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The Otterbein Miscellany - Fall 1986

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THE OTTERBEIN MISCELLANY

**"THERE SHE SAT": THE POWER OF THE
FEMINIST IMAGINATION IN *TO THE LIGHTHOUSE***
Beth Rigel Daugherty

**REFLECTIONS ON A HIDDEN WHOLENESS:
THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THOMAS MERTON**
David Stichweh

**CHARACTER AND VERISIMILITUDE
IN DANIEL**
Cecile G. Gray

**A REVIEW ESSAY OF PAUL RICOEUR'S
*TIME AND NARRATIVE***
Sylvia Vance

The Otterbein Miscellany

Fall, 1986

Foreword

The Otterbein Miscellany is published as an outlet for faculty writing on a wide variety of topics. The college underwrites this publication in the belief that it will help maintain a genuine community of scholars. Papers are accepted, therefore, on the basis of their interest to the whole academic community rather than to members of a particular discipline. Editorial responsibility rests with a committee of the faculty.

Contributions are considered from the Otterbein College faculty and administration, active and emeritus—others by invitation only.

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Writing in 1841 in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, Thomas Carlyle stated with characteristic drama:

Certainly the Art of Writing is the most miraculous of all things man has devised. Odin's *Runes* were the first form of the work of a Hero; *Books*, written words, are still miraculous *Runes*, the latest form! In Books lies the *soul* of the whole Past Time; the articulate audible voice of the Past, when the body and material substance of it has altogether vanished like a dream No magic *Rune* is stranger than a Book. All that Mankind has done, thought, gained, or been: it is lying in magic preservation in the pages of Books. They are the chosen possession of men.

Although the Sage of Chelsea has lost much of the rhetorical and moral force that he exerted in the Victorian world, his charged style can still send intuitive flashes into the present, as does his foregoing judgment on language and its written record, books, as the distinctive human accomplishment. In the academic world we use language so readily and pervasively we may cease to note its miraculous quality. Let this issue of *The Miscellany*, in which colleagues share their "articulate audible voices"—through their analytical studies and their created visions—remind us of the primacy of the "miraculous Runes" that can come only through the medium of language.

The Editor

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“There she sat”: The Power of the Feminist Imagination in *To the Lighthouse*

Beth Rigel Daugherty

*Of course, we're always writing about women—abusing them, or jeering at them or worshipping; but it's never come from women themselves. I believe we still don't know in the least how they live, or what they feel, or what they do precisely . . . —Terence Hewet, The Voyage Out, Virginia Woolf's first novel*¹

An odd moment occurs near the end of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, yet it does not seem at all unusual as one reads it. Powerful, yes. Moving, yes. But strange? No. Only afterward does the reader puzzle over it—when describing it to someone else, say, or when listing the novel's events.

The best word for the moment is resurrection.² Mrs. Ramsay has been dead for ten years, but as Lily Briscoe concentrates on finishing her painting, Mrs. Ramsay appears, sitting in the window as she used to: “Mrs. Ramsay—it was part of her perfect goodness—sat there quite simply, in the chair, flicked her needles to and fro, knitted her reddish-brown stocking, cast her shadow on the step. There she sat”(300).

Everything after this moment—Mr. Ramsay's praise of his son, the journey's end, Lily's completion of her painting—is important but somehow anti-climactic. The emotional climax of the novel occurs at this moment, when Mrs. Ramsay, so alive in the first section of the novel but absent in the second and third sections, suddenly becomes present again. Woolf provides no argument, justification, or explanation; Mrs. Ramsay is simply there.

And we accept that. How does Woolf make her modern, skeptical readers believe in Mrs. Ramsay's reappearance? Why does this scene continue to move us, even on subsequent readings? What meanings cohere in that moment to make Mrs. Ramsay's presence seem natural, right?

Woolf, of course, is famous for making “life stand still here” (240) in her “moments of being” (“Sketch” 78). Also, since most of the novel's readers now know that the characters are based on Woolf's family (Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay are Leslie and Julia Stephen and Lily Briscoe, the artist, is Woolf herself), the moment seems more charged emotionally.³ But these explanations do not completely account for the moment's power.

For me, the moment's extraordinary power comes from seeing Woolf's personal, feminist, and artistic goals coalesce. I watch with admiration as Woolf raids the patriarchal camp and uses her feminist imagination to restore her mother, a woman destroyed by patriarchal

myths, to her own identity. Woolf transforms a traditional woman, a woman who worked to perpetuate the patriarchal society, into the personal, feminist, and artistic heritage she herself needs. By freeing both the literary and the real mother from the patriarchy's grip, Woolf frees herself from the patriarchal mother and can go forward artistically. This audacious moment of liberation for mother and daughter alike makes me gasp, makes me believe that, yes, "There she sat."

When Virginia Woolf spoke about professions for women to the London/National Society for Women's Service on January 21, 1931, she claimed to have killed the Angel in the House early in her career as a book reviewer. Killing the Angel, with its seductive voice crooning, "whatever you say let it be pleasing to men. Be sympathetic; be tender; flatter," was an act she could take credit for, she said, but noted she had acted in self-defense: "If I had not killed her, she would have killed me—as a writer" ("Speech" xxxi). In both her speech and the essay that grew out of it, "Professions for Women," Woolf notes that the Angel holds women back, even when outward barriers have disappeared, because it is an internalized, insidious voice, a phantom more difficult to kill than any reality ("Speech" xxx; "Professions" 288).

Woolf's mother died when Virginia Stephen was 13 years old. In "A Sketch of the Past," Woolf's unrevised memoir, she writes that Julia Stephen was "the whole thing" (83; compare *To the Lighthouse* 174); after her death, "there was nothing left of it [family life]" (84). She also writes that her mother's presence obsessed her: she heard her mother's voice almost daily until she was 45, the year she completed *To the Lighthouse* ("Sketch" 80). Observe, too, that Woolf's description of the Angel in her essay could be Mrs. Ramsay's character sketch in the novel:

She was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish She sacrificed herself daily she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others she was pure [Such women] must charm . . . must conciliate . . . must—to put it bluntly—tell lies if they are to succeed. ("Professions" 285-86)

Far from killing the Angel early in her writing career, then, Woolf continued to struggle against its inner voice. The strong resemblance between the Angel and Mrs. Ramsay, the identification of Mrs. Ramsay with Julia Stephen, and finally, the daily sound of her mother's voice, all suggest that for Woolf, the internalized phantom she had to kill was her own mother.

Yet she also believed that "we think back through our mothers if we are women" (*Room* 79). How could she think back through a mother who haunted her? Who had signed Mrs. Humphry Ward's Anti-Suffrage petition? Who was a sacrificing, placating, reassuring, nursing Angel? Who thought all women should marry, have children, and put men's endeavors above their own?²⁴ How could she create a

female tradition to sustain her work when her own mother was an Angel, someone she knew had to be killed if she were to survive as a writer?

In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf resolves this contradiction; she kills the Angel in the House and rescues a mother she can "think back through" by separating the Angel role from the woman herself. She exposes the mythic origins of the pressures to play the Angel role, she reveals Lily Briscoe's (and thus her own) struggle to resist those pressures, and finally, she frees Mrs. Ramsay (and thus her own mother) from those pressures through acceptance and understanding. Woolf finally kills the Angel in the House, but by resurrecting the woman's self, not by killing the mother.⁵ Woolf's understanding of the pressures upon Mrs. Ramsay to play the Angel ultimately frees the woman from that phantom. And by freeing Mrs. Ramsay/Julia Stephen, Woolf frees herself. When *To the Lighthouse* was finished, Woolf writes in her memoir, "I ceased to be obsessed by my mother. I no longer hear her voice; I do not see her" ("Sketch" 81).

Mrs. Ramsay works hard to be the Angel in the House, "the woman that men wished women to be" ("Speech" xxix-xxx). She wholeheartedly supports patriarchal values, enjoining all to marry and to have children (93), believing wives should subject themselves to their husbands' labors (20), and trusting in the "admirable fabric of the masculine intelligence" to uphold the world (159). She smooths things over, hiding both small unpleasanties and more painful realities from her husband (62, 104). Although she feels "impeded in her proper function by these lies, these exaggerations" (63); and although Mr. Ramsay criticizes her for exaggerating, her proper function is to lie: Mr. Ramsay demands reassurance from her, not truth. She may suspect that his last book is not his best (62), but she would never say so because, as Lily knows, the patriarchal code of behavior compels Mrs. Ramsay to be nice, to enlarge Mr. Ramsay's ego (137-39).⁶

When the younger children go to bed, Mrs. Ramsay can "be herself, by herself" (95) for awhile. Her need for solitude and silence is not surprising; she constantly gives herself to others: to the children (lessening strife, reading to James, calming Cam's fears, being a sponge for the emotions of all eight of them [51]); to her husband (giving him sympathy and comfort, joining him for a walk when she would rather continue to sit [100], taking his rebukes in silence [51]); to her guests (taking Charles Tansley to town, persuading Mr. Bankes to stay for dinner, taking full responsibility for "the effort of merging and flowing and creating" [126] at dinner); or to the patients she visits. She sacrifices herself so thoroughly that after building up Mr. Ramsay, she thinks, "there was scarcely a shell of herself left her to know herself by; all was so lavished and spent" (60). When she can sit by herself, she shrinks to what she calls her self, "a wedge-shaped core of darkness" (95), but this sense of self merges into a more impersonal being (95-96), she has little time for such sitting, and it bothers her when Mr. Ramsay sees her do so: "Had she known that he was looking at her, she thought, she would not have let herself sit there, thinking" (104). Her powerful, public personality, then, is the Angel's, operating when she's doing the patriarchy's work; her real self exists in spare moments, does not function in any public way, and has little space in which to grow.

Clearly, the Angel role demands self-sacrifice. And Mrs. Ramsay complies. In exchange, she is revered. She explains that she has "the whole of the other sex under her protection" because of "an attitude towards herself which no woman could fail to feel or to find agreeable, something trustful, childlike, reverential" (13). No one can read "The Window" (the first section of the novel) and "fail to feel" the aura of reverence around Mrs. Ramsay. Charles Tansley realizes that she, at 50, is the "most beautiful person he had ever seen" and is proud to be allowed to carry her bag (25); a poet inscribes a book to her, calling her Helen (43); and Mr. Bankes, responding to her voice on the telephone, says to her, "Nature has but little clay . . . like that of which she moulded you" (46-47). Mr. Ramsay comes to her as though he were a supplicant approaching a goddess, asking for rejuvenation, restoration, and life (58-60). The word "homage" is often used in association with her, and Mr. Bankes, gazing with adoration at her reading to her son (73-76), sees "Mother and child . . . —objects of universal veneration" (81).

With these lines, Woolf indicates the mythic origins of the Angel in the House role: the Virgin Mary.⁷ The Angel in the House grows out of the same equation established by the story of the Virgin: reverence paid for with the self's denial. Mrs. Ramsay's extreme self-surrender, for example, not her self, earns her the patriarchy's reverence (224-25). As Marina Warner notes in *Alone of All Her Sex: The Cult of the Virgin Mary*, society's worship of Mary also presupposes a denial of what women actually are. For example, Mary's identity as Christ's mother depends upon a denial of human sexuality. Warner writes,

every facet of the Virgin [has] been systematically developed to diminish, not increase, her likeness to the female condition. Her freedom from sex, painful delivery, age, death, and all sin exalt[s] her ipso facto above ordinary women and show[s] them up as inferior. (153)⁸

Thus, the Mary myth suggests that to receive reverence, "ordinary" women must attempt to be not human.

Why would any woman want to play this role? Does reverence compensate for the loss of self? Do women really want to be revered? Woolf portrays several debilitating side effects of the Angel role. For example, Mrs. Ramsay suffers from fatigue and depression ("But what have I done with my life?" [125]), feels compelled to get others to make the same choices she has (92-93), and reveals her resentment toward her husband in a power play at the end of "The Window" (185-86).⁹ Woolf sees the connection between the role and these feelings, but Mrs. Ramsay never does, probably because reverence conceals the damaging payments.

Besides, even without reverence as compensation, the pressure to play the Angel is strong. Early in the novel, Woolf shows mythic pressures of another sort oppressing Mrs. Ramsay. As Mr. Bankes gazes in adoration at his secular Madonna, Mrs. Ramsay reads her son a Grimm's fairy tale, "The Fisherman and His Wife" (61, 66, 85-87, 89, 93-94). The tale, a variation of the Adam and Eve story,

subconsciously affects Mrs. Ramsay's thoughts about herself, and causes her to work even harder at being the Angel.¹⁰

In this fairy tale, a poor man catches a flounder who is actually an enchanted prince. When the flounder asks to be freed, the fisherman, startled by a fish who can talk, lets him go. His wife, IIsabil, later tells him he should have wished for something and suggests a better cottage. At her insistence, he returns to the ocean and calls for the flounder, telling the magic fish of IIsabil's wish. The flounder grants the request, but she keeps sending her husband back with further demands—after she gets the cottage, IIsabil wants to be king, then emperor, then pope. The flounder continues to give her what she asks, though the sea gets uglier and wilder at every request, until she asks to control the rising of the sun and the moon and to “‘be like unto God.’”¹¹ At this request, the flounder's wrath knows no bounds. Nature itself rages, and IIsabil and her husband are thrown back into their original hovel. The tale thus implies that a woman's desire for, and attainment of, power is unnatural and must be punished. The tale also justifies society's control of women, since it portrays women's desire for power as insatiable.

Words from the tale occasionally pop into Mrs. Ramsay's consciousness, as they occasionally pop into the novel. As she unwittingly puts it, “the story of the Fisherman and his Wife was like the bass gently accompanying a tune, which now and then ran up unexpectedly into the melody” (87). Its subtle but devastating message makes her question her motives, attitudes, and behavior. For example, the tale's title comes into her mind just after she has reassured her husband that he has not failed, either in his work or in his life, and has allowed herself to feel “the rapture of successful creation” (61). That's when her fatigue becomes “tinged” with

some faintly disagreeable sensation with another origin. Not that, *as she read aloud the story of the Fisherman's Wife*, she knew precisely where it came from; nor did she let herself put into words her dissatisfaction when she realised, *at the turn of the page* when she stopped and heard dully, ominously, a wave fall, how it came from this: she did not like, even for a second, to feel finer than her husband (61; my emphasis)

Mrs. Ramsay may be unconscious of the origin of her feeling, of the connection between the tale's message and her inability to enjoy her achievement, but the reader sees it. The tale's punishment of a power-hungry woman makes Mrs. Ramsay change a “successful creation” into a suspicion that she feels finer than her husband:

but it was their relation, and his coming to her like that, openly, so that any one could see, that discomposed her; for then people said he depended on her, when they must know that of the two he was infinitely the more important, and what she gave the world, in comparison with what he gave, negligible. (62)

The tale, therefore, reminds her to put things "right." (Ironically, her fear of appearing superior to her husband is groundless, since the men in the novel think she hinders Mr. Ramsay's career and certainly assume his contribution is more important.)

Woolf emphasizes the tale's power to damage a woman's esteem when she again juxtaposes Mrs. Ramsay's self-doubt with the title of the fairy tale. Mrs. Ramsay, criticizing even her satisfaction in playing the Angel role so well, asks herself, "For her own self-satisfaction was it that she wished so instinctively to help, to give, that people might say of her 'O Mrs. Ramsay! dear Mrs. Ramsay . . . Mrs. Ramsay, of course!' and need her and send for her and admire her?" (65; Woolf's ellipses). What should she do about such power seeking? Mrs. Ramsay thinks "she had better devote her mind to the story of the Fisherman and his Wife" (66). Literally, of course, the thought suggests a busy mother's need to concentrate on the task at hand. But Woolf also subtly indicates a more thorough "devotion" to the tale's message about power.

Woolf shows how that message permeates society when Mrs. Ramsay tries to present herself in a different role at the dinner table that evening. Her friends and family treat her just the way the flounder ultimately treats *Ilsabil*, and for the same reasons, but they react much more quickly. Mrs. Ramsay would like to work outside the home and clean up the English dairy system. She knows the problem exists and feels strongly about it: "Milk delivered at your door in London positively brown with dirt. It should be made illegal" (89). She presents her facts and is ready to prove her assertions. What happens when she thus suggests entering the "male" world of facts, charges, and reform? She is mocked:

her children laughed; her husband laughed; she was laughed at, fire encircled, and forced to veil her crest, dismount her batteries, and only retaliate by displaying the raillery and ridicule of the table to Mr. Bankes as an example of what one suffered if one attacked the prejudices of the British Public. (155-56)

She has attacked a British prejudice, all right, but not the one about milk. Rather, she has stepped outside the Angel role and must be punished. Mrs. Ramsay's ability to manage people would make her a skillful administrator, but because her society considers such a role unnatural for a woman, it makes her warmth, eloquence, and research look ludicrous. She faces a flood of laughter, a storm of mockery, as soon as she even hints at being something other than the Angel in the House.

The origin of the idea that a woman's desire for knowledge and power is unnatural and should be made to look either ridiculous or sinful lies in the Adam and Eve story. This myth transforms death's victims into death's cause¹² and makes Eve ultimately responsible for death's appearance in paradise. Eve's "sin"—wanting knowledge, sight, and power the equal of God's (in Milton's version, Eve sins against the "natural" order of things by desiring equality with Adam)—justifies God's punishment of her. God curses woman's

generative power: the pain of childbirth becomes the price a woman pays to enjoy her sexuality; paternity and domination become synonymous as wife and children become possessions; and woman desires both the pain and the domination, becoming the archetypal masochist.¹³ God curses Adam, too, but the curse has nothing to do with Adam's sexuality or his relationship with Eve.¹⁴ Whereas Eve loses the power to define herself, Adam retains the power to name, and in fact, names Eve. The story thus embodies what it describes—it defines Eve (and thus all women) at the same time it justifies man's "right" to define her. The story is a tidy rationale for men's treatment of women—the definition of woman as secondary, sinful, and inferior and the right of man to define her that way are both presented as truth.

The undercurrent of fear and hostility in the Adam and Eve story underlies "The Fisherman and His Wife," also, and Woolf quotes just enough of the tale to create a hostile "bass" that then runs up "unexpectedly" into the novel's "melody" on occasion.¹⁵ She also makes this accompanying bass apparent by scattering men's contemptuous comments about women throughout the novel. The society just "naturally" applies the Eve myth to its opinions of women. For example, Charles Tansley transforms Mrs. Ramsay into Eve the temptress when he imagines saying to his friends, "Of course Ramsay had dished himself by marrying a beautiful woman and having eight children" (136). Such comments, when run together, form an impressive litany of disparagement that demonstrates the male assumption of the right to define women:

The extraordinary irrationality of her remark, the folly of women's minds enraged him Women can't paint, women can't write She had no control over her emotions, Andrew thought. Women hadn't They never got anything worth having from one year's end to another. They did nothing but talk, talk, talk, eat, eat, eat. It was the women's fault. Women made civilisation impossible, with all their "charm," all their silliness Women can't write, women can't paint The women bored one so can't paint, can't write can't paint, can't write He thought, women are always like that; the vagueness of their minds is hopeless They could not keep anything clearly fixed in their minds. (50, 75, 117, 129, 130, 136, 137, 237, 238, 249)

Woolf uses "The Fisherman and His Wife" and its echoes of the Eve myth to show that patriarchal contempt for women exists on the mythical, social, and personal levels within society. Mrs. Ramsay unconsciously internalizes, her society reinforces, and the men repeat the tale's message: women's claim to knowledge and power must be rejected, because if women get knowledge and power, they will misuse it.

Woolf also uses the tale to show why Mrs. Ramsay seems so attracted to the Angel role. The two mythical messages feed off each other—trying to avoid being like Eve (unnatural, outrageous,

perverse) drives women into Mary's arms, and the reverence given Mary keeps the cost, the sacrifice of self, hidden. That reverence also keeps the relationship between the two myths hidden. Thus, the pressure to play the Angel in the House feels inherent.¹⁶ In *To the Lighthouse*, the two myths function in just that way: Mrs. Ramsay experiences her drive to sacrifice self as natural. Thus, the inward barriers Woolf mentions in "Professions for Women" are formed, and thus, Mrs. Ramsay never realizes how she participates in her own destruction.

Woolf's metaphor for the fairy tale (it "was like the bass gently accompanying a tune, which now and then ran up unexpectedly into the melody" [87]) suggests that the Eve myth is the foundation for the tune, but rarely heard, whereas the Mary myth functions as the melody. Both the bass and the melody tell the same story, however—woman as she is is not acceptable—and have the same message—women must be controlled, either through contempt or through reverence. Even though the Mary myth may seem better, its cost is the same as Eve's—death. After all, Mrs. Ramsay is ultimately killed by her role: "Giving, giving, giving, she had died" (223). As Woolf points out in her "Professions for Women" speech, the Angel has "more blood on her hands than all the murderers who have ever been hanged" ("Speech" xxxii).

In her novel, Woolf reveals the mythic pressures on her mother/Mrs. Ramsay, exposes the double bind women are in, and shows why a woman might not even see the trap. What Mrs. Ramsay and her own mother could not do for themselves, then, Lily and Woolf do for them. But the painter and the writer free neither the mother nor their own imaginations without a struggle. They must fight against their own reliance on patriarchal definitions, must strive to accept death, pain, and loss as part of reality, and finally, must go beyond being critics of patriarchal culture to become feminist seers. When they have gone through this process, they can use their feminist imagination and art to recreate the mother as she might have been outside the double bind: they seek the woman that emerges "before habits [have] spun themselves across the surface" (285).

Woolf portrays Lily Briscoe as a critic of the patriarchal society from the beginning of the novel. Lily does not accept patriarchal definitions and myths as given, handed down by God, always and already present, but views them as constructs, reflections of desire, useful fictions.¹⁷ For example, Lily admits that the protection a young man offers to a woman if the Tube bursts into flames can be nice, but she also realizes that such a "code of behaviour" promotes insincere relationships. When it insists the young woman should help the young man assert himself at dinner, it ultimately prevents a man and woman from knowing each other (139). For Lily, then, the code is open to question: "But how would it be, she thought, if neither of us did either of these things?" (137). Lily also never sees Mrs. Ramsay just in terms of a role, but instead asks, "How did she differ? What was the spirit in her, the essential thing . . . ?" (76). Mr. Bankes is shocked, for example, by "her neglect of the significance of mother and son" (262) in her painting of Mrs. Ramsay and James. Woolf shows Lily's energies going in the opposite direction from the

society's; whereas the society labels and controls under the auspices of protection and reverence, Lily questions because she wants to see.

Lily also refuses to let the rationale behind patriarchal myths inform her art. For example, she does not define art as the subduing of reality into a system she can then name truth; rather, she wrestles with reality, knowing she will never control it:

For what could be more formidable than that space? Here she was again, she thought, stepping back to look at it, drawn out of gossip, out of living, out of community with people into the presence of this formidable ancient enemy of hers—this other thing, this truth, this reality, which suddenly laid hands on her, emerged stark at the back of appearances and commanded her attention . . . It was an exacting form of intercourse anyhow. Other worshipful objects were content with worship; men, women, God, all let one kneel prostrate; but this form, were it only the shape of a white lamp-shade looming on a wicker table, roused one to perpetual combat, challenged one to a fight in which one was bound to be worsted. (236)

Lily confronts rather than masters, opens herself up to reality rather than controls it, and wants to communicate reality's complexity rather than simplify it. For example, she does not want her art to give things "a wholeness not theirs in life" (286); for Lily, the great revelation, the one that would explain the meaning of life, "had never come. The great revelation perhaps never did come. Instead there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark . . ." (240). Thus, Woolf repeatedly reminds us that Lily's vision differs from that of her society.

Lily's function as an outsider (single, female artist, and not an actual member of the Ramsay family) makes her more sharply aware of her society's mythical structures. For example, she observes Mrs. Ramsay's self-sacrificing behavior and tries to imitate it once. But that's just the point. What seemed "natural" to Mrs. Ramsay, simply part of being a woman, is something Lily has to self-consciously imitate. Lily can recognize, whereas Mrs. Ramsay could not, that the mythical structures still have a hold on her, because even as she realizes she cannot "lose" herself the way Mrs. Ramsay did, she wonders about her adequacy as a woman (224-26).

Woolf also has Lily demonstrate how easy it is, even for someone struggling against patriarchal structures, to fall into the patriarchal mode of expressing contempt and reverence for a woman. When Lily thinks about a marriage Mrs. Ramsay arranged, a marriage that did not turn out well, she becomes childishly mocking, triumphant:

Mrs. Ramsay has faded and gone, she thought. We can override her wishes, improve away her limited, old-fashioned ideas . . . And one would have to say to her, It has all gone against your wishes. (260)

Her contempt quickly disappears, however, when she recalls how compelling Mrs. Ramsay's marriage "mania" had been in life (261). Then remembering how Mrs. Bankes reverently looked at Mrs. Ramsay, Lily sees an "astonishingly beautiful" woman (264). But she soon rejects reverence, too, because she realizes beauty distorts life by freezing it into one mold (264). When she understands that neither a dusty, out-of-date matchmaker she can rebel against nor a lifeless icon have much to do with the woman she wants to paint, she attempts to do more than criticize her society's codes. Wanting to actually see from a position outside those codes and myths, she rejects the patriarchal modes of thinking. But that means she must also give up the control and protection such habits of thinking provide.

Lily must face Mrs. Ramsay's absence. At first, it feels "safe" to think of the older woman. But when she tries to see Mrs. Ramsay clearly, her sense of the world's reality changes:

Ghost, air, nothingness, a thing you could play with easily and safely at any time of day or night, she had been that, and then suddenly she put her hand out and wrung the heart thus. Suddenly, the empty drawing-room steps, the frill of the chair inside, the tumbling on the terrace, the whole wave and whisper of the garden became like curves and arabesques flourishing round a centre of complete emptiness. (266)

Without the comfort of myths that impose meaning on underlying fears, that explain death and promise life, Lily must confront the reality of her loss, the reality of a world without safety or certainty:

Could things thrust their hands up and grip one; could the blade cut; the fist grasp? Was there no safety? No learning by heart of the ways of the world? No guide, no shelter, but all was miracle, and leaping from the pinnacle of a tower into the air? Could it be, even for elderly people, that this was life?—startling, unexpected, unknown? For one moment she felt that if they both got up, here, now on the lawn, and demanded an explanation, why was it so short, why was it so inexplicable, said it with violence, as two fully equipped human beings from whom nothing should be hid might speak, then, beauty would roll itself up; the space would fill; those empty flourishes would form into shape; if they shouted loud enough Mrs. Ramsay would return. "Mrs. Ramsay!" she said aloud, "Mrs. Ramsay!" The tears ran down her face. (268)

Through Lily's experience, Woolf shows us our desire to control, the desire to shout something into being from nothing, and thus shows us why we allow patriarchal myths to have such a hold on us. But Woolf does not allow herself or her fictional artists to become

gods, to explain away the void at the center of things. Rather, she and Lily must try to accept the world as it is, without making it less painful. Paradoxically, the attempt at acceptance makes the painful feelings diminish somewhat and then, and only then, does Lily begin to sense Mrs. Ramsay's presence:

and of their anguish left, as antidote, a relief that was balm in itself, and also, but more mysteriously, a sense of some one there, of Mrs. Ramsay, *relieved for a moment of the weight that the world had put on her . . .* (262; my emphasis)

Only when Lily opens herself to the world as it is, can she sense what Mrs. Ramsay might have been like without the burdens of the Eve and Mary myths, without the fear of the flounder's punishment of a woman's power and without the drive to meet all the Angel's demands.

Lily begins to pursue actively this sense of Mrs. Ramsay. But Woolf shows that a new vision does not come easily. Lily thinks

She must try to get hold of something that evaded her. It evaded her when she thought of Mrs. Ramsay; it evaded her now when she thought of her picture. Phrases came. Visions came. Beautiful pictures. Beautiful phrases. But what she wished to get hold of was that very jar on the nerves, *the thing itself before it has been made anything*. (287; my emphasis)

The painter and the writer have similar experiences with pictures and phrases that prevent real insight. Lily soon realizes, however, that "one got nothing by soliciting urgently . . . Let it come, she thought, if it will come" (288).

Woolf thus demonstrates an acceptance of the creative process. Lily lets her mind wander, and instead of trying to define Mrs. Ramsay, she begins to explore Mrs. Ramsay from Mrs. Ramsay's vantage point, which is also an acceptance, an acceptance of the woman's value. What was it like to be Mrs. Ramsay? Such a question is a loving gesture from a daughter to her mother, a gesture that assumes the mother's complexity:

One wanted fifty pairs of eyes to see with, [Lily] reflected. Fifty pairs of eyes were not enough to get round that one woman with, she thought. Among them, must be one that was stone blind to her beauty. One wanted most some secret sense, fine as air, with which to steal through keyholes and surround her where she sat knitting, talking, sitting silent in the window alone; which took to itself and treasured up like the air which held the smoke of the steamer, her thoughts, her imaginations, her desires. *What did the hedge mean to her, what did the garden mean to her, what did it mean to her when a wave broke?* . . . And then what stirred

and trembled in her mind when the children cried, "How's that? How's that?" cricketing? (294; my emphasis)

Woolf portrays Lily intuitively focusing her attention on those moments when Mrs. Ramsay was most likely to experience her self, that wedge-shaped core of darkness. More important, Lily's desire—though impossible to fulfill—and her questions—though unanswerable—assume that Mrs. Ramsay is a person worthy of her (and our) attention. And these are just the questions a patriarchal society never asks of Eve, of Mary, of women—how does it feel to be you?

For Lily and Woolf as daughters, the questions reflect an interest in how someone else sees, but without any compulsion to see in the same way, and thus they free mothers and daughters to be themselves. For Lily and Woolf as feminists, the questions reflect an acceptance of a woman as she is and an assumption that life for a woman is complex and deep and meaningful. For Lily and Woolf as artists, the questions reflect a desire to see, not control, a refusal to play God, and an attempt to build into a work of art the acceptance of reality's resistance to art. The inherent respect for Mrs. Ramsay revealed by these questions, the assumption that Mrs. Ramsay had a view of the world that might not be the same as her publicly expressed views, the acceptance of Mrs. Ramsay as a person in her own right, constitute a feminist understanding that allows her to be *in* the world once more.

Thus, Woolf creates the moment: an acceptance of death as part of reality, a validation of Lily's type of seeing, and an assumption of Mrs. Ramsay's complexity all converge. The feminist imagination produces a world in which Mrs. Ramsay exists:

"Mrs. Ramsay! Mrs. Ramsay!" she cried, feeling the old horror come back—to want and want and not to have. Could she inflict that still? And then, quietly, as if she refrained, that too became part of ordinary experience, was on a level with the chair, with the table. Mrs. Ramsay—it was part of her perfect goodness—sat there quite simply, in the chair, flicked her needles to and fro, knitted her reddish-brown stocking, cast her shadow on the step. There she sat. (300)

For Lily, Mrs. Ramsay's very presence, her "thereness" are good and perfect in themselves. Cursed by patriarchal contempt, killed by patriarchal reverence, Mrs. Ramsay disappears from the novel. Accepted as human, named worthwhile, seen and valued for what she was, Mrs. Ramsay appears again. Lily makes the absent mother present.

And so does Woolf. When her mother died, Woolf writes that the real tragedy was not so much Julia Stephen's literal absence, although that certainly was painful, but her being made unreal ("Sketch" 95). Her father's *Mausoleum Book*, into which he poured his grief and guilt, reified Julia Stephen: a paragon of saintly and angelic virtues stares from the pages of that book.¹⁸ Her father's

extreme reverence killed her mother's reality for Virginia, and thus probably guaranteed the presence of the Angel's haunting voice later. Ironically, the daughter's artistic act of murder, the killing of the Angel in the House, resurrected Julia Stephen. After reading *To The Lighthouse*, Vanessa Bell, Woolf's sister, wrote to Woolf, testifying to the novel's power:

It is almost painful to have her so raised from the dead. . . . It was like meeting her again with oneself grown up and on equal terms and it seems to me the most astonishing feat of creation to have been able to see her in such a way. (*Letters*, III, 572)

No longer a saint, no longer a role, model impossible to emulate, the mother is real again, someone the daughters can meet on equal terms.

Seeing and understanding her mother and the myths that crippled her removed the inward barriers to Woolf's own artistic development. Woolf made up *To the Lighthouse*, what many claim is her best work, "in a great, apparently involuntary, rush" ("Sketch" 81). The focus of the novel, originally on her father, shifted between the conception and the writing of it: "The dominating impression is to be of Mrs. R's character."¹⁹ Writing the novel "very quickly," Woolf recalls that she ceased to be obsessed by her mother. She also writes, "I suppose that I did for myself what psychoanalysts do for their patients. I expressed some very long felt and deeply felt emotion. And in expressing it I explained it and then laid it to rest" ("Sketch" 81). Woolf finally kills her personal Angel in the House.

In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf accepts her ambivalence about her mother. Mrs. Ramsay is not without flaws, and Lily openly rebels against some of the older woman's patriarchal values. However, Woolf also understands the pressures put on the older woman to have and to perpetuate those values. Without condoning Mrs. Ramsay's alignment with the patriarchy, Woolf does not condemn her, either. Through her use of the fairy tale and the Angel in the House, Woolf shows the implications of the patriarchal myths for women—they kill. The Eve and Mary myths allow Mrs. Ramsay no real choice and no real value. In fact, both myths imply that the only good woman is a dead woman. Finally, Woolf's personal, artistic, and feminist aims converge in the extraordinary moment of resurrection: she kills the Angel in the House, and thus frees both mother and daughter to be themselves; she strips away veils of habit in her art, openly acknowledging her desires and yet courageously attempting to see reality as it is; and she recovers the mother that existed beneath the burden of myth and claims her as part of her feminist heritage. Woolf makes her mother real again, changing a haunting Angel into an internalized ally, someone she can think back through. No longer silenced by a curse, no longer an idol, Mrs. Ramsay is *there*. The moment's power, then, is a *woman's* power, power that rarely exists unfettered, but that *Woolf's* power releases. Transforming what some have called a patriarchal collaborator into a heritage for the feminist enterprise, Woolf's powerful feminist imagination robs the defining pen from the patriarchy and hands it back to Eve and her daughters.

Notes

¹Terence Hewet's comment appears only in the first British edition of Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out* (London: Duckworth, 1915), 258. Woolf's first novel went through many drafts and a further revision for an American edition published by George H. Doran in 1920. The revision for Doran is the text used by Harcourt in its current printings of the novel. See Louise A. DeSalvo, *Virginia Woolf's First Voyage: A Novel in the Making* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1980) for a history and an interpretation of Woolf's drafts, revisions, and editions.

This essay grew out of my work on Mrs. Ramsay, the Eve myth, and "The Fisherman and His Wife" in Chapter 2 of my dissertation, "Virginia Woolf's Use of Distance Against Patriarchal Control of Women, Death, and Character." Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1979), especially chapters 1, 2, and 6, greatly influenced that chapter and this essay. As I reworked my ideas, Jane Marcus' essays, "Introduction" and "Thinking Back Through Our Mothers," in *New Feminist Essays on Virginia Woolf*, ed. Jane Marcus (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1981), xiii-xx and 1-30, were especially useful.

I want to thank The College of St. Catherine for inviting me to present an earlier version of this essay at "Virginia Woolf and the Life of a Woman: A Conference for Common Readers and Scholars" in the fall of 1982 and Jane Marcus for encouraging me to turn that talk into an essay. I also want to thank Louise DeSalvo, James Gorman, Laura Moss Gottlieb, Candace Hartzler, Mary Kuhner, Jane Marcus, Alison Prindle, and Linda Westervelt for the insightful readings they gave this essay along the way. I appreciate James Bailey's support, patience, and encouraging words. And I am grateful to Gary for his Salt Box, his wit, and his belief.

²Susan Dick also uses the word "resurrection" to describe Lily's vision. See "The Tunnelling Process: Some Aspects of Virginia Woolf's Use of Memory and the Past" in *Virginia Woolf: New Critical Essays*, ed. Patricia Clements and Isobel Grundy (London: Vision Press, 1983), 193. So does Jane Marcus in "Thinking Back Through Our Mothers," 11.

³Woolf openly admitted her novel's autobiographical basis in her letters, unpublished autobiographical writings, and diary. See especially the latter, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf: Volume Three, 1925-1930*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell (New York: Harcourt, 1980), 18-19, 36, 61, 208. See Jane Lilienfeld, "Where the Spear Plants Grew: The Ramsays' Marriage in *To the Lighthouse*," *New Feminist Essays on Virginia Woolf*, 148-169, and Sara Ruddick, "Learning to Live with the Angel in the House," *Women's Studies* 4 (1977), 181-200, for two close examinations of the links between life and art in the novel.

⁴See Marcus, "Introduction," xix, and "Thinking Back Through Our Mothers," 14-15.

⁵As Marcus puts it, in "Thinking Back Through Our Mothers," 21, the female artist need not commit "mental matricide"!

⁶See also *A Room of One's Own*, 35: "Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size."

⁷See Gilbert and Gubar, 20. The great popularizer of the Mary myth in secular form during the nineteenth century was Coventry Patmore, *The Angel in the House* (London: George Bell & Son, 1885). The heroine of his poem,

Honorio, has thoughts like these: "Man must be pleased; but him to please/Is woman's pleasure" (73)

Woolf notes that Elizabeth Robins, a friend of Julia Stephen's, called Julia a "mixture of the Madonna and a woman of the world" ("Sketch" 90). See also Leslie Stephen, *The Mausoleum Book*, ed. Alan Bell (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), 53, where he writes about Julia, "She was for very sound reasons a better saint for me than the blessed Virgin."

⁸See also John A. Phillips, "The Second Eve," in his book *Eve: The History of an Idea* (San Francisco: Harper, 1984), 131-147. He writes that "The Virgin Mary is Woman as she ought to be," but that she "cannot really be emulated" (145).

⁹Although Mrs. Ramsay cannot allow conscious desires for power to cross her mind, those desires remain potent in her unconscious, expressing themselves as manipulation and domestic domination. Feminist critics often note the connection between lack of real power and the existence of manipulation, but see, in particular, Jean Baker Miller, *Toward a New Psychology of Women* (Boston: Beacon, 1976), 9-12, and Josephine O'Brien Schaefer, *The Three-Fold Nature of Reality* (The Hague: Mouton, 1965), 123, who notes that Mrs. Ramsay employs her powers in personal domination because she has no other arena for them. See also Jean O. Love, *Virginia Woolf: Sources of Madness and Art*, vol. 1 (Berkeley: U of California P, 1977), for her discussion of Julia Stephen's enjoyment of nursing as a way to remain an Angel but get out of the house and away from family demands for long periods of time.

¹⁰According to Susan Dick, ed., "Introduction," *To the Lighthouse: The Original Holograph Draft* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1982), 21, "The Fisherman and His Wife" does not appear in the first draft. Woolf mentions titles of other tales—the Three Bears, the Three Dwarfs—but quotes no materials from these tales. I suspect Woolf chose "The Fisherman and His Wife" because of its sea setting and its patriarchal message. She quotes the parts of the tale most directly related to men, women, and power: the husband's thinking his wife's desires are "not right"; the husband's prefacing his remarks with "For my wife, good Ilsabil/Wills not as I'd have her Will"; and the sea's raging when Ilsabil wants to have godlike power.

See Glenn Pedersen, "Vision in *To the Lighthouse*," *PMLA* 73 (1958), 585-600; Josephine O'Brien Schaefer, *The Three-Fold Nature of Reality*; and Maria DiBattista, *Virginia Woolf's Major Novels: The Fables of Anon* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1980), 74-88, for differing interpretations of the fairy tale and its relationship to Mrs. Ramsay and the novel's themes.

¹¹See *The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 103-12, for the entire tale. The Pantheon edition uses the 1944 James Stern revision of Margaret Hunt's translation of the tales from the German, and it differs slightly from the version Woolf seems to have used. For example, in the description of the storm's waves, Woolf's quotation does not include the words "crests of" in the phrase "and all with white foam at the top" (93). Woolf probably used Margaret Hunt, *Grimm's Household Tales*, introduced by Andrew Lang (London: George Bell & Sons, 1910).

¹²See Jacques Choron, *Death and Western Thought* (New York: Collier, 1963), 14, where he writes that "nowhere can the idea be found among the primitives that man himself is responsible for death (as he is in the Old Testament); rather, the explanation often encountered is that the gods have sent death because they are jealous of man, who has driven them from the earth."

¹³Gen. 3:16. "To the woman he said, 'I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.'"

¹⁴In one early interpretation of the story, Adam doesn't even sin. See 1 Tim. 2:13-14: "For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor."

¹⁵See Wolfgang Lederer, *The Fear of Women* (New York: Harvest-Harcourt, 1968) for an enlightening study of such fear and hostility in our culture. Marina Warner calls it the "undertow of misogyny" (58).

Woolf's quotations from "The Fisherman and His Wife" show the Adam-like husband's non-involvement (though he follows his wife's lead), the Eve-like wife's desire for power, and the God-like flounder's anger; they also show the husband paying for his wife's sin.

¹⁶See Phillips, especially 145-147, and Warner, 191, where she writes: "The two arms of the Christian view of woman—the contempt and hatred evident in the interpretations of the Creation and the Fall, and idealization of her more 'Christian' submissive nature—meet and interlock in the advocacy of humility for the sex." See also Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill & Wang, 1972), 129, as quoted in Warner, 335. Barthes notes that the "very principle of myth" is to transform "history into nature."

¹⁷See Barthes, 142, as quoted in Warner, 335: "in myth, things lose the memory that they once were made." Warner, 25, also quotes E.B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (London, 1871), I, 416: "Myth is the history of its authors, not of its subjects . . ."

¹⁸For example, Leslie Stephen quotes himself in a letter to Julia: "'And,' I said, 'you must let me tell you that I do and always shall feel for you something which I can only call reverence as well as love . . . You see I have not got any Saints and you must not be angry if I put you in the place where my Saints ought to be'" (*Mausoleum Book* 53). See also Noel Annan, *Leslie Stephen: The Godless Victorian* (New York: Random, 1984), 98-113, for a biographical account of the Stephen marriage. Annan notes that Leslie's *Mausoleum Book* turned Julia into a "marble angel" (104).

¹⁹See *Diary: Vol. III*, 18-19; Dick, 25-26; and Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse: The Original Holograph Draft*, MS 2.

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A Sabbatical Journal

Albert Lovejoy

In my sabbatical proposal I stated that I hoped to bring myself up-to-date in the field of social work, in both theory and practice. In this quest I was somewhat successful, though practice was much more salient than theory, theory often having to be inferred from practice. My strategy was to visit a number of social work agencies in Central Ohio, two in metropolitan Columbus and three in Delaware, Ohio, during the spring and summer of 1984.

Then as a kind of comparative assessment I intended to visit analogous agencies in a somewhat similar area abroad, which area turned out to be metropolitan Leeds, England, a place of roughly the same population as Columbus though a less heterogeneous city inasmuch as it was one of England's outstanding textile centers.

In the days and weeks between social work agency participant observation, I read in areas related to social work, social problems, and other fields of my teaching responsibility.

March 20 A luncheon appointment with Su Ann Farnlacher, ('71) Director of the Homemaker Program at Community Health and Nursing Services of Columbus, prepared me for what I might experience at this agency, headquartered at 303 East Sixth Avenue in Columbus.

March 26 I reported to Community Health and Nursing Services headquarters where I received an orientation and overview of the work, went with a group of new homemaker aides to the Columbus Welfare Office for I.D.'s, and in the afternoon observed Nurse Ruth Kennedy treat four elderly clients at the Second Avenue and Summit Street Recreation Center. What impressed me most was the friendly relaxed atmosphere and the hope and trust instilled in the clients by Nurse Kennedy.

March 27 I learned about N.I.C.E., the nutritional program for elderly folk, and in fact went on a delivery run with a young lady who was responsible for large numbers of mid-day meals that are supposed to supply one-third the nutritional requirements of each "client" each weekday. It seemed obvious that many of these meal clients are very lonely and thus also hungry for personal attention and at least some snatches of conversation. Our last meals were not delivered until 2 p.m. Later that afternoon I accompanied a lady on home visits to Homemaker clients to find out how they felt about the people who were cleaning, grocery shopping, etc., for them. This could almost be labeled "friendly visiting," an ancient and honorable social service, as well as a kind of monitoring mission.

March 28 Nurse Gerri Garbe and I visited a very ill Westerville woman who was taking the prescriptions given her by at least two physicians, such medications being prescribed by one without the knowledge that another doctor was also prescribing medicine. She was not eating and was lying in bed nearly comatose, to the chagrin and befuddlement of her not-too-medically sophisticated kinfolk. It turned out that she was not even under the Agency's jurisdiction, but

obviously needed help from some quarter. Back at Community Health and Nursing Services I attended an in-service seminar for homemaker aides on "Depression Among the Elderly." Obviously worries over health, finances, and family relationships press heavily on many older people. The cheery, energetic, typically young homemaker aide can be a real source of joy and companionship to a senior citizen if only for a few hurried hours a week. Later in the afternoon I went with Rosalyn Beatty to visit another Westerville woman, who, as her bedridden husband's sole caretaker, surely needed a helping hand since she lacked friends and relatives in the city. Her reply to the question about whom we might call in case she was out of her apartment was poignant. After giving it a minute's reflection, she guessed that the apartment manager was the only one who knew her. Shades of the "lonely crowd" in the once Q.PV?!?

March 29 Becky Davis, R.N., now working toward a graduate degree in Social Work, and I went out as homemaker aides. Sweeping, carrying out trash, mopping, spraying, dusting, vacuuming, dish washing, grocery shopping, laundering and chatting were what we did. One widow had \$14 for food until the next Social Security check arrived. Our grocery purchases for her came to \$14.13. As I recall, Becky covered the 13 cents overage. Becky, like other homemaker aides, is a salt-of-the-earth kind of person. Just being around her makes the sun shine in one's life. Our visits in several homes convince me that a lifetime's accumulation of things can be a lot! One of the aides, after her first day out and as she was writing up her report, turned to me and asked, "How do you spell CLUTTER?" That summed up a great deal on the homemaking front.

March 30 With Rosalyn Beatty I visited people in the Clintonville area. One really has to know Columbus and environs to do this work expeditiously! The people we saw evidently value these services highly, though some indicate that a nearby daughter takes them shopping and for medical visits.

April 2 Sylvia Geisler ('81) arranged a most helpful luncheon meeting for me with a number of social service people in Delaware. At that time Sylvia was the Associate Executive Director of the Delaware County United Way and thus was able to be of vital aid to me in my quest for participant observational opportunities.

April 5 I spent the morning talking to Grace Volker and others at St. Stephen's Community Center on 17th Avenue in Columbus. As Volunteer Co-ordinator, Grace was in a good position to slot me into some of their programs.

April 9 My first morning at St. Stephen's was spent observing a bingo game mainly for black, elderly neighborhood residents. The prizes were household items usually not permitted with food stamps. The games were so varied and long-lasting that nearly every player won at least one prize. A good bit of gentle banter and sporting spirit pervaded these contests. Following the game, a congregate meals-on-wheels lunch was brought in and served in the same hall.

April 10 I helped set up tables, chairs, etc., for a banquet for Community Center staff, Roman Catholic Church leaders, and Columbus city officials. I spent some time talking to group workers and also went out on the playground with one of them and three of her charges.

April 11 We made final preparations for the 320-person banquet. At odd times I talked with staff members concerning politics and urban population changes. Because of the banquet preparations, there were no children's programs scheduled so I watched adults playing billiards, sewing, and eating the congregate meals-on-wheels—not at all at the same time, I hasten to add.

April 12 I visited the Cleveland Avenue branch of St. Stephen's where I talked to department heads about bureaucracy, eligibility of clients, the Catch-22 nature of many welfare stipulations, the multi-problem family, the paucity of preventive welfare programs, and the apparent lack of a central coordinating agency for clients. We agreed that "blaming the victim" and neglecting to treat incipient problems are very costly in the long run.

Returning to the Community Center that evening to watch the youth programs from 6-9:30 p.m., I witnessed a lot of activity as older kids arrived to play card games, billiards, ping-pong, basketball, etc. There was much scurrying about, some roughhouse play, "friendly" banter, and one fight on the basketball floor. The fighters had to leave the Center for violating a Center rule. Two other prohibitions are using profanity and wearing headgear (by males) inside the Center.

April 13 I spent all day in the St. Stephen's food pantry, usually in the company of two community service workers. Since there was only a light demand for food orders, much time was spent shelving packaged food, talking, and bagging orders and carrying them out to waiting cars. After the pantry closed, I observed an art class of fairly young children and their creative instructor.

April 30-May 3 At the Delaware food pantry I was under director Mary Lou De Jonge's able and energetic supervision. Moving the pantry into new quarters, stocking shelves, going back to the old facility and cleaning it, helping to fill food orders, and again cleaning and straightening up the new quarters kept me occupied most of this time.

May 4 I added a bit of "artistry" to my routine food order help, as I made a sign for the food pantry window so that our clients could clearly distinguish us, the Pantry, from the residences on both sides. PEOPLE IN NEED told the story and marked the place. In this fairly straightforward needs-meeting assignment I met a board member or two, volunteers, and "clients." One volunteer who was especially knowledgeable and energetic was a middle-aged woman whose husband had been out of work for more than a year and had been a recipient of groceries from this food pantry. Her husband's "structural unemployment" and thus their need for assistance showed me that middle-class folks may also be vulnerable to the tides of economic recession.

May 7 Another agency orientation took place at Touchstone, a half-way house for teenage male status offenders. Talking with Donna Stark, the director, and several volunteer workers, I learned about their program with young offenders. It's a facility which on weekdays doesn't start to hum until 3 or 3:30 p.m. when the boys are all back from school in the city of Delaware.

May 8 From 3 to 10 p.m., I was at Touchstone with the guys and

their friends and the largely volunteer staff. Talking, TV watching, supper preparation, a swim in the O.W.U. indoor pool, studying, joshing, telephoning, etc., were the main events in which I took a fairly relaxed and minor part.

May 9 As it turned out, the evening stint was quite dramatic because the father of one of our clients who did not like his son's undergraduate counselor's advice phoned to say that he was coming to Touchstone to shoot the counselor. Tension ran high for awhile until Touchstone's consultant-psychologist, Dr. Marc Isralsky, was able to defuse the irate parent's rabid hostility. That night I could talk more easily with the residents of Touchstone. They felt more comfortable around me, as was evidenced by more open complaining, bickering, "bad language," and random talking during their study hour.

May 10 I was comfortably accepted during my 2:30 to 10:30 p.m. tour of duty and was able to interact with the volunteer counselors, the guys, and their visitors. I helped somewhat in the preparation of a picnic supper and on several occasions "played" garage-door basketball with the boys. Again that evening there was some griping, some disagreement over the basketball points, some telephone-use frustration, some calling-out-the-window to female passers-by and some "bad" language now and again, but all in all it was a quiet, pleasant afternoon and evening.

May 11 A brief stint was filled mainly with playing garage-door basketball with a new and rather nervous boy, there, as I recall, for substance abuse. After a bit of supper, I came home at 7 p.m. since most of these young men were going to the Columbus Northland Shopping Mall for the rest of the evening.

May 12 At Touchstone in the morning, I helped one of the older boys put the basketball hoop back on the garage-storage shed from which it had tumbled during some rather rough play. I was amazed at this young man's ingenious carpentry, using very few tools and make-shift materials. Also I talked and visited with several of the counselors and their family members who dropped in. At about 1:30 p.m. we all left for the Columbus Zoo. According to one of our clients, who had lived near the Zoo, we went the "long wrong way," but eventually arrived, at which time we broke into three groups, one of which was under my surveillance. After a rather full and even exhausting afternoon, I left the Zoo and my involvement with Touchstone at 4:30 p.m. with little ceremony or fuss, but I confess that I had really grown to like this gang and their undergraduate counselors in the week I spent with them.

May 17-20 After the flurry of last-minute duties Eunice (my wife) and I left for London on Thursday, arriving at Heathrow early the next morning. We spent the weekend sightseeing.

May 21 We took an express bus to Leeds on Monday morning, arriving at 2 p.m. I proceeded to look for a city map. Several hours later I had gotten a tour-guide booklet of the city, had finally found the Social Service Headquarters, had arranged an appointment for Tuesday, and, with their kind help, had found a nice hotel in the city, not too far from the little bus station where Eunice, frightened, shivering, and angry, was frantically awaiting word of my death from heart

attack, pedestrian mishap, or amnesic accident, over two hours after I had left her for what should have been at most a ten-minute errand! However, after we were snugly ensconced in our Griffin Hotel room and had had a good supper, she was beginning to believe that maybe I could be trusted again—but not too far out of her sight.

May 22 Following a wholesome and filling breakfast, I received word that Mr. Michael Runciman's secretary, Mrs. Sibai, wished to talk to me at Social Service Headquarters. Our appointment, from 9:45 to 11:00 a.m., enabled her to divine what my social work interests were, since Mr. James, the director, was on vacation and my letter to him detailing my interests had apparently been lost in the mail. Thus my arrival the previous day was a bit of a surprise and a dilemma. What exactly did I wish to do and how could such arrangements be made to accommodate my academic mission? Mrs. Sibai would relay my explanations to Mr. Runciman, Senior Training Officer, with whom I would be talking on Wednesday.

May 23 At 10 a.m. I met with Mr. Runciman, whose English hospitality and graciousness hid a dynamo of energy and velvet efficiency. Within an hour and a half he had used his good offices via telephone to book me up for eight days, usually morning and afternoon, with visits and appointments with social service personnel at a variety of agencies, this despite the fact that the Monday and Tuesday following were "bank holidays." After this appointment I talked to Christine in the Social Service Headquarters. She told me about work done with mentally handicapped adults in small, family-like settings, which arrangements have the advantage of being more stimulating, less expensive, and more highly motivating to such people. Then from 12 to 1 p.m. I talked to Pam Smith about the various levels of work with elderly people. In this work an emphasis is placed on keeping people out of retirement institutions and affording them maximum independence. Pam impressed me with her energetic, cheerful, efficient, bureaucracy-wise but humane approach and her genuine respect for older people.

From this appointment I hurried down to the "Corn Center," took a bus to visit Seigen House for the Elderly, ably managed by Mike Simpson. He is a young man who seems to be creative, flexible, innovative, and caring and, like Pam, he truly respects older people. I chatted with him for two fleeting hours. That evening back at our downtown hotel, Eunice and I worked at plotting the bus routes for my various social welfare appointments for the next seven days.

May 24 Following the traditional big breakfast and a bit of scanning of the bus route map, I set off for the Hyde Park Centre. Mrs. McHale, whom I was to see, was off duty so I was ably shown about by her assistants. The mid-morning tea was served—a gracious accompaniment of business and professional duties! Elderly folk, mostly women, began arriving by mid-morning. At lunch I sat with six of these people who could not go into the main dining hall. Several college students arrived soon after the first clients and conversed, played dominoes with the handful of men, and generally socialized with the people at the Centre. The college volunteers were all males and this seemed a bit unusual to me since American social work students still seem to be predominantly female. The women I talked

with seemed to be alert and communicative in contrast to the elderly men who seemed less outgoing and less inclined to socialize. While all the older folks played bingo (a universal game for Seniors!?), two supervisors took me aside for after-lunch tea and serious talk about day-care centres for the aged and political trends in the U.S. and Britain.

From the Hyde Park Day Centre it was an easy walk to Cliffdene, a residence for young people with disabilities where, as usual, I arrived early. Nevertheless, Mr. Ward took me on a tour of the facilities which surprisingly were not too well suited for people using wheelchairs. Mr. Ward and I talked rather extensively about the problems, philosophies, and actualities of places like this. He, like Mike Simpson, believes in giving residents maximum latitude and autonomy. His assistant and his wife (who works with epileptic patients at another facility) drove me back into the city of Leeds in a sporty new Nissan at 4:30 p.m. As we three conversed, I discovered that both of them had been in the field of nursing before getting into social service work.

May 25 My appointment with Pam Smith was at 9 a.m. in the Griffin Hotel lobby. She arrived early, as enthusiastic and ebullient as ever, catching us stowing our luggage for the move to the cheaper Boundary Hotel that weekend. She took me to the offices of Services to the Elderly where the goal is to enable older people to stay out of institutions as long as possible as well as to accommodate some people who are coming out of them (in some cases after a forty to fifty year stay!). In both cases people are helped to live independently. Services for the Elderly helps make it possible for people to live in their flats by having a corps of warders, nurses, and care-givers to see them daily or as they are needed, both to help them with needed services and to encourage them always to do as much for themselves as they can. The warden and I popped in on a number of these folk, briefly chatting, occasionally helping with the omnipresent tea making, and checking on medications. I should interject here that this warden was the warm motherly sort of person who is a delight and welcome in one's life at any age. During our tour, the warden's beeper announced an emergency, which turned out to be that of an elderly, rather large woman who had somehow slipped out of her chair onto the floor. Five persons, residents and supervisors, were there when we arrived. Since she had apparently sustained no fractures, we lifted her into another chair. It was obvious as we looked about this high-rise for elderly people that their needs differed widely, irrespective of age. Sometimes the "old-old" would be helping the "young-old" or the "middle-old," but they seemed generally cheerful and optimistic and truly grateful for the service they enjoyed. Many had a keen sense of humor; I would have enjoyed chatting with them at length if time had permitted.

Returning to Headquarters I talked with another lady for about an hour and a half about her *special* program for the elderly, a program which is designed to offer care for those who are not officially or publicly eligible for assistance but who nonetheless need help. Despite this program, she admitted that some people remain unserved and others even purchased such services! The theme of

care-for-the-elderly that came through to me very clearly was that "those who need care shall receive *it as their right*." Ability to pay will not limit this care, though people with savings and property may be asked to pay a portion of the cost of some services.

At 1:35 p.m. I was whisked to the Youth Facility. Fortunately I had been served custard and tea earlier. There I met Mr. Lake, the superintendent, who embodies common sense, wisdom, and a deep-rooted faith that young people who've been in trouble can be taught to "make it" on their own. He is in charge of two youth populations: young offenders and youth-at-risk. He instructed one of the youth directors to show me the facilities, which included the boys' quarters, a kitchen, recreation areas, school classrooms, etc. In contrast to my sense of being imprisoned along with the inmates during my ten-week sabbatical several years ago at the Ohio Reformatory for Women, neither he nor his aid seem to feel this way. Among other topics, Mr. Lake and I discussed short-term versus long-term planning and the difficulty politicians have doing the latter since their terms of office are usually quite brief. This, of course, has always resulted in a great deal of institutional mischief, inefficiency, and bad planning.

After transferring our luggage from the Griffin Hotel to the Boundary Hotel, we picked up a rental car and proceeded to leave Leeds from downtown at rush hour. We spent the next two days, May 26 and 27, in the lovely, stonewalled countryside where we hiked, took many misty photographs, and thoroughly enjoyed the strong primary colors and invigorating temperatures of this beautiful geographic area.

May 28 I proceeded to my first appointment at Westwood Grange and much to my surprise found Mr. Runciman waiting for me in his auto. I think he wanted to be sure I could find this youth facility for "wayward girls" and also to relay some changes in my visitation schedule. Then I went in to meet and talk with Mr. Clayton, the superintendent, and his deputy for about an hour. It was significant to me that nearly everywhere I went people were interested in the American (U.S.A.) political climate and "Reaganomics" and were especially interested in my personal attitude toward President Reagan. After our chat, I attended a morning religious service in which the Superintendent read a brief homily and ended the service with prayer. No separation of State and Church here! In fact, one sees evidence, as we should expect in a country like Britain, of a rather tight integration of the two.

After what seemed to me to be a workingman's size lunch with the supervising staff and a tour of the Westwood Grange facilities with the Deputy, I came back to a Leeds as deserted as any place could be on this first of a double bank holiday. Perhaps it was because of the eerie urban emptiness or the lack of usual pedestrian hustle-bustle, but I saw many more seedy, though not dangerous, and pitiful-looking persons about the streets than I had noticed previously. Where do they seclude themselves in the usual workday life of the city?

May 29 The second bank holiday dawned peacefully enough and I set off for Roos Court. Though I had apparently taken the wrong

bus, my Pakistani driver and I (there were no other passengers) managed to figure out where I was headed and I arrived to meet Sue at the door. Can you imagine an English don being welcomed at a short-staffed social agency on a major holiday in the U.S.A.? Talking with her and a former director of the facility, we discussed the philosophy and practice of working with the mentally handicapped adults. In sum, our distilled conclusion came out as: "Treat them with respect and don't try to take over their lives." Every now and then residents of the home would speak with us. When Lynn Elliott came on duty to take a number of the residents for a bus ride to the countryside, she invited me to go along. Six or seven of us crowded into an old black "banger" of a mini-bus and started on our way through little villages and over beautiful terrain, both with typically narrow streets and commercial establishments hugging the thoroughfares. Oh, yes, we picked up Lynn's boxer (dog) with whom she has visiting privileges. Arriving at our destination, a hilly area, we all walked out to an overlook and rested there for some minutes before trekking back to where we thought the bus was, but Lynn shares my utter lack of a sense of direction and so with a resident or two she went up the hill to retrieve the black bus while I stayed with the rest of the residents to await her return. We tried to visit a friend of Roos Court on a hill, but as no one was there, came on back to home-base. This very capable slip of a girl, our driver, talked about her desire to come to and work in the U.S.A. America still seems to have a magnetic influence abroad. Is it because of our world power status, our blatant flaunting of individuality and wealth, or the wild stretches of real and imagined frontiers of the land and opportunity?

May 30 Mr. Richard Hall of the Department of Employment spent over an hour in the morning telling me about various employment and aid-for-the-unemployed schemes, especially for young people. These included job training programs, job sharing, etc. By now my head was so full of social service theories, practices, statistics, dilemmas, etc., that I fear I was not comprehending very effectively, but my lasting impression is still that the British are concerned about the welfare of those who, for whatever reasons, are languishing in the backwaters away from the mainstream of society.

May 31 I went by bus, as usual, to my appointments at Ramshead Wood Centre. Upon arrival I talked to Tom Matthews for awhile before we adjourned to observe the cricket match across the street being played by trainees and staff. Enthusiasm and spirit were high, even among those with quite severe disabilities. One young man, aided by two staff members, one on each side, was enabled to take his turn at bat and, with assistance, to run following a hit. He seemed to be deeply thrilled by this opportunity to participate.

In the sheltered workshop it seemed that the fabrication of Hoover vacuum cleaning bags and the making of woolen rugs were two of the stellar operations. Later in the day I sat in on a class in consumer economics where a young black instructor was doing a masterful job of alerting young people to the sly seductions, outright frauds, and reasonable places to shop in the vast hurly-burly of the city of Leeds. I was fascinated to note that these young people were

obviously avid TV watchers and just as obviously were being deeply influenced by the TV advertisements. As has often happened before, staff people kindly delivered me to our hotel.

June 1 I headed to Roundhay Day Centre, an old-fashioned sheltered workshop where I was shown various production units, such as repackaging toothpaste, craft-making, woodworking and ceramic areas. Here, as in some such organizations I have visited in the U.S.A., some of the work superintendents were very proud of their production records, but not so mindful of the personal and social needs of their workers. And yet even here, especially among the younger unit supervisors, there was evidence of warm personal relationships and a concern for individuals' problems. This was a refreshing counterpoint to the emphasis on production, routine, orderliness, and efficiency.

Back in Leeds, for this was a half-day schedule, I had a bite to eat and spent the afternoon at the city library. I met Eunice at the Vicar Lane bus station from which we proceeded to the lovely City Parish Church, a stunning cathedral, for evensong. It was bittersweet to observe robed officiants, thirty-five or more robed choir members, thrilling organ music, and a very spiritually nourishing brief homily—all presented before an audience of six, five of whom Mr. Runciman had invited! Such is all too often the situation, I am told and have read, in countries with an Established Church.

June 2 So now it was back to London for another day where we were caught up in a massive anti-Botha demonstration; then back to the U.S.A.

July 16-25 I spent a week at the Hickory Knoll School, operated by the Delaware County Council for Retarded Citizens. I was with a group under the able direction of Linda Mervine. The young people there, who seemed to range from pre-school to early 20s or so, had a variety of disabling conditions. In addition to the directors and some volunteers, there was a group of young male ex-offenders who were doing their community service by helping to look after members of this group. Some of these young men dealt with very difficult children who needed constant one-on-one attention. These community service people showed commendable patience and restraint.

What were the activities of the week? They were gym play (basketballs, tricycles, wagons, random racing about, etc.), audio-visual programs of an educational nature, an opportunity to decorate one's face as a clown or wear a mask (on this day I imagined that I witnessed more than ordinary spontaneous joy as the young people were temporarily taking on new personas and leaving the old behind), a birthday party for a young child who was so disturbed that he enjoyed it least, outdoor picnics and games, an afternoon at Delaware's Mingo Park pool, meals together, and the sad spectacle of young folks so bewitched by their demons that they could hardly relate to the human or physical environment in which they found themselves. I marveled that there were so few accidents; I was thrilled by the devotion of parents and care-givers; I was impressed by the community service workers; I was glad to be part of such a group, if only for one week, a group that was trying to make life a little more

bearable for these two dozen or so young people.

At the end of each day I was physically and emotionally exhausted and, I presume, that much younger staff may have been tired, too. Clients of this type need lots of discipline, tender loving care, and protection from themselves and others.

In conclusion, I must warn the reader that my remarks are impressionistic, partial, and selective, and yet I do believe these experiences have given me knowledge and insights I had not had before.

In both countries there is a sense of retrenchment under the politically conservative leaders, Thatcher and Reagan, but despite budgetary stringency, there is also a commitment to meeting publicly the most obvious human needs of their respective citizenry.

In Britain I felt a kind of assumed responsibility for helping any who needed succor without the blighting shadow of a *means* test, but in both countries it is tacitly admitted that because of pride, as well as for other reasons, there are those who are eligible for aid who do not come forward to claim it.

It seems that the public institutions themselves and the numbers of clients in Leeds are smaller than in the Columbus metropolitan area. There is perhaps more an emphasis on deinstitutionalization and more intimate relationships between care-giver and care-receiver in Leeds than in Central Ohio.

The social service personnel seemed to be less specialized in England, but whatever deficiencies they had in this regard, they appeared to be very bright, able, dedicated, and professional people. Did higher pay, a more prestigious ranking for social work, or the higher unemployment rate in Great Britain bring this about? For the most part, they were young as were many in the Columbus metropolitan area. Are "burn-out" and a high rate of turnover factors here?

Probably the "needy" in the Columbus area react to being dependent with more self denigration and resistance than do those in Leeds. Doris Francis' anthropological comparative study of elderly Jewish (mostly female) pensioners in Cleveland and Leeds saw this in a much longer, more rigorous, and detailed study as presented in *Will You Still Need Me, Will You Still Feed Me When I'm 84?*

The sense of family solidarity and pride in mutual aid and togetherness may be greater in Britain than it is here in America where we rather expect and applaud the social and physical mobility (the growing away from us) of our offspring. We expect them to be successful and when they are, we oldsters try not to stand in their way. And we try mightily to save a nest egg so that in our "golden years" we may not have to lean on our children or grandchildren. This is the ideal—often violated by Americans who really do aid their aged parents willingly but in subtle ways not embarrassing to either generation.

Another thing I think, which represents a contrast in our welfare service systems, is that in the United States one is more likely to have to initiate procedures for help, whereas in Britain in some sense one is sought out if he or she seems likely to be eligible for some form of assistance.

All in all, there are people truly in need in both countries. Many of them are gladly receiving a variety of social services. Some are not getting what they desire or what they deserve. At this juncture private agencies are still trying to shoulder a very heavy load in the U.S.A. Both countries' leaders are convinced that economic revival and productiveness are better means to the good life for all than social services. I like the caring atmosphere of England very much, and I also like the emphasis on individual initiative here, especially as long as such initiatives do the job of feeding, clothing, sheltering those less fortunate—whether through heredity, environment, or the complex interaction between the two.

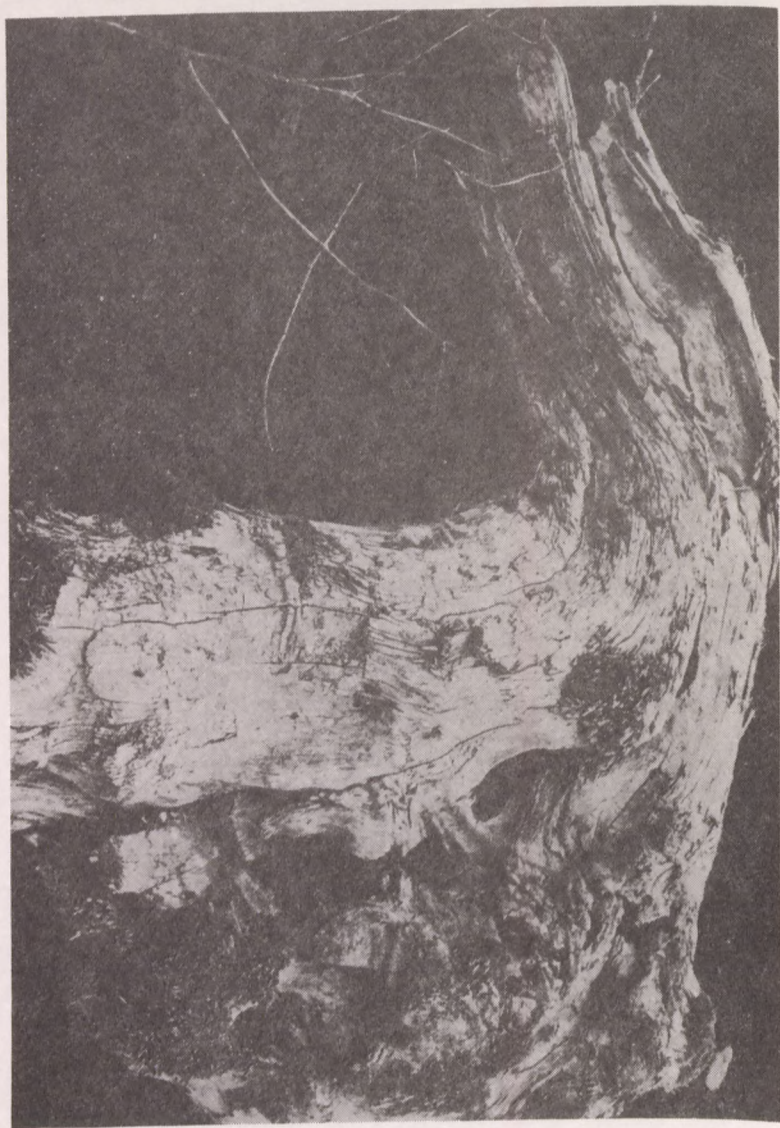


Photo by Thomas Merton

Reflections on a Hidden Wholeness: The Photographs of Thomas Merton

David Stichweh

Priest, poet, novelist, mystic, theologian—Thomas Merton was one of the most influential religious writers of the twentieth century. From 1941 when he entered the Trappist monastery of Our Lady of Gethsemani in Kentucky, until his untimely death in 1968, Merton probed the depths of spiritual understanding. The fruits of his contemplation, which were expressed in poems, books, essays, took visual form in his photographs. For Merton, the visual image was just as important a means of expressing spiritual awareness as was the written word.

This paper was originally presented at the national literary conference, "Poetry and Mysticism: The Art of Thomas Merton," held in April 1985 at the Pontifical College Josephinum, Worthington, Ohio. The paper was accompanied by eighty slides presenting Merton's photographs. The image accompanying this article is representative of Merton's photographic work.

A photograph can serve both as a window and as a mirror. As a window, a photograph conveys to the viewer something that the photographer saw. We are looking through the photographer's eyes at a scene, an object, an event. The photographer is sharing with us something that he saw and experienced in order for us to see and experience it as well. But a photograph also functions as a mirror. Reflected in the photograph is something about the photographer: his perception, sensitivity, awareness. We gain insight into the person by looking at what and how he photographs, and what expressive statements the photographs convey. In the photographs of Thomas Merton, we have both windows and mirrors—windows into his visual world, and reflections of his unique sensibilities.

Merton first became interested in photography through his friend, the writer and photographer, John Howard Griffin. On his visits to the monastery, Griffin would allow Merton to use his cameras. Very often the two of them would go off together on photographic explorations. Merton's fascination with the camera and the photographic process became so strong that Griffin gave him permanent use of one of his cameras (Patnaik 102).

With borrowed camera, Merton walked and photographed the many and varied objects that drew his attention. At first, part of the joy of photographing was just learning how to use the camera: looking through the lens, focusing, exploring the world framed within the viewfinder. Fascination with the camera itself was often motivation enough for photographing.

Unable to do his own processing, Merton relied upon Griffin to develop and print his photographs (Patnaik 103). Merton would mark proofsheets to indicate the images he wanted printed. Relieved of the necessity of working in the darkroom, Merton could concentrate his attention on seeing and responding. As he worked, his perceptions became sharper, and the visual and expressive qualities of his photographs became stronger.

It is perhaps not by accident or coincidence that Merton began photographing shortly after moving into his hermitage. The hermitage provided him with what he had long sought: solitude, silence; the quiet to fully focus his spirit on contemplation; the aloneness that enabled him to sense his relatedness to all created things.

From his hermitage he writes of the small and ordinary things that compose the days and the seasons: the sound of birds awakening before dawn, the rising of the sun in the eastern woods, the smell of the fields, the squirrel that comes to his porch to feed, the sound of sheep and far-off cattle, the language of the rain beating on the tin roof. His writing is filled with images of nature presented in a poetic and often meditative fashion. With these images the subject of his writing, it is not surprising to find these same nature images the subjects of his photography.

In terms of visual imagery, Merton concentrated on roots, trees, rocks, the shape of the landscape, the pattern of sunlight and shadow, the surface of walls, the placement and arrangement of objects. And within these subjects, Merton focused on texture, shape, form, lines, the contrasts of light and dark. Very often he would explore within an object, searching for different perspectives, other relationships, a stronger point of view from which to present the subject.

One of the striking qualities of Merton's photographs is their simplicity. The subjects themselves are not bold and dramatic, but simple and often ordinary. The way in which Merton photographs is likewise neither bold nor dramatic. He does not impose himself on his subjects, change or manipulate them. Rather, he photographs in a direct and straightforward manner, allowing the subject to present itself in a natural and uncomplicated way. This directness, this visual exploration of the common and the ordinary is an important characteristic of Merton's photographic style. In photographing the ordinary, Merton enables us to see a beauty and a significance that we might otherwise overlook.

In the introduction to Shirley Burden's photographic essay on the Monastery of Our Lady of Gethsemani, Merton wrote about Burden's photographs, but he could just as well be speaking about his own:

And now a man, an artist, comes along with a camera and shows us, beyond a doubt, that the real [world], the one that is so obvious that we no longer see it, the one that has become so familiar that we have not even looked at it for years, is not only beautiful, but romantically beautiful. It is romantic even in the ordinariness, the banality that we ourselves tend to reject. (Introduction n.pag.)

In writing about art and spirituality, Merton states that one of the most important elements in the beginning of a spiritual life is the ability to respond to reality, to see the value and the beauty in ordinary things, to come alive to the splendor that is all around us (Merton *Reader* 386).

Merton came alive to the splendor that was around him because he saw and sensed the value and the beauty in ordinary things. He saw and sensed this value because of his life as a contemplative. Achieving a state of quiet and inner stillness creates a state of receptiveness—an openness and awareness to the mystery and the wonder that surrounds us. What Merton became receptive to out of his life as a contemplative was, as he called it, a hidden wholeness—the awareness of a vital life force that lies within and beyond all things and binds all things together. For Merton creation became revelation. In contemplating natural creation, we see the spiritual glory which has been hidden in it by the Creator. In looking at nature, he says that we perceive the “unseen roots of all created beings” (Griffin 4). In looking deeply into the world around him, Merton achieved an “unspeakable reverence for the holiness of created things” (Merton, *Jonas* 238).

Merton communicated this awareness very poetically in his writing, and expressed it just as profoundly in his photographs. He used his camera to focus on the images and the objects of his contemplation. The camera became for him a contemplative instrument. He took his camera with him on his walks and, with his special way of seeing, photographed what moved or excited him—whatever responded in some mysterious way to that inner awareness and sensitivity that was his (Griffin 50). In photographing, Merton was concerned not with documenting but with transcending—showing the object for what it is but also for more than what it is. In a photograph, Merton allowed the subject to communicate its essence and to reveal an inner significance. It was this idea of essence and revelation that Merton tried to achieve. He focused on the visual essence of his subjects: the unique shapes, forms, surface textures, patterns of light and shadow that made up the physical structure of the objects. In focusing on these shapes and forms and textures, he also sought to reveal the forces which created these shapes and forms: the life within the life of a tree; the force within the form of a root; the strength within the shape of a rock. We see beyond the outer appearance of things into their inner nature. Merton felt that all created things talked of something beyond themselves. Their meaning, he said, is not something we impose on them, but a “mystery which we can discover in them, if we have the eyes to look with” (Labrie 19). Merton used the eyes of his contemplative spirit to look within the mystery of his visual world, and the camera became an extension of these eyes to reveal to us the mystery—the hidden wholeness—that lies within all of creation.

Merton's photographs are as much a product of the spirit as they are the product of a camera. Taken in a moment of both visual awareness and spiritual insight, his images represent more than the eye at first sees. His photographs are images of transcendence concerned not just with the momentary, but with the eternal. If we look

at them deeply enough, his photographs become the means of perceiving the eternal in the temporal. In his photographs of rocks and trees and roots we can experience the feeling of sacredness, of wonder, of joy, of communion with nature and with life.

In a certain sense, the photographs of Thomas Merton do not need to be studied; they need to be contemplated and experienced. They reveal to us the awareness, the understanding, the spiritual insight of the man who made them. If we truly allow ourselves to experience them, the photographs will speak to us of the mystery, the transcending quality, the hidden wholeness that Merton so deeply felt.

A portion of *The Excursion*, a long poem by William Wordsworth, offers insight into our experience and understanding of Merton's photographs:

I have seen
A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract
Of inland ground, applying to his ear
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell;
To which, in silence hushed, his very soul
Listened intensely; and his countenance soon
Brightened with joy; for from within were heard
Murmurings, whereby the monitor expressed
Mysterious union with its native sea.
Even such a shell the universe itself
Is to the ear of Faith; and there are times,
I doubt not, when to you it doth impart
Authentic tidings of invisible things;
Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power;
And central peace, subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation. (Book 4, lines 1133-1147)

Instead of placing a shell to his ear and hearing, Thomas Merton placed a camera to his eye and saw and sensed the flow and movement and presence of invisible things. Out of his contemplation he saw intensely. He saw with an eye of Faith—a perception that was made sharper and clearer by his spiritual understanding. And he used his camera to communicate the understanding.

Merton's photographs of trees and rocks and shapes and textures become a meeting place: a place where his unique perception enlarges and expands our awareness of creation; a place where he reveals to us a wholeness and a holiness that can deepen our spiritual understanding. The camera became an integral element for his contemplative and creative spirit, and the means by which he visually expressed the depth of his communion with nature and with life.

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Barrier Reef

Norman Chaney

There is no reef that claims the eye.
The guide explains: where waves crest
the reef lies just below.

And danger. "The x's on your map
are tankers' graves.
Cook was a good navigator,
but bloody lucky."

Brain coral, parrot fish, giant clams
slide beneath the boat.
In the glass bottom I see my face betrayed,
inching incredulously
toward creation's last day.

Character and Verisimilitude in Daniel

Cecile G. Gray

Daniel, the faithful Jew in the Old Testament book that bears his name, is one of a type. He is the wise ancient, according to Biblical scholars like Norman W. Porteous and J.J. Collins, and he speaks as a seer in a pseudonymous apocalyptic work. In the philological studies of this book and in those examinations whose goal is to determine historical setting and authorship for it, writers do not go far beyond these observations about Daniel himself. They fail, therefore, to ask who this Daniel is in his literary context, and how his visions are affected for the reader by his character. Fully realized and complex, Daniel is furthermore set in a structurally sophisticated narrative. This courtier understands the dreams and visions of kings, judges wisely, makes hymns, lives in a foreign land, dreams and has visions. He is a clever man who accepts no foolishness. Furthermore, he narrates much of the story and thus provides continuity in a complicated series of writings: court accounts, visionary stories and folk tales.

W. Sibley Towner calls Daniel his book's "hero" (5), but "hero" is the wrong term for him. A hero in ancient literature is one who, by his extraordinary physical prowess, courage and wit, and with the impetus of fate, wins great battles for his people or leads them on far-flung journeys across desert or sea. He usually suffers from some tragic flaw that prohibits him from enjoying fully the victory to which he has brought his followers, and his pride often causes a conflict between him and his gods or God. Daniel certainly does not appear to be a hero in this sense.

One should note further that Daniel is not, in fact, even the "main character" or protagonist of the book, although his presence and personality tie together stories about assorted kings and courtiers, *ex eventu* prophetic visions of Jewish history, and folk tales about dishonest pagan priests, a virtuous Jewess and a monster. Daniel approaches the posture of a hero in only three instances: in the Lions' Den tale from chapter 6¹, and in the stories of Bel and the Dragon. Carey A. Moore points out that in the latter story Daniel does not pray until he has been in the lions' pit for six days, and that "without the [intrusive] Habbakuk incident, Daniel rather than God is glorified" (127). More often, Daniel plays the role of narrator, and he does not appear at all in chapter 3.²

Daniel lacks other heroic qualifications. Generally, his position is that of mere advisor to the foreign prince. In trying to recover the truth about an ancient character, the modern reader plays with fire to assess him in terms of responses to later figures of his sort. However, I would like to proceed with the assumption that the courtier is a literary archetype who generally has one of two sorts of

characteristics. He may be, like T.S. Eliot's J. Alfred Prufrock, ineffectual and anti-heroic. Other more sinister literary and historical courtly advisors come to mind: Polonius with his conniving, low-level insidiousness; power-mad Sejanus; or Herodotus' treacherous Gyges. The reader, in fact, encounters this sort of court figure in chapter 6 of Daniel. These advisors to the king are jealous, competitive, lying sycophants, and Darius, like Tiberius or Candaules, finds himself helpless before their schemes. Yet with the intervention of Daniel's God, Darius is finally enabled to overcome them and to cast them and their families into the den of lions (6:24).

These typical courtiers are Daniel's (and his Jewish friends') foils: he is honest and respectful, even to the ludicrous Belshazzar, and when he rises to political power, he often does so despite his lack of interest in preferment (5:17). The kings that Daniel serves come and go, but he remains, a kind of shadow of the steadfast God who protects him against the real and terrible dangers of the court. And another more powerful image is prefigured in these passing reigns of the kings—the panorama of history drawn in fantastical, enormous images in the visions that will follow. The things of human history are shown in terms of a day-to-day court life before they are imaged in the visions, lest the reader take nations and people who must pass away overly seriously. The events in the visions are bestial and deformed representations—perhaps even containing a hint of parody—of mere people, and are as insubstantial before God as the passing monarchs in chapters 1-6. Parallels, then, are set up for the reader's understanding, with the names and realistically drawn kings and their vision counterparts on the one hand, and Daniel and his God on the other.

It seems perhaps a little odd that a foreign courtier should be given the power to make important judgments, although even an alien king would have to be impressed with one who could so cleverly assess the Suzanna case despite his youth. Moore says that "the story of Suzanna originally preceded Daniel 1 and served to introduce Daniel who was only a boy at the time" (90).³ Even as the book currently stands, one knows from the beginning that Daniel makes fine judgments with the aid of his God, which help he proclaims in every instance. His claim to God's aid is ratified by God's direct pronouncement on Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 3, where Daniel does not appear, as well as chapter 4: Daniel's judgment and God's are consistent.

At any rate, the simple folk tale about the virtuous Jewess prepares the reader to see the mature Daniel make considerably more complex right decisions about good and evil. His name itself means "'God has judged'" (Porteous 28). In accord again with this characterization follows Daniel's adherence to the law: what God has judged right and wrong in matters of practice and taboo, Daniel likewise accepts or rejects, as in chapter 6. And Daniel is not blinded to his own or to Israel's failures to act in accord with the law: in chapter 9 he assesses their guilt without equivocation. Daniel's visions, too, present images of the judgment of his God, and the reader is thus prepared to take them seriously.

Examples of Daniel's mature judgment are provided in chapters

2, 4 and 5. There he goes beyond determining an individual's guilt or innocence as he has done in the Suzanna folk tale: he begins to interpret the dreams and apparitions of kings. Simple judgment becomes the power of interpretation on a grand scale: the future of kings and nations, not just of a few individuals, is staked on Daniel's ability to discern what the images of good and evil mean.

Daniel the sensible judge also plays the role of psalmist in this narrative. D.S. Russell says, in regard to chapter 7, that his "sanctified imagination is a gift of God which can become a vehicle of divine revelation" (113). Here the critic is speaking of Daniel's revelation of the facts of history; but one can take his statement further. Daniel's inspired visions and speech all show the sound judgment, power and grandeur of Israel's God. The visionary narratives are certainly the most powerful examples of Daniel's revealing this truth in his book. However, once again the author builds to this culmination: in chapter 2 Daniel blesses God for his gift of a revelatory night vision (verse 19), and in verses 20-23 he takes on the mantle of poetry, proclaiming God's wisdom and power with the authority of the poet, and out of poetic inspiration.⁴ Thus the author prepares the reader for the overwhelming image of God that Daniel the poet draws in 7:9-14. Here the image is grand, extravagant and mystical. And since all who have sung songs before in this book have sung truly of God, Daniel's magnificent poem in chapter 7 must be readily credited in its detailed imagery and burning metaphors. Further, the reader will know that Daniel's poem arises from no frenzy: he is a wise and sensible man. Besides, the reader will recall, songs about Israel's God are made only by sane men: Nebuchadnezzar, for example, could sing of him only after his frenzy had passed. Also the reader should be confirmed in his belief that Daniel, who has this gift of image-making in his songs of praise, can interpret others' dream images.

As well as building carefully from simple manifestations of Daniel's judgment to complex and amazing ones, and from simple hymns to detailed poetic visions, the author of Daniel employs another impressive technique. He shows Daniel to be, ironically, an outsider and an insider in several ways in the events of these stories. His "insideness" makes him privy to information; his "outsideness" gives him a perspective from which to evaluate it without bias. One learns, before one reaches the difficult chapters 7-12, to respect Daniel's word partly because he has been, for six chapters, set in a unique position to see and to evaluate Babylonian, Median and Persian rulers. Because of his positions at court and because of his reputation as a reader of dreams, he is made privy to such "inside" information as kings' fears and failures of understanding. On the other hand, by Daniel's being Jewish and a worshiper of a God other than their idols, he has a perspective from which to measure these kings. He evidences no discomfort in his inside-outside role, since he is secure in his being Jewish. Further, he shows confidence again and again that with God's help he can do whatever these monarchs may demand of him as courtier, and that he can, again with God's help, endure whatever he must in the midst of powerful alien men. Thus he turns his position at court, which would have destroyed or corrupted a man prone to self-serving, to his, Israel's and his God's advantage.

If in the story he is both an insider and an outsider at court, he seems to be both inside and outside the narrative in another way: the main players, with the exception of his three young friends who echo his fidelity in chapter 3, are historical figures, whereas Daniel appears not to be. He seems to come, instead, out of a past era; he carries the name and personality of an "ancient worthy who is linked in Ezekiel 14:14, 20 with righteous Noah and righteous Job, . . . who is described (Ezekiel 28:3) as a wise man" (Towner 5). Like a *Märchen* character in folklore and in the epic, he springs into the forefront of the action without a defined lineage or even parentage. Therefore, this sensible courtier is endowed with a quality not quite of this world; again, he is set apart, and again, he gains an advantage for accurately reporting its events, both by being in the midst of things and being outside them in a way no ordinary mortal could be.

Daniel's *Märchen* nature also endows him with the helpful characteristic of outrageously clever wits. He does not use his wit *Märchen*-style, for his own benefit, but to judge as in the Suzanna tale, and to understand dreams and apparitions in the court stories (2, 4 and 5). Another twist is God's gift to Daniel of this cleverness; it is part of his nature only in so far as God makes it so. As well as being clever, the *Märchen* character is extraordinarily brave, and Daniel is no exception to this rule. He has no fear at the prospect of facing a den full of hungry lions, a mad king or a dragon. The author astutely takes advantage of this piece of characterization when he shows Daniel to be weakened and sickened after his own visions: surely the reader must respond to this change with proper amazement, and be awed along with Daniel before the Ancient of Days, who becomes undeniably the protagonist of chapters 7-12. In these chapters, the *Märchen* figure becomes hero, while in the latter he becomes the authoritative narrative voice, as formidable at his art as the epic hero is at his.

One might expect a *Märchen* character to reside comfortably in the folk-landscape of the Deuterocanonical stories. The court tales, however, would seem at first to be antithetical to such figures. These tales are, as D.S. Russell says, sophisticated "short stories," and each, self-contained and complete, shows action arising from character. Each is realistic; but these tales still contain prophetic dreams, visions and miraculous deliverances. Thus Daniel weaves in and out of courtly-realistic and more frankly *Märchen* worlds in the first six chapters and the Deuterocanonical ones. If one looks more closely, however, one will see the possibility that Daniel spends more time in *Märchen* territory than might originally have been apparent, for there is something distinctly *Märchen* about one of the kings to whom Daniel plays courtier.

This character is Darius the Mede. H.H. Rowley, in his careful study of the possible historical veracity of the Median king, says finally that Darius, as the Book of Daniel presents him, is irreconcilable with history (11). He further concludes that "the value of Daniel vi" does not depend "on the title of Darius to a place in history" (60). From a narrative point-of-view, his contention makes good sense. And certainly chapter 9's significance depends even less upon the historicity

of the king under whom Daniel's penitential prayers are made, and under whose reign Daniel is brought divine intelligence by an angelic messenger. For this discussion, however, it is important that one of the court tales and even one of the visionary episodes occur in the *Märchen* world, as surely as the Suzanna story or the tale of the dragon. Here the *Märchen* element is more subtle. One might fear that the reader must discredit the book as one more non-historical character enters its main portions. But in fact the opposite is true.

The modern reader, perhaps like his intertestamental counterpart, is often unwilling to believe that anything much out of the ordinary can happen right next door. The author of Daniel circumvents that skeptical resistance by the introduction of Darius the Mede: what might not happen here and now, in an age when new prophecy seems unlikely to speak truly, might well have occurred in Darius' kingdom. And then, by extension, might it not happen closer to home, say in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who was historical enough, but who lived long ago? This is, it seems to me, the function of Darius in this book.

An additional ironic juxtaposition exists within the character of Daniel himself. The Daniel whom Darius throws into the lions' den is a public man, but the Daniel who has visions during his reign is a private one. This is the deepened vision that the reader has of Daniel between chapters 1-6 and 7-12. His private night visions are concerned with the public world of kings, of course, but even so a new element in Daniel's character is introduced. This new element is indicated by the change in point of view in the stories: now Daniel will speak of himself in first person. Another change has occurred, too. Whereas Daniel was needed to interpret the visions of others, his own chimeræ must be interpreted by angels. Thus Daniel's place in a kind of spiritual hierarchy is defined: he is less wise than heavenly messengers, but is more clearly than ever shown to be superior to worldly kings. They seem to rule, but don't, because Daniel's God in fact controls their ultimate destiny. By his being the vessel of that wisdom, Daniel is more powerful than they, although he seems to be only their attendant. And, again, form in the book of Daniel reflects character in a most successful way: Daniel's hybrid chimerical beasts from visions had in the night are echoed by the hybrid, elliptical form of the narrative.

And although the chimeræ in dream and in form may sometimes be obscure, the God who presides over both is entirely the contrary. His unwavering presence manifests wisdom that is never clouded, bizarre or inconsistent. Certainly one can understand Daniel's (and Nebuchadnezzar's, for that matter) disturbance at the realization of the overwhelming contrast between the God who controls the destinies of the nations, and the distorted, disfigured nations themselves, which are these characters' temporal dwelling places.

The Daniel narrative achieves great depth through the richness of the characters, especially the character-narrator Daniel, and the consistency of character and event proves its verisimilitude. The diversity of narrative forms echoes the level of characterization. Daniel's author weaves together impossible-sounding combinations of character, story and level of meaning in order to provide a book

that is both evocative and credible, and that echoes realities beyond the historical materials with which the author begins. The truth that neither God nor his adherent is inconsistent, despite the ironies of appearances, is put forth convincingly in a narrative that is as delicately constructed as it is varied.

Notes

¹Nebuchadnezzar and Darius are in fact the protagonists of their stories. They are the characters who experience changes of heart in the context of the tales, and they admit to truth when they recognize it. That they come to understand the ultimate truth of Daniel's God further sets them up as foils, first for Belshazzar and finally for Antiochus Epiphanes. Daniel's virtue cannot be questioned in his loyal service to these pagan kings, because they are initially unaware of truth rather than being simply opposed to it. Nebuchadnezzar is an especially compelling character who has been translated into other literatures as hero of apologetic stories. Darius is the actual protagonist of chapter 6 since the change of heart is his.

²Porteous' translation of Daniel will be used for all references in this paper except for the Deuterocanonical portions. These will be taken from the NAB.

³All the glory allotted to God's faithful does not fall on Daniel here; much adheres to Suzanna herself. In the same way, Nebuchadnezzar is glorified by his wise appreciation of Daniel and his God, as is the queen (or queen-mother, according to Porteous 80) of the ignoble Belshazzar for her recognition of Daniel's wisdom.

⁴One might note that Nebuchadnezzar, with his new-found understanding, proclaims the greatness of God with the same authority and in the same mode in chapter 4. Azariah has done the same in chapter 3, and Darius will make the same sort of response in chapter 6.

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Carthaginian Peace

Stuart E. Knee

Without permission
four stark, surreal images
celebrated sunset
on my island

My hospitality unnerved them
for I had monkeys there
and polished sandalwood
five-petalled shells
and ocean-going kayaks

But they were pagans
needing driftwood
chunks of flotsam
bloody coral beads
arranged in squares
on black, volcanic beaches

A momentary clash of wills
resolved in pain and chaos
and so I served them
with bright stones
and purest ivory
gathered there
gleaming there
a peon drunk on master's wine
abandoned on a shore
that once was mine

A feast:
a head of deer
swollen dolphin carcass
rabbit eyes

They chewed

discarding bones and heavy teeth
on the altars of their gods
to whom they pledged
humility and glory

Sitting in a circle were the clans

sullen
and with eyes of burning amber
revolving passed the sun
and toward darkness

for the moon now rivaled sun
which bent away from light
and toward darkness

Sighing
a mighty leader
swaying metronomically
in prayer
and pushed against a great bonfire
I
the uninvited
lay
the object of the frenzied prayer
around my neck were twisted thrice
the captive bonds of sacrifice
which snapped
within the fire

When my inferno burned away
millennial silence
came to stay

And I was free
but not yet free
'til memory unleashed
the pyre's roar:

In life
I served you well I shrieked
In death
I serve no more

A Review Essay of Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative*

Sylvia Vance

Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative*, Volume One, (Trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984) is the middle volume of three works which together explore the problems of structure, sense, and reference in metaphor and narrative. The first work, *La Métaphore vive*, examined (at the level of the sentence) what Ricoeur terms semantic innovation, "the producing of a new semantic pertinence by means of an impertinent attribution" (*Time* ix). *Time and Narrative*, Volume One, contains the first two parts of a four-part study analyzing another, parallel work of synthesis—that is, emplotment. This text is, together with the projected Volume Two, concerned with the creation of meaning in narrative, and thus with semantic innovation at the level of discourse.

Ricoeur describes Part One, Volume One, of *Time and Narrative* as being based on a major presupposition: "... time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal existence" (3). In order to show that this circle of reciprocity is a healthy circle whose two parts mutually reinforce each other, Ricoeur embarks first upon an examination of the enigma of time, building upon the meditation of Augustine in Book 11 of the *Confessions*. He recalls Augustine's example of the recitation by heart of Saint Ambrose's words *Deus creator omnium*. This line of verse offers the alternation of four long syllables and of four short syllables within a single expression. In reciting it, "We must be able to retain (*tenere*) the short and to apply it (*applicare*) to the long." In doing this the mind performs three functions: expectation, attention, and memory. The result is that "the future, which the mind expects, passes through the present, to which it attends, into the past, which it remembers." Here the complexities of this three-fold present become evident as mental acts, with attention becoming active intention. For Augustine, it is within the soul that the present exists as a "present intention" rather than a point of passage, and there also that expectation and memory are extended. The Augustinian "solution" to the puzzling experience of time remains aporetic, built on a series of enigmas haunted by what Ricoeur terms an "existential burden of discordance" (31).

The poetic act of emplotment (here studied primarily through Aristotle) puts this aporia to work. The verse recited by heart becomes the model for other actions where the soul engages itself and thus experiences distention. In emplotment (the imitation of action, of lived temporal experience) the tensions of concordance and discordance are at play; the poetic act represents the establishment of

that resolution which is the reciprocal of the Augustinian aporia of time. Thus is the whole realm of narrative implicated in the circle; where Augustine and Aristotle only suggest, Ricoeur will develop. He will explore the relationship of the experience of time to emplotment.

What Aristotle calls *muthos* (the organization of the events) Ricoeur is calling narrative. What Aristotle terms mimesis ("the break that opens the space for fiction" [45]), Ricoeur will analyze as a three-fold process, where the central mimesis of creation (mimesis²) is surrounded by two other stages. Thus we understand that mimesis functions not just as a break but as a connection. Time becomes human time through narrative. As Ricoeur puts it, "We are following . . . the destiny of a prefigured time that becomes a refigured time through the mediation of a configured time" (54). In human living, acting, and suffering mimesis¹ originates, formed at one side of that continuous mimetic arc; at the other is located the reception by a reader of a composed, emplotted work which then influences human acting (mimesis³).

Ricoeur contrasts this hermeneutical approach to narrative discourse with that of textual semiotics which he deems to be based upon an abstraction of mimesis² alone; semiotics, says the author, does not consider the two "sides" of a text, but simply the center (53). For his own three-fold study, Ricoeur utilizes a "relay station" of Heidegger's *within-time-ness* in order to discuss temporality of action, thus developing implications of the *Poetics* in a realm where Aristotle is silent. Furthermore, the Kantian concept of judging, says Ricoeur, helps us understand what it means to follow a story—that is, to extract a configuration from a succession. "It is this 'followability' . . . that constitutes the poetic solution to the paradox of distention and intention" (67).

Having demonstrated the *mediating* functions of mimesis², Ricoeur closes Part One by describing mimesis³, where narrative receives its full meaning in being restored to the time of action—the interaction of text and reader.

Part Two of *Time and Narrative*, entitled "History and Narrative," is (in the words of the author) "an investigation of the relations between the writing of history and the operations of emplotment . . ." (227). It is an attempt to answer the question of whether historiography (not to be confused with the more limited concept of narrative history) *belongs* to the field of narrative. Ricoeur's thesis is that history, even when seemingly the most distant from narrative form, remains tied to our narrative understanding, but in an indirect way. Although historiography finds its rightful place within the mimetic circle which Ricoeur has described, history cannot be seen as simply a species of the genus story.

In so arguing, Ricoeur (who is deeply in touch with both European and American critical theory) accomplishes a reconciliation of two opposing points of view within the recent historiographical debate concerning the function of narrative and the status of its referents.

The first chapter of Part Two summarizes the two differing attacks on historical narrative. First it reviews the plea of French historians (especially those of the *Annales* school) for a *non*-event-based history, and hence—as they have tended to see it—for a non-narrative history, since its objective has for them become the total social fact. The chapter goes on to discuss the attempts to apply the so-called “covering-law model” to history, beginning with Karl Hempel’s article, “The Function of General Laws in History.” (Hempel had divested the historical event of its narrative status.) From this discussion comes Ricoeur’s analysis of the existence of an epistemological break between historical knowledge born of inquiry (on the one hand) and our ability to follow a story (on the other).

Next, Ricoeur examines work which has challenged the application of the covering-law model to history (notably that of William H. Dray and G. H. Von Wright) and also the narrativist arguments of Arthur Danto, W. B. Gallie, Louis O. Mink, and Hayden White, which together provide (with varying emphases) defenses of narrative in history. He finds both groups helpful to our understanding of history, but also lacking in two ways: (1) they do not sufficiently recognize the problem of the epistemological break, and (2) they do not take adequate account of present-day historical narratives which are no longer “naive.” Ricoeur notes that it is Paul Veyne’s provocative *Comment on écrit l’histoire* which suggests the crucial question (for narrativist theories) of how far the notion of plot can be extended when history ceases to be a “history of events.”

In the final chapter, “Historical Intentionality,” Ricoeur seeks to heal the epistemological break he has described, that between historical knowledge and our ability to follow a story. He first analyzes the effect of this break on our understanding at three differing levels: (1) explanatory procedures, (2) historical entities, and (3) historical time. In each level, he follows a method (taken from Husserl’s *Krisis*) of reconstruction, of “questioning back” in the sense of the genesis of meaning. For the first level, involving the autonomy of explanatory procedures, Ricoeur constructs a healing of the epistemological break through “questioning back” to the concept of *singular causal imputation*, the basic link of all explanation in history. It is this procedure that accomplishes the transition between narrative causality (“one because of the other”) and explanatory causality based on laws. In the questioning back process, Ricoeur draws upon Von Wright’s “quasi-causal explanation,” and also upon Max Weber’s explication of the logic of singular causal imputation, concluding that we are authorized to “apply the notion of plot by analogy to all singular causal imputation” (192). Ricoeur then suggests for this application the term “quasi-plot,” denoting the indirect but necessary connection between history and narrative.

The second “questioning back” relates to the autonomy of historical entities. Here Ricoeur’s “relay station” is Maurice Mandelbaum’s notion of society as a singular, first-order entity which can function as what Ricoeur calls a “quasi-character.”

The third reconstruction relates to historical time(s). In this section Ricoeur notes that the ambiguous use historians make of the term “event” supports his thesis that historical events do not greatly

differ from events framed by plot. Evidence is drawn from Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, and from the work of Jacques Le Goff, Georges Duby, and François Furet. Ricoeur's conclusion: "... all change enters the field of history as a quasi-event" (224).

The three terms quasi-plot, quasi-character, and quasi-event signal the series of analogies which Ricoeur strives to maintain:

- (1) that between causal attribution and emplotment (on the level of procedures)
- (2) that between societies and characters (on the level of entities)
- (3) that between the time of individuals and of civilizations (on the level of historical time).

Thus he concludes that history does indeed belong to the narrative field which is defined by the configuring operation involved in composing works that imitate an action. The relationship of history and narrative has been revealed to be one that is complex and indirect, but nonetheless essential.

The argument of Part Two of *Time and Narrative* (whose brief summary here can only suggest the scope of the erudition Ricoeur brings to bear) constitutes a reconciliation between narrativist theories of historical writing, on the one hand, and, on the other, the explanatory model proposed by those who hold that history is not a form of art. How sturdy is this reconciliation? It appears that the crucial part of Ricoeur's argument in Part Two is the section relating law-like explanation to plot—the first reconstruction, the one which involves "singular causal imputation" and which heals the first-level epistemological break. Once that portion is accepted, the rest of Ricoeur's argument in Part Two follows. It also appears that when Ricoeur's chain of reasoning through that first reconstruction is examined, the scrutiny must be conducted in the light of his concept of plot as more complex in history than in fictional narrative (229-30). It is this concept which underlies his insistence on the highly analogical use of narrative categories in history. To this reviewer, Ricoeur's argument in Part Two appears to be very carefully constructed, and it is a convincing one, establishing the connection of history with narrative understanding. Furthermore, one appreciates an appraisal of the works of important French historians accompanying this study of the epistemology of the historical sciences. It is notable that, in contrast, to the direction taken by much of narrativist theory, Ricoeur insists on the reality of the epistemological break and thus on the essential nature of *inquiry* in history, while establishing history's equally essential ties to narrative.

It is important to remember that this examination of narrative is based on theories of language and its referents which Ricoeur has earlier presented in *La Métaphore vive*, challenging both the semioticians and deconstruction. Given this basis, we may well ask what sort of history Ricoeur invites us to contemplate as adequate or ideal for the 1980s. Here, his text is perhaps not so satisfying. It appears that what it evokes is solid but not greatly challenging or compelling.

Granted, his concepts of historical narrative do stretch conventional ideas of plot, of character, of event, but the privileged works examined in his text are those where already these concepts had taken shape. (And, one wonders, does not Le Roy Ladurie's contribution deserve mention?) In Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative*, we do not perceive history as *having* a history in the sense that is so pervasive in, for example, Foucault. Nor do we recognize any call to that radical change which Lionel Gossman says would result from historians' recognition of the need to point to history's signifying system. Gossman has urged (in "History and Literature: Reproduction or Signification") that historiography orient itself to a "reality" defined as what we make signify, and not as a mere given. This is not the sort of question that Ricoeur's theories of discourse attempt to raise. For him, historical understanding is the refiguration of the past; to a degree, the story told is already present in the events, which thus constitute a referential reality independent of what we make signify as a referential system.

And thus we return to the concept of the three-fold mimesis explicated in Part One of *Time and Narrative*. From this section will come the most important implications for *literary* studies (as distinct from historical ones) issuing from Ricoeur's text, in combination, of course, with Volume Two and its projected analyses of "Fiction and Narrative" and "Time as Narrated." What do we see, thus far, in *Time and Narrative* which has importance for literary studies, knowing as we do that these days no statement about them can be uncontroversial? While we are aware that Ricoeur's major arguments distancing his approach from a semiotics of the text will come in Volume Two, we already perceive in his present discussion of mimesis¹ (the prefigurative stage) a distinctive and positive statement of the hermeneutical position. Stressing the *mediating* function of the central mimetic process (his mimesis²), Ricoeur shows it grounded in our understanding of the world of action, and thus in a field subject to ethics before it is subject to poetics. Or, better said, a field where there exists the practical understanding from which the poetics of emplotment never stops borrowing. For actions imply goals and refer to motives and have agents; they cannot be ethically neutral (59).

As Ricoeur explains, terms relative to action are synchronic in that interrelated meanings between means, ends, agents, and circumstances are reversible. Yet every narrated story is "irreducibly diachronic," and plot thus represents the literary equivalent of syntagmatic order that narrative introduces into the practical field. "If human action can be narrated, it is because it is always already articulated by signs, rules, and norms. It is always already symbolically mediated Symbolism confers an initial *readability* on action" (57-58).

It is in this desire to support the reality of the symbol that we find Ricoeur taking his distance from Derridean deconstruction and from the semioticians. For the full import of his presentation we must await Volume Two. But already in the first volume of *Time and Narrative* we are in the presence of a highly logical, erudite, and brilliant argument linking time and narration in a way that defends

the central principle of Ricoeur's lifetime work, the reality of reference.

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Her Careful Eye

Mike Christian

I remember a certain little girl . . . blond and
fairhaired she was.

We hiked together once.

It started like any other walk . . . refreshing,
different, felt good.

We walked quickly . . . she quicker than I for she
was young and I . . . felt older.

The path was not unkind . . . but inviting and pulled
us easily along

and up

and down

and

around

and back

again.

So much was about us.

So much better than cars and buses, and left-turn
signals, and stinky air.

I wanted to breath here

and . . .

absorb with what time

I had.

We skipped on.

Suddenly . . .

She stopped.

"Look," said she . . . and underneath a large green leaf . . . was
the most different, appealing, beautiful caterpillar I'd
ever seen.

She stroked it. And . . . I realized I had almost missed this
in my always hurrying.

I wonder if I miss a lot in life as I rush by?
How many beautiful colors or beautiful moments, . . . or
beautiful caterpillars have I missed?

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Beth Rigel Daugherty, Assistant Professor of English, wrote about Virginia Woolf's fiction for her doctoral dissertation at Rice University. Her essay, "The Whole Contention Between Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Woolf, Revisited," appears in *Virginia Woolf: Centennial Essays*.

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Stuart E. Knee was chairperson of the History Department from 1984 to 1986. He is now an Associate Professor of History and Head of Jewish Studies at the College of Charleston.

Albert E. Lovejoy, Professor of Sociology and Chairperson of the Department of Sociology and Psychology, has often shared reports of his sabbatical research and travels with readers of *The Miscellany*.

David Stichweh directs the Learning Resource Center and teaches photography. Within the past year, in addition to campus shows, he has exhibited photographs at the Columbus Art League, Cincinnati Art Academy, Herndon House Gallery, Ohio Dominican College, and in Keuka Park, New York.

Sylvia Vance chairs the Department of Integrative Studies, is an Associate Professor of French, and also teaches history. She is writing a book on seventeenth century memoirs in which her interests in history and literature converge.



