zen (Ch'an) teachers T'ang era China, see *The Roaring Stream*. On medieval Japanese Buddhism in relation to literary genres and themes, see William R. LaFleur, *The Karma of Words: Buddhism and the Literary Arts in Medieval Japan* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1983).

[5]For an up-to-date discussion of American literary homelessness, see Arnold L. Weinstein, *Nobody's Home: Speech, Self, and Place in American Fiction from Hawthorne to DeLillo* (New York: Oxford UP, 1993).

[6]Barbara Johnson writes that Toni Morrison presents home as "always already lost" in *Sula*. See *The Feminist Difference: Literature, Psychoanalysis, Race, and Gender* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1998) 75.

[7]We cannot really say Snyder is alienated from the tradition, as "alienation" is clearly an out-of-place term with which to describe Snyder's relationship to literary tradition. At any rate, the difference of Snyder's view from that of the mainstream American view, which tends towards a wide variety of naturalisms in which man struggles with his environment, is not properly recognized. The phrase "sense of place," if turned around to refer to the idea that a place might have its own "sense," more properly gestures toward the sense of place in Snyder's work. In this particular poem, the canyon wren's mouth (through which the place speaks to the poet) and the poet's ears are the "ears of the place" through which the *canyon* hears the wren's song.

[8]Quoted from *No Nature: New and Selected Poems* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1992) 362.

[9]We cannot, according to Zen Buddhist beliefs, arrive at such knowledge via the "mind-road" of conceptual thought. Zen has sometimes been accused of anti-intellectualism because of the alacrity with which the Zen master will derail this train of concepts, and one Zen Master Seung Sahn, teaching in America, has popularized the slogan, "Open mouth already big mistake!"

[10]Tung-shan's words are collected in *The Roaring Stream*. Foster and Shoemaker append a note of explanation to Tung-shan's question about the doctrine that "nonsentient beings" actually teach: "The question of whether nonsentient beings possess Buddha-nature and thus, by extension, are capable of expressing Dharma—a major controversy in early T'ang China—grew out of differing interpretations of the *Nirvana Sutra*, particularly the line, 'All beings, without exception, possess Buddha-nature'" (117).

[11]First published in *The Old Ways: Six Essays* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1977), this essay has been collected in *A Place in Space: Ethics, Aesthetics, and Watersheds* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1995). The reference to America's political loneliness appears on page 3 of *A Place in Space*.

[12]Dôgen Eihei's "Guidelines for Studying the Way," translated by Ed Brown and Kazuaki Tanahashi, appears in *Moon in a Dewdrop: Writings of Zen Master Dôgen*, ed. Kazuaki Tanahashi (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1985) 31-43.

[13]The essay describing the genesis of the poem appears just after the last poem of *Mountains and Rivers Without End* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1996) 153-58.

[14]The line "cook in the dark" quoted in this paper is actually "cool in the dark" in my first edition hardcover copy of *Mountains and Rivers Without End*, but the line is "cook in the dark" in *Axe Handles, No Nature*, and later paperback printings of *Mountains and Rivers Without End*.

[15]The note follows the poem in Snyder's *No Nature* 306.

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Vol. 8.1 (1998/99)

Who was the Rival Poet of Shakespeare's Sonnet 86?

ERIC SAMS

Many of Shakespeare's sonnets are addressed to a patron. One of them, No. 86, is about a rival poet. Its text reads as follows, in the 1609 first edition:

> Was it the proud full saile of his great verse,
> Bound for the prize of (all to precious) you,
> That did my ripe thoughts in my braine inhearce,
> Making their tombe the wombe wherein they grew?
> Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write,
> Aboue a mortall pitch, that struck me dead?
> No, neither he, nor his compiers by night
> Giuing him ayde, my verse astonished.
> He nor that affable familiar ghost
> Which nightly gulls him with intelligence,
> As victors of my silence cannot boast,
> I was not sick of any feare from thence,
> But when your countinance fild vp his line,
> Then lackt I matter, that infeebled mine.[1]

Shakespeare had only one known patron, namely Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, to whom *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* were lovingly dedicated in 1593 and 1594 respectively. So, unless anyone has any reason (and none has yet been offered) for inventing a second patron, at a different period, Sonnet 86 was addressed to Southampton at that time.

In those years, history records only four rivals for his favours. George Peele paid courtly compliments to Southampton in *The Honour of the Garter* (1593) and in *Anglorum Feriae* (1595). Barnaby Barnes's volume of love-lyrics *Parthenophil and Parthenophe* (1593) contains several dedicatory sonnets, including one to Southampton. The same is true of Gervase Markham's epic narrative *The Tragedy of Sir Richard Greville* (1595). Thomas Nashe's

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For debates inspired by this article, please check the Connotations website at <http://www.connotations.de/debsams00801.htm>.

prose satire *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594) begins with a prose address to Southampton. Lastly, Nashe's undated manuscript poem *The Choice of Valentines* was accompanied by two dedicatory sonnets addressed to "the Lord S.," who may have been Southampton.

Those are all the known relevant facts. Should they not therefore be relied upon? Even so, the topic cannot be tackled without drawing on the *Sonnets* as a textual source. Now, these are notoriously deep waters, navigable only by powerful aestheticians. Such strengths are as rare among editors as a among ordinary readers; but we are all entitled to put an oar in. Of course Shakespeare may just be imagining things, as his expert commentators often claim; but so may they. In order to steer any course at all, it seems reasonable to start from the facts and to proceed on the basis of minimal assumptions.

One phrase in Sonnet 86 echoes Barnes, namely "when your countenance filled up his line." Barnes's sonnet to Southampton includes the actual words "your countenance." Thus Southampton's favour is solicited for the love-lyrics of *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*, so "that with your countenance graced they may withstand" envy and criticism. The word "countenance" has indeed "filled up" Barnes's line—to overflowing, since it adds an extra syllable.

This congruence between the two sources suggests that Shakespeare's thirteenth line (which scans "countenance" correctly) means what it says. On that basis, which poet had been taught by spirits to write above a mortal pitch, received aid from his compeers by night, and was nightly gulled with intelligence by an affable familiar ghost? Those words are regularly tortured into confessing some connection with Marlowe or Chapman. But Marlowe died in 1593; and there is no record that Chapman's innocuous claim to have conversed with the spirit of Homer was made before 1609. Besides, their two candidatures cancel each other out. Above all, neither of them can be shown to have sought Southampton's favour at a time when he was Shakespeare's well-known patron.

But Barnaby Barnes did, with a sonnet which has a line filled with Southampton's countenance, and in 1593, when *Venus and Adonis* was first published. Barnes, furthermore, was a notorious occultist. His intimate friend William Percy asks him, by name, in his own *Sonnets to Coelia* (1594):

"What tell'st thou me, by spells thou hast won thy dear?" John Ford, who also knew Barnes well, writes in *The Lover's Melancholy* "If it be not Parthenophil . . . 't is a spirit in his likeness" (3.4),[2] while the villain Orgillus in Ford's *The Broken Heart* is asked "You have a spirit, sir, have ye? a familiar / That posts i' the air for your intelligence?" (3.4, p. 215), which looks very like an allusion to Sonnet 86.

Barnes himself had already made comparable claims, in 1593. His envoi to *Parthenophil and Parthenophe* says that having burned frankincense on an altar and kindled a fire of cypress-wood he called on threefold Hecate, invocated the Furies, and despatched a black goat to bring Parthenope (Greek for virgin) naked to his side. Then he made a libation of wine to the Furies, burnt brimstone, and cut rosemary with a brazen axe, to make magic boughs. All these rituals were observed at night.

This diabolism should surely be taken seriously. In 1598 Barnes was rightly arraigned as a poisoner before the court of Star Chamber; he escaped justice only by flight. His later play *The Devil's Charter*, about a poisoner, dramatises the conjuration of spirits, from sources including the *Heptameron* of Petrus de Abano. This *grimoire* gives instructions about the appropriate robes, incense, incantations, magic diagrams, goatskin parchment, and other paraphernalia to be used in raising the apparitions that rule the hours and the seasons. They will then fulfil one's wishes and answer one's questions, as in Sonnet 86.

No wonder that in Middleton's *Black Book* c. 1604 Satan addresses Barnes thus: "I am not a little proud, I can tell you, Barnaby, that you dance after my pipe so long." A tobacco-pipe is ostensibly meant; but no doubt a smokescreen was still needed so that all such allusions could be masked as mere licence in one sense or another. Every necromancer includes a romancer. The sensible Shakespeare remained unimpressed, as Sonnet 86 freely implies in its manifest ironies (and indeed as it says straight out, in the word "gulls"). Perhaps he felt that his rival's pretensions to demonic inspiration were worthless—like the poetry those procedures allegedly produced.

Despite this inference, modern commentators are disposed to assume that "great verse" in the first line of Sonnet 86 must correspond with their own evaluation of poetic merit, some 400 years later. But this ignores the

famous fact that Shakespeare in the *Sonnets* calls himself "old," "poor," "ignorant," "despised" and so forth, presumably by contrast with his young, rich, well-educated and admired patron. So perhaps "great" was also seen from his master's viewpoint? If so, that proud full sail may merely mean windy over-inflation.

Southampton himself, however, would have been predisposed to accept and encourage Barnes. They both hero-worshipped the Earl of Essex, under whose command they both served as soldiers. Further, Barnes was the son of the Bishop of Durham and hence at home in elevated social as well as literary circles, including Southampton's own. Barnes was thus a celebrity as well as a poet. He wrote commendatory sonnets or dedications to the Countess of Pembroke, Sir William Herbert, Lady Strange, Lady Bridget Manners and the Earls of Northumberland and Essex, as well as Southampton; he was invoked, in praise or blame, by writers or orators as diverse as Thomas Bastard, Thomas Campion, Thomas Churchyard, Sir Edward Coke, John Florio (Southampton's Italian tutor), Sir John Harington, Gabriel Harvey, John Marston, Thomas Michelborne, Thomas Nashe and the publisher John Wolfe, as well as the sonneteer William Percy and the dramatists Thomas Middleton and John Ford. Barnes was thus a far more famous and exalted personality, and for far longer, than any other rival, whether evidenced (like Peele, Markham or Nashe) or not (like Marlowe or Chapman).

In all the respects so far cited, Barnes is by far the best-qualified candidate. The sole stumbling-block is the phrase "great verse," as already quoted from Sonnet 86. But Barnes has been praised as a poet by such competent critics as Bullen, Lee, Dowden, Gosse, Saintsbury, Boas and C. S. Lewis. His "chains . . . of adamant" is echoed by Milton's *Paradise Lost* (I. 48). His style has a colourful if pretentious music of its own, as in "that white lily leaf, with fringéd borders / Of angels' gold, veiled the skies / Of mine heaven's hierarchy" (Madrigal 4). He was, furthermore, already an acclaimed poet and scholar in the early 1590s, when his youthful verse was first published; thus Churchyard's *Praise of Poetry* (1595) names only three living English poets—Spenser, Daniel and (at the same level) "one Barnes that Petrarch's scholar is."

That description accords well with Shakespeare's claim that Southampton's eyes had "added fethers to the learneds wing" (Sonnet 78, line 7); having merit in the Earl's eyes would certainly have raised the Oxford-educated scholar Barnes to further heights of achievement and esteem. As Barnes says to Southampton in his own dedicatory sonnet: "Vouchsafe . . . To view my Muse with your judicial sight; / Whom when time shall have taught by flight to rise / Shall to thy virtues, of much worth, aspire." Further, that same sonnet fulsomely praises Southampton's eyes as "those heavenly lamps that give the Muses light." Shakespeare also says that a rival had not only praised Southampton's eyes (Sonnet 83.13-14), but also mentioned his "vertue" and admired his "beautie" (79.9-10). Barnes's sonnet mentions Southampton's virtue, three times, and admires his beauty. Further, Shakespeare is content to "crie Amen / To euery Himne that able spirit affords" (85.7); in other words, a rival sometimes refers to his own love-lyrics as hymns. Barnes twice refers to his love-lyrics as hymns—as indeed they are. Shakespeare describes that same rival as a "spirit" (*ibid.*, and again in 80.2); and, as we have seen, Barnes was described as a spirit, by John Ford.

There are many other evidential interconnections between Barnes and the *Sonnets*. Thus, long before any rival poet is mentioned, Shakespeare scornfully rejects "that Muse" which is "Stird by a painted beauty," uses "heauen it selfe for ornament" and so forth, with a dozen specific comparisons (Sonnet 21.1-8)—all of which occur in Barnaby Barnes. The Dark Lady Sonnet 130 is equally forthright about other poets' "false compare." Commentators commonly quote parallels from Thomas Watson, a decade earlier; but almost all the over-effusive examples that so distressed Shakespeare are again found in Barnaby Barnes. That contemporary poet was famous for the "new found methods, and . . . compounds strange," typical of "the time," that Shakespeare avowedly abjured (Sonnet 76.3-4). *Parthenophil and Parthenophe* was praised by its publisher for its "variety of conceits"; it also exemplifies more poetic forms and sources (including Renaissance French, Italian and English models, as well as classical Greek and Latin) than any other known collection of lyrics then or since. Unlike Shakespeare, furthermore (Sonnets 21.1, 67.5, 82.13, 83.1-2), one rival poet

approved of painting; Barnaby Barnes admired it as an enhancement of his inamorata's beauty.

There is other evidence in Shakespeare's works that he had studied *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*. For example, Barnes mentions a "Siren" and adds that from his "love's 'lembic" he has "still 'stilled tears"; cf. "*Syren* teares / Distil'd from Lymbecks" (Sonnet 119.1-2). Again, Barnes in the same poem describes a "Fiend" dressed "in Graces' garments"; cf. Shakespeare's "fiend . . . covered . . . with the garment of a grace" in *A Lover's Complaint* (316-17). Perhaps these echoes derive from a close reading of the copy that Barnes had presented to Southampton in 1593, with "dedicated words" (Sonnet 82.3, 4), thus rivalling Shakespeare as "thy Poet" (Sonnet 79.4, 7). The contents of Barnes's volume, conversely, suggest that he had seen some of Shakespeare's sonnets in manuscript, as well as *Venus and Adonis*. The allusions include "Master . . . Mistress," "Charter . . . Bonds," "hot June," "devouring Time" and the over-deliberate word-play in "When Mars returned from war / Shaking his spear afar; / Cupid beheld! / At him, in jest, Mars shaked [sic] his spear!" (Ode 15) The blatant puns and latent bawdry may well also have been intended as a pointed dig at Shakespeare.

Times and tastes change but the nature of evidence stays the same. Shakespeare's deference to his rival presents no real difficulty; his *Sonnets* are habitually self-abnegatory. Their young patron was his sun (33.9, 14) and God (110.12); *Venus and Adonis* pays tribute to him by name and (in a Latin epigraph) to the sun-God Apollo. Southampton had only to countenance Barnes for the latter to be hailed as the wielder of a "goulden quill," the writer of "good words" as well as the compiler of many a "precious phrase by all the Muses fil'd" (85.3-5). Besides, Barnes compares his sweetheart to each of the nine Muses, by name, one after the other.

But Shakespeare reserves his position vis-à-vis that "proud full sail." "My sawsie bark," although ("inferior fare to his") (Sonnet 80.7) nevertheless won the combat. The smaller vessels had famously outmanoeuvred the great galleons of the Spanish Armada, only five years earlier. Both "proud" and "pride" (in Sonnet 76.1 as well as 80.12) presaged a fall. Who now remembers Barnaby Barnes? Yet he might well have been the main rival poet, on merit, as well as on the facts of the case. Then he

and Shakespeare together would be the pair described as "both your Poets" (Sonnet 83.14).

This conclusion in turn would confirm Southampton as the patron of the *Sonnets*, and the early 1590s as the period when his patronage was sought by others. Shakespeare reacts to that general rivalry by "Doubting the filching age will steale his treasure" (Sonnet 75.6) and complaining that "euery *Alien* pen hath got my vse / And vnder thee their poesie disperse" (Sonnet 78.3-4). Their compliments include crude flattery, or "grosse painting" (Sonnet 82.13), in their "comments of your praise" (Sonnet 85.2); nevertheless young Southampton is typically extenuated as being "inforc'd to seeke anew / Some fresher stampe of the time bettering dayes" (Sonnet 82.7-8). Barnes was indeed far fresher, i.e. years younger, than Shakespeare and all the other rivals, whether evidenced or putative. He was born in 1571[3] and died in 1609, the year when the *Sonnets* were published. He may never have suspected that they rated him as a rival. But they portray his features, among other good likenesses of real people in actual circumstances. The *Sonnets* therefore, are *prima facie* biographical. So why not attribute all their utterances to Shakespeare, in the first instance, and not to an imaginary "speaker"?

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NOTES

[1]The 1609 text is reprinted, for example, in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. Stephen Booth (New Haven: Yale UP, 1977).

[2]See John Ford, Four Plays, ed. Havelock Ellis (London: Benn, 1960) 65.

[3] For this fact, and others, this essay is indebted to the well-researched chapter on Barnaby Barnes by Mark Eccles in *Thomas Lodge and other Elizabethans*, ed. C. Sisson (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1933). The most accessible source of Barnes' *Parthenophil and Parthenope* is the text included in vol. I (*Elizabethan Sonnets*) of the re-issue (Constable, 1904) of Arber's *An English Garner*, with a new introduction by Sidney Lee. This re-asserts (p. lxxvi) the probability that Barnes was the Rival Poet, an identification already promulgated by Lee in his *Life of Shakespeare* (London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1898; often reprinted with various pagination) as satisfying "all the conditions of the problem." No one has ever refuted that thesis; I have repeated some of its relevant points and added others.

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Vol. 8.1 (1998/99)

Surrender Dorothy: A Reply to Leona Toker*

JAMES SODERHOLM

Bewitching as the hermeneutics of suspicion has been, it's unusual to see a literary critic resist its (highly marketable) charms and instead trust her ears, eyes, hands—her *feel* for the texture of nuance—and more generally her good will toward poetry. Such a critic is Leona Toker. Her piece on "Tintern Abbey" testifies to all these nearly forgotten capacities. Variously indebted to neo-Marxist thought, especially as it has been reproduced in the new historicism and cultural materialism, many recent critics have ransomed good sense, sympathy, and acuity for a set of initiatives that turn poems into either political documents or—what is worse—evasions from politics altogether. Wordsworth in particular has received the jackal's share of negative hermeneutics, for his poems, from a certain alienated perspective, seem to demonstrate Walter Benjamin's thesis that "Every document of civilization is at the same time a document of barbarism." The allure of this formulation has beguiled a generation of literary critics and underwritten some of the most pretentious, wrongheaded and, to my mind, dishonest work, much of it published by first-rate journals and university presses.

An analogy and a paradox, perhaps a paradoxical analogy, governs this suspicion toward Wordsworth and "Tintern Abbey." Just as Wordsworth is represented as being a politically disengaged, condescending, authoritative, in a word, an *unsympathetic* presence in the poem, so critics turn on him and take their cue from him at the same time. Wordsworth, that is, reads history against the grain by ignoring the meaning of his own subtitle (the presumably portentous July 13, 1798) and climbing above

*Reference: Leona Toker, " Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey': From Self-Consciousness to Sympathy," *Connotations* 7.2 (1997/98): 181-93.

and beyond the ruined abbey (presumably full of vagrants, "the homeless") into the abbey of his mind, his redemptive memory and " that serene and blessed mood" that may allow all of us to "see into the life of things." Wordsworth's lack of sympathy toward politics, vagrants and, most alarming of all, his sister Dorothy (reposing with him under the dark sycamore) has become a foregone conclusion among critics eager themselves to show off their lack of sympathy toward their subject. Have these critics learned from Wordsworth how to be unsympathetic readers? If so, this would be a paradox indeed, since Wordsworth devoted his life and poetry to indicating how "affections gently lead us on" and encourage us, finally, to love our fellow human beings, as he certainly loved his sister.

Immensely to her credit, Toker does not fall prey to the enchantments that have made otherwise perceptive critics deaf to anything but the siren-call of their alarming suspicions about Wordsworth's "exploitation" of Dorothy in "Tintern Abbey." Toker follows earlier critics (Abrams, Hartman, the early Bloom) when she sees the address to Dorothy as "a respectful and sympathetic turning to a fellow subject" (188). The difference between Toker and her new historical counterparts (John Barrell and Marjorie Levinson chief among them) rests with her patience in reading the nuances of words and lines and in not assuming from the beginning that something unseemly, egoistical, and alienated pervades Wordsworth's poem. Toker does not interrogate Wordsworth's distances, for indeed he can be distant (even from himself, as in "Tintern Abbey"), but rather incorporates his strange fits of detachment into a more comprehensive understanding of the honest perplexity generating his best poetry. "Tintern Abbey" is a meditation whose every affirmation is parsed by doubt, a set of wistful affirmations struggling to affirm the loss of childhood wonder that the poet glancingly recaptures in the wild delight of his sister's eyes. Taking into account the paradoxes and tensions in "Tintern Abbey," Toker nevertheless does not make them her own modus operandi, or what could be described as hobbihorsicality, the ruling passion of critics who insist on finding (contrary to Oscar Wilde's strictures) ugly meanings in beautiful things.

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Vol.8.1 (1998/99)

Response to Bernd Engler's "Recollections of Home in Joyce Carol Oates's 'By the River'"*

DANIEL F. HURLEY

Many of the enduring stories in western culture are etiological stories, stories about the beginnings of things. The Genesis story is such a story, purporting to explain, among other mysteries, the origins of death, sex, family, and the longing for an earlier, better time and place now lost. The irony about such stories is that they tend to be told only about matters that entirely escape historical or rational explanation. "Where did death come from?" assumes there was a time or place in which death did not exist, but that "fact" cannot be demonstrated, only posited. Thus etiological stories will always carry evidence of the illogical premises with which they begin.[1]

In the Genesis story, for example, "death" (inherently meaningless to Adam and Eve since no instance existed) is both the threat employed to prohibit Adam and Eve from eating of the tree of knowledge and the knowledge they will acquire by violating that prohibition. The birth of death also makes sex "necessary." According to the extended story, the notions of husband and wife, son and daughter, brother and sister are based on death and sexual difference and sequential (most notably, generational) time. This origin-of-family tale is also claustrophobic, however, because its very simplicity makes incest necessary, although mention of this necessity is repressed until Noah's drunken coupling with his own daughters after the Flood. The sacred family unit, then, takes some of its origin in the violation of the very incest taboo that is universally regarded as defining it and protecting it.

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*Reference: Bernd Engler, "Nightmare Visions of Eden: Recollections of Home in Joyce Carol Oates's 'By the River'" *Connotations* 7.3 (1997/98): 306-19.

All story-telling is necessarily repetitive, because no stories, especially the etiological ones (the most important ones), can satisfy the needs that generate them. The same story must be told again and again. Variation after variation on the same story must be told. Even stories that violate the shapes of such stories must take their meanings from the conventions they violate. What cannot be told is the last story, the sufficient one.

Etiological stories find an analog in the development of individual humans. If the desire or the need to believe that death—especially death as annihilation—did not always exist elicits etiological stories about death's birth, the most compelling "evidence" in favor of such stories is the infantile ignorance of mortality that is the lot of all of us. If it is impossible for an adult to recollect vividly what it was like when one did *not* know about sex and death, it is also impossible to forget completely that once one could not have known anything of either. Both the ignorance and the knowledge are nearly always experienced in family life.

Bernd Engler's interesting account of Joyce Carol Oates's work seems at least plausible, although it verges on cliché, suggesting as it does that Americans pursue a Second Eden but translate that notion into merely economic and self-absorbed terms. Engler's essay also seems to share (or compulsively repeat) the etiological urge which it finds in American culture and in Oates's stories and novels. After offering not to claim that "an autobiographical impulse" is "the essential factor in the *genesis* [my emphasis] of Oates's oeuvre" or "that her art *originates* [my emphasis] in an act of communication with a *hidden self*" (Engler 307), Engler claims that "Oates's works" are "*first and foremost* . . . objectified efforts to analyse the *past and present* in the light of the highly problematic impact which America's *fundamental* belief in the possibility of establishing a second paradise in the New World has had upon the *individual* [etiological language underlined for emphasis]" (Engler 307). Engler also claims that the Americans in Oates's fictions are largely aware that "their rural Eden and its promise of individual self-realization have not only been destroyed by the encroachments of modern civilization, but primarily by their own spiritual and moral disorientation" (Engler 308). Engler's largest unexamined claim is that "one may even assume that the characters forfeit

their return to an earthly Eden by the very obsession with which they try to salvage it" (308).

Engler comments, accurately, on the "gaps and irritating contradictions" (Engler 310) in the "information" about home, family, and self provided through Helen, the central figure in the story and, until the story's concluding sentences, the fictional consciousness through which the third-person narrator works. The "fictional facts" in this story are, in some instances, extremely difficult, perhaps impossible, to identify with certainty. What follows, however, are several examples of what appears to be Engler's confusion about some of these "fictional facts," a confusion perhaps produced by their importance to his argument.

It seems vital to Engler's argument that he make the case that Helen "has no recollection of her life before her arrival in Eden County," because, according to Engler, the parents' "den" shocked her with her first awareness of time and change and mortality, even though Engler himself has noted "too many aspects of Helen's former life seem to be censured and repressed, too many attempts at gaining access to the past seem aborted at an early stage" (Engler 310-11). He is in fact able to quote from the story on this matter: "he [Helen] could not remember the city and the house [belonging to and also occupied by her maternal grandparents, who spoke only German] they had lived in there . . ." (117; 135).[2] But we are also told: "The grandparents—her mother's parents—had died in *that old dark house in the city*, and Helen did not remember them at all except as her father summoned them back, recalling with hatred his wife's father . . ." (Oates 135). That "old dark house"—whose memory is this, if not Helen's?—went to the bank after the death of the grandparents and not to Helen's parents, thus causing their move to the country. If Engler needed a fall from innocence for Helen, would not a dark house full of intergenerational tension, the death of its two owners, her grandparents, and her own family's "eviction" in favor of a bank have been sufficient to impress instability, loss, and mortality on a child of five? Or is it easier to believe in a twenty-two year old woman who has no memories of the first five years of her existence? If Helen's memories of that earlier time are "censured and repressed," perhaps the interpreter's task is as much to locate the place, time, and circumstances when those memories were

hidden as to repeat the conscious ones, which may be mere substitutes, displacements, or transformations of traumatic memories that might clarify both Helen's vagueness and her father's murderous fury.

Similarly, Engler appears to oversimplify Helen's contradictory, even "amorphous" memories of the farm in Eden County to which the family moved after the grandparents' death. Engler claims that Helen "*initially* [my emphasis] visualizes the farmhouse the family moves into as a shabby run-down place" and only later eliminates "all disturbing aspects of her vision" (Engler 311) of the place and invests it with mythic grace. In "fictional fact," however, part of Helen's memory is significantly different: "The family was big—six children then, before Arthur died at ten—and *half an hour after they had moved in* [my emphasis], the house was crowded and shabby" (134). The clear implication here is that the family's size and condition made the house seem "crowded and shabby." That the house was large is emphasized several times in the story, so the crowding was these eight people more than the house. Although the father will eventually speak of some of what was wrong with the house ("that son of a bitch house with the roof half rotted and the well all shot to hell" 142), these would be "secret things" only to a small child with parents who did not talk much with one another. Engler's version is that the father would soon feel his hopes betrayed because "the farm did not yield the profit he had expected" (Engler 312) and that the child would sense this collapse of the dream. The father insists, however, "But it wasn't the money I wanted! . . . It wasn't never the money I wanted . . ." (145).

Similarly, Engler himself, in a contradictory fashion not supported by the story's "fictional facts," both countrifies and glamorizes the farm and invents a communicative father who is only now oddly silent. Engler reports: "When her father finally picks her up and drives her home along backcountry dirt roads, Helen is somewhat irritated by his unusual taciturnity . . ." (Engler 310). The story makes no mention of contemporary dirt roads and, in fact, goes out of its way to remove them. Even the road in front of their quite distant house was "covered with blacktop" years ago (131). Engler also claims that shortly before the murder "her father drives along and passes pastures and fields that once belonged to her parents' farm . . ." (123 [141]). These pastures and fields are at least "seven

or eight miles from home" (140), the distance Helen thinks to herself later when her father stops the car near the place where she will be killed. If these particular pastures and fields had ever belonged to Helen's parents, they constituted a Texas-sized farm.

More significant, perhaps, is Engler's description of Helen's supposed irritation at her father's "unusual taciturnity" (Engler 310) after he has picked her up at the bus station. All of the descriptions given of him, whether seventeen years ago or at present, emphasize his silence, except in the bizarre moments leading up to the killing of his daughter when be becomes so voluble Helen accuses him of being drunk. In her memory of moving into the farmhouse, "she remembered being frightened at something and her father picking her up right in the middle of moving, and not asking her why she cried—her mother had always asked her that, as if there were a reason—but rocked [sic] her and comforted [sic] her with his rough hands" (134), not with words. When Helen remembers the house, she thinks:

> If she had been afraid of the dark, upstairs in that big old farmhouse in the room she shared with her sister, all she had to do was to think of him [her father]. He had a way of sitting at the supper table that was so still, so silent, you knew nothing could budge him. Nothing could frighten him. (138)

His strength—and her security as a child—was in his silence and in "the solid flesh beneath [his work clothes], the skeleton that hung onto its muscles and would never get old, never die" (138). When her father begins to talk of moving to their place seventeen years ago, he clears his throat, "the gesture of a man unaccustomed to speech" (137). When he does begin to speak, however, he will not stop until speech itself stops and he slams a knife into his daughter's chest.

Interpretation is, among other things, an attempt to achieve a good fit between the manifest and latent meanings of a story. Moments of excess and riveting scenes that seem to arise without adequate causes are the elements in a story that clearly demand interpretation. In this story, the father's killing of his daughter is the excessive scene that demands explanation, perhaps for its ritual quality ("Pa" washes his hand in the dirty river water before the killing and washes the bloody knife afterward) and

certainly for the sexually charged intimacy that must accompany a father's plunging a knife into the chest of his own daughter. This is the daughter whom he himself has described as the "only one [he] loved," and near the end, she is "no longer afraid but only curious with the mute marblelike curiosity of a child" (146). But this excessive scene also has antecedents in the father's descriptions, first, of his time in the house of his father-in-law, and secondly, of his time of silent fury on the farm in Eden County.

"Pa" married Helen's mother, produced six offspring, and apparently spent many years living in the house of his father-in-law, which he describes with loud revulsion:

> And you [Helen] don't remember your mother's parents and their house, that goddam stinking house, and how I did all the work for him in his store . . . . The dirty sawdust floor and the old women coming in for sausage, enough to make you want to puke, and pigs' feet and brains out of cows or guts or what the hell. . . . I could puke for all my life and not get clean of it. You were just born then. And we were dirt to your mother's people, just dirt. I was dirt. (142)

Even when the in-laws died, the house and store went to others in what the father still treats as an act of malice or fraud that left him working on his farm in silent fury for seventeen years: "First I did it for me, myself, to show that bastard father of hers that was dead—then those other bastards, those big farms around us—but then for you, for you" (143). The father's scalding memories are rich with the stink of flesh and a feeling of defilement from which he cannot imagine ever being cleansed. Ironically, perhaps, Helen also thinks of his "thickened, dirt-creased hand that could never be made clean" (135).

Almost immediately on his new farm he endured what he took to be a continuation of the arrogance of his father-in-law on the part of the local "money people." In the worst of his inner rage, the father prayed that God would drag "every bastard one of them . . . down to me so they could see me, my children as good as theirs, and me a harder worker than any of them . . ." (143). He vowed that one day Helen would be in one of those "big houses" and he said he would do that for her or die. He was praying to a "God" very much like himself, however, one who listened but said nothing at all. And from then on he "knew [he] was in it all on [his] own . . . [and] never bothered about God again" (145). And then he has to

confess that he didn't know exactly what it was that he had wanted. His own language suggests he wanted that American core mythic value not mentioned by Engler, equality (to be "as good as" others), but also, contradictorily, a share in the superiority of the "money people," a place in "their world even if it had to be on the bottom of it . . ." (143). He planned to blister their ears one day. He had even practiced the angry speech to himself so often he speaks of it now as if he had already said it to them. But, in fact, "[He] never talked about it to anyone" (143).

It is possible to complement Engler's theory by emphasizing what he avoids: the various hints that the bond between father and daughter is both mutual and excessive. The father clearly says that he had invested all his love and hopes in Helen, because he believes she was innocent (ignorant of his time of degradation in the city), having been born only toward the end of that time. Helen's imagination, memory, choices, and travels have now combined to bring her back to the father she left at age seventeen.

Helen's first thought, the opening sentences in the story, can be taken as the first of many threads that can be woven together to show the tragic dynamics of a family in the process of imploding, a secularized retelling of the Electra story: "Am I in love again, some new kind of love? Is that why I'm here?" John Hendriks, her young husband, and her nameless daughter are both here, but she has returned not to them but to her own father, and her father has made certain that neither her husband nor her mother know of her return.

Helen's father seems to reveal in his ranting to his daughter a previously concealed hatred of his wife, Helen's mother. Helen's one telling memory in this regard is of a family ride after church long ago when her father sneered at a couple of the local "money people" from "old, old families" (135), who dressed poorly and drove old trucks. In the child's view, her father's phrase, "money people," which had made her mother "sharp and impatient" (135), "had ruined the ride, as if by magic" (135). That is, no rational connection occurred to the child between the remark, the mother's anger, and the ruined ride. Given other bits of evidence scattered about in the story, however, it is not difficult to locate a lasting strain between husband and wife. Ma's parents were the reverse of the local money

people: her parents had only seemed to have money but in fact owned nothing and left nothing to Helen's parents. As Helen's father says to her later, "Your mother and me never had much to say, you know that. She was like her father" (143), the very man whom he professes to hate furiously even now. In addition, Helen's "mother's dissatisfaction with her had always ranged Helen and her father together" (133). Somewhat cryptically, Helen recalls that "there had always been trouble, sometimes the kind you laughed about later and sometimes not; that was one of the reasons she had married John . . ." (130). Finally, Helen married John, the son of "money people," but she tried to reassure her father by saying, "If John didn't have the store coming to him, and that land and all, I'd have married him anyway" (144), a remark that might have been reassuring to John before she left him, but which could not help but be a painful mirror-image (that is, reversed) reminder to her father of his own experience with his father-in-law, who got him to do all the work in the store and treated him like "dirt," with the implied but fraudulent promise that Helen's parents would inherit that house and store.

Helen also takes comfort in the sameness of her own face, "the face she had always seen" with its "smooth gentle skin . . . and the cool, innocent green of her eyes" (128), a child's face that does not reveal the woman's guilty choices. Those are the features she shares with her father who also has "pale surprised green eyes" and "skin that [is] almost as fair as Helen's" (138), at least in the winter.

But nothing expresses Helen's sense of her closeness to her father so compellingly—or disconcertingly—as her memory of bringing water to him as he worked in his fields. Her memory is perhaps stirred by the heat of this April day:

> She remembered going out to the farthest field with water for him, before he had given up that part of the farm. And he would take the jug of water and lift it to his lips and it would seem to Helen, the sweet child Helen standing in the dusty corn, that the water flowed into her magnificent father and enlivened him as if it were secret blood of her own she had given him. And his chest would swell, his reddened arms eager with muscle emerging out of his rolled-up sleeves . . . . (141)

The erotic wildness of this memory is perhaps tamed but only because she was "the sweet child Helen" at the time and now wonders what connection, if any, there can be between that vision and the aging man sitting beside her in the car.

Helen next remembers her father's amazed white expression when his eldest son Eddie, "moved away now and lost to them" (141), had shoved him against the supper table. The violent break with the father's authority freed the eldest son, perhaps, but the youngest daughter's break was in marriage to a young man, with whom she has had a (nameless) child that she then left for an emotionally needy drinking man not much younger than her father. And now she has left even that man to return to her father. The attempt to return to her own childhood innocence is as hopeless as trying to find again her magnificent young father, as she herself half realizes. But she is here.

When her father demands, "Why did you leave with that man?" (145), Helen cannot answer him except by saying, "He made me think of . . . you, Pa . . . And if he loved me that much I had to go with him" (146). Her father's next challenge, "Then why did you come back?" allows for either no answer at all, which is Helen's response, or the same answer she had given about both her husband John and her nameless middle-aged lover: "And if [you] loved me that much I had to go with [you]" (146). (Remember her father's frightening words: "It was all for you . . . I said I would do it for you or die" [145].) This time, of course, her own father is not someone she can leave husband, child, and lover for; that would be unspeakable.

When her father strikes her with the knife, his hand ("his whitened fist") finally looks clean as her blood "explod[es] out upon it" (146). He then washes the knife in the dirty water of Eden River and squats and finally sits beside her body and the river for hours in a kind of post-coital trance.

The point of view, the angle of narration, shifts into the father as soon as the daughter is dead, but all that is in his head and heart for hours is an empty waiting. The father finally tries "to turn his mind with an effort to the next thing he must do" (147), but it is difficult to imagine him succeeding.

No matter how rooted in American culture Oates's stories are, they always seem to have moments like this one when they aspire to the stature of parable, fable, or myth.

The gates of Eden are closed. There is no returning to such a place or time, not even to one's own infancy. Angels with swords still guard every entrance.

In this Joyce Carol Oates story, of course, any religious straining toward transcendence is thoroughly secularized by the metaphor of a deadly disease (Helen's notion of her own adultery) displacing the traditional notion of a mortal sin, a homely country water jug displacing the communion chalice of sacred blood, a "generous" daughter displacing Eve in this return to the grave, not the garden, and the father himself with his "familiar" knife standing in for the angels.

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NOTES

[1]For an interesting treatment of these matters, see J. Hillis Miller's "Narrative" in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin, 2nd ed. (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1990, 1995) 66-79.

[2]This and all subsequent references in parentheses are to "By the River" in Joyce Carol Oates, *Marriages and Infidelities* (New York: Vanguard, 1972) 127-47.

Connotations
Vol. 8.1 (1998/99)

Re-representing African Identity: A Response*

DEREK WRIGHT

Francis Ngaboh-Smart's essay "Science and the Re-representation of African Identity in *Major Gentl and the Achimota Wars*" explores the effect of the electronic revolution on the African literary imagination through a searching analysis of Kojo Laing's 1992 novel, a work in which urban space is seen to be exploded into cyberspace, the modern city into the postmodernist zone, and character into computer-generated, digitally-enhanced electronic effects. The essay ranges, exhaustively, across a great many features of Laing's complex creative personality and multifaceted work, including language experimentation, science fantasy, social philosophy, and cultural polemic, though without always stating clearly the relations—the continuities and the tensions—between them. In this brief response I have not taken general issue with the critic's balanced, comprehensive reading of Laing's novel but, confining myself to a single passage, have chosen to qualify particular observations which have wider ramifications for the essay as a whole.

A few pages into his essay Ngaboh-Smart debates "Laing's insistence on the possibility and problem of a pure origin" (68) in the context of an electronic mediascape made up entirely of representations, where infinite replication has displaced stable primal referents and the direct, unmediated relationship of subject to world is no longer possible. He continues: "There is, for instance, the reference to a time 'when the whole country existed' (3) as an indivisible entity, but, presumably, it has now entered a period of division. The fragmentation appears in the reference to 'a missing land,' long separated from the country (a symbolic reference to slavery, perhaps).

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*Reference: Francis Ngaboh-Smart, "Science and the Re-representation of African Identity in *Major Gentl and the Achimota Wars*," *Connotations* 7.1 (1997/98): 58-79.

But the 'returning citizens' or 'the first gentleman to return never failed to reject' their 'origins' (176)" (68-69). Ngaboh-Smart then remarks that "the elders of government almost seem to want to recreate a wholeness they can, at best, only imitate" and ponders on "how irrecoverable that wholeness or vitality has become in an electronic culture that is incapable of generating a counter-myth adequate to the moral needs of its era" (69).

Some of these points need enlargement or clarification. Firstly, the novelist's use of "whole" in the quoted phrase "the whole country" does not mean "united" or "undivided" as the critic appears to assume but "entire" or "complete"—unitary rather than unified—and is thus closer in meaning to Ngaboh-Smart's own subsequent usages in the noun form ("wholeness" as fullness or intactness, bodily soundness or spiritual health). What is called "Ghana" in Laing's novels often features as part of cosmic, ecological, and metaphysical wholes, but it is not conceived as a national whole or invested with an indivisible primal being prior to historical fragmentation. On the contrary, it is envisaged, past and present, as the locus of many discrete ethnic cultures, languages, and beliefs. Consequently, Laing's novels are fiercely heteroglossic works, employing words from a multiplicity of ethnic languages and dialects, and the effect of this multilingual rhetoric is to undermine the idea of the nation as a single integrated body of values and culture. In his first book, *Search Sweet Country* (1986), the multi-ethnic metropolis of Accra is inherently heterotopian, the projection of its patchwork population's random collective imaginings. No single group is able to apprehend its totality (or that of its macrocosm, the nation) or to command a linguistic monopoly; each is a fraction, a half that can never be unified into the whole pursued by the country's titular search. Many of the inhabitants—for example, the reconstituted witch Adwoa and the human fraction ½-Allotey—are already composite constructs, ripe for electronic dispersal, so their digital transformation in *Major Gentl* does not, in effect, violate some pristine cultural essence or integrity but merely gives new, apt expression to pre-existing fragmentation. Here, in this volatile disunity and rampant heterogeneity, lies Ghana's (and Africa's) real authenticity—an authenticity which is therefore not undermined by Laing but redefined and relocated in the postmodernist atomization that answers most closely to its historical

condition (the unilateral rejection of origins in the quoted passage implies the repudiation of the very *idea* of origins). If Ngaboh-Smart gives insufficient emphasis to Laing's revisionist notion of authenticity, it is perhaps because, even though he challenges Mary Kropp Dakubu's conception of Laing's writing as "the direct expression of unified, existentially authentic experience" (19), he tends, like her, to conflate "unified" with "authentic"; then, after establishing the modernist novel as a site for the construction of authentic postcolonial African identity, he proceeds to equate Laing's "shift from a modernist to a postmodern worldview" (72) with a progression from an "authenticist" to a "post-authenticist" phase of writing.

Two things are established at the outset in *Major Gentl*: firstly, that Ghana existed not as an indissoluble "whole" but did once, in some fashion, exist and now, effectively does not; and secondly, that this once extant country has gone "missing," not from an originary essence in precolonial, pre-slave history (for which there is no evidence) or from a native homeland but from the ultramodern modes of electronic representation in which its syncretic condition finds quintessential expression. After selectively siphoning off the Achimotans' cerebral energies into cyberspace for their own use, the West's cybercratic superpowers have declared Africa to be expendable and irrelevant to what is conceived as reality in the twenty-first century world, seeking no knowledge of it other than what they themselves have created. The powers who build the information highways also decide where they run. For countries not let onto the network in the year 2020 little or no data is available and consequently they cease to exist not intrinsically, severed from authenticating ancestral traditions, but informationally, on blank computer screens. The dematerialization of the Achimotans' city and country, and the negative virtualization of the inhabitants as insubstantial shadows and zeros, are metaphors for Africa's omission from the global village and its effective nonbeing in the informational universe.

And yet, to view the electronic culture as, in Ngaboh-Smart's phrase, "incapable of generating a counter-myth adequate to the moral needs of its era" and to assume genuine "wholeness" (fullness, not oneness) and "vitality" to be "irrecoverable" from this culture is perhaps to grant the

new informational neocolonialism more victimizing power than Laing actually does. Ngaboh-Smart argues, importantly, that Laing's use of the hybridized cosmopolitan English of the 1990s is not a capitulation to transnational neocolonial hegemonies but an inventive rearrangement which, like Achebe's refashioning of the colonial English of the 1950s, transforms the language into an instrument of postcolonial resistance by its release of peculiarly African (in Laing's case, Akan, Ewe and Ga) energies. But why should this not be equally true of Laing's revisioning of the electronic representational modes, language codes and varieties of technologese which are the transmission lines for the new millenium's cybernetic imperialism? Laing's cybercultural polemics are not ignored by Ngaboh-Smart but, surprisingly in an essay titled "The Re-representation of African Identity," they are allocated little more than a page at the end of a long essay, whereas in the novel under discussion they occupy a much larger space. Indeed, the last quarter of Laing's text is given over to the polemical musings of the eponymous hero on the recuperation of these same lost harmonies and vitalities. Gentl speculates, in particular, about the restorative aid that surviving holistic consciousnesses like Africa's can still offer to spiritually-truncated Western cybercrats who have externalized mind into sheer brain power, bereft of any moral intelligence and imagination.

Admittedly, most of Laing's imaginative counter-technology exists at the level of satiric whimsy and comic fantasy: for example, "soft" but serious African computers as alternatives to the ones that digitalize Rollo's roller-skates and map the route of his food from fork to mouth; the "brain-restoring machines" with which the Achimotan physicist Grandmother Bomb counteracts the West's "energy-stealing brain machines"; or the ecologically holistic armies, led by vegetable cybernauts, which rival Space Invaders and Star Wars. But underlying these poetic whimsies are serious imperatives about making intelligence human and consciousness whole again by relocating them in the entire pattern of being, and remedying the Information Age's ontological crisis by reestablishing direct contact between the electronic and organic orders, between virtual and vital reality. The Achimotans' Second War of Existence is, literally, a battle for physical, material existence and human experience in the virtualist

universe. Their task, as Africa's and the world's standard setters, is to revamp technology so that in the next century "humanity and invention allowed even the smallest human being to open out into the trees and into the universe, to see the whole, to touch the inner," restoring "a type of living that had sympathy, power and creation as well as harmony" (180, 165). This lost creative vitality and concord are external and in opposition to the electronic culture only insofar as the latter has been constructed according to exclusive Western imperatives; the vanished benefits, Gentl implies, are recoverable and expressible through that culture with the cultivation of the right relativist vision—"the sort of global subtlety that allowed you to move in and out of cultures, without shouting the greatness of your own through time" (165). It falls to the culturally mobile part of the planet, which has never "ceased to be human" (105), to recover what has been abandoned as "completely out of date" and "belonging to another century altogether" by the imperial superpowers (164)—namely "language and humanity" (2), both key features of Laing's crusade. The English in which his electronic characters are encoded is interspersed with words from African, other European and invented languages, thus preventing any single register from exercising an imperial monopoly over the others. And the brooding polemics of the long finale do, finally, contrive to reconstitute one homogeneous thinking human consciousness from the book's fractured simulacra and recyclable digital clones. The mild Major himself, at least, reacquires something of the physical integrity and ontological stability originally dispersed at his serial, computer-processed birth and, like Commander Zero earlier in the narrative, "bursts into a human being out of the profusion of his insubstantiality" (75). This paradoxical negation-into-creation is a striking trope for the generation from within the cybernetic culture of what outdoes and transcends it.

Laing's corrective counter-myth of a new transcendent humanism may not in itself constitute a force for electronic decolonization. But, in its appropriation and incorporation of Western technological givens into what is ultimately an African worldview, it foreshadows emulative triumph over rather than submissive victimization by Informationalist neoimperialism. In his pioneering importation into African fiction of cybernetics and hyperreality—complete with computerized characters,

video games, satellite wars and invented language codes—Laing states Africa's claim to a place on the information highways of the twenty-first century and reasserts its right to an existence—political, artistic, electronic—independently of the technocratic superpowers' negating images and denials.

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March/April 1999

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