REVISTA DE ESTUDOS GERMÂNICOS

REVISTA DO DEPARTAMENTO DE LETRAS GERMÂNICAS DA FACULDADE DE LETRAS - UFMG - ISSN 0101-837 X

ESTUDOS GERMÂNICOS	BELO HORIZONTE	V. 8	Nº 1	p. 01-66	DEZ. 1987

APRESENTAÇÃO

O oitavo volume da revista *Estudos Germânicos* apresenta várias mudanças no conteúdo e na forma. A destacar, a divisão em dois fascículos semestrais, divulgando, um, trabalhos sobre literatura, e o outro, trabalhos sobre língua.

Este fascículo, dedicado à literatura, inicia-se com um estudo sobre as distorções provocadas pela tentativa de se psicanalisar autores através de suas obras. É interessante compará-lo com o artigo sobre Nabokov, que mostra como o inverso se dá, isto é, como aspectos biográficos podem interferir na compreensão da obra literária.

Mais voltados para a análise do texto em si. os estudos sobre Conrad, Eliot e Hellman procuram mostrar o desenvolvimento das personagens em sua busca, nem sempre vitoriosa, de auto-conhecimento e libertação.

Um outro artigo, de alcance mais geral, especula sobre como os efeitos da herança puritana, que é parte da ideologia americana, passaram a gerar mais obstáculos do que benefícios para o progresso econômico e cultural.

As personagens podem exercer tamanho fascínio que chegam a atrair a audiência para dentro do universo ficcional. Isso confere ao autor poderes divinos, como mostra o artigo sobre Woody Allen.

Esperando que as mudanças tenham sido para melhor, anunciamos que o próximo volume terá como tema a literatura do século XX.

O EDITOR

EMILY DICKINSON AND THE PSYCHOANALYST

Emily Dickinson e o Psicanalista

Emily Dickinson und der Psychoanalytiker

Stephen L. TANNER *

SUMMARY

This essay is a consideration of John Cody's book *After great pain: the inner life of Emily Dickinson*. It reveals not only the distortions created when psychoanalysis is applied to Dickinson, but also the kinds of distortions that can result when the method is applied to authors in general.

RESUMO

Este artigo é uma ponderação sobre o livro de autoria do psiquiatra John Cody, *After great pain: the inner life of Emily Dickinson*. O artigo revela não só as distorções criadas quando a psicanálise é aplicada à poetisa, mas também os tipos de distorções que podem resultar da aplicação do método a escritores em geral.

Emily Dickinson appears tailor-made for the psychoanalytical method of biography and criticism. The childhood shaped by a dominating father, the later seclusion from society and habit of dressing in white, the penetrating self-observation and ambiguous sexuality revealed in the poems and letters — all these cry out for psychoanalytical explanation. Moreover, she had the intelligence, articulateness, and capacity for fantasy that make her, as the psychiatrist John Cody remarks, "the psychoanalysand par excellence."

According to Cody, her poetry describes a remarkable variety of psychological symptoms, sharply observed and accurately delineated. Using just herself as subject, she discovered territory Freud would not get to for another fifty years: "All the so-called psychopathology he encountered in his patients she discovered within herself." If we credit Cody, she was fully aware of the unconscious as a potent motivating force, she recognized the existence and function of repression and other ego defenses, and she understood the phenomena of identification, transference, and sublimation. "One suspects," Cody concludes, "that the ultimate elucidation of certain of her more obscure psychological poems awaits further advances in our scientific knowledge of personality" (6-7). In short, Cody would have us believe that Emily Dickinson is not only a prime candidate for psychoanalytical study but was a remarkable sort of proto-psychoanalist herself.

Freud's influence is now so pervasive that its extent is scarcely calculable. In one form or another, often in perversions or absurd simplifications, it has permeated our life and become an integral component of our culture. Freudianism, the popular version of Freud's ideas, is one of those eminently comprehensive and pliable world philosophies that seem capable of explaining everything. As the narrator of John Barth's *The end of the road* remarks in reflecting upon Freud's "dance of sex": "When the synthesizing mood is upon one, what is more soothing than to assert that this one simple yen of humankind, poor little coitus, alone gives rise to cities and monasteries, paragraphs and poems, foot races and battle tactics, metaphysics and hydroponics, trade unions and universities? ... A therapeutic notion!" (93).

But systems that explain everything fail to explain anything completely and accurately. Freudian psychology may be, as Lionel Trilling asserts in his famous essay "Freud and literature," "the only systematic account of the human mind which, in point of subtlety and complexity, of interest and tragic power, deserves to stand beside the chaotic mass of psychological insights which literature has accumulated through the centuries" (33). But the psychoanalytical method applied to literature manifests biases and limitations that ought to be clearly recognized. Trilling, a fervent admirer of Freud, indicates them when he acknowledges that Freud's rationalism "supports all the ideas of the Enlightenment that deny validity to myth or religion; he holds to a simple materialism, to a simple determinism, to a rather limited sort of epistemology" (40).

John Cody's *After great pain: the inner life of Emily Dickinson* (1971) is an instructive example of the psychoanalytical method applied to Emily

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Dickinson. A consideration of this book reveals not only the distortions created when psychoanalysis is applied to Dickinson, but also the kinds of distortions that can result when the method is applied to authors in general.

I have selected Cody's book as representative among the numerous psychoanalytical treatments of Dickinson for the following reasons: it is written by a practicing psychiatrist; it has been highly praised and is considered the definitive psychobiography; it is ambitious and comprehensive; and its hypotheses claim to explain more aspects of her life and work than do the hypotheses of any other psychoanalytical examination of the poet.

Cody's fundamental hypothesis asserts that an unsatisfactory relationship with her mother was the most important determinant in Emily Dickinson's life and poetry. Some early disturbance in the mother-daughter relationship caused Emily to feel unloved, and this primal deprivation set in motion an elaborate series of complex psychological conflicts, resulting in the enigmas and oddities of her adult behavior and the distinctive achievement of her poetry. The maternal deprivation syndrome "foredoomed her to an agonizing and protracted adolescence and an almost insurmountable crisis of sexual identity" (55). Her dissatisfaction with her mother prevented her from accepting that parent as a suitable model of femininity, which in turn prevented her from resolving the problems of "the normal, positive, oedipal situation." Her stage of sexual latency was abnormally prolonged, and she "vacillated anxiously in a state of unresolved bisexual potentiality, like a pre-oedipal child, vulnerable from every side" (148). And to complicate this situation, her relationship with her brother and future sister-in-law revived "the old oedipal dilemma, now grossly magnified and frighteningly distorted" (254). When Austin and Susan married, she was psychologically shattered — no purpose for existence, no sexual or social role, no bridge to the future. The result was a psychotic breakdown.

According to Cody, she faced the following dilemmas. To become a woman was to resemble her despised mother and be a victim of masculine callousness and exploitation. To embrace her masculine side was to lean toward forbidden homosexuality. Moreover, opting for femininity meant giving up masculinity, which subserved her creativity. Thus heterosexuality and homosexuality were ruled out, and she gave up interpersonal sexuality altogether. She became a recluse because she had no adult sexual role to play with either men or women.

Cody is critical of the "tacit conspiracy" to skirt or rationalize Emily's abnormality. Biographers who interpret behavior "on a commonsense, nonscientific basis" are inadequate. Their psychological hypotheses are academic, not based on experience with actual patients (8-9). We must face the fact that Emily was psychotic, which, for Emily *the artist*, was no misfortune because her "psychic imbalance and eventual collapse allied themselves on the side of her genius" (485). He even goes so far as to say it is likely that she "had a deep need to feel unloved, unappreciated, and rejected by her mother (and her mother's later representatives [which for him included every adult female friend she had]) in order to bring about the barren, arid, emotional climate that she intuitively realized was necessary for the flowering of her poetic fantasies" (497).

The following critique ignores the benefits of psychoanalytical biography and criticism, not because I am blind to them, but because distortions, excesses, and reductionism are the issues here. A rigorous evaluation of Cody's book seems justified since it has already received ample commendation.

Cody begins by likening psychoanalytic interpretation of a historical figure to reassembling a fossil skeleton or, if the figure suffered a psychological catàclysm, to piecing together fragments of an aircraft that exploded in flight. These engaging analogies imply considerably more scientific accuracy than the psychoanalytical method warrants. Human personalities, after all, are not much like bones or metal parts. Cody insists, however, that the psychobiographer, like the paleontologist, is justified in using "plaster bones." He admits that one of his plaster bones is the hypothesis that Emily experienced what she interpreted as a cruel rejection by her mother. There is, as he acknowledges, no concrete evidence for this (2). In keeping with his analogy, a few plaster bones might be acceptable, but when the hypothesis of maternal rejection is the very spinal column of his study, the ratio of plaster to actual bones is unacceptable.

Another large chunk of plaster is Cody's hypothesis that Emily's adult personality was partly shaped by Reverend John S. C. Abbott's *The mother at home: the principles of maternal duty* (1833). This book, with its authoritarian discipline and religious cast, is obviously a bugbear for the psychoanalyst and an obvious target as the source of Emily's problems. But there is no evidence that the parents used it. We know only that Edward Dickinson bought it for his wife. Actually, it is a pretty innocuous book, and, as Rebecca Patterson remarks, since it was so widely popular, why weren't there more Emily Dickinsons? Are we to assume that her parents were particularly sadistic in applying the book? (233-34).

Where are the bones amid all the plaster? The poems and letters, says Cody, are "the authentic 'osseous' basis" for his argument (10). And he finds the poems "intrinsically more self-revelatory than the letters" because they "uniquely reveal a height of turmoil and psychic desintegration only obscurely adumbrated in the remainder of our biographical sources" (294). In other words, his primary evidence is the poems considered as direct and unequivocal expressions of her own feelings and experiences. The poems, he insists, "are the distillation of actual circumstances" and "portray faithfully the terror of a mind collapsing under pressures that exceed its endurance" (23-24). Quoting such phrases as 'And then a Plank in Reason broke,' 'I felt a Cleaving in my Mind/ As if my Brain had split,' and 'I thought-/ My Mind was going numb," he

asserts that Emily Dickinson was describing her own experience of going out of her mind. He acknowledges the objection that "a supposed person" is speaking in such poems, although he carefully avoids quoting in full Dickinson's own statement concerning the poem "There came a day at summer's full": "When I state myself, as the representative of the verse — it does not mean — me — but a supposed person" (Quoted in Walsh 147). Revealing his naivete concerning the nature of poetry and the psychology of the creative process, he answers the objection by saying, "We must ask ourselves whether anyone, even a poet, can portray a feeling state that he has not himself undergone. And if one grant that this is possible, what could possibly motivate a person to attempt to express what he never felt" (292). This appalling denial of the powers and uses of literary imagination characterizes too much of psychoanalytic biography.

Cody, in short, ignores the *poetry* of poems. By focusing on the poems solely as psychological documents, he ignores the way aesthetic considerations often determine meaning, the way word choice is governed by patterns of alliteration, rhyme, and imagery, the way form shapes content. As Albert Gelpi points out, "His method is paraphrase, reducing the poet's language, which links with intricate subtlety the various levels of her mind and psyche, to formulae. This sort of abstraction is diametrically opposed to the thrust of poetry to refuse generalizations and to individualize experience in richness of nuance" (158). Gelpi senses in the book "a mind and sensibility not only less complex than Dickinson's but less open than it ought to be to her complexities" (159). This is certainly true of the literary complexities.

Probably more objectionable than Cody's insistence on reading the poems as direct autobiography is the way he abandons that posture when it fails to suit his purpose. He tries to have it both ways. After asserting that the poems clearly express her own psychosis, he must deal with the famous love affair, which implies mature heterosexuality — something he denies her. At that point, he reverses himself: "The story of Emily Dickinson's love affair as it is told in the poems cannot be accepted at face value" (384). He describes the love poems as "pseudologia fantastica" — the communication to others of imaginary experiences in the guise of real happenings (388).

The exclusively sexual orientation of his method causes Cody to neglect other shaping elements — literature, for example. In a book that appeared the same year as Cody's, John Evangelist Walsh argues that much in Dickinson's poetry was borrowed, with varying degress of modification, from literary works such as Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* and Elizabeth Browning's *Aurora Leigh*. In fact, he identifies a passage in the latter as the source of the "Plank in Reason" phrase. And the intensity and love talk of Emily's letters to Sue, which Cody makes so much of, squeezing a sexual interpretation even out of the punctuation, Walsh traces to Longfellow's *Kavanaugh*, a novel both young women had read just prior to those letters. Walsh's particular examples are sometimes less than convincing, but his conclusion must be reckoned with: "Emily's poetry, as is now abundantly clear, can never be taken as autobiographical without strong evidence to support the claim; too often she will be found parading in a rented costume" (150).

In addition to ignoring literary influences, Cody's Freudian approach neglects other significant factors that shaped her personality and poetry. Social-cultural influences receive very little consideration, such things as the emotional climate of the region, the social mores and religious ambience of the community, the place of women, the special male-student orientation of Amherst, and so on. Moreover, Emily Dickinson was homely, a fact that her brother said played no inconsiderable part in her life (Walsh, 55), yet Cody attributes no part of her psychological development to her appearance. She was also a considerable humorist in the tradition of Downeast Yankee wit, yet Cody sees her playfulness only as means of psychosexual sublimation. Of a poem Emily sent to Sue after her baby was born, he says, "stripped of its playful language," it is "a message of murderous aggression toward the infant" (364). His book demonstrates that the Freudian biographical method needs a more comprehensive view of human interaction. Inner lives are symbiotically related to outer lives, and individuals must be seen as doing more in their relations with others than simply expressing an exclusively sexual inner dynamic rooted in their infantile pasts.

Cody's psychoanalytical method is Procrustean and formula ridden and at the same time ingeniously versatile — formulaic in its hypotheses, ingenious in conforming the data to them. To some extent this is its strength, but it is also its principal weakness. Cody uncritically subscribes to such Freudian chestnuts as these: every human being must solve the problem of "how to possess exclusively the parent of the opposite sex and render harmless and noncompetitive the parent of one's own sex" (182); "to some degree all men marry their mothers and all women their fathers" (214); a girl must admire her mother and want to be like her; food in art "is basically and unconsciously associated with maternal solicitude and the receiving of love" (46); all poetry is a symptom and a compensatory reflex. As true as these notions might be, they are not the whole truth. Similarly, one doubts that every illness — from Austin's headaches to Sue's ailment when Austin graduated to Emily's eye disorder — is a psychosomatic manifestation of sexual fears.

Cody characteristically begins his interpretations of Dickinson's writing by citing psychoanalytic case histories or Freudian explanations of behavior. He then selects sentences and phrases from the poems and letters which fit those patterns, or more specifically, which fit his thesis concerning psychotic breakdown resulting ultimately from maternal deprivation. He admittedly disregards chronology (260), and when he believes the poet was unaware of the full implications of her utterances, he infers

the unconscious import (10). Some poems may be "opaque and frustrating to explicate" to those without psychiatric training, he condescendingly points out (398). Freed from the constraining considerations of context, chronology, and conscious intention, and buoyed by the elitism of allegedly scientific knowledge and clinical experience, he is enticed into overly ingenious interpretation and surmise that too easily make the leap from the possible to the probable to the factual.

Psychoanalysis grants license for seeing unconscious patterns and motives in poetry. Herein lies its chief value applied to literature. But this licence incurs responsibilities. Judgment, balance, and restraint are needed. Otherwise anything can be read into a poem, and a poem can be wrenched to conform with any biographical thesis. A method of substantiating hypotheses that manifest as much latitude and pliability as Cody's has to be suspect.

A particularly irresponsible feature of the psychoanalytical approach is the tendency to confuse the literal and figurative. The result is a sort of hypostatizing of metaphor in which a figurative relationship is accepted as actual. Carl Bode does this in his epilogue to *The portable Thoreau*, when, after arguing that Thoreau had a "mother-fixation," he asserts that since Thoreau's culture did not countenance a mother-fixation he shifted his psychic energies to "Mother Nature": "Kind, lovely, she let him immerse his loneliness and tension in her" (686). Similarly, Cody argues that Dickinson feared for her eyes because eyes can penetrate as well as receive. This makes them male phallic. Thus fear for her eyes was a fear of losing her maleness (436). Or, in another variation on eyes, he points out that the sun is to many patients an unconscious symbol of the father figure. Sunlight is thus equated with the father's gaze: hence Dickinson's photophobia (423). This hypostatizing of the figurative began with Freud himself. He cautions in *Civilization and its discontents* (102-03) against the dangers of misusing analogy in psychoanalysis, but the warning comes in the chapter which proposes that civilizations have super-egos just as individuals do.

In his essay "Education by poetry," Robert Frost asserts that "unless you are at home in the metaphor, unless you have had your proper poetical education in the metaphor, you are not safe anywhere. Because you are not at ease with figurative values: you don't know the metaphor in its strength and its weakness. You don't know how far you may expect to ride it and when it may break down with you. You are not safe in science; you are not safe in history" (334). He might have added, you are not safe in psychoanalytical biography. Cody could use some education by poetry.

There is something incongruous in the way the psychoanalytic approach presumes a certain mastery over poetry, in the sense that it allegedly exposes its hidden meanings and secret motives, for it tries to do so by using metaphor and symbol, things it frequently understands less perfectly than does the poet. This incongruity is strikingly apparent when a psychoanalyst with so little sense of the ways of metaphor presumes, on the basis of her poetry, to explain the inner life of one of American literature's greatest masters of metaphor.

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A PESQUISA DO ÓBVIO NA FICÇÃO DE VLADIMIR NABOKOV

The Research of the Obvious in Vladimir Nabokov's Fiction

Die Untersuchung des Offensichtlichen im Werk von Vladimir Nabokov

Leila F. P. ALMEIDA *

RESUMO

O presente artigo coordenou aspectos biográficos que são discutidos como interferentes na compreensão da obra de ficção de Vladimir Nabokov, assim como procurou analisar os elementos estruturais que a compõem.

SUMMARY

This is a survey on the biographical aspects that are discussed as concerning to the understanding of Vladimir Nabokov's prose fiction, as well as an analysis of the structural items that compose it.

Ao considerarmos o panorama das produções literárias em prosa de ficção do século XX, haveria lamentável omissão caso o nome e a obra literária de Vladimir Nabokov não fossem lembrados de forma especial.

Parecem-nos bastante válidas as opiniões de Bradbury e Bigsby[1] a respeito da produtividade literária de nossos dias: "Nos últimos vinte anos tem-se delineado claramente uma mudança decisiva que ocupou espaço no espírito e no aspecto da escrita contemporânea. Existe agora, à nossa volta, em ficção, teatro e poesia uma realização estilisticamente fundamental e atual que, provavelmente, pode ser considerada tão emocionante, importante e renovadora como a que se verificou no período precedente.

Estamos convictos de que a era de Beckett, Borges, Nabokov, Bellow, Pynchon, ... e muitos outros seja de fato uma época notável de criatividade internacional, de surpreendente experimentalismo e de bastante coerência estética."

Nestes últimos vinte anos vimos surgir a obra literária de Nabokov, com grande importância e repercussão. Ela transcendeu os limites culturais da literatura ocidental, invadindo o território proibido da Cortina de Ferro e causando enorme impacto na Rússia. O Oriente Médio também recebeu a produção de Nabokov através de edições piratas que divulgaram o autor pelos países árabes, com o romance *Lolita*, em francês.

Sua área de alcance se fez sentir, de forma direta, na Europa Ocidental pela França, na Europa Oriental pela Rússia e nas Américas pelos Estados Unidos. Indiretamente, a obra de Nabokov foi divulgada, em todo o mundo, através de traduções.

No Brasil, parte dos trabalhos literários de Nabokov se acha traduzida. Primeiro há aquele que notabilizou o autor, o romance *Lolita*, além de outras obras cujos títulos sugerem o tema daquele romance. Neste caso se inclui a tradução da obra prima do autor: *Ada ou Ardor: a crônica de uma família* — rotulada, sensacionalisticamente, de "obra prima do erotismo" mas que não trata, em especial, do enunciado — *Rei, valete e dama, Gargalhada no escuro, A verdadeira vida de Sebastião Knight, O olho vigilante, Fala, memória, Somos todos arlequins*, que é a autobiografia do autor e *Transparências*.

Alguns dados sobre o autor de *Lolita* e sua obra fazem-se necessários para que possamos nos iniciar no emaranhado universo artístico que nos propusemos expor e que causa tanta polêmica no mundo todo.

Vladimir Vladimirovitch Nabokov nasceu em 1899 em São Petersburgo, na Rússia, provindo de família abastada, em cujo seio surgiram alguns expoentes da cultura russa do século passado.

Em sua infância aprendeu o inglês e o francês com suas governantas. Ele próprio declarou ter sido o inglês a primeira língua que aprendeu, e o russo, a última. Com este dado, está configurado o primeiro problema com Vladimir Nabokov: não sabemos qual teria sido, realmente, seu idioma materno, aquele de que se serviria nos momentos de reflexão abstrata, aquele com o qual delinearia seus pensamentos e suas inquietações mais íntimas: se o inglês, o francês ou o russo, uma vez que escreveu nas três línguas e ele próprio efetuou as traduções

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respectivas de uma para as outras duas, às vezes sozinho, às vezes recorrendo ao auxílio de outras pessoas, como sua esposa Vera ou seu filho Dmitri Nabokov.

Viveu sua juventude na Rússia, onde teve as governantas inglesas e francesas substituídas por preceptores russos, quando já em idade escolar. Permaneceu em São Petersburgo até eclodir a Revolução que depôs o regime político monárquico dos czares em 1917, quando então contava 18 anos e lá ainda permaneceu por dois anos. Mas em 1919 fugiu para a Europa Ocidental, mais precisamente para a Inglaterra, onde ingressou na Universidade de Cambridge, local em que completou sua escolaridade, empreendendo seus estudos superiores e lá se graduando.

Da Inglaterra, em 1925, Nabokov se deslocou para Berlim Ocidental onde esteve até 1937. Nesta época em que conviveu com ilustres expatriados russos, na capital alemã, o escritor apresentou seus primeiros trabalhos literários sob o pseudônimo de Vladimir Sirin.

Nesta fase germânica de sua vida, Nabokov conviveu com Kandinski — que iria impulsionar o impressionismo alemão — com Máximo Gorki, Esenin, Balanchine e Stravinski.

Esta fase, em que apresentou seus primeiros escritos, parece ter tido alguma importância na formação de seu temário e de seus conceitos estéticos, embora o escritor o negue, como comentou Robert Williams[2]: "Nabokov vigorosamente nega que 20 anos de exílio político forneçam uma chave para seus trabalhos. De fato, suas andanças de exilado foram de crucial importância para suas mais criativas motivações, tanto representando uma fuga da piada cruel da realidade para o mundo estético, para a terra do espelho que é a imaginação, como representando uma fonte de personagens que são estrangeiros e estranhos no universo comum e prosaico, residentes temporários que são nos locais, em vez de pessoas sedentárias e fixadas, aqueles sempre enfrentando lares estranhos em cidades estrangeiras."

Da Alemanha, Nabokov foi para Paris onde recebeu convite para regressar à União Soviética, o que ele recusou. De lá, emigrou para os Estados Unidos, que o receberam em condições condizentes com a sua genialidade, em 1940, acompanhado pela esposa e filho.

Em 1945 tornou-se cidadão norte-americano, tendo já adquirido cidadania suiça quando vivia na Europa. Nos Estados Unidos foi convidado a lecionar em várias universidades, tendo prestado serviços junto às de Stanford e de Cornell, como professor de Literatura Russa e de Literatura Comparada.

Desenvolveu, tanto na Europa quanto nos U.S.A., uma variedade de atividades, não só como escritor, mas que o notabilizaram também em outros setores, como na zoologia, no enxadrismo e na música. Na primeira atividade citada descobriu espécie rara de lepidóptero à qual conferiu o seu nome, "Nabokov", e escreveu obra a respeito desta família animal, intitulada *Neartic members of the genus Lycaeides Hubner*, em 1949. Como estudioso de música, publicou a tradução da ópera *Eugene Onegin* de Alexander Pushkin, do russo para o inglês, com notas explicativas.

Em área literária foi-lhe conferido o "Grande Prêmio de Literatura", outorgado pelos críticos e editores norte-americanos, na década passada.

Os livros de sua autoria re-editam-se continuadamente e estão sempre esgotados, em todas as línguas.

Seus últimos anos de vida, Nabokov os passou em Montreux, na Suiça, onde veio a falecer em 1º de julho de 1977, vitimado por doença infecciosa não identificada.

Obra literária de Vladimir Nabokov

Como o autor escrevesse com igual facilidade nas três línguas já apontadas, o inglês, o francês e o russo, e traduzisse de uma para as outras duas línguas, torna-se difícil sistematizar a produção de Nabokov, obra que aguarda estudos e que é carente de bibliografia crítica.

Conseguimos, no entanto, organizar dela um quadro geral que pode ser assim apresentado:

1. *Obras originalmente escritas em russo: O olho vigilante, Poemas e problemas*, que contém poemas em russo e problemas de xadrês, *Gargalhada na escuridão, Desespero, Rei, valete e dama e Somos todos arlequins* (obra autobiográfica).

2. *Obras originalmente produzidas em francês*: *Contos* e, entre eles, o famoso *Mademoiselle O*.

3. *Obras originalmente apresentadas em inglês*: *Bend Sinister, The defense, The grift, Glory, Invitation to a beheading, Lolita, Mary, Nabokov's dozen, Nabokov's quartet, Nicolai Gogol*, uma biografia crítica, *Pale fire, Pnin, Poemas, The real life of Sebastian Knight, Speak, memory, Ada or Ardor, Spring in Fialta and other stories, Transparent things* e *The waltz invention*, peça de teatro.

4. *Traduções de outras obras, do russo para o inglês*:

   — A ópera "Eugene Onegin", de Alexander Pushkin;

   — "The song of Igor's campaign", de autor anônimo, em russo arcaico original;

   — "Three Russian poets", versos traduzidos de três autores.

Tendo, agora, elementos informativos gerais sobre o autor e sua obra, pode-se tentar maior aproximação com sua produção literária.

Nabokov colocou, indiferentemente, em qualquer dos três idiomas já citados, e com igual facilidade, a sua fórmula mágica, que encanta e fascina a todos quantos se propõem a aproximar-se de seus escritos.

A "receita" de Nabokov parece conter, na prosa, um conjunto muito especial de elementos formais e temáticos que a caracterizam.

Pode-se dela apontar alguns que nos parecem flagrantes como elementos constitutivos. Vejamos alguns deles:

A caracterização de personagens é feita de forma não unificada e coerente, pois o autor a apresenta não como um todo orgânico, lógico e disciplinado. O personagem de Nabokov surge, de preferência, sem raízes de pátria, habitando um local imaginário, não real; é bem vivo em sua composição física e mental, porém repartido ou refletido em outro ou em outros. Exemplos desta assertiva são: o personagem masculino central do romance *Lolita,* Humbert-Humbert, um expatriado europeu que vive nos Estados Unidos num contínuo vagar, e que se vê refletido, fisicamente, no final do romance, na figura do marido de Lolita, Dick Schiller, enquanto que psicologicamente ressurge no homem que a libertou da companhia de Humbert-Humbert, numa fuga espetacular: o produtor de teatro e cineasta Clare Quality, que era da mesma faixa etária de Humbert-Humbert e que possuía até algumas de suas características.

Além desse caso, pode-se mencionar vários outros tipos de pulverização ou de desintegração das personagens na obra de Nabokov, como o que se viu em *Ada or Ardor*, onde os caracteres centrais já são apresentados aos pares, um completando, ou antagonizando, ou refletindo o outro. É o que se vê com as gêmeas Aqua e Marina e com os dois primos próximos que, significativamente, têm nome semelhante: Walter D. Veen, sendo o D. intermediário seu único elemento diferenciador. Num, é a abreviação de "Demon" e no outro, da palavra russa que significa "vermelho". Todo o elenco de *Ada or Ardor* vai se movimentar num país imaginário, posto dentro do território americano.

O foco narrativo é difícil de se tentar padronizar. O autor o muda dentro de uma só obra várias vezes, como ocorre em *Ada or Ardor*, desnorteando o leitor. Outras vezes é alguém indeterminado que se apresenta na primeira pessoa e que está, psicologicamente, vivendo o drama interior de algum personagem explícito e real, de forma muito próxima a esse, mas sem identificar-se até o final da obra. Isto ocorre em *Pnin* onde o professor Timofey Pnin tem suas ocorrências físicas e mentais contadas tão de perto que chegamos a pensar que o "eu" do narrador seria o dele. Mas, no final da obra é que vemos descerrar-se o véu de mistério do foco narrativo, apontando-o para a pessoa do maior inimigo e rival do infeliz professor. Raramente o foco narrativo de Nabokov é tão regular e disciplinado como vimos em *Lolita*, onde o desenrolar dos acontecimentos nos vêm, todos, quase linearmente através do tempo cronológico, pelo relato de Humbert-Humbert na primeira pessoa.

A concepção do tempo, para Nabokov, também se apresentou complexamente: distinguiu "tempo" de "temporalidade", fazendo, de ambos, instrumentos ou elementos de composição que se combinaram, alternaram ou conflictuaram.

Assim Elizabeth Dipple definiu 'tempo' e 'temporalidade': "O 'tempo', sendo entendido como meio indispensável para o progresso da ação do romance através de um início, meio e fim e a causalidade existindo no seu fundo", e "A 'temporalidade' sendo entendida como as negativas do "tempo" em ser considerado mensurável, previsível e exterior. Começa pela memória, que credencia somente o passado e o presente doloroso ou marcantes, sem envolver-se num positivismo otimístico".[3]

Comentando esses dois dados, observamos que há um contínuo e acelerado ritmo na marcha evolutiva dos acontecimentos, pautados pelo princípio da causalidade, nos romances de Nabokov, e que ela é obstaculizada pelos retrocessos ou "Flash-backs" e pelas considerações feitas sobre o presente, incerto e inseguro. Nabokov não se mostrou disposto a fazer previsões sobre o futuro, talvez por achar que ele não valesse a pena.

A esse respeito, temos a apontar certo experimentalismo vanguardista na obra de Nabokov, que o aproxima dos trabalhos literários de Virgínia Woolf, nas letras britânicas.

Conforme se viu em sua obra *Orlando*, e na de Nabokov *Ada ou Ardor*, o tempo simplesmente não existe. Os personagens sofrem experiências vivenciais que os levam a atravessar séculos, cronologicamente. Neles, o significado psicológico de trechos anteriores e passados de suas vidas, e as opções por certas fases vitais presentes, teriam obrigado os escritores a muito se deter em seu enfoques e, enquanto isso se dava, o tempo cronológico corria célere.

O temário de Nabokov é centrado na exposição da real situação da vida do homem comum. Nessa, o que lhe interessa é a hedonística satisfação do alcançar as aspirações interiores de cada ser humano. A vida íntima das pessoas, em conflito e em harmonia com seus pares, suas paixões, suas prioridades clamantes e a sexualidade demandatória que impera sofrem rigorosa análise do romancista, através de sua "verve" genial.

Nos Estados Unidos ele enfocou a chamada "classe média média", que talvez constitua a faixa populacional de maior incidência numérica naquele país. Ela é exposta de forma completamente despojada e sem nenhuma contemplação por Nabokov, que lhes expõe as fraquezas e os ridículos.

Poderíamos, talvez, pensar que esta prática fosse difícil de ser feita por um expatriado, mas parece que ocorre o inverso. Alfred Appel Junior, em seu artigo "Nabokov's dark cinema" até acha que o fato de ser ele um estrangeiro na América teria concorrido para facilitar a tarefa da observação, empreendida pelo autor, na fauna humana que habita, sofre e tenta viver nos Estados Unidos da América.

Segundo Alfred Appel Jr.,[4] Nabokov teria recorrido à cultura popular, dela se servindo para visualizar os detalhes do meio americano e para retratá-los em suas obras. Julgou aquele autor que somente a um emigrado seria facultada uma observação mais real da vida rotineira do americano da classe média. Assim, ele pôde até divertir-se, e nos

divertir, com o que constatou nas propagandas de artigos domésticos, nas séries de filmes para TV, no uso desenfreado de vitrolas automáticas, de motos e de motéis, nas armadilhas das máquinas caça-níqueis. Enfim, expôs toda a mecanização industrial e a comercialização que marcam a vida do país que o acolheu. Para o comentarista, Nabokov se deu conta de uma realidade americana que eles, os donos da terra, já não percebiam por estarem demasiadamente nela envolvidos.

Quando se ocupou de ambiente europeu, Nabokov retratou também a classe média em geral, constituída por profissionais liberais como médicos, professores, etc. e outros tipos, como motoristas, donas de casa, etc.

Todos os pontos anteriormente citados não teriam sido suficientes — se únicos — para caracterizar a obra de Nabokov.

Parece que à tal congregação de elementos está imposta uma tônica estilística que varia do cômico ao lírico, alternada e pitorescamente. prendendo o leitor de Nabokov até o fim da obra cuja leitura principie. Nabokov simplesmente nos impede de chorar perante o trágico da vida, e provoca o nosso riso restabelecendo o quadro emocional dos leitores.

Neste particular, Nabokov se nos afigura qual dançarina de espetáculos circenses, caminhando sobre o arame esticado e saltitando no ar, para restabelecer o equilíbrio.

Ele preferiu nos fazer rir, expondo seus personagens em tiradas cômicas, compondo de todo mundo — e dele próprio — uma grande caçoada universal. Não é sem razão que sua obra autobiográfica é intitulada *Somos todos arlequins*, o que vale dizer palhaços.

Exemplificando essa alternância tragi-cômica do estilo de Nabokov, pode-se encontrar exemplos, em prosa e verso, no interior do romance *Lolita*, respectivamente à página 12, capítulo 2º e às páginas 278/279 do 25º capítulo.[5]

A criatividade de Nabokov verificou-se, nos seus romances, estrutural e lingüisticamente. Nesse ponto, seus jogos de palavras e suas confecções vocabulares são notáveis e denunciam o absoluto domínio lingüístico do autor sobre os seus meios expressivos.

Em língua inglesa, os críticos chamaram sua linguagem de "um Inglês genuinamente perfeito e Nabocóvico." Ficou, nesse setor, famoso pela adoção enfática do termo "nimphet", com o qual se referia Humbert-Humbert a Lolita, e dos compostos que passou a formar do vocabulário apontado, como "nimphetland", "nimphage", "nympholepts", etc., que ainda não se acham dicionarizados.

Outro caso é o de Lolita, personagem feminina central do romance de mesmo nome, e que passou a designar substantivo comum, indicativo de mulher jovem, possuidora de forte apelo sexual, escrito com minúscula.

Finalmente há a apontar uma ocorrência muito séria e paradoxal quanto a Vladimir Nabokov e sua obra literária.

No período de *The eye ele* afirmou: "Como todos ssbem muito bem (para empregar a conhecida frase), meus livros se caracterizam não só por uma completa ausência de conteúdo social, como por não cultivarem o mito."[6]

Concordou com sua assertiva talvez um tanto rápido demais o crítico K. K. Ruthven,[7] ao ajuizar assim: — "Com tantos ávidos explicadores do mito à disposição, quantos escritores podem se rotular igualmente a Vladimir Nabokov por ter ele produzido ficções à prova de mito, à volta das quais os freudianos se movimentam avidamente, aproximam-se, param, farejam e se retiram?" Essa afirmativa foi formulada, parece-nos, antes que o tempo deixasse a obra de Nabokov agir sobre a humanidade suficientemente para que a presença ou a ausência do mito pudesse ser configurada com base.

O que se verificou posteriormente é que à revelia do autor, o romance *Lolita* conferiu ao mundo a origem de dois mitos para a época contemporânea. Primeiro, o do homem comum, simbolizado por Humbert-Humbert, sintomática redundância de nomenclatura que sugere "Humbert todos nós", universalizando um desejo proibido — e a fatalidade que está à espreita de quem se aventurar a consegui-lo.

Segundo, a denúncia da presença das lolitas da vida, que permeiam a todos nós, temperando a existência da humanidade masculina, sensível a seus condimentos perigosos.

NOTAS

1 BRADBURY, Malcom & BIGSBY, Christopher. *Harold Pinter*. London, Methuen, 1983. p. 7.
2 WILLIAM, Robert C. Nabokov's Berlin *The Yale Review*, Winter 1971. p. 241.
3 DIPPLE, Elizabeth. Plot. In: THE CRITICAL idiom. London, Methuen, 1980. p. 43.
4 APPEL, Alfred, Jr. Nabokov's dark cinema. *Western Humanities Reviews*, New York, 29(2) : 189.
5 Referimo-nos à tradução em língua portuguesa feita por Brenno Silveira, Rio de Janeiro, Ed. Record, 1982.
6 NABOKOV, Vladimir. The eye. In: NABOKOV'S dozen; thirteen stories. London, Heineman, 1959.
7 RUTHVEN, K. K. Myth. In: THE CRITICAL idiom. London, Methuen, 1976. p. 79.

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CONRAD: LIGHT IN DARKNESS

Conrad: Uma Luz nas Trevas

Conrad: Ein Licht in der Finsternis

Suely M. P. S. LOBO *

SUMMARY

This essay presents an analysis of the several stages Marlow, the main character in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of darkness*, passes by in his search for truth and self-understanding. It also questions the nature and extent of his achievement and success.

RESUMO

Este ensaio apresenta uma análise dos diversos estágios por que passa Marlow, o narrador principal em *Heart of darkness* de Joseph Conrad, na sua busca de verdade e autoconhecimento. Também questiona a natureza e o sucesso dos resultados dessa busca.

Multiple reasons account for the special appeal a literary text has for the reader. To detect those reasons and explain them is the task of specialized criticism. But, even the common reader is able to see that certain texts are more inviting than others to varied approaches, which is the case of Conrad's *Heart of darkness*. This is the kind of book that can be analysed from a sociological point of view if one's main concern is to explain what European contact meant to a continent like Africa or analyse what can really be found in the roots of colonialism. Or, it can be approached from an eminently psychological standpoint through which the reader will be tempted to follow Marlow's strip to the dark centres of the self and to establish a parallel between a physical trip and a psychological one. Or else, the approach can be historical, in an attempt to have a better understanding of the processes connected with countries economic, political and cultural development.

But, none of these methods, interesting as they may be, is, by itself, to be pursued in this essay. What is intended here is to use as many resources and approaches as necessary to achieve a satisfactory explication of Marlow's search for truth and understanding concerning himself and the world around. How near he gets to self-knowledge and what stages he passes by in the process are aspects that enrich this search and explain a lot about it.

Preoccupation with getting a more careful and exact view of reality is a dominant theme in Conrad's writing. In *Heart of darkness*, Marlow embodies this idea and at the same time reflects Conrad's personal concern about it. The author himself had been to Africa and, on his return confessed to a friend "Before the Congo I was a mere animal." He was perhaps referring to a somewhat distorted way of seeing the world (before his trip to Africa), which had been replaced by a more reliable perception of life (after the Congo experience).

In *Heart of darkness*, the first narrator sets the tone of the book when he suggests that that particular night on the Thames estuary is pregnant with promises of remembrances of past days, past experiences: "We looked at the venerable stream not in the vivid flush of a short day that comes and departs for ever, but in the august light of abiding memories" (CONRAD, 1986: 28).

To this comment he adds, later on, pieces of information concerning Marlow, the second narrator, indeed the narrator of the Congo experience. It is a significant descriptive piece because it talks of Marlow as not being a typical sailor, but a man of meditative nature, one for whom "the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze..." (30).

The two quotations seem to be complementary and the connection between them is important. The reader can see that on a night and in a place that are evocative of things already done and lived, there is a man in a group of others who is able to bring out the meaning of a tale (even if simply in

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the likeness of a misty halo) by telling that tale to people.

It is tempting to associate a character like this with archetypes such as that of the Wandering Jew or a character such as Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, traditional images of wanderers who go through the world telling a tale. But, such a ready association would lead to a kind of oversimplification that might be misguiding to the reader. Unlike them, there is no personal feeling of guilt in Marlow; there is the fascination for the wilderness, a fascination made clear by the comparison of the Congo river with a snake, an animal which often stands for the Tempter that offers the wisdom of the Tree of Knowledge. Marlow acknowledges the fact that the river attracts him as a snake attracts a bird. In this aspect the river = snake carries with it the Biblical implication of an agent of the Fall: "But there was in it one river specially, a mighty big river, that you could see on the map, resembling an immense snake uncoiled, with its body at rest curving afar over a vast country, and its tail lost in the depths of the land. And as I looked at the map of it in a shop-window, it fascinated me as a snake would a bird... I went on a long Fleet Street, but could not shake off the idea. The snake had charmed me" (33).

.....

"And the river was there-fascinating-deadly-like a snake" (36).

But, the tension created by this suggestion of fascination and impending doom is relaxed by the pervading idea that if one is strong enough to survive the attraction of the wilderness, then one is bound to move from darkness into some kind of light. This is not made clear in the text but is given signs of in a number of ways. The doctor that gets the dimensions of Marlow's head before his departure remarks: "... the changes take place inside, you know" (38). The first narrator refers to Marlow's stories as "inconclusive experiences" (32). Marlow himself points out that there is no initiation into the mysteries of the wilderness and that one "has to live in the midst of the incomprehensible" (31). But, he counterpoints these comments by referring to the farthest point of his voyage as being "the culminating point of my experience. It seemed somehow to throw a kind of light on everything about me — and into my thoughts. It was sombre enough, too — and pitiful — not extraordinary in any way — not very clear either. No, not very clear. And yet it seemed to throw a kind of light." (32) In the quotations presented in this paragraph two elements are clear: the certainty that experience leads to some kind of insight and the notion that this experience is not a way of achieving absolute truth but rather one of a series of steps on the way towards "a kind of light" (32). That is why Marlow's tales are called "inconclusive": they will be retold again and again before most of the hidden implications can come to full clarity.

For the reasons given above, it is interesting to observe the way in which Marlow is described while talking to the other men on board the Nellie "... with his legs folded before him, he had the pose of a Buddha preaching in European clothes and without a lotus-flower" (31).

The analogy between Marlow's and Buddha's position refers one back to the comparison between Marlow and wandering characters, such as the Jew and the Mariner and reinforces the idea that the connection in this case is not quite suitable. It would be more accurate, indeed, to think of Buddha in connection with Marlow than of the two characters mentioned above. In the very last paragraph of the book, the first narrator again describes Marlow as sitting in the position of a meditating Buddha and the reader is then reminded that in Buddhism *wandering* symbolizes *samsara*, man's mid-position between birth and death until enlightenment is reached and he can then join the centre, which is *motionless*.

Summing up, Marlow, like the Jew and the Mariner, tells his story to different people on different occasions; unlike them, he may do so to try to come to a better understanding of the experience he had lived and not because he is haunted by guilt. Like Buddha, Marlow has a meditative nature but, unlike him, he does not carry — at least not yet — the lotus-flower, which stands for wisdom and spiritual flowering.

Before his setting off to Africa, Marlow's aunt makes it clear she thinks he is an emissary of light taking progress, culture and civilized values to a backward land. Her words end up by causing a strange and unusual effect: an uncomfortable feeling of being an impostor comes over him. For this reason, it is not surprising that on getting to Africa, his notions concerning the real and the unreal become confused. From such a feeling of confusion there emerges the sensation that whatever belongs to that world is real and whatever is connected with his own world is not genuine, not natural there: "... we passed various places — trading places — with names... that seemed to belong to some sordid farce..." (40). But, there is no feeling of unnaturalness when Marlow observes native life: "Now and then a boat from the shore gave one a momentary contact with reality. It was paddled by black fellows... They shouted, sang; their bodies streamed with perspiration; they had faces like grotesque masks — these chaps; but they had bone, muscle, a wild vitality, an intense energy of movement, that was as natural and true as the surf along their coast. They wanted no excuse for being there. They were a great comfort to look at" (40).

To be able to perceive the clash between inative naturalness on one side and "a touch of insanity" (41) on the European side is quite a revelation to Marlow. He can now understand the feeling of imposture he had had before and the idea that no matter what he did he was inevitably part of the misdoings going on in such a situation. That is why one can say that there is no personal sense of guilt haunting Marlow. His is a social guilt, the guilt of belonging to the political group that has the power and that can so devastatingly promote "the merry dance of

death and trade" (41). This again explains why Marlow's story is told: not for penance, but, as an attempt to reach some kind of understanding or, perhaps, to bring some order out of chaos.

When Marlow reaches the Central Station, certain aspects make themselves relevant to the main point of this work. It is important to observe Marlow's recognition that when cut off from familiar surroundings and plunged into primitive and isolated places, man tends to unleash his most secret desires and forget the "external checks" (50) that are in a great measure responsible for his image as a civilized being. Marlow has always believed that work can be redeeming to a human being, not because of the effort in doing it, but because of "what is in the work, -the chance to find yourself" (59). But, as far as Marlow can see, those men out there are not working. Their greed for ivory makes them participants in all kinds of dirty games: "The only real feeling was a desire to get appointed to a trading post where ivory was to be had, so that they could earn percentages. They intrigued and slandered and hated each other on that account — but as to effectually lifting a little finger — oh, no" (54).

The Manager's ineptitude and the Brickmaker's laziness and uselessness are truly representative of the disjointedness between work and ideal in that world. The event witnessed by Marlow, in which a white man tries to extinguish a fire carrying water in a pail with a hole in the bottom, impresses him very much and reinforces the idea presented in this paragraph.

Another relevant aspect in Marlow's arrival at the Central Station has to do with his perception of the temptation the wilderness can be to some people, including himself. In reference to it, Marlow says: "... I wondered whether the stillness on the face of the immensity looking at us two were meant as an appeal or as a menace... Could we handle that dumb thing, or would it handle us?" (56).

At this point, Marlow finds out something about himself: he gets to know that he is not tempted by what is essentially material (ivory) but that he is deeply affected by the powerful primeval world of which he knows nothing; he is impressed by the enigma.

As Marlow goes on upriver to the Inner Station, he has the chance to think about mankind in general. It does not take a long time for him to come to the conclusion that although no man is superior to another yet every human being is really a mystery to each other. He goes deeper in his reflections and becomes able to see that the kinship between white men and the so-called uncivilized ones (the natives, in this particular circumstance) must be faced as a way of trying to understand one's own true nature: "...but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity — like yours — the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar ... What was there after all... truth — truth stripped of its cloak of time" (69).

Marlow experiences the pains of confrontation, of a confrontation between what is on the surface and what lies hidden in the unconscious. And again it is in work that he looks for strength to bear what he sees: "I had to keep a look-out for the signs of dead wood we could cut up in the night for next day's steaming. When you have to attend to things of that sort, to the mere incidents of the surface, the reality — the reality, I tell you — fades. The inner truth is hidden — luckily, luckily. But I felt it all the same..." (67).

Here he advances one step forward in terms of self-knowledge: one can see from the quotation above that Marlow feels that work may be a way towards the understanding of his own reality. But, he can also see that that is not enough. In order to face such reality one needs more: one needs "inborn strength" and "deliberate belief" (69).

At this point, Marlow has managed to go beyond the mere surface of things: principles, acquisitions are important but cannot replace "inborn strength" and "deliberate belief". These only can lead to authenticity, which is possibly, at least from Marlow's viewpoint, the way to integrate your own self with the world around.

As the steamboat progresses towards the inner Station, the reader can see Marlow progressing in his evaluation of certain aspects of man's behavior. At this point two main events cannot be overlooked either because they are representative of Marlow's recent observations or because they appear to him as questions of an instigating and complex nature. One of these events is linked to the idea of hunger, the other to the one of uprootedness.

The cannibals' attitude towards hunger perplexes him. The word *restraint* is repeatedly used to explain that attitude but the idea behind this word is in itself part of the enigma Marlow has been facing: "Why in the name of all the gnawing devils of hunger they didn't go for us — they were thirty to five — and have a good tuck in for once, amazes me now when I think of it ... And I saw that something restraining, one of those human secrets that baffle probability, had come into play there. ... Restraint! What possible restraint? Was it superstition, disgust, patience, fear — or some kind of primitive honour? ... It takes a man all his inborn strength to fight hunger properly" (75-76).

The "appetite" of the white men for ivory functions as a foil to that surprising restraint of the hungry cannibals. When analysing the situation from this angle, Marlow cannot but see in the white people the cannibalistic nature he had formerly thought to be an attribute of the natives.

As mentioned before, the other significant notion here is that of uprootedness, which, in this context,opposes the concept of authenticity. The steamboat helmsman is a good example of this contrast. Working for the white people in Africa, he has lost contact with his social group. Wounded during an attack suffered by the steamboat, he dies having in his eyes an "inquiring glance... it looked as though he would put to us some question..." (82). His bewildered glance no doubt expresses his confusion at his position in the order of things.

Detribalised, belonging neither to one world or another, he dies in utter puzzlement and without knowing what he is dying for!

While telling his story, Marlow sometimes interrupts the narrative of chronological facts to make digressions on what he has learned through observation and experience. In one of these moments, he ponders over the white man's power of restraint. He concludes that what makes civilized people behave in a socially acceptable way is the existence of the butcher (who provides them with meat for their hunger) and of the policeman (who forces them to stick to the straight path). Left to themselves in the wilderness they are prone to return to a state of savagery and ferocity: "...stepping delicately between the butcher and the policeman, in the holy terror of scandal and gallows and lunatic asylums — how can you imagine what particular region of the first ages a man's untrammelled feet may take him into by the way of solitude?" (85).

...Again, he takes up the idea of "inborn strength" and "deliberate belief"; these he has found out to be the resources man can count on. These alone will make it possible for him to "breathe dead hippo, so to speak, and not be contaminated" (86).

According to Marlow's narrative, he set off upriver, into the interior of the jungle do meet an agent called Kurtz and bring him back to civilization. On reaching the Outer Station, Marlow hears about Kurtz for the first time. From then on different people — the accountant, the manager, the brickmaker — provide pieces of information that make Marlow more than merely curious about that mysterious man. He very soon begins to perceive that Kurtz is part of the enigma that has been defying deciphering.

The accountant introduces Kurtz to Marlow by presenting a very flattering picture of the agent: "He is a very remarkable person. ... Sends in as much ivory as all the others put together. ... He will be a somebody in the Administration before long" (47).

To Marlow's question as to who had painted a "sketch in oils, on a panel, representing a woman, draped and blindfolded, carrying a lighted torch" (54), the brickmaker answers that Kurtz had done it. "He is a prodigy. ... He is an emissary of pity, and science and progress" (55).

For all that Marlow hears, he begins to see Kurtz first as a "word" (57) then as a "voice" (83):

> "Hadn't I been told in all the tones of jealousy and admiration that he had collected, bartered, swindled, or stolen more ivory than all the other agents together? That was not the point. The point was in his being a gifted creature, and that of all his gifts the one that stood out pre-eminently, that carried with it a sense of real presence, was his ability to talk, his words — the gift of expression, the bewildering, the illuminating, the most exalted and the most contemptible the pulsating stream of light, or the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness".

The seventeen-page-report written by Kurtz to the International Society for the Supression of Savage Customs is read by Marlow and shows him how seductive but, at the same time, how destructive that kind of eloquence can be. The Russian boy, the harlequin, is also a proof of this. "You don't talk with that man — you listen to him (91) he tells Marlow. He insists that Kurtz has made him see things, that he has enlarged his mind. However, twice he says: "I don't understand" (98, 102). Marlow notices that the harlequin idolises Kurtz but is wholly unable to meditate over his selfishness and lack of moral sense. Marlow realizes that his own power for moral discrimination makes him stronger than those people that are easily entrapped by Kurtz. When describing his first meeting with him, Marlow says: "I looked around, and I don't know why, but I assure you that never, never before, did this land, this river, this jungle, ... appear to me so hopeless and so dark, so impenetrable to human thought, so pitiless to human weakness" (94).

Marlow can see that physically as well as morally, Kurtz has become the shadow of a man. His ambivalent feelings towards Kurtz become explainable when he sees himself face to face with the enigma. Marlow comes to understand that Kurtz is at the same time a living representation of what can make man great and a terrible ilustration of the way in which one can bring down destruction and debasement upon oneself. Kurtz's positive qualities — idealism, eloquence, sophisticated cultural background — have been impaired by his cannibalistic nature, hist tremendous greed and sense of property. Marlow thinks that because Kurtz did not make use of his inborn strength and deliberate belief, he could not resist the spell of the wilderness, could not develop a resilient character that would have preserved his sanity and also his faithfulness to an ideal.

Although Marlow can come to conclusions such as those expressed above, he feels that part of the riddle remains inexplicable to him, impenetrable to his capacity of understanding. His admiration of Kurtz, in spite of everything, his feeling that something attached him to that man are aspects that will have to be made out in the long run: "I did not betray Mr. Kurtz — it was ordered I should never betray him — it was written I should be loyal to the nightmare of my choice. I was anxious to deal with this shadow by myself alone, — and to this day I don't know why I was so jealous of sharing with anyone the peculiar blackness of that experience" (105).

The reader, however, can see more than Marlow. He can see that there are similarities between him and Kurtz that may account for his attachment to him. Like Kurtz, Marlow is also seen as a gifted creature and an emissary of light. Like Kurtz, his instrument is eloquence, a *voice*. But, Marlow does not believe in the white man's mission as the carrier of light: on being told this, he feels he is an impostor. He uses his voice not to deceive and dominate but to try to throw light into darkness.

This explains why Marlow can break the spell of the wilderness upon himself and why Kurtz cannot do the same. Besides this, it enables Marlow to look into darkness and, nevertheless, keep his integrity: "But his [Kurtz's] soul was mad. Being alone in the wilderness, it had looked within itself, and, by heavens! I tell you, it had gone mad. I had — for my sins, I suppose — to go through the ordeal of looking into it myself. ... I saw the inconceivable mystery of a soul that knew no restraint, no faith and no fear, yet struggling blindly with itself" (108).

It is probably this fierce struggle that finally enables Kurtz to see the truth about himself: "It was as though a veil had been rent" (111), Marlow observes. Before his voice is gone, Kurtz whispers: "The horror! The horror!" (111).

Marlow is awe-struck at what he hears and sees. He thinks that Kurtz had been able to look at his own soul, balance what he had seen there and judge. Marlow's question "Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge?" (111) has no definite answer. But it brings Marlow face to face with himself; it forces him to compare Kurtz's vision with his own and conclude that while Kurtz had made a stride and stepped over the edge, he had only peeped over and then retreated. Kurtz had achieved a "moral victory": "Better his cry — much better. It was an affirmation, a moral victory, paid for by innumerable defeats, by abominable terrors, by abominable satisfactions. But it was a victory!" (113) For this Marlow has remained loyal to him and for this he has refused to destroy the illusions of Kurtz's Intended. His belief that a woman's world should be preserved from the deterioration and ugliness that are part of a man's world has something to do with his decision to lie to the Intended. But, it is out of sheer respect for Kurtz's memory and of his certainty that it would be useless to add to the darkness which was already too dark that he allows the Intended to plunge into "that great and saving illusion that shone with an unearthly glow in the darkness, in the triumphant darkness from which I could not have defended her — from which I could not even defend myself" (119).

Marlow has learned something! He has learned that perhaps "life is a greater riddle than some of us think it to be" (112) and that "The most you can hope from it is some knowledge of yourself — ..." (112). Like Coleridge's ancient mariner (and now the comparison seems appropriate) he goes on through life each new day "a sadder and a wiser man".

Marlow finishes his story but not his self-questioning: "Marlow ceased, and sat apart, indistinct and silent, in the pose of a meditating Budha" (121).

Conrad has told us one of his "inconclusive stories". How far Marlow will get in his search for truth we cannot know. Let us hope that, like Buddha, he will be allowed one day to hold the lotus-flower.

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THE THEME OF LONELINESS IN T. S. ELIOT'S PLAYS

O Tema da Solidão nas Peças de T. S. Eliot

das Thema der Einsamkeit in den Werken von T. S. Eliot

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SUMMARY

This paper analyses the theme of loneliness and estrangement in T. S. Eliot's plays, also making references to some of his poems. Loneliness is seen to co-occur with a process of inner disintegration, a step in the metamorphoses of Eliot's characters towards self-realization and wholeness. It also reveals Eliot's shift from tragedy to tragi-comedy together with an increasing use of some of the conventions of the masque.

RESUMO

O presente trabalho analisa o tema da solidão e do distanciamento nas peças de T. S. Eliot, fazendo também referências a alguns de seus poemas. Constata-se que a solidão ocorre simultaneamente com um processo de desintegração interna, uma etapa na metamorfose dos personagens de Eliot em busca da auto-realização e da plenitude. Demonstra-se também a transição da tragédia para a tragicomédia, juntamente com um uso crescente de algumas das convenções da «masque».

The characters in T. S. Eliot's plays, in their metamorphoses towards self-realization and wholeness, start out with the awareness of something "dis-easing" them, which is usually conveyed by the objective correlative of filth and illness (Vieira, 1986). But before achieving wholeness, they go through a second stage of increasing inner disintegration, which leads them to express their loss as loneliness. They are lonely from the start, but at least they develop a social mask, living on the illusion of sham roles. However, when they become aware of this sham, their conflicting inner values cause a greater inability to relate to others. The breaking up of their relationships coincides with a climactic moment of recognition, when they walk off the stage and ask the "overwhelming question" — who am I? — in unbearable loneliness. When they strip away the actor's mask and costume of their outer selves, they feel there is a loss of personality. Headings explains the breakdown of the outer self, the masked actor: "Only in the illusory personality do we normally conceive of our identities, and our views of others are equally or perhaps even more erroneous. Once our illusions are shed, the lack of them seems at first an intolerable isolation" (Headings, 146). Shedding illusions, dropping masks, mixing actors with audience within metamorphosis of dramatic ritual is the stuff of Eliot's plays, as it is the nature of that earlier form of entertainment, the masque.

It seems that Eliot adapted some of the conventions of the masque to modern drama especially in his later plays. His use of the image of the "masked actor" could be an influence of his readings of 17th century English entertainment. For example, in *The cocktail party*, the "guardians" make frequent irruptions into the host's house; sometimes they also take over Edward's role (Julia pours drinks, Alex prepares food), until the distinction between host and guest becomes blurred. But Eliot's greatest debt to the masque is to show, with great economy, the distinction between inner self (the face) and outer self (the mask). But instead of showing characters actually disguised in concrete masks and costumes, Eliot presents a mask which is philosophical in character: the playing of roles. The masks are, rather, devices his characters use to hide or to avoid confronting their inner selves. Whether belonging to the first group of characters, the martyrs and scapegoats, or to the second one of ordinary men, they wear a public mask to cover the inner suffering self. Elit's shift from martyr-oriented plays to ordinary man-oriented ones coincides with a gradual shift from tragedy to tragi-

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comedy. It has been said that man answers to anxieties in two ways: in tragedy he defies death — therefore tragedy begins where the instinct for preservation ends; in comedy he tries to minimize the danger — therefore comedy begins with the instinct for preservation (Hodgson, 23) Accordingly, Eliot's martyrs, isolated from the world, reach communion by denying the flesh, their human mask. And the disintegrated and lonely common characters reach communion by bridging the public mask and the private face, or by putting on proper masks. No matter what method they use, it is nevertheless an attempt to integrate themeselves and while away their painful isolation.

Eliot shows five categories of isolation, ranging from many to few people:

1. isolation from the world
2. isolation from one's country
3. isolation between friends
4. isolation within the family or between generations
5. isolation between a man and a woman.

In the first category, isolation from the world, we have Becket in *Murder in the cathedral* and Celia in *The cocktail party*. Becket, as a priest, is set apart from ordinary humanity. Thomas is well aware that his alienation from the world is part of a cosmic design, to be fulfilled when he has passed the stage of religious purgation. So, instead of postponing the moment of recognition, he forces "the moment to its crisis" by returning to England, facing the King's knights and ordering the priests to "unbar the doors" of the Cathedral, knowing the moment of his death has come.

Celia, through her lover Edward and her psychiatrist Dr. Reilly, also realizes that she does not belong to ordinary humanity and pursues her own way to martyrdom. Edward, in breaking with her, serves as a catalyst to quicken her awareness that she has always been alone and that one is always alone; she does not take the break as the end of an illusion, but as a revelation about her relationship with people — "It no longer seems worth while to speak to anyone". She feels she has to atone for the sense of emptiness and failure towards people, but at the same time she realizes that her kind of love does not belong to this life. Reilly, the priest wearing a doctor's mask, warns her that to achieve communion through martyrdom (entering the so called sanatorium) she would have first to suffer extreme loneliness. Celia accepts the hardest way. She finds the world a delusion, for communication here resembles a dumb show: people "make noises and think they are talking to each other; / They make faces and think they understand each other". She then abandons the world's masquerade for God.

As martyrs, Becket and Celia are rather unique cases. The ordinary masked actors sooner or later painfully have to confront their inner selves. That inner self must determine the conduct of the outer self if the whole self is to lead a satisfactory life. But the martyr's concern transcends earthly happiness. His suffering is not only spiritual but physical on his way to illumination. Reilly, talking about Celia's death, says she probably suffered "the reluctance of the body to become a thing". In fact, the glory and communion of the saint is usually associated with the annihilation of the flesh. The process, thus, is not self-discovery but self-denial. The similarities to Christ's martyrdom are very clear in both plays. Both Becket and Celia choose to look inward, to follow their conscience, as symbolized in the Church, and thus become isolated and antagonistic to the world. The form of Celia's sacrifice also echoes Christ's death: she was crucified by heathens near an ant-hill. Becket overtly says that he is repeating Christ's death:

> I am a priest,
> A Christian, saved by the blood of Christ,
> Ready to suffer with my blood.
> This is the sign of the Church always,
> The sign of blood. Blood for blood.
> His blood given to buy my life
> My blood given to pay for his death,
> My death for his death
>
> .....
>
> For my Lord I am now ready to die
> That his church may have peace and liberty (81).

Yet, Becket's bold statement that he is, like Christ, a redeemer and his haughty attitude throughout the play make the meaning of his death rather ambiguous. The play allows for the interpretation that Thomas acts not only out of submission to God, but also out of pride, as shown in the extreme views expressed by Zizola [1] and Smith.[2] If it is pride, the play is no longer a Christian Drama, but fits into the pattern of Classical Tragedy. The world is in chaos, because the powers which should order it (Church and State) are at variance. Thomas refuses to submit to the King's will. Therefore, the "wrong reason" may be also Becket's tragic flaw — pride. It is the Fourth Tempter who shatters Becket's confident belief that his death, like Christ's, is part of a cosmic design. To start with, since Becket compares himself to Christ, he expects three Tempters, not four. Moreover, the Fourth Tempter shows Becket that through death he can be more powerful than the King: "Seek the way of martyrdom, make yourself the lowest / On earth, to be high in heaven" (41-2). He also adds that the king's power is transient: kings die, are succeeded by others, and soon forgotten. But the martyr's power is timeless. Through the acceptance of a glorious death, Thomas can take revenge on the King. Since the play is ambiguous, "blood" may be the blood of redemption, like Christ's. But "blood for blood" is quite suggestive of retribution or revenge, as the "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" in The Old Testament. And in the dispute with the King, Becket had the lion's share, for his

glory actually transcended time. From the point of view of Classical Drama Becket's death has a different purpose from that of sainthood — the hero's tragic flaw brings catastrophe to the land, and order is restored only by his death. Eliot wrote a Christian drama using a Classical model. It is likely that he did not realize the ambivalence of the play. He stated in "Poetry and drama" that his design was to write a play on Martyrdom (In Hayward, 78). And the martyrs, Becket and Celia, the instances of extreme alienation from the world, reach communion with God through death.

Another type of loneliness is not a step to "salvation" as Becket's and Celia's were. Gomez, Lord Claverton's friend in *The elder statesman* is the one instance of the second category of loneliness, alienation from one's country. After he had served a term in prison, he fled to the Republic of San Marco in Central America. There he became a successful businessman and raised a family according to the standards of the country. He also changed his name, previously Fred Culverwell, to Frederico Gomez, to make it sound like Spanish. But adopting foreign customs did not make him less lonely — he had put on a Spanish mask and costume, but he still did not feel he belonged. In his loneliness, he had his children learn English, but language alone could not give them an English outlook on life. This he explains to Lord Claverton, upon his return to England after an absence of thirty-five years. He compares ordinary loneliness to the alienation of the foreigner:

> Gomez. I made my children learn English —
> it's useful;
> I always talk to them in English.
> But do they think in English? No, they
> do not.
> They think in Spanish, but their thoughts
> are Indian thoughts.
>
> O God, Dick, you don't know what it's like
> To be so cut off! Homesickness!
> Homesickness is a sickly word.
> You don't understand such isolation
> As mine, you think you do ...
> Lord Claverton. I'm sure I do,
> I've always been alone.
> Gomez. Oh, loneliness —
> Everybody knows what that's like.
> Your loneliness — so cozy, warm and
> padded:
> You're not isolated — merely insulated..
> It's only when you come to see that you
> have lost yourself
> That you are quite alone (23).

The process of losing one's outer self is a painful feeling for expatriates. They must adjust to a new environment without the aid of a mask. That adjustment causes a tension between the new outer self and the old inner self. Most of their inherited apparatus, including the cultural trappings, has to be left behind. As Gomez puts it, "I had to fabricate for myself another personality". Gomez explains to Lord Claverton that he came back because he was a lonely man, "with a craving for affection". Considering his painful isolation, one agrees with his explanation, but is also inclined to think that, among other reasons, he came back to search for the reintegration of his lost self.

These two categories comprise extreme cases — the voluntary isolation of the martyr and the imposed alienation of the expatriate with their loss of the self. The other three categories, isolation between friends, isolation within the family or between generations, and isolation between a man and a woman, seem to have interrelated aspects in common: when the "masked actors" fail to play the proper roles, their communication becomes difficult, which accounts for their ambivalent attitude of willing both to meet and shun people; usually there is an outsider who helps the characters to reach a moment of recognition, when the "actors walk off the stage" and confront their inner selves. They may feel temporarily lonely, but sooner or later reach communion in varying degrees.

Lord Claverton, in *The elder statesman* comprises the three categories of ordinary loneliness. As a public man, he was a typical actor, wearing an "authority's costume". He tells his daughter Monica and her fiancé Charles:

> I've spent all my life in trying to forget myself,
> In trying to identify myself with the role
> I had chosen to play. And the longer we
> pretend
> The harder it becomes to drop the pretence,
> Walk off the stage, change into our own clothes
> And speak as ourselves (55-6).

Accordingly, he is the clearest example of ambivalent attitude in his wish to meet and shun people. His social attitude is a contrast to the paradigms of the quasi-perfect relationship of Monica and Charles and also to the near-ideal relationship implicit in the perigraphy of the book.

Eliot dedicated the play to his second wife,[3] and anticipates in it the idea of perfect, even non-verbal communication. He talks of "The breathing in unison / Of lovers ... / Who think the same thoughts without need of speech / And babble the same speech without need of meaning". In their perfect mutual understanding, lovers may or may not use words. Yet, as isolation is an essential part of the human condition, the words lovers use have meaning only for them: "The words mean what they say, but some have a further meaning / For you and me only". Even though the husband and wife can communicate, they are isolated from the rest of the world. But there is a shared isolation, and therefore a communion. Hence even in the best of relationships, as that between husband and wife, man's herd instinct leads him to seek out others in order to break the isolation. Yet, paradoxically, such a communion can create its own isolation.

Another case of a near-ideal relationship is Charles and Monica's successful struggle to escape

from isolation. At the beginning of the play we find them quarreling because they can not say what they want; it is not a problem of articulation, but of opportunity — they are always surrounded by people, either in restaurants or shops, or complying with Lord Claverton's summons, and, therefore, do not have enough privacy. But at the play's end, after helping Monica's father to escape the burden of his alienation, they try hard to express their feelings, showing that the love they share is not transient and has, moreover, a staying power:

> Charles. Oh my dear,
> I love you to the limits of speech, and beyond.
> It is strange that words are so inadequate.
> Yet, like the asthmatic struggling for breath,
> So the lover must struggle for words.
> .....
>
> Monica. Age and decrepitude can have no terrors for me
> Loss and vicissitude cannot appal me,
> Not even death can dismay or amaze me
> Fixed in the certainty of love unchanging.
> I feel utterly secure
> In you; I am a part of you (70).

Widely apart from those two paradigms of near-ideal human relationship, we find the aging and decrepit Lord Claverton. A failure as friend, lover, husband and father, he has nothing to face but extreme loneliness at the end of his life. But throughout the play he departs from this intense isolation exactly through the very people he had failed, and his daughter Monica. As the play opens, Lord Claverton has just retired from public life, and experiences not only isolation but a sense of emptiness. As a politician and a businessman, he had always surrounded himself with people because of his terror of being alone. Yet he shuns strangers, because they are unknown entities to him and may uncover his mask of success and expose his guilty conscience. He is like Prufrock in his ambivalence towards people, and like one of the Hollow Men in that his fear makes him impotent to act:

> Lord Claverton. No, I've not the slightest longing for the life I've left
> Only fear of the emptiness before me.
> If I had the energy to work myself to death
> How gladly would I face death! But
> waiting, simply waiting,
> With no desire to act, yet a loathing of inaction.
> A fear of the vacuum, and no desire to fill it (17).

No matter how hard he tries to avoid people who would make him face his inner self, an old friend, Gomez, manages to have a meeting with him using the intruder's device of a change of names. And Gomez reminds Lord Claverton of his pay off when they were at Oxford. Exactly when the conversation is getting to a climactic point, Lord Claverton manages to leave, using the device of "a pre-arranged interruption of a trunk call to terminate the unwelcome intrusion". This visit may have quickened his decision to look for privacy in a nursing home, where in the first fifteen days he is happy. But he was soon to be interrupted, first by the matron, then by a former lover, next by his son in distress and finally by Gomez again. The appearance of his former lover, Mrs. Carghill, also explains why he has a guilty conscience and avoids facing it. Lord Claverton had no responsibility for those who admired and depended on him. His son's visit also reveals another instance of neglect — instead of teaching Michael the proper values in life, he simply taught him to be Lord Claverton's son; upon his return, Michael shows his father what the prestige of an important name had done to him: he did not learn to be responsible for his own acts, being thus unable to keep a steady job and to pay for his debts. All of those charges are too much for Lord Claverton's distressed conscience — one is reminded of the waiter in "Dans le Restaurant", who could only relieve his mind by telling a customer his coward and careless attitude of abandoning a little girl threatened by dogs in a storm. Similarly, Lord Claverton feels he has to confess things to clear his conscience. He begins by admitting to Monica and Charles that there had been no real communication between himself and his wife — she did not even know that ghosts haunted his conscience. And Lord Claverton, like Prufrock, did not find it worth the trouble talking to people for fear of being misunderstood:

> Lord Claverton. How open one's heart
> When one is sure of the wrong response?
>
> How make a confession with no hope of absolution?
> It was not her fault. We never understood each other.
> And so we lived, with a deep silence between us,
> And she died suddenly. She had nothing to say (57).

For Lord Claverton and his wife communication had been utterly imperfect. But he can still make amends and improve communication with his children. Monica, Claverton's daughter, suggests that they should "break the silence". Lord Claverton is still reluctant, for Monica still holds a high opinion of him and the revelation of his past misdeeds might destroy the ideal image she has of her father. But Monica encourages him to confess, and, contrary to his expectations, she does not blame him or give the wrong response. Both Charles and Monica listen with understanding and sympathy and feel that the confession has not estranged them, but strengthened the bond between the two generations. Relieved after the confession and the friendly response he had, Lord Claverton, now an "unmasked actor", talks of the process of reconciliation of the selves

— man can achieve wholeness only after disintegration:

> I've been freed from the self that pretends to be someone
> And in becoming no one, I begin to live.
> It is worth dying, to find out what life is (69).

This paradoxical process of "murdering to create" to reach communion differs only in degree from the process used by the martyrs Becket and Celia. The martyrs annihilated the body to purify the spirit; Lord Claverton "dissolved" the outer self to purge the inner one and reach conciliation of the two selves. Having integrated himself, he can now integrate with people around him. He no longer feels isolated and is the more willing to face the "intruders":

> Each of them remembers an occasion
> On which I ran away. Very well.
> I shan't run away now — run away from *them.*
> It is through this meeting that I shall at last escape them (59).

In *The confidential clerk* Eliot had already dealt with the problem of communication between husband and wife and between generations. Characters here are not completely isolated, for they have reached the point of accepting intermediate possibilities and partial understanding. They are well aware that they play dual roles in life and manage to find a compromise between their private and public selves. As the play develops each character reveals his private self and attempts to fill in the gap between the two selves, to improve social interaction. Unlike Lord Claverton, they are not self-deceivers who have to drop off a mask. They have no masks. Rather, they feel Janus-faced, parted from their inner selves. And unlike Lord Claverton and Prufrock they do not have to "murder to create". Emphasis in this play lies rather on the wish to create and perpetuate.

The paradigm in this play of perfect communication between a man and a woman is Sir Claude's former confidential clerk, Mr. Eggerson, and his wife, whose "perfect" communication is accepting imperfect communication. An elderly childless couple, they live in the country, where they spend their spare time growing a garden. Even though they seem a very happy couple, Mr. Eggerson admits there is a lot he does not understand about his wife. Colby, the new confidential clerk who, in some ways carries on the tradition of the former one and perpetuates Eggerson's self-image, can explain more convincingly why human understanding is essentially partial. Colby says there is no end to understanding people because they are always changing. He echoes the Buddhist doctrine of universal impermanence, in which all existence is merely a process of becoming. If men's consciousness is a series of transitory states,

> All one can do is to understand them better,
> To keep up with them; so that as the other changes,
> You can understand the change as soon as it happens,
> Though you coudn't have predicted it (53).

Colby also has his garden, an imaginary one, his metaphor for the search for privacy. But he explains that Eggerson's garden is more real than his, because he does not feel lonely there:

> Well, he retires to his garden — literally
> And also in the same sense that I retire to mine.
> But he doesn't feel alone there. And when he comes out
> He has marrows, or beetroot, or peas... for Mrs. Eggerson (50).

But what is more relevant about the garden is that it provides an opportunity of creating and giving things. And the act of creation has a special and symbolic meaning for the Eggersons. They had lost a son in wartime and, as an old couple, they cannot have another child. The vegetables he grows, especially marrows and beetroot, thus become anthropomorphic in the context. Marrow, besides being a vegetable, is also the soft tissue inside man's bones, the source of vigour. And the juicy, red beetroot is suggestive of blood. Both are images for man's vital fluids. Thus, giving her vegetables, Eggerson symbolically gives her a child. Gardening is then his life-giving work. And in his garden Eggerson can also enjoy his privacy.

Sir Claude, a businessman, escapes into the private life of his collection of porcelain. Having a pronounced artistic bent, he says that when he is among his china collection, "If it is an escape, is escape into living". His father had determined him for a financier, but he would like to be a potter. For dealing with his ceramics, however second-rate, Sir Claude has "that sense of identification / With the maker ... an agonizing ecstasy / Which makes life bearable". But making pots remains a dream for him, for his financial affairs take up most of his time. Unlike Eggerson, he cannot give life and shape things but as a financier, he buys whatever he would like to have created. His choice of a profession also has a direct bearing on his choice of a wife, who should be a good hostess. As he puts it, "I wanted a lady / And I'm perfectly satisfied with the bargain". In fact, Lady Elizabeth, an earl's daughter, is a suitable mate for a financier. On the other hand, Lady Elizabeth's parents, who thought her an ugly and feeble-minded child, rejected her, and had her brought up by a governess. Hence her choice of a husband of importance, to make her feel that at least the world accepted her. It seems that their marriage was satisfactory, for they had complementary needs. But after many years together they realize they took too much for granted — they know only each other's masks. In the natural tension that precedes the climactic point in plays (here Mrs. Guzzard's revelation of the characters' real identities) both husband and wife feel a drive

to speak their minds — Sir Claude reveals that his inner wish is to be a potter and Lady Elizabeth adds that she has always wanted to inspire an artist (hence the choice of her first love, a poet). If their marriage had been satisfactory on the surface so far, it can now be fully gratifying by bridging their complementary inner desires.

The fourth category of isolation is the problem of communication between generations. There is a common denominator for characters in *The confidential clerk*; except for Mr. and Mrs. Eggerson, all of them were, or felt themselves to be, either foundlings or bastards, therefore the characters try to fill a gap in the parent-child relationship. Sir Claude, the mildest case, had a father who forced his choice of a career. But there was a flaw in their relationship, as he explains:

> All my life
> I have been atoning. To a dead father
> Who had always been right. I never understood him.
> I was too young. And when I was mature enough
> To understand him, he was not there (38-9).

No matter how imperfect Sir Claude's relationship with his father had been, he still has the basic human need of perpetuating himself. But what he thinks of as his two children, Lucasta and Colby, were illegitimate and, therefore, were brought up away from him. Before he learns that Colby is not actually his son, he perpetuates his father's mistake of trying to impose a career on the son — Sir Claude tries to introduce Colby into the business world, when the latter really wanted to be a musician When the "father" asks Colby how he finds his work, Colby answers:

> It's rather disturbing. I don't mean the work.
> I mean, about myself. As if I was becoming
> A different person. Just as, I suppose,
> If you learn to speak a foreign language fluently
> So that you can think in it — you feel yourself to be
> Rather a different person when you're talking it.
> I'm not at all sure that I like the other person
> That I feel myself becoming (36).

Colby, thus, temporarily shares with Gomez, the expatriate in *The elder statesman* the same sense of parting from one's self — we see in both plays the parallel to speaking a foreign language. Colby's supposed sister, Lucasta, provides another example of Sir Claude's inability to relate with his children. Lucasta hated her mother, first because she was addicted to alcohol and secondly because she had to become a prostitute to make ends meet. As an adult, Lucasta came to live in Sir Claude's household, but she says that he only accepted her like "a debit item / Always in his cash account". Because she was rejected she put on a protective mask — she got into the habit of giving the false impression of being frivolous, and of outwardly not showing respect for people. She defies them by calling them by their first names; moreover she is unable to have a steady job and to keep control over her money. But deep inside she hates the image she has created around her, and wishes to drop off the mask and become herself. Talking to Colby and ignoring the fact that he is a bastard too, she says:

> Little you know what it's like to be a bastard
> And wanted by nobody.
> I don't like myself,
> I don't like the person I've forced myself to be;
> .....
> And I thought, now, perhaps if someone else sees me
> As I really am, I might become myself (56-7).

But it must be awfully difficult for Lucasta to integrate herself. Her case is more serious than a partial loss of the self, for she feels she is no more than an object at the mercy of fate, as she confesses to Colby:

> I hardly feel that I'm even a person:
> Nothing but a bit of living matter
>
> Floating on the surface of the Regent's canal.
> Floating, that's it (24).

Lady Elizabeth also floats in life. In spite of being an earl's legitimate daughter, her parents had rejected her. Her first love, a poet with whom she had a child, died suddenly in an accident, and she lost track of the baby when it was put up for adoption. She is satisfactorily married to Sir Claude, though childless. Her suppressed inner drive, forever seeking an outlet, finds an expression in her travels and social events designed to fill up the emptiness of her life. Believing that she has more insight than other people, she has the intuition that Colby is her lost child. It is then that Sir Claude decides to confess to her that Colby is his son. Each tries to provide the most reliable evidence to their claims, while Colby listens quietly, only to conclude later:

> What does it matter
> Whose son I am? You don't understand
> That when one has lived without parents, as a child,
> There's a gap that never can be filled.
> Never (77).

In fact, if one thinks of the part played by the family group in the socialization of the individual, one can understand Colby's introversion. If the family provides the first opportunity for social interaction, then there was no real interaction in Colby's case, for he lived alone with an aunt, therefore becoming an introvert and a self-sufficient person. Even his playing music is not really a means of contact with the world, for he likes to play mostly to himself. Moreover, he resents not having had a father whose image he could internalize

and perpetuate — this is probably the gap he refers to. Eliot, in his "Conformity to nature", has insisted on the importance of the family as a vehicle to transmit culture, including in it both craft and a way of life. He also adds that "when the family life fails to play its part, we must expect our culture to deteriorate" (In Hayward, 118). Colby sounds like Eliot's mouthpiece when he answers Mrs. Guzzard's question on what kind of father he would like to have:

> I should like a father
> .....
> Whose image I could create in my own mind,
> To live with that image. An ordinary man
> Whose life I could in some way perpetuate
> By being the person he would like to be,
> And by doing the things he had wanted to do (118).

When Colby was talking to Sir Claude about his feeling of becoming a different person in his new profession, he added later that when he walked alone in the night (probably an indirect allusion to his deep consciousness) he had to fight the disappointed organist inside himself. Little did he know that what he was trying to fight was exactly what he searched, his father's model. Again, it is Mrs. Guzzard who clears up the situation by revealing that he is actually the son of a poor musician. Colby then drops his mask of prospective businessman and follows his real father's model — an obscure church organist.

Mrs. Guzzard's information also enables Lady Elizabeth to discover that Kagham, Lucasta's fiancé, is her lost child. Kaghan finds it slightly difficult to face the fact that he has a mother, for he has always lived with the idea that he is a foundling. To make things worse, it is exactly Lady Elizabeth, his prospective mother-in-law, and whom he does not admire much. He finds the situation so awkward and artificial, that he was given permission to call her "Aunt" Elizabeth. Like Colby, he had unconsciously adopted a father model, namely Sir Claude. As the play opens, he believes Sir Claude to be his future father-in-law and, as it closes, Sir Claude is both his father-in-law and step-father. And Kaghan had actually already followed his steps, for he was a sucessful businessman who wanted to be "a power in the city".

Unlike the other plays, characters in *The confidential clerk* have passed the stage of shunning people. Each character has two main concerns, trying to find his true vocation and his inheritance. The choice of true vocation depends on self-knowledge; but self-knowledge depends on communication with others and understanding them. This is the conclusion Lucasta draws when, talking to Colby, they realize that they have common features,[4] insecurity, for example:

> Oh, it's strange, isn't it,
> That as one gets to know a person better
> One finds them in some ways very like oneself.
> In unexpected ways (48).

Lucasta had already said that one of the reasons for her insecurity is the false impression she gives to people — in other words, her outer self does not match her inner one. As the conversation goes on, Colby also shows that he feels uneasy about his professional choice. Since Lucasta is not very concerned about true vocations, she believes it to belong to the realm of the outer self. But Colby takes his wrong professional choice as the outer self; the true vocation belongs to the inner self. But it is through conversation with Lucasta or, communicating with people, that Colby concludes that, like her, he has two unrelated selves:

> Lucasta. It's awful for a man to have to give up
> A career that he's set his heart on, I'm sure:
> But it's only the outer world that you've lost.
> You've still got your world — a world that's more real.
> .....
>
> Colby. You may be right, up to a point
> And yet, you know, it's not quite real to me —
> Although it's as real to me as... this world.
> But that's just the trouble. They seem so unrelated.
> .....
>
> If you have two lives
> Which have nothing whatever to do with each other —
> Well, they're both unreal (49-51).

Even though characters feel that talking to people is a process of self-knowledge, they are aware that communication is essentially imperfect. When one says something, his statements bear the value and sense of things as one sees them; but the listener translates them according to his own conception. The obvious consequence is misunderstanding, or, as Prufrock puts it, "That's not what I meant at all". Colby explains this essential flaw in communication in terms of music performance:

> Always, when I play to myself
> I hear the music I should like to have written,
> As the composer heard it when it came to him;
> But when I played before other people
> I was always conscious that what they heard
> Was not what I hear when I play to myself.
> What I hear is a great musician's music,
> What they hear is an inferior rendering (39-40).

Even though characteres in this play say time and again that understanding and communication are essentially limited, they are most willing to improve both. The clearest example of this effort is their summoning an outsider, Mrs. Guzzard, to

unfasten the "knot of confusion". Lady Elizabeth shows how keen they are to face people by overstating her wish: "I must *see* this Mrs. Guzzard. I must *confront* her" (*italics mine*). And Mrs. Guzzard's accounts do help them first to know their inheritance and then to follow their true inner promptings. Through meeting people, understanding and communication among characters were improved, but not yet perfected. Lady Elizabeth, in her last speech in the play, sums up their wish to bring understanding nearer perfection:

> Between not knowing what one should ask of other people,
> One does make mistakes! But I mean to do better.
> Claude, we've got to try to understand our children (127).

Lucasta and Kaghan then second Lady Elizabeth's words by saying they should also try to understand their parents.

In *The confidential clerk* Eliot develops some of the themes presented earlier in *The family reunion*. Both Colby and Harry, the protagonists in the two plays, learn that some of our apparently unaccountable promptings are inherited. The theme of communication is also common to both plays. But communication in *The family reunion* is a much more serious problem. Since the characters in *The Confidential clerk* have a higher degree of self-awareness, they can communicate better and do not feel so lonely. Harry, on the contrary, problably owing to his clouded self-understanding, finds communication awfully difficult. Even at the play's end he can only communicate better with his aunt Agatha and to a lesser degree with his cousin Mary. Isolation is a widespread disease in *The family reunion* where even the house, Wishwood, is cold and isolated in the country. Henn adds that the word "Wishwood" "suggests the confusion and the sinister character of the wood, and the desire of its inhabitants for the past" (222-23). "Wishwood" has, moreover, the connotation of a place that exists only in imagination, a sort of stage acting, as it were. In fact, Amy, Harry's widowed mother, has matriarchally imposed roles on the children and near relatives. As they grow up, she just changes the roles to be played, but remains a peremptory stage director, assigning parts, as Harry discloses to Agatha:

> Family affection
> Was a kind of formal obligation, a duty
> Only noticed by its neglect. One had that part to play,
> After such training, I could endure, these ten years.
> Playing a part that had been imposed upon me:
> And I returned to find another one made ready —
> The book laid out, lines underscored, and the costume
> Ready to be put on (76).

In fact, when Harry returns home after many years, Amy had already planned his life from then on for him. The occasion is her birthday. Realizing her impending death, Amy tries to assemble her sons, brothers and sisters to celebrate both her birthday and Harry's return, and to pass on to him command over Wishwood. This is his new part to be played. The aunts and uncles, who make up the chorus, also feel they are a set of amateur comic actors performing a play without the proper stage direction:

> Why do we feel embarassed, impatient, fretful, ill at ease,
> Assembled like amateur actors who have not been assigned their parts?
> Like amateur actors in a dream when the curtain rises, to find themselves dressed for a different play, or having rehearsed the wrong parts,
> Waiting for the rustling in the stalls, the titter in the dress circle, the laughter and catcalls in the gallery? (26).

Even though the chorus in this play[6] does not have the traditional function of explaining, it has that one of anticipating as we can see in its foreseeing failure. In fact, throughout the play, we see Amy's plans and management collapsing. Her commanding attitude dates further back than Harry's return on her birthday or even his childhood. The first three years of her marriage were childless, and the couple did not get along well. Yet, her great concern about the future led her to keep the husband for seven years as "a discontented ghost / In his own house" and to "force sons upon an unwilling father". But at the end of Amy's life Harry is the first one to openly reject the roles she had imposed. In her loneliness at old age, because of failures dating from the past, she very much resembles and echoes Gerontion, the lonely old man tormented by winds. One of her last speeches before death is so pathetic that we are inclined to agree with Eliot that "we are left in a divided frame of mind, not knowing whether to consider the play the tragedy of the mother or the salvation of the son":[6]

> So you will all leave me!
> An old woman alone in a damned house.
> I will let the walls crumble. Why should I worry
> To keep the tiles on the roof, combat the endless weather,
> Resist the wind?
>
> .....
>
> It is no concern of the body in the tomb
> To bother about the upkeep. Let the wind and rain do that ((86).

Harry had already rejected Amy's impositions eight years before, when he went away. Haunted by ghosts he could not explain, he left the house to drift in the world. It may be that he did this

to avoid collision with his mother, even though this is not stated in the play; but the fact is that, leaving the house to flee from his ghosts, he felt he was parting from himself and, as a consequence, experienced a very painful isolation:

> At the beginning, eight years ago,
> I felt, at first, that sense of separation,
> Of isolation unredeemable, irrevocable —
> It's eternal, or gives a knowledge of eternity,
> Because it feels eternal while it lasts. That is one hell.
> Then the numbness came to cover it — that is another —
> That was the second hell of not being there,
> The degradation of being parted from myself,
> From the self which persisted. Only as an eye, seeing (71-2).

To avoid solitude, he tried to mingle with the crowd. But, like Prufrock, merging with the crowd did not make him feel less lonely. On the contrary, it seems that the crowd was as aimless and lost as Harry, or maybe merely his projection, therefore making things worse. His resemblance to Prufrock is so great, that even the image of the etherized person is used here to show the quester covered with a mist of unknowing:

> The sudden solitude in a crowded desert
> In a thick smoke, many creatures moving
> Without direction, for no direction
> Leads anywhere but round and round in that vapour —
> Without purpose, and without principle of conduct
> In flickering intervals of light and darkness.
> The partial anaesthesia of suffering without feeling
> And partial observation of one's own automatism (30).

During his absence, Harry got married but again he was no less lonely nor free from his ghosts. He tried to escape them through violence, that is, by pushing his wife overboard during a voyage; Harry himself is not sure whether her death was an accident or not, as he comments later in the play; but either witnessing or committing violence did not help him:

> One thinks to escape
> By violence, but one is still alone
> In an over-crowded desert, jostled by ghosts (30).

Being then a widower and away from home for eight years, Harry could no longer bear his tormented loneliness. Not only has his inner integrity collapsed, but he does not even feel he is a person — as he puts it, "all this last year, I could not fit myself together / ... Diffused, I not a person, in a world not of persons / But only of contaminating presences" (72). Considering his painful condition, one can easily understand his impulse to return to the point of departure, believing that at Wishwood he would "fit himself together". This is exactly what Mary concludes upon his return:

> But surely, what you say
> Only proves that you expected Wishwood
> To be your real self, to do something for you (46).

But returning home did not make things fall into place. On the contrary, as soon as Harry enters the house, the ghosts long tormenting his conscience become now visible — the first thing he sees are the Eumenides in the window. Mary adds later that a change of places is useless, because what he needs to alter is something inside him. The family assembled for the birthday party readily notices Harry's distress and tries to get him to explain it. Yet his affliction is so great that he is unable to articulate his feelings. The more he talks about his sufferings, the less does the family understand. Harry himself concludes that what has happened or is happening to him is unspeakable, untranslatable, and explaining would only set him farther away from them. Moreover, to explain that he has been living on several planes at once, he would need several voices — thus, the only way for them to understand is by seeing. But the family's concerns are too practical and down-to-earth, therefore hindering their penetrating into Harry's mind. They remain then as spectators. There are, however, two exceptions — Mary and Agatha, the most sensitive characters in the play. The latter even tells her brothers and sisters that they cannot simply watch is going on as a passive audience:

> We cannot rest in being
> The impatient spectators of malice or stupidity.
> We must try to penetrate the other private worlds
> Of make-believe and fear (67-8).

Agatha has a private talk with Harry and unfastens the "knot of confusion" which the uncles and aunts had helped to tighten. Harry's instinct to return, believing that things would readily fall into proper places, had proved a failure so far. But he certainly senses that the origin of his sufferings is there in the house. He had already unsuccessfully tried to find a way of talking with Dr. Warbuton that would get him somewhere. But it is Agatha who finds this way. By revealing his family's past, she enables Harry to learn the nature of his ghosts. Agatha's revelation of the past to order the present is very similar to Mrs. Guzzard's in *The Confidential clerk*. Moreover, both of them are outsiders; even though Agatha is a relative, Amy has considered her an intruder since she had tried to take her husband away from her thirty years before.

As mentioned before, Harry learns through Agatha that he is the unconsciousness of his unhappy family. Harry realizes that an inherited

curse is part of his self. Having found out what had been unknown about his own self, Harry experiences a feeling of wholeness, however precarious it may be. And this sense of integrity enables him for the first time to communicate perfectly with Agatha, who also shows to be his real spiritual mother. Instead of saying his habitual "you do not understand", he asks Agatha whether she also feels" a communication, a scent / Direct to the brain". No longer clouded, Harry now sees his ghosts, the Eumenides, as angels he must follow.

This higher degree of self-awareness also enables Harry to make more conscious choices. He drops the mask of his outer self given him by his mother, openly rejecting the roles she had designed. He decides to leave not to shun people as he had done for eight years, but because, again like Lord Claverton, having integrated himself, he has learned to accept solitude. Once more the family is bewildered, this time with the news of Harry's sudden leaving. But he has not yet learned to communicate with them. He tells them he is sure of what he is doing; but if he says anything it will only be to avoid their thinking he is concealing an explanation. Harry's driver, Downing, is also an outsider who has more insight than people within. When the family asks him whether he would still be with Harry, he says he will, but he has the feeling that Harry will not need him long now. Downing cannot explain why, and adds later that soon Harry will need neither him nor anybody else. In this respect Harry bears some resemblance to the martyrs Celia and Becket, who reach communion through complete solitude, that is, by isolating from the world. The martyrs also sacrifice the self to expiate a general curse or sin — and Harry also says that he will worship in the desert and feel thirst and deprivation, he will expiate the family curse by sacrificing his self.

Harry's resemblance to Celia is not the only similarity between *The family reunion* and the play Eliot wrote next, *The cocktail party*. Agatha, Harry's amateur therapist, has an analogue in Dr. Reilly, the psychiatrist who treats the widespread disease of loneliness and also, more specifically, estrangement between a man and a woman in *The cocktail party*. When Harry decides to leave, he asks Agatha whether they will ever meet again. She answers that "Meeting is for strangers / Meeting is for those who do not know each other". Reilly echoes and expands Agatha's views in his admonitions to Edward: he should meet his wife as a stranger when she comes back, for "at every meeting, we are meeting a stranger". In fact, it is during his wife's absence that Edward realizes how little he knows her, therefore a stranger to him.

When Edward first meets and confides in Reilly, the latter was an Unidentified Guest at the cocktail party — then a stranger and to a certain extent an intruder. He is the last guest to leave the party. Feeling distressed by his wife's sudden leaving, Edward had tried to put people off, but could not get hold of all of them. He had meant to shun the guests, knowing beforehand he would not be able to play the host's role properly. Throughout the party he tries to act as if his wife's absence were only a momentary mishap, but could hardly wait for the party to end, to drop off the pretence. Left alone with the Unidentified Guest, Edward asks him to remain and listen to him. Edward had wanted to disclose to someone, but it should be someone he did not know. His choice of a stranger as a confidant is understandable — a stranger would not expect him to play the sham role of the happy husband and host he was used to. He could therefore say what he really feels. But the Unidentified Guest warns him that "to approach the stranger / ... Is to start a train of events beyond your control". In fact, facing the two strangers, the Unidentified Guest and his wife as he now sees her, Edward painfunlly feels the disintegration of his personatlity. Using a party, an actor and a staircase as metaphors, the Unidentified Guest explains to Edward what has happened to him:

> When you've dressed for the party
> And are going downstairs, with everything about you
> Arranged to support you in the role you have chosen
> Then sometimes, when you come to the bottom step,
> There is one step more than your feet expected,
> And you come down with a jolt. Just for a moment
> You have the experience of being an object
> At the mercy of a malevolent staircase (30).

This choice of interrelated metaphors is pertinent here. The first one, the party, readily recalls Edward and Lavinia's "amateur Thursdays" when they gather people at their flat. Edward's explanation of those weekly parties has to do with the metaphor of the actor — Lavinia wants to play the hostess, and therefore needs the husband to play the successful professional to supply a background for her kind of public life. One may go a step further and interpret the party as a search for anonimity or self-escape in the crowd, knowing that when the couple mingles with the guests they avoid facing each other and the staleness of their life as husband and wife. But postponing is useless, for eventually the couple has to admit how frail the bases of their mutual life are. This idea of fragility leads to the third metaphor, the malevolent staircase — the person going down can conceal some underlying weakness with a neat outward look, but an unexpected last step is there to betray him. Eliot had used this image before when he showed Prufrock in an elegant coat and tie, willing to go down the stairs, but reluctant to do so, foreseeing that his feeble limbs would fail him. In his disclosure to Celia that same night, Edward shows other features he has in common with Prufrock. He says that, since his wife's departure that morning, he met himself as a middle-aged man beginning to

know what it is to feel old and having a desire for inaction. Edward also has a painful feeling of being confined in a place — but torn by intolerable contradictions he is unable to leave and remains within his hell of loneliness. There are also parallels to Sartre's *Huis clos* in Edward's words:

> There was a door
> And I could not open it. I could not touch the handle.
> What is hell? Hell is oneself,
> Hell is alone, the other figures in it
> Merely projections. There is nothing to escape from
> And nothing to escape to. One is always alone (99).

The image of the character in a close, confined room, isolated from the world without is the same in the two plays. Yet, Edward's "Hell is oneself" is a counterstatement to Garcin's "Hell is ... other people". People in *Huis clos* are free to open the door and leave, but they prefer to close it. They choose to stay within the hell of their despair. But Edward's despair is momentary and only one of the steps in the process of achieving a full life.

It is the Unidentified Guest who leads Edward to understand why he feels like a damned soul torn into pieces. His wife's going away not only means that their marriage had gone on the rocks, but also makes Edward feel he has lost his personality. The Unidentified Guest explains man's basic dichotomy of matter / spirit or physical self / personality in very simple terms: man is an object as well as a person. If man loses touch with the person he thought he was, he is suddenly reduced to the state of an object. He is like etherized Prufrock on a table, as the Unidentified Guest says:

> Or, take a surgical operation.
> In consultation with the doctor and the surgeon,
> In going to bed in the nursing home,
> In talking to the matron, you are still the subject,
> The center of reality. But, stretched on the table,
> You are a piece of furniture in a repair shop
> For those who surround you, the masked actors.
> All there is of you is your body.
> And the "you" is withdrawn. May I replenish? (30-31).

If we take an operation as a cure, the first step is removing the impaired part; similarly, to fix a piece of furniture one removes the broken part, replaces it with a new one and then assembles the parts again. Likewise, Edward had "lost" his personality and can only integrate himself by "fixing" himself another one. This quotation from *The cocktail party* provides an outstanding example of the Unidentified Guest's ambiguous talk throughout the play. The question "May I replenish" is left open, because "replenish" is a transitive verb; but here the object is missing. Since they had been fixing cocktails, the question may be simply his asking permission to fill in the glasses. But they had also been talking about loss of personality; so the question may be the priest-psychiatrist offer to provide what was missing in Edward, namely the "you".

Julia, who also appears at the parties under a mask of guest. is actually Reilly's partner in the "fix-it-shop". She also talks of disintegration as a step that precedes integration. She uses the image of the masked actor to convey her meaning:

> All we could do was to give them the chance.
> And now, when they are stripped naked to their souls
> And can choose, whether to put on proper costumes
> Or huddle quickly into new disguises,
> They have, for the first time, somewhere to start from (146).

Edward is stripped naked to his soul, but he still has to grope for a starting point. His ambivalent attitude is the first sign of his being lost in the world. He wants his wife back, yet, at the same time, he wants to be alone. He faces a painful dilemma, for his life is empty without Lavinia, but is unbearable with her, as he tells Reilly:

> Without her, it was vacancy.
> When I thought she had left me, I began to dissolve,
> To cease to exist. That was what she had done to me!
> I cannot live with her — that is now intolerable;
> I cannot live without her, for she has made me incapable
> Of having any existence of my own.
> That is what she has done to me in five years together!
> She has made the world a place I cannot live in
> Except on her terms. I must be alone,
> But not in the same world (112).

To solve his dilemma and lead a gratifying married life, Edward must first find out who he is and what he really is among people, according to Reilly. Edward had taken both his wife and himself for granted and, therefore, lived on a very meagre knowledge of what they really were. "Replenishing" one's naked soul requires self-knowledge — and Edward, in his clouded condition, tries to find who he is in a sort of trial and error method. His first attempt is trying to be alone, maybe to muse over the situation. But one guest irrupts in as soon as the other leaves, and the attempt proves a failure. His next attempts have to do with meeting people, rather than shunning them. To start with, he wants Lavinia back, "to find out who she is, to find out who I am". Later, Edward has the chance of seeing a situation analogous to his own. Peter, another of his guests is in love with Celia, but she has broken with him. Not only does one situation

mirror the other, but Peter's words also echo Edward's:

> But I must see Celia at least to make her tell me
> What has happened, in her terms. Until I know that
> I shan't know the truth about even the memory (48).

Analogies increase self-awareness. By distancing the problem, one can see it in a broader context and reason it out. Celia, coming back later that same night, provides Edward with another method — seeing oneself through the eyes of other people. Celia is Edward's lover; if Lavinia had left Edward, he is now free to marry her. But this possibility makes Celia think about the affair and realize it is dream-like. She then also breaks with him. After their respective metamorphoses Celia sees Edward as no more than a Kafkan insect:

> I looked at your face: and I thought that I knew
> And loved every contour; and as I looked
> It withered, as if I had unwrapped a mummy.
> I listened to your voice
> .....
> What I heard was only the noise of an insect,
> Dry, endless, meaningless, inhuman
> .....
> I looked
> And listened for your heart, your blood,
> And saw only a beetle the size of a man
> With nothing more inside it than what comes out
> When you tread on a beetle (67).

When Lavinia comes back she is changed, or as Reilly had warned Edward, a stranger to him. Edward says he has also changed and in reply to her question on how it happened, he says it is "The change that comes / From seeing oneself through the eyes of other people".

In his "trial and error" method, Edward at least learns that one's personality includes both a deep and an outer self which must be integrated, or else the whole collapses, as he discloses to Celia:

> I see that my life was determined long ago
> And that the struggle to escape from it
> Is only a make-believe, a pretence
> That what is, is not, or could be changed
> The self that can say "I want this — or want that —
> The self that wills — he is a feeble creature;
> He has to come to terms in the end
> With the obstinate, the tougher self; who does not speak,
> Who never talks, who cannot argue;
> .....
> The willing self can contrive the disaster
> Of this unwilling partnership — but can only flourish
> In submission to the rule of the stronger partner (66-7).

This is already a step towards self- knowledge but not yet the way of integrating the selves. As Lavinia points out to Edward, "You're much too divided to know what you want". Upon the advice of Lavinia and Celia, Edward decides to go and make the visit to the psychiatrist. Edward talks of the symptoms of his "illness": loneliness, a fear of the death of the spirit, his being obsessed by the thought of his own insignificance and his feeling that he is uncapable of loving. But Reilly had noticed some of these symptoms in Lavinia before, with the difference that she feels incapable of being loved. Reilly does not treat Edward's symptoms, nor does he integrate his personality. He leads them to find a way out of loneliness, exactly by sharing their isolation. Like Sir Claude and Lady Elizabeth, they also have complementary needs:

> And now you begin to see, I hope,
> How much you have in common. The same isolation.
> A man who finds himself incapable of loving
> And a woman who finds that no one can love her.
> .....
> See it rather as the bond which holds you together (124-25).

The Chamberlaynes learn that isolation is man's essential feature. But acceptance of human limitation and mutual tolerance may be ways out of loneliness toward integration. And it seems that Reilly's method works. In the last party Lavinia and Edward are satisfactorily reconciled to each other and to themselves. Moreover, the love triangles at the beginning of the play, a sign that loneliness within leads to the need to complement from outside, no longer exist at the play's end.

This is only one instance of the many changes in Eliot's plays. Within the action of each play, the characters learn that loneliness and disintegration are steps to communion and wholeness. But considering the plays as a whole, we notice a changed outlook in Eliot's treatment of the characters' metamorphoses. Archbishop Thomas, Eliot's most tragic character, is the symbol *par excellence* of extreme alienation. Believing that secular life is not his assigned lot, he faces his death squarely. Harry, the lonely pathetic sufferer in *The family reunion*, is unable to communicate except with Agatha and Mary. He leaves his mother to expiate a curse in the desert. Celia, the martyr in *The cocktail party*, chooses a dangerous way of life which she is well aware may lead to death. Certain that it is not even worth while speaking to anyone, she abandons the world's dumb show, and, like Becket, reaches communion with God through death. Except for Celia, from *The cocktail party* on, Eliot presents ordinary masked characters. The plays also grow lighter in tone, and the distinction between tragedy and farce becomes blurred. Accordingly, the character as scapegoat has disappeared — emphasis lies rather on individual responsibility.

Loneliness and suffering grow less extreme and salvation is therefore intermediate. Edward and Lavinia, lonely at first, drop their mask of sham to put on a proper one — they also learn how to tolerate each other. In *The confidential clerk* the less lonely, yet Janus-faced characters manage ao integrate their previously conflicting mask and inner self, thereby improving social interaction. As Unger points out, this play, from the start, shows a brighter perspective on marriage and mutual respect; and in *The elder statesman* there is the most marked departure from isolation, for in this play there is, rather, an affirmation of human relationship as exemplified by Monica and Charles (Unger, 13). Even though at the beginning of the play Lord Claverton is an old lonely man torn by ambivalences, Monica's love has a healing power for him. He has a "happy" death.

One outstanding feature in the last three plays is that most of the characters drop their masks, but put on new ones. It is just a matter of changing an inadequate mask for a proper one. Yet, the mask remains. This is a metaphorical way of saying that masks or illusions are necessary to one's integrity. Man may take refuge from a harsh reality in beneficial illusions. The Eggersons in *The confidential clerk* provide the clearest example of illusion not as an escape from reality, but as a means of making reality less bitter. As mentioned before, they had to face the pain of losing their only child. But retiring to their dream-like garden, they enact a symbolic creation, thereby filling in the void.

Human illusions and trespasses receive a much more tolerant treatment in Eliot's last plays. For example, in *The cocktail party* Lavinia and Edward are not rebuked for their respective illicit affairs. Instead, through Reilly, Eliot tries to show why people act in a particular way, therefore arguing from causes and less from effects. On the other hand, in the first plays innocents suffer — the consequences of one individual's sin hand themselves from one person to another. If sin grows, spreads and deteriorates the world, man can only achieve wholeness in the after-death. The characters are helpless puppets of a cosmic design. But it seems that in the last plays Eliot presents a more human point of view — the individual can learn why he suffers, and therefore find a relief for his pains.

NOTES

1 Zizola examines in detail the pride motif in «Orgoglio e sanità nel Tommaso Becket di Eliot». He says, for example, «*Murder in the cathedral* ha il senso di un mistero medievale. Respira un clima liturgico, emerso da schemi rituali ... Nonostante tutto questo, *Murder in the cathedral*, piu che tradizionale profilo di Santo, è tragedia dell'orgoglio... Nonostante la malizia reffinata del tentatore, l'Arcivescoso sopravive intellectualmente al gorgo del sentimental, li calcola, li vigilia, li segue nel loro itinerario e precipite» (649-53).

2 Smith, on the other hand, argues that «instead of Assuming the common judgment of Becket as overwhelmingly arrogant, ... Eliot depicts him as humbly submissive, accepting death, not resisting it... Since in *Murder in the cathedral* Becket speaks to the Knights sternly, without discourtesy or scuffling, he retains dignity and escapes arrogance.» (183-84).

3 Unger's studies — *T. S. Eliot's moments and patterns* and *T. S. Eliot* have been particularly useful in their examination of the theme of communication in Eliot's poems and plays.

4 Harding has some ingenious remarks about Colby and Lucasta's relationship. It seems that he stretched the psychological interpretation too far and his comments sound *ad hoc*. He says, for example, «a prominent and moving part of the play conveys the possibility that Colby and Lucasta may become deeply in love... Between the two states of mind there intervenes the entertainment device of the supposed incest barrier» (150-52).

5 In «Poetry and drama» Eliot says that «he has made some progress in dispensing with the chorus» in *The family reunion*. Even though he admits that «the device of using four of the minor personages, representing the Family, sometimes as individual character parts and sometimes collectively as chorus does not seem... satisfactory», I cannot agree with him that this was an improvement over the convention of the chorus in *Murder in the cathedral* (In HAYWARD, 80).

6 «Poetry and drama», in HAYWARD, 82.

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THE ESCAPE THEME IN MISS HELLMAN'S PLAYS

O Tema FUGA nas Peças de Lillian Hellman

Das Fluchtmotiv in den Stücken von Lillian Hellman

Júnia de Castro Magalhães ALVES *

SUMMARY

This article establishes a parallel among Miss Hellman's eight original plays, focusing on one of her most recurrent themes: her characters' psychological needs and their often vain attempts to flee from their land, their history and themselves.

RESUMO

Este artigo estabelece um paralelo entre as oito peças da teatróloga americana Lillian Hellman, focalizando um de seus temas recorrentes: os anseios e frustrações de seus personagens, na tentativa vã de fugir de sua terra, de seu passado e de si mesmos.

The well known 20th century American writer Lillian Hellman published, among other works, eight single-handed plays. Four of them *The little foxes* (1939), *Another part of the forest* (1946), *The autumn garden* (1951) and *Toys in the attic* (1960) interpret the American Southern way of life: the remaining four, *The children's hour* (1934), *Days to come* (1936), *Watch on the Rhine* (1941) and *The scarching wind* (1944) focus on the North.

Although Miss Hellman's characters and setting vary from play to play, they both present recurrent traits meant to convey a recurrent theme: a longing for escaping.

The action also comprises a series of events showing the characters' psychological needs and their often unsuccessful attempts to leave their land and background in search for new hopes. There are three main forms of escape. Two are unreal: a) to run away from either place or time or both; b) to attack through physical violence or emotional aggression. The third form is real; it is to return to the objective world left behind.

To facilitate the development of this thesis, I have classified the plays into four different groups:

1. THE HUBBARD PLAYS

The little foxes and *Another part of the forest* tell the story of the greedy Hubbard family and deal specifically with the Southern background and way of life.

2. THE MOOD PLAYS

The autumn garden and *Toys in the attic* differ from the Hubbard sequence in that they stress mood. In their own ways they show the social phenomena of their time more through characters than through plot and action.

3. THE SOCIAL PLAYS

The children's hour and *Days to come* treat very definite social issues. Here Miss Hellman's particular fight is to rebel against the social system where human relationships become objects for sale.

4. THE POLITICAL PLAYS

Watch on the Rhine and *The searching wind* were both molded from Miss Hellman's radical opposition to the totalitarism of Mussoline and Hitler.

The plays of the Hubbard series study the exploitation of man and land and introduce the notion (further developed in the Mood Plays through the plant-man metaphor, the cold-heat images and the influence of weather and season on living beings) that existence is only meaningful in action. The Social and the Political Plays also develop these same themes. The former emphasize the opposition

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between good and evil within a capitalistic society, the latter oppose what is presented as pernicious American innocence and inaction to European maturity and action. This analysis leads to the conclusion that although each character assimilates the social pressures and prohibitions of his or her environment as well as physical facts like cold and heat, light and darkness, time and space, and interacts with both by resisting or avoiding their hostile or unfavorable aspects, he or she also reacts against them. Those two mechanisms constitute two different forms of escape. Miss Hellman is part of a tradition of American playwrights and novelists such as O'Neill, Williams, Miller, Albee, Hemingway, Faulkner, Steinbeck, Bellow, Updike and others who have approached the escape theme. Harry Hope's saloon benchers, Amanda and Laura Wingfield, Willy Loman, Martha and George, Santiago and Tommy Wilhelm escape from their hostile environment through illusions. Eben and Abbie, Yank, Biff and Joe Christmas resist it. Simon and Peter Cabot, Tom Wingfield, Pepe Torres and Rabbit Angstrom actually run away from it. Miss Hellman presents these three forms of escape in her plays. Her characters are intensely dissatisfied with their situation, with people around them, with the place they live in. They either recoil within their fantasy or become unhealthily aggressive. They act out their dramas somewhere, always wishing to be somewhere else.

The geographical escape, found in all Miss Hellman's dramatic work, but more so in the social series and in the Hubbard Plays, is probably the simplest as well as the most primitive of them. The characters long for what is far away (either in place or time or both), but their dreams are seldom if ever fulfilled. In *The children's hour* Martha looks "forward to some place by the lake" [1] (14), Mrs. Mortar wants to "go back to the stage" (17), Cardin dreams of escaping from scandal by going to Vienna (56), Karen wants "to go to sleep" (61), to "take the train in the morning" (61) and go "Somewhere; any place" (62). They finally understand there is nowhere to go and they must face reality. Martha is not strong enough to accept that and consequently escapes through the ultimate act of violence — by committing suicide. Martha's death wish parallels Karen's need for sleeping. In *Days to come* Ellicott wants to escape from tension by "going down to White Sulphur when things are cleared up" (82), and Julie wants to escape from the boredom and comfort of her wealthy household into the hard life of the strikers (105-09). In the Hubbard Plays — *The little foxes* and *Another part of the forest* — we find the greatest number of geographical escapes. No one seems satisfied with what he has, what he means or where he is: Regina wants to escape from family and home to the impersonality of the big city, from the provinciality of Bowden to the commerciality of Chicago, and while she waits to carry out her plans she tries to bring Chicago to her by ordering her expensive clothes from there:

> Ben. What you doing having men on the porch, you in your wrapper?
> Regina (gaily). Isn't it a pretty wrapper? Came from Chicago.
> Ben (pointing to boxes). And so did these on the mail train. They got your name on'em. Belong to you?
> Regina (giggling). Writing can't lie. Specially writing in ink (334).

John and Birdie, Regina's aristocratic neighbors, carry an even stronger and more uneasy sensation of inadequacy for their roles — a social dissatisfaction — since they long to escape from both the place and the time they live in. John wants to leave Bowden in search of a war, any war — in Brazil or at any place where he might demonstrate his chivalric prowess. As a nostalgic Southern gentleman he values the notions of violence and "honor". He comments: "I was only good once — in a war. Some men shouldn't ever come home from a war. You know something? It's the only time I was happy" (332). Birdie wants to go back to the old Lionnet, where she was born — a land of plenty and "perfection" and a symbol of the static, conservative, unchanging Southern society of her parents. She says to the Hubbards: "I should like to have Lionnet back. I know you own it now, but I'd like to see it fixed up again, the way Mama and Papa had it" (145), "Oh, I do think we could be happier there. Papa used to say that NOBODY had ever lost their temper at Lionnet, and NOBODY ever would. Papa would never let anybody be nasty-spoken or mean. No, sir. He just didn't like it" (146-47). Oscar, less worried about power, money, honor and land, but led by his sexual libido, plans to elope to New Orleans with Laurette:

> Oscar. Laurette, I'm going to ask Papa for a loan. Then we'll go on down to New Orleans. Would you, Laurette — (361).
> Laurette. You've asked me the same question for the last year, twenty times. But you never yet asked your Papa for the loan (361).

Leo, Oscar's son, is part of a process of social and moral degeneration. He inherits his father's acute sexual desires and no strength to sublimate them. The small town of Bowden is too provincial for him and so he "must go to Mobile for the ... Very elegant wordly ladies" (137). Lavinia, in turn, to compensate for her omissions and sinful deeds, escapes into the half-insane and mystic world of her anthropomorphic god and imposes upon herself the penitence of going "As far as Altaloosa" (381) to provide for her poor colored children. Lavinia's counterpart in the Mood Plays is Lily, Julian's child-wife. She also finds support for her insecurity in mysticism, while Carrie and Anna, her sisters-in-law, dream of going to Europe. In the Mood Plays (the last series Miss Hellman wrote and also the most mature of her dramatic work) as well as in her Political Plays (which chrono-

logically precede it) Miss Hellman gradually changes her approach to the escape theme.

Her characters become less worried about actually moving from place to place in search of ideality and attack their unsatisfactory reality by means of either psychological or physical violence. It is true that these acts of violence appear in all her plays. In *The children's hour* Martha commits suicide, while Mary, in a fit of rage, kicks the table, throws cushions at the doors, twists Peggy's arms and slaps Evelyn's face. In *Days to come* the psychological atmosphere is tense. The action develops through a war of nerves and culminates with the use of guns, the killing of Mossie and the murder of Firth's child. In the Hubbard Plays Marcus is responsible for the massacre of twenty-seven Union troop boys, Oscar beats his wife, and Regina murders her husband. There are Nazi raids in *The searching wind*, a murder in *Watch on the Rhine*, and a spanking in *Toys in the attic*. Miss Hellman recalls that Dashiell Hammett "frequently objected to her use of violence"[2] on stage. He meant that such physical violence leads to melodrama. Psychological violence, in turn, is a more subtle form of escape, a peculiar quality of her more intellectually sophisticated characters. It appears in her first work, *The children's hour*, and becomes more and more elaborate until it achieves a high level of craftsmanship in her last series, the Mood Plays.

Violence and escape are sometimes repetitive, but may also acquire different aspects in different situations and contexts. In *The children's hour* Mary actually runs away from school, but her ultimate form of escape shows up in dissimulation, lies, blackmail, and slander. In *Days to come* Julie tries to leave home in an attempt to escape from the stagnant state of her family affairs, but the more conflicting type of self-defense takes the form of infidelity, hatred, and competition. In the Hubbard Plays these same motifs reappear. The relationship between brother and sister, husband and wife, father and son, master and servant is marked by either greed, exploitation or revenge. The characters put on masks of friendliness, self-certainty, and self-reliance, but they attack in fear of being unmasked. Regina's unrealized dream of moving to Chicago becomes a minor form of escape as compared to her unwholesome quest for comfort, money, and power. And in *The searching wind* Moses Taney and Alexander Hazen escape reality by avoiding both their personal and political responsibilities. A few characters are able to give up their fantasies and face the objective world. Carrie and Anna Berniers discover their mutual hatred, the real reason for the postponement of their trip to Europe, and Carrie's incestuous love for Julian. Constance and Crossman understand that they will have to suffer loneliness for the rest of their lives. Sophie and Kurt go back to Europe to meet war and death. Alexandra and Sam react against their family's inaction, irresponsibility, selfishness and greed. Nick and Nina, Rose and Griggs, Carrie and Anna, Alex and Emily, Andrew and Julie accept their fate: that they must live together "for all the days to come" (128). Karen is able to confront seclusion and Mrs. Tilford takes upon herself the consequences of her false judgement.

All the characters, situations and places discussed hitherto belong to Miss Hellman's single-handed plays, but ironically she only offers a formal answer to her escape theme in that grand flop written in collaboration with others, the musical *Candide* (1956). Her *Candide*, like Voltaire's, tells the story of an incredibly naive young man who moves from place to place in search of perfect love, purity, wisdom, harmony and happiness. The whole action is that of escape: "I'm homesick for everywhere but here" (655). Candide's escape, as opposed to those escapes found in Miss Hellman's plays, is thoroughly fulfilled. The last song of the musical contains the thematic answer so laboriously sought after in the plays — that each one must face his own reality, must make his own garden grow:

Candide (with force). No. We will not think noble because we are not noble. We will not live in beautiful harmony because there is no such thing in this world, nor should there be. We promise only to do our best and live out our lives. Dear God, that's all we can promise in truth. Marry me, Cunegonde. (He sings.)

You've been a fool and so have I,
But come and be my wife,
And let us try before we die
To make some sense of life.
We're neither pure nor wise nor good;
We'll do the best we know;

We'll build our house, and chop our wood,
And make our garden grow.
And make our garden grow.

Cunegonde (sings).

I thought the world was sugar-cake,
For so our master said;
But now I'll teach my hands to bake
Our loaf of daily bread.

Candide and Cunegonde (sing).

We're neither pure nor wise nor good;
We'll do the best we know;
We'll build our house, and chop our wood,
And make our garden grow.
And make our garden grow.

(Cast begins slow entry.)

Pangloss, Maximillian, Old Lady, Cunegonde, Candide and Governor (sing).

Let dreamers dream what worlds they please;
Those Edens can't be found.
The sweetest flowers, the fairest trees
Are grown in solid ground.

Entire Company (sings).

We're neither pure nor wise nor good;
We'll do the best we know;
We'll build our house, and chop our wood,
And make our garden grow.
And make our garden grow (678-79).

Curtain

With *Candide* Miss Hellman had finally and formally concluded that neither subjective running away nor any kind of violent aggression brings satisfaction, and that happiness will only be found in accepting the objective world.

NOTES

1 Lillian Hellman, *The children's hour*, in *The collected plays* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), p. 14. All the quotations from Miss Hellman's plays are taken from this edition. Subsequent references are cited parenthetically in the text.

2 John Phillips and Anne Hollander, «The art of the theatre: Lillian Hellman; an interview,» *Paris Review*, 33 (Winter/Spring, 1965), p. 125.

TRUTH: THE DOUBLE EDGED WEAPON
Based on Lillian Hellman's play *Toys in the attic*

Verdade: Faca de Dois Gumes
Baseado em *Toys in the attic,* peça de Lillian Hellman

Wahrheit: Ein Zweischneidiges Schwert
In *Toys in the attic,* von Lillian Hellman

Maria José FERREIRA *

SUMMARY

The following article is divided into three parts: a summary of *Toys in the attic*, some considerations on the title of the above mentioned play, and an analysis of the theme «Truth» as related to the play. Its conclusion emphasizes the ambiguity of the term «Truth», pointing out the difference between «reality» and one's «aprehension of reality», between «knowledge» and «interpretation of knowledge».

RESUMO

O artigo seguinte está dividido em três partes: um resumo de *Toys in the attic*, algumas considerações sobre o título dessa peça, e uma análise do tema «Verdade» no que diz respeito à peça. A conclusão enfatiza a ambigüidade do termo «Verdade», chamando a atenção para a diferença entre «realidade» e «apreensão da realidade», entre «conhecimento» e «interpretação do conhecimento».

The action of Lillian Hellman's eighth and last play, first produced on February 25, 1960, at the Hudson Theatre in New York, takes place in New Orleans, Louisiana. Among its main characters are Anna and Carrie, two maiden sisters who live in the house that once belonged to their parents. Their younger brother, Julian, married Lily and left for Chicago one year ago. He now returns very rich, bringing many expensive gifts, including boat tickets for his sisters to go to Europe — an old dream of theirs. But they are suspicious about the origin of his money, and they would rather have him poor beside them, than rich and distant. Lily too is suspicious about the money, and about a lady that her husband has been meeting. Lily's mother, Albertine, is a very rich woman who has Henry, her colored chauffeur, as her lover. Carrie listens to a conversation between Albertine and Henry, in which Albertine tells him about both the money and the lady. Carrie tells Lily what she knows, and Lily makes a phone call to the husband of the lady Julian has been meeting. The husband sends his men after his wife and Julian, and Julian comes back home defeated, beaten, depressed, and with no money at all.

Julian is a toy for his sisters; they do not want to let him out of the attic, out of their house. They want to keep him forever, for he is a special toy for them. They have always been careful with him, always handled him, as it were, with kid gloves, and now they do not want to see this toy played around with, and spoiled and ruined by outsiders. He leaves the attic and they become worried about his integrity. They do not want to share their esteemed toy with anybody else. They do not like the "attic", but that is the safest place they have to keep him from harm. Whenever they think of leaving, happiness seems to evade them, and they feel lost: what will happen to him when they are absent? So, they never leave. And he stays. And they keep him. And they are all toys in their attic.

Lillian Hellman has written in *Pentimento*, "The hardest lesson to learn in the theatre is to take nobody too seriously".[1] If we comprehend this sentence from the point of view of the revelations of a given character, we will understand that nobody possesses the truth entirely. We search for truth in others, forgetting that such an analysis proceeds from our point of view — which is not truth in itself, but our truth only.

In *Toys in the attic*, Lily Berniers is the one who is not taken too seriously either by her mother or by her husband's sisters. Lillian Hellman has said about her, "sadly whacky, not crazy, but fey, and disjointed, and sweet and lost".[2] Her description of Lily in the play is, "Lily is a frail, pretty girl of about twenty-one" (697). This presen-

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tation helps to define her as insecure and naive. Her prettiness and youth go together to reaffirm this statement. Her being "frail" suggests Lily's inclination to be vulnerable and lacking, as it were, in substance, as well as "morally weak; easily led astray or into evil",[3] which is a prediction of what happens at the end of the play. Just as with Lily Mortar, her name also reveals a dichotomy: she is a lily — the symbol of purity, whiteness, beauty; but nevertheless, she involves the person that she loves most — her husband — in a ridiculous situation, when, at the end of the play, he is beaten up by the men that the husband of his former mistress sends after him; automatically, they fleer, gibe and mock at him — and "fleer", "gibe" and "involve someone in a ridiculous situation" is the meaning of the French word "berner",[4] of which "Berniers" — Lily's French name — is a modification.

The problem with Lily is that she is completely lost, reluctant to act and to decide about even the minimal things in her life. The truth with Lily is that she is afraid of losing her husband. She is afraid of loneliness. "Lily is greatly in need of love and is possessed of a mystical-religious obsession for 'truth'. Having felt rejection as a child, since her mother slept during the day in order to be free of her and to make love to her Negro paramour at night, Lily finally resolved her self-doubts in her discovery of Julian's love for her".[5]

The feeling of rejection that Lily holds because she presumes that her mother has sold her to Julian helps to increase her insecurity and her need for truth and support. She tries to get this support from her husband cutting her hand and hitting herself against a table, on purpose, to call his attention, and to make him desire and love her. Goaded by her insecurity, Lily tries to captivate Julian, and suggests, "Please. Make me cured, Julian. Let's go to bed and maybe you'll be pleased with me — Maybe" (730). But indeed *she* wants to be pleased with him: nobody else gives her pleasure or satisfaction, or pays attention to her, or shows her kindness. She lacks love, and Julian is the only one who can make her content.

In her search for truth, Lily prefers to keep her wedding ring than a new diamond one that Julian has bought for her, "Please give me my ring" (706), "I want my ring. I was married in my ring" (707), "I want my ring. I was married in my ring. This is a vulgar ring" (708), "I want my married ring" (708). Julian asks her, "Superstitious?" (706), which implies a doubt about reality: being superstitious suggests that one is afraid of truth. She does not answer, and the doubt persists. She does not want or like money, either, "My money? Doesn't matter about my money. I don't want money" (699), I'm not worried about money" (699), "I never wanted us to have money. I hate money" (719), "I said I wasn't worried about money" (699). The troubles that involve Lily make her confused by illusions, in her hope for being able to act, and finding herself and truth. This money which she is not interested in is the same that helped her marry Julian, and it is the same that helped them live in Chicago for a year. Lily's wish is to make herself independent of material riches, to be able to pursue happiness. For her, money, diamonds and traveling are a way of concealing truth, and camouflage what is really valuable. Richness implies Julian's absence, whereas they were always together before he became rich. Her wedding ring brings her good memories of the times when Julian had no money and they were just married, "Did it rain? I don't remember. It was all days to me: Cold and hot days, fog and light, and I was on a high hill running down with the top of me, and flying with the left of me, and singing with the right of me — I was doing everything nice anybody had ever done nice" (699). Her first ring symbolizes what life has of simplicity. Although a fake, it means a real marriage, a hope in the future; it means truth for her, while her real diamond ring does not mean anything: it symbolizes a false situation, fear for a dubious future, and it gives her insecurity, "[...] what he married me for, he doesn't need anymore. Isn't that true?" (740).

In her pursuit of happiness — her motivation being Julian — Lily naively calls Mr. Warkins and inadvertently tells him where his wife is to be found with Julian; this conversation is a turning point in the play, and it reminds us of the conversation between Anna and Carrie, in which Carrie reveals one more of Lillian Hellman's doctrines, "[...] when you love, truly love, you take your chances on being hated by speaking the truth" (731). As Lorena Holmin has observed, "This line emphasizes [...] that love can be destructive. One means of destroying by love is by failure to express the truth to the beloved".[6] And this reminds us of Albertine, in Act Three, when she warns Lily, "[...] the pure and the innocent often bring harm to themselves and those they love and, when they do, for some reason that I do not know, the injury is very great" (747). Lily's mother once more gives her some advice, "There are many ways of loving. I'm sure yours must be among them. Put white flowers in your hair, walk up your mountain path of truth with a white banner in your hand, and as you drop it on his [Julian's] head, speak of love" (727). Lily repudiates what is not truth, and says, "But I will go and tell him the truth now and —" (727). Interestingly, though, lies have helped her through Anna's attitude toward her; Anna lies to conceal Lily's unskilled attitude toward Mrs. Warkins' telephone call:

> JULIAN. I heard the phone. Didn't the phone ring?
> ANNA (*after a second*). No. (708)

Again Anna lies to conceal Lily's casting her new ring away, "I have it. I was looking at it" (709).

Carrie's jealousy of Lily helps to increase her suspicion of everything; she is always defensive, she is always criticizing something. When she says that she does not believe that Julian and Lily are in town, Anna says, "Maybe Lily's pregnant. They arrived and wanted to go to a doctor first so they could tell us the good news" (695). That is not exactly a lie, because the truth is unknown, but again it is a way that Anna has of protecting Lily. Julian is aware of this kind of protection that his sisters have toward him, because he explains to Albertine, "[...] and they got ready to give me all they had, and tell all the same nice lies about how the next time" (722).

In contrast with the truth — since there is no lie without a truth — Lily's insecurity and fear of losing Julian also make her lie, specially when the subject is the mysterious lady that he has been meeting, "That's the first lie I ever told you" (701): she admits having seen them in a place different from the one that she had mentioned. He is at home when Mrs. Warkins calls, but Lily tells her that he is not; she tells Julian that she said that in an impetus: she does not know why she said it, "The phone did ring. It was that lady who calls every evening. I told her you weren't here. I don't know why I said it but I did" (708-09). She admits her lie once more, "I didn't know I was going to do it" (709). Lily lies again when Julian asks her where her new ring is, after she has just thrown it away; she says, "I don't know" (709). In a conversation with Anna, Carrie accuses Lily of lying to Julian, "He doesn't know she went out last night. He doesn't know she gave her ring away — to some woman — She's told him lies. She lies to him, she tricks him" (730). Lily belongs to an environment in which she is involved in lies and tricks, which increases her sensibility. All this is woven by Lillian Hellman through the influence of one character upon another, which leads to Lillian Hellman's maturing artistry of characterization. Lillian Hellman's maturing perspicacity about her characters and her increasing strength in characterization coincide with the expansion and refinement of her characters as her career expands. Her characters' motives, their psychology, and their motivation sometimes lead them to personal failures or neurotic complication. Lily twice hurts herself on purpose, and she also tried to kill herself rolling down a hill some years before — which may have a connection with her expression of ecstasy which has already been quoted. The adjectives used by Lillian Hellman to describe Lily (" [...] sadly wacky, not crazy, but fey and disjointed, and sweet and lost"), quoted earlier in this study, help us to understand Lily's escapes into the night through dangerous alleys into "an upstairs room with a morphine addict who holds séances" (747). In her search for truth, she is positive that Madame Celeste is right, "Truth, truth is the way to life, and the one way, the only way. Open your hearts with this knife and throw them here" (717). Lily attempts to escape into religious illusions and experiences in her search for truth:

LILY (*sits down, speaks quietly*). Everybody left and there I was. The woman said, "You want me, child?" And I said, "Could I buy your knife?" "No", she said. "The knife is not for sale." But I wanted it more than I ever wanted anything and, well — (*Smiles, slyly*) — finally, we swapped something — And when it was in my hand, for the first time in my life, I just said everything, and asked. The lady said the knife of truth would dress me as in a jacket of iron flowers and though I would do battle, I would march from the battle cleansed. Then I fell asleep —

ALBERTINE. Your many religious experiences have always made me uneasy, Lily —

LILY. When I woke up I knew that I must begin my struggle up the mountain path of truth by asking you —

ALBERTINE. You telephoned at two this morning to speak with me about a journey up a mountain path of truth?

LILY. And Henry came instead, and made me get in the car, and brought me *here*. He stood in the way — But he can't. Because I must ask truth, and speak truth, and act truth, now and forever.

ALBERTINE. Do you think this is the proper climate? So hot and damp. Puts mildew on the truth. (717-18)

It is through Albertine that Lillian Hellman releases her philosophies and what Annette Johnson calls "real truths".[7] Later on, in this same scene, in a dialogue which takes more than six pages of Act Two, Albertine warns Lily, "On your struggle up the mountain path, you will find that truth is often ugly. It burns" (719). As Meredith Ackley points out, "Lily is not plausible. One is left to wonder what purpose is served by the belaboring of idiosyncrasies, the dark implications and the needlessly detailed drawing of her very strange character. Portraying Lily as a child could be in part explained as a device to show Julian's need for someone whom he could take care of and who would depend on him as he has been taken care of and has depended on his sisters. Her character, however, remains inexplicable because no reason becomes apparent for the attention given her bizarre activities".[8] In Cynthia Larimer's opinion, "The 'knife' of truth which she clings to so desperately is symbolic of the pain of truth, the truth which hurts Carrie and Anna, as well as Julian. But it also represents Lily's masochistic search for the truth [...]".[9] In Meredith Ackley's point of view, "Though her infantile stammerings about truth may announce the subject of the drama, they clog the machinery of the play. She brandishes a 'knife of truth', but if she is not simple-minded, her truthfulness is mindless. Miss Hellman may intend the results of Lily's activities as a warning of the dangers of naiveté, or of abstract truth untempered by reality which can become another form of

blindness".[10] This obsession of Lily's comes to be known and not only involves herself, but also disturbs those around her. Julian is probably the most bewildered, hit by the inconvenient and odd attitudes and speeches of Lily. He is surprised by what is going on within his wife's mind:

> LILY. The knife of truth. Will you swear on it? Swear that you will keep me with you whatever —
>
> JULIAN. For Christ's sake, Lily. What the hell's the matter with you? *(He drops the knife on the table)* Stop talking foolish and stop playing with knives. (736)

As the play progresses, Lily's fixed idea to know the truth and to tell only the truth grows through a situation in which she is talking to Carrie about Mrs. Warkins, "I'll swear on my knife of truth that if I have just one more year —" (741) to a climax in which she talks to Mr. Warkins on the phone and tells him where to find his wife and her husband. Her action is irrational and destructive, and illustrates her fear of losing Julian, at the same time that it shows her relief to be free of what she considers a heavy burden. She feels light, and secure because of the confidence her "knife of truth" gives her; nevertheless, because it is the first time in her life that she makes a decision, and because she is doubtful about its results, she becomes intuitively apprehensive, "I did right, just exactly. *Didn't I?* And I'll take the knife of truth and swear to keep my word —" (744). (Italics mine.)

In her dispair, Lily had given her diamond ring as a proof of her fidelity to Madame Celeste, who sells it back to Albertine. Lily says to her mother, "That's not fair, is it? Now I must give her back the knife of truth. *(She turns as if to leave)* I'd like to keep it, but she'd never sell it" (746). Afraid that her mother wants to take her friend from her, she defends Madame Celeste in her naiveté of not knowing what Madame Celeste really is, "You want to take my friend from me —" (747), "My friend is a sweet friend. I gave her my ring because she loved me and gave me courage —" (747). On giving her truth, Madame Celeste gives her courage, and vice versa. It seems as all that Lily wished was condensed in a single word: courage — which reminds us of a vigorous sentence by Lillian Hellman, "I never want to live again to watch people turn into liars and cowards [...]".[11]

In one of her several pieces of advice to Lily, even before her daughter talks to Mr. Warkins on the telephone, Albertine refers to Lily's overaction, "You asked my advice and here it is: You do too much. Go and do nothing for a while. Nothing. I have seen you like this before. *(With force)* I tell you now, do nothing" (727). This is a presage of what is going to occur at the end of the play on account of Lily's attitude (which causes all the damages to Julian); it is also a forecast of Albertine's words to Lily when Julian gets home bruised and beaten up, "Go in and sit by him. Just sit by him and shut up. Can you do that? Can you have enough pity for him not to kill him with the truth? Can you love him enough to go by him, sit down — *(Very softly, with great violence)* — and be still? *(Lily nods)* Then go and do it" (750). After the truth is known, Lily is blamed by Carrie — and rejected, "Let's be glad nothing worse happened. We're together, the three of us, that's all that matters" (750), which reminds us of another one of Carrie's bitter remarks, "I read in a French book that there was nothing so abandoned as a respectable young girl" (730) — a parallel with the French book *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, by Théophile Gautier, referred to in *The children's hour*.[12]

It is surely more than a coincidence that Lillian Hellman begins her collection of eight plays with a Lily, and closes them with another Lily, both catalytic in relation to the lives of those around them, and that both are closely involved with two maiden women who live in the same house, and a man who is connected in one way or another with these two women. Then again both Lilies somehow belong to the families that they destroy. But nonetheless they are different: Lily Mortar is led on by malice and selfishness, while Lily Berniers is activated by unawareness and naiveté. The destruction in *The children's hour* is caused by Lily's inaction, while the ruin in *Toys in the attic* is caused by Lily's overaction: Lily Mortar is sure that truth is with her, that she knows all, that she can act — yet, she does not act: she disappears when needed; Lily Berniers is inactive, she is not sure of anything, she is all doubts, she seeks truth — but she reveals part of her hidden personality when she takes command of the situation. Both families are damaged physically, economically and socially by their "lilies". Willian Shakespeare, at the end of his "Sonnet XCIV", has already taught us that the word "lily" has a certain ambiguity; that it may be a symbol of purity, whiteness and beauty, but, because of this, its corruption is worse:

> "For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;
> Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds".

NOTES

1 Lillian Hellman, *Pentimento* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), p. 196.

2 Richard G. Stern, «Lillian Hellman on her plays,» *Contact*, 3 (1959), p. 117.

3 *The American heritage dictionary of the English language*. Ed. William Morris (New York: American Heritage & Houghton Mifflin, 1969), p. 521.

4 The French word «berner» was cross-checked in *Larousse* and *The American heritage dictionary*.

5 Annette Bergman Johnson, «A study of recurrent character types in the plays of Lillian Hellman,» Diss. Univ. of Massachusetts 1970, p. 133.

6 Lorena Ross Holmin, *The dramatic works of Lillian Hellman*, Diss. Uppsala 1973 (Stockholm: Rotobeckman, 1973), p. 153.

7 Annette Bergman Johnson, «A study of recurrent character types in the plays of Lillian Hellman,» Diss. Univ. of Massachusetts 1970, p. 262.

8 Meredith Erling Ackley, «The plays of Lillian Hellman,» Diss. Univ. of Pennsylvania 1969, pp. 150-51.

9 Cynthia Diane Miller Larimer, «A study of female characters in the eight plays of Lillian Hellman,» Diss. Univ. of Purdue 1970, p. 183.

10 Meredith Erling Ackley, «The plays of Lillian Hellman,» Diss. Univ. of Pennsylvania 1969, p. 150.

11 Lillian Hellman, *Three* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), p. 726.

12 Lillian Hellman, *The children's hour* in her *The collected plays* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972), p. 24 and p. 49.

THE PURITAN HERITAGE AND CURRENT ECONOMIC ATTITUDES IN AMERICA

A Herança Puritana e as Atitudes Econômicas na América

Puritanisches Erbe und Wirtschaftliche Gepflogenheiten in Amerika

Emory ELLIOTT *

SUMMARY

This essay sustains that the contemporary economic yearnings of American society are deeply rooted in seventeenth century Puritan Massachusetts — a cultural heritage which the people are unwilling and perhaps unable to abandon.

The author identifies five of the most firmly-held assumptions as a beginning for the study of cultural values and economics in the United States today:

1. The assumption that America has a special, divinely ordained role as a world leader — exemplar of democratic ideals;
2. An assumption that those in power and authority should be willing to sacrifice something for the common good;
3. A sense of pride in the product itself and identity with the institution;
4. A sense of certain independence from the employer based on the integrity of the individual;
5. The assumption that individuals and institutions adhere to a set of shared moral principles.

The essay concludes that the strengths of the Protestant ethic which have become part of the national ideology have begun to produce more barriers than benefits to progress and that what is urgently needed in the United States today is creative and imaginative leadership.

RESUMO

Este artigo sustenta que os anseios econômicos contemporâneos da sociedade americana estão profundamente arraigados na Massachusetts puritana do século dezessete — herança cultural da qual o povo não quer e talvez não consiga se libertar.

O autor apresenta cinco das pressuposições mais enraizadas, como ponto de partida para o estudo dos valores culturais e econômicos dos Estados Unidos de hoje:

1. A suposição de que os Estados Unidos representam um papel conferido por Deus, como líder mundial — modelo dos ideais democráticos;
2. Uma suposição de que os detentores do poder e as autoridades deveriam estar dispostos ao sacrifício pelo bem comum;
3. Um sentimento de orgulho por aquilo que produzem e identificação com a instituição;
4. Um sentido de certa independência do empregador, baseado na integridade do indivíduo;
5. A suposição de que os indivíduos e as instituições são fiéis a um conjunto geral de princípios morais.

O artigo conclui que a força da ética protestante, que é parte da ideologia americana, passou a gerar mais obstáculos do que benefícios para o progresso, e que os Estados Unidos de hoje precisam urgentemente de liderança imaginativa e criadora.

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In the United States this year a surprising book won a Pulitzer Prize, a National Book Award, and climbed to the top of the best seller lists. While the subject of the book is business, this fact alone should not surprise anyone. The non-fiction best seller list has been packed for the last few years with books on the economy, the coming apocalypse, investment, and the rise and fall of American business. But this book is different. *The soul of a new machine* by Tracy Kidder is an account of how a group of Data General engineers worked at breakneck speed for over fifteen months to produce a new microcomputer.[1] Although the book is filled with technical details, plans are being made to turn the tale into a major motion picture. What, we might well then ask, is the appeal of this non-fiction narrative?

For the student of American culture, this book's appeal is an important signal of yearnings that lie much deeper in the society. Through his journalistic account of an actual project, Kidder has subtly linked his story of the experiences of living human beings and the problems of contemporary economic realities to deeply held beliefs about American life and national character which have their roots in seventeenth century Puritan Massachusetts. Kidder achieves this remarkable effect through frequent allusions to works of American literature, by writers such as Melville, Twain, and Cotton Mather, through vibrant associations drawn between the people at Data General and heroes of American history and fiction from Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Edison to Horatio Alger, Captain Ahab, the Lone Ranger, and other mythic giants. Repeatedly Kidder invokes the most cherished values of the American heritage: rugged individualism, philosophical idealism, anti-materialism, a romantic yearning for freedom, and a nearly religious commitment to hard work and self-sacrifice.

The underground level of the Massachusetts-based headquarters of Data General is transformed into a ship on which a freewheeling and inscrutable captain, symbolically named Tom West, inspires pure-hearted young geniuses to give the best of themselves, regardless of pay and hours. Under West's charismatic leadership (reminiscent also of Twain's Connecticut Yankee), these young heroes in jeans create a machine that will express their indomitable faith in the democratic-capitalist mission and their pride in their good old American know-how. Mixing images from the Puritan heritage of austerity, purity, and zeal; the nineteenth-century impulse for expansion, inventiveness, and independence; and the twentieth century drive to lead the world through teamwork, industrial power, and technology, Kidder discovers in the Data General experience an expression of the enduring American dream. His story exposes not only the soul of a new machine, but the soul of American culture as well.

The popularity of this book in the 1980's is significant, therefore, because it reveals how profoundly Americans desire to find a basis for a restoration of national pride. More important, perhaps, is that it also demonstrates the need to understand present struggles of American businesses in the context of the attitudes, assumptions, and values that are so deeply ingrained in the consciousness of the people that they are part of what cultural anthropologists call the deep structure upon which public policy and corporate decisions are founded. At its conclusion Kidder's book presents Data General as a microcosm of the larger state of affairs for American industry in the last third of the present century. After the company allowed the young engineers to develop the feelings of western free-spiritedness, Calvinistic purity of motive and dedication, and even iconoclastic defiance of the corporate authority needed to produce their extraordinary commitment, Data General then took the product of these astounding labors, changed its name from the symbolic "Eagle" to MV/8000, and systematically disbanded the production team. One member expressed a general feeling of betrayal in saying, "It was a group that was formed and achieved this remarkable thing for the company, and the company had deemed to reward that group by blowing it up. It's really sad" (286).

Instead of concluding with an expression of hope that the accomplishment of the team may prophesy what is still possible for American industry, Kidder presents the episode at Data General to be a last gasp of those tenets that brought America success in the past. In the final chapter, entitled "Dinosaurs," the still youthful members of the group become representatives of a dying spirit of corporate inventiveness, imagination, and vitality that is sinking under a massive wrong-minded business technique that leaves the best and the brightest cynical, restless, and bored. Tom West, a hero from an earlier era, sums up the book's bitter-sweet conclusion. He observes that the ingredients for American achievement still exist in the Protestant ethic and the Romantic spirit of adventure, but that in the case of the Eagle computer, these cultural resources were tapped for only a brief interlude: "Yeah, it's all blown apart, but the ethic's still in place," he said, "in some sense spreading that around may be beneficial." West added: "It was a summer romance. But that's all right. Summer romances are some of the best things that ever happen" (287).

For observers of economic affairs in the United States even the temporary warmth and rejuvenation of a summer romance does little to relieve the growing chill of uncertainty and fear. In its optimism and faith in American inventiveness and achievement, *The soul of a new machine* is a notable exception among the books that Americans are presently buying and reading in order to understand the present economy. More typical of the present mood is Antony Jay's *Management and Machiavelli: an inquiry into the policies of corporate life*, or Christopher Lasch's *The culture of narcissism: American life in an age of diminishing expectations*, and Richard Curtis's *How to prosper in the coming apocalypse*.[2] Such works loudly proclaim the current

widespread opinion that individuals and corporations have become completely ruthless, self-interested, and short-sighted. Like an early Puritan minister chastising his congregation for backsliding from its sacred corporate mission to seek forbidden pleasures, Lasch exhorts his readers: "Have we bargained away our future for self-gratification now?"

Yet in spite of frequent analyses of what is currently wrong with the American economy and repeated calls for national reform, frustration and pessimism about the future has increased. In electing Ronald Reagan to the White House, many Americans felt that a radical break with the economic policies of the past — which his policies seemed to offer — would reduce waste in government and industry, instill business to invest in research and new facilities, and thereby restore life to the construction and manufacturing arms of the society and revive the economy. What the voters heard in Reagan's "New Federalism" message of reduced bureaucratic controls over business, lower taxes, stimulation of capital investment, and less government was a return to an earlier way of governing America that would allow on a large scale for the kind of adventure, self-sacrifice, dedication, loyalty, and personal pride that Tracy Kidder depicts as occurring for a brief span in the basement of Data General. The slogans of Reagan's platform touched deep-seated yearnings in the American nation for the restoration of a cultural heritage which the people are unwilling, and perhaps unable, to abandon. When they think of growth, prosperity, and national pride, many Americans, including some of its brightest engineers and best educated leaders, recall a set of inherited principles which they feel should form the ground rules for business activity and set the course for American economic progress.

When average Americans try to understand the causes of the present situation, they are inclined to view the period of the great depression and World War II as marking the beginning of a story that now draws toward an ending. The plot can be summarized briefly: The years of growth and prosperity that followed the war led the expansion of American industry in the 1950's, the growth of the middle class, the expansion of the cities and suburbs, and a general rise in the standard of living. While a recession in the late fifties slowed this growth temporarily, conditions remained favorable for increases in productive research and development into the 1960's. But then something went wrong. The period of turmoil marked by political strife and the Vietnam war masked a shift of fiscal policies in Washington and in major corporations that has had a profound effect on the economy of the 1970's and early 80's. Rampant inflation, diminished resources, the decline of the American automobile industry and productivity in general, and the economic supremacy of other nations such as Germany and Japan over the United States — to the common people these miseries are somehow the result of self-serving human decisions made behind closed doors during the late 1960's or early 70's. Among older Americans there is a grave suspicion that gains achieved through victories on the battlefield in World War II have been bartered away to other nations, even old enemies, in secret deals of the last decade.

To diagnose this pervasive malaise in the society, though, an observer must understand the shared assumptions and cultural values that lie beneath the surface of the society like an underground stream whose source may be traced back to the religious beliefs of the early settlers. It is because many people feel that these national values have been betrayed, abused, and rejected by those in power, that there has been a pervasive loss of hope at restoring the faith and optimism of earlier times. But because people do not articulate these deeply held values, the intellectuals, businessmen, and leaders of government are not often aware of how such attitudes shape opinion and inspire actions. The impressive achievement of the book on the Data General group is that Kidder captures through casual remarks and private conversations a sense of how these shared values affect the drive, cooperation, loyalty, and persistence of even some of the most highly-educated workers. There is a widely-shared conviction that since the late 1960's Americans have repeatedly betrayed certain religiously-grounded national ideals and that lapse has had a devastating result in American business and economic life.

A careful study of current books and articles on the American economy and a close examination of the cultural heritage of the nation reveal several of these commonly held values which those who will guide the United States to an economic recovery would do well to ponder. For the purpose of this brief overview on the present mood of Americans, I want to identify five of the most firmly held assumptions as a beginning for the study of cultural values and economics in the United States today:

1. *The assumption that America has a special, divinely-ordained role as world leader - exemplar of democratic ideals.*

During the early decades of the seventeenth century Puritans who came to New England formulated through their sermons and writings a set of doctrines about the role of the colonists in history that eventually became transformed into a myth or dream of America's mission in the world. By the time of the Revolution the colonists had come to believe that the new chosen people of America had a sacred mission to lead the world toward political freedom and an enlightened social order. Repeated in Fourth of July orations, political rhetoric and sermons, these deeply accepted and internalized beliefs became codified into the American middle-class ideology. To be an American meant that one accepted these shared assumptions. To reject these notions was un-American.[3]

As elaborated and extended by the political orators and the leaders of government and business

in the nineteenth century, this religious-political vision, or ideology, took on important economic elements: every American (actually every white male) had an equal opportunity under the law to achieve his potential through talent and hard work. As a result of such faith, those in power were assumed to be the best people in the society who deserved their positions because they had achieved their status through intelligence and energy; they were in Huck Finn's term, "the quality." Because of cultural expansion, it was held that a man with "pluck" who found he could not achieve his desired level of success in one place need only pack up and move on to a spot where his work would be valued and rewarded. Another belief was tied to property. With an abundance of land, it was believed, every hard working American could expect one day to own his own farm or home — even though it may be humble, it would be his castle.[4]

So strong was the myth of equal opportunity that Americans continued to cherish the notion even as millions of workers languished in tortuous jobs in textile mills, on railroads, in lettuce fields, and in coal mines. The conviction that the system of economic and political freedom provided a chance for everyone to rise to the top was so strong that in the face of realities of hardship and exploitation, the people simply shifted their hopes and promises to the next generation. If a first generation parent could not rise out of the coal mines, then he could expect that his children, educated in the U.S. and prepared for the opportunities of the future, would attain a new plateau from which his own children could ascend. In the course of three generations an ambitious family would be able to rise from nothing to a level of wealth and prominence. In their study *Schooling in capitalist America: educational reforms and the contradictions of economic life*, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis have effectively described the shift from faith in the frontier to education as a basis for the dream of unlimited possibilities for Americans:

> "Go West, young man!" advised Horace Greeley in 1851. A century later, he might have said: "Go to college!" The Western frontier was the nineteenth-century land of opportunity. ... throughout the nineteenth century, the image of the frontier sustained the vision of economic opportunity and unfettered personal freedom in an emerging industrial system offering little of either. With the closing of the frontier in the latter part of the nineteenth-century..., a new ideology of opportunity became the order of the day. The folklore of capitalism was revitalized: Education became the new frontier.[5]

Such conceptions stemmed from the fundamentally religious conviction that the American economic system was a new stage in some providential design. Throughout most of the twentieth century these attitudes persisted among business leaders and workers alike. Indeed, much of the optimism and energy behind the formation of the supercorporations during this century arose from this faith in the unique role of America, and thereby American business, in the world. But in recent years doubts about this special errand have arisen.

2. *An assumption that those in power and authority should be willing to sacrifice something for the common good.*

Perhaps the first American businessman to find that his neighbors expected more of him than he had been prepared to give was the Puritan merchant Robert Keayne. In the 1650's Keayne, who had considered himself a generous donor to his church and a productive member of his community, found himself hauled before the magistrates and ministers of his town of Boston for overcharging. So excrutiating was the experience for Keayne that he poured out his feelings of shame and regret into his Will and set aside sums for restitution of individuals and for public improvements.[6]

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the tenets of American Protestantism helped to establish the notion that those who became rich in America should share their good fortune and exhibit public spirit and generosity. The contrary pull of the religious doctrine of Christian charity and the economic doctrine of emerging capitalism created tensions for merchants like Robert Keayne. As public opinion became a potent force, this tension had to be resolved through rhetoric or action. During and after the Revolution this tradition was temporarily undermined by the economic and social chaos of the period and by the decline of the authority of the American churches. In their efforts to reestablish their own base of influence in the society, however, the clergy formulated in the early nineteenth century a new argument for what came to be American philanthropy. This modification to capitalist competitiveness and acquisitiveness provided a new basis for justifying the wealth of the very rich through a system of voluntary "give-backs."[7] Even during the period of the late 1800's when the public fervor against the new business magnates, known as the "robber barons," grew into outrage and riot, the touted generosity of the rich, evidenced in museums, college buildings, hospitals, public parks, and fountains served to soften the public images of the wealthy and legitimize the laissez-faire economic system.[8]

On a smaller scale in the twentieth century this same pattern was reflected and reinforced through a style of management that stressed personal contact and recognition. Such devices as Christmas bonuses, company parties and picnics, and personal gifts of hams or turkeys to workers at holidays served to demonstrate an employer's sense of his public duty. Such acts as assistance money to individual workers during times of special needs, such as a family crisis, built company loyalty and identity as well. Again, as organized labor became stronger in recent decades and methods of management changed, these symbols of the employer's appreciation of a worker's value and efforts have disappeared in favor of increased health benefit plans, shorter working hours, longer vacations and

the like. While workers voted for such changes because they recognized the advantages of guaranteed financial benefits over informal gifts and uncontracted supports in times of need, all of these negotiated benefits are formal, impersonal, and seem to result from worker "demands" rather than the supposed "generosity" of the employer. While a cold realistic look at both systems of reward makes it clear that in either case business is business, the fact is that these changes have altered relationship between workers and management. The present system does not encourage impulses toward sacrifice by either side and fosters constant resentment for a lack of encouragement rather than gratitude for unexpected returns.

Of course, a few exceptions have endured, and in a recent study of management techniques, *Corporate cultures: the rites and rituals of corporate life*, Terrence E. Deal and Allan A. Kennedy point out that some of the most successful American companies, including General Electric, Procter and Gamble, and Mary Kay Cosmetics, have been able to maintain a strong sense of corporate mission by eschewing the science of "management systems" and retaining the old emphasis upon human relations between workers and bosses.[9] Ironically, too, on the employee side, now that an economic crisis has threatened the jobs of large numbers of workers in industry, some are offering to "give back" certain fringe benefits if such sacrifices result in saving jobs. Again to invoke Kidder's account of Data General, those who labored for months of overtime did not want financial or fringe benefits for their achievement, but wanted only to be recognized by name for having done well and given a chance to perform again in similar projects to realize their full potential. The opportunity to excel, to take a risk, to do original work and the recognition due to an individual for his contributions — these were the rewards that the engineers wanted, and in return they gave all they could to their company.

3. *A sense of pride in the product itself and identity with the institution.*

Of course, it has been a long-established truth, going back to Ruskin and Marx, that the methods of modern industrialism would separate the worker from the fruits of his labors in such a way as to destroy the sense of personal relationship between worker and product that once fostered the notion of craftsmanship. From the time of the Revolution to the present there has been in the United States a strong sense of the connection between national identity and national product. When the leaders of the rebellion against England in the 1770's wanted to express their protest, they encouraged the wearing of homespun garments, and throughout the nineteenth century America took pride in the inventions and technological advances from the steamboat to the telephone as expressions of the national character. Even today in the telephone industry Western Electric takes fierce pride in the durability and operating consistency of American-made telephones. What is surprising, in fact, is that, in spite of the prophecies of Marx and Ruskin, the desire by workers to be identified with their products and company still remains intense.

John Kenneth Galbraith sums up this inclination well with an example. Although writing of the situation in the mid-1960's and looking ahead to the decline of such pride that has taken place since, Galbraith emphasized the importance of the worker's identification with his company:

> ... the prestige of business organizations may well be declining, the large corporation continues to be a symbol of success and achievement in the culture. It endows its members with this prestige; (...). The question automatically asked when two men meet on a plane or in Florida is, "Who are you with?" Until this is known, the individual is a cipher. (...) If, however, he is with a large, well-known corporation — a good outfit — he immediately counts.[10]

Indeed, the great technological achievements of the American space industry of the 1960's carried with them profound national and company pride.

With rare exceptions today, however, as again in Kidder's depiction and Galbraith's prophecy, workers do not identify their own talents and skills with the quality of their company's product. Two decades ago the urge to "buy American" was common among factory workers, and a purchaser of a foreign car could expect to meet a certain number of cold glances and vocal objections to his implied rejection of American-made goods. This nationalistic fervor regarding goods has virtually disappeared and the personal identification of self with product that characterized American business in the past has all but disappeared with it.

4. *A sense of certain independence from the employer based on the integrity of the individual.*

Whether it is the freedom of a research scientist or engineer to work on an independent project, the freedom of assembly workers to make private jokes about the boss, the chance to go to the restroom and even grab a quick cigarette without being clocked, or the opportunity to tell off the boss through a suggestion box, American workers need to feel that they are respected as unique individuals and that management recognizes that there are gains in creativity, loyalty, and productivity when workers are allowed to have a degree of freedom.

There is widespread opinion that sometime in the 1960's, with the introduction of scientific methods of management and the proliferation of efficiency experts, employers became too repressive.[11] Time limits placed upon trips to the restroom, increased formality of attire, imposed codes of behavior in plants, and greater pressures upon high level workers to meet ever-increasing performance levels seemed to combine with an increased impersonality of managers and executives to make

working conditions more repressive. Increased "legalism" and formality resulted in a deepening cynicism on the part of workers — a feeling that the "company" was out for all it could get and the worker should do the same — began to pervade the work place. In this context notions that workers would put in extra hours without pay, care more about the product they were making than their own private gains, or sacrifice personal pleasure for the good of others have nearly disappeared. Similarly, employers do not concern themselves with the personal lives of their employees, nor do they concern themselves with increasing the personal satisfaction of workers. Such attitudes and concerns would now be perceived as "unbusinesslike," rather archaic and foolish ways of conducting business. One of the most startling things in *The soul of a new machine* is Kidder's depiction of young engineers who cared more about being allowed to create something new than they did about pay or hours. Routinely they put in uncompensated overtime hours, and emphatically they declared with pride that they did not do this job for money. In his book Kidder returns repeatedly to this attitude because it has become so rare today.

5. *The assumption that individuals and institutions adhere to a set of shared moral principles.*

From the time of the Puritan founders Americans have believed that all members of the community, from the most humble to the most prominent, would adhere to a shared code of religious or moral principles. In the early decades of the New England settlements, of course, ministers and magistrates worked closely with the wealthiest men of the Massachusetts community to assure that all did indeed live by the same standards. During the eighteenth century itinerant preachers spread this Puritan ethic through the south and the west. Still, in spite of theological differences among the many sects that grew up after the Revolution, the great religious revivals reestablished the belief that all Americans were God-fearing people who lived according to a minimum set of religious convictions that encouraged honesty, sobriety, fair play and Christian charity toward neighbors.[12]

In spite of the later diversity that allowed Jews and Catholics, and even atheists, to live, in principle at least, without persecution, there remained through the early 1960's an unspoken assumption that people, and especially leaders, aspired to certain moral standards in their public and private lives. Thus, there existed until quite recently certain expectations of such moral conformity: to be trusted in business or in the professions, a man should be a churchgoer, he should be happily married to his first wife (even as late as 1959 Nelson Rockefeller's divorce made him unfit in the eyes of many for the presidency), and he should be willing to sacrifice, when needed, his own personal comfort for the good of others. Leaders of business were expected to be community leaders through participation in lodges or community associations, and wives of very successful men would be expected to perform volunteer work either through a club or community organization.

During the last twenty years this set of convictions has all but disappeared. The moral standards of the society have become blurred.

With little or no sense of moral or ethical standards being imposed from above or demanded from below, people seem to feel absolutely at sea in their efforts to formulate a new understanding of the relationship between private values and public performance. From the time of the Vietnam war and the Watergate scandal, great numbers of Americans have become so cynical about the lack of moral leadership in business and government that they seem to have become blasé about such misconduct.

The effect of such pessimism upon the long-range planning of Americans and their attitudes in the work place has been very destructive. Most people work only for immediate rewards and with little faith that genuine achievement will be rewarded. "Learning the game," "playing the game," "getting one's own," "ripping off the organization," making the "big score" or a lucky hit are phrases that now seem a part of the common vocabulary. While the older generation complains that the young do not understand the value of hard work and are not willing to labor for and plan for their rewards, the young argue that those who are successful in today's society are those few shrewd ones who figure a way to strike it rich quick on some scheme that exploits the system or others in some new way. The Protestant ethic of hard work and moral purity seems almost entirely to have been replaced today by a gambling ethic.

Present conditions

At the level of the individual worker or junior executive, this short-term gambling mentality leads to a sense of instability and transience. Instability and uncertainty in personal and corporate life lead to the feeling that one had better move up quickly in the organization or move on to another opportunity elsewhere where the chances for quick advancement may be better.

Considering management itself as a separate entity, such hit or miss thinking has created another set of problems that is now resulting in the most profound corporate soul-searching ever experienced in American business. In an earthshaking article in the *Harvard business review* in 1980 Professors Robert Hayes and William J. Abernathy argued most persuasively that short term thinking has made American business its own worst enemy.[13] By neglecting the human needs of the worker — front-line essentials such as clean working conditions and well-maintained machinery — and by focusing upon short-term profits instead of building a solid reputation for quality products, American business, they argue, has ransomed future economic well-being for immediate profits. As a result, managers have become overly concerned with

financial analysis rather than line operations and have been making decisions based upon the present rate of return on a particular segment of a business instead of considering what that might mean for the whole company down the road. In other words, instead of taking the long-range human chances that create corporate reputations, employee pride, and consumer respect and loyalty, corporations have been playing with a roulette wheel of short term profits: as soon as a computer print-out indicates that a number could come up a loser within the next quarter's roll of the dice, they pull their money off the number. One observer summarized the effect of such policies upon the attitudes of junior executives and workers this way:

> These days corporate managers are taught ... that big corporations ... should be managed like an investment portfolio. ... If a business falters, it becomes an immediate candidate for abandonment, in favor of some pursuit with a greater short-term profit. ... It is a seductive doctrine that promises the bright student a quick path to the top and that piles its rewards on executives who force through impressive short-term performance, at indeterminate cost to long-term health.[14]

It is interesting that Hayes and Abernathy began their investigation of American productivity with the assumptions shared by most analysts today and that they found the current wisdom faulty because of its lack of cultural perspective. Mr. Hayes says that the new insight came to him when he was teaching a seminar to European businessmen: "I began to list all the standard reasons for the decline in American productivity — organized labor, government regulations, the baby boom — and they all looked at me with polite amusement. They said I was totally off the mark since all the same factors applied to Europe and more, and their productivity was increasing."[15] This experience led Hayes to a comparison of modern American and Japanese business that brought him to his conclusion that the real trouble with America is that companies are afraid to invest in their futures. He says that an obsession with the expected impact of continued inflation and high interest has paralyzed business investment. Rather than order new machinery which may take years to build and install, they opt for patch work on old inefficient models. Rather than remodeling a wing of a plant so that better working conditions may lead to increased productivity two years from now, companies simply close that part of the operation and buy out some other business. Hayes says, "Present value calculations support a decision to operate on the goose and remove some of the golden eggs prematurely even though doing so impairs its future egg-laying ability."[16]

Although these authors have gone deeper into the cultural sources of the problems plaguing the American economy today, what is wanting here is the depth of understanding that would recognize the decline of the work ethic and the avarice of workers and executives as expressions of the same deep-seated cultural shifts that have produced corporate fears about long-term investment in technology and human resources. The same lack of faith in the future that has eroded ethical standards and moral values also underlines the financial decisions of corporate policy makers. The leaders and followers share the same cultural milieu.

What is apparent in these analyses of America's current situation is a failure to perceive the recurring cycles of optimism and pessimism — assurance and guilt — that have characterized the emotional life of the people from the early decades of the seventeenth century. Whether raised to be formally religious or not, most Americans bred in this country have unconsciously accepted the ideology of national mission which has its roots in the Puritan religious heritage. As part of this cultural background is a psychological pattern grounded in what scholars have called the jeremiad tradition. The jeremiad is that name given to the ritualistic sermons of the early Puritan ministers who chastised the people of the new Zion for their backsliding and failure in order to generate a sense of individual and corporate guilt severe enough to result in personal reform and a community recommitment to its original covenant.

After the military and political traumas of the late 60's and early 70's, the last decade has involved a period of soul-searching and guilt in the United States. The sense of national guilt has been so strong that people have tried to repress and ignore it. The indulgence in materialism and pleasure-seeking may seem to spring from a failure of values, but actually on a deeper level it is the result of a bitter sense of failure. The national realities drifted so far from the articulated ideals that even individuals feel that they share the guilt and shame for this disgrace. Without a process for purging this sense of guilt and redirecting the energy it drains from real productivity and social development, people can only try to distract themselves from the uneasiness. Without a focus upon the long-range future of the society, few can do more than think of immediate personal gains and gratification. Given this situation, everyone's impulse is to "lie low," "play it safe." and "look out for number one" — phrases currently to the fore in the national idiom.

During the 1970's both Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan used their political rhetoric to win elections by tapping into the pattern of failure-guilt-reform. Carter appealed to the yearnings of those who wished to be "born again." Through his quasi-religious message he touched the desire of many to be reconverted to their lost faith in the national mission. In his call for a return to the values of the founding fathers, Reagan offered hope of a new beginning that would return the nation to an earlier innocence and resolve. Even though Reagan proposed a period of sacrifice, austerity, and pain, people voted for him because he seemed to offer absolution from the sins of the past through a covenant renewal that would restore the original American dream of self-reliance, freedom from

controls, and equal opportunity for all who live a clean life and work hard. Reagan's image as a western hero, both in film and in reality, who seemed to uphold America's founding principles aroused in many the deep cultural attachments to the dual heritage of the Puritan ethic and the frontier romanticism that Tracy Kidder discovered in the souls of the Data General engineers. In one way the elections of '76 and '80 support Lasch's faith in the reforming spirit of the people: the people were ready to believe again. But each time their leaders fail to fulfill these promises of covenant renewal, the needed cycle of purgation and reform is short-circuited, leaving everyone trapped in a continuing phase of great fear and its accompanying short-term thinking and cautious policies.

One other aspect of this psysho-social configuration that has always been present and must be understood in cultural context is the dangerous potential for directing such powerful emotional energies toward others. During the seventeenth century Puritan ministers did not need modern sociologists to tell them that besides the call to reform another effective way of breaking the cycle of guilt and despair was to direct the inner turmoil of the people upon some external enemy — whether the Indians in the forest, foreign persecutors, the "Whore of Babylon" in Rome, or Satan and his devious army.[17] It may be a comforting logic that leads to the view that a people who feel guilty over the mistakes in Vietnam will therefore be alert to avoid "future Vietnams." But cultural predispositions and logic do not always coincide. Unification of the in-group through an attack on an out-group has often served to shake the American people from their own inner turmoil and lost direction. But this is a tragic and ultimately self-destructive method of reform.

Where the present leadership has failed is precisely in that area in which the American people had placed faith for its success — in its ability to strengthen the ties between business and government. Ironically, after candidate Reagan had convinced the electorate that the principles of the New Deal and Old Left had failed and that concessions to big business involving sacrifices on the part of labor would be necessary, President Reagan faced a business community resistant to his call for corporate reinvestment of saved tax dollars into research and development and for more aggressive approaches to developing new products and increased sales abroad. Corporate executives who once complained that their companies were shackled by government regulations, taxes, and liberal federal policies have not responded creatively to the challenge and opportunities offered by the "new federalism."

A reflection upon American cultural history reveals some of the fundamental attitudes of the people and their leaders that need to be changed before there can be creative solutions to recurring economic patterns. The American either/or logic, inherited from the Puritan fathers, combined with a sense of cultural inferiority bred on the frontier have led to a destructive adversary mentality. The price that is being paid for the luxury of sustaining these old habits has become too high. An overvalued American dollar may boast of American power, but it is drastically affecting the balance of trade of the United States with its world neighbors. Instead, world economic leaders, those of the United States among them, must come to the international negotiating table and establish sane valuations that will stem the present slide toward increasing international antagonism. Raising the familiar specter of the red dragon in the wilderness may win votes and encourage national unity among the American people, but such political tactics only deter the formulation of sensible trade agreements. Instead, leaders must strengthen lines of communication and strike financial bargains with adversaries as well as friends to devise policies of international cooperation that may generate broader approaches to the problems of unemployment and recession that threaten not just one nation but all nations together. Pitting business against labor and using the old Protestant psychic burdens of blame and shame in order to arouse a sense of national guilt may serve to shift the focus of public attention away from the failures of government policies, but instead, national leaders should encourage a more rational approach to financial disputes and attempt to diffuse and defuse tensions between labor and business in order to create an atmosphere for reasonable solutions. The time has come that the strengths of the Protestant ethic — the fierce competitiveness, the spirit of independence, the self-righteousness and national pride that have become part of the national ideology and that have led in earlier times to growth and achievement — have begun to produce more barriers than benefits to progress. At the moment on every level of the economic structure what is needed is cooperation and a spirit of unity to guide decisions.

Perhaps, as some have suggested, the only plan to produce more than a temporary pause in the downward spiral of national confidence and expectations would involve a major shift away from the capitalist ideology that has been dominant in the nation since the mid-nineteenth century. Such a development would require that leaders and their people break outside of the narrow vision of the role of America in the world that produced a great era of expansion and leadership but may now be obsolete. On the other hand, such a sweeping change may yet be beyond the imaginations of all but a few and thereby impossible to achieve during the present or next generation. In this case, what is urgently needed today is creative and imaginative leadership in business and government that can establish monetary and foreign exchange policies that will form the basis for a sounder integration of the world economy. America must overcome its cultural predispositions toward isolation in times of crisis so that it can join other nations in the formulation of a plan for the coordinated growth of world markets of which the United States is a cooperative and fair partner.

NOTES

1 Tracy Kidder, *The soul of a new machine* (New York, 1982).
2 This trend is also reflected in the many books comparing the successful business methods of Japanese companies with those of failing American concerns. For example, see William G. Ouchi's *Theory Z: how American business can meet the Japanese challenge* (New York, 1981), and Boye DeMente, *The Japanese way of doing business: the psychology of management in Japan* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1981).
3 For the best summary of formation of these aspects of American ideology in the early national period see Sacvan Bercovitch's study of American intellectual and cultural history, *The American jeremiad* (Madison, Wis., 1978).
4 For a useful summation of the foundation of these accepted beliefs see, for example, Lawrence J. Friedman, *Inventors of the promised land* (New York, 1975).
5 (New York, 1976), p. 3.
6 See «The apologia of Robert Keayne,» ed. Bernard Bailyn, in *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Transactions*, 42 (1954), 233-41, and for commentary see Bailyn's study of the emergence of capitalist attitudes in Puritan New England, *The New England merchants in the seventeenth century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1955).
7 I have discussed this point with full references in a different context in *Revolutionary writers: literature and authority in the New Republic* (New York, 1982), p. 41-5.
8 See such studies as Marion R. Fremont-Smith, *Philanthropy and the business corporation* (New York, 1972), and Arnaud C. Marts, *Philanthropy's role in civilization: its contribution to human freedom* (New York, 1953).
9 (Reading, Mass., 1982). A very recent article connects an increasing concern with loneliness and yearning for community to the failure of most corporations, except for the «best run» like «I.B.M., Hewlett-Packard or Procter & Gamble.» The author, who cites cultural historians for proof, sees this corporate and personal crisis as rooted in the American ideals of «personal freedom, autonomy and independence,» and notes that «the Japanese are so much better at making workers feel a part of the community at work.» See Louise Bernikow, «Alone: yearning for companionship in America,» *The New York Times magazine*, August 15, 1982, Section 6, p. 24ff.
10 *The new industrial state* (New York, 1967), p. 141.
11 For a summary of these attitudes see Deal and Kennedy, *Corporate cultures*.
12 For a useful summary of these changes and a guide to the relevant literature, see Paul F. Johnson, *A shopkeeper's millennium: society and revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York, 1978).
13 See, for example, Hayes & Abernathy, «Managing our way to an economic decline,» *Harvard business review*, July-August 1980, p. 67-77.
14 Leslie Wayne, «Management gospel gone wrong,» *The New York Times*, May 30, 1982, Section 3, p. 1.
15 As quoted in Wayne, «Management,» p. 21.
16 *Ibid.*
17 For discussion of this pattern and appropriate references see my study of society and sermon language, *Power and the pulpit in Puritan New England* (Princeton, 1975), Chapter 5.

GOD OR SCRIPTWRITER?

The character of fiction in the film **The Purple Rose of Cairo**

Deus ou Roteirista?

A personagem de ficção no filme **A Rosa Púrpura do Cairo**

Gott oder Drebuchautor?

Die figur im film **The Purple Rose of Cairo**

Magda V. F. TOLENTINO *

SUMMARY

A brief review of the blending of roles of the fictional character with actual people as presented in Woody Allen's film.

RESUMO

Uma rápida visão da fusão dos papéis da personagem de ficção e de pessoas reais conforme visão de Woody Allen em seu filme.

Real and imaginary on the screen mingle with real and imaginary in the audience in a meta-language of fiction in which the spectator goes into the dream and the fictional character comes out into the world of reality.

Woody Allen, in his cinematographic fable, presents a study on the character of fiction which repeats Henry James' question in his short story *The Real Thing*: what is real? what is fiction? which imitates which?

The incredible game of real versus imaginary in the film is reflected in another film inside it, in which the mingling of one and another embarrasses the protagonists and astonishes the spectators into demanding that fiction remains as such. The immortality of the character of fiction is threatened by its own attempt to become real and be part of this vibrating world in which man can choose his own destiny instead of repeating umpteen times the choice of a creator. And the next moment he realizes there is a higher creator — GOD? and wonders whether real life also boasts of a scriptwriter.

The film within the film reflects in "mise-en-abyme" the projection of the dreams of the spectators of the first film, over which our dreams are also projected. Each film is a microcosmic repetition of a bigger one, in which we see a reflection of our own anxieties.

Duplication is a constant recurrency, be it in the above mentioned mise-en-abyme of a film within the film, in the fantastic game of fiction versus reality or in the figure of the actor-character in face of his fear of losing himself. The actor is inside the film representing an imaginary reality and the character jumps out of the film into real life, in search of living emotions. The actor is looking for immortality in fiction and the fictional character, even becoming liable to mortality, looks for feelings that on the screen can only be represented. Each embodies some characteristic of the other, and they come to a final duel from which only one will be able to survive on the level of reality, and which reduces each of them to his own level. The equilibrium of each plane — both real and imaginary — is finally restored and the actress-spectator, who hovers between one and the other, starts again her round of dreaming. The script-writer has receded into his limited universe and given way to the higher one in the girl's life — God. But Woody Allen himself, through the lips of his creatures, states that in fiction people make much more sense and are much more coherent than in real life, a fact which makes the scriptwriter a creator a hundredfold more sensible and down-to-earth.

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DISSERTAÇÕES DEFENDIDAS NO CURSO DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM LETRAS

MESTRADO: INGLÊS

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Título obtido: *Mestre*

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Título e subtítulo do trabalho: *"The eye / I upon the event: a study of narrative voice in Robert Penn Warren's* All the King's Men".

Ano de conclusão: *1987*

Nº de páginas: *128*

Sinopse:

This thesis is a study of the relationship between the narrating self and its enunciation in Robert Penn Warren's *All the king's men*. The concept of point of view is surveyed and discussed and the poetics of narrative is opposed to the poetics of drama, since *All the king's men* is a novelization of a play by the same author. It is argued that narrative prose allows for a temporal perspective and is thus the adequate genre for the portrayal of man trapped in the complex tensions of time, a major theme of the novel. The narrative discourse is then analysed through the categories of time, mode and voice, with the narrator's hesitation being examined in terms of function at the linguistic level. Finally, the fragmented and specular pattern of the enunciation is investigated by examining the insertion of the Cass Mastern episode in the narrative. A concluding reflexion focuses on the other voices which permeate the narrator's discourse and confirm the fragmented configuration of the text.

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Título obtido: *Mestre*

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Título e subtítulo do trabalho: *"Voice and choice: a study of polyphony and its relation to the problem of free will in William Golding's* Free fall".

Ano de conclusão: *1987*

Nº de páginas: *124*

Sinopse:

In this study of William Golding's *Free fall*, the polyphonic structure of the novel is analysed through the stylistic marks that separate different and opposing voices incorporated in the narrator's discourse:

Since the narrator is also the protagonist, those voices are a reflection of the central character's perspective of events at different phases of his life, the philosophical questioning of the problem of free will is what moves the central character's retrospective examination of his life. So the present work also includes an analysis of the philosophical frame that underlies his transition from a naive to a mature viewpoint.

The stilistics analysis of the mix of discourses in the central character's narrative is based on Mikhail Baktin's dynamic view of the polyphonic novel. Bakhtin's polyphonic structure is here associated with Sartre's existential philosophy, the central character of *Free fall* is analysed as a conciousness in the process of defining itself through moral choices associated with the events narrated; it has been possible to link Bakhtin's and Sartre's ideas since both theoreticians see man in a process of becoming.

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